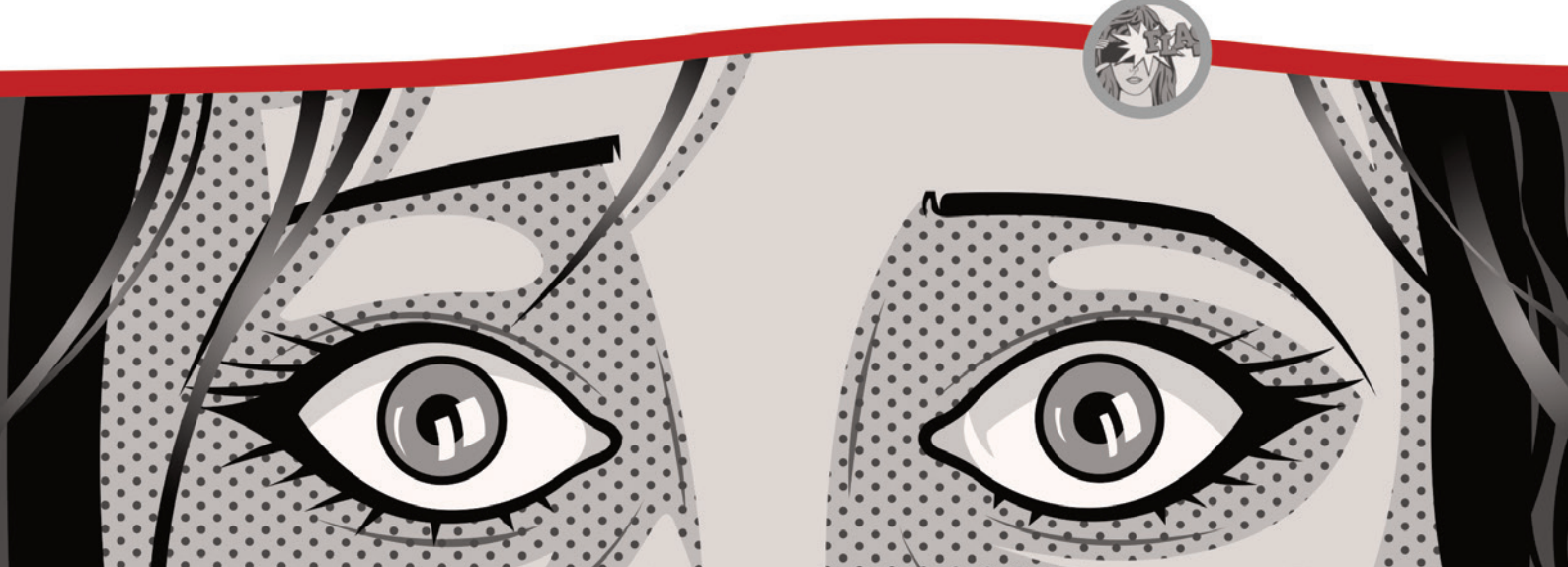# so you got naked online...

A resource provided by the South West Grid for Learning

So you got naked online...

OK... so I guess if you have picked this up and started to read, it's likely that you have done something online that you are now regretting. Or perhaps you are trying to help someone who has done something? And if that something involved nakedness or something sexual, then that may look more serious than other stuff you see happening online.

But don't freak out just yet... you are obviously keen to find out more about how you can help yourself or your friend and perhaps get some advice and a plan for how to improve things. Well, you're in the right place.

Read on and you will discover:

- **Why** these things happen and what different people **think** about it
- When it has happened to **others** and what they have done.
- How the **technology** works and what the **real** risks are.
- What the **first** things are you can do to begin to take **control**.
- Whether your **fears** of getting into **trouble** are realistic.
- The **impact** on you for the **future** and what you can **do** about it.
- How to get **support** and **advice** from organisations who are there to **help** you for just this sort of issue.

