

# TAGS: Parenting; Internet and Adoption Kids

## The Power of the Internet in Adoption

You are likely familiar with the old adage that in this life, you have to be prepared to take the bitter with the sweet. It's a saying that has stood the test of time because it's true. And it's a good way to maintain perspective over a lot of circumstances and experiences. Such is the case with the Internet. In the world of adoption, the Internet has been a mixed blessing.

In 2013, the Donaldson Adoption Institute released a study examining the impact of the Internet on adoption, finding that "it's being widely used in an array of positive ways" but "also is increasing commodification of children and commercialization by for-profit brokers, while enabling greater exploitation of pregnant women considering adoption for their babies and of adults seeking to adopt."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a very a mixed blessing.

### The Internet Can Be Exploitive

The biggest concern is that the Internet has further commercialized adoption. While adoption has always been a business, the Internet has pushed the culture further and further in that direction. While prospective adoptive parents can be the victim of this exploitation, a bigger concern is for expectant parents. All expectant parents deserve to have an honest conversation about the realities of adoption, future contact, and counseling. Aggressive online "recruiters" often don't provide the full disclosure or counseling. This is a lousy deal for the birth parents, and a heavy legacy for the children they place.

### The Internet Can Be a Force for Good

Certainly, we can fully acknowledge that there are problems with the Internet in adoption, but it's equally important to recognize that we are surrounded daily by the unbelievable power of the Internet for all members of the adoption triad. It's worth considering that the Internet's greatest force for good is in allowing adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth parents to find a community of people going through the same experience. It gives them a voice and an audience.

### Finding Your Adoption Peeps

Everyone needs community – a place where others "get" you and your experience. We've shared here in our Parent Support Center just how vital it is to participate in healthy, in-person support groups; but the reality for many (most?) adoptive parents, birth parents, and adoptees is that local support groups are simply not available. It's fair to say that the Internet may very well have made it even harder to sustain in-person support groups, but the online groups have been a life-enriching place for so many, and a life-saving place for some. As one adoptive mom said:

*I realize it's popular to point to the vehicle – the internet – as part of the cause of many things negative about adoption. But I can not fathom my own despair, or that of my family's if I hadn't had the internet to learn about early childhood trauma, attachment disorder and find therapists*

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<sup>1</sup> From Untangling the Web II, A Research-Based Road Map for Reform, [https://issuu.com/adoptioninst/docs/2013\\_12\\_untanglingtheweb2](https://issuu.com/adoptioninst/docs/2013_12_untanglingtheweb2)

*that I trekked across the country to see, conferences that I traveled to, and now so many “experts” that I know who are parenting traumatized children.<sup>2</sup>*

If you are looking to harness the power of the Internet for the good of your adoptive family, our partners at [Creating a Family](#) have a very active [adoption on-line support group on Facebook](#) that includes the voices of adoptive parents, adoptees, and birth parents. Additionally, [NACAC](#) offers this resource to [Find a Parent Group](#) that is local to you.

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<sup>2</sup> From Creating a Family blog post, The Internet’s Effect on Adoption, quoted by permission, <https://creatingafamily.org/adoption-category/the-internets-affect-on-adoption/>