

Principles for the Safer Use of Connected Devices and Online Services by Children and Young People in the EU

Background

Following the launch of the “Principles”, Google has been working in the last 18 months to implement the provisions according to its services and/or products.

The Principles aimed to ensure that Signatories:

- Encourage the development of innovative approaches which enhance safe use of the technology by children and young people
- Encourage the empowerment of parents and carers to protect children and young people engaged in online activity through education and advice
- Promote users’ awareness of information and tools to help keep themselves safer online and of their obligations to behave responsibly towards other users
- Encourage the provision of easily accessible, clear and transparent information to help users understand in a timely way the conditions of use for the service they are using, including what is permitted in terms of acceptable behaviour and user-generated content
- Seek to promote users’ awareness of how – and to whom – to report abuse and concerns, including – where available – specialised external agencies and law enforcement bodies.

[Background](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Empower](#)

[Educate](#)

[Protect](#)

[Content](#)

[Parental controls](#)

[Dealing with abuse/misuse](#)

[Child Sexual abuse content or illegal contact](#)

[Privacy and control](#)

[Education and Awareness](#)

Introduction

Google works hard to provide anyone using our services with a safe and positive experience. As a responsible company, we are committed to protecting children on the internet. When it comes to family safety, we have a three strand approach: empower, educate, protect.

Empower

Our [Family Safety Center](#) provides parents and teachers with tools across our products to help them choose what content their children see online.

We also encourage users to report, or flag, inappropriate content, with mechanisms across products such as YouTube, Picasa, Blogger and Search. We have teams of people monitoring flagged content 24/7. In addition, through our product Help Centers, Google invites users to contact us directly with complaints about illegal content or abuse they encounter on the web or in its products.

Educate

Google is committed to educating families on using the internet safely. We have our own dedicated website - Good to Know - which educates all users about how to stay safe online. Good to Know provides families with tips and advice on how users can help protect themselves and their family from identity theft, con-artists and fraudsters online. They can also learn how to make their computer or mobile device more secure, and get more out of the web. We used Safer Internet Day this year to drive awareness about these resources by running a promotion of Good to Know portal on our homepage.

We also collaborate with the experts, such as Beatbullying, Childnet, and European Schoolnet. We support education projects around the world, such as our Génération Numérique program in France which saw 26 digital literacy coaches visit nearly 1800 schools, training 510,000 kids, 130,000 parents and 7500 teachers.

Protect

We provide industry leading tools for our users to tell us about illegal content or abuse they

encounter on the Web or in our products, including community flagging tools and “Report Abuse” buttons integrated into products.

Through our product Help Centers, we invite our users to contact us directly with complaints about illegal content or abuse they encounter on the web or in our products.

When we discover child pornography or are made aware of it, we respond quickly to remove and report it to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in the U.S. We also use databases from designated organizations listing websites suspected of containing child sexual abuse images in order to remove any illegal URLs from our search results. Finally, we work closely with a network of child safety experts who advise us on how to promote safety and combat abuse in our products.

Content

The ICT Principles require under Section 1 – Content that signatories should:

- Indicate clearly where a service they offer may include content considered not to be appropriate for children and display prominently options which are available to control access to the content. This could include, where appropriate for the service, tools to manage access to certain content, advice to users or a recognised system of content labelling
- Display prominently and in an easily accessible location the Acceptable Use Policy, which should be written in easily-understandable language
- State clearly any relevant terms of service or community guidelines (i.e. how users are expected to behave and what is not acceptable) with which user generated content must comply
- Ensure that reporting options are in the relevant areas of the service
- Provide notice about the consequences for users if they post content which violates terms of service or community guidelines
- Continue work to provide innovative solutions able to support child safety protection tools and solutions.

Community Guidelines and Content Policies

We have developed and posted Terms of Use and Program Policies that set out the rules of the road on our platforms. For example, on YouTube, we have Community Guidelines, a quick guide to YouTube policies that will help users understand what video content is allowed on our site. If a

user posts a video or otherwise behaves on the site contrary to these Guidelines, we will generally remove the offending material, and apply a Community Guidelines warning strike against the user.

