

# Flirting App *Skout* Shuts Down Teen Site to Protect Kids from Adult Predators

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*Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: Parents beware! We are in the perilous times about which the prophets forewarned us. (2 Timothy 3)*

Skout, a San Francisco-based firm that has connected millions of users from more than 100 countries worldwide since 2007, is suspending its service for minors following three alleged rapes, the company announced Tuesday. (Skout.com)

A mobile app that helps flirty users connect with others nearby has shut down service for minors after a third teen was allegedly raped by an adult predator using it.

Skout, a San Francisco-based company that has connected millions of users from more than 100 countries worldwide since 2007, announced the change on its blog Tuesday after a 21-year-old Wisconsin man allegedly raped a 13-year-old boy he contacted through the app. The company had already sought to protect young users by creating a separate service for 13- to 17-year-olds, but was apparently unable to keep adults from posing as kids.

"It's become clear to us that these measures aren't enough," Christian Wiklund, the company's founder and chief executive, said. "In recent weeks, we've learned of several incidents involving a few bad actors trying to take advantage of some of our younger members ... We know how much Skout means to our teen community, and, at Skout, our community means everything to us. For now, we believe that there's only one thing we can do: until we can design better protections, we are temporarily shutting down the under-18 community."

The company had tasked a quarter of its employees to monitor the underage community, including chats and profiles, using advanced algorithms to find inappropriate content and behavior. But now, even with the teen version shut down, there's still no foolproof way to prevent teens from lying about their age to use the adult version of the app, or any other number of social media sites, a company spokeswoman told FoxNews.com.

"It's an industry-wide problem," the spokeswoman said regarding false ages and identities, adding that profiles are manually checked by at least four employees.

Using a zero-tolerance policy, company officials said "tens of thousands" of the devices associated with problem users are banned each month for suspicious or inappropriate behavior.

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- Christian Wiklund, Skout's founder and CEO

In each case, men allegedly posed as teenagers in a Skout forum ...

To read this article in its entirety, go to: <http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2012/06/15/skout-location-based-flirting-app-bans-minors-following-three-alleged-rapes/?test=latestnews#ixzz1xsHbrtH>