Contents:

However, this isn't helping yet, so let's crack on. You don't have to read this whole thing through but it does help to browse each section to get a really good understanding of how and why this stuff causes problems. The more clued-up you are, the better decisions you are going to make for yourself (or friend).

"Knowledge is power"

I see sexting mentioned in the newspapers.
What does it mean?

"Teen sexting is a very rational act with very irrational consequences." danah boyd

"Sexting" is a term created a few years ago and describes the use of technology to share personal sexual content. It's a word-mix of **"sex"** and **"texting"**. Other nicknames you may hear might be **"cybersexing"**, **"doxing"** or **"selfie"**.

This content can be anything from texts, partial nudity right up to sexual images or video. Very often it is between partners, but can be between groups and can use a whole range of devices, technologies and online spaces. However, the most common ones are **mobile phone MMS, Skype and social network sites** where images can be posted and shared **(Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat etc)**.

Deliberate and Accidental

Most sexting is deliberate; the person sending the content means it to happen. They will pose or act in a sexual way and will make a direct effort to send it to the person they want to see it, usually a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

Occasionally, if you have personal pictures of yourself on your phone it might be possible to accidentally "share" it via email, MMS or Bluetooth with the wrong person but this is unusual. There have also been cases where pictures have been spread after mobile phones have been stolen! Accidental sexting is more likely to happen if your judgement is clouded e.g. if you have had alcohol or taken drugs or are under pressure from those around you. This could result in you:

- getting confused and pressing the wrong send button
- feeling brave about risking a naughty photograph
- feeling more sexually confident
- feeling less inhibited, less aware of risk and the consequences
- being encouraged by mates to do it as a dare
- thinking that it is a good laugh and there is no harm in it

The accidental stuff happens once it has left your control, but more about this later.

Both Deliberate and Accidental?

Some people think putting naked or sexual photos and videos online will help make them more popular. Be careful with this – there are some unpleasant people out there who enjoy manipulating photos and videos to humiliate people. Think through the worst case scenario before you share your naked or sexual image. You might choose to hold off sharing.

Some people think putting naked or sexual photos and videos online will help them become rich and famous. Remember if you want to become a celebrity you need to protect your image. TV and music executives don't want to spend money on people who have already put themselves out there. They need people that understand the importance of managing their image. If you put too much online for everyone to see you decrease your value – there is nothing more to know about you. **Keep your private self a valued asset.**

LOL or OMG?!

People sharing naked pictures as part of a safe relationship is not a new thing.

What has changed though is the speed with which you can share. Using webcams or sending mobile pictures can be a spontaneous decision, made without thinking about what could happen and what people might think. Once the picture leaves your control it can easily and quickly be shared with many people.

A recent study by the UK Internet Watch Foundation showed that up to 88% of self-generated images have been collected and put onto other sites!
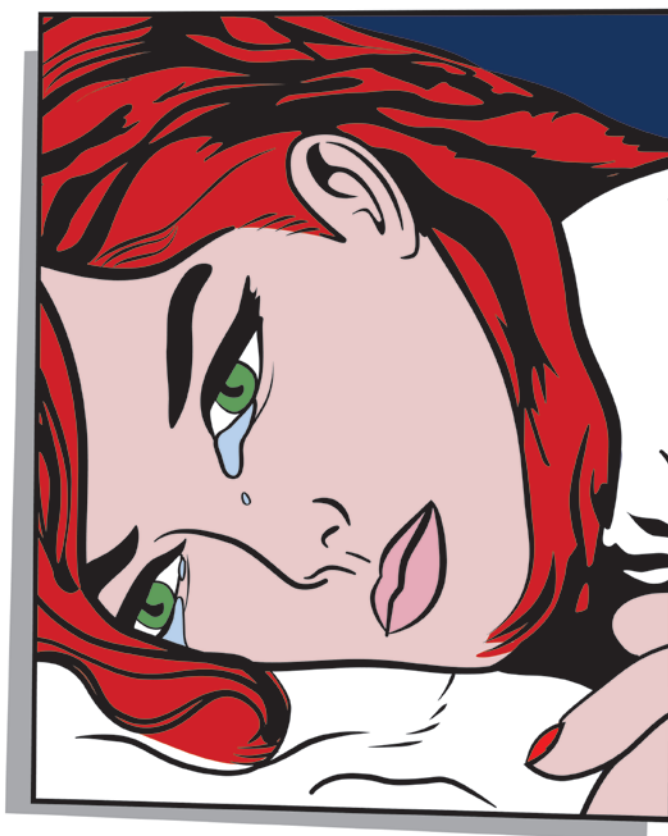
In your parents' younger years, the embarrassing stuff they did was rarely seen by anyone else. Today with mobile phones and the web that has changed. The World Wide Web means the potential of a huge audience and of course, if a photo is uploaded and shared, it can be on there forever. Pretty scary thought that something stupid you do at 14 can still potentially affect your adult life.