Reporting and flagging options

Several of our products, such as Google+, YouTube and Blogger, provide ways for you to create, post and share content. With over 72 hours of video uploaded to YouTube and 270,000 words written in Blogger every minute, you can imagine why we can't pre-screen content. This is why we count on our millions of community users to report abuse and inappropriate content. Users can find out what types of content aren't allowed in our Terms of Use and Program Policies for our various products. We've created tools that let users notify us if they find content that shouldn't be on the site.

Google+

You can report several types of inappropriate content on Google+; learn how to report a [post or comment](#), a [video or photo](#), or an [inappropriate profile](#) to us for review.

YouTube

If you find a video on YouTube that you think violates our Community Guidelines, you can [flag it as inappropriate](#) and it will be submitted to our team for review. There are many ways to alert us to potentially problematic content, including using our flagging tool found below the video player, our Help & Safety Tool, and our privacy and legal issues process.

Blogger

When reading blogs hosted by Blogger, users can [flag any material](#) they feel violates Blogger's policies.

YouTube age-restricted content

Our Community Guidelines are clear about what is allowed on YouTube and what is not. There is however a category of content that does not breach our terms of use, but which still could be determined to be inappropriate for users under the age of 18. These videos are [age-restricted](#). Content deemed age-restricted after staff review is only viewable by signed-in users who represent that they are 18 years of age and older and who've clicked through a warning message. We are continuing to investigate ways in which we can foster a vibrant community for teens.

Google SafeSearch

Many users prefer not to have adult content appear in their search results. [SafeSearch](#) filters

provide you with the ability to change your browser setting to prevent adult content from appearing in your search results. No filter is 100% accurate, but SafeSearch should help you avoid most of this type of material.

YouTube Safety Mode

YouTube created [Safety Mode](#) to give families additional controls over what they want to see. When users turn on Safety Mode, videos with potentially objectionable content will not show up in video search.

Android Content Filtering Lock

Through the Google Play [content rating system](#) and additional tools such as [pin lock](#), we empower users with the option to choose and lock the suitable levels of content exposure and information sharing through apps that are downloaded from Google Play.

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1. Parental controls

Signatories of the ICT Principles have committed, as relevant for their products or services, to assist parents to limit their children's exposure to potentially inappropriate content and contact. It is recognised that parental controls have limitations and cannot replace parents' engagement in their children's online use. Measures that are available or appropriate to each service/product will vary, but may include:

- Manufacturers seeking to optimise hardware design to provide products which simply and clearly help parents to set appropriate levels of control on devices.
- Network providers seeking to provide necessary tools and settings across their services to enable parents to set appropriate levels of control
- Service and content providers making available the necessary tools and settings across their services to enable parents to set appropriate levels of control.

We build tools and controls into our products that help users manage their online experience. Learn about SafeSearch, YouTube Safety Mode, and content filtering on Android below.

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2. [Dealing with abuse/misuse](#)

The Signatories have committed, when relevant for their services or products, to deal with all abuse/misuse related to content or conduct which may be illegal, harmful, offensive or inappropriate e.g. under a company's Acceptable Use Policy. Signatories commit to:

- Provide a clear and simple process whereby users can report content or behaviour which breaches the service's terms and conditions
- Implement appropriate procedures for reviewing user reports about images, videos, text and other content or behaviour;
- Provide clear information to users on all available report and review procedures;
- Place and review regularly links to these reporting options in appropriate areas of the service;
- Place links to relevant child welfare organizations or specialist providers of advice and other confidential helplines/support services in appropriate areas;
- Ensure that moderators who review user reports are properly trained to determine or escalate content or behaviour presented to them.

Security and Safety

Google works hard to help protect users from identity theft, personal fraud and online scams, to help protect users' computer, and to make the Internet a safer place.

Helping prevent malware

As we work to protect our users and their information, we sometimes discover and investigate unusual patterns of activity. Every day we identify and flag more than 10,000 of those unsafe sites, and we show warnings on up to 14 million Google Search results and 300,000 downloads, telling our users that there might be something suspicious going on behind a particular website or link.

