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Cassandra Barnett ([00:21](#)):

Welcome to the SMACtalk for educators podcast, a part of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Social Media Advisory Committees Initiative. Each month, we feature interviews with people who have interesting things to say about, not just social media, but all things tech. I am your host, Cassandra Barnett. I am the program advisor for school libraries here at the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. And this month, I'm excited to be talking with Ayden, who his father has described as a bonafide gamer to the max, and Teagan, who loves to hang out with her friends on various real time chat apps. So welcome Ayden and Teagan. Keep in mind that our audience is mostly teachers, so this is your opportunity to educate teachers. So the first question I have is just, I'd like both of you to just talk a little bit about how you use the internet and social media, just give me kind of an overview.

Teagan ([01:26](#)):

When I use social media, it's usually Discord and YouTube and Instagram. Those are my three main ones. And then TikTok is also one, but I don't use it a lot. I usually talk to my friends, and that's basically about it.

Cassandra Barnett ([01:40](#)):

I know when I was a teenager, it was way before internet, and we used the telephone, and it wasn't a smartphone. But I would get home from school, and then spend an hour or two talking with my friends that I had just spent the whole day with.

Teagan ([01:55](#)):

Yeah.

Cassandra Barnett ([01:57](#)):

Okay. So Ayden, what about you?

Ayden ([01:59](#)):

Well, I use Steam, which is like an online sort of gaming store, you can buy games from and play with your friends with. I use Discord like her, but I don't have, usually, friends from school. I usually have friends that I've met from games, and I just talk to them from Discord, like her.

Cassandra Barnett ([02:17](#)):

We're going to talk about gaming a little bit later, but I also want to talk about social media and online presence and the way to really handle being safe online. So I'd kind of like to just ask you what you all have done to protect your online presence.

Teagan ([02:36](#)):

When I'm online, I'm not as-

Ayden ([02:39](#)):

Outgoing?

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Teagan ([02:41](#)):

Yeah. I'm not well-known. I don't socialize with people I don't know.

Cassandra Barnett ([02:47](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Teagan ([02:48](#)):

I protect myself by being reclusive.

Cassandra Barnett ([02:51](#)):

And that's one good approach, being very selective in who you interact with. Ayden, what about you?

Ayden ([02:59](#)):

I've had a few encounters of where people have wanted to know where I was or lived. It was pretty scary. So I've learned from those experiences and kept most stuff private to myself, like location, what my name is. I only have a select few friends that know my real name

Cassandra Barnett ([03:18](#)):

So when you're gaming, you have a gamers' name then, not your real name?

Ayden ([03:23](#)):

Yeah.

Cassandra Barnett ([03:24](#)):

Both of you do have some online relationships with others. It sounds like those are mostly with people that you know, but how do you manage that? How do you make sure that you're interacting with those people that you know?

Teagan ([03:42](#)):

So in person, I'll get their gamer tag. On Discord, you'll have your gamer tag, and then you'll have a number beside it. And I'll make sure that I have their number. And then after that, we'll create a big group chat, and we'll stay in that community.

Cassandra Barnett ([03:59](#)):

What about you, Ayden?

Ayden ([03:59](#)):

Sort of like her, but mine consists of friends I've met all across, maybe countries. But usually, what we do is we make different sort of community groups, sort of like her.

Cassandra Barnett ([04:10](#)):

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I think what I'm hearing you say is you formed communities. Talk to me a little bit about how that community works. Is there a specific app that you have where you form these communities?

Ayden ([04:21](#)):

We all use Discord to gather up a bunch of friends. You could say you could invite over a hundred people that could be friends that you've met all across world. There could only be a select few that you only talk with, but there could be a bunch of close friends that's in there.

Cassandra Barnett ([04:38](#)):

You've both mentioned Discord, so tell me a little bit about Discord. What's Discord, and how do you all use it?

Ayden ([04:45](#)):

I would say, think of it as like a Messenger app, because it's a free texting slash calling app that lets you create servers that relate to games that you like to play with your friends, or you can just message with them.

Cassandra Barnett ([04:57](#)):

Do you get to see each other on that app, or is it mostly talk and chatting?

Ayden ([05:02](#)):

Oh yeah. There's a feature sort of like Skype where you can use video call and lets you sort of interact with each other through that way as well.

Cassandra Barnett ([05:10](#)):

I've never heard of that. So how new is it?

Ayden ([05:12](#)):

I think it's been out for a while.

Cassandra Barnett ([05:14](#)):

Has it?

