



<https://www.meetme.com/#home>

What is it?

This app launched in 2004 as MyYearbook and changed to MeetMe in 2012. Today, it claims over 100-million users. The app helps people connect based on shared interests and GPS tracking. The idea is to allow the app to find someone who lives near other users so they can relate.

Why can it be dangerous?

Osch (2019) runs a for-profit online course to help warn parents and school leaders about the constantly changing face of social media. He considers MeetMe one of the most dangerous applications in which a young person could interact. The two top concerns Osch proffers are, firstly, the app's default setting gives your phone permission to use the GPS feature in a students' phone so that once an account is created and they sign in, other users can instantly see where they are located. There is no way to tell if the person who visits your pictures, information, and location is a good or evil person.

Secondly, the app does not use any effective means of protecting a persons' data. Kanzler (2019) wrote about a sexual predator law enforcement sting where they used various social media apps; MeetMe is one. Sixteen men from multiple professional fields, including a cop, pastor, and schoolteacher, were arrested in this one simple operation.

Defenses

McKenna (2016) warns parents that MeetMe is nothing more than a dating or physical encounter app. He does not believe the app exists so that people can interact in a usual social manner, but instead, they use it to find someone ready to meet up and engage in adult activities.

At the same time, the app acts like all other social media apps that allow pictures, private messaging, private chat rooms, and other avenues by which a young person could be easily swayed into something inappropriate, including physically meeting a mysterious person. His advice is to heed the app makers' accurate warning on their site; it is for seventeen or older individuals, and no one under that age should venture into this dangerous world of unknowns.