

eSMART PARENT

28 ONLINE SAFETY
TIPS FOR CHILDREN



TOBI & FEMI AWOYEMI

Foreword by Femi Awoyemi

Who is this book for?

This book is for you - as a Parent, guardian, carer, someone who takes care of children in late primary school and early years of secondary school.

This book is simply a common sense approach to online safety for children - some of this information might be known to you already - If this is the case, take this opportunity to score you self not on how much you know, but how much you actually practice the safeguarding tips shared in this book.

As I wrote this introduction, I recalled a conversation I had with my house mate as a young single guy about 16 years ago!

The conversation went along the lines of, look at the videos on "*this Music TV Channel*" showing quite a lot of semi nudity, typical of musical videos I suppose, and we talked about how daring the videos had become and what these videos would be like when we have 15-year old daughters in future. This makes it's very surreal considering I now have a daughter nearing her teenage years (same as my friend) and I am thinking about the same problem again.

So what's changed? Well I no longer watch *this Music TV Channel* and neither do my children, (not on the priority list) but I do watch YouTube, and they watch a whole lot of YouTube too! And guess what? YouTube is pretty much the music channel of this generation, so the problem 16 years ago hasn't gone away, but has in fact become

aggravated across social media and the internet as a whole.

This book isn't about musical videos though, rather this book is about how we safeguard our next generation, what we expose them to and how we ensure they are equipped enough to make the right choices - by being able to identify deliberate, subliminal and innocent looking messages being sent their way every second while they are online.

It's about you as a parent ensuring you don't feel helpless when you consider the plethora of social media platforms you have to navigate through to keep up with safeguarding your child or children from negative content they may become expose to in the online world.

My wife - Tobi and I, have written this book in order to make a difference not only to our generation, but to our children's generation.

We are both Working Parents (with Tobi being a Social Media Consultant and myself, a Project Management Consultant) and so understand issues and barriers, you as a parent may be experiencing in safeguarding your children online so we decided to share what we know.

In conclusion, this book is for the everyday parent, easy to read and created in a way that you can refer to it over and over again. We hope you find this book useful in your journey as a parent, and if this book helps you, be sure to recommend it to a friend or family member that may need the Information and find it useful too 😊

The Out of touch Mum and Dad - *I don't use social media, it's not just for me* 😊

1. **Begin at the right time!** Most social media platforms today have a minimum age of 13 before you can use social media, and that's for a good reason.

In fact, I would go as far as saying parents should decide if their child is ready for social media at age 13, then make a decision as to allowing them get any social media account.

So parents, don't be in a hurry to get your children onto social media. If you can, a few more

months or even years may just do them a whole lot of good!

- 2. You cannot police what you don't know.** I sometimes hear some parents say, I am not on social media, it's not just my thing! Parents! Please make it your thing!

A really good way of securing your children's safety online is to ensure you explore and use the social media apps they use. If your kids are on Instagram, you also need to be on Instagram. Whether they befriend you on the platform is another kettle of fish 😊

At least be on there, so you are aware of the benefits and dangers of the platform, see

their profile picture and bio (make sure they are not sending out the wrong signals or information), posts, friends, followers and who they are following.

Come to an agreement with your child to make sure you have access to their online profile and are not blocked from their content in any way.

Do your own investigation online if necessary.

☺ Some children might even think you are cool knowing that you keep up with the current social media platform - Oh well maybe not

3. Look at it this way, social media is a public space, so would you let your 10 year old go on a public road without any knowledge or training on road safety?

I don't think so, so why let your child loose on the online public space?

As a parent it's your responsibility to guide your child on the appropriate and safe use of social media in the same way you would teach them how to ride their bike on the road or swim.

4. Let the kids know it's a public space, therefore they need to be careful with their settings, same way you are careful at traffic lights. If you need to, guide them

on the right privacy settings they should have on their devices.

Also, guide them on the level of information they should share online about themselves, and as a parent, check the information they are publishing about themselves such as age, address and school details.

- 5. Let your children know what you post on the online world is just as real!** For example, you take a naked picture of yourself and allow this to be shown on a billboard in the town center? Or would you insult or make fun of someone and this get published in the school magazine? Point here is, once published, there isn't any going back!

Find a way to drive home the consequences and effects of their online actions, you know your child best so find examples that resonate.

- 6. The more you can share and enjoy the use of social media with your children, the more they will trust you and likely to use social media responsibly. If you go out and drink responsibly with your children, there is a high chance they will follow that model and also drink responsibly. So watch YouTube videos with your children, have a laugh together on social media and you are likely to win their trust on social media, if they are**

**unsure, they will turn to you
for help.**

**☺ For no particular reason
Monday night has become the
social media night in our
home, we all curdle on my bed
and watch videos and laugh
till its bed time, I guess this
replaces the old TV sofa
family time, when we used to
watch TV.**

- 7. Know their Passwords.** I can
literally hear you scream as you
read this one You mean spy on
my children! Well the
government is spying on you!
Your internet providers and
mobile providers are spying on
you, so you might as well get in
on the action!

