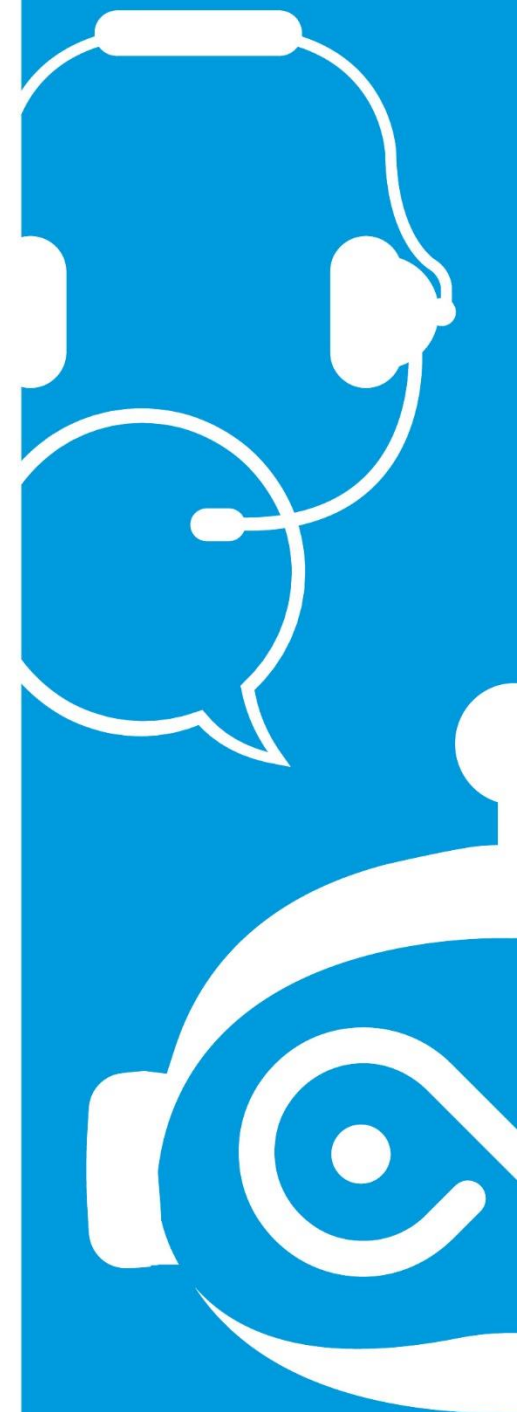




SOCIAL MEDIA: X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

What is it?

X is a **digital tool** that functions as a free interactive social media platform, which allows users to write short posts ('tweets') with a 280-character limit. Besides using it to communicate and debate their ideas and thoughts, X also allows people to search for topics that interest them with the use of hashtags (#), connecting them to like-minded users.



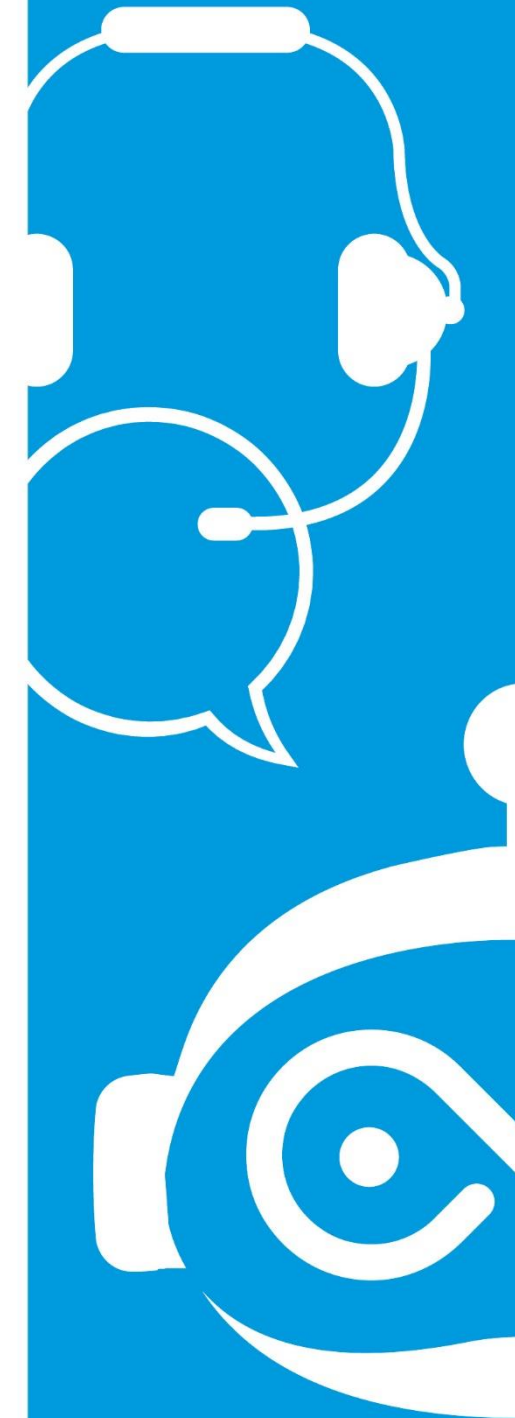
How can it impact the sexual and reproductive health of youth?

