

Online traps: how extremists target you

Part 1

Learning objectives

Explain what online radicalisation means and how it can happen

Spot the signs that someone might be getting pulled into extremist ideas

Talk about ways to keep yourself and others safe online

Ground rules

Do:

- Respect, listen, and let others finish
- Share ideas, not others' personal details
- Pass if you wish
- Raise any concerns with staff
- Use respectful language
- Keep things private unless safety is at risk
- Ask questions

Don't

- Interrupt
- Share private information about others
- Use offensive/extremist language



Starter Activity

Online traps: how extremists target you

In pairs, or small groups, match the terms to their correct definitions

**What do we
know
already?**

Term

Algorithm

Definition

An algorithm is.....



Matching activity online

<https://wordwall.net/resource/94387411>



Reflection

- Were any of these terms new to you?
- If not, where have you seen or heard these terms being used before?



Picture stimuli

Online traps: how extremists target you

Image 1:

What do you think the image represents?



Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Image 2

What do you think this image represents?



Image credit: [Nomad_Soul](#)

Image 3:

What do you think the image represents?



Image credit: [sonmez karakurt](#)

Image 4:

What do you think the image represents?



Photo credit: StreetMic LiveStream, CC BY 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

Reflection

- Has the image activity made you think or feel differently about anything, or consider a different perspective?



Debate

Online traps: how extremists target you

Debate motion: Social media companies should be more responsible for monitoring extremist content.

Debate motion

FOR

Social media companies should be more responsible for monitoring extremist content.

AGAINST

It is not the responsibility of social media companies to monitor extremist content.

Debate roles and rules

Be respectful of others' opinions

Listen carefully to opposing views

Ask questions to clarify or challenge ideas

Only one person speaking at a time

Support your arguments with examples or evidence

Debate motion: Social media companies should be more responsible for monitoring extremist content.

Some prompts to help

- What are the current challenges in monitoring extremist content on platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Discord, Instagram, and Telegram?
- How do algorithms and influencers contribute to the spread of extremist content?
- What responsibilities should individual users have in reporting harmful content?



**Some
prompts
to help**

Debate motion: Social media companies should be more responsible for monitoring extremist content.

- Should governments regulate online platforms more strictly - or would that be censorship?
- What is the role of digital literacy in helping people avoid being drawn into extremist content?
- How might online monitoring affect freedom of speech? Where is the line?



Reflection

- What went well?
- What was challenging?
- What did you learn about the topic and about debating?



Let's discuss

- Tell us what you think online radicalisation means, and describe ways how it can happen.
- How might you be able to tell that someone might be getting pulled into extremist ideas?
- How might you be able to keep yourself and others safe online?
- Name a trusted adult you can talk to and get help from if you are concerned.
- What one thing are you going to take away from today?



Online traps: how extremists target you

Part 2

Learning objectives

Spot the signs that someone might be getting drawn into extremist ideas

Talk about ways to keep yourself and others safe online

Know where you can go and who you can talk to for help

Ground rules

Do:

- Respect, listen, and let others finish
- Share ideas, not others' personal details
- Pass if you wish
- Raise any concerns with staff
- Use respectful language
- Keep things private unless safety is at risk
- Ask questions

Don't

- Interrupt
- Share private information about others
- Use offensive/extremist language



Quiz activity

Online traps: how extremists target you

1) What is online radicalisation?

a) Learning how to fix computers online

Quiz

b) Being influenced online to support extreme idea or actions **CORRECT**

c) Watching films and TV online

d) Using the internet for shopping



Quiz

2) Which of these could be a warning sign that someone is being drawn into extremism?

a) They begin volunteering more often at local community events

b) Becoming secretive about who they're speaking to online **CORRECT**

c) Talking at length about everyday hobbies

d) They start becoming more interested in political news and current events



Quiz

3) Why do extremist groups often use the internet instead of recruiting people face-to-face?

- a) It's more expensive
- b) It's easier to stay anonymous and reach more people
- c) People don't like talking online
- d) Social media is always private

CORRECT



Quiz

4) How might algorithms contribute to the spread of extremist content?

- a)** They hide all extremist content
- b)** They only show funny cat videos
- c)** They recommend similar content, keeping people in a “bubble” of the same ideas **CORRECT**
- d)** They block all messages from strangers



Quiz

5) Why might it be difficult for social media companies to monitor all extremist content?

- a) There are too few people on social media
- b) People only post photos, not messages
- c) Extremist messages are always obvious and easy to spot
- d) There's a huge volume of content and hidden or coded language is often used **CORRECT**



Quiz

6) What is one argument against governments creating stricter rules for social media platforms?

