



Government Acts to Protect Children’s Privacy when Online

It’s now time to tell the Federal government what you think is needed to protect children’s privacy when they are online, playing apps or using social media. The Attorney General (AG) is calling for comment on its Discussion paper by January 10, and on the exposure draft of a new Privacy Bill by December 6. The government began its review of privacy in Australia late last year and called for submissions on the issues it should consider (ACCM’s submission is [here](#)). The AG has considered the feedback on its [Issues Paper](#) and seeks further feedback on potential changes to the Act. Its [Discussion Paper](#) covers a broad range of topics, including:

- The scope and application of the Act.
- The protections contained in the Australian Privacy Principles.
- How the Act is regulated and enforced.

The AG says you can “make a submission in response to any or all of the proposals and questions in this Discussion Paper or any other matter relevant to the review’s [Terms of Reference](#) by 10 January 2022”. Submissions and feedback received in response to the Discussion Paper will inform the review’s final report.

“The AG is holding this consultation at the same time as a [consultation on the exposure draft](#) of the Privacy Legislation Amendment (Enhancing Online Privacy and Other Measures) Bill 2021 (Online Privacy Bill). The Online Privacy Bill addresses the pressing privacy challenges posed by social media and certain other online platforms. The Privacy Act Review seeks to build on the outcomes of the Online Privacy Bill to ensure that Australia’s privacy law framework empowers consumers, protects their data and supports the Australian economy.”

ACCM encourages all, who want to see the law provide better protection for children online than it does presently, to take the time to understand the issues and make a submission (or two). In preparation for this Government review, ACCM has, for the past 12 months, been researching the law and preparing resources for parents to support their actions both personally and in law reform. [These resources](#) (supported by a grant from the [Law Foundation of SA](#)) are complemented by [reviews of individual popular apps](#) that reveal their tracking behaviour and by [this page](#) of videos and guides for parents.

These app reviews and resources are supported by a grant from the [Australian Communications Consumer Action Network](#).

See *Editorial P2* for more on this topic.



SQUID GAME: WHY SO POPULAR?

Netflix’ top favourite series is classified MA15+. This should be signal enough that the series is not suitable for children under 15 years. And yet there are many reports of young children watching it, and sometimes without their parents’ knowledge. Squid Game has been a money spinner for Netflix with the [BBC reporting](#) [that](#) “The US firm added 4.4

million users in the three months to 30 September, more than double the previous quarter. Korean TV series Squid Game was its biggest hit, watched by 142 million households in its first four weeks.”

Some commentators have asked why such a violent and brutal series is so popular. Frank Bruni of the [New York Times](#) says: “I canvassed young people I know: “I couldn’t look away”, “insane premise that I was captivated by”, “very few shows have its wow factor”... But the fact that they’re not repelled by the incessant bloodletting and by many characters’ flamboyant cruelty to one another says something weird and disturbing about modern sensibilities. “We’re entertained by extremes,” a 23-year-old who zoomed through “Squid Game” in two days told me.”

One reason why children may be wanting to see the series and are acting out the games is that the games have been incorporated into [children’s apps](#), such as TikTok, Roblox and YouTube.

ACCM has [reviewed the series](#) and found it “a brutal, social commentary on the destitution and desperation of adult failure and hopelessness in a rigged class system (in the context of South Korea, but certainly applicable in many other countries). The series uses extreme violence as a mechanism for creating impact, and the repetitive and visceral nature of the violence has a distinct desensitising, dehumanising, and numbing effect on the viewer. “

Want a chance to win big prizes and support ACCM at the same time?

Buy a ticket (or more) in the 2021 People’s Choice Community Lottery. ACCM receives 100% of what you spend.

Really big prizes include cars and a home; there’s an Early Bird prize drawn on Nov 18. Ticket sales close on 24 February 2022 and the main prizes will be drawn on 3 March 2022. [Here](#) is where you can buy your tickets.



small screen

issue 390 - October 2021

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
**Australian Council on
Children and the Media
(ACCM)**

ACCM is a national, non-profit community organisation. Its mission is to promote a quality media environment for Australian children.

No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission of the Editor.

Contributions are welcome.

