

# Chapter 5

## The Hidden Dangers of Online Gaming for Teens: Fraud, Harassment, and Parental Controls

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### ABSTRACT

*Online gaming has become an essential part of teenage life, offering entertainment, skill development, and social engagement. However, this digital space also exposes young players to significant risks, including fraud, harassment, and exploitation. Teen gamers are often targeted by cybercriminals through phishing scams, account breaches, and deceptive in-game transactions, leading to financial and security concerns. More alarming is the risk of online predators who use gaming platforms to manipulate and exploit vulnerable players. This chapter examines these hidden*

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*dangers, shedding light on their consequences and the measures needed to combat them. It emphasizes the importance of parental involvement, highlighting tools such as content filters, communication monitoring, and spending limits to enhance online safety. Furthermore, fostering digital awareness, promoting responsible gaming, and encouraging open conversations between parents and teens are crucial steps in reducing these risks.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Gaming involves playing video games by using digital devices such as personal computers, smartphones, virtual reality devices and gaming consoles. When these games are played over the internet, it is referred to as online gaming. Gaming has both pros and cons, the dark side of gaming consequences for the internet gaming disorder, particularly associated with certain online games, however offline computerized games can also contribute to these concerns. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)

Given the growing number of young users, ensuring a safe and secure online environment for children and adolescents is increasingly essential.

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly altered the way individuals interact and communicate with each other. The internet now become as an important tool for accessing information and entertainment. Platforms such as instant messaging applications, social media and audio/video calling applications have become primary means of communication. Out of the 4.95 billion internet users worldwide, one in third are minor under the age of 18, and many of them use internet without the adult supervision (Livingstone, Carr, & Byrne, 2015). Given the increasing numbers of young users, ensuring a safe and secure digital environment for children and adolescents is essential. Many adolescents may be vulnerable to cyber threats while engaging in online social activities which can expose them to violent content. Common and serious risks include Child harassment exposure to pornographic content, cyberbullying, victimization, abuse, online grooming, sexting, and pedophilia. These threats can arise from interactions with strangers or even with peers in the digital world. (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012)

In this rapidly growing technological environment, online gaming is one of the most widely used internet activities that has been linked with positive effect, such as increased social relations. Although, negative effects are also correlated with extreme use of online gaming, such as negative attitudes and emotions, loneliness, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor academic performance, and maladaptive coping strategies (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012)

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