This is not the end of the world. It just needs some thought on how you can minimise the effect of your mistake.

Was I right to have trusted the person to whom I sent it? Was I being naive?

Most of the time, these intimate pictures are shared between boyfriend and girlfriend, and let's be honest, you wouldn't send them if you didn't trust the other person would you? There are probably many images shared which never leave the intended recipient, even when the relationship ends. **So ask yourself, if we break up, will this person respect me enough not to share my pictures?** How well do you really know them? Sadly, it is often only when we split up with someone that we see their true colours.

Sometimes yes you can trust the person you text.

But, and this is a big but, do you really need to send them pictures of your body? If the person asking for this acts up when you refuse is this someone you can trust? If they accept your refusal without question they sound like a good friend.

Others letting you down...

Some of the problem will be around people you thought you could trust sharing the image or joining in the negative comments. This might be the person who you sent the image to in the first place, or mates or others who then circulate it. People get caught up in gossip or bitching sessions, often without meaning harm to the victim, either to impress other people, to "belong", or because it starts as a joke which escalates. Other times people do it to bully someone.

Will other people see it?

It depends how the image was published; if you sent it directly to someone's mobile and then had second thoughts, you need to have an honest conversation with them as soon as possible to get them to delete it.

WHO CAN I TRUST!?

Posting directly to social networks makes it harder to regain that control. Networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram are designed to make publishing and sharing quick; the software makes those connections for you... and that's the trouble. **It's hard to know where the image has gone and who has got it. It can very quickly leave your social circle and spread to others.**

It's important to understand the different ways in which you contact and report to social network sites to request removal of content. It's not enough just to say "I don't like it." **Your request needs to show that it breaks the site's terms and conditions.**

It is also important to understand how you yourself can change or remove content that you have posted about which you have changed your mind. That profile pic of you in your underwear was funny at the time but ...

It's important in life to have friends around you that you can trust and on whom you can rely; this is no different online. It's less likely your close friends would want to do anything serious to hurt you; very often they're the first ones you might turn to for help.

I REALLY NEED A FRIEND RIGHT NOW!

Let's use them to help put out the messages we want and recover the situation where they can.

That's why it is important to think carefully about your social network friends lists and ask yourself "Who would stand beside me when things go wrong?"

What is your definition of a "friend" or a "friend of a friend"? We often add friends because our other friends know them. In reality the person may have been passed on through lots of lists like this. If they have, then this makes it more difficult to track who has seen a naked picture you may have posted, as it has spread across groups you don't belong to. It may even be public which could mean literally anyone on the internet could see it.

