Online safety: digital dictionary

Learn and understand some of the language your child might be using both online and offline when talking to their friends.

Refer back to our dictionary when you're unsure about a word or phrase

You don't need to learn these terms - use this as a reference if you hear your child use a word that you don't recognise.

This dictionary isn't exhaustive, but we'll continue to add more terms over time as they become relevant or noteworthy.

Your child might not understand the words they're using

This is especially true if your child is younger. It's important to remember that they:

- Might not mean to use this language in a hurtful way
- Might mean to use a different word

If you hear your child using a term you don’t recognise, you can ask them what they mean, and then check this resource to see if the child is using the word correctly.

If the term is potentially an offensive one, you can ask your child:

1. "Do you know that some people might be offended by that word/phrase?"
2. "Do you know why it might be a bad idea to say that?"

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See below for NSPCC resources on how to talk to your child about different issues like sexism, racism and bullying.

Language related to cyberbullying, harassment and cybercrime

Cyberstalking	Using the internet or text messages to repeatedly harass or bully someone - often using multiple apps and platforms and multiple accounts.
Doxing / doxxing	Publicly posting someone's private information (e.g. their name, address, place of work or school), usually without their consent. This information might be used to harass the person further.
Dogpiling	When a group of people, usually a large group, target a single person with harassment.
Griefing	Deliberately trying to ruin other people's fun in online games (e.g. destroying another player's house in Minecraft).
Finsta	'Fake Insta/Fake Instagram' – this may mean a second, private, Instagram account for sharing more personal content with a trusted group of friends, or a second Instagram account made to look like another person, either to impersonate them or bully them. This is also known as a 'sock puppet account'.
KYS	Stands for 'kill yourself', used to harass or upset others.
Phishing	A kind of scam where criminals trick targets into giving up personal information (including bank details or account passwords).
Ratio / ratio'ing	When a negative response to a social media post gets far more

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	positive engagement than the original post.
Troll / trolling	Deliberately saying hurtful or inflammatory things to get a response from someone, or a group of people.
Sub-tweeting	Negatively talking about someone publicly on social media without tagging them in a post, so the person might not see it. It's most common on X (formerly Twitter) but can happen on other platforms.
Swatting	Calling emergency services (usually the police) and falsely claiming a serious crime is happening at someone else's home (e.g. a bomb threat or a hostage situation), with the intent of police arriving at the person's house. This is done to harass and frighten someone.

Read the NSPCC's guidance on talking to your child and supporting them if they're being bullied.

Language related to dating and sex

Bodycount	A way for someone to say how many people they've had sex with (e.g. 'my bodycount is 3').
Catfishing	Pretending to be someone else on the internet (e.g. on dating apps), sometimes to trick others into sending them nude images and/or money.
Ghosting	Suddenly breaking off all contact with someone, which might include blocking or 'unfriending'/unfollowing them on all platforms. This usually happens in romantic relationships but can also happen between friends.

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Hook-up / hookup	Casual sex and/or casual sexual relationships.
Nudes	Nude or semi-nude images. It's sometimes written as 'newds', 'noods' or 'n00ds' to avoid language filters on some apps.
Thirst trap	A sexually-suggestive photo or image intended to grab people's attention and boost engagement. It usually isn't a nude image so that it can be posted on social media.

Read the NSPCC's guidance on talking to your child about healthy relationships.

Language related to extreme beliefs

'Chad' and 'Stacy'	Used by people in the incel subculture to describe conventionally-attractive men ('Chads') and women ('Stacys').
Incel	'Involuntary celibate' - a subculture mostly made of young men who think they're unable to find a romantic or sexual partner. People in this group may blame women and girls for this, and use sexist and misogynistic language to describe women.
Great replacement	A far-right conspiracy theory stating that the global elite is deliberately replacing the population of white people (mainly in Europe) with non-white people. It's related to 'white genocide' (see below).
Manosphere	A subculture focused on masculinity and opposition to feminism. It's sometimes called 'men's rights activism' or 'men going their own way' (MGTOW).
Taking the red	To become aware of 'truths' about the world according to a

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pill	subculture. This mostly relates to incel and manosphere culture, but is also used by far-right extremists (e.g. 'becoming red-pilled on race'). People in the incel subculture sometimes use the term 'black pill' - hopelessness that there is nothing a man can do to improve his attractiveness to women.
White genocide	A far-right conspiracy theory stating that there is a plot to make white people extinct.

As well as its guidance on healthy relationships, find out from the NSPCC how to talk to your child about racism.

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