

ICT Coalition for Children Online

This bulletin aims to providing some examples of the actions and initiatives carried out by the members of the ICT Coalition for Children Online

April 2021

Events

ICT Coalition Online Forum April 20th

Initiatives

1. Instagram teen safety update

On 16th March 2021, Instagram announced updates on new features and resources as part of our ongoing efforts to keep our youngest community members safe, including an update on our work to understand age. We have dedicated teams focused on youth safety, and we work closely with experts to inform the features we develop. Some highlights include:

- **Improving our work to understand peoples' real age:** Whilst we require everyone to be at least 13 to use Instagram and ask new users to provide their age when they sign up for an account, we know that young people can lie about their date of birth. Verifying people's age online is complex, but to address this challenge we're developing new artificial intelligence and machine learning technology to help us keep teens safer — and apply new age-appropriate features.
- **Restricting DMs between teens and adults they don't follow:** To protect teens from unwanted contact from adults, we're introducing a new feature that prevents adults from sending messages to people under 18 who don't follow them. This feature relies on our work to predict people's age using machine learning technology, and the age people give us when they sign up.
- **Making it more difficult for adults to find and follow teens:** In the coming weeks we'll start exploring ways to make it more difficult for adults who have been exhibiting potentially suspicious behaviour to interact with teens. This may include things like restricting these adults from seeing teen

accounts in 'Suggested Users', preventing them from discovering teen content in Reels or Explore, and automatically hiding their comments on public posts by teens.

- **Encouraging teens to make their accounts private:** We've added a new step when someone under 18 signs up for an Instagram account that gives them the option to choose between a public or private account. We'll be encouraging young people to opt for a private account by equipping them with information on what the different settings mean. Teens can still opt for a public account if they choose to do so after learning more about the options. If the teen doesn't choose 'private' when signing up, we will now send them a notification later on highlighting the benefits of a private account and reminding them to check their settings. We're assessing additional measures we can take to protect young people on Instagram and we'll have more to share in the coming months.

For full details of our announcement, please see [Continuing to Make Instagram Safer for the Youngest Members of Our Community](#).

2. Child Exploitative Content, Focusing on Prevention

Understanding how and why people share child exploitative content is critically important to deploying effective comprehensive solutions to combat it. To help with that understanding, Facebook conducted an in-depth analysis of the illegal child exploitative content we reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) from Facebook and Instagram in October and November 2020. The analysis found that more than 90% of this content was the same as or visually similar to previously reported content. Copies of just six videos were responsible for more than half of the child-exploitative content we reported in that time period. While this data indicates that the number of pieces of content does not equal the number of victims, and that the same content, potentially slightly altered, is being shared repeatedly, one victim of this horrible crime is one too many.

The fact that only a few pieces of content were responsible for many reports suggests that a greater understanding of intent could help us prevent this revictimization. With that in mind, Facebook worked with leading experts on child exploitation, including NCMEC, to develop a [research-backed taxonomy](#) to categorize a person's apparent intent in sharing this content. Based on this taxonomy, we evaluated 150 accounts that were reported to NCMEC for uploading CSAM (child sexual abuse material) in July and August of 2020 and January 2021, and we estimate that more than 75% did not exhibit malicious intent (i.e. did not intend to harm a child). Instead, these accounts appeared to share for other reasons, such as outrage or poor humor. While this study represents a best understanding, these findings should not be considered a precise measure of the child-safety ecosystem. Facebook's work to understand intent is ongoing.

Based on those initial findings, Facebook is developing targeted solutions, including new tools and policies, to reduce the sharing of this type of content. In particular, two new tools are being tested: one aimed at potentially malicious searches for this content and another aimed at sharing of this content for reasons other than to harm a child. The first intervention is a pop-up that is shown to people who initiate searches on Facebook using terms associated with child exploitation. The pop-up offers offender diversion resources from child protection organizations and shares information about the consequences of viewing illegal content. The second is a safety alert designed for people who have shared viral memes of child exploitative content informing them of the harm it causes the victim and warns that it is against our policies and there are legal consequences for sharing this material. Facebook is also working with experts on public awareness campaigns to help people understand that, no matter the reason, resharing this content is illegal and revictimizes the child and that they should formally report it instead.

