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Join Janice D'Arcy, journalist and mother of two, in exploring how we raise our children today. Janice will write about the news, ideas, trends, people and opinions shaping our experience as parents. Read more about Janice [here](#).

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Posted at 01:06 PM ET, 04/10/2012

Instagram: What parents need to know

By [Janice D'Arcy](#)

Business news today is dominated by Instagram, a quirky photo sharing application. Facebook has announced it's buying the start-up used by 30 million people in [a deal worth about a billion dollars](#) in cash and shares.

Some of the most prolific users of Instagram are teens. Using their iPads and smart phones, they snap photos, embellish them and share them with friends.

Instagram is a hit with teens. (Karly Domb Sadof - AP)

A 16-year-old writing for the teen-produced site Radical Parenting detailed in [a recent post](#) why she and her friends are addicted to Instagram. Perhaps the biggest reason the application is such a hit with teens, as the writer mentions, is that it offers an outlet for that abundant need teens have for self-expression.

The purchase by Facebook is likely to make Instagram that much more popular. So, it might be a good time for a parental primer.

The folks at [Yoursphere For Parents](#), a group that provides Internet safety information, recently gathered some helpful tips to better supervise this digital playground.

First, it's important to know that photos uploaded on Instagram can, by default, be viewed by anyone, anywhere. There's also an option to share the photo location, which may be of concern if a parent would rather not have a child broadcast his whereabouts.

Yoursphere provides guidance [here](#) on how to add privacy restrictions to an account.

Also, Instagram, like Facebook, is not supposed to be used by children under 13. Images are usually cute or artistic, but there are also nude

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photos and disturbing images to be found.

The application requires an account sign-on, which includes entering a birth date, but many parents have already found that tech-savvy kids easily overcome this obstacle.

Also, like so many digital gathering places, Instagram has been used for cyber-bullying.

The Yourshpere editors make it clear that it's not the application itself that is necessarily a problem — and the Radical Parenting writer offers a glimpse at how teens are using it to explore their artistry.

Still, a certain level of supervision is advised.

Do your kids use Instagram? How? Do you monitor their use?

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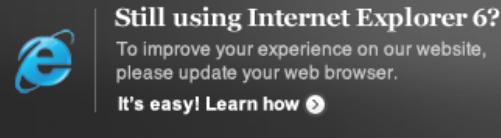
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



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



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