

**The world's largest Internet safety, help and education organization**

If you have any questions about online safety, privacy or security, ask cyberlawyer, Parry Aftab  
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**I Tube, We Tube...they all scream for You Tube!****What is Video Networking?**

Video Networking is new technology that allows anyone to upload and share videos they produce, copy or find. They can usually also rate others' videos, set a list of favorites and link to others. They are sometimes also called video-sharing sites. But they are not to be confused with media sharing sites/services such as Limewire and Kazaa. The video-sharing technology allows people to download the videos you are sharing. Most video-networks allow you to watch, or link to, them, not copy them.

**How does video-networking work?**

While the concept of video sharing has been around for quite some time (on sites like Kazaa and Limewire), only within the past year or so has video-networking become easily available to the general public. Originally, most videos that one would want to share were posted to a personal webpage or a company server for retrieval by others who knew where to look for it. This was due in part to the fact that technology even a short two years ago was not as advanced as it is today, and storing large video files incurred significant costs. As with everything else, technology has advanced to the point where now, storing and sharing videos is as easy as posting a profile on MySpace or sharing pictures.

You also don't need expensive equipment. Now, everyone with equipment as simple as a cell phone video camera to as advanced as broadcast-quality gear can take and post videos online. Most of the popular sites require that you only 'register' in order to be able to upload or download site content. Registration is almost always free.

Most sites do have some sort of acceptable use policies setting the rules about what you can and can't post. For instance, many sites will allow the posting of hardcore pornography only in the adult sections of their sites. Many don't permit sexually explicit videos at all.

Most sites do NOT allow the posting of copyrighted materials. (This is to avoid the plight of the old Napster, which was shut down for aiding and abetting copyright infringement.)

**What do parents need to know?**

As with the social networking sites before them ( and many of these social networking sites now have video sharing capabilities of their own, such as MySpace, or have spun off sister sites that do), parents need to get up to speed on the kind of things their kids can see online.

Most of these sites do not require any sort of identity verification to become registered. What this means is simply this: If there is an age restriction to access "adult" material on the site, it is on the honor system as most sites have not implemented any sort of meaningful age verification process. Also, because many of these sites have MILLIONS of members, they rely on self-policing to keep the site relatively free of illegal or improper postings. Even at that, objectionable material is relatively easy to find and can take some amount of time to get addressed by site administrators.



WiredSafety, the world's largest Internet safety, help and education organization  
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## How graphic does the video get?

How graphic do you want? There are documented incidents of graphic combat video from the Iraq war, be-headings, pornography, graphic fights, pedophilia and other highly objectionable material has been posted to the various sharing sites.

## What are the potential risks?

Let me count the risks. Young children react in different ways to explicit videos. Older teens can be affected as well. Not to mention the potential for video-bullying... situations that were caught on tape and now available for the entire world to see. The affect this has on the target of the bullying can be immense. There are also situations where internet predators have coerced, badgered or even black-mailed young victims they have found online to perform various sex acts on camera and then send it to them. They used the threats of something bad happening to them or someone they loved if they didn't play along. Most of the time these predators have managed to isolate these kids from their families, who typically are totally unaware of what is going on in their own households.

## How well do the companies police their sites for inappropriate material?

When you are talking about millions of members and hundreds of millions of videos, there is no realistic way of saying that any site is 100% safe. Even if only a small fraction of one percent of videos contained objectionable materials, that equates to a staggering number of potential problems numbering at least into the tens of thousands. Most of the larger sites use some sort of member review and flagging system. YouTube for instance (recently acquired by Google) allows their registered members to 'flag' videos with potentially graphic content. They also restrict access to those videos to those who have registered and stated they were of legal age. (Note that if they know enough to lie about their age, a minor can still register.) Still, the potential is there and PARENTS need to be the protectors of their kids online and not rely on the sites to do their jobs for them.

## Advice for parents on how to talk to their kids about video-sharing sites?

Parents need to take an on-going interest in what their kids are doing online. When the social networking sites exploded back in early 2005, video sharing sites were only a blip on the radar. Now with the advance of technology, the availability of personal devices such as the video iPod, video sites are the current wave. They allow people to create and share their artistic talents, show off their works, share stuff about their favorite bands with their friends, the list is endless. Parents need to explain to their kids that videos posted online do have potential problems associated with them. It could give an online predator information that could lead to the predator finding their kids online. Certain videos perhaps posted as being "funny" could be used later on for blackmail purposes and there can be legal problems if the videos being posted violate copyright law.

## Resources for parents?

[WiredSafety.org](http://WiredSafety.org) is the world's premier online safety and help organization and has extensive information available about all aspects of online safety available on our website.

## Resources for kids and teens?

Teenangels and WiredSafety.org's other youth expert programs teach young people safe and more responsible interactive technology use by developing programs they design themselves. Visit [Teenangels.org](http://Teenangels.org).

## Final Thoughts?

From our experience in being advocates for online safety, parents need to fully understand that they are the ones ultimately responsible for keeping their kids safe online. So many times they want to pass off this responsibility to the various websites where problems have occurred. While sites do share some responsibility for maintaining a decent environment for their users, the sheer size of many of these sites should cause all parents to realize that no site will be 100% safe. Work with your kids, teach them what is appropriate and what is inappropriate activity online. Set down rules, and ENFORCE them. Keeping your family safe online is the responsibility of everyone in your family, but as parents, your kids are looking to you for your experience and your guidance. You're still the parent. Remember that!



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