

Video games, websites predators are using to lure children in 2022

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CINCINNATI (WXIX) - A new year means new apps, websites and video games that predators are using to try and lure children.

FOX19 NOW Investigates spoke to experts who say it's not only the platforms - it's the pandemic.

In recent months, Kenton County Detective Brian Jones has been warning about sites like Omegle, Chat Roulette or Emerald Chat that are built to "talk to strangers."

"The majority of cases like this, you know, child sexual exploitation online occurs from strangers. So if I had any tip for any parents out there is know what your kids are doing and teach them that this happens with strangers primarily. So if you don't talk to strangers online, statistics show that you're not going to be a victim," he said.

Jones recently received a tip in a child exploitation case from Omegle.

"A couple months ago, there was a local child that was on Omegle and had been solicited," he said.

The detective then posed as a 14-year old female from Ohio.

"And initially it was 'do you have pics?' And so his very first time on that website was somebody asking a child for pictures - very first line of

conversation," Jones said. "So that's the kind of websites here you're dealing with when you get Omegle Chat Roulette."

The FBI warns there are about 500,000 predators active online everyday. Kids ages 12 to 15 are most at risk.

A mother of a son who loves gaming said her rule for him about talking to people is what you teach your kids with in-person encounters - do not talk to strangers.

"When you talk to a stranger in front of you, it is easy to say 'they are kind of giving me a weird feeling.' The same thing happens online," Mallory Diebel said. "It's about having those little hard conversations that they may not want to have, but important to keep that communication open."

FOX19 NOW reached out to the owner of Emerald Chat to talk with them about their security policy, but they never responded.

Jones said the best advice is to do your research and educate yourself.

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