Developing and sharing security tools

We've also developed a number of popular security tools, like Skipfish, that provide information to web application developers, website owners, network administrators, to help them keep their platforms safe and detect security problems with their sites. We provide these tools for free and work with many partners to develop and continuously improve them.

2-step verification

To bring even stronger levels of protection to Google Accounts, we offer 2-step verification to our users. This tool adds an extra layer of security by requiring not just a password, but also a verification code to sign in to a Google Account. Even if a user's password is cracked, guessed, or otherwise stolen, an attacker can't sign in to their account without entering the verification code we'll send to their mobile phone. We offer 2-step verification in more than 50 languages and 175 countries.

Encryption

Google takes many steps to keep your personal information safe from attackers and snoops. By default, we encrypt the Gmail connection between the user's computer and Google – this helps protect their Google activity from being snooped on by others. We also make this protection, known as session-wide SSL encryption, the default when they're signed into Google Drive and many other services.

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Blogger

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SecondFriend

We will be offering the possibility to interested help-/hotlines to test and improve the reporting chat tool SecondFriend, which was developed during the June 2012 [EUhackathon](#).

YouTube Deputy Program

Community flagging is an important part of YouTube, allowing us to maintain a safe and vibrant platform with the help of our users. In November 2012, we launched the Deputy program for users with high flagging accuracy and volume which will help them to report content accurately and at scale.

Reporting comments on YouTube

We have a team exploring ways to allow users to have a more efficient and user-friendly process to report comments. The hope is that this will improve user-experience and help YouTube remove abusive content more easily.

G+ abuse reporting updates

Based on recent feedback from our users, we launched several new abuse reporting updates on G+, including:

- Reporting content in the stream: You'll now have more options when reporting bad posts, comments, profiles or photos. This will mean we can deal with misconduct more quickly, and prevent abuse from happening again.

- Reporting people in public hangouts: If you ignore someone in a hangout, we immediately mute their audio and video to keep you safe. Now when you report someone in a public hangout, we'll also automatically record a small snippet and notify the room. We can then check for bad behavior—and once we've done that we'll delete the clip.

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3. **Child Sexual abuse content or illegal contact**

Under this section, the ICT Principles require that signatories, if relevant for their services and products, cooperates with law enforcement authorities and other agencies, as provide for in local law, on child sexual abuse content or unlawful contact. The Signatories shall:

- Facilitate the notification of suspected child sexual abuse content to the appropriate law enforcement channels, in accordance with existing laws and data protection rules;
- Ensure the prompt removal of illegal child sexual abuse content once notified by national law enforcement agency
- Provide relevant additional information and/or links to users so they can make a report or obtain information about appropriate agencies or organisations that users can contact about making a report or obtaining expert advice, at national and EU level.

When Google becomes aware that content violates the law, we cooperate with law enforcement agencies quickly and in the proper legal framework. We respond proactively to threatening situations and report all instances of child exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

Additionally, we work closely with several organizations globally dedicated to eradicating child abuse and exploitation -- for example we support INHOPE and many local child safety hotlines. Just recently, we joined the European Financial Coalition to support their five objectives for 2013:

- Support international law enforcement investigations; wherever possible through cooperation with private stakeholders;
- Assess & study the commercial child sexual exploitation on the Internet through all kinds of Internet environments.
- Help protect legitimate private business interests from possible misuse of their services perpetrated by criminals with the aim of distributing child sexual abuse content through different information & communication technologies;
- Empower law enforcement & private companies in counteracting the problem through

the delivery of trainings & sharing of resources;

- Inform decision makers & raise awareness among the public about the EFC's activities.

Part of effectively taking down child abuse material is helping organizations and law enforcement -- those fighting exploitation on the ground. We cooperate with child safety investigations, and have a legal team devoted to this effort around the clock. We respond to thousands of law enforcement requests for assistance, and hundreds of subpoenas, each year. We also provide training and technical assistance to law enforcement officials investigating online crimes against children through forums such as the Internet Crimes Against Children's National Conference and the Virtual Global Taskforce. In Europe, we have been working with Missing Children's Europe to help them use Google technology to search for publicly available information across all MCE member websites at the same time.

