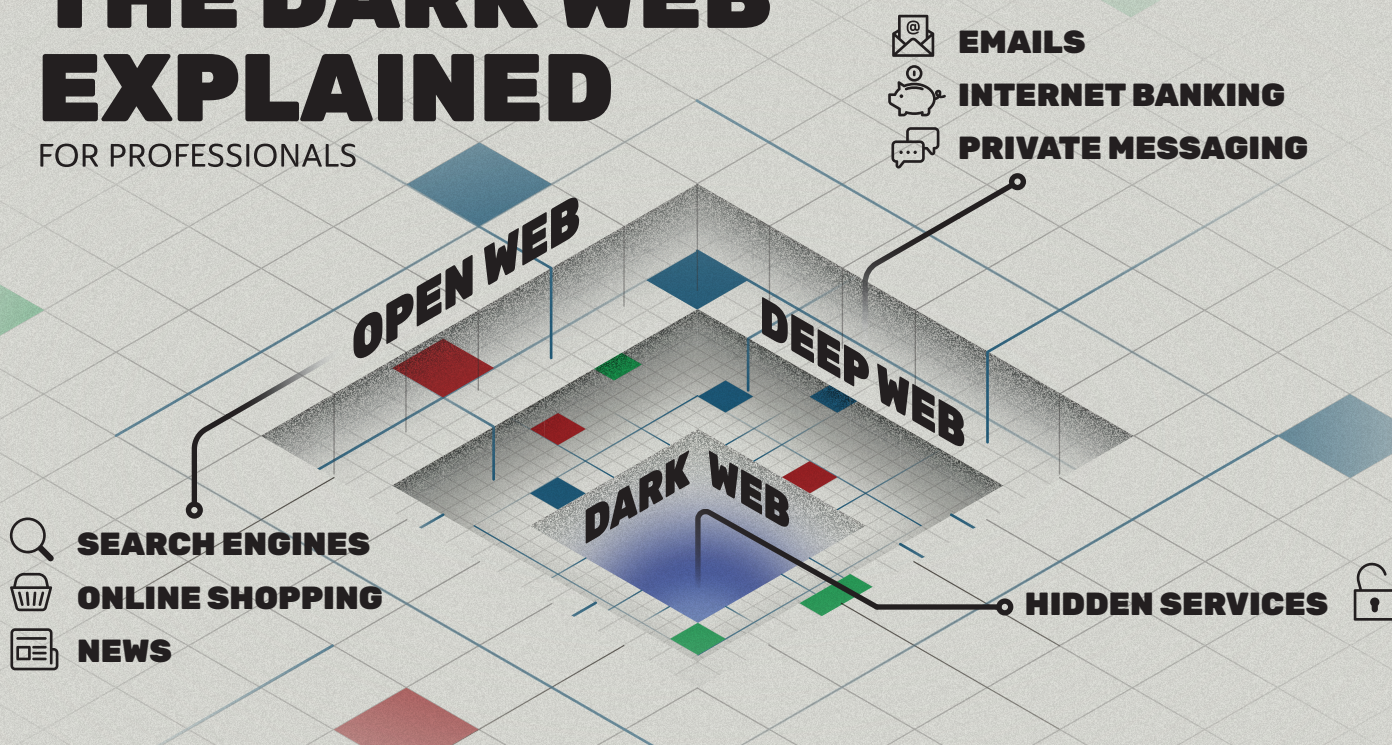


THE DARK WEB EXPLAINED

FOR PROFESSIONALS



Being aware of the Dark Web can help you have informed conversations and support a young person if you are concerned.

WHAT IS THE DARK WEB?

There are three different parts of the internet: the Open Web, the Deep Web and the Dark Web.

The Dark Web is the hidden part of the internet. Dark Web sites do not appear on search engines and can only be accessed using a dedicated anonymity software such as Tor.

This software protects the identity of the website and the user and can be used to browse the Open Web anonymously or to access Dark Web sites known as hidden services.

Although the Dark Web is often linked to criminal or illegal content, it is not illegal to access the Dark Web, or to download anonymity software.

WHY MIGHT A YOUNG PERSON ACCESS THE DARK WEB?

There are a number of reasons why a young person might want to use the Dark Web. These include:

- Curiosity about technology and the online world.
- Privacy concerns.
- Accessing illegal content or services.
- They have been coerced or forced to access the Dark Web by someone else.

Whatever the reason for accessing the Dark Web, the potential risks are the same as those on the Open Web. This includes exposure to harmful or illegal content and people who may seek to harm children.



Have you watched our Dark Web Explained video?
Watch to find out more about the Dark Web and what to do if you have concerns about a young person using it.

thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/dark-web-explained

WHAT TO DO IF A YOUNG PERSON HAS ACCESSED THE DARK WEB

1 REMAIN CALM

Try not to make assumptions. If you're angry or worried, it may stop the young person from telling you why they have accessed the Dark Web.

Remain non-judgmental and don't blame them for anything that may have happened while on the Dark Web. Remind them that you want to make sure they are safe and supported.

2 ASK QUESTIONS

Ask sensitive, open-ended questions. If you don't know much about the Dark Web, don't be afraid to say. Ask the young person to explain it to you.

Seek to understand more. You want them to feel that they can share their thoughts and feelings about their experience using the Dark Web without getting in trouble.

3 SEEK SUPPORT

If you think a young person is going on the Dark Web and may be at risk of immediate harm call **999**.

If you are concerned, please refer to your internal safeguarding policy and procedures.

For further advice and support about your concerns, you can call the [NSPCC Helpline](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/helpline/) on **0808 800 5000**.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Why did you want to go on the Dark Web?

Has there been a time when you were on the Dark Web that you felt uncomfortable or unsure about?

Tell me about what you saw on the Dark Web?

How did you access the Dark Web?

Do you think you will go on the Dark Web again?

Not all young people will want to access the Dark Web.

Only talk to a young person about the Dark Web if you know they have used it or are interested in accessing it.

STEPS TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE SAFER ONLINE

- **Support families to understand the Dark Web.** Find out how much parents and carers know about the Dark Web and share the parents and carer's fact sheet with them. Remind them to only speak to their child about the Dark Web if they know their child is using it.
- **Make sure you are using appropriate filtering and monitoring solutions** on devices used by young people in your setting. For more information visit: swgfl.org.uk/magazine/appropriate-filtering-and-monitoring
- **Encourage and support young people to identify a healthy use of technology.** If a young person's use of technology is impacting their wellbeing, for example, you've seen changes in their emotional, social or physical health, you may need to work with them and their families to regain a healthier balance.

- **Let them know support is available.**

A young person may find it difficult to tell you about their experiences, or about something that has happened online.

For further support, let them know they can:

- Report concerns about online sexual abuse to the [CEOP Safety Centre](https://www.ceop.gov.uk/).
- Report nude images shared online to Childline and Internet Watch Foundation's [Report Remove](https://www.iwf.com/uk/report-remove) tool.
- Call or message [Childline](https://www.childline.gov.uk/) if they are worried and want someone to talk to.

For further advice and guidance or to download our educational resources for young people visit:

thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals