



The Dark Web

The dark web (or dark net) refers to sites hidden by encryption, through an 'onion network'

It can also refer to the darker side of the 'normal' web, such as the bulletin board 4Chan or Pro Ana sites, which can promote anorexia

You may have read about it in relation to the shutting down of the online drugs market, Silk Road

Young people are naturally curious. Some are drawn to the dark net because of its mysterious nature



Tor is the most well known encrypted browser. It stands for The Onion Router

(So called because internet traffic is disguised by going through lots of layers, like the layers of an onion. It's not illegal to download it)

Once you have downloaded an encrypted browser, it protects the anonymity of the people using it – and the websites it hosts. Advocates of online privacy are big fans. But a 2014 study by the University of Portsmouth found that the most commonly requested type of content on Tor was child sex abuse images. Encrypted browsers are also where many drug dealers conduct their business, and political and religious extremists can communicate freely

In 2013 it was reported that out of 1500 UK users of Tor, a third were thought to be involved in criminal activity



Encrypted browsers also protect people who live in countries where free speech is difficult. They can talk and organise on the dark net without fear of the authorities discovering them.

Whistleblower Edward Snowden used Tor to protect himself from the US National Security Agency

Jamie Bartlett, author of The Dark Net, argues that parents should explore the dark web themselves and discuss what they find with their children, to help them avoid the more disturbing parts and question the more contentious or inflammatory content they might find there

Whether parents feel comfortable doing this or not, it is a good idea to ask older children what they know about the dark web, and discuss what they may find if they go there