

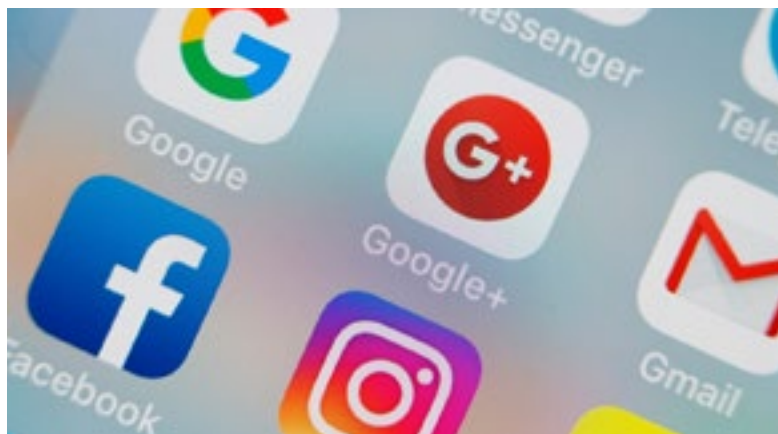


## Will new restricted access system protect under 18s?

Submissions to the eSafety Commissioner on the [Restricted Access System \(RAS\)](#) and Age Verification Systems required under the [Online Safety Act 2021](#) have now closed. A RAS covers the kind of material that has been or is likely to be classified R18+ or Category 1 Restricted ('Restricted Material') under the National Classification Code.

This includes realistically simulated sexual activity between adults; high impact nudity; high impact violence; high impact drug use; and high impact language. The eSafety Commissioner must have the new RAS declaration in place from January 2022, as outlined in the Online Safety Act 2021.

This replaces the 2014 Restricted Access System declaration.



Services that need to meet the requirements of the RAS include social media services, designated internet services and relevant electronic services which provide access to Australian material. Australian hosting service providers will be required either to stop hosting the non-compliant material or to take reasonable steps to ensure that only adults can access material classified as Restricted.

The information gathered through the consultation process will also be used to inform the development of eSafety's [age verification implementation](#) roadmap for online pornography.

*Note: see Editorial p2 for an edited version of ACCM's submission. As a submitter, ACCM can provide further comment as the RAS is developed.*

### Be Closer: an app to stay away from?

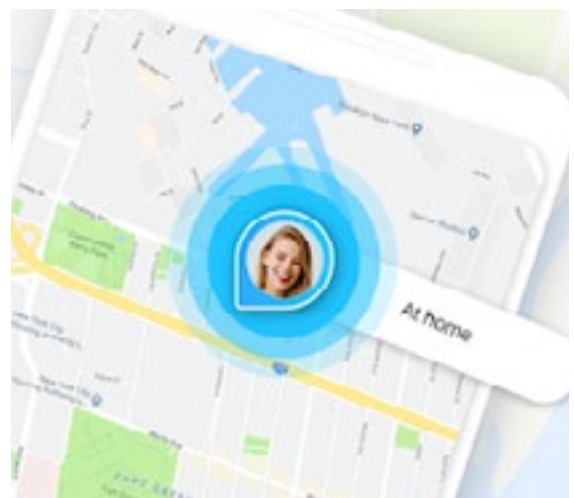

In recent months, ACCM's app reviews have been augmented with AppCensus analyses, which show what data is being gathered by apps and to whom it's being sent.

*Be Closer* is a new GPS family tracker app promoted on Google Play as "a life-changing way to keep an eye on your family's whereabouts, no matter how far apart you might be. Thanks to this app, you can see where your children are at all times, as well as

your parents or anyone else" The analysis of this app provided by AppCensus has shown that the collected user data is sent to numerous third parties, including several networks that engage in behavioural advertising.

The *Be Closer* analysis can be viewed [here](#).

More information about using ACCM's app tracking analyses is here at [Privacy Checks](#).

**Facebook pauses Instagram for Kids**

World News | P4

**Read our latest movie reviews [here](#)**



## small screen

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# editorial

## ACCM on the Restricted Access System Declaration

**PROF ELIZABETH HANDSLEY  
ACCM PRESIDENT**



**The eSafety Commissioner has called for comment on the Discussion Paper on the RAS. Here's an edited version of ACCM's submission:**

Regulatory measures to protect the interests of children as media users are always welcome, but such measures are only ever as good as their understanding of just what children's interests are. ACCM finds the Discussion Paper pays only passing attention to these, while focussing heavily on the needs and interests of industry.

Children develop through different stages, and they have different needs as media consumers depending what stage they're at. Yet the paper lumps all children together. Moreover, the proposed system, like the existing one, relies on the National Classification Scheme, which likewise pays no attention to the evolution of children's needs and capacities. ACCM also notes the paper refers only to R18+ content, without explaining why there is no proposal to protect children even from material in the other restricted category, namely MA15+. It is worth noting that very little content is actually classified R18+, because that classification sets a very high bar. There is still a large amount of content at MA15+ especially in video games – that would shock many adults and is certainly considered unsuitable for children....The ACCM submits that the RAS should in some way incorporate categories below R18+, at least MA15+.

Having said all that, ACCM sees this paper and the process underlying it as yet another reminder of how deficient the National Classification Scheme (NCS) is, in that it fails to address the needs and interests of children at different ages and stages. ... Reliance on the NCS in this context, in addition to the classification of films and games, points to the urgent need to reform that scheme. A comprehensive review was commenced in 2019, and we are still waiting .... [for] what the government plans to do in response. ACCM submits that if the government wishes to fix the problem of children's access to online content, it needs to fix the criteria and

processes by which content is judged to be suitable for children or otherwise. Ideally this should be done before any new regulatory scheme is introduced, before a culture grows up around the old criteria. The paper also suffers from a lack of subtlety as to the

careful balancing process that must go on when children's rights are at stake. To fulfill Australia's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the starting point must be that children's interests are a primary consideration (article 3). .... there are, broadly, two important matters that need to be weighed against each other, namely children's right to seek, receive and impart information via the media (article13) and the various rights that can be breached when children access inappropriate content (eg articles 6(2) (survival and development),16 (privacy), 19 (violence), 23 (disability), 24 (health), 28 (education)).