CONTENTS

- 2 - EDITORIAL
- 3 - NEW PUBLICATIONS
- 4 - WORLD NEWS

CONTACT US

Editor: Barbara Biggins OAM
Compiler: Martha Depasquale
Editorial Board: Barbara Biggins, Judy Bundy, Elizabeth Handsley.

Address: PO Box 1240
Glenelg South South Australia 5045
Email: info@childrenandmedia.org.au
Website: www.childrenandmedia.org.au
Telephone: +61 8 8376 2111

ACCM acknowledges support from



ACCM's website is designed by



Click to donate

SUPPORT US

Guest editorial

ELENA YI-CHING HO
POLICY FELLOW &
RYS FARTHING
DATA POLICY DIRECTOR
RESET AUSTRALIA



The long awaited Enhancing Online Privacy Bill paves the way for an Australian privacy code, that addresses how all Australian's data can be used on social media platforms (think TikTok), large online platforms (like Spotify) and by data brokers (such as Axiom).

The Code addresses some aspects of children's needs, stating that the Code must require social media companies to:

- Take reasonable steps to verify the age of users.
- Ensure parental consent is obtained for users under 16 years old.
- Require that data is only used in ways that are in children's best interests.

A lot has been made about the first two requirements, which on the surface appear radical. It's worth remembering that 'reasonable steps' to verify age and consent doesn't mean kids having to scan birth certificates and send them to TikTok, as many terrified press commentators have suggested. Reasonable steps might include, for example, asking young users to reconfirm their date of birth that they used to sign up or analysis of photos to flag those likely to be under 13.

Although none of these are foolproof, they will add one iota of friction to a process that is currently -- deliberately -- "friction free". It's designed to encourage young people to join effortlessly. There are pros and cons to this friction, but at the end of the day it's probably fair to ask social media companies to make reasonable attempts to ensure that very young children aren't on their risky platforms.

But neither requirement is likely to move the dial much. The root problems of social media for kids is not that parents are unaware that their kids are on it, nor that 12 year olds are sneaking on (although both are bad). The core of the issue is that social media companies develop risky, exploitative platforms. From algorithms pushing harmful material,

messaging systems exposing kids to unwanted contact and non-stop invasive data harvesting, social media platforms are just awful to kids. The third requirement, for social media companies to only use children's data in ways that are in their 'best interests', has the capacity to change this. It means social media companies may have to change the way their platforms work for kids in the first instance.

But there's a long way to go between this Bill, and the Code it paves the way for. The Privacy Act stipulates that the Information Commissioner must draft this Code alongside industry, and that most likely industry will have the first opportunity to draft it.

Given what we know about this industry, this is worrying to say the least, and is a giant fly in the ointment. As Frances Haugen pointed out two weeks ago in Canberra, Facebook is not to be trusted. It would be a disaster if Facebook's industry representatives -- Digi -- drafted the very code that is meant to protect kids from them.

The Bill is currently open for consultations, and we'd encourage you to have your say. ■

Read more at Reset Australia.



Note: Reset Australia (RA) is the Australian affiliate of Reset, the global initiative working to counter digital threats to democracy. RA works exclusively in Australia on public policy advocacy, research, and civic engagement to strengthen Australian democracy.

ADVERTISING

Theodore, F.L.; Lopez-Santiago, M.; Cruz-Casarrubias, C.; Mendoza-Pablo, P.A.; Barquera, S.; Tolentino-Mayo, L.
Digital marketing of products with poor nutritional quality: a major threat for children and adolescents.
Public Health, Sep 2021, Vol 198, Pp263-269

Van der Bend, D.L.M.; Jakstas, T.; Van Kleef, E.; Shrewsbury, V.A.; Bucher, T.
Making sense of adolescent-targeted social media food marketing: A qualitative study of expert views on key definitions, priorities and challenges.
Appetite, Jan 2022, VL 168.

Feller, G.; Burroughs, B.
Branding Kidfluencers: Regulating Content and Advertising on YouTube.
Television and New Media, Oct, 2021

BODY IMAGE

Harriger, J.A.; Wick, M.R.; Trivedi, H.; Callahan, K.E.
Strong Hero or Violent Playboy? Portrayals of Masculinity in Children's Animated Movies.
Sex Roles, Oct 2021

Garcia, R.L.; Bingham, S.; Liu, S.
The effects of daily Instagram use on state self-objectification, well-being, and mood for young women.
Psychology of Popular Media (online publication), <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000350>

GAMING AND GAMBLING

Uddin, S.
Loot the children: the need to regulate predatory loot box mechanics in video games that target young audiences.
Family Court Review, SEP 2021.