Ayden ([05:15](#)):

Yeah.

Cassandra Barnett ([05:16](#)):

It sounds like it's easy to use and something that works really well. So that's one that kids your age are tending towards?

Ayden ([05:24](#)):

Yeah.

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Teagan ([05:25](#)):

Most kids.

Cassandra Barnett ([05:26](#)):

Yeah.

Teagan ([05:26](#)):

Yeah. You can do a lot of things on Discord. You can host games and a bunch of other things.

Cassandra Barnett ([05:33](#)):

Are there any particular privacy settings and stuff like that that make it safer?

Ayden ([05:39](#)):

This one uses an alias name instead of your full name. So instead of using like Google Hangouts like that, instead of having it as your name, it would use an alias. And it also has different settings where like you want to be left alone, there's online, there's idle, and then there's gray for like, you just want to be left alone. They can't tell you're online and stuff. And red, which looks like a circle thing through it, makes it where like you don't get pings or messages from anybody.

Cassandra Barnett ([06:09](#)):

Do they collect a lot of data about you?

Ayden ([06:12](#)):

No. Hardly.

Teagan ([06:14](#)):

Not much.

Cassandra Barnett ([06:15](#)):

So they don't make you do a whole bunch... Give you a whole bunch of personal information then?

Teagan ([06:20](#)):

No.

Ayden ([06:21](#)):

No. It's just, you sign up with your Google email, and you make your account that way. Discord is a really good way to be able to connect with someone. And it could be a really good way to start up something, like we had said earlier, like a server. Teachers and other students could talk to each other on different, like projects that might be coming up, about homework, make suggestions on what to do, I guess, next. And they could do polls, because I know that's a thing. And I think that would be a really good way to be able to communicate with each other.

Cassandra Barnett ([07:00](#)):

So tell me a little bit about how you became aware of dangers online. It sounds, Ayden, like maybe you even had a personal experience. Did you learn about it in school? Is that stuff you learned at home or from your friends? Tell me a little bit about that.

Ayden ([07:19](#)):

In first through fourth, they would kind of drill that into you in computer class. It would sort of be like they would show you videos of people who have been kidnapped by messaging someone random and then meeting up with them. So it scared us. So we kind of learned from that. Also, an experience off of my PlayStation, I was playing one day, and I got this random message from someone, and they wanted to get private information from me. They wanted to meet up somewhere. I got my dad to help me, and he immediately blocked them away from me. I'm glad he could help me with that.

Cassandra Barnett ([07:52](#)):

So Teagan, have you had any experiences like that?

Teagan ([07:56](#)):

No. I only play games with people that I truly we know. And if I get anything that's like what he had, where he had somebody text him over the PS4, I just kind of ignore it. At school, we didn't get much. Whenever I was in middle school, it wasn't as thorough as what they have now.

Cassandra Barnett ([08:17](#)):

We've learned to be a little more careful about that over the years, for sure. We hear a lot about cyber bullying. And I'm wondering if you all have experienced that, or have friends that you know that might have been cyber bullied?

Teagan ([08:34](#)):

I don't think I have. Not that I recall. Like I said, again, I'm not very outgoing on the internet.

Cassandra Barnett ([08:41](#)):

It sounds to me like being really careful about how much you're on the internet can kind of minimize those kind of experiences then.

Teagan ([08:49](#)):

Yes.

Cassandra Barnett ([08:49](#)):

Ayden, what about you?

Ayden ([09:00](#)):

The only things I've really experienced in that realm is competitive trash talk on games that I played. There's a lot of people out there that like to, I guess, trash talk their way into there and try to be toxic

towards you, saying mean stuff towards you, and try to make you feel down, because you've done something wrong and you messed up.

Cassandra Barnett ([09:13](#)):

Okay. So what would your advice be for people who are doing that kind of stuff? What would be your advice for how to handle it?

Ayden ([09:22](#)):

Well, I try to at least ignore them, or some games have a feature to where you can turn off voice chat. I usually do that, because after a while you can see that it probably gets annoying to most players. So I would recommend for them to do that.

Cassandra Barnett ([09:38](#)):

So I see peer pressure as being a little bit different. Is that something you all have experienced, with your friends trying to get you to do something that you may not necessarily want to do?

Teagan ([09:52](#)):

No, not for me, because it's easier to ignore them if it's online than it is in person, for me.

Cassandra Barnett ([09:58](#)):

So I'm interested to know, do you consider yourself more consumers of stuff that comes out over the internet and through the apps that you connect with, or do you like to create content?

