



What parents & carers need to know about... XBOX ONE



The Xbox One is among the most popular video game consoles on the planet. Released in 2013, there are a multitude of Xbox One variants on the market, including the One, One X and One S, with the next full console, the Xbox Series X, coming towards the end of 2020. With units sold exceeding 50 million, there's a whole network of gamers already enjoying online experiences together through the console's Xbox Live service. That's why it's important that parents and carers understand exactly what the Xbox One is all about.

Playing with Strangers



Xbox Live is the online service for the Xbox One, and it's where the majority of online games are played. Part of the fun of gaming is playing with people from all different walks of life, and while most players will only be looking to have fun and make some new friends along the way, it also means that children can be playing and potentially communicating with people online they don't know and have never met.

Online Bullying



Xbox includes multiplayer games and the ability to interact and chat with other players. This includes being able to private message one another. Xbox has community standards that players should abide by however these aren't always followed and it's possible, like any online social media interaction, that players can send harmful or hateful messages to your child or even display online bullying behaviour.

Inappropriate Content



Like many gaming platforms, one of the biggest attractions to Xbox One is the ability to play games online. Children can access these through the Games Pass service. However, this can also open up channels for younger children to potentially play online games with older children or young adults who may use swear words or inappropriate language. Furthermore, if there are no age restrictions in place, children could access games that contain adult themes such as graphic depictions of war, violence or even sexually suggestive material.

Purchasing Add-Ons



The Xbox Games Pass gives players access to over 100 high quality games which can be played on the console, PC and, soon, other Android devices depending on what type of pass is bought. Players can also receive discounts on in-game purchases and add ons, which can quickly add up, particularly if your child is operating under an adult account and has a card registered with no spending limits in place.

Screen Addiction



The Xbox is not just a games console; it's a family entertainment system. Children can play games online, stream their favourite films and TV shows, listen to music, watch YouTube, chat on Skype and browse the web. All of this makes it very easy for children to rack up the hours in front of the screen and find it difficult to switch it off which could lead to tiredness, fatigue and an inability or reluctance to engage in other activities.

Phishing Risk



Phishing is the act of posing as somebody else (possibly an authority figure like an Xbox or Microsoft employee) in order to obtain things like passwords for accounts. Unfortunately, there are many people out there who look to those who are vulnerable and aim to exploit them. They could disguise their intentions by asking seemingly innocent questions, with an ulterior motive of gaining details that will give them access to personal accounts or banking details.



Safety Tips



Set up a Microsoft Family Account

Setting up a family account is a great way to personalise your child's online experience based on age-appropriate limits that you set for privacy, online purchases, content filters and screen time. It provides you with the ability to manage parental settings and ensures that only you can change Xbox privacy and online settings for a child account.



Check Age-Ratings

Make sure you're aware of the games that your child is playing and what the PEGI ratings for them are. The ratings are there to guide parents in knowing what's contained within the games, but it's up to them to make the decision of whether or not they're suitable to play. If you want a complete overview, use the family account settings to block inappropriate content and make sure your kids only view content and play games that are right for their age.



Discuss Screen Time

Taking regular breaks from gaming is vitally important for children as much as anybody so it's important to encourage children to take time away from their screen and to do other things. If you're really concerned about their device usage, you can implement screen time limits from your family account to help encourage a healthy balance. This can be done on specific apps and games and can be implemented for individual devices or every device they own.



Create Spending Limits

Having a pre-set limit of how much a child can spend is a great way to set boundaries on purchases with your bank accounts, while giving them the freedom to spend some money on their favourite games. On top of that, it's a great way to encourage fiscal responsibility at an early age. If you'd prefer, you can also have child accounts request approval to buy things through you each time they want to make a purchase.



Report Bullying Behaviour

Teach your child how to report inappropriate behaviour that they experience online. If it's a particular player, they can search for them from the People tab and then select report or block. Make sure they know when to tell a trusted adult if somebody has said or done something upsetting online. It's also worth remembering that kids don't have to game online; there are a lot of games that can be played offline either alone, or with family members in the house.



Keep Profiles Private

Use the Xbox controls and settings to ensure your child's profile is kept private online. Manage what others can see about your child's personal details and limit who your child can communicate with and who can interact with their content or send them friend requests. This will help to reduce the number of strangers contacting them and will keep you in the loop as to who they are engaging with online.



Meet our expert

Mark Foster has worked in the gaming industry for 5 years as a writer, editor and presenter. He is the current gaming editor of two of the biggest gaming news sites in the world, UNILAD Gaming and GAMINGBible. Starting gaming from a young age with his siblings, he has a passion for understanding how games and tech work, but more importantly, how to make them safe and fun.



Sources: <https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/community/for-everyone/responsible-gaming>