

TAKE A LOOK AT HOW  
YOU USE TECHNOLOGY NOW.

HAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT  
ONLINE IDENTITY AND ACTIONS.

EXPLORE THE DIGITAL  
WORLD TOGETHER.

### Use technology responsibly yourself.

Set limits on accessing texts and other technology during family times. Don't text and drive. Ask critical questions about information you find online. Don't be distracted by technology to the point where your kids feel that they don't have your attention.

### Let your kids initiate contact.

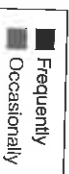
Cell phone interactions bring parents and kids together best when kids initiate most of the calls seeking parents' advice or support. Use technological solutions rather than constant contact to keep track of their schedule and assignments. When difficult conversations are needed, have them in person.

### Recognize links between online and offline behavior.

Youth who are most vulnerable to risky behaviors online tend to be the same ones who have difficulty in other parts of their lives. The skills, values and attitudes you cultivate in your family will help to guide them in their online activities.

## What Happens When Teens Spend Time Online with Friends?

A Pew Research Center study of 789 teens who use social media found that they had experienced each of the following on social media.



### Learn about what your student is doing online.

Teens typically use social networking sites, instant messaging and text messages to connect with offline friends, and they use a variety of websites for homework or to explore personal interests. At the same time, they may be accessing (either accidentally or intentionally) inappropriate content or visiting sites that promote unhealthy behaviors, such as pro-anorexia sites. Ask explicit, non-judgmental questions about what your teen is finding online to help identify areas where you might be concerned so that you can respond appropriately.

### Talk about what to post—and not post—online.

Emphasize the importance of not sharing private information (such as age, location, school and phone number). Discuss the kind of information, language and images they might post that could be embarrassing or hurtful to themselves or to others, and encourage them to pause before they post.

### Have an exit strategy.

Does your teen know what to do if they ever feel threatened online by a bullying friend or a predatory adult? Talk about this in advance so they have options in mind if there should ever be a need. For example, they can end the interaction immediately and block the person. Make it clear that you will help them if they have concerns about online challenges. If the subject keeps trying to contact the youth or continues with threatening behaviors, the situation should be reported to the police or other appropriate authorities. Visit [JostensRenaissance.com/digitalworld](http://JostensRenaissance.com/digitalworld) for online resources.

### Evaluate online sources for bias.

Investigate several sites together and discuss how to think critically about the information being shared. Are the sources reliable? Is the site consistent with positive values that are priorities for your family? Does it treat alternate perspectives respectfully? Does the site represent diverse viewpoints?

### Discuss ethical and legal concerns.

The Internet can sometimes make it easy to blur the lines around honesty and integrity. It's easy to plagiarize (use someone else's writing or ideas as your own), or to download or share pirated music, videos and computer programs. In addition to the ethical issues, some of these activities can catch the attention of the rightful copyright holders, with serious consequences.

### Participate in social action online together.

Use the web to learn about important social issues and gain different perspectives on complex global issues. Find opportunities to contribute, volunteer or take a stand on issues that matter to your family. Show your teen the positive possibilities of the online community.

### Use technology together to expand possibilities in your life.

Explore different parts of the world, different cultures and different ideas online together. Learn about your family heritage and genealogy through online sources. Use online programs to tell your family's story through videos or pictures.

## SET GUIDELINES AND LIMITATIONS TOGETHER.

It is important to have clear expectations about technology use based on your family's priorities and values. Youth are more likely to see these guidelines as fair and then follow them if they are part of the decision-making process and understand your reasoning and concerns.

Consider these guidelines that have worked well for other families:

- ▶ Limit technology in certain contexts, such as at dinner or after bedtime.
- ▶ Protect safety by not giving out personal information, including location.
- ▶ Parents have the right to check any phone or computer at any time.
- ▶ Restrict certain content, such as specific games, sites, activities or devices.
- ▶ Limit technology use until homework or chores are complete.
- ▶ Set limits on time spent with technology and balance it with other activities.
- ▶ No producing, sharing or viewing sexually explicit content.
- ▶ Be kind to others and refrain from using bad language.
- ▶ Restrict certain uses (such as streaming without Wi-Fi) for cost reasons.



## PARTICIPATING IN THE DIGITAL COMMUNITY CAN HAVE BENEFITS AS WELL AS RISKS.

### BENEFITS

- ▶ Socialization and communication
  - ▶ Learning opportunities
  - ▶ Useful health information
  - ▶ Self-expression and creativity
  - ▶ Cross-cultural communication
- ▶ Involvement in civic issues and causes
- ▶ Cyberbullying and harassment, usually by peers
  - ▶ Sharing sexually explicit photographs
  - ▶ Inaccurate or harmful health information
  - ▶ Exposure to inappropriate and illegal content
    - ▶ Sharing too much information
- ▶ Inappropriate commercial or sexual solicitations

### RISKS

The Jostens logo, featuring the brand name in a stylized, cursive script.

Visit [JostensRenaissance.com/digitalworld](http://JostensRenaissance.com/digitalworld) for sources and additional resources.  
Adapted with permission from Search Institute, Minneapolis, MN  
©2016 by Search Institute, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

# HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR TEEN IN A DIGITAL WORLD

It's not just about providing a safe, supportive home and/or neighborhood anymore. Today's youth live in a world where digital media — websites, social media, cell phones, video games and others — are part of everyday life. This reality opens up new challenges and opportunities for parents, teens and families.