

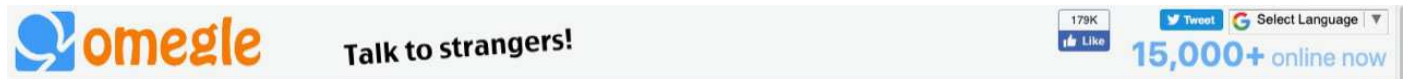


Safe on Social Omegle Cheat Sheet

OMEGLE

WARNING for schools and parents.


Around since 2009, Omegle is something of an internet cockroach; it just won't die. And this site is disturbing and a serious concern. Barely mentioned in cyber safety talks these days, Omegle can claim to be one of the more frightening social media services seen in schools for a while.



Banned from the Apple App shop and from Google play years previously, Omegle can only be accessed through its website.

"Talk to strangers" is the head-line for the homepage, and the site expands its description to include the words "Predators have been known to use Omegle".

You don't need an app to use Omegle on your phone or tablet! The web site works great on mobile.



Omegle (*oh-meg-ull*) is a great way to meet new friends. When you use Omegle, we pick someone else at random and let you talk one-on-one. To help you stay safe, chats are anonymous unless you tell someone who you are (not suggested!), and you can stop a chat at any time. Predators have been known to use Omegle, so please be careful.

If you prefer, you can add your interests, and Omegle will look for someone who's into some of the same things as you instead of someone completely random.

By using Omegle, you accept the terms at the bottom. You must be 18+ or 13+ with parental permission.

Video is monitored. Keep it clean ! *

18+: [Adult](#) [Unmoderated Section](#)

What do you wanna talk about?

Add your interests (optional)

Start chatting:

or

Add my Facebook likes as topics Spy (question) mode Unmoderated section

It could be fair to think that those words should act as a warning for a user after all, children are taught regularly about ‘online stranger danger’, but some students seem to be unable to grasp what “predator” means and have dived into a game of internet prank calling random strangers.

This shows a serious level of fool-hardiness on the behalf of these students who are putting themselves and their families at risk by taunting random strangers online.

NOTE – if you wish to check if your child is using this former app , as it is a website based anonymous forum, clearing a search history will simply remove any evidence of use by your child. This will make it difficult when checking your child’s devices as search histories may not be available.

About Omegle.

Free, the website offers online chat with random strangers via text, voice or via video link. There is no requirement to register or identify yourself to use either feature.

While there is an age requirement of 13+ , and individuals under 18 are expected to have parental supervision this is easily avoided.

A user outlines a few of their interests and is then connected to a random stranger to initiate either a text chat, voice chat or a video link. There is the option to use monitored and unmonitored forums.

A quick read of the terms and conditions shows how little responsibility this sites developer has to their users.

By using the Omegle Web site, and/or related products and/or services ("Omegle", provided by Omegle.com LLC), you agree to the following terms: Do not use Omegle if you are under 13. If you are under 18, use it only with a parent/guardian's permission. Do not transmit nudity, sexually harass anyone, publicize other peoples' private information, make statements that defame or libel anyone, violate intellectual property rights, use automated programs to start chats, or behave in any other inappropriate or illegal way on Omegle. Understand that human behavior is fundamentally uncontrollable, that the people you encounter on Omegle may not behave appropriately, and that they are solely responsible for their own behavior. Use Omegle at your own peril. Disconnect if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable. You may be denied access to Omegle for inappropriate behavior, or for any other reason. OMEGLE IS PROVIDED AS IS, AND TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT ALLOWED BY APPLICABLE LAW, IT IS PROVIDED WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, NOT EVEN A WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT ALLOWED BY APPLICABLE LAW, THE PROVIDER OF OMEGLE, AND ANY OTHER PERSON OR ENTITY ASSOCIATED WITH OMEGLE'S OPERATION, SHALL NOT BE HELD LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT DAMAGES ARISING FROM THE USE OF OMEGLE, OR ANY OTHER DAMAGES RELATED TO OMEGLE OF ANY KIND WHATSOEVER. By using Omegle, you accept the practices outlined in Omegle's [PRIVACY POLICY](#) and [INFORMATION ABOUT THE USE OF COOKIES](#) (updated 2014-06-03 – contains important information about video chat monitoring).

Parental control protections (such as computer hardware, software, or filtering services) are commercially available that may assist you in limiting access to material that is harmful to minors. If you are interested in learning more about these protections, information is available at <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/> as well as a number of other Internet sites that provide information on this form of protection.

