

To stream or not to stream?

Target audience

Learners who are thinking about or currently using streaming.

This resource has been produced to support teachers and other professionals working with young people to introduce the topic of livestreaming.

It includes the following:

- An introduction for staff on the topic of livestreaming and how their learners may engage with it
- Two scenario based activities to support learners and educators in discussing some of the risks of livestreaming
- A page of livestreaming tips provided by [Childnet Digital Champions](#) and the [Childnet Youth Advisory Board](#)

Note to educators

This resource is aimed at learners aged 11+. However, the scenarios are designed to be broad enough to be adapted to use with younger learners, with further guidance from the educator.

What is livestreaming?

Livestreaming is the act of transmitting or receiving live video or audio coverage of an event or person. As adults, we may be more familiar with livestreaming being used to communicate to the world what is happening at a specific moment in time. For example, livestreaming can be used to document breaking news stories.

Livestreaming has also become a very popular way for people to broadcast themselves on apps and sites such as TikTok, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram or Twitch. People use these services to broadcast live video footage to others, such as their friends, a certain group of people, or the public. Influencers and gamers may stream content like gaming playthroughs or tutorials. This can help them to communicate with their followers and share certain messages such as advertising.

How are young people engaging with livestreaming?

There are two key ways young people may engage with livestreaming, which are shown below.

Watching (as a viewer)

Lots of young people enjoy watching livestreams. It's exciting and can help them feel like they're part of something.

They may watch livestreams from their friends, but also from influencers or celebrities who use live video to communicate with their audiences.

There are many popular forms of livestreaming. One popular form is watching live gameplay. The footage will often show the game as it appears on the screen for the player, alongside a voiceover by the person playing and sometimes video footage of the player too. Viewers also enjoy 'get ready with me' or story time content, where the streamer is chatting while often doing other activities such as their makeup. Streaming is also used to broadcast Q & A sessions, so streamers can reply to their followers in real time. On platforms like TikTok, livestreams are frequently used for advertising products and showing these products being used.

Hosting (as a streamer)

Some young people may choose to host their own livestream, broadcasting live video content to their friends or followers.

They may use the live features of social media services they already have accounts with (for example, TikTok LIVE Studio) to show friends and family what they are doing in their day-to-day lives.

However, some young people may choose to broadcast their livestream to a wider audience – or even publicly, particularly if they're trying to build up a following online.

How can I teach young people about livestreaming?

You can teach learners about livestreaming in the same way you teach them about other aspects of online safety. Start by talking to your learners about their online lives and their experiences of livestreaming: Are they watching livestreams on services like Twitch? Or hosting their own? Do they livestream using social media services like TikTok or YouTube? What about livestreaming appeals to them the most?

Use what you find out to then inform the messages you're delivering in the classroom. Lots of the key online safety messages that your students may already be familiar with can be adapted and discussed specifically in relation to livestreaming.

This resource is designed to be adapted to best suit the needs of different learners. It focuses on the benefits and risks of young people hosting their own livestreams and has two parts. Both parts are scenario based and can be used as the basis for an entire lesson on livestreaming or as a quick activity in a wider lesson on online safety.

Part 1 – Considering when it is and isn't appropriate to 'go live'

The resource consists of 8 scenarios for students to think about and discuss.

Key points to consider for each scenario include:

- Could livestreaming at this time or in this place put someone in physical danger?
- Could livestreaming at this time or in this place damage someone's reputation?
- Is any personal information being shared in the livestream?
- Is the content of the livestream respectful of other people and the law?

