

# Age no bar for tweens to be on Facebook

Aparajita Ray | TNN

One in every four tweens (children between the ages of 8 and 12) online has had nasty comments directed either at them or at a friend, while many have witnessed cruelty in the virtual space. Among these, 49% shared the experience with a friend, 46% told a parent, 20% sought teacher's help and 20% brought it to the notice of a family member. Twelve-year-olds are more likely to have seen online nastiness than 8-year-olds, (36% and 16% respectively).

E-bullying is the biggest challenge for parents. The Tweens and Technology Report 2013, compiled by McAfee, a firm offering software security solutions for internet-enabled electronic devices, points to several such trends that could have a lasting effect on impressionable young minds.

According to the report, despite Facebook setting an age bar of 13 for first-time users, about 70% tweens surveyed admitted to having an FB account. Surprisingly, 89% have parental permission and are friends with their folks online. In fact, 70% of them said their parents initiated them into the virtual space.

The survey reached out to 572 boys and 428 girls from Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai,

## Parentspeak

Children now are more addicted to computers than physical activities like playing outdoors. While I see nothing wrong in allowing children to use Facebook and other social media sites, we should be friendly with them so that they share what they're up to online.

Mary Vatsala | MOTHER OF 6-YEAR-OLD, FRAZER TOWN

It's about keeping a balance between being a friend and parent to your child. Giving too much of freedom could also lead children to think their parents understand them very well and they needn't ask them what to do. If I allow my 12 year-old daughter to be on Face-

book, I am going to tell her that she has to set her own limits.

Kolkata, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. It looked into how teens use social networking sites. About one out of three tweens said they would miss their phones or laptops if they were taken away from them even for a day. While 53% of sample the surveyed said they are daily online for one to three hours, 76% of this lot is online between 5 pm and 9 pm and 23% beyond 9 pm.

The survey claimed that 88% of the FB-using tweens shared photos of themselves, while 73% put up photographs of family or friends, and a substantial 41% of them shared personal information online.



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Shilpa Wadhwa | RR LAYOUT

## Expertspeak

Parents need to be educated [in web usage]. Through them, children should be educated, too. Technology is catching up with youngsters but they don't have appropriate information on how to use it and end up abusing it. They need attention; they're getting that from social networking sites. At one level [it] is okay, but [it] could be harmful too. Parental supervision is surely required.

Meera Ravi | FAMILY COUNSELLOR

## Cybermum

McAfee also runs a dedicated Cybermum initiative and cyber education programmes to make the internet safe by providing resources to help educate and protect families. Anindita Mishra, McAfee Cybermum India, said, "There's an increasing influence of the online world on children's persona that cannot be undermined because of the emotional and developmental impact. The role of parents in delivering safe and positive cyber experience to their kids is significant than ever before. Having transparent communication with children is fundamental to establishing a safe cyber experience."

## TRENDING ONLINE

1/12/13

On an average, online tweens use 3-4 internet-enabled devices - laptops, mobiles and desktops



Tweens have clear preferences not just for devices but also the type of activity



spend 2-4 hours every day on gaming consoles

