



What Parents Need to Know



The idea of Omegle is simply... to chat with strangers online!

What is it?

Omegle is a social networking web based tool which is also available as an iPhone, iPod or iPad app; generally used for 1 of 3 reasons:

1. Meet new people with similar interests
2. Witness outrageous and random things people do online
3. Find someone who's mutually interested in engaging in some form of cyber sexual activity.

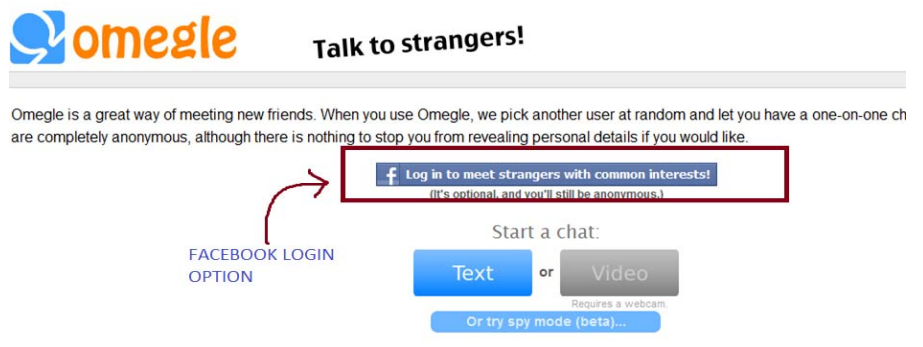
From a parent's perspective, the first two don't seem too worrying, especially if you feel your child is mentally mature enough to act appropriately online and recognise the risks of sharing personal information with strangers.

But the third reason... this should clearly raise red flags, not because your child is necessarily looking for that encounter, but because they could very easily come across it.

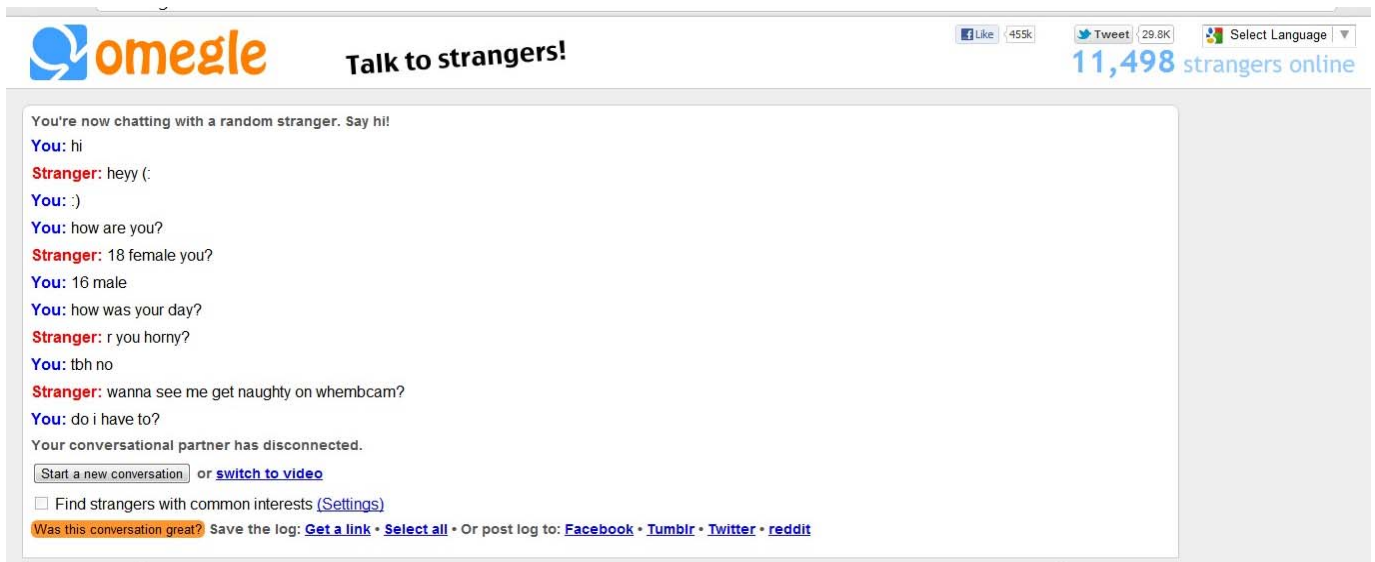
How does it work?

The Omegle gives the user 2 options for a 1-2-1 chat session; chat in text-only (spy mode) or with video (webcam); users can start chatting with random strangers straight away, or connect with people based on specific interests. It is possible for users to link their Facebook account to Omegle and seek interests from there as shown here

Once the user chooses how they want to chat, they are immediately paired with a stranger. If either party isn't interested, they can disconnect and move on to the next person.... that's pretty much how Omegle works.



Below is an example of a non-webcam chat; notice how many strangers are available at any one time





Although Omegle have staff monitoring conversation, this site/app is intended for older teens and adults and is not created with safety in mind.

In order to deter sexual predators and indecency, the homepage gives a 'decency enforced' message that lets users know they're not welcome if this is their intention

As a video-chat site which encourages users to talk to strangers, Omegle is certainly 'unhealthy' for your child; it is an international arena for 'risky' interactions, you must warn your child of the dangers or should consider blocking access to it on your child's device(s).

What can you do?

Have a **discussion** with your child; ensure they are aware of the dangers of using this site and other like it, and encourage them to come to you if things go wrong!

Alternatively, you can **block** the Omegle app on your child's iPhone, iPod or iPad by using the restrictions feature to disable app downloads; follow the steps below



1. Go to phone **Settings** in the main menu

2. Then go to the tab called '**General**' shown on the right

3. Scroll down to the 'Restriction' tab - it should say 'Off'; tap it...



4. Click on 'Enable Restrictions'; this will trigger a password. **Don't forget this password, there's no way to retrieve it; don't give it to your child!!**

Once you've done this you'll be able to:

- Remove/restore certain apps from the device.
- Set restrictions for the App Store.
- Set content restrictions for videos and music

Re-enabling is just as simple; re-enter your password, turn the functions back on.

Geo-tagging: Another important thing to do here is switch **Location** to 'Off' - the geo-tagging function allows other people to see the exact physical location of your child by their phone signal.

Online Safety Advice



Hampshire Police: www.hampshire.police.uk

101 non-emergency or 999 in an emergency



CEOP – ThinkuKnow: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Internet safety site with current advice for young people, parents and professionals consisting of videos, games and related links

Parent Protect: www.parentsprotect.co.uk

A comprehensive guide for parents from the Lucy Faithfull Foundation to better understand the risks posed to children by the internet, and to keep them safe online. Includes a guide called '**What's the Problem?**'

NSPCC: Net-aware www.net-aware.org.uk

Free information tool to help parents understand a bit more about the sites their children use including



NSPCC: Share aware www.nspcc.org.uk

Games & videos for children & parents can be found in the 'Preventing Abuse' section on the homepage.

SEND THIS INSTEAD APP: www.sendthisinstead.com

An app which gives children an alternative option to sending a nude or indecent image when asked to do so online

Virgin Media & F-Secure offer an interactive internet safety package for all ages called '**Switched on Families**' to help you make the right choices for your family's internet use: www.keepup.virginmedia.com/switchedonfamilies