

From Your Ridgecrest Counselors

PVPUSD welcomed Josh Ochs, founder of [Safe, Smart, & Social - Teaching Students How To Shine Online](#), to its campuses to present to our community on best practices for social media use. Josh Ochs highlighted the different scenarios parents and students can face regarding one's online identity and how to create an appropriate and presentable personality within the social media mainframe. Josh Ochs presented to Ridgecrest students this week to give students an overview of how their social media usage and actions today impact their future lives. We took Mr. Och's presence on our campus as an opportunity to sit with him for a quick Q&A to gather some recommendations that he encourages our community to practice. We included "our spin" to offer suggestions we felt would be helpful contributions as well.

Google Resume Admissions counselors and employers are googling applicants from a very young age; by the time an applicant is applying it may be too late because their reputation is hurt. Josh Ochs suggests google searching the first two pages of yourself (entering your name in the google search bar). If you google yourself and other people [with the same name] come up, Mr. Ochs suggest creating "brand specific" content that is light, bright, and polite to bring your positive content to the top. Creating a brand specific name on one's social media accounts helps make a person easily identifiable online in a positive fashion. Doing so prevents colleges and employers from identifying content that may hurt one's application. [More information on the meaning of Light, Bright, and Polite – a book by Josh Ochs is available in this link.](#) *Our spin:* Keep in mind Ridgecrest students are still in middle school. We encourage our students to not wear identifying logos (school name, sports teams, etc.) or tag their locations on social media apps as a safety precaution. We recommend keep the location services feature turned off on the camera and social media apps.

Self-Monitor Josh Ochs recommends that students monitor themselves once per month on Google to make sure they are aware of the content out there about them. Regular monitoring of online content about oneself and what others may be posting about that person is good practice for a positive social media reputation. *Our spin:* If you find information about yourself or others online that may appear questionable or need help reporting, feel free to show a parent or see a counselor or administrator at school. Reporting any negative, abusive, or false content can lead to positive outcomes.

Anonymous Apps When kids use anonymous apps, they behave in a very different way, as Josh Ochs described in an article published in the PV News (full article available [here](#)). In the article, Mr. Ochs describes this behavior as "when we do not have a reputation that we have to hold or defend, we end up acting in ways that we never thought possible." *Our spin:* It is important to continue to teach students what type of person they are and want to be, and that they should be proud of the content they put out on social media, anonymous or not. Everyone remembers their online activity. The rule of treating others as you wish to be treated in person applies online as well.

Parent Dialogue Every parent is strongly encouraged to have dialogue with their child(ren) about social media applications (aka "apps"). To start the conversation, Josh Ochs suggests to parents to turn your kids into the expert. Have your child(ren) download apps and teach you how to use them. *Our spin:* Hold

a discussion with your child(ren) about what appeals to them about these apps and what/why they use these apps for. Parents should conduct periodic checking of their children's phones for appropriate and inappropriate content to keep their children on healthy phone habits. For a list of safe and unsafe apps, visit safesmartsocial.com.

You can learn more about Josh Ochs and his work at safesmartsocial.com. We cannot stress enough the practice of smart and safe social media use. We are available to answer any questions or concerns related to social media and offer support and assistance to your family.

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