

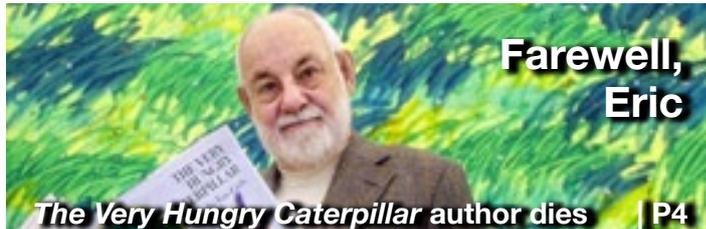


# small screen

News Digest of Australian Council on Children and the Media (incorporating Young Media Australia) ISSN: 0817-8224

**“It aligns well with ACCM’s values and objectives – but not perfectly.”**

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## ACCM launches Australian-first service

Parents can check which personal data and identifiers popular children’s app titles collect and who’s receiving

With the support of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), and in partnership with the San Francisco-based research group AppCensus, the Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM) has launched a ground-breaking tool to help parents vet potential privacy intrusions in the popular apps that their children want to play. ACCM and AppCensus will provide monthly analyses of 50 top Android apps popular with Australian children. These will show what “dangerous permissions” are granted, what identifiers are gathered, and to whom the data is sent.

In a [recent research project](#) funded by the SA Law Foundation, ACCM found there were no effective protections in place in Australian law to protect children’s

online privacy effectively. This leaves parents with a big responsibility and low levels of effective support.

As part of this present project, a Macquarie University team has provided the research that underpins ACCM’s development of parent-friendly videos and texts (short and long) on issues from *Why does children’s privacy matter?* to *How to talk to your 3-5 year about privacy* (using their toes).

ACCAN is the country’s peak body for consumer representation in communications, representing residential consumers and small business. AppCensus examines data flowers to detect the presence of sensitive data in mobile apps. Their findings have been covered by American media companies such as *The New York Times*, *the Boston Globe* and *The Washington Post*.



See our new resource [here](#)



### Screen time, the brain and Instagram

ACCM’s vice-president Wayne Warburton (pictured), and Associate Professor in Developmental Psychology at Macquarie University,



contributed his research insights to ABC Science’s segment [Instagram for kids may be coming](#) on May 18. Technology reporter James Purtill quoted Dr Warburton saying: “children’s consumption of mindless

content is atrophying parts of their brains, while large companies are looking to exploit this by building platforms that, like pokie machines, use a strategy of endlessly deferred gratification to hook them into staying ... When you’re using media that’s mindless, where you’re consuming but not engaging with it cognitively, the brain starts to atrophy ... The brain is the ultimate use it or lose it organ.”

### Appcensus co-founder gives evidence

On May 18, 2021, the US Senate Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security held a hearing, “Protecting Kids Online: Internet Privacy and Manipulative Marketing”. The International Computer Science Institute’s Director of Usable Privacy and Security, Dr. Serge Egelman (and cofounder of AppCensus), testified at the hearing along with Professor Angela Campbell (US) and Baroness Beeban Kidron (UK 5Rights).

Dr. Egelman testified about his research on apps for children, particularly in the Android landscape, and the COPPA (Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act) violations that his team discovered in the course of their research. “We used our tools to test 5,855 Android apps that were directed to children and found that more than half appeared to be violating COPPA”. Read Dr. Egelman’s full written testimony [here](#)

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editorial

UN releases General Comment 25: a constructive critique

PROF ELIZABETH HANDSLEY  
 ACCM PRESIDENT



If there are two principles that guide ACCM's work in advocating for the child media consumer, they are: (1) that children's age and stage of development are of great importance in working out how to optimise their media experiences; and (2) that media experiences can influence children's development in both beneficial and detrimental ways.

The recently-released General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment (GC) contains some helpful statements recognising both these facts. We were especially pleased to see that the drafters adopted our recommendation to include a dedicated section on the significance of ages and stages, along with some of the specific language we suggested.

The following text that we recommended was picked up almost word for word: *The risks and opportunities associated with a child's engagement in the digital environment vary depending on his or her age and stage of development. States should be guided by this consideration whenever they are designing measures to protect children in, or to facilitate their access to, that environment.*

*The design of age appropriate measures should be informed by the best and most up-to-date research available, from a range of disciplines. (See para 19)* Unfortunately, however, the drafters left untouched a statement that online counsellors should be exempt from any parental consent requirement when providing services to children (para 78).

ACCM had submitted that this 'lacks nuance as to the age of the child in question – that is, older children have higher expectations of privacy from their parents than do younger children'.

We are disappointed to see that the principle of ages and stages or, in the language of the CROC, 'developing capacities' was not applied here.