For more information, please see Facebook's recent Newsroom Post [Preventing Child Exploitation on Our Apps](#).

3. Twitter First Youth Summit

At Twitter we want to empower young people every day to speak up and to talk about topics that matter most to them and we want them (as well as everybody else) to feel safe expressing their unique point of view with every Tweet. This desire, and more broadly our mission to serve the public conversation, guided the recent expansion of our [hateful conduct policy](#) and underpins the regular updates of the [Twitter Rules](#) to better address emerging challenges, as well as our work on media literacy, and the constant development of new tools, from increasingly sophisticated conversation controls to #ThereIsHelp search prompts in areas such as suicide prevention, eating disorders, child sexual exploitation, gender-based violence and many more.

Young people are increasingly utilising the open nature of Twitter to raise awareness about issues and causes that are important to them, from climate change to social justice. Our service can be a powerful tool for young people to get active and to make their voices heard across the globe.

In the context of our efforts to empower young people and to listen to their voice, on the 24th of February 2021, we held [Twitter's first ever Youth Summit](#).

The event gave approximately 40 young people from 14 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Portugal) the opportunity to exchange ideas and thoughts around media literacy and digital citizenship as well as to discuss issues related to mental health, cyberbullying, equality and sustainability with Twitter and with fellow peers. Safety and security were also discussed in-depth.

Speaking about the event, [Lorcan Tuohy, member of the Webwise youth panel \(part of the Irish Safer Internet Centre\) and BIK Youth Ambassador](#) wrote:

"The event was an overall success; a number of young people were able to gain an insight into what Twitter is doing in order to make its platform better for people to voice their opinions and concerns, as well as what is being done to ensure that those who use the platform are kept safe while doing so. Events like these are very important as they provide an opportunity for young people to work directly with industry on issues that concern them. With plenty of takeaways for both the young people in attendance as well as Twitter, the event was a pure joy to be a part of. Equally, it is encouraging to see industry taking such steps to ensure that the voice of youth is being heard."

Full article [here](#).

4. Comunicar em Segurança, Altice Portugal/ Altice Foundation

As a result of the pandemic, we adapted our Comunicar em Segurança program to the online context and all the awareness sessions which were normally given in schools are now online. The theater play "ID a tua marca na NET" has also an online version, and the resources we are developing - Digital brochures, animations and videos are all available online.

- Digital brochures for parents and teachers <https://fundacao.telecom.pt/Site/Pagina.aspx?PageId=2277>
- Digital animations for parents and teachers <https://fundacao.telecom.pt/Site/Pagina.aspx?PageId=2279>
- Theater Play "ID a tua marca na NET" videos <https://fundacao.telecom.pt/Site/Pagina.aspx?PageId=2278>

In the context of the Safety Internet Month, Altice Portugal promoted **internal awareness sessions** for colleagues and their children on “how to minimize risks online”. This initiative was very timely and very well attended also due to the present situation in which teleworking and online classes are becoming more and more common.

Altice Portugal is the industry partner in the ROAR European Project. ROAR is an European project aiming to promote prevention and reporting of cybercrime and improve support to and protection of its victims. Coordinated by APAV, the Portuguese Victim Support Association, the partnership included the Portuguese Public Prosecutor Office (PGR), the National Republican Guard (GNR), Altice Portugal, Weisser Ring (Germany) and Equality and Human Rights Action Center (Romania). This project was financed by the Internal Security Fund - European Union Police. Altice Portugal contributed with its industry perspective and experience, specifically by ensuring, through its Foundation, awareness sessions in the school community. Excellent feedback was received from schools.