Ayden ([10:12](#)):

I've done both. And I'm more of a consumer when it comes to just watching YouTube videos. I have my own channel that I posted videos on there about me playing games. It kind of brings like a... If you had a bad day at school, it just brings joy back to you. That's what I find that good for.

Cassandra Barnett ([10:31](#)):

Teagan, what about you?

Teagan ([10:33](#)):

I'm probably also a consumer, because I like to watch a bunch of YouTube videos. I don't have a channel, but I have posted one video on my profile. But it was just me drawing, and it was for somebody else. So I don't really create things. Not that I'm saying that I won't maybe later in life, but I just kind of like to watch YouTube videos, or look at Instagram posts that are memes that are really funny.

Cassandra Barnett ([11:05](#)):

Well, there isn't anything wrong with being a consumer of stuff. There's so much out there to go down that rabbit hole and just keep digging and digging. So you talked about Discord, but there are some other platforms or apps that you really like to use?

Teagan ([11:21](#)):

Instagram is one that I like to use, because I get a lot of content from it. So there'll be short videos, and then there'll be memes. And sometimes there'll be really cute pictures that I can look at that are animation drawings, and they're really cool.

Cassandra Barnett ([11:42](#)):

We know that, and I've heard about it in particular with Instagram and Facebook and stuff, a lot of information gets posted on there that's not really true. So how do you sort out what the good information and the bad information, how do you sort that out?

Teagan ([11:59](#)):

For me, I don't really get into a bunch of misinformation. I don't get into that. I kind of just follow people that I like from other stuff, like for YouTube, I'll follow YouTubers pages. And then if it's something that they post that probably isn't great or something like that, I'll just... I don't know. I don't really ignore it, but I'll kind of fact check it.

Cassandra Barnett ([12:29](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. So I'd to spend a little bit of time talking about gaming. So Ayden, tell me about the games that you particularly like to play.

Ayden ([12:41](#)):

For Honor and Call of Duty, that was the first thing I went to. I actually really like racing games more than I do shooter games.

Cassandra Barnett ([12:51](#)):

I don't remember where I saw it, but a lot of the online games seem to have a chat feature. So is that how you communicate with the other people that you play with, or do you do something on the side along with that? How does that all work?

Ayden ([13:09](#)):

Oh, PlayStation has this cool feature where it lets you talk and game through your headset. If you have a microphone attached, you can unmute to talk to the team to help do call outs, or like in Rust, it has a shortcut button, which is V, and it allows me to talk to other players.

Cassandra Barnett ([13:26](#)):

So Teagan, what about you? What are the games that you like?

Teagan ([13:30](#)):

I dabble in game play. I like to play Minecraft, and that's about as far as it else.

Cassandra Barnett ([13:35](#)):

Well, what about Minecraft appeals to you?

Teagan ([13:38](#)):

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The creativity. It's just that you can express how to create different houses, or you can create really cool water parks. There are even servers, different servers that you can play on where Minecraft players can get together and play a bunch of mini games. So it's like murder mystery, or it's build battle, which is where you get to pick a topic, and then you build it out of Minecraft blocks, and it's really cool.

Cassandra Barnett ([14:06](#)):

That sounds like you could spend hours and hours and hours.

Teagan ([14:09](#)):

Oh I do. It's great.

Cassandra Barnett ([14:12](#)):

So Ayden, what is it that appeals to about the racing games?

Ayden ([14:18](#)):

Well, I'm a car fanatic. Like if I see a car, I have to know the specs of it. Plus, I really like to be a fast-paced player. Usually racing games, you have to be sort of into it, and you have to be able to react to it fast. You have to be more consistent, which is what I find really cool about them.

Cassandra Barnett ([14:35](#)):

Okay. So are you thinking that someday you're going to actually be a race car driver?

Ayden ([14:41](#)):

I don't know. I could put more thought into doing content creation.

Cassandra Barnett ([14:46](#)):

So it sounds like maybe you might even be interested in creating your own game someday.

Ayden ([14:51](#)):

Yeah. I would actually really like to do that.

Cassandra Barnett ([14:55](#)):

Guys, I really appreciate you taking the time to visit with us today. There are insights that I got today about gaming in particular that I really appreciate you talking about. I'm just so glad that you were able to take the time to talk to us. Thank you.

Teagan ([15:12](#)):

You're welcome.

Ayden ([15:12](#)):

You're welcome.

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Ayden ([15:12](#)):

(silence)