



# Digital Bulletin – Yubo

You may have heard news reports about the rise in popularity of an app called Yubo. In this bulletin, I will look at its function for young people, its features and also the potential online safety concerns.

## What is Yubo?

Yubo, a location-based social networking app which used to be called Yellow, has been dubbed 'Tinder for teens' in the media due to its similarities with adult dating app Tinder in which users swipe to find matches. Yubo syncs with Snapchat and allows users to livestream themselves to anyone watching, and rate other users. Its official guidelines do not permit users under the age of 13 on the app, while those aged between 13 and 17 must have parental permission to create a profile.

## Purpose

Yubo promote their app saying that "its fun, free and easy to use" and that users "get to meet new people who have the same interests". Users can look at other profiles and either swipe right on the profile picture if they would like to 'like' them or swipe left if they would rather not be friends with them. They can then immediately instant message other friends and have the option to 'go live' during the chat and start a live video stream. Anybody will be able to see a live broadcast, regardless of whether they are friends or not and the person streaming can decide whether to add new viewers as friends or not.

## Account

Although advertised as a dating app for teenagers who wish to make new friends and connect with other teenagers, the app does not verify ages or identities upon sign-up, leading to fears that it could be exploited by those seeking to target children and that children may interact with people who are not what they seem. Adults can set up fake profiles for sexual reasons, while children younger than 13, with access to the internet, could pretend to be older than they are.

## Moderation of content

Not only can teenagers live-stream footage of themselves to the world, but they can also be exposed to anything or anyone. Yubo says it uses a combination of technical tools and human moderators to check the content created by Yubo, but because users can comment on footage in real-time, it could mean children could be exposed to derogatory or unpleasant language.

## Potential exploitation

There have been media reports that teens are being pressured into undressing live on camera for strangers, sending nude photos, and even lured into face-to-face meetings on Yubo. Any users can take screenshots or copies of live streams, alter them and share them with others – which could open your child up to blackmail. The Yubo app links to Snapchat – you can exchange messages, photos and video chats with them and even add them as a friend on Snapchat. By giving easy access to Yubo's users' other online accounts, there is the potential to reveal enough information to be identified. Because users 'swipe' to accept or decline to talk to someone based on their profile picture, there is the potential that children may be left with low self-esteem. Receiving comments about their appearance can have a negative impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, leaving them feeling less confident about how they look or how interesting they are. Bullying includes actions such as making threats or spreading rumours about people.

## Advice

As with all online safety issues, we would recommend open conversations about your child's usage. Discuss the risks of sharing information, images and videos (particularly streamed) online. As with all social media platforms, there are inherent risks when talking to strangers online. Are they who they say they are? Are there any checks that your child can make? I like the idea of asking a new 'friend' to show a video of them with a spoon on their head. Although silly sounding, this at least verifies that the image you are seeing is responding to your conversation. For more specific advice, or information regarding Yubo, I would suggest reading [Yubo's own parent guide](#), and also a third party, objective [guide by National Online Safety](#), which features more detailed tips for parents.