Ok, hear me out, does your child lock the doors to their room and you aren't able to enter (I am thinking 7-13 year olds)?

I suspect with a little knock you can enter their bed room, check to make sure there's no pizza box from 10 days ago under the bed? Check to make sure they have some clean clothes, check their temperature at night if a younger child!

For the slightly older children, imagine you got your 17-year old daughter a new car, where would you keep the spare key? I suspect it would be in your top draw! So make it clear to the kids at an early age (for as long as you can get away with it 😊), you know their passwords and anytime they change it, you need to know.

This way you can access and enjoy their social media together (maybe their videos, funny posts and so on), same way you can knock before you enter their room, then enter and tell them how tidy their room is. For avoidance of doubt! Not peeping on them 😊

8. **Set boundaries.** Set a time limit to how much time your child can spend on social media, same way you set a time limit to how much time they can stay out or stay at a friend's place.

You may also choose to set a time limit on their device, for example, amazon fire enables you limit how much time children spend on specific apps or sites,

Microsoft provides data on sites visited, duration of their visits and a lot more data on your children's habits online.

We talk more about this in the next section.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICE ☺

**If that's doesn't sound cool,
how about Social Media CIA-
Lock your home internet!**

**I know it sounds a bit
draconian but hang on a
second - I know everyone
reading this book locks their
front doors before going to
bed, in fact most of us lock
the door even in the daytime
when we are in the house -
same principle applies to your
internet at home.**

**So, how do you lock your
network at home?**

**In this section let's talk Apps
that can help you safeguard
the children while online.**

9. **Tablets for children** have really good features to protect the children, this is especially good for the younger ones below 11 years of age. These tablets don't run the full features like the regular ones and you can be rest assured the "kids mode" provides them with plenty of entertainment and educational material. I especially like the kindle fire for children.

10. **Report Inappropriate Behavior.** Honey if a strange man tries to speak to you on your way from school, make sure you let me know or tell your teacher when you get to school. The equivalent of this online is - teach your children how to use the options to report inappropriate behavior online,

they might not come to you for help depending on their age, but they can raise it with the site admin, relevant authorities or at least tell a friend. There are many Apps out there to help you prevent the use of specific sites on your home network, so I am going to use the best few pointers to take you through these. You won't need all of them, so take a half-hour to install the one that best meets your needs and then keep a regular check of it to ensure it's still up to date.

11. **Spector 2.2** This acts as an online police for your child's activities online.

This industry standard application takes pictures at intervals of your child's online

activities and stores them in a file known to you alone. You can then view these files to know what your child has been up to.

The purpose of applications such as these is to help parents in their bid to safeguard their children online.

12. **Cyberpatrol.** Another good application to consider is cyberpatrol (I just love the name 😊).

This application guarantees maximum security with little or no efforts. It comes with a two-fold filtering software which allows it to stop questionable sites from being accessed.

It also gives you the opportunity to build a comprehensive list of blocked and allowed keywords that can be displayed on any device on your home network.

13. **Lock in App.** If you use an Android phone or tablet, why not try a Lock in App: this helps you with '*screen pinning*'.

This means you can lock your apps in such a way that when your child uses your phone; he or she cannot leave that app to browse another site or app - their use is pinned to that screen, in other words, the phone remains on that app alone.

Simply go to settings – security – screen pinning and turn this on.

This way your child needs you to unlock the screen, before he or she can move to another app.

This might be especially useful when you have younger children, so they don't accidentally wonder onto sites they ought not to visit.

14. **Amazon Kid-friendly FreeTime service.** Amazon has a kid friendly web browser within this service.

The service gives children access to a limited number of sites already approved by

amazon and includes strict parental controls.

This is a good service to check out.

15. **Family Link** is a popular app created by google that helps configure safeguarding features on your children's android devices and chrome browser.

It can control how much time your children spend on a device, set a sleep time on the device and even helps control access to unsafe content on YouTube - now that's really cool for parents, well at least until they are 15 years of age and they can work it out themselves 😊

16. **Esafely** filters content being delivered on Facebook, YouTube and even on searches, so that there is no accidental browsing of adult sites. This is FREE.

17. **Use Secure Passwords**
Here's a really obvious one many parents fall short of 'Passwords'!

So here's an opportune time for another story - we have an amazon prime account as a family which comes with Prime movies, this includes a sensor feature which requires a password for non-child friendly movies.

As many of us do, I used a really simple password for this - my year of birth!

Surprise, surprise! My almost-teenager has figured it out!

Morale of the story - use secure passwords for your home internet or devices where your child is likely to get exposed to unsuitable content so that they can't override your safeguarding configurations.

18. **Gaming rooms.** If you have a son between the age of 7 and 15 years, chances are he plays an online game with his friends, and sometimes with people he doesn't know.

Fortnite is especially popular at the moment, and if you are like Tobi and I, the most frequent words we now utter in the house are “***take a break from the game***”!

