



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Consumer Information

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Buying an internet-connected smart toy? Read this.

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Before giving in to your kid's plea for a new toy, you may want to collect some information about it. Why? Well, for one thing, that toy may want to collect information about your kid. I'm talking about internet-connected smart toys with cameras, microphones, and sensors. The ones that know your kids' voices (and yours). Smart toys that silently collect data (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-protecting-your-childs-privacy-online>) on each interaction, listen to conversations, and share their location while kids play.

Internet-connected smart toys have opened up a whole new set of possibilities for toys — experiences that are educational, just plain cool, or both. But smart toys run the risk of being hacked by criminals, or having their data misused, just like any other device.

Before buying a smart toy this holiday season, be sure you know how it works. If you can't find information on how a smart toy collects, shares, or secures your kids' data, think about buying something else.

- Have there been security issues or recalls (<https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>) reported for this smart toy? Search online for the toy's name, the company that makes it, plus the words "complaint," "security," and "privacy."
- What do watchdog and safe harbor groups (<https://www.ftc.gov/safe-harbor-program>) have to say about it? Many offer smart toy recommendations.

Understand the smart toy's features:

- Does the toy come with a camera or microphone? What will it be recording, and will you know when the camera or microphone is on?
- Are you okay with a toy that sends email to your child or connects to social media accounts?

- Can parents control the toy and be involved in its setup and management?

Understand what information the smart toy collects, and how it will be used:

- What kind of information does the toy collect when your child plays with it?
- Where is this data (including pictures and recordings) stored, how is it shared, and who has access to it? Does the toy company give parents a way to see and delete the data?
- If the toy collects personal information from your child (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0031-protecting-your-childs-privacy-online>) under 13 years old, the toy company has to tell you about its privacy practices, ask for your consent, and give you the right to have your child's personal information deleted. If it doesn't, consider buying a smart toy that does. Or consider whether your kids might be happy with a toy that's not quite so smart.

For more information, check out our Protecting Kids Online (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online>) page.

Blog Topics: Privacy, Identity & Online Security (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/privacy%2C-identity-%26-online-security>)