

November 14, 2012

Sheryl Sandberg
COO, Facebook, Inc.

Dear Ms. Sandberg,

We are a community of concerned citizens in British Columbia, including Amanda Todd's mother. As you may know, Amanda was contacted and blackmailed through Facebook by an adult predator who impersonated local teens to enter her circles of friends.

We write imploring you to lead change in the social media industry by correcting the security failures that made such victimization possible.

As shocking as Amanda's story was, there is still much cause for worry. A YouTube channel, *The Daily Capper*, openly celebrates and promotes the sexual exploitation of many young girls, fueling traffic to a dark web of under-age sex sites. Meanwhile, reports out of Indonesia document that predators use Facebook as a key tool enabling them to abduct under-age girls into human trafficking.

Instagram, a photo-sharing program owned by Facebook, now features tens of thousands of images of children uploaded by their babysitters, available for viewing by some 8 million daily users. No security prevents the inadvertent publication of profile information such as home addresses and phone numbers, and Instagram has a map function that enables predators to find the location of many photos.

Omegle is a site that invites kids as young as 13 to "Talk to Strangers" via video or text, and integrates directly with Facebook Connect. A simple YouTube search yields online instruction for contacting very young girls, and Omegle itself has a feature through which lurkers can prompt users to inter-act with each other, and to watch them anonymously.

These examples point to serious systemic design defects that place children and teens in harm's way.

Known security gaps in a proliferating host of mobile applications have converted mainstream social media sites into highly effective devices for predators and abusive bullies. And in what can only be described as the cruelest irony, YouTube now sells advertising on Amanda's desperate video cry for help, while in a well-documented trend, her Facebook memorial page was desecrated.

Facebook has become a brand feared by parents, when it should be one they can trust.

We appeal to you as COO of Facebook, a mother, a visionary digital media leader, and member of the board of The Walt Disney Company, to lead industry-wide adoption of systemic security to block predators and abusers from accessing kids on major social media platforms, starting with Facebook itself.

This is a consumer protection issue. Facebook has over a billion users around the world, of which an estimated 20%, or **200 million**, are aged 17 and under. Those users should be secure from contact with unscrupulous predators and abusers.

We are delighted to hear of your current initiative to reduce bullying and make young Facebook users safer through stronger reporting and educational resources, and we applaud your efforts. ***Yet while education of parents and kids is laudable, the onus for safety must not rest solely with consumers. Parents are not equipped to navigate complex technology and what their kids (or their kids' friends) do online is often outside their control.***

Indeed, the principles of consumer protection are well established, particularly for products intended for use by children. The burden of ensuring systemic product safety rests with the industry that designs, engineers, markets and distributes it.

Real safety in social media requires systemic change across the industry.

We know that everyone in the legitimate social media industry wants kids to be safe. **As a society we have a duty to use all our powers to ensure young people are free from exploitation and abuse.**

Over the coming weeks and months our BC community will build a coordinated effort to press for industry reform and consumer protection. As one final note, we implore you to ensure that memorial pages are monitored and abusive posts *immediately* removed.

We would love to meet with you to discuss how Facebook can lead that change.

For Amanda,

Sandy Garossino, civic advocate, business owner, *View from BC* panelist, CKNW
Raffi Cavoukian C.M., O.B.C., Centre For Child Honouring

Carol Todd, mother of Amanda Todd

Kim Cunliffe, bereaved mother of teen Darin Cunliffe, whose Facebook memorial was desecrated

Kip Woodward, Chair, Vancouver Coastal Health

Dr. Marlene Moretti, Senior Research Chair, Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Saleema Noon, B.A. M.A., Sexual Health Educator

Out In Schools, Drew Dennis, Executive Director, Ross Johnstone, Director of Education

Maureen Palmer, Director CBC documentary **Sext Up Kids**

Melissa Carr Vancouver's "Top Mom Blogger" <http://thethirtiesgrind.com/>

Bill Good, host, The Bill Good Show, CKNW, Corus Radio Network

Bridgitte Anderson, VP, Corporate & Public Affairs, Edelman Vancouver *View from BC* panelist CKNW

Alise Mills, Strategic Communications & Media Relations, *View from BC* panelist, CKNW

Jen Shaeffers, Executive Director, CKNW Orphans Fund

Jessica Gares producer, The Bill Good Show, CKNW

Michael Tippett CEO, *Ayoudo*, Co-founder, *NowPublic*

Michelle Rupp, Community-builder and Principal, Lighthouse Leadership

Peter Ladner, Author, columnist, former city councillor

Bif Naked, International Recording Artist, author, advocate

Grimes, Claire Boucher, International Recording Artist

Shane Koyczan Canadian poet, anti-bullying author and advocate

Linda Solomon, CEO, Observer Media Group, Publisher, The Vancouver Observer

Mark Busse, Partner/Managing Director, Industrial Brand, Vancouver organizer; Creative Mornings

Meeru Dhalwala, Partner, Vij's & Rangoli, author, healthy living advocate