

# Facebook installs 'panic button' for children

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Facebook has joined forces with a child protection agency to create a "panic button" application on its site, as the social networking giant finally gave in to calls to do more to protect youngsters online.

Facebook has joined forces with a child protection agency to create a "panic button" application on its site, it was announced Monday, as the social networking giant finally gave in to calls to do more to protect youngsters online.

The application allows youngsters to report suspicious behaviour to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and Facebook.

The launch of the service marks a turnaround for Facebook which initially resisted calls for a so-called panic button after the murder of a teenage girl in 2009 was linked to the site.

At the time, Facebook said its own protection mechanisms were sufficient.

Users of the social networking site will from Monday be able to bookmark the ClickCEOP service or add it as an application by going to [www.facebook.com/clickceop](http://www.facebook.com/clickceop).

An automatic advert for ClickCEOP will also appear on the homepage of every Facebook user listed as between 13 and 18 years old.

Jim Gamble, chief executive of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) said today marked "a good day for child protection."

"By adding this application, Facebook users will have direct access to all the services that sit behind our ClickCEOP button which should provide reassurance to every parent with teenagers on the site," he said.

"We know from speaking to offenders that a visible deterrent could protect young people online."

Facebook vice-president Joanna Shields added: ""There is no single silver bullet to making the internet safer but by joining forces with CEOP we have developed a comprehensive solution which marries our expertise in technology with CEOP's expertise in online safety.

"Together we have developed a new way of helping young people stay safe online and backed this with an awareness campaign to publicise it to young users."

[Facebook](#) came under fire earlier this year for not offering enough protection to its young users after the conviction of a serial rapist who used the site to contact and murder a teenage girl.

Peter Chapman posed as a young boy to lure 17-year-old Ashleigh Hall to her death in Sedgefield, in northeast England in October 2009.

He was jailed for a minimum of 35 years in March.

Calls have since grown for more websites to install panic buttons -- which allow youngsters who feel threatened online to quickly contact a number of sources of help, such as CEOP or anti-bullying helplines.

Panic buttons were already in use on [social networking sites](#) Bebo and MySpace.

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