

Facebook Is Going Public, but Is the Social Network Safe?

Shocking reports on WND, LINK and ZDNet provide evidence of pedophiles using Facebook to share photos of very young children in arousing poses and even in the act of being molested. The Facebook names of the pedophiles and pedophile groups leave no question what their purpose for being on Facebook is. We will not repeat any of the names here.

As of March 31, Facebook had 901 million users. The population of the United States is just over 300 million.

More than 250 million photos are uploaded to Facebook daily. The challenge of combating abuse of Facebook is huge. Based on the above-mentioned reports, Facebook has not found a way to eliminate the problem. Facebook responded to an inquiry from ZC Net with the following:

“Nothing is more important to Facebook than the safety of the people that use our site and this material has absolutely no place on Facebook. We have zero tolerance for child pornography being uploaded onto Facebook and are extremely aggressive in preventing and removing child exploitative content. We scan every photo that is uploaded to the site using PhotoDNA to ensure that this illicit material can’t be distributed and we report all instances of exploitative content to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. We’ve built complex technical systems that either block the creation of this content, including in private groups, or flag it for quick review by our team of investigations professionals.

“We’ve worked with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the New York State Attorney General’s Office in the U.S., as well as the Child Exploitation and

Online Protection Centre in the U.K., to use known databases of child exploitative material to improve our detection and bring those responsible to justice.

“We feel we’ve created a much safer environment on Facebook than exists offline, where people can share this disgusting material in the privacy of their own homes without anyone watching. However, we’re constantly refining and improving our systems and processes and building upon our relationships with NCMEC and law enforcement agencies specializing in child protection to create an even safer space.”

Facebook’s stated policy sounds much stronger than its success rate. Some of the pages found by WND were in blatant violation of Facebook’s policy statements. They apparently got past Facebook’s PhotoDNA system.

Many millions of people around the world use Facebook for perfectly healthy and decent purposes. Several members of the Movieguide staff use Facebook. has a Facebook page. The problem is that social networking is not just done by honorable people. Networks of pedophiles want to trade their salacious photographs and to attract children they can abuse.

Children like to have privacy in communicating with friends in their social networks but Facebook is dangerous, not because that’s the company’s intent, but because the challenge of monitoring the behavior of 900 million people is so immense and because company or government monitoring invites another kind of abuse with “big brother is watching everything you do.”

At the risk of costing children some privacy, parents should monitor their children’s Facebook activity (with their children’s knowledge). Parents should say, “If you want a Facebook account, you need to agree to let your parents see your communication.”

More than just a means to spot pedophiles, this kind of

control helps parents to know more about the character of the friends their children associate with. Allowing children unmonitored access to Facebook is like sending them out on an interstate freeway riding their bicycle. Pedophiles have been known to pose on Facebook as people they are not in order to attract children. You need to be aware of who your children's Facebook "friends" are.

Facebook's PhotoDNA will not protect your children. You need to play an active role. Many of the salacious pictures being passed around by pedophiles were acquired because parents didn't effectively monitor their children's associations.

One of the worst fears any parent has is that their child might be abducted, molested or murdered. There are people who want to use Facebook for the wrong reasons. You can't count on Facebook to monitor the behavior of 900 million users. You can, however, monitor the posts of the much smaller number of "friends" your children make on Facebook.

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