

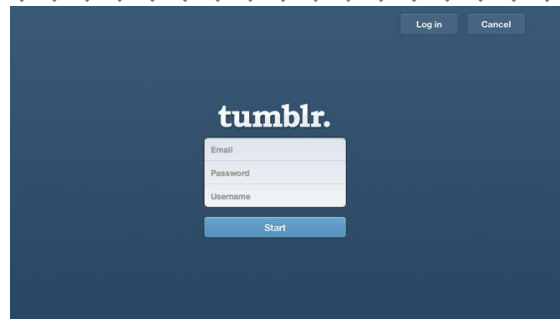


Tumblr – Why Kids Love It and What Parents Need To Know



Maybe you've heard your teen talking about something called Tumblr. Or perhaps you've seen it on the Internet somewhere and always wondered what it is. Aside of its increasing popularity among the younger crowd, there's really only one reason why you might want to consider blocking Tumblr on your home computer, or at the very least having a conversation with your child/teen about why they should wait until they're older before signing up for an account.

In contrast to other blogging platforms like WordPress, Typepad or Blogger, Tumblr is a streamlined blogging platform that adds a unique creative element to creating and sharing ("re-blogging") photo, video and audio blog posts. Of course, users can post traditional blog articles, but what attracts the younger crowd is the ability to create somewhat of a collage of photos, videos and quotes that represent their individuality. As many Tumblr users will tell you, this can be a great way for *anyone* to express their creativity and interests. Why did I italicize "anyone"? Well, because just like with Facebook both adults and children can join the Tumblr community, and just like on Facebook the inappropriate content isn't necessarily promoted, but it's there if you (or better yet your children) want to find it.



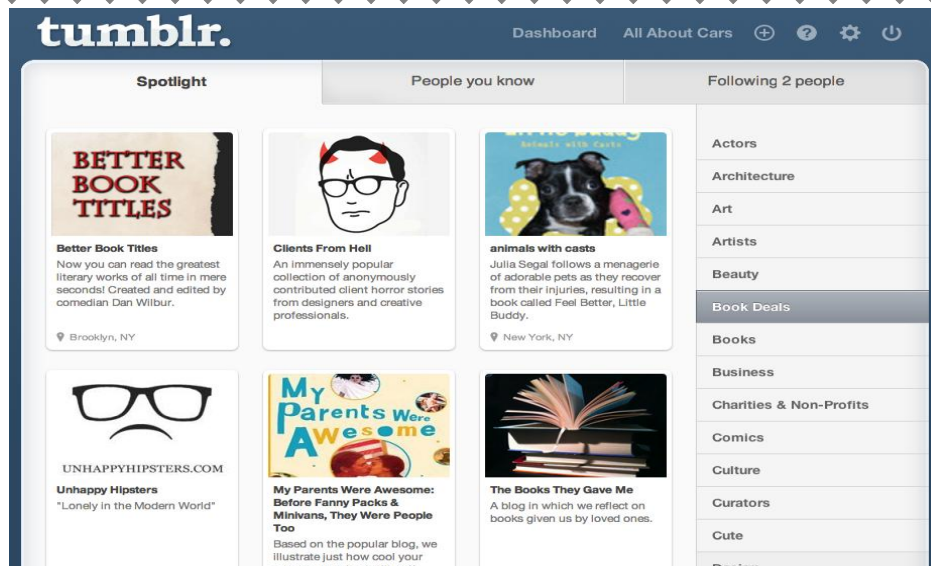
On the safety side of things Tumblr keeps things simple. The only information they ask of you during sign up is what's shown in the screenshot above. However, as soon as you hit start you're asked to type in your age, and if you type in anything below 13 Tumblr rejects your registration. This means, and as Tumblr's Terms of Service makes clear, **children 12 and under are not allowed on Tumblr.**



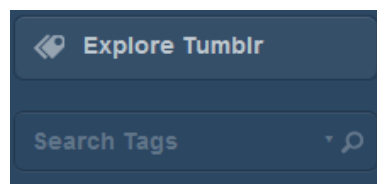
If cyberbullying or any kind of online harassment becomes an issue, Tumblr makes it easy to report and block a specific user and/or their Tumblr blog.

What Parents Need to Know –

In a lot of ways Tumblr is an online collection of contemporary culture. Users can follow Tumblr blogs of celebrities, architects, fashion designers and professional athletes, among many others. And because of Tumblr's compilation style of blogging, you can literally find anything from art and crafts ideas to hardcore porn, and equally as easy.



All of that being said, finding pornography on Tumblr is no different than finding it on Twitter or Facebook.



A simple tag search for “porn”, “sex” or “adult” results in a stream of pornographic images and video that any Tumblr user can see and share.

Despite it being a creative outlet for young minds, the fact remains that Tumblr is not for children. Websites like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr can only go as far as requesting their age during registration; it’s in your hands to educate your child about following the rules, whether it’s in school, on the soccer field or online.

I can hear a child saying: “Dad, I don’t use Tumblr for all these things you’re worried about. My friends and I don’t go looking for that stuff you mentioned. Don’t worry so much!” Don’t fall prey to these comments. The fact of the matter is, Tumblr, like many websites, blog platforms and social networks, does not have the content filters or oversight in place to ensure a healthy experience for your child.

For your teens, it might help to create a dialogue about their activity on Tumblr – find out what they post, who they follow, and if necessary, create an account of your own and follow them. Let them know you know what kind of content is available to them in the Tumblr community and how inappropriate content, regardless of where it’s coming from, can often times lead to malicious applications and computer viruses. If you feel that blocking Tumblr altogether is necessary in your home, there are several options available to you: