



## THE INHERENT VALUE OF CHILDREN'S PRIVACY ONLINE

Editorial - page 2



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# CHILDREN DISTRESSED BY NEWS COVERAGE

Australian children exposed to news coverage are facing significant rates of distress, prompting expert warnings for parents and carers to keep an open dialogue about current events.

Nearly one in three children have felt upset by news coverage in the past three months, according to a poll by The Royal Children's

Hospital (RCH). The [latest RCH National Child Health Poll](#) asked Australian parents about their experiences in relation to their child's exposure to distressing news. The key findings were:

- Almost one-third (29 per cent) of children have been upset or distressed about news in the media



in the past three months.

- Primary school aged children are most commonly affected by distressing news in the media.

- Half of all children upset by news coverage experienced this multiple times in the past three months.

- Only half of parents (53 per cent) are confident talking about distressing news with their children.

The report calls for programs and support for parents, with targeted and tailored education in how to have meaningful conversations about the news with their children.

## Give junk food, gambling ads the punt: poll

An Australia Institute (AI) think tank survey in August, using a nationally representative sample of 1,003 Australians, [reveals a majority of Australians](#) agree that junk food advertising during children's viewing should be banned, and an overwhelming majority support a ban on TV gambling advertisements.

Some of the key findings from the survey include:

- Two in three Australians (66 per cent) agree that junk food ads during children's viewing hours

should be banned, compared to 12 per cent who disagree.

- Seven in 10 Australians (71 per cent) agree that gambling ads on TV should be banned.
- The existing ban on tobacco advertising is very popular, with three in four Australians (74 per cent) agreeing it should stay in place.
- Half of Australians (51 per cent) agree that alcohol ads on TV should be banned, which is more than twice as many as disagree (19 per cent).

Read the [ABC News story here](#).

## ACCC deadline approaching

Part of the ACCC's five-year [Digital Platform Services Inquiry](#) is looking into potential consumer issues, including the way businesses are using social media advertising services such as display advertising, sponsored posts and paid influencers to engage with and advertise to consumers. [Full issues paper is here](#) with a deadline of September 9.

## small screen

Issue 399 - August 2022

*small screen* is published at the beginning of each month and reports on the events of the previous month 11 issues per year (Dec/Jan double issue)

Published by  
Children and the Media  
Australia  
(CMA)

Children and Media Australia (CMA) is Australia's peak body representing children's interests as digital and screen media users.

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# guest editorial

## TikTok, Apps and the Inherent Value of Children's Privacy Online

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At least for very small children, parents are responsible for making decisions about their online presence and their privacy. Parents decide how much screen time their children have, the apps their children play with, and even their children's online social media profile, such as TikTok or Instagram. In making these decisions, parents should, and most do, strive to act in the child's best interests. To act in the best interests of the child in making decisions about their engagement with digital technology, parents should think about the technology involved, the risks and benefits that accompany it, and, I suggest, the inherent value of privacy. In this minefield of new technology, new platforms, and new information all the time, what is best for our children? What kind of technology is actually being used? And how important is privacy, really?

Many parents will be aware of the advice provided by the [e-safety commissioner](#) about precautions to be taken in posting images of children online, including avoiding visual hints as to location, clearing metadata and removing images of other children, whose parents have not agreed to them being included in the post. However, there are other considerations also to take into account. We might not think tracking is a problem, and it might seem far-fetched on commonly used and popular social media platforms or apps. But there are many ways to collect information and reuse images, not all of them including hidden cameras or location settings.

Every digital interaction creates data, possibly collected by multiple companies, linked to digital identity and analysed by algorithms to make predictions about preferences and behaviours. In profiling, moreover, demographic information, such as name, birthday and address, that parents often choose not to disclose online about their children, may not be as important as other factors, such as behavioural traits, interests, preferences factors, time spent on particular websites, locations and even

biometric identifiers.

