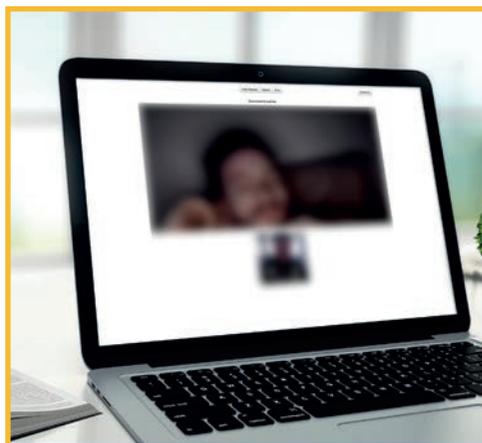
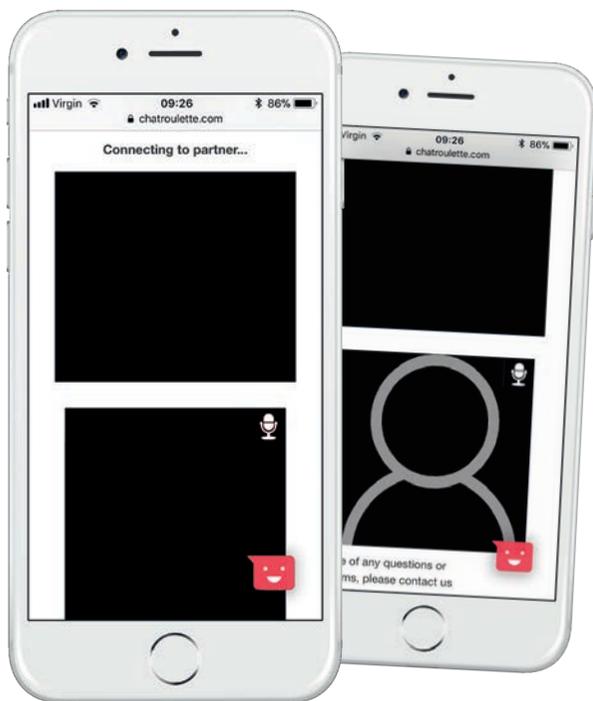




What is Chatroulette?

Chatroulette connects visitors to random people around the world to have a webcam chat. As well as sharing webcam video, you can also have audio chats with each other. Chatroulette's unique feature is its entirely random nature - hence the 'roulette' part of its name. There is no way to search for a particular person, no list of known friends and there is no categorisation for finding people to talk about specific subjects.

What does it look like?



Main Concerns for Parents

Chatroulette



Chatting with strangers

Chatroulette is a largely unregulated portal and anyone using it is actively encouraged to chat with strangers. There is no sign-up process, so it takes a matter of seconds to get up and running on the site. This also means that there are no age checks carried out. Chatting with strangers via Chatroulette involves many of the same risks of chatting with strangers in the real world and there is a dark element out there that attracts some of the worst people imaginable.

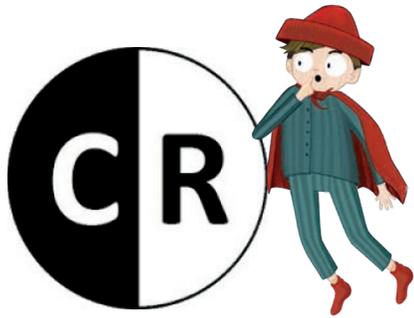
Inappropriate content

Because Chatroulette is driven by its users and whatever they place in front of their webcams, there is great potential for there to be content you'd rather your child didn't see. Sexual content is not only present, but also quite prevalent - nudity is very common as is all manner of other adult content and advertisements for premium services.

Privacy

Chatroulette can be used for grooming and phishing purposes and this is something users need to be aware of. Other people may try to extract personal information from younger children, either in an attempt to determine who and where they are, or to gather information that could be used to conduct identity theft.

CHATROULETTE: Tips for Parents



Block the site

For most parents - particularly those with younger children - simply blocking Chatroulette is a good idea. This can be done by adjusting your router's settings, or by putting a block in place with parental control software. Realistically, Chatroulette is not a site that children should be using, simply because of the prevalence of adult and sexual content.

Encourage reporting

While Chatroulette is largely unregulated, there is a Report function that children should be made aware of. If they start to feel uncomfortable chatting with someone, or they are concerned about what they are seeing and hearing, they should know of the existence of the Report button. Hitting this will generate an alert for the user - if other people report the same user, a ban can be placed on them by the site.

Check what your child is up to

Chatroulette has no settings that can be configured and there is no way to check activity as there are no user accounts. As such, the only real way to monitor Chatroulette usage is to physically watch who they are chatting to. If you decide to let your child use the site, it would be a good idea to insist that it is done in a room where you can see and hear what is happening.

Do not share personal information

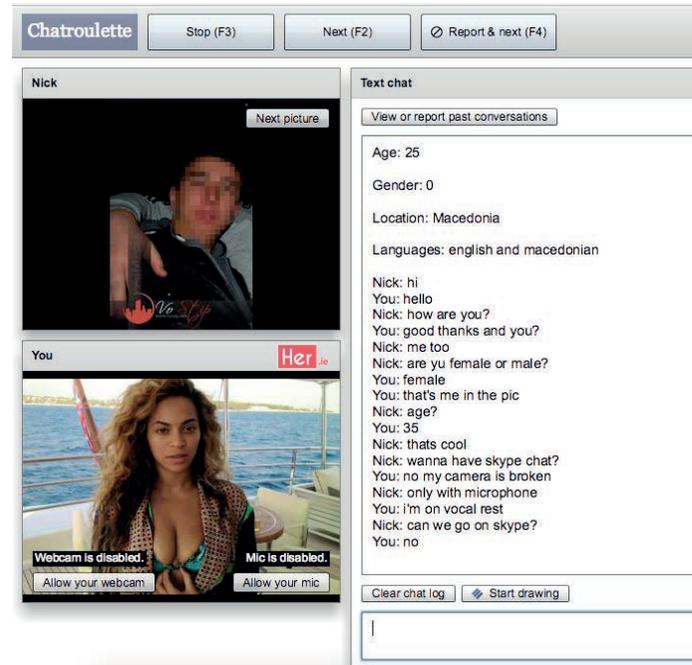
You almost certainly understand the importance of not sharing information online that could be used to identify you or could be used against you in a phishing scam or something similar - and it's important that your child understands this too. While there is no need to terrify your child with scare stories, you'll need to convey to them the importance of keeping private information to themselves.

Webcam and microphone safety

Chatroulette encourages the use of both a webcam and a microphone for chats, and it's important to keep in mind what can be picked up by both devices. Remember that things can be seen and heard in the background and it's possible for a chat partner to see and hear things you might prefer they didn't.

Don't feel pressured

Children should be reminded that they should never do or say anything they do not feel comfortable with. They should be happy to walk away from any chat that they are unhappy with for any reason.



Know when to move on

As well as the Report button, it is important that people are aware of the ability to jump to a new chat partner. If your child feels uncomfortable with who they are talking with - for any reason - they can just hit the Next button to move on to someone else. There's no guarantee that the next chat partner will be better, but it's good to know how to bring a chat to an end quickly.



Connected to somebody.

Talk to your child about what's out there

Chatroulette is - if nothing else - a great conversation starter for when you want to talk about the dangers of the web. In a just a few clicks, it's all too easy to connect to disturbed and disturbing individuals, and it's important that there's dialogue between parent and child about boundaries and what's appropriate.