- a) People would never use social media again
- b) It could be seen as censorship and limit free speech
- c) Social media companies want to ban all users
- d) Only young people use social media

CORRECT



7) Which is a responsibility of an individual online user?

a) Ignoring harmful content

Quiz

b) Reporting extremist or harmful content when they see it **CORRECT**

c) Sharing everything they find online

d) Keeping quiet about their opinions



Quiz

8) Which of these is a good way to protect yourself from extremist content online?

- a) Reply to everyone who contacts you
- b) Keep your accounts public so everyone can see them
- c) Avoid suspicious links and check sources of information **CORRECT**
- d) Share your personal details with strangers



Quiz

9) Which combination of behaviours might suggest someone is being radicalised online?

- a) Posting recipes and cat videos
- b) Suddenly changing opinions, isolating themselves, and using new or secretive online accounts **CORRECT**
- c) Sharing funny memes with friends
- d) Using strong passwords and security tools



Quiz

10) Apart from telling a trusted adult, which will help protect you from extremist content online?

- a) Responding to all friend requests and clicking unknown links
- b) Keeping your profile public and sharing personal details
- c) Fact-checking information and adjusting privacy settings **CORRECT**
- d) Sharing extremist posts so friends can see them



Quiz

Online quiz

<https://wordwall.net/resource/94621309>



Video

Online traps: how extremists target you

Discuss the following quote and consider what it means in the context of the internet and online hate:

***“Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
only light can do that. Hate cannot
drive out hate; only love can do that.”***

Martin Luther King Jr.



Video feedback

- What did you notice first?
- How did this video make you feel?
- What is the story behind this video?
- Who might be affected by what is shown here?



DRAFT

**Video
feedback**

- Are there people who you only know in an online context? What do you really know about them?
- Have you ever encountered anything disturbing online? What might be some ways of dealing with this if and when you do?



John's story

Optional
video 1



https://youtu.be/-CCj_c5y-OI?feature=shared

Video feedback

- What do you notice about John's story?
- How do you feel about John being changed?
- Does it make you think differently about what you have seen online recently?



Case Study

Online traps: how extremists target you

Case study: Jamie's story

Jamie is a 15-year-old who enjoys online gaming and spending time on social media platforms. Over the past several months, Jamie has increasingly withdrawn from offline friendships and become more involved in a private Discord server dedicated to gaming. While the group initially shared gaming tips and funny memes, over time, the content began to shift.

Some of the older members in the server regularly posted memes, videos, and links to livestreams containing extreme political messages. At first, Jamie saw this material as just 'edgy' humour designed to provoke reactions. However, the repetition of similar ideas, blaming specific groups for social problems and glorifying violence started to influence Jamie's views.

The group members encouraged Jamie to follow certain online influencers who promoted conspiracy theories and violence. They directed Jamie to carefully curated websites and private channels that presented biased information often mixing half-truths with outright misinformation. These platforms made Jamie feel part of a community with 'special knowledge' that outsiders did not understand.

Case study: Jamie's story

Gradually, Jamie started to see the world through the lens promoted by the online group. Group chats regularly framed immigrants, religious minorities, and people with different political opinions as 'the enemy', accusing them of deliberately destroying society. Violence was increasingly discussed as a legitimate or heroic way to 'fight back'.

Jamie's behaviour offline began to change. Friends and teachers noticed that Jamie became more irritable, withdrawn, and suspicious of others. Jamie started using new phrases and slogans picked up from the online group, expressing hostility towards people Jamie had never previously talked about negatively. When a friend gently challenged these ideas, Jamie reacted defensively, accusing them of being 'brainwashed by the mainstream'.

Jamie's parents remain unaware as Jamie has become secretive about online activity and dismissive of concerns.

One of Jamie's close friends is now genuinely worried. They have noticed how the online content has escalated from provocative jokes to open calls for hatred and violence, but they are unsure how to help Jamie or who to tell.

Case study: Jamie's story



Case study: Jamie's story



Case study: Jamie's story



In your groups, discuss one of the questions below:

Case study activity

- Is Jamie gradually being radicalised?
- Why was the online community so powerful for Jamie?
- What were some of the tactics used to persuade Jamie?
- Were there any early warning signs?
- Is challenging these beliefs always the right thing to do?
- Do you think Jamie knew they were being targeted?
- Who should help Jamie?

Reflection

- What early signs of radicalisation can you spot in Jamie's story?
- Why do you think Jamie felt drawn to the online group?
- How might friends or teachers approach Jamie in a supportive way?
- What could Jamie's friend do now if they're worried?
- What would you do if you noticed similar changes in someone you know?



Let's discuss

- How might you know if someone is getting drawn into extremist ideas?
- What are your tips for staying safe online?
- Who or where could you go to for help if you have any worries about yourself or someone else?
- What one thing will you do differently as a result of today's session?