Scenario	Guidance notes
You're playing your favourite game and promised your friends and followers you'd show them a walkthrough of a level...	Who can see this stream? Is it public or private? Do you actually know all of your followers really well? Be aware of accidentally sharing personal information.
A close friend is competing in a running event. You are stood at the finishing line waiting when you spot them heading your way...	This could be a fun way to share the event with family or friends who couldn't make it. But it might be better to video your friend so they can decide if they want to share it after the event.
You're in town when you hear a commotion and people shouting and running towards it...	Is it safe to livestream this event? If something bad has happened, is filming respectful to the victims of whatever has happened? Make sure to be aware of your surroundings and keep yourself out of danger.
You are waiting on the platform for a train with some friends. Everyone is chatting and having a laugh, but the train is delayed and you're bored. You suggest that your friends do a dance that you've all seen online...	Is there a physical risk here because of the location? It's easy to get carried away with friends and forget where you are. Think first: are you being safe and sensible?
You're in class but the teacher has left the classroom. One of your friends is messing around and joking about another classmate...	Jokes can be funny if everyone is in on it, but the victim may end up feeling bullied or targeted. If school finds out about this stream, could someone get in trouble?
You're looking after your friend's new puppy and he keeps chasing his tail...	Everyone loves cute and funny animal videos – but be careful about sharing personal information, your own or your friend's, including your location. The dog's collar might also include an address or a phone number on it that you might not want to share with different people online.
You're at a house party with your friends. Everyone is having a great time...	Will everyone be happy to feature in this livestream? People may not want to be on camera. Could any of the activities taking place damage someone's reputation? Consider the age of everyone involved and whether there is anything involved, such as alcohol, which could affect their reputation.
You've just been shopping and want to show off your new purchases to your friends and followers...	'Hauls' can be popular videos and may attract new viewers but be careful of sharing personal information. Could content like this be seen as 'showing off' or 'boasting'? It's important to remember not everyone will have money to buy these things.

To stream or not to stream

Look at the following scenarios. For each one consider the possible benefits and possible risks of 'going live'. Try to decide if you were in this situation, would you stream or not?

You're playing your favourite game and promised your friends and followers you'd show them a walkthrough of a level...

A close friend is competing in a running event. You are stood at the finishing line waiting when you spot them heading your way...

You're in town when you hear a commotion and people shouting and running towards it...

You're waiting on the platform for a train with some friends. Everyone is chatting and having a laugh, but the train is delayed and you're bored. You suggest that your friends do a dance that you've all seen online...

You're in class but the teacher has left the classroom. One of your friends is messing around and joking about another classmate...

You're looking after your friend's new puppy and he keeps chasing his tail...

You're at a house party with your friends. Everyone is having a great time...

You've just been shopping and want to show off your new purchases to your friends and followers...

Part 2 – Responding to possible dangers when already livestreaming

The resource consists of 5 scenarios for students to think about and discuss.

Key points to consider for each scenario include:

- What could happen if this situation continues?
- What is the best response in this situation?
- How could someone get support in this situation?

Specific points to consider for each scenario are shown in the table on the next page.

Part 2 – Responding to possible dangers when already livestreaming

Scenario	Guidance notes
<p>Jenna is livestreaming from her bedroom on her mobile. Her viewers can send Jenna requests – most of them are silly but one request makes Jenna feel really uncomfortable.</p> <p>What advice would you give Jenna?</p>	<p>Jenna does not have to do anything which makes her feel uncomfortable and should speak to an adult about what has happened immediately. Be aware that public viewers of a stream could make inappropriate requests or offer money or praise in exchange for streamers undertaking certain behaviours on camera. Young people need to be aware that there is never any obligation to participate in this and that they should speak to an adult they trust to get help in these situations.</p>
<p>Hitesh and his friends are hosting a livestream together when they receive a really horrible comment from a viewer.</p> <p>What advice would you give Hitesh?</p>	<p>This scenario is a good opportunity to discuss consent. Hitesh should check that all his friends are happy to continue with the livestream. Learners may talk about blocking or reporting the viewer who posted the mean comment – these are good responses but remind them that you cannot block how it makes you feel. Talk about the importance of sharing what has happened with an adult and of supporting the friend who is upset. Some learners may suggest retaliating to the comment but remember this could make the situation worse.</p>
<p>Nikita is livestreaming when someone she doesn't know asks her if she will do the latest challenge. They say she will get lots more views if she does it.</p> <p>What advice would you give Nikita?</p>	<p>It's not clear here what the challenge will be and if it is safe for Nikita to do. Although some online challenges can be fun, some can be dangerous, and you should never just follow instructions from someone online like this, especially if someone who you don't know has suggested it. It's important for young people to know that they do not have to follow these trends and that, even if they do the challenge, they may not get more views.</p>
<p>Mica is livestreaming for her friends. An online friend who she's been chatting to and flirting with for a while starts watching the live. They comment lots of flattering compliments and then message Mica directly to go on a video call to show something she hasn't shown them before.</p> <p>What advice would you give Mica?</p>	<p>The first thing to draw out here is that Mica does not know her friend offline and they are therefore still a stranger. You could ask the learners what they think Mica's friend is asking for – they may mention 'nudes'. Discuss the phrasing 'just for me' – is there any guarantee that what Mica shares will remain private? How could content from a livestream be shared further? (Recordings, screenshots, etc.) It's worth nothing that whilst the victim here is female this scenario could apply to a young person of any gender.</p>
<p>Jay is watching a popular streamer live on social media. Halfway through the stream, the content changes – it's graphic and upsetting with no prior warning.</p> <p>What advice would you give Jay?</p>	<p>This example is intended to highlight that whilst watching livestreams can be great fun – there are risks here too. Remind learners that as the footage is live, you can never predict exactly what you'll end up seeing. Advice for Jay could include strategies like turning the device over or immediately exiting the stream. Reporting the stream to the platform where he is viewing it is also a good idea. Make sure learners know that talking to someone about what he's seen is the most important thing for Jay here.</p>
<p>Mateo watches his favourite streamer most days and really enjoys their content. Recently, the streamer has been asking for donations or gifts through the streaming platform. Mateo thinks he might give a donation.</p> <p>What advice would you give Mateo?</p>	<p>Encourage learners to think about why streamers are producing content. Remind them that gifts and donations provide streamers extra income and are bought using real money. Any contributions should only be given if they are spending within their means and it's important to consider if the money could be better spent elsewhere e.g. donating to good causes. You can discuss why learners think Mateo wants to gift something as people watching streams may often feel like streamers are their friends, but they do not actually have a close relationship. It's a good idea for Mateo to research the streamer to make sure he'd be happy to give them money.</p>

