

Examining the ethics of family vlogging

 queensjournal.ca/story/2020-11-06/pop-culture/examining-the-ethics-of-family-vlogging

We're all familiar with YouTube; boasting about every genre known, its videos range from beauty tips and toy unboxings to gaming videos and everything else in between. One genre which has cropped up in recent years is family vlogging, racking up millions of views and attracting a number of families to give the format a shot.

These channels don't appear sinister on the surface—in fact, they seem like rather cute and harmless fun. Families post themselves pulling pranks on each other, gaming, crafting, or just living their daily routines.

Perhaps for some families, vlogging is a way to document important parts of their lives. But for others, it's a way to profit off of their children.

Through its structure, YouTube can be an effective way to grow a following of loyal fans who subscribe to your videos. The more people watch your videos, the larger the profit these creators can make through ad revenue.

Traditionally, vloggers are adults—they're able to pick and choose what aspects of their lives to share. However, family vlogging often centres around children, who are often the main focus of these channels' content. Parents show the highs and lows of their children's lives, including moments that might be against the best interests of their kids.

With such significant exposure to the public, critics have questioned the ethics of family-oriented vlogging. The format sets up parents to profit from exploiting their children for views and advertising revenue, but it's questionable whether or not children should even be on these channels due to their inability to consent to having their privacy invaded.

Children can't be fully aware of social media's dangers nor the risks associated with having so much information about them out on the internet.

One YouTube family that's [come under fire\(link is external\)](#) for posting too much of their children's personal lives is YouTube channel '8 Passengers.' The family's mother has posted videos of her punishing her children, as well as having conversations with them about puberty and other highly personal topics. During these conversations, the children have asked their mother to put the camera down, but she continues filming. Despite the criticism from onlookers and the families' own children, their channel continues to thrive.

Another family that's recently made headlines is 'The ACE Family' on YouTube. The family isn't new to scandals: in October, the family posted a video where they didn't edit out a clip in which the father got aggravated and [cussed at his wife in front of their children\(link is external\)](#), his anger stemming from her starting to film before he could fix his hair. The whole situation was sad and uncomfortable.

Channels like ‘8 Passengers’ and ‘The ACE Family’ shine a harsh light on the questionable ethics of family vlogging, particularly on platforms that are profitable like YouTube. In this sphere, the family dynamic is beginning to be exploited as a business model: children are at risk of being employees to their parents, and intimate moments are being shown to millions of people, all to capture the attention of the people who watch their channels.

It should be difficult to watch family vlogs without questioning if all of the parties are being treated equally and fairly. It’s important to think critically about who you’re watching when consuming online content—particularly on a platform like YouTube, where almost anything goes.

While the onus is on YouTube to implement guidelines to combat these issues and protect children on their platform, viewers and subscribers can help make family vlogging less profitable for those parents who are mistreating their children by simply not watching them.