Despite the fact that X provides users the opportunity to inform themselves about their SRH by following content generated by other users (benefitting from both anecdotal experience and links to research), this platform is vulnerable to manipulations spreading misinformation due to its slow fact-checking procedures.

In addition, X also has a very lax sensitive media policy, unlike Instagram and Facebook. Therefore, users can easily come across full frontal nudity and sexual content from simply browsing the application and its features, such as users' liked posts.

More nefariously, however, is the prevalence of unrestricted hate speech and harassment on X. Violence and abuse against minority groups and women is present in the form of direct or indirect threats of physical or sexual violence, abuse targeting one or more aspects of a person's identity (e.g., racism, transphobia, etc.), privacy violations such as doxing, and the sharing of sexual or intimate images of a user without their consent. Usually these individuals who engage in targeted harassment against a user are often called 'trolls'.

Concerns over the sexual exploitation of minors is also rapidly growing on X, making it a hotbed for predators online targeting vulnerable groups that may be inquiring about their SRH.



What are some ways in which youth can be supported?

Using X in a safe and functional way to inform yourself about SRH requires making use of some of the platform's privacy features, such as:

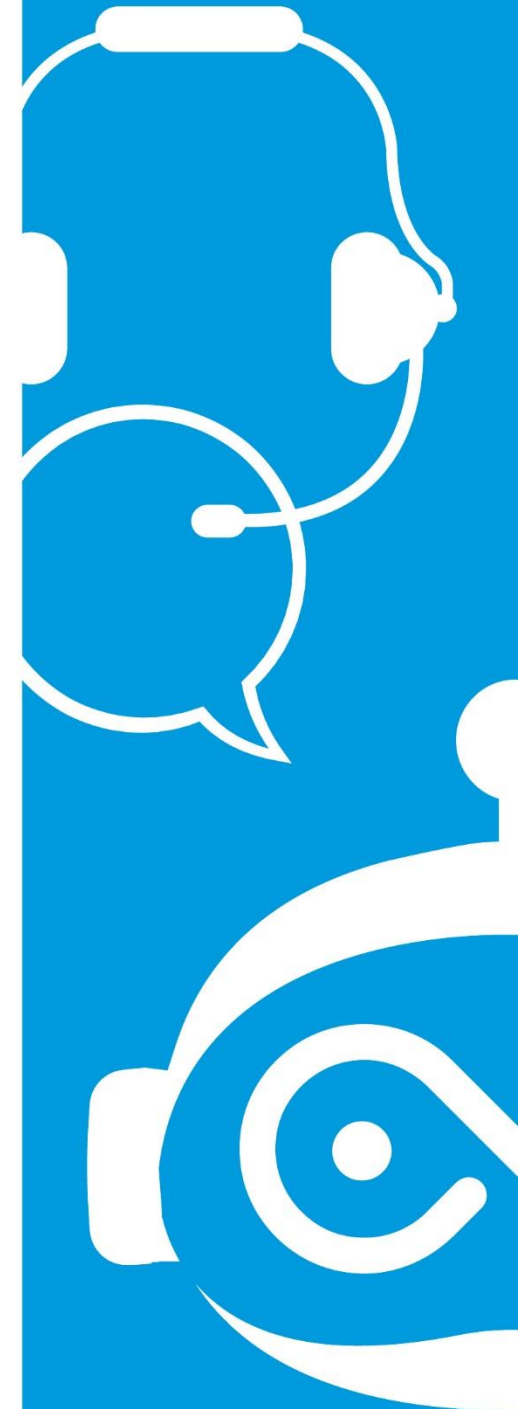
- Blocking, reporting or muting users that post inappropriate or harmful content
- Limiting who can see your tweets, contact or tag you, in order to make yourself less visible to potential predators or harassers online
- Enabling the 'hide sensitive content' option to be able to browse through the application without worrying that you'll come across sexually explicit content

The safe use of X also entails following some already-mentioned good practices online such as hiding personally identifiable information from others and double-checking the validity of claims posted online.

Related digital phenomena/tools:

See sheets:

- Online abuse: Hate speech
- Social media: Snapchat
- Chatboards: Omegle



Further reading:

- Amnesty International. "Toxic Twitter - Women's Experiences of Violence and Abuse on Twitter," March 20, 2018. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/online-violence-against-women-chapter-3-2/>.
- Cahill, Ryan. "The Hot, Hot Rise of the NSFW Twitter Alt." Dazed, January 1, 2021. <https://www.dazeddigital.com/science-tech/article/51518/1/the-rise-of-the-nsfw-twitter-alt-onlyfans-tumblr-censorship>.
- Kasmani, Mohd Faizal, Abdul Rashid Abdul Aziz, and Farah Fatin Zulaikha. "Twitter Usage And The Impact On Young People's Wellbeing." *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences* Breaking the Barriers, Inspiring Tomorrow (October 6, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2021.06.02.35>.
- Nguyen, Quinn. "9 Must-Know Tips to Help Keep Twitter Safe for Kids." *CyberPurify* (blog), October 1, 2021. <https://cyberpurify.com/knowledge/help-keep-twitter-safe-for-kids/>.

