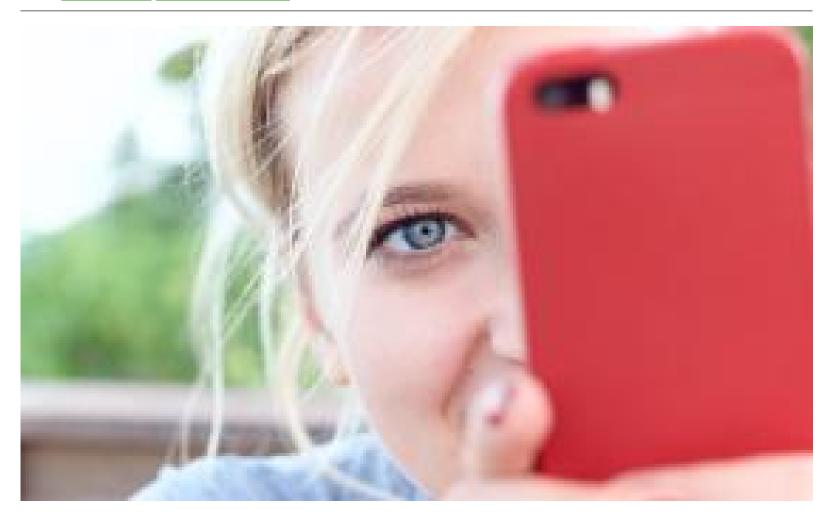# Parenting, Media, and Everything In Between

Catfishing Apps Let Kids Fake Everything from Texts to Tweets
It can be hard to tell what's real when people use these apps. By Christine Elgersma 4/25/2016

Topics: **Digital Citizenship**, **Privacy and Internet Safety**

From Shakespeare to TV sitcoms, the idea of pretending to be someone you're not never gets old. In the online world, there's a name for it -- "catfishing" -- and it's common enough to have inspired a movie and a TV show. But creating a false persona isn't the only bait-and-switch game out there. New apps let kids boost, create, or totally fabricate reality, tapping into the pressure kids feel to project a certain public image. Teens are especially vulnerable, since a lot of their social lives play out online, and they may be tempted to lie using tech. Learn more about helping your kids use social media safely and responsibly, and how to help them think through the consequences of creating fake profiles. Here's a sampling of the new tools that take catfishing to a whole new level.

Fake Conversation
It's common to feel inadequate as a teen and want to impress. Apps like this one let you choose from a list of characters -- like "playboy" and "music producer" -- and set a time to receive a call from your new fabulous friend. When the character

calls, you just listen to the recorded script, as if on a real call, and repeat what the recording says. Though it's mostly meant for pranks, it's also advertised as a means to impress, trick, or ditch people.

Fake GPS Location

Some parents rely on a kid's phone location to keep tabs, but it's not foolproof. Not only will this app let a user fake a location, it also tricks all the phone's other apps, so when a teen posts to social media it looks like they're somewhere they're not.

Gotta Go!

Sometimes we might make up an excuse to get out of an uncomfortable situation. However, this app -- created in conjunction with Chelsea Handler -- takes it a step further. It lets you create a fake contact who writes pretend text messages that get sent at a predetermined time. Since the text looks like it's from a real person, it's safe to show the phone as proof that you "gotta go." Users can also get a fake call if they can act their way through a one-sided conversation.

Imaginary Girlfriend and Invisible Boyfriend

If a teen is surrounded by paired-off couples, there might be some pressure to have a special someone. Imaginary Girlfriend and Invisible Boyfriend will send you texts to make it look like you've got one, too. Depending on the service, you can also get a picture to post on social media and a made-up "this is how we met" story.

Instafame - Get More Instagram Followers

For some, social media is all about the likes, and if you can't build a following fast enough, there are plenty of apps that can help -- for a price. With Instafame, you earn coins by liking other people's photos and then "spend" your coins on likes for your pics. Turbo Like for Instagram works similarly.

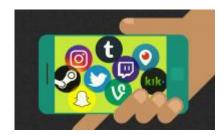## Social Dummy - Create Fake Social Posts and Statuses

Want to pretend you posted something to social media? Use the templates available in the app (for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and so on), create a fake post that looks like the real thing, and snap a screenshot to share. Because the templates look exactly like the formatting of different social media sites, they're pretty convincing. If you create more than a few, you can pay real money to make more.

About Christine Elgersma

Christine Elgersma started as Senior Editor, Apps and Digital Learning in January, 2015. Before coming to Common Sense, she helped cultivate and create ELA curriculum for a K-12 app, taught the youth of America as a... Read more

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