What parents need to know

- **It's too easy to "copy all."** Kik's ability to link to other Kik-enabled apps within itself is a way to drive "app adoption" (purchases) from its users for developers. The app also encourages new registrants to invite everyone in their phone's address book to join Kik, since users can only message those who also have the app.
- **There's some stranger danger.** An app named *OinkText*, linked to Kik, allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. There's also a Kik community blog where users can submit photos of themselves and screenshots of messages (sometimes displaying users' full names) to contests.
- **It uses real names.** Teens' usernames identify them on Kik, so they shouldn't use their full real name as their username.

Oovoo is a free video, voice, and messaging app. Users can have group chats with up to 12 people for free. (The premium version removes ads from the service.)

Why it's popular

Teens mostly use Oovoo to hang out with friends. Many log on after school and keep it up while doing homework. Oovoo can be great for group studying and it makes it easy for kids to receive "face to face" homework help from classmates.

What parents need to know

- **You can only chat with approved friends.** Users can only communicate with those on their approved "contact list," which can help ease parents' safety concerns.
- **It can be distracting.** Because the service makes video chatting so affordable and accessible, it can also be addicting. A conversation with your kids about multitasking may be in order.
- **Kids still prefer in-person communication.** Though apps like Oovoo make it easier than ever to video chat with friends, research shows that kids still value face-to-face conversations over online ones -- especially when it comes to sensitive topics. Still, they sometimes find it hard to log off when all of their friends are on.

. Yik Yak is a free, location-aware, social-networking app that lets users post "anything and everything" anonymously through brief, Twitter-like comments, which are distributed to the geographically nearest 500 people who are also signed in to the app.

Why it's popular

Kids can find out opinions, secrets, rumors, and more. Plus, they'll get the bonus thrill of knowing all these have come from a 1.5-mile radius (maybe even from the kids at the desks in front of them!).

What parents need to know

- **It reveals your location.** By default, exactly where you are is shown unless you toggle location sharing off. Each time you open the app, GPS updates your location.