

# Privacy fears as eight in 10 kids have photos online

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A study by Melbourne-based AVG found an average of 81 percent of toddlers in 10 western countries have a digital presence; 92 percent in America, followed by 91 percent in New Zealand and 84 percent in Australia and Canada.

A third of [children](#) have their photos online at just a few weeks of age, while a quarter appear on the Web before they are even born in the form

of ante-natal scans, the company said.

"It's a sobering thought," said managing director Peter Cameron. "The vast majority of children today have online presence by the time they are two years old -- a presence that will be built on throughout their whole lives."

"It reinforces the need for parents to be aware of the [privacy settings](#) they have set on their social network profiles. Otherwise, you may be sharing your baby's picture not only with your friends and family but with the whole online world."

The company said parents should keep tight [privacy](#) settings to guard against identity theft or unauthorised use of the pictures which could dog the child as it grows up.

"They've got to have (settings) so they are only sharing with family and close friends and it's kept within close confines, otherwise it can be picked up and used anywhere," said spokesman Lloyd Borrett.

"Stranger danger applies online just as much as it does in the real world."

AVG, which has software to protect against identity theft, surveyed 2,200 mothers with Web access and children under two in Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

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