Gonzalez-Cabrera, J.; Basterra-Gonzalez, A.; Montiel, I.; Calvete, E.; Pontes, H.M.; Machimbarrena, J.M.
Loot boxes in Spanish adolescents and young adults: Relationship with internet gaming disorder and online gambling disorder.
Computers in Human Behaviour, Jan 2022, Vol 126.

Bassett, D.T.; Stanley, T. B.; Irons, J.G.; Correia, C.J.

An investigation of the reinforcing value of video game playing relative to concurrently available monetary alternatives.
Psychology of Addictive Behaviours, Advance online publication: <https://doi.org/10.1037/adb0000782>

MEDIATION

Livingstone, S.; Mascheroni, G.
The outcomes of gaining digital skills for young people's lives and wellbeing: A systematic evidence review.
New Media and Society, Sep 13, 2021.

Nelly, E.; Dafna, L.; Galit, N.
Factors Explaining Grandparental Mediation of Children's Media Use in Two National Contexts.
New Media and Society, Sep 27, 2021.

NATURE AND NURTURE

Fyfe-Johnson, A.L.; Hazlehurst, M.F.; Perrins, S.P.; Bratman, G.N.; Thomas, R.; Garrett, K.A.; Hafferty, K.R.; Cullaz, T.M.; Marcuse, E.K.; Tandon, P.S.
Nature and Children's Health: A Systematic Review.
Pediatrics, October 2021, Vol. 148 (4).

SCREEN CONTENT

Uhls Y.T.; Felt, L.; Wartella, E.; Sanders, A.
Investigating Viewership of Season 3 of "13 Reasons Why" and the Mental Wellness of Adolescents: Partially Randomized Preference Trial.
JMIR Mental health, Sep 2021, Vol 8, No 9.

SCREEN USE

Jensen, M.L.; Carpentier, F.R.D.; Corvalan, C.; Popkin, B.M.; Evenson, K.R.; Adair, L.; Taillie, L.S.
Television viewing and using screens while eating: Associations with dietary intake in children and adolescents.
Appetite, Jan 2022, Vol. 168.

Fitzpatrick, C.; Boers, E.
Developmental associations between media use and adolescent prosocial

behaviour.

Health Education & Behaviour, Oct 2021.

Choi, Y.; Lee, D.Y.; Lee, S.; Park, E.J.; Yoo, H.J.; Shin, Y.
Association between screen overuse and behavioural and emotional problems in elementary school children.

Journal of the Korean Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Oct 2021, Vol. 32 (4), Pp 154-160.

Tandon, P.S.; Zhou, C.; Johnson, A.M.; et al.

Association of Children's Physical Activity and Screen Time With Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic.
JAMA Network Open, Oct 1, 2021.

Paulich, K.N.; Ross, J.M.; Lessem, J.M.; Hewitt, J.K.

Screen time and early adolescent mental health, academic, and social outcomes in 9- and 10- year old children: Utilizing the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study.
PLOS ONE, September 8, 2021 <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.025659>

Magis-Weinberg, L.; Gys, C.L.; Berger, E.L.; et al.

Positive and Negative Online Experiences and Loneliness in Peruvian Adolescents During the COVID-19 Lockdown.
Journal of Research in Adolescence, 26 August 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12666>

SLEEP

Marciano, L.; Camerini, A.L.
Recommendations on screen time, sleep and physical activity: associations with academic achievement in Swiss adolescents.
Public Health, Sep 2021, Vol 198, Pp 211-217.

Lund, L.; Solvhoj, I.N.; Danielsen, D.; Andersen, S.
Electronic media use and sleep in children and adolescents in western countries: a systematic review.
BMC Public Health, Sep 30, 2021, Vol. 21 (1).

AUS | CURB GOOGLE'S DOMINANCE

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has recommended that a choice screen, providing consumers with a selection of search engine options be introduced in Australia, in order to curb Google's dominance in the space. This recommendation is in the ACCC's [third Digital Platform Services Inquiry interim report](#), released October 28.