More info: <https://apav.pt/publiproj/index.php/96-projeto-roar>

5. Youtube - A new choice for parents of tweens and teens on YouTube

This generation of tweens and teens has grown up online, and it’s where they go to learn, laugh, and connect. Every family has a different approach to how they use technology, access the internet and set digital ground rules. Over the years, we’ve made investments to protect families and kids on YouTube, such as launching a dedicated [kids app](#), better protecting their [privacy](#), [restricting features](#) and improving [age restrictions](#). To complement this work, in March this year we launched a [new choice](#) for parents who have decided their tweens and teens are ready to explore YouTube with a supervised account.

From our earliest days, YouTube has been a platform for people [over 13](#), and we’ve always recommended that parents co-watch with their kids if they choose to watch YouTube. In 2015, we created [YouTube Kids](#), a safer destination for kids to explore their interests while providing parental controls. But since then, we’ve heard from parents and older children that tweens and teens have different needs, which weren’t being fully met by our products. As children grow up, they have insatiable curiosity and need to gain independence and find new ways to learn, create, and belong.

Over the last year, we’ve worked with parents and experts across the globe in areas related to child safety, child development, and digital literacy to develop a solution for parents of tweens and teens. This work has led to the launch of a new experience in beta for parents to allow their children to access YouTube through a [supervised Google Account](#). This [supervised experience](#) will come with content settings and limited features. We’ll start with an early beta for families with kids under the [age of consent](#) to test and provide feedback, as we continue to expand and improve the experience.

Giving parents content options on YouTube

Every parent has a different parenting style and every child is unique and reaches different developmental stages at different times. That’s why supervised experiences on YouTube give parents the ability to choose from 3 different content settings.

- **Explore:** For children ready to move on from YouTube Kids and explore content on YouTube, this setting will feature a broad range of videos generally suitable for viewers ages 9+, including vlogs, tutorials, gaming videos, music clips, news, educational content and more.
- **Explore More:** With content generally suitable for viewers ages 13+, this setting will include an even larger set of videos, and also live streams in the same categories as “Explore.”
- **Most of YouTube:** This setting will contain almost all videos on YouTube, except for [age-restricted content](#), and it includes sensitive topics that may only be appropriate for older teens.

6. Yubo introduces popups in private messages to prevent inappropriate requests

Yubo’s new feature has been developed to mold its users’ behaviour in the future. The new feature prevents the sharing of personal information or inappropriate messages by intervening in real-time. For example, if a user is about to share sensitive information, such as a personal number, address or even an inappropriate image they’ll receive a pop up from Yubo highlighting the dangers of sharing this information. The user will then have to confirm they want to proceed before they are allowed to do so. Additionally, if users attempt to share revealing images or an inappropriate request, Yubo will block that content from being shared with the intended recipient in real time.

Marc-Antoine, COO, said, *“we passionately believe in enabling Gen Z to make meaningful digital connections and friendships safely across the world. Now more than ever, this generation needs a space to safely connect with like minded people and experience social interaction online, when they are unable to do so in real life. However, it is our responsibility as a business to ensure that they are protected and educated on how to behave responsibly online, not just on Yubo, but on any social media or online forum. That is why we have introduced these new features and will continue to proactively work with our safety and moderation experts to ensure Yubo is a safe space to make new and meaningful connections.”*

7. Technology Coalition Research Fund

See <https://www.technologycoalition.org/news/>

The Technology Coalition in partnership with the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (End Violence), is launching a research fund. The Technology Coalition has invested \$1M for the Tech Coalition Safe Online Research Fund which will provide grants of up to \$250K for research that produces actionable insights and can impact product and policy development to advance the world’s understanding of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA).

Webpage: http://bit.ly/TC_SafeOnline_ResearchFund

Through this collaboration, End Violence is teaming up with the biggest players in the technology space as part of Technology Coalition’s Project Protect. Project Protect seeks to prevent and eradicate online CSEA through technology innovation, collective action, research, knowledge sharing, and increased accountability. This fund is an essential part of that process, supporting actionable research that will lead to real, lasting change for children’s digital safety.

As the lead research arm of the project, End Violence will manage the Tech Coalition Safe Online Research Fund while building on four years of work in the Safe Online space. Since our inception in 2016, End Violence has invested \$45 million in 53 projects focused on preventing and eliminating online CSEA, with impact in over 70 countries across the world