

New teen dating app puts kids at risk

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It's the greatest child safety danger of the modern age, young teens sharing too much of themselves on the internet, a practice that can be as dangerous as letting a stranger through their front door.

While school children think messaging each other online is as harmless as passing notes in class, what they don't realise is the hidden evil lurking on the internet, looking for young targets to exploit.

Now, child protection and advocacy groups fear a social media app called 'Yellow' will put children at even greater risk, claiming the app will make it all the easier for online predators to find their prey.

Despite only now gaining popularity in Australia, it's already been reported children have been approached and pressured into sending nude photos to strangers via the Yellow app, which has been described as a cross between Snapchat and Tinder.

The app which has been dubbed "Tinder for Teens" has sparked fears among online safety experts who say it will put children at risk of predators.

Yellow, which has about five million users worldwide, doesn't have an age restriction unlike Tinder which has a minimum age requirement of 18.

While the app claims under 18s can only speak to under 18s, there's no way of telling if adults are pretending to be children and are lying about their age to groom youngsters.

Police manager at the NSPCC (the leading children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK) Lisa McCrindle said children are at risk because the app focuses on encouraging strangers to network.

"We do know that those who are seeking to groom children will use this mechanism and can do it incredibly quickly to start to groom a child, until they make sexual contact, by making sexual requests of a child," she said.

"Some research suggests that that can happen within 20 minutes of contact."

Just like Tinder, Yellow user's swipe right to the profile pictures of strangers in order to highlight their interest, they then communicate via Snapchat.

Founder of Kidz Biz Education Wendy Hill said children using the app have been asked for nude photos almost immediately.

However the app's creators, based in Paris, have played down fears.

"We have been developing a set of tools to avoid deviant behaviours," they said in a statement.

They also said users could report suspicious profiles and inappropriate content.