There are ways in which you can choose who sees what on your profile (privacy settings) and this might be something you would want to get up to speed with after the incident to reduce the chances of it happening again.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR PRIVACY!
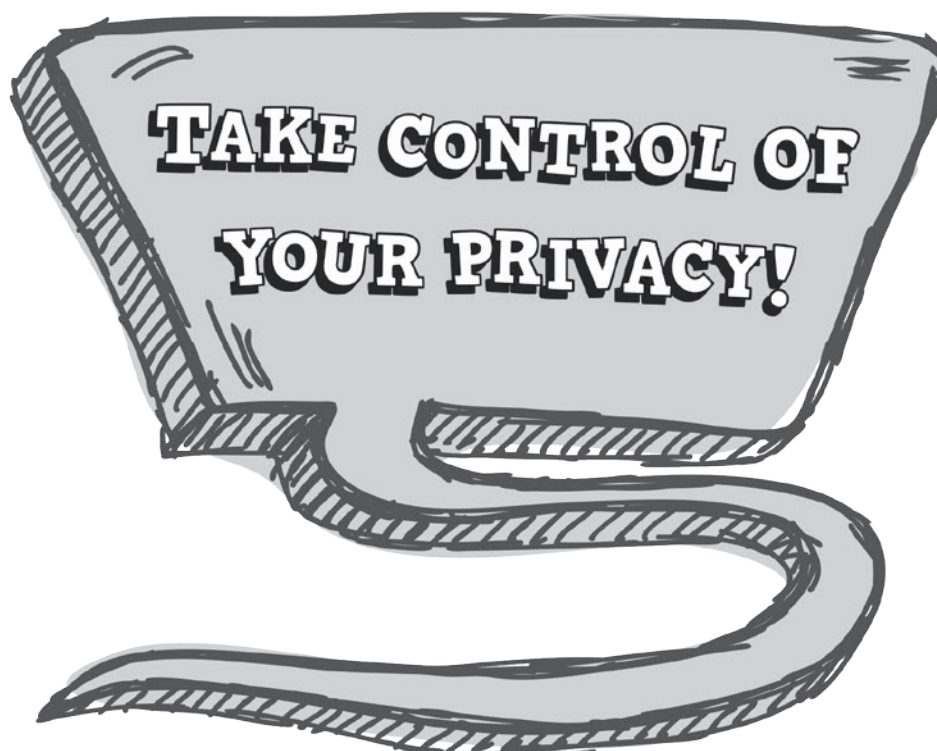
Where your picture might be:

Peer to peer sites - sharing files is a worldwide system used by all kinds of people. Images are exchanged in bulk and can become part of collections in folders that very often sit on other people's computers. This means adults and others you don't know viewing your personal naked pictures on dodgy file share sites.

Social networking sites also have photo albums and timelines which can contain images of others e.g. Facebook, Myspace, Twitter. Your content may very well be sitting on the software company's servers, but it is also worth remembering that people can download or copy these images to their own computer.

1 Photo sharing sites like Flickr or Instagram allow open and unrestricted (as well as private) sharing of pictures. Again your data could be on company's servers or copied to users' personal devices.

2 Webcam sharing sites can also cause problems when people record your actions. Sites like Omegle and Chat roulette often attract criminal elements. Sometimes these "anonymous" services encourage people to be more adventurous and risky, but being online is never completely anonymous. It only takes screen or webcam capture software to end up with a video clip.

3 Online Groups and Communities also often contain sex offenders who will form close knit groups and share indecent images (many of which they will obtain from the web).

4 Cloud storage sites like iCloud, SkyDrive, GoogleDrive, Dropbox or Rackspace allow server space for people to store material such as images. Other users with permission can then access the files. Once again it is difficult to know where your content actually sits and where the cloud servers are based. Those that are based outside of the UK or European Union often don't have the same strict laws about personal data that we have and your content could be sold and shared with other networks across the world.

What are the first things I should do?

It might seem like the end of the world but try not to panic! Take a deep breath and give yourself a chance to think about how this might affect you.

First off, are you OK? Do you need support? If you do, find the best person to support you right now... friends, family, school? You choose. **There is also a list of organisations at the end of this booklet that can help.**

Sometimes that first step of asking for help is a difficult one. But you have to be honest with yourself. Real friends and professionals trying to help are only able to do so when they know all the facts and how you feel about it. If you know of a friend who is trying to deal with this maybe you could show them this!

If you decide you need to do something, don't wait. The quicker you deal with it the better chance there is of managing the spread.

