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Browser plugin tracks kids' online activity — and whether it's good for their mental health

## BROWSER PLUGIN TRACKS KIDS' ONLINE ACTIVITY — AND WHETHER IT'S GOOD FOR THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

**Mevoked gives parents greater insight into the types of online content their kids are looking at, as well as how it's affecting their state of mind.**

Children growing up with the internet can spend much more time using it than their parents, and are often able to navigate their way around it more easily — whether that's a good or bad thing. Designed for parents who want more control over their children's internet usage, [Mevoked](#) is a new platform that gives parents greater insight into the types of content their kids are looking at, as well as how it's affecting their state of mind.

Essentially a behavioral analytics platform, Mevoked is based on research which suggests that the things we look at on the web can indicate emotional states, and the same goes for children. The plugin can be installed on both Google Chrome and Android devices, where it discreetly collects data from the websites, searches and comments being viewed or posted. A dashboard for parents then lets them know how long their kids are spending online, as well as if they're searching for and interacting with positive or negative content. Rather than aiming to help parents snoop on their kids, the feedback is delivered in a non-specific form — most visually as a smiley face which changes in real time depending on the behavior patterns being exhibited by their kids. The system learns kids' typical web behavior in order to determine what's normal for them and what's unusual. The dashboard also shows the general types of any negative content being viewed — violence, sexual, drugs/substances, and mental health — in order to allow parents to approach their children about the subjects they may be worried about.

Arun Ravi, CEO and founder of Mevoked, says: "We can look at early indicators of depression, obsession with violence, [and] risk of suicide based on online activity. We're trying to intervene before that happens and empower parents to act." Ravi was driven to develop the platform by his

personal history, which involved the suicide of a school friend when he was 13. While some may not welcome the outsourcing of parental vigilance to a browser plugin, Ravi believes it could make the difference between detecting the early signs of mental health problems and tragic loss.

The basic Mevoked extension is free, while advanced analytics and flagged content alerts are available in the Standard option for USD 5 a month. Are there other ways to help parents connect with their kids by being more open about their internet use?

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