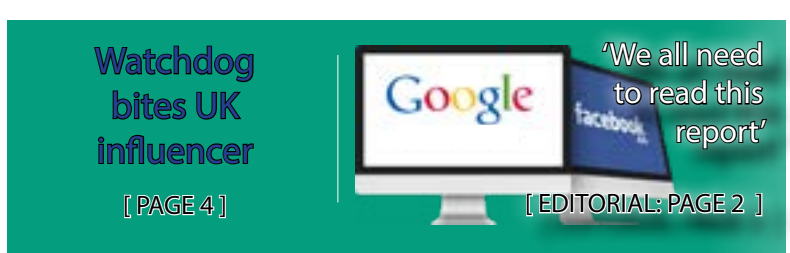




**Pokemon Go worth reaches \$4 billion worldwide**

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**Watchdog bites UK influencer**

[ PAGE 4 ]

**'We all need to read this report'**

[ EDITORIAL: PAGE 2 ]

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# APPS TRACKING YOU

## New report shows Google, Facebook “extensively” tracking users

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has released disturbing new findings about the extent to which consumers are being tracked - often without their knowledge - and personal data collected, while using popular apps and social media.

This study is included in the ACCC's six monthly follow-up [report](#) as part of its Digital Platforms program 2020-2025. The Government announced in December last year the ACCC would have an ongoing role to monitor digital platform services and their impacts on competition and consumers. In the Executive Summary of the ACCC report released on October 23, and the section on Potential consumer concerns the ACCC notes: *Australians' online activity is being extensively tracked, with large platforms including Facebook and Google key recipients of this data .... Google and Facebook had the largest presence in online tracking, with Google and Facebook's third party scripts present on over 80 per cent and 40 per cent respectively of 1000 popular websites in Australia. Amazon and Microsoft tracking were present on nearly 30 per cent and almost 20 per cent of websites respectively.*

The ACCC commissioned research



from privacy analysis firm AppCensus to conduct a review of the top 1000 Android apps in Australia, including the top 100 'Health apps' and the top 100 'Kids apps' on Android devices based in Australia during June and July 2020. AppCensus observed: *platforms such as Google and Facebook and advertising service providers have the potential to receive a range of user information from apps because of the prevalence of their software development kits (SDKs) within apps. AppCensus observed Google's SDKs were identified in 92 per cent of all apps analysed and Facebook's SDKs in 61 per cent of apps. Almost two thirds of apps analysed were observed by AppCensus to have the ability to transmit user information to Facebook, regardless of whether those users have Facebook accounts. In addition to the*

*presence of SDKs in apps, AppCensus observed that a range of platforms and advertising services providers were being sent data from apps during testing. The research showed that Facebook received data from approximately 40 per cent of all apps analysed. Other platforms such as Google, Twitter and Amazon were observed to be receiving user data from around 10 per cent, 8 per cent and 4 per cent of the apps respectively.*

The ACCC found *less than 10 per cent of consumers have a very good understanding of how their personal information is used once they give consent and more than 4 in 5 consider it to be a misuse for an organisation to ask for information that is not relevant to the purpose of the transaction or to monitor and record their online activities without their knowledge.*

**It's certainly time that Australia's privacy laws are reviewed and improved. See editorial on Page 2.**

The ACCC's commissioned research can be found [here](#)

Of particular interest to ACCM and the readers of small screen is the review of the tracking activities of 100 mobile apps for children [here](#)

## Just among us, this app is causing concern

Now very popular with children, the game [Among Us](#) has some risky aspects. The game is classified G in Australia, 7+ in PEGI ( the European game system), 9+ in the Apple Store, 10+ in the US ESRB system and 10+ by Google

Play. To the game's developers, *Among Us* is:

**CONTINUED PAGE TWO**



**Our family viewing list**

[CLICK HERE](#)

## small screen

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# editorial

## Apps can trap

**BARBARA BIGGINS  
CEO ACCM**

We all need to sit up and take notice of this finding from the ACCC report.

*Sec 4.1 Despite increasing consumer concern about use of their information, new research conducted by the ACCC and AppCensus has found that consumers are tracked extensively online. Many popular online private messaging, social media and search services, including those provided by Facebook and Google, receive vast amounts of information on consumers' activity on websites and apps not connected to their platforms. AppCensus observed that many communications apps analysed, including online private messaging services, requested access to sensitive information from users and some were observed transmitting user's information to third parties during the testing period.*

AppCensus described what they looked for in 1000 apps searched on behalf of the ACCC.

"During the testing period, we undertook three key areas of analysis:

1. We examined the apps' network traffic to detect the transmission of user information to third parties during the testing period (e.g., known persistent identifiers, contact information, location data, etc.).
2. We identified the third-party SDKs [Software Development Kits] that were embedded within the apps, which have the potential to transmit



*user information to those third parties (and others).*

*3. We analyzed how the apps were making use of permission requests, which regulate access to sensitive user data (i.e., 'user information,' which we define in Section 3).*

*We specifically examined*

*what permissions were requested by the apps and whether those permissions were actually used at runtime.*

AppCensus' research on 100 children's apps for the ACCC can be found [here](#).

AppCensus has a strong reputation for its work in this field. It offers access to its research, via the AppCensus website. The website provides [a link](#) to a searchable database where app titles can be checked for information about their tracking activity. We checked the popular app "Among us" (see front page and below) and found that it "transmits sensitive data" (Android ID, Device description).

This information is useful and important for parents but needs some translation for those without technical knowledge of app development. With support from the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network, ACCM is working with AppCensus to develop a resource and guide for parents, so that they are better equipped to evaluate the apps that their children play. Watch this space. **Take our survey on Page 3.**

### FROM PAGE ONE

*A game that combines the elements of many genres and offers a unique and gripping experience you won't be able to tear away from? ... This is a fascinating story of flying home from a strange planet in the dangerous company of a killer. Several players perform the roles of crew members and one of them is randomly selected to be the murderer. Working together, they need to figure out who it is and make sure this person doesn't bother them anymore! As you can see, you can enjoy this wonderful game with your friends, but it's also fun to play with random people.*

It's the latter that is the main cause of concern. Australia's eSafety Office [notes that](#) Among Us can be played in "private mode" which is recommended for younger players, ideally with parental engagement. Like any game with a public chat function and a co-mingled environment, that can introduce risks of adult strangers interacting with children online. eSafety considers that stronger safety features would include as a minimum a reporting function. The eSafety report says "eSafety has reached out to Among Us seeking information on their age rating and to discuss what safety measures

*they have in place to protect their users. We are reticent to provide a definitive rating until these questions have been answered".*

The UK site *Internet Matters* lists the main concerns as

- Talking to strangers in the game (they may meet and chat with people they don't know which could put them at risk) and
- Seeing inappropriate content (Although you can use the censor filter to block out bad language, it does not block everything), and has [a useful set of pointers](#) for parents.

## ADVERTISING

Backholer, K; Gupta, A; Zorbas, C; Bennett, R; Huse, O; Chung, AD; Isaacs, A; Golds, G; Kelly, B; Peeters, A

**Differential exposure to, and potential impact of, unhealthy advertising to children by socio-economic and ethnic groups: A systematic review of the evidence**  
OBESITY REVIEWS OCT 2020

Mascheroni, G

**Datafied childhoods: Contextualising datafication in everyday life**  
CURRENT SOCIOLOGY OCT 2020 VL 68 (6) 798-813

**Australian Competition and Consumer Commission Digital platform services inquiry 2020-2025: ACCC commissioned research**  
[Click here](#)

Evans, Yolanda N.  
**One-sided Social Media Relationships and the Impact of Advertising on Children**  
[Click here](#)

Alruwaily, Amaal; Mangold, Chelsea et al  
**Child Social Media Influencers and Unhealthy Food Product Placement**  
Pediatrics peds.2019-4057; Published online October 26, 2020  
[Click here](#)

## SCREEN TIME

Arundell, L; Parker, K; Timperio, A; Salmon, J; Veitch, J  
**Home-based screen time behaviors amongst youth and their parents: familial typologies and their modifiable correlates**  
BMC PUBLIC HEALTH OCT 1 2020 VL 20 (1)

Zhu, R; Fang, H; Chen, M; Hu, X; Cao, Y; Yang, F; Xia, K  
**Screen time and sleep disorder in preschool children: identifying the safe threshold in a digital world**  
PUBLIC HEALTH SEP 2020 VL 186 204-210

Oswald, TK; Rumbold, AR; Kedzior, SGE; Moore, VM  
**Psychological impacts of "screen time" and "green time" for children and adolescents: A systematic scoping review**  
PLOS ONE SEP 4 2020 VL 15 (9)

Lin, SY; Eaton, NR; Schleider, JL  
**Unpacking associations between mood symptoms and screen time in preadolescents: a network analysis**  
JOURNAL OF ABNORMAL CHILD PSYCHOLOGY SEP 2020

Guedes, SD; Morais, RLD; Santos, LR; Leite, HR; Nobre, JNP; Santos, JN  
**Children's use of interactive media in early childhood - an epidemiological study**  
REVISTA PAULISTA DE PEDIATRIA 2020 VL 38

## MOBILE DEVICES

Kiefner-Burmeister, A; Domoff, S; Radesky, J  
**Feeding in the digital age: an observational analysis of mobile device use during family meals at fast food restaurants in Italy**  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH SEP 2020 VL 17

## SCREEN CONTENT

Aglipay, M; Vanderloo, LM; Cost, KT; Maguire, JL; Birken, CS  
**The digital media environment and cardiovascular risk in children**  
CANADIAN JOURNAL OF CARDIOLOGY SEP 2020 VL 36 (9) 1440-1447

## ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Mundy, LK; Canterford, L; Hoq, M; Olds, T; Moreno-Betancur, M; Sawyer, S; Kosola, S; Patton, GC  
**Electronic media use and academic performance in late childhood: A longitudinal study**  
PLOS ONE SEP 2 2020 VL 15 (9)

## RELATIONSHIPS

Jassogne, C; Zdanowicz, N  
**Real or virtual relationships: does it matter to teens?**  
PSYCHIATRIA DANUBINA 2020 VL 32 (SU 1) 172-175

Dredge, R; Schreurs, L  
**Social media use and offline interpersonal outcomes during youth: a systematic literature review**  
MASS COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY SEP 2020

## SLEEP

de Oliveira, MLC; Holanda, FWD; Valdez, P; de Almondes, KM; de Azevedo, CVM  
**Impact of electronic device usage before bedtime on sleep and attention in adolescents**  
MIND BRAIN AND EDUCATION SEP 2020

Friel, CP; Duran, AT; Shechter, A; Diaz, KM  
**US children meeting physical activity, screen time, and sleep guidelines**  
AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE OCT 2020 VL 59 (4) 513-521

## VIDEO GAMES

Cote, AC; Coles, SM; Dal Cin, S  
**The interplay of parenting style and family rules about video games on subsequent fighting behavior**  
AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR OCT 2020

## TAKE OUR SURVEY

As part of its project on apps that track, ACCM is seeking parents' views about the apps their children play. FIND the survey [here](#).

## Pokemon Go hits \$1 billion in 2020 as lifetime revenue surpasses \$4 billion

US | SENSOR TOWER

Pokémon GO from Niantic has seen its best calendar year yet after generating \$1 billion in the first 10 months of 2020 alone, Sensor Tower Store Intelligence estimates show.



Spending declined 29 percent in 2017, but has risen each year since, with 2020 already representing its best year ever.

Players worldwide have spent up 11 percent more so far this year than in all of last year, and 30 percent more than in the first 10 months of 2019.

[Read more here](#)

## TikTok star Emily Canham falls foul of UK ads watchdog

UK | BBC NEWS

A social media influencer has become the first person to be reprimanded by the UK's advertising watchdog over a TikTok post.

The ruling centred on a video published by Emily Canham that promoted products made by the hair-styling brand GHD.

The regulator said it should have featured an #ad hashtag or similar label.

[Read more here](#)

## Roblox and Fortnite overtake candy and books in kids' spending charts

US | CISION PR NEWSWIRE

A comprehensive new study of

40,000 kids in the US shows how kids' allowance spending habits have changed ahead of the new school year.

[Read more here](#)

## Game company facing class-action lawsuit in Canada related to loot boxes

US | CISION PR NEWSWIRE

A pair of Canadians have filed a class action lawsuit against Electronic Arts, alleging that the company's use of loot boxes violates the country's Criminal Code.

[Read more here](#)

## NZ Privacy Commissioner labels Facebook as 'morally bankrupt'

NZ | ZDNET

The New Zealand Privacy Commissioner John Edwards has lashed out at Facebook, labelling the social network as "morally bankrupt pathological liars who enable genocide (Myanmar)" on Twitter on Sunday night.

[Read more here](#)

## Eva Mendes reveals her two daughters' favourite TV show is Bluey

US | NOW TO LOVE

For actress Eva Mendes and her partner Ryan Gosling, the Hollywood couple look to an iconic Australian children's cartoon to help entertain their two daughters, Esmeralda, six, and Amada, four.

"They love Bluey! Bluey is huge in our house. Huge," Eva tells Now To Love in an exclusive interview as she announces her latest role as the

McHappy Day Ambassador.

[Read more here](#)

## Extracurricular activities help adolescents' mental health, screen time does not: study

CA | CTV NEWS

A new study from researchers at the University of British Columbia has examined how recreational screen time and participation in extracurricular activities can impact the mental health and well-being of adolescents.

[Read more here](#)  
[Read the research here](#)

## Google kicks out these three popular kids apps from Play Store: here's why

IN | INDIA TV NEWS

Google and Apple usually tend to remove any app that violates the respective app stores' policies. This time around, Google has removed three applications from the Play Store over security concerns. Princess Salon, Number Coloring and Cats & Cosplay are the three gaming apps for children that have been kicked out of the app store.

[Read more here](#)

## Harball wins prestigious Japan prize

AUS | ACTF

Hardball, produced by Northern Pictures, has continued its unstoppable 2020 awards momentum by taking home this year's prestigious NHK Japan Prize as the best program in the Primary age category.

[Read more here](#)