We are also advising and working with NCMEC engineers to define and address their greatest challenges by developing new technical solutions aimed at eradicating child pornography on the Internet and identifying and locating exploited children. In the past few years, we've donated Google hardware and software to accelerate and improve NCMEC's ability to manage incoming reports of child exploitation, increasing the effectiveness of the organization. For example, we recently assisted NCMEC in building a more user-friendly and seamless reporting system for both the public and electronic service providers.

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4. **Privacy and control**

The Signatories have committed, when relevant for the services and products, to continue compliance with existing data protection and advertising rules and privacy rights as set out in the relevant legal dispositions. In addition, the Signatories if appropriate to their service/product, may also:

- Manage privacy settings appropriate for children and young people in ways that ensure they are as safe as is reasonably possible;
- Offer a range of privacy setting options that encourage parents, children and young people to make informed decisions about their use of the service and the information they post and share with others online. These options should be easy to understand, prominently placed, user friendly and accessible;
- Take steps, where appropriate and in accordance with legal obligations, to raise user awareness of different privacy controls enabled by services or devices and enable users to use these as appropriate;
- Make reasonable efforts to raise awareness among all parties, service, content, technology and application providers, including public bodies, of industry good practice

in relation to the protection of children and young people online.

Google offers many services and tools that allow users to share and control their information, from Gmail to YouTube to Google+.

YouTube

We provide YouTube uploaders with the ability to limit the exposure of their videos. They can set it to be a [Private](#) video. If the video is set to Private, only the uploader and up to 50 other invited users will be able to see it. The video will not appear in their channel, in search results, or in playlists.

A user could also choose to set the video as an [unlisted](#) video. An unlisted video is a different type of private video. Unlisted means that only people who know the link to the video can view it. An unlisted video will not appear in any of YouTube's public spaces (such as search results, channel, or the Browse page).

Google Talk

Google Talk, the chat feature in Gmail and other Google products, allows users to take chats off the record. Chats that have been taken off the record aren't stored in their or their contact's Gmail chat history. When they take a chat off the record, a message will appear to them and their contact confirming that future chats won't be saved, unless one of the users changes the setting.

Gmail

We built Gmail to improve the experience of using email, and we continue to develop innovative new features to make the experience better. Gmail offers a variety of tools to help users' protect their information including virus scanning, spam filtering, HTTPS access and 2-step verification.

Blogger

On Blogger, the user's blog is completely public by default, and can be viewed by anyone on the Internet. If the user would like to keep their blog private, they can limit the viewers of the blog to only people they choose to invite.

G+ sharing settings

Google+ circles help users manage their friends and contacts. Users can put their friends in one circle, their family in another and their boss in a circle all by himself – just like real life. Then they can share relevant content, like Google+ posts, YouTube videos, or Local listings, with the right

people anytime they choose.

When we know a user's age, we may apply age-appropriate default settings for them. When carefully developing Google+ for teens, we aimed to foster safety alongside self-expression. The result was age-appropriate defaults for teens around sharing and content visibility, with extra guidance on features offered in Google+.

Incognito Mode on Chrome

In incognito mode, pages users open and files they download aren't recorded in Chrome's browsing or download history. Users can also use this feature in Chrome for Android – and Chrome is now the default browser for new Android products, letting users browse the web on their phone or tablet in private.

Google Account Settings

On the Account settings page, users can see services and information associated with their Google Account and change their security and privacy settings.

Google Dashboard

The Google Dashboard shows what's stored in the user's Google Account. From one central location, they can easily view and update their settings for services such as Blogger, Calendar, Docs, Gmail, Google+ and more.

Google Takeout

Google Takeout provides users with an easy-to-use tool to download their personal data, like their documents or photos, so that they can always have a copy of it or easily be able to upload their information to another service.

Android device and location

On Android devices, users can turn off geolocation for all apps and websites. They just need to visit "Location Access" under the device Settings panel to do this. Once turned off, if an app or website wishes to access location information, it will ask the user to change their settings or work without this information.