ACCM is also disappointed that the GC does not comment squarely on the significance and implications of article 17 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) which provides for children's rights as consumers of mass media and incorporates the concepts of 'information and material of social and cultural benefit' and 'information and material injurious to [a child's] well-being' (consistent with principle (2) above).

The GC makes multiple references to the kinds of content likely to be beneficial and injurious

to children (for example, respectively, 'age-appropriate and empowering digital content ... about culture, sports, the arts, health, civil and political affairs and children's rights' (para 51) and 'targeted or age-inappropriate advertising, marketing

or other relevant digital services [including] the promotion of unhealthy products, including certain food and beverages, alcohol, drugs and tobacco and nicotine products' (para 97)).

However, it does not link these to article 17 or its wording.

It is true that article 17 seems a little out of date now, having been drafted at a time before the recent explosion in digital platforms and content.

However, it is the closest thing that the CROC has to a way of specifically addressing children's rights in the media environment, and we are puzzled to understand why, in a document about children's rights in the digital environment, it should not have been given its own section.

Article 17 represents a compromise arising from a complex negotiation, and as a result it covers a number of different ideas and issues (and not always with a high degree of precision or clarity).

The GC frames it as an article about access to information, as indeed it is. But the access required is not just to any information, it is to beneficial information and material (a broader concept). ACCM submitted that the means of determining what information is beneficial to children should be spelled out more clearly in the GC; this does not appear to have been taken up. This is a shame because such detail could help to put a point on the Australian government's obligations in relation to quality children's content, just as it has severely watered down the Children's Television Standards.

As to signatories' obligation in relation to the protection of children from 'injurious' content, it is true that it is fairly limited – to '[e]ncourage the development of appropriate guidelines', presumably by private industry – but it is still an obligation, and in an age where there is much discussion of the business

world's obligations to uphold human rights (including children's rights), one might have expected some mention of how those obligations fit together – hopefully to make them mutually reinforcing.

Continued page 4

## ADVERTISING

Tur-Vines, V; Castello-Martinez, A  
**Food brands, YouTube and children: media practices in the context of the PAOS self-regulation code**  
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Kemps, Eva; Tiggemann, Marika; Tuschanski, Amber  
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Handsley, Elizabeth and Warburton, Wayne  
**'Material likely to harm or disturb them': testing the alignment between film and game classification decisions and psychological research evidence**  
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Feijoo, S; Foody, M; Norman, JO; Pichel, R; Rial, A  
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Konok, V; Liskai-Peres, K; Bunford, N; Ferdinandy, B' Juranyi, Z; Ujfalussy, DJ; Reti, Z; Pogany, A; Kampis, G; Miklosi, A  
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**Screen time use impacts low-income preschool children's sleep quality, tiredness, and ability to fall asleep**  
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**Longitudinal Associations Between Screen Use and Reading in Preschool-Aged Children**  
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## GAMING AND GAMBLING

Ide, S; Nakanishi, M; Yamasaki, S; Ikeda, K; Ando, S; Hiraiwa-Hasegawa, M; Kasai, K; Nishida, A  
**Adolescent problem gaming and loot box purchasing in video games: cross-sectional observational study using population-based cohort data**

## PHYSICAL IMPACTS

Joergensen, AC; Strandberg-Larsen, K; Andersen, PK; Hestbaek, L; Andersen, AMN  
**Spinal pain in pre-adolescence and the relation with screen time and physical activity behavior**  
BMC MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS APR 26 2021 VL 22 (1)

## PRIVACY

Bezakova, Z; Madlenak, A; Svec, M  
**Security risks of sharing content based on minors by their family members on social media in times of technology interference**  
MEDIA LITERACY AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH APR 2021 VL 4 (1) 53-69

## SCREEN TIME

Haycraft, E; Sherar, LB; Griffiths, P; Biddle, SJH; Pearson, N  
**Screen-time during the after-school period: A contextual perspective**  
PREVENTIVE MEDICINE REPORTS SEP 2020 VL 19

Jarvis, JW; Berry, TR; Carson, V; Rhodes, RE; Lithopoulos, A; Latimer-Cheung, AE  
**Examining differences in parents' perceptions of children's physical activity versus screen time guidelines and behaviours**  
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AMERICAN JOURNAL OF EPIDEMIOLOGY FEB 2021 VL 190 (2) 220-229

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**Out of control? How parents' perceived lack of control over children's smartphone use affects children's self-esteem over time**  
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**Smartphone use and academic performance: First evidence from longitudinal data**  
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## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

