

What Parents and Carers Need to Know about OmeTV

National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to help children and their children, should they need it. This guide focuses on one of many apps which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, tips and advice.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

OMETV

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

OmeTV is another app which encourages users to 'make friends from all around the world'. People can search profiles by age and gender and send direct messages or photos. However, the app is primarily used for video calls. When using this feature, users are connected at random, although only their country of origin is shared. People can then either choose to move on to the next chat or can stay in that call for as long as they wish.

STRANGER DANGER

While young people generally know not to share personal information with strangers, the safety of their home and the distance offered by technology can make them feel more relaxed and uninhibited. Combined with the fact that OmeTV provides a webcam function – and anonymity – it can be an easy way for groomers to gather information, ask to connect on other social media platforms, or potentially request intimate images.

EXPLICIT CONTENT

Unfortunately, there are a lot of users who use OmeTV's webcam feature to expose themselves. While users can swipe to the next call quickly, it's not something that can be filtered out completely – so young people could easily be exposed to highly inappropriate images.

REPORTING DIFFICULTIES

When video calling, the other person's username is often hidden and therefore they can't be blocked or reported. There is a 'support abuse' tab at the bottom of the video, but the speed with which calls can swing past can make it difficult to use this system. There's also little evidence to suggest that offenders are dealt with appropriately (through warnings or account termination, for example).

FOLLOW AGE GUIDELINES

OmeTV has an age recommendation of 18 and over, which suggests the developers are aware that it may facilitate adult content. It's important to adhere to the age guidelines and try to restrict access to the app for younger users. If you find it on an under-18's device, talk to them about the potential risks and explain why they probably shouldn't be using it.

DISCOURAGE CHATS WITH STRANGERS

Remind your child of the dangers of talking to strangers online. The anonymity OmeTV offers, plus its webcam function, makes it an attractive place for groomers to network and create inappropriate content. Explain that your app isn't safe and remind which aspects them – and that it's a crime for anyone to expose themselves to a young person online.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber-safety policies for schools. She has edited national considered papers and expert testimony for the Australian government's e-safety framework on real-world behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

Source: <https://www.nationalonlinesafety.com/policies/>, requests from school students to delete their accounts from the app, and reports from school students to delete their accounts from the app.

This guide was created by National Online Safety, funded by the Department for Education, for the purpose of raising awareness of online safety risks to young people aged 11-18 years old. It is not intended to be a definitive guide to online safety.

Twitter: @nationalonlinesafety Facebook: /NationalOnlineSafety Instagram: @nationalonlinesafety YouTube: @national_online_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 07/08/2023

AGE VERIFICATION

Although the site states that users must be 18 or over, there's no way to verify this, and it's easy to use an existing Facebook account to log in, or for users to set up a fake account. To access OmeTV, users simply need to press a button confirming they're an adult, which means it's likely many users will claim to be much older than they are.

VIDEO RECORDING

When young people are chatting live on a webcam, they could be coaxed by others into doing things they don't feel comfortable doing or persuaded that no harm can come from it. What they don't know is whether the other user is recording them. These videos could then be used to embarrass or blackmail them, or they could be kept by a predator to exploit later.

LIMITED PARENTAL CONTROLS

OmeTV has very limited parental controls. There is a 'safe mode', but this is of little practical use given that explicit content isn't filtered out. While the site lists several rules and regulations, there are few options to enforce them or restrict what users can see or do.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

Maintain communication with your child about online safety and empower them to protect themselves. Simply deleting an app from their device impacts their independence and can cause resentment. Instead, highlight news reports of predators exposing themselves to children on the internet, and discuss what they should do if asked for explicit images.

ENABLE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Regardless of how responsible your child may be, it's essential to use parental controls on their device. It's easy for young people to get lured in by others, feeling they've built up a trusting friendship and being coaxed into doing things they wouldn't normally do. Ensure in-app purchases aren't enabled on their device, and emphasise that they can always talk to you about anything online that worries them.

Twitter: @nationalonlinesafety Facebook: /NationalOnlineSafety Instagram: @nationalonlinesafety YouTube: @national_online_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 07/08/2023

Most of us love meeting interesting people, making connections and forging new friendships. It's this exact experience that OmeTV promises: letting users interact with people across the globe via randomly connected video chats. At their best, apps like this let you talk to some amazing people you'd never have met otherwise. At worst, they connect you with unpleasant, dangerous characters, who are interested in far less innocent activities than talking.

OmeTV is popular with younger users, despite coming with clear warnings that it's intended for over-18s only. As our [#WakeUpWednesday](#) guide outlines, this presents obvious dangers to any children and young people who *do* use the app, with reports of predators trying to exploit OmeTV for their own ends.

As of 2023, OmeTV hosts a colossal community, with users numbering more than a million on mobile devices alone – and a further hundred thousand via their site. With such a large global community, there's a reasonable chance that users might be matched with someone who could genuinely be a potential friend.

It's equally likely, however, that they'll also encounter some unsavoury individuals who have the potential to endanger any young people they meet online. This week's #WakeUpWednesday guide explores the risks of OmeTV, detailing what trusted adults can do to protect any child who ignores or is unaware of the app's 18+ age rating.

Please [click here](#) to download the guide