In 2021, Niels Wouters and I raised concerns about TikTok's decision to include a right to collect biometric data in its [privacy terms](#) for US users. Biometric data consists of the unique features of faces, irises, and even gait. TikTok has dropped those terms, but its privacy policy still allows it to collect data about users' [keystrokes patterns](#) and rhythms, and concerns have recently been raised about the cybersecurity implications of this [capacity](#). TikTok is not alone in raising concerns about overreaching data collection practices. For example, CMA recently reported the significant number of children's apps that allow extensive amounts of data to be collected about their child users, making the apps susceptible to hacking. We might assume children are somehow protected or insulated from the decisions of the adult world. However, the data collected by companies about children now does not go away or reset once they reach adulthood. Instead, data collected about children remain linked to their growing online profiles, and we do not know the consequences of this trend. As a result, children and young people now are the first generations to be extensively digitally tracked, monitored and profiled online for their entire lives. What we do know is that digital profiles are increasingly being used to influence children's [consumption decisions](#), for example, towards [unhealthy foods, gambling or alcohol](#). This information may also be used in the automated decision-making systems that will determine children's future access to [jobs, credit and insurance](#). For precisely these reasons, there is currently law reform occurring across the world to build stronger data rights, and even, in some countries, bans on profiling and automated decision-making [about children](#).

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**COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Meri, R; Hutton, J; Farah, R; DiFrancesco, M; Gozman, L; Horowitz-Kraus, T  
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**Sociodemographic and behavioural factors of adherence to the no-screen guideline for toddlers among parents from the French nationwide Elfe birth cohort**  
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Fitzpatrick, C; Harvey, E; Cristini, E; Laurent, A; Lemelin, JP; Garon-Carrier, G  
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Bodewein, L; Dechent, D; Graefrath, D; Kraus, T; Krause, T; Driessen, S

**Systematic review of the physiological and health-related effects of radiofrequency electromagnetic field exposure from wireless communication devices on children and adolescents in experimental and epidemiological human studies**  
 PLOS ONE 2022 VL 17 (6)

**SCREEN CONTENT**

RCH National Child Health Poll 2022  
[Distressing news events: Helping children to cope](#)

**SCREEN USE**

Khan, A; Lee, EY; Janssen, I; Tremblay, MS  
**Associations of passive and active screen time with psychosomatic complaints of adolescents**  
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Nagata, JM; Chu, J; Ganson, KT; Murray, SB; Iyer, P; Gabriel, KP; Garber, AK; Bibbins-Domingo, K; Baker, FC  
**Contemporary screen time modalities and disruptive behavior disorders in children: a prospective cohort study**  
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Weinstein, Emily; James, Carrie (2022)  
[Behind Their Screens: What Teens Are Facing \(and Adults Are Missing\)](#). MIT PRESS PAPERBACK – August 16, 2022

**SLEEP**

MacKenzie, MD; Scott, H; Reid, K; Gardani, M  
**Adolescent perspectives of bedtime social media use: A qualitative systematic review and thematic synthesis**  
 SLEEP MEDICINE REVIEWS JUN 2022 VL 63

Yamamoto, M; Mezawa, H; Sakurai, K; Mori, C  
**Association between media use and**

**bedtime delays in young children: an adjunct study of the Japan Environment and Children’s Study**  
 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH AUG 2022 VL 19 (15)

Vežina-Im, LA; Beaulieu, D; Turcotte, S; Roussel-Ouellet, J; Labbe, V; Bouchard, D  
**Association between recreational screen time and sleep quality among adolescents during the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada**  
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Xie, Weizhen ;Wang, Xe  
[Effects of sleep duration on neurocognitive development in early adolescents in the USA: a propensity score matched, longitudinal, observational study](#)  
 THE LANCET: CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH Published:July 29, 2022

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Beyers, Ine; Keijsers, Loes; Coyne, Sarah M.  
**Social media, parenting, and well-being**  
 CURRENT OPINION IN PSYCHOLOGY Volume 47, August 25, 2022

**VIOLENCE**

Miles-Novelo, A., Groves, C. L., Anderson, K. B., Pimentel, C. E., Escobedo, G. S. B., Plante, C., Mariano, T. E., & Anderson, C. A. (2022).  
[Further tests of the media violence-aggression link: Replication and extension of the 7 Nations Project with multiple Latinx samples.](#)  
 PSYCHOLOGY OF POPULAR MEDIA. Advance online publication.

Allen, J. J., Ash, S. M., & Anderson, C. A. (2022).  
[Who finds media violence funny? Testing the effects of media violence exposure and dark personality traits.](#)  
 PSYCHOLOGY OF POPULAR MEDIA, 11(1), 35–46.