Speaking of children's needs or interests is no simple matter, and it requires at least the same level of attention and discussion as the needs and interests of industry. Yet the paper persistently speaks about the latter needs and interests as if they are paramount. For example ...at page 7 the paper goes so far as to suggest it is interested only in the views of industry and not, by implication, in those of other parts of the community, which have a huge stake in the outcome of a process like this. Another shortcoming of the paper—and by extension the proposed scheme as a whole –is that it focusses exclusively on the nature of the content available online, whereas a significant part of the concern regarding children's engagement with online content is to do with the way the content is presented and delivered, that is, by persuasive design. We have mentioned the interests of children, and their rights in international law; another set of rights and interests that come into the frame are those of parents and others who care for children. Parents have the right to be supported in their role of keeping children safe and protecting their rights (article 18 of CRC), and this should be taken into account in the formulation of the RAS. This is especially so considering that the burden is likely to fall on parents and carers to monitor children's experiences and report any difficulties.

ADVERTISING

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 COMMUNICATIONS-EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH SEP 2021 VL 46 (3) 352-372

The Facebook Files: Yale Law School webinar

The Facebook Files — a collection of stories published at the *Wall Street Journal* based on hundreds of pages of leaked documents from inside Facebook — is one of the greatest exposés of Big Tech yet produced. For a timely and expert discussion spanning the worlds of journalism, activism, and academia join this webinar Oct 7 (US).  
 The first panel, The Journalists and

Activists, will discuss the ongoing ability for people inside and outside technology companies to participate in shaping the space that is shaping them. The second panel, The Academics, will discuss the social and legal changes that need to take place to make technology better and safer.

[More info and to register](#)

## US: Facebook pauses Instagram for Kids

The development of a children's version of Instagram has been delayed after scores of critics [came out against it](#).

Fairplay Executive Director Josh Golin [made a statement](#) on September 30 about the change.

"Facebook is still peddling the fiction

that their interest in Instagram Kids is driven by concern for children's safety, when the company's own leaked documents make clear it's part of a larger strategy for growth, and to compete with TikTok and Snap for young users."

*Courtesy: The Christian Science Monitor*



## US: From 13, children treated as adults online

Fairplay (US) says [13 is a poor age to grant adulthood online](#). "At age 13, essentially the internet treats you as an adult ... I doubt very many people now would say... "That seems like a good time to throw them into the belly of the beast."

*Courtesy: France24*

## US: Could Apple's child safety feature backfire?

Psychologists say Apple's new child safety features, [can increase rather than reduce](#) risky sharing of photos.

*Courtesy: The Conversation*

## US: Senators reintroduce legislation to protect children's privacy online

Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass) and colleagues have [reintroduced the Kids Internet Design and Safety \(KIDS\) act](#) to stop online practices such as manipulative marketing, amplification of harmful content and damaging design features.

*Courtesy: Ed Markey government website*

## US: Senators Vs Facebook, Round 2

Facebook [appears before US Congress](#) hearings on September 30.

*Courtesy: Politico*

## AUS: Australia's competition watchdog says Google has a monopoly on online advertising – but how does it work?

Australia's competition watchdog, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), says Google now dominates the country's online advertising so thoroughly it must be [reined in](#). The ACCC maintains that over the past ten years, Google's advertising technology has developed to the point of being anti-competitive. David Tuffley, Senior Lecturer in Applied Ethics & CyberSecurity, Griffith University comments on the ACCC's findings.

*Courtesy: The Conversation*

## UK: Children's Commissioner to present survey findings

UK Dame Rachel de Souza DBE, Children's Commissioner for England is to respond to those 557, 077 children who made her Big Ask survey of children (21st April- 16th May 2021) the largest survey of children of its kind anywhere, ever. [In a message](#) both thanking them and revealing her thinking about what they said, she sets out both immediate policy changes that would make children's lives in England better.

*Courtesy: Fe News*

## AUS: 'An idealised Australian ethos': why *Bluey* is an audience favourite

As part of the new research project, [Australian Children's Television Cultures](#), an academic team is [surveying audiences](#) about how they interact with Australian children's programming. From over 700 adult responses, *Bluey* was

the TV program parents were most keen to watch with their children.

*Courtesy: The Conversation*

## US: Gun manufacturers quietly target young boys using social media

"Over the past several decades, gun manufacturers have largely marketed toward younger audiences through traditional modes of print advertising, like magazines and catalogues. But more recently, they've drastically narrowed their focus on one channel in particular: social media." [Jon Scolnik of Salon mag.](#)

*Courtesy: Salon Mag*

## UK: The Guardian on CBeebies: cherish this British success

CBeebies [should be proud of its record](#) of provision for the young. "if the stories that we tell to the youngest children matter – and they do – it also matters that some of these are made for them by adults who know something about their lives"

*Courtesy: The Guardian*

## US: Boston Children's Hospital offers webinar

The Boston Children's Hospital offers webinar [Problematic Interactive Media Use \(PIMU\): Gaming, Social Media, and More](#) on October 15. PIMU is a disorder akin to Binge Eating Disorder – the overuse of a necessary resource. PIMU has been associated with problems with sleep, anxiety, depression, and academic and social deterioration. Patients may be presenting with more acute symptoms due to two reasons: increased screen use during the pandemic, and a lack of available speciality programs as clinics.