While online gaming may generally be seen as harmless, it is worth educating your child about the Do's and Don'ts of meeting people online - this might sound all too obvious but is worth stating.

Don't give out your full name or address, and don't accept invitations to meet anyone you have met online without adult consent.

19. **Adult content filter.**

Another simple one we often neglect is the Adult content filter.

When buying mobile phones or tablets, ask your service provider to activate the adult content filter.

You should be able to activate this at your phone network's store or with help with their customer service team.

Once done, that's a major headache you needn't worry about.

20. Still on simple tips! And another one that's often overlooked! Keep your browser up to date, especially if you have

communal desktop or laptop in the house.

21. **Disable Location**

Services Be sure to disable the location services on your children's device while still young, as they will either be in your care or at school, so they don't require location services.

It might be a good idea to enable the location settings once they start to venture out unaccompanied.

Music TV Channels to YouTube!

Coming back to YouTube - this is the social media tool most children will be exposed to at a young age.

There are a few tips we can adopt here to safeguard our children and the first one is to start with “Kids YouTube” instead of the regular YouTube used by everyone.

It’s free just like the regular YouTube and great for the younger audience.

It takes you 2 mins to set-up and you can feel more relaxed about leaving them alone with the screen for a little while.

22. **Shared YouTube**

Account As the children get older, the “Kids YouTube” might not cut it anymore for them 😊, so then you can create a shared account on YouTube, so that you can easily monitor the history and content of their searches.

Simple search on YouTube for a video on how to create a shared YouTube account. 😊

23. **Restricted Mode**

YouTube also has a feature called “restricted mode”, which does exactly what it says, it restricts videos that can be viewed when enabled.

24. **Safety Mode** In addition to the restricted mode, YouTube also has a safety feature.

Scroll to the bottom of your account page and simply click on “safety mode”.

This tip assumes you are sharing an account or device with your children - If your children have their own account or device separately, you will have to enable it on there as well.

Instagram - The very popular photo-sharing App!

25. **Private Account** So your children already have Instagram - well it's not too late to ask them to make it a private account after explaining the safety implications, this way the children's photos are only seen by people they approve to follow them.

26. **Check out Your Child's Profile** Ensure your child's Instagram Bio only reflects the necessary information not their age, school name or home address as previously mentioned.

It is also a good idea to make sure they are not making use of a profile picture that attracts the wrong connection online.

27. **The Secret Account.** So you child knows you are on Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and like any smart kid they create a new one - a secret one, an alias one, so you cannot follow them 😊

This is one of the reasons why you must use the social media platform yourself as a parent, or you would never know!

If your child as a secret account, there is a huge probability that you both have a few common “Instagram followers or people you are following” - Just because

they are your child and you are probably connected to common friends or even online celebrities.

You may also be connected on another social media platform such as Facebook.

The way these commonality helps is this - Instagram will probably suggest your child's secret account to you as someone to follow, so watch out for recommended people to follow 😊

If you find out your child as a secret account on any social media platform, be sure to carefully explain the dangers of their action, as well as, the benefits of being accountable to you, an adult.

It is very important that you explain and try your best to make them understand the implications, instead of simply scolding them, as they may just carry on creating yet another account!

☺ *By the way, I am offering a 50% discount for anyone who wants to find out if their child has a secret Instagram account -*
JUST KIDDING! ☺

More.....

28. **Watch with them, sometimes.** Watching programs online along with your children can help you discover what you might have missed!

I once watched an online cartoon on the big screen along with my children. It had a great story line of a football team winning against all odds, which was good, but something did not just feel right.

I discovered a few weeks later when closing off the website tab, several highly unsuitable adverts for children, on the right hand side of the webpage!

The solution here was to find another site where we could watch the cartoon, and if we couldn't, I offered to buy the series, so they would no longer be exposed to the wrong imagery!

29. **Bonus Point!!!** 😊 So we really hope you have found these pointers useful or will find them useful in future depending on where you are in your parenting journey.

We have covered a lot of points here, Apps to spy 🕵️ sorry I meant follow the children on social media, restricting their access to specific websites and educating them carefully on dangers of not being safe online,

as well as, the benefits of being safe.

I believe the most important tip of all **is to spend time with your children**. As you do this, you will discover many things together as a family, including social media, and will be able to figure out appropriately what is right and NOT right for your family.

Be sure to tell someone else about this book If it has helped you in any way at all 😊

Until the next in our series, we wish you a Happy Family Browsing time and God Bless You!

About Femi and Tobi Awoyemi

Tobi and Femi together have founded and run several businesses across industries including a **Social Media Consultancy, SOCIAL INSTA SUCCESS.**

Femi is an Information Technology Professional with over 10 years' experience in the industry and a Proud Hands-on Dad!
😊

Tobi is the creator of several online courses including, the powerful Instagram Online course, "**InstaBizGrowth**" for Business Owners.

She has been featured as a business start-up and social media expert at several conferences and media outlets.

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