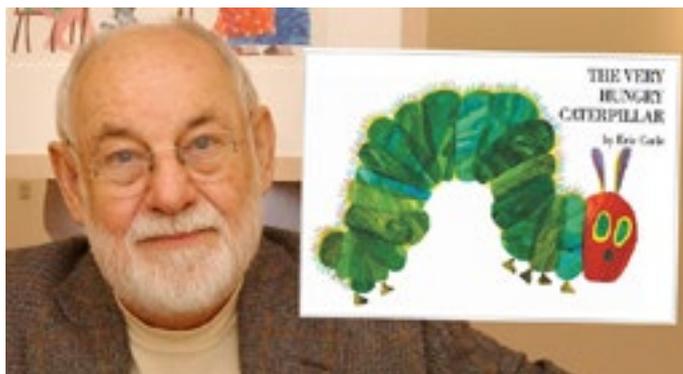
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**Australia in 2030: what is our path to health for all?**  
MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA 2021; 214 (8 Suppl): S1-S40; [doi: 10.5694/mja2.51020 - See Chaps 5 and 6](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Fat, LD; Cable, N; Kelly, Y  
**Associations between social media usage and alcohol use among youths and young adults: findings from Understanding Society**  
ADDICTION First published: 22 April 2021 [DOI](#)

## VIOLENCE

Kjærviik, S. L., & Bushman, B. J. (2021).  
The link between narcissism and aggression: A meta-analytic review.  
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[Advance online publication.](#)



## The Very Hungry Caterpillar author dies

Eric Carle's picture books were often about insects such as spiders, lady bugs and crickets. But it was *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* - probably his best work - that came out in 1969 that became his most famous literary work. Carle passed away at his summer studio in Northampton, Massachusetts,

aged 91 years old. "Children need hope. You, little insignificant caterpillar, can grow up into a beautiful butterfly and fly into the world with your talent. Will I ever be able to do that? Yes, you will. I think that is the appeal of that book." Listen to his NPR interview [here](#).

## US: Big Food, Big Tech, and the Global Childhood Obesity Pandemic

Center for Digital Democracy's [new report](#) Calls for Action to Address Saturation of Social Media, Gaming Platforms, and Streaming Video with Unhealthy Food and Beverage Products

## US: Use of premiums in child-targeted TV ads for children's fast-food meals deceives

Research [published in Pediatrics](#) finds that these ads often overemphasize premiums such as toy giveaways and games relative to the primary product being sold, the fast food itself. Read the research [here](#).

## AUS: Bluey: the beach – the book wins award

*Bluey* the much-loved TV show for preschoolers received an International Emmy in April the world's best television program for young children, [but in May won the Australian Book Industry Awards' top prize](#), book of the year, for *Bluey: The Beach*. "It's the biggest shock since we've been making this series," EP Charlie Aspinwall said. And has just taken out the top spot for 'Animation: Preschool (0-4)' at [Banff TV festival](#).



## AUS: Australia's Online Safety Bill 2021 still to be passed

The Bill, currently before the Senate, if passed in its current form, [will have significant impacts](#) for online service providers. The journal Lexology explains its provisions in detail.

## UK: Why the age of 13 for online platforms?

Stephen Balkam Founder & CEO, Family Online Safety Institute [discusses where to set the online age of consent: the US says 13, the UK16](#).

## US: Disney to shift channels to Disney +

The great majority of [100 Disney international channels' content will migrate to Disney+ this year](#)," Disney's CEO says- "That continues to be a core strategy for us as we pivot toward direct-to-consumer."

## CHN: An hour a day for young teens

Middle-school aged children who use the internet, social media or video games recreationally [for more than an hour each day during the school week have significantly lower grades and test scores](#), according to a study from the Center for Gambling Studies at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. Read the research [here](#)

## US/AUS: Where are programs for middle school children?

[In the 1960s, Joan Ganz Cooney published The Potential Uses of Television in Preschool Education, a report that would revolutionize television for children](#)

## AUS: Classifications: do decisions align with research?

ACCM's President and vice-President Prof Elizabeth Handsley and Assoc Prof Wayne Warburton, combining law and psychology research, find not all concepts used in classification have a basis in the research evidence, and some are directly at odds with it. They recommend changes to the rules to promote better alignment.

## UN releases General Comment 25: a constructive critique

*Continued from page 2*

However, although the GC does have a section on the business sector (which, puzzlingly, includes not-for-profit organizations) it does not expressly state, much less elaborate on, the obligation of governments in relation to injurious content.

Rather that section singles out children's right to privacy and refers to their right to 'protection' only in relation to 'all forms of violence' (para 37).

It is not clear whether this is referring to depictions of violence or interpersonal practices such as harassment and bullying.

If the former are included, we wonder why the reference should be limited to violence and not extend to other kinds of material widely recognised as injurious, such as pornography or the example above of advertising for unhealthy products.

The draft GC on which we made our submission did not include the reference, otherwise we would have queried it. Overall the GC promises to be a rich source of authoritative analysis of the requirements on signatories to CROC in relation to issues of huge importance to children's lives.

It aligns well with ACCM's values and objectives – but not perfectly.