

Esafety News 22nd May 2015

A very recent matter has highlighted the risks of using **Instagram**. Parents and carers should be aware that a student has recently had his personal profile details taken to create a fake account by an unknown third party. The creator of this fake account has sent follower requests to other students, some of whom accepted the request, thereby giving access to their photos and details. Fortunately some students reported the fake account to Instagram and it has since been closed.

It has come to my attention that we cannot rely on age ratings on the Apple app store; this can be very misleading for parents who are trying to check the suitability of an app. Instagram, for example, insists that users must be 13 or older, but the app shows 12+ in the Apple Store.

The UK Internet Safety Centre has told me that “Apple only has 3 age ratings on their app store 3+, 12+ and 17+. These are used to correlate apps with their own apple age/parental controls. They have in (very) small print something which says users should check individual apps terms and conditions to check actual age limits and appropriateness. “

Alan Earl, from the UK Internet Safety Centre offers this advice: “we always advise parents, should they be concerned around sites to look at the site/game themselves, familiarise themselves with the age rating and then make a balanced decision on whether it is right for their child”.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has just published safety checklists for Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat – see <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/teachers-and-professionals/safety-features> where you will also find safety guidance for a range of popular social network sites used by many teenagers.

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