
Twitch - a guide for parents and carers

Twitch is a streaming service which is extremely popular among young people. We look at what Twitch is and explore some key things for parents and carers to be aware of.

What is Twitch?

Twitch is a platform for live video streaming, with a minimum user age of 13. It is available as a website or app. Live videos can feature any activity, however, much of Twitch's content is centred around gaming.

Young people and adults frequently use Twitch to watch, or create, live videos of people. These videos could be of users playing popular video games such as [Roblox](#) or [Minecraft](#), or of celebrities and influencers talking to their fans in a live setting.

If watching gaming videos, viewers can see the gamer's screen and the gamer themselves. Viewers can also hear any commentary whilst playing.

Within a stream, viewers can leave comments for the streamers to interact with or answer.

Why is Twitch so popular?

Twitch has over 9 million daily active users. It provides an opportunity to connect with others through sharing a common interest online. Watching others can provide young people with a new way to enjoy their favourite games and it allows them to learn from or appreciate the skill of others. It can also let them preview and explore new games before buying or downloading them. Users also enjoy the fact that the videos are live, making them less edited than other content.

We asked our Childnet [Digital Champions](#) why they liked using Twitch:

"I personally like how you can get involved with what's happening in the moment as well as the ability to talk to other people viewing the stream and the content creators. I also enjoy how the interactions aren't just limited to subscribing, you can do so much more to show your support and it's genuinely more fun to do. The only thing I dislike about Twitch is how certain groups of fans are genuinely unkind and most can get away with it however I think Twitch is working to improve this."

"Personally, I don't really watch gaming on Twitch, which is what I think it's meant for... However, some of my favourite actors and influencers go live on there as it's generally a

lot smoother than Instagram, TikTok or Twitter's live streaming features. I've found Twitch to be much more interactive too, there are screen recording features that you can use to save part of a stream, the chat can be paused too which is really helpful."

Communication on Twitch:

Each live stream on Twitch has a public live-chat. On a site intended for teens and adults, it is hard to fully manage the type of conversations that take place here. However, it is possible to set filters that will block some inappropriate content – e.g., sexualised content, discrimination, and profanities. This can be done using the **'automod' feature**.

There is also a private message or "Whisper" function on Twitch. By adjusting your child's settings, you can ensure that only friends that they've added can send them a whisper.

Content on Twitch:

Because all videos on Twitch are live, it is hard to completely filter content that is inappropriate for children. As part of Twitch's guidelines, streamers are supposed to label their channel as having mature content, to prevent young people from being exposed to it. However, this relies on the streamers themselves and therefore isn't a complete guarantee.

The other type of content to consider is the games themselves. All games have an age rating, which refers to the game's content, not the level of skill required to play it. If your child is viewing the stream of a gamer playing an older rated game, they will see the content. It is worth extending any existing expectations or boundaries, that you already have in place surrounding gaming, to Twitch too.

What young people think parents should know about Twitch

We asked our Childnet Digital Champions about what they think parents and carers should know about Twitch, this is what they told us:

"I think that parents should know what Twitch is used for and all of its features. As I said, it's a heavily interactive platform and can involve money. Users can subscribe to a streamer; it's not like YouTube, it actually involves contributing money to support that creator and I believe there are some bonuses for yourself too. Money can be spent very quickly in high volumes and the automation of it may mean that a young person subscribes £50 and then their parent has mysterious £50 sums leaving their account each week."

"Something else for parents to consider is who their children could be interacting with on Twitch. The majority of streamers are between 17-40 years old but it varies... Watching someone play Fortnite is one thing but if someone is constantly interacting with a streamer (especially smaller accounts) they can become known by them and even close, so it's a good idea to watch out for who they're interacting with."

If your child is live streaming:

Young people need to be careful when live streaming anything. It is important that your child doesn't give away any personal information, and carefully considers their online reputation. Because videos shared to Twitch are going out live, it is easy for streamers to accidentally say something they wouldn't deliberately choose to publicise. Anyone watching a Twitch stream can capture 30 seconds of video, by using the clips feature. This means that live content can be recorded, saved, and shared after the event.

Advertising and spending:

Twitch is owned by Amazon. Having an Amazon Prime account gives you automatic access to Twitch Prime, a paid for membership providing benefits such as freedom from adverts, discounts on games and free in-game "loot" or items. Adverts for other products are common throughout Twitch too.

Twitch has its own currency called Bits. Users can buy Bits for real money and spend them by "Cheering" or tipping streamers to appreciate their content. Users are incentivised to donate Bits because spending a certain amount unlocks Emotes which are very popular. Emotes are like emojis and can be used across the platform.

Safety and security:

Twitch asks that anyone under the age of 18 is authorised by a parent or guardian, who agrees to its terms and conditions.

If you are unhappy with the behaviour of other users, you can ban them from your channel or live chats, and block people completely. If you have any concerns about the communication between your child and someone they have never met and only know online you should **[report this to CEOP.](#)**

The most important thing is maintaining honest and open communication and letting your child know they can come to you if anything worries or upsets them online. Being involved and interested in your child's life online is a great way of helping them to enjoy the online space safely