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Even seemingly innocuous images shared online are there for good. Children’s digital presence can affect their [online and real-world behaviours](#) and fuel dangerous practices or [harmful trends](#). Moreover, firms such as Clearview AI, [which sells](#) facial recognition technology to law enforcement agencies and commercial businesses, have developed their

products by scraping images of faces and other identifying information from the internet, a practice contrary to the advice of [Australia’s Privacy Commissioner](#). These considerations raise risks about future impacts, something hard to factor into decisions. But another critical consideration in making decisions about children’s online social media presence and digital interactions is the value of privacy itself. Privacy is a fundamental human right.

For all of us, especially children, privacy allows space to experiment, create and develop our beliefs and values. Privacy, and freedom from an unrelenting public gaze or the scrutiny of commercial firms, are something to be nurtured. Parents interested in their children’s well-being may wish to pay attention to the value of this right and not lightly squander it away.

## US: Further tests of the media violence–aggression link

There has been some suggestion that Latinx cultures may be less vulnerable to violent media exposure, but this [cross-sectional study](#) (N=862) showed effect sizes comparable to those from other ethnicities and countries. This relation remained significant in statistical “destructive tests” that included other major risk factors for aggression in the model. The effect generalized across samples, sex, and type of aggression (physical, verbal, and relational).

The authors conclude that by further demonstrating the generality of media violence effects on aggression, this research has implications for public policies that strengthen safeguards for consumers. For instance, warnings of harmful effects could appear in public service announcements, in digital literacy programs, and on the products themselves. In some countries, legal restrictions on children’s and adolescents’ access to such materials could be imposed.

### US: California sets up new privacy Act with special provisions for children under 18

The California Senate Appropriations Committee has advanced the California Age-Appropriate Design Code Act. Modeled on the [UK’s Age Appropriate Design Code](#), the Act would impose data protection obligations on businesses that provide an “online service, product, or feature likely to be accessed by children.” In a significant shift from the federal Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), however, [new protections granted by the bill](#) would extend to all individuals under age 18.

More discussion [here](#) at Story 3.

### AUS: 2021 commercial television Australian content results [released by ACMA](#)

For the first time the metropolitan commercial networks have [reported on their compliance](#) with the new Broadcasting Services (Australian Content and Children’s Television) Standards 2020 (ACCTS), which commenced on 1 January 2021. 10 August 2022  
[The Guardian discusses](#) the loss of

Children’s programs as predicted by many.

### US: FTC calls for public input on apps tracking activity

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission asked for [additional public comments](#) on how digital advertising affects minors. This call comes after the commission sought [initial comments](#) following its announcement of a virtual event on October 19 that will focus on potential updates to federal children’s privacy protections against “a growing array of manipulative marketing practices.”

### US: Facebook settles lawsuit on locations

Facebook has agreed to pay \$37.5 million to settle a class-action lawsuit alleging that the company collected users’ IP addresses, [which offer general information about location](#), in violation of a prior privacy policy. [Further discussion here](#) at Story 3.

### US: New research provides findings on social media, parenting, and well-being

Researchers Sarah Coyne, Ine Beyens and Loes Keijsers [present](#)

[a synthesis](#) of the findings of 32 articles published between 2017 and 2021 that examined media-specific parenting in the context of children’s social media use, of which 19 studies investigated associations of media-specific parenting with children’s social media use and eight studies investigated associations of media-specific parenting with children’s well-being and /or ill-being. More [discussion here](#)

### Australia: Help for parents trying to curb mobile phone use

New Edith Cowan University (ECU) [research is shedding light](#) on the issue to help millennial parents who are literally making it up as they go when it comes to digital media use in the home.

Lead researcher and PhD student [Stephanie Milford](#) said the results emphasised the importance of educating parents on the role mobile media was playing in shaping their child’s behaviour.

A survey of 281 Australian parents found 75 percent of parents reported experiencing conflict, tension, and family disagreements over mobile media use, yet almost 1 in 3 had never looked for official guidelines for help with digital media use by children.



### Coming soon...

From a world-renowned expert on creative play and the impact of commercial marketing on children, [Susan Linn](#), comes a timely investigation into how big tech is hijacking childhood—and what we can do about it. [Who’s Raising the Kids?](#) closely scrutinises the interactions of big tech, big business, with the lives of children.