To stream or not to stream

Finish the activity by reminding learners that whilst livestreaming can be fun and exciting, there are risks involved and it's always important to think before you post.

Show them the tips from the Childnet Digital Leaders and Youth Advisory Board.

Let them know that if they have any concerns about anything that has happened online then they should tell someone: an adult they trust at home or someone in school.

They can also get support from the following places:

Childline www.childline.org.uk

The Mix www.themix.org.uk

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

To stream or not to stream

Look at the following scenarios. Each one takes place whilst someone is hosting a livestream.

For each situation, consider what advice you can offer them.

Jenna is livestreaming from her bedroom on her mobile. Her viewers can send Jenna requests – most of them are silly but one request makes Jenna feel really uncomfortable.

What advice would you give Jenna?

Hitesh and his friends are hosting a livestream together
When they receive a really horrible comment from a viewer.

What advice would you give Hitesh?

Nikita is livestreaming when someone she doesn't know asks her if she will do the latest challenge. They say she will get lots more views if she does it.

What advice would you give Nikita?

Mica is livestreaming for her friends. An online friend who she's been chatting to and flirting with for a while starts watching the live. They comment lots of flattering compliments and then message Mica directly to go on a video call to show something she hasn't shown them before

What advice would you give Mica?

Jay is watching a popular streamer live on social media. Halfway through the stream, the content changes – it's graphic and upsetting with no prior warning.

What advice would you give Jay?

Mateo watches his favourite streamer most days and really enjoys their content. Recently, the streamer has been asking for donations or gifts through the streaming platform. Mateo thinks he might give a donation.

What advice would you give Mateo?

Livestreaming Top Tips from Childnet's Digital Champions and Youth Advisory Board

Think about what you are sharing

Remember that live streams and chats can be saved and replayed.



Make sure you know what's around you and when you have stopped streaming, so you don't accidentally share more than you meant to.



Be careful about what you say as you can't take it back. If you are asked to say or discuss something, you don't have to.

Be aware that the information streamers are sharing can be false.

Be aware of what is in a livestream

Remember that streamers may be paid for the products they show.

Some streams won't be suitable for everyone. They might expose you to language or images that can be upsetting.

Before you send gifts or donations, remember this costs real money.

Consider how you are interacting

Only say things you would be willing to say to someone offline too. Don't argue or bully, it is just as hurtful in a livestream.

If you are in a streamer's chat, make sure not to share personal information.



Get support if you need it

If you are livestreaming, look up how to do it safely and privately.

You can always talk with someone, block or report content if you see something you don't like.

Childnet's mission is to work in partnership with others around the world to help make the internet a great and safe place for children. We work directly with children and young people from the ages of 3 to 18 on a weekly basis, as well as parents, carers, teachers and professionals, finding out about their real experiences online, and the positive things they are doing as well as sharing safety advice.

Explore more resources at childnet.com/resources