* Omegle video chat is moderated. However, moderation is not perfect. You may still encounter people who misbehave. They are solely responsible for their own behavior.

“...human behaviour is fundamentally uncontrollable, that people you encounter on Omegle may not behave appropriately, and they are solely responsible for their own behaviour’ stands out in particular, as does the repeated disclaiming of all liability that the site continues with.

With around 25,000 people world-wide ready to chat with your teen at any given time, and with some of these being predators and many purely there for sexual purposes, there is a cause for concern.

There is the option available on Omegle to link to other social media such as Facebook and Twitter. This means that a supposedly anonymous conversation can be posted to these additional sites, and a user risks revealing their identity and having their conversations or videos made public.

The dangers are real.

Sexual assault

In the USA in 2014, two thirteen-year-old girls struck up an online conversation with a young man of twenty-three. The girls exchanged personal details with this man and arranged to meet him in real life.

He picked them up in his car, took them to his home and sexually assaulted them both. Police were able to locate the missing girls through details on their electronic devices. They were found in his basement, hiding and crying. Casey Chinn was charged with criminal sexual conduct, kidnapping, and solicitation of a child.

Sextortion and content

Police have warned that predators are extorting teens to take explicit pictures, threatening to release the content of conversations they have had online to other social media or to family members.

Investigative officers across America in 2016 have seen multiple cases of this form of sextortion, they have discovered child pornography in the video chats, images of bestiality and live sexual acts.

Data collection and chat storage

A security researcher called Indrajeet Bhuuan has claimed that Omegle's servers; supposedly protecting the anonymity of its users, are in fact storing all conversations had on the website.

He has proved this by writing a very simple piece of software that automatically downloads all the saved screen shots from the website. He called it Omegle-Chat-Hack. And neatly proved Omegle is hackable.

Be advised that –

Any data that can be gleaned from a user such as IP, cookies, and time stamps is recorded and stored. This includes conversations and video. The site states that these records are "typically stored for approximately 120 days". The use of the word typically can mean that conversations remain stored indefinitely.

Any personal information revealed in any conversation is therefore saved and accessible. Limiting the amount of personal information that is shared online is vital.

Links to pornography

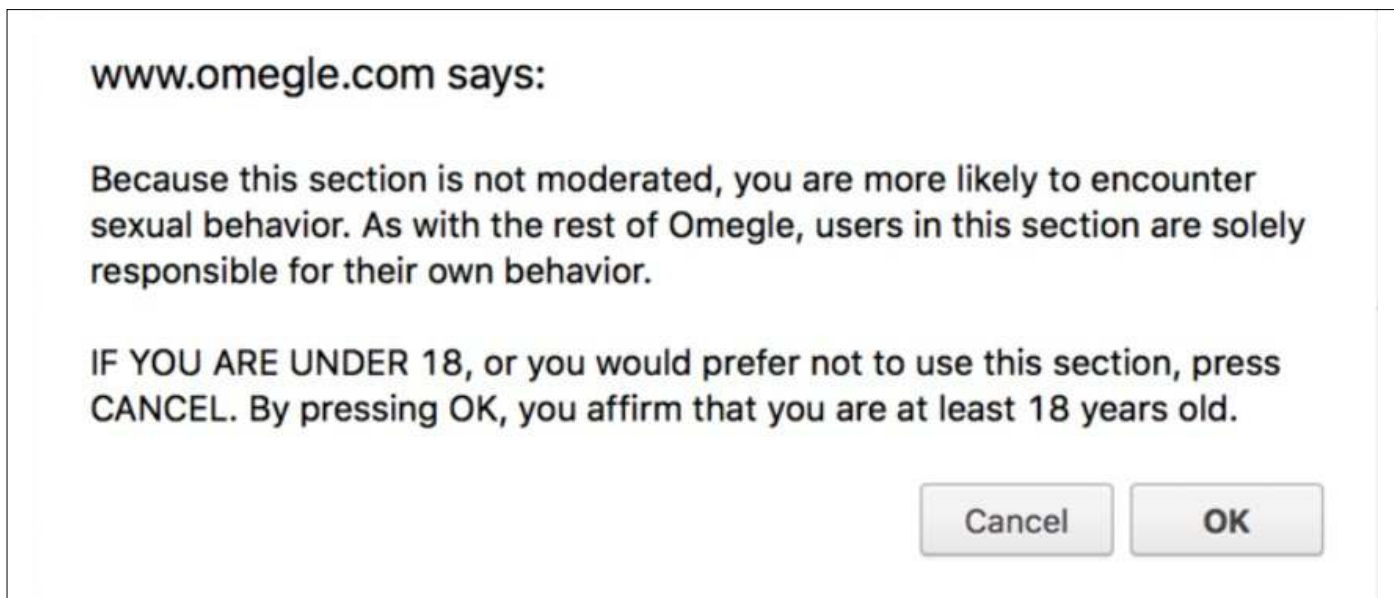
The web analytics of Omegle (user data) show a strong link to visitors logging into Omegle directly after using pornographic sites and then returning to these sites if they are not offered the kind of chat they are after.

