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Vaults & Hidden Content Containers

A GUIDE TO APPS, SITES & SOCIAL NETWORKS THAT YOUR
CHILDREN MAY BE USING

DIGITAL FUTURES INITIATIVE

Kids who have something to hide, will do just that. Vaults, Ghost apps or Hidden apps are designed to disguise themselves as a common app (Calculator, music, file manager, etc) but with the correct passcode – open the secret storage area. While there are hundreds of such apps across all the mobile device platforms, below is a sampling of the different types of more popular apps that kids are using today and what some look like on a device’s screen.

Best Secret Folder



An iOS App used if you don’t want anyone to know what you downloaded. **Disguised as “My Utilities”** creating a covert place for photos. There is an “Intruder stopper” option that plays fake videos when opened. Will also auto-capture photos of anyone who tries to use the app without the proper password and record their location.

Gallery Lock



Android app used to hide photos is one of the top 10 sold on Google Play. App icon can be in “stealth mode” so it doesn’t appear on the phone. It catches intruders photos after three failed attempts to enter the device.

Hide it Pro



Hide it pro is a free app to hide your private photo, videos, apps or take secret notes. It is disguised as a fully functional audio manager. The program disappears from the recent apps list.....covering users’ tracks.

Snapchat



The popular social media and messaging app has a feature that most parents are unaware of. Under the “My Eyes Only” tab, users can hide photographs with password protection.

KYMS



Android and iOS app that hides photos, PDFs, Word Docs, Excel, PowerPoint, and text files. Disguised as a calculator. There is a “panic” feature that by placing hand over screen-closes the app.

Photo Locker



Android hidden photo & video app. It has ‘stealth mode’ that hides app in Android drawer.

Private Photo (Calculator%)



It appears as a calculator, but by punching in a code you unlock the photos or videos hidden behind the calculator icon called **Calculator%**.

Private Photo Vault



iOS app to import photos in albums and hide them behind a PIN lock. There is a decoy button that launches a different set of pictures. A reviewer says, “The decoy password feature is great. Let’s say someone sees photo vault on your phone, and is like what is in that? You tell them the decoy password and it opens up to entire set of fake secret photos so people lose their curiosity.”

Poof

Created to hide other apps on smartphone. Used to hide Snapchat or Whisper to prevent parents from learning of the download of such apps. *No longer exists but some teens may still have on their phones. *

Smart Hide Calculator

An Android app that hides files and itself. It appears as a calculator but with a code it unlocks content.

Jailbreak or Rooting Apps

Jailbreak for Apple and Rooting for Android----basically hacking one's own device to lift restrictions on applications for the device. Allows teens to download third party Apps and gain access to other features like Poof and other hide tools. Used to hide Apps, content, and violent games from parents.

There are many more types of vaults or hidden file apps. This is meant to represent the types of vault apps that are out there.

Do you think your child may have a vault app already? Here are a couple of ways to see if your child has a vault app on their device.

1. Do a quick look through their device for duplicate apps (ie. Two calculator apps)
2. Goto the App Store and search for "vault". Hundreds of apps will appear. Look next to the app – most will have a little box that says "GET". This means you do not have it. If the box says "+OPEN" – that means the app has been downloaded already.
3. The way to prevent in the first place is by placing parental controls on devices that require a parent password in order to download any app even if it is free.