

Leisure

== *The Nerd In Me...* ==

Pay attention to what your child does online

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The internet is as dangerous as it is wonderful. Social media exposes your children to concepts and ideas they would never encounter within their day-to-day lives.

During my school days, most children gave the same set of answers to every adult who asked what careers they wanted to pursue as adults: doctor, lawyer, engineer, and teacher.

Today, you are going to hear, soccer Player, animator, violinist, game designer, and the like. The internet has opened children's eyes to a whole new world of possibilities.

Unfortunately, it has also imported threats that the current crop of parents is ill-equipped to defend against, and internet cults are probably the worst of the bunch.

Most people think that sexual predators are the biggest danger prowling the internet.

However, internet cults are far worse. But before I tell you why, let me first explain how they work.

Cults find your teens and pre-teens on popular platforms like Telegram, Twitch, Steam, YouTube, and Roblox (yes, that Roblox that your five-year-old can't stop obsessing over). Sometimes, they target minors who have discussed their mental health challenges and struggles online because they are more vulnerable to manipulation.

Then they love-bomb these individuals, essentially showing them so much affection, kindness, and care that your child cannot help but drop their guard. If adults fall prey to love bombing all the time, imagine how



much more susceptible children are to such techniques.

That level of attention compels them to trust these online strangers. This allows those strangers to do two things. First, they will collect personal information from the child (full name, home address, phone number, parents' names, etc).

Secondly, they will expose the child to content of a violent and sexual nature. The goal is to desensitize them to that type of content to the point where the child is willing to record and share their own sexual content (mostly explicit images of themselves).

For some predators, the second step is unnecessary. Winning the child's trust through love bombing is enough to coerce them into sharing explicit content. And then the abuse begins. By this point, the predator has moved the conversation to a private communication platform.

The predator will extort the victim, forcing them to perform shameful acts. If they resist, the predator threatens to share the

explicit content the child already provided with the child's friends and family.

CBC News has a 2025 article, which chronicles the trials of 15-year-old Trinity, who went so far as to carve symbols (with a knife) into the skin on her stomach, including a swastika and the names of her abusers.

That is a common request from predators. Victimized children will cut and burn their bodies, perform sexual acts, torture family pets, and even end their lives on camera. Why? Because the predator is an administrator running a platform with hundreds, thousands, and even hundreds of thousands of members who sign up expressly to watch that content.

That raises a question. How can an adult be so depraved as to abuse vulnerable children? Well, that is the shocking bit I mentioned earlier that makes internet cults far worse. Trinity (the 15-year-old girl I mentioned above) was victimized by the so-called 764 cult.

They eventually arrested Bradley Cadenhead, who created 764 in 2020 when he was 15. This is why internet cults are so sinister. Most of the time, children are targeting and victimizing other children, which is why their tactics are so effective.

They know what it takes to break and manipulate a fellow child.

So once again, I urge you to pay close attention to your child's online activities. Don't assume that gaming platforms such as Roblox and Steam are secure simply because they keep promoting the safeguards they have put in place to protect users.

Predators won't abuse your child on those platforms. Instead, they will use Twitch and Roblox to identify and then lead their victims to the darker corners of the internet.

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