The Age Appropriate Design Code in Action

Tech companies have added new protections for children in the U.K.

Sacramento is debating a children's online safety law modeled after the U.K.'s Children's Code, passed in 2020. Here's how tech companies have started to comply. While some pledged to roll out changes globally, it's unclear how many have started to do so.

The **Google Play Store** now prevents children from viewing and downloading adult-only rated apps.

YouTube turned off autoplay for children. It also turned on break and bedtime reminders as default settings.

TikTok does not push notifications to children ages 13 to 15 after 9 p.m., and does not send push notifications to children ages 16 to 17 after 10 p.m.

Instagram and **TikTok** have disabled direct messages between children and adults they do not follow.

Google made SafeSearch the default browsing mode for users younger than 18.

Source: POLITICO reporting

Also on TikTok: all accounts belonging to people under 18 will have an automatic 60-minute screen time limit

Default settings: Many services have made changes so that children and teen's accounts are set to the highest privacy settings by design and default.

YouTube's default upload settings have been changed to the most private setting for under 18s.

Pinterest now has notifications switched off by default and users are not pressured to switch them on.

Adults can no longer direct message young people who do not follow them on **Instagram**.

Greater user control: Alongside default settings, many services have unveiled further user controls to help users manage and curate their own experience:

Twitter expanded its *Safety Mode*, which blocks accounts who send abusive messages from following the recipient for seven days. Twitter will now proactively scan Tweets for abusive content, and positively nudge recipients to turn on Safety Mode.

Among Us now grants users the opportunity to manage data collection at sign up and in game, including the option to turn off a personalized game experience and opt out of data collection.

Transparency: Some services have also taken innovative approaches to updating their terms of service, privacy policies and community guidelines to make them more suitable for children. For example:

King, a prominent game publisher with 16 games listed on the Apple and Google app stores, has produced a gamified version of its privacy policies to educate their users on their data practices.

Meta updated its privacy policy, changing the format, breaking up the text, using more understandable language and making use of illustrations and videos.

Spotify has for the first time published its platform rules, setting out which content is prohibited and the consequences of uploading such content, with signposting for users on how to report any potential violations.

On **Pinterest**, children in the UK will not be shown ads and their data will not be shared or used outside the service.

Recognition of evolving capacities: Many of the positive changes have included a recognition of 'evolving capacities' with products adapting safeguards for different age groups. For instance:

Google has developed engaging and easy-to-understand materials will help children and their parents understand Google's data practices in an age-appropriate way, with options for 6–8-year-olds, 9–12-year-olds and 13–17-year-olds.

TikTok has created two bands, 13-15 and 16-17 for many of its safety features, granting older teens greater scope to manage their experiences on the app.

In addition to the UK where the Code is law, other countries, including France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the Republic of Ireland, have already introduced guidance influenced by and building on the Age Appropriate Design Code.