

A parent's guide to Vlogging - what you need to know

If you have a child between the ages of 8-18, you'll probably be aware of vlogging – the art of making video blogs or 'vlogs' on YouTube. YouTube is an increasingly popular platform for young people, so they're likely to be aware of them, if not already a huge fan.

For parents who didn't grow up with YouTube, it can be very strange to discover that there are online world-famous superstars, making a living from the site, and sometimes earning enough to buy £1m mansions. Young people, especially teenage girls, love them – there's even a magazine called Oh My Vlog.

It can all sound pretty alien if you've never had a browse through these videos before. Here's our lowdown on vlogging and what you need to know as a parent.

What is vlogging all about?

There are hundreds of 'vloggers' on YouTube, who cover an enormous range of topics. But here are some of the most popular types of video content:

- Gaming.
- Fashion, beauty and shopping.
- Lifestyle and food. Baking is a popular YouTube topic!
- Health – mental or physical. For example, vlogger Marcus Butler makes videos showing healthy recipes and refers to himself as a member of the #kalesquad.
- Funny dares and general silliness.

Some of the most popular vloggers: The UK YouTube 'family'

After YouTube was set up in 2005, and people started posting vlogs, it didn't take long for certain vloggers to gain popularity and a loyal following. The UK has produced a team of incredibly popular vloggers that are worshipped by tweens and teens nationwide.

Zoella and Alfie Deyes, Marcus Butler and Niomi Smart, Tanya Burr and Jim Chapman (all real life couples), plus Sprinkleofglitter (Louise Pentland), Joe Sugg, LucyandLydia, Caspar Lee are some of the vloggers that make up the group.

Part of the attraction may be the fact that all of the most well-known UK vloggers are linked in some way. Many of them are siblings or best friends. They regularly do vlogs with each other, and appear on each other's channels - often by popular demand of their adoring fans. Watching a group of entertaining, 'cool', perfectly turned out people in their late teens and early twenties, who are all real-life friends, is very interesting (and comforting) viewing for younger teens looking for role models.

There are also lots of vloggers who aren't a part of this group, but who are equally, if not more popular for young people. Gaming videos by vloggers such as PewDiePie and KSI are hugely popular.

Making money

Anyone can make money from their videos as long as the content passes certain criteria. The vlogger is then paid every time somebody clicks on an ad displayed on one of their videos, or watches an ad for longer than 30 seconds. The more subscribers and views you have and the more popular the content, the more likely you are to have people clicking on or viewing the ads on your channel, so

the more money you make. You are automatically a 'YouTube partner' if one or more of your videos is monetized.

Some vloggers are paid to promote products.

As the vlogging scene has developed and grown, so have the PR opportunities. Vloggers who are particularly popular are often approached by companies asking them to promote their products on some of their videos.

Less than half of 12-15s who go online (47%) are aware of the potential for vloggers to be paid for endorsing products or brands.

Promotion of products is very common in certain video types, such as those showing a 'shopping haul' or the vlogger doing their make-up and beauty routine.

Tip: It's important to tell your teen that when vloggers are explicitly discussing a branded product, they're probably being paid to do it. This will make them less susceptible to this sort of subtle advertising. They shouldn't believe everything their favourite vlogger says, even when they're being very convincing about how amazing a certain product is.

Zoe-seller!

Many of the biggest YouTubers have been taken on by agencies specifically created for social media and online stars, helping further their success. Many have had books published, and have sold other merchandise under their personal 'brand': Zoella released a beauty range and SprinkleofGlitter designed a fashion line.

Is the content appropriate?

Some of the most popular YouTubers like Zoella, Alfie, etc - the ones you'll find in a copy of 'Oh My Vlog' magazine - know their key audience (namely tweens and teens) and produce bright, sparkly, squeaky-clean content for them.

They're positive, inspiring, and seem to want to build the confidence of their viewers. Many of them have been involved in children's and young people's issues, such as Marcus Butler and Zoella who are anti-bullying ambassadors. Zoella, who has suffered from anxiety and panic attacks, also talks about her illness – helping to destigmatise the issue.

Most of the comments people post are positive and these YouTubers' channels seem to offer a fairly supportive environment. After spending time looking at some of their videos, you certainly don't come away from them feeling bad! They're normally quite uplifting, and fun, so content-wise they're pretty innocuous.

Other YouTubers such as KSI have been known to swear and have been accused of sexism. Gaming vloggers also show themselves playing all the most popular games – some of which will be of an age rating that's inappropriate for your child.

There have been instances of vloggers being accused of using their success to form inappropriate relationships with some of their followers.

Tip: If you're concerned about your child seeing inappropriate content on YouTube, make sure your filters are set up, and if they're in at pre-school or primary age, it might be a good idea to download YouTube Kids, so that they can use that instead.

Some of the YouTubers can reveal personal information and their life is sort of on stage – this is especially true of Zoella, who has spoken in depth about her personal life and emotions. One of her videos showed her crying to the camera, talking about how terrible she was feeling that day. Younger children may find this upsetting.

Obsessed fans and voyeurism

Many people who follow Vloggers will meet other fans online. It's important children remember the rules about talking to strangers, and not give away any personal or identifying information to someone they don't know.

Vloggers often share a lot about their lives and relationships and after watching several of their videos, it can start feeling nosy and as though you're prying too much into somebody else's life. Teens can often be more intense about their passions, and this applies to being a fan of a certain YouTuber online, too. Admiring someone and having a role model is positive, but just make sure their hobby doesn't veer into the realms of obsession.

Tip: Many of the popular YouTubers share lots of details about their life. Zoella has also accidentally shared information about her address. Children may need to be reminded that they shouldn't follow suit by sharing details about their personal life online – regardless of the medium – whether it's a video, blog post, or anything else.