Will I get into trouble?

If the police get involved be honest with them. Tell them how the video/ image was made and where it might have been sent/posted. They will want to know who was involved and whether there was consent from all involved. Their concern is preventing harm to you and other young people. While it can be a crime to take and share sexual images of people under 18, the police don't usually prosecute
if there is no harm to those involved. You may get in trouble with the law if you have deliberately shared a photo or video of someone without their consent, especially if you meant to embarrass or humiliate them.

Who can help me?

If you or somebody else is at risk of abuse, or have been abused online or offline, or had your image shared without consent you can report the abuse to the Australian Federal Police at **https://forms.afp.gov.au/online_forms/ocset_form**. You can also report it to your local police station. You may also choose to seek independent legal advice.

Parents

It may be your worst nightmare thinking of telling your parents you shared intimate pictures, and yes, they may kick off at first but they need to know; how are they going to support you if they don't know?

Use your discretion, if you don't think the pictures will go viral, then don't upset them for no reason. If you feel there is a risk, or if your picture has already been shared, then you need them on board. Yes, they will probably be very upset and disappointed, but they'll get over it!

And will probably respect you more for being upfront about it...

I NEED HELP!

Is this going to affect things for me in the future?

Hopefully in most cases your continuing digital life will 'bury' your mistakes as time goes on. There is however no guarantee that the pictures will not be seen by others later. Your reputation could be affected if future employers, college, or school friends see this. Being honest and open and admitting a mistake is the best approach, as it will be with any future relationships.

Knowing about reputation

Do you know what's online about you?

You should first check what others can see about you. Search for your name using Google or other search engines and see what information already exists about you. Repeat the search regularly using services such as Google Alerts which give automatic updates. Although you may not have added anything new, your friends and family might have (CAS 2010). Aggregator sites will also show you publicly available internet information about you (e.g. Facebook accounts, blogs and YouTube postings etc).

If you find anything offensive or require anything removed, report it to the hosting site immediately. Remember it will need to break the site's terms and conditions. If it is a naked or semi-naked image of you it is highly likely to breach these conditions and the legal implications mean the site host is likely to remove it quickly when made aware.

Bury the bad stuff! Increasing your positive online presence...

Sadly there are some occasions where online content can't be removed, for example if your image is shared via an adult site hosted outside the Australia, in these cases we advise that you try and bury the content you don't want people to see. One way to do this is to set up social networking accounts, (you don't have to use them, just set them up and leave your name publicly searchable), to regularly comment on news articles and forums, and also to run a small blog. The more you add the further down the search lists this unwanted content will be.

Show me organisations that might be able to help me:

There are lots of places you can go for help and advice. Consider who is the best person to support you. A parent, aunt, uncle, family friend, coach, teacher or school counsellor might be able to help. At the very least talk to a trusted friend.

There are also organisations that can help such as:

Kidshelpline   www.kidshelp.com.au   Ph 1800 55 1800

Headspace   www.headspace.org.au

Lifeline   www.lifeline.org.au   Ph 13 11 14

Cybersmart   www.cybersmart.gov.au

For Legal advice:

ThinkUknow   www.thinkuknow.org.au

Legal Aid   www.nationallegalaid.org

Local police

Be prepared to explain:

As a final note, you should be prepared to explain the following things...

What if they ask questions?

- I've made a mistake

- I have learnt by it

- I have moved on

About this resource:

This is a resource for children, young people and parents that offers advice and explores strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting incidents.

Visit **www.cybersmart.gov.au** for more information.

This resource was originally produced by the South West Grid for Learning and UK Safer Internet Centre and co-funded by the European Union. This resource has been customised for Australian users by Cybersafekids, Privacy Victoria and Cybersmart.

CS**K**
CYBER SAFE KIDS

P privacy victoria
Office of the
Victorian Privacy
Commissioner

cyber(smart:)

UK Safer
Internet
Centre

SOUTH WEST
GRID
FOR LEARNING