Predators are patient, and will wait for a younger user to be linked to them; disconnecting the video chats if a participant is too old or the wrong gender.

Video Chat

This feature has two sections – moderated and 18+. With no verification method installed to confirm the age of a user, it is very easy for a teen to enter the 18 + section. And let your imagination run wild as to the type of interactions that take place, you won't be far off in your worst possible guesses.

The following warning precedes this -



Apart from the content in these sections, teens may inadvertently be revealing more about themselves than they might wish.

For users of video chats - Safe on Social regularly warns against wearing school or sport club uniforms while chatting, filming in a bedroom where there maybe identifying pictures or certificates on the walls, being careful of the scene outside a window- if there are locatable images.

Great care should be taken with this site that a teen has not shown too much information to the 'stranger' they are communicating with.

Capturing IP addresses and viruses.

There are a number of users on this site with very good computer skills. There have been numerous reports and questions about an individual's IP address being "captured" and used to trace the location of a user.

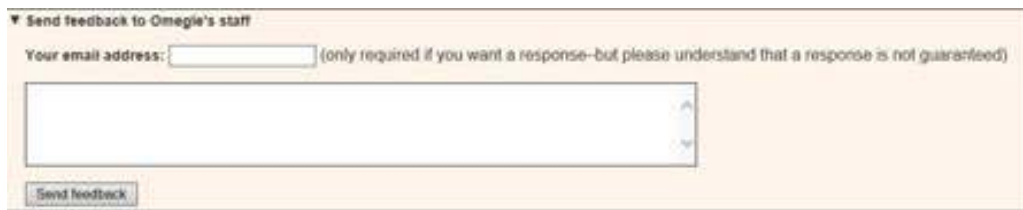
While this tracing can only take place as long as the individual is online and continuing the chat, it is of concern that the general area a person is in may be pinpointed. Details gleaned from conversations can mean that a child's security is compromised.

Strong firewalls and other internet security measures should be in place before an individual even considers going near this site.

No means of reporting

Almost all apps have a system to report and block individuals.

Omegle merely has a Feedback option. It believes its moderation is fairly aggressive on the moderated sections, yet there is a large part of the website that is unmoderated- and this is where all the trouble begins.

A screenshot of a feedback form on the Omegle website. The form has a light orange background and a title "Send feedback to Omegle's staff". Below the title, there is a text input field for "Your email address:" with a small note in parentheses: "(only required if you want a response-but please understand that a response is not guaranteed)". Below the email field is a larger text area for the feedback message. At the bottom left of the form is a "Send feedback" button.

The site claims that a chat may be stopped at any time and as you are anonymous this is sufficient in place of blocking. Unfortunately, if any personal details or other social media information has been given, simply stopping a chat may not be enough. And as has been proven, Omegle is easily hacked.

Summary

Talk to your teens about this site. If they are foolish enough to discount the warnings about predators, and the sketchy underground styling of the app appeals to them – they need to be reminded of the real risks that exist online.

This website is not regularly discussed in cyber safety education, and is one of the more worrying. Parents and teachers may not be aware of it. Should your teen be using this Safe on Social media recommends installing a monitoring system on your child's laptop for a time that reports to you via email which websites your teen has been using. Explain to your child that this monitoring is necessary until they show they are able to use their heads when selecting social media to use.

This is not a website filled with individuals who will tolerate being pranked by silly teenagers. It is not safe, personal data and anonymous conversations are not secure, and yes it is indeed used by predators.

The logo for Safe on Social, featuring two overlapping speech bubbles in a dark blue color. The top bubble is larger and partially overlaps the bottom bubble.

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