Courtesy: Mumbrella

US | BETTER PRIVACY BROWSER

Mozilla's Firefox browser quietly began testing the "[Global Privacy Control](#)" opt-out tool several weeks ago, and expects to roll out the feature more broadly in coming months. The privacy tool aims to enable users to opt out of the sale of their data on a universal basis, as opposed to opting out site-by-site.

Courtesy: MediaPost

US | FACEBOOK WHISTLEBLOWER TESTIFIES

Frances Haugen, former Facebook data scientist has testified to the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection. She claims that Facebook's products are harmful to children, but executives refuse to make changes as profit is prioritised over safety. You can watch her testimony [here](#).

And for [further commentary](#).

More information on Facebook's activities [here](#)

Courtesy: PBS NewsHour and POLITICO

US | MARKETING IN E-SPORTS

Luxury brands look to capitalise on popularity of esports: "When you're in-game, you are totally immersed. And that's where the opportunity lies for brands, because most gamers block ads, delete cookies or use VPNs. So you literally have to be IN IT to win it." [Read more here](#).

Courtesy: MediaPost

UK | NEW CHILDREN'S CODE COMPLAINTS PILE UP

TikTok, Snap, Twitter, Instagram, and lesser-known platforms Omegle, Monkey, Kik, and dozens of other companies are on the list of apps accused of "systematically endangering children online and breaching the UK's [new Children's Code](#)."

Read the 5Rights foundation letter to Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham identifying 12 common breaches of the Age Appropriate Design Code [here](#).

Courtesy: MediaPost, 5Rights Foundation

UK | GDPR FINES MOUNT UP

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)'s 984.47 million euro fines (more than \$1.14 billion) in the third quarter of 2021 was almost 20 times higher than the combined total of Q1 and Q2, and triple the total amount of fines in all of 2020, [according to a Finbold report](#).

Courtesy: pymnts.com

UK | FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM: THE SCIENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

The BBC looks at how algorithms have made social media the new "drug of choice" and what people are doing about it. [Find out more here](#).

Courtesy: BBC

US | FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADVERTISING REPORT

The United States Kids' Food and Beverages market has been huge and complex. Across the country, growth of kids' food and beverage appears to be outpacing the total demand for traditional food and beverages in the same categories. [Read more here](#).

Courtesy: prnewswire

UK | BRITISH CHILDREN'S TV COULD VANISH

Ministers are currently weighing up whether to continue the Young Audiences Content Fund, set up in 2018, which helps cover the cost of making

children's shows for public service broadcasters. It has been allocated £44m over a three-year trial to support the production of shows on channels ranging from E4 to Channel 5 and Welsh-language S4C. However, the project's future is now in doubt, with campaigners including former Play School presenter Floella Benjamin – now a Liberal Democrat member of the House of Lords – [urging ministers](#) to renew its funding.

Courtesy: The Guardian

AUS | DIGITAL CHILD WEBINARS NOV 4TH AND NOV 18TH

Nov 4 - *New Lenses for Understanding Young Children's 'In the Moment' Digital Authoring at Home*.

The Digital Child Centre of Excellence (based at QUT) draws on data from the 'Creativity, Technology and Play' (Marsh et al., 2020) project, funded by the Lego Foundation, in order to focus on young children's text production in the home. More information [here](#).

Nov 18 - *The Play Observatory: Researching and theorising children's lived experience of play in pandemic times*.

This seminar will reflect on the methodological and theoretical challenges involved in developing a collaborative online research project focused on capturing children's play experiences and wellbeing during the pandemic. More information [here](#).

AUS | OAIC REPORTS ON PRIVACY RISKS FOR CHILDREN AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

This [report](#) considers factors that may create, influence, and mitigate vulnerability of children and other vulnerable groups in online settings, considering risks for privacy arising from these vulnerabilities. It considers international developments in the protection of privacy of children as well as emerging examples of best practice in providing notice and consent. The report primarily makes recommendations for specific requirements for the handling of personal information of children that should be contained in a privacy code for social media platforms and other online platforms that trade in personal information. New privacy resources for parents [here](#).