Google mobile apps and location

Google offers a variety of mobile applications that users can download onto their smartphone and some of these apps, such as Search and Maps, incorporate geolocation features. Some parents may be concerned about their teen sharing their location with others. Each app allows users to adjust sharing setting so they can share as much or little as they want. The Google Settings

shortcut on Android device easily allows users to turn off location access on all Google apps.

Android Apps and location

When users download an Android app from Google Play, the app must ask for permission to use geolocation. It must also specify how granular the location information is which it is asking for. Depending on the app, this information could be used in a variety of ways whether that's providing targeted results, or publishing the user's location on the web.

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5. Education and Awareness

The Signatories commit to raise awareness and provide appropriate information with the aim to:

- Educate children and young people and give them up to date information to manage their access and settings in relation to content, services and applications, adding support where possible to existing initiatives and partnerships;
- Provide advice about features of the service or functionality that are available to allow parents to improve the protection of children, such as tools to prevent access to certain types of content or service;
- Provide links to other sources of relevant, independent and authoritative advice for parents and carers, teachers, and for children;
- Provide access to information that will help educate parents, carers, teachers and children about media literacy and ethical digital citizenship, and help them think critically about the content consumed and created on the Internet;
- Encourage parents and teachers to use this information and talk to their children/pupils about the issues arising from the use of online services, including such topics as bullying, grooming and, where relevant, cost management.

Google has partnered with organizations and experts around the world who care about helping people learn more about how to use their web, stay safe and be good citizens online. Find out about our partners, and about additional resources from Google and others to help users make the most of the web.

Good to Know

We have our own dedicated website - [Good to Know](#) - which educates all users about how to stay safe online. Good to Know provides families with tips and advice on how users can help protect themselves and their family from identity theft, con-artists and fraudsters online. They can also learn how to make their computer or mobile device more secure, and get more out of the web.

YouTube and Google+ Safety Center

We have product specific help and safety centers for [YouTube](#) and [Google+](#). These resources go into more depth on the settings, policies, and safety controls offered to all of our users.

Safer Internet Day 2013

We actively participated in [Safer Internet Day this year](#) by driving awareness on staying safe online through local events globally and promoting tips and advice on how to stay safe on the Internet with promotions on the Google homepage.

YouTube Digital Citizenship Curriculum

This [interactive curriculum](#) for YouTube aims to support teachers of secondary students with lesson plans and new resources. The curriculum educates students about what YouTube is doing to keep them safe online but also about what they need to do to manage their digital reputation, so that students can develop a holistic understanding about responsible digital citizenship, not only on YouTube but in all online activity.

Webrangers

We helped stimulate a peer-2-peer project in Israel called [Webrangers](#), empowering 200 children across the country to design and run their own safety campaigns. It was a format that really worked, with participants developing 82 separate campaigns reaching a total of 20,000 children.

Google Search Education

With more and more of the world's content online, it is critical that students understand how to effectively use web search to find quality sources appropriate to their task. We've created a [series of lessons](#), including a few on evaluating content credibility online, to help guide students to use search meaningfully in their schoolwork and beyond.

Partnering to Protect

We believe it is critical to work with and listen to experts and organizations that promote Internet safety and security -- those who have their ears to the ground on how kids, parents, and families are using technology and the challenges they are facing along the way.

Google is part of a number of organizations that work to help companies improve security and safety for their users. For example, we collaborate with experts, such as European Schoolnet and Beatbullying. We recently supported [European Schoolnet's "The web we want" booklet](#), which was designed with the needs and preferences of young people in mind, and to get them thinking about issues such as managing their digital reputation, rights and responsibilities. This handbook is not only designed to be used in the classroom, but can also serve as a useful resource for peer education.

We have also been strong supporters of the Family Online Safety Institute's project -- [A Platform for Good](#) -- which is designed to help parents, teachers and teens to connect, share, and do good online. FOSI is an international, non-profit organization that convenes leaders in industry, government and the non-profit sector to collaborate and come up with new solutions and policies in online safety. We will be hosting the the introduction of FOSI's European Chapter at our Dublin headquarters this May.