



Contribution by 5Rights Foundation

PROTECTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Purpose

Share international best practices for coherent global standards on children's rights in the digital environment.

Action required

This report is transmitted to the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection **for information**.

Protecting Children's Rights in the Digital Environment

ITU Council Working Group on child online protection, 22nd meeting

13 February 2025

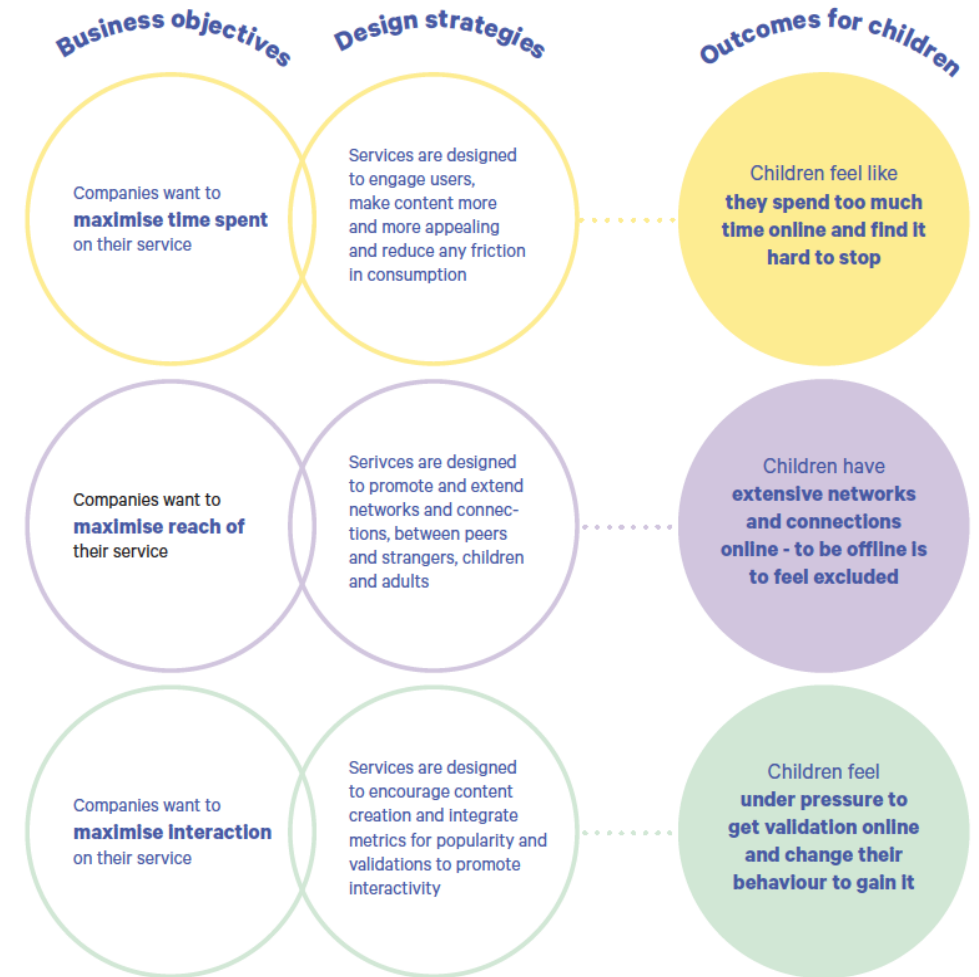
Building the digital world that young people deserve

5Rights is at the forefront of delivering practical change for children so they can access the digital world knowledgeably, creatively and fearlessly.

[EXPLORE OUR RESOURCES](#)



Pathways: How digital design puts children at risk



Children's Rights in the Digital Environment



Committee on the Rights of the Child

General comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment

I. Introduction

1. The children consulted for the present general comment reported that digital technologies were vital to their current lives and to their future: "By the means of digital technology, we can get information from all around the world"; "[Digital technology] introduced me to major aspects of how I identify myself"; "When you are sad, the Internet can help you [to] see something that brings you joy".¹
2. The digital environment is constantly evolving and expanding, encompassing information and communications technologies, including digital networks, content, services and applications, connected devices and environments, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, robotics, automated systems, algorithms and data analytics, biometrics and implant technology.²
3. The digital environment is becoming increasingly important across most aspects of children's lives, including during times of crisis, as societal functions, including education, government services and commerce, progressively come to rely upon digital technologies. It affords new opportunities for the realization of children's rights, but also poses the risks of their violation or abuse. During consultations, children expressed the view that the digital environment should support, promote and protect their safe and equitable engagement: "We would like the government, technology companies and teachers to help us [to] manage untrustworthy information online."; "I would like to obtain clarity about what really happens with my data ... Why collect it? How is it being collected?"; "I am ... worried about my data being shared".³
4. **The rights of every child must be respected, protected and fulfilled in the digital environment.** Innovations in digital technologies affect children's lives and their rights in ways that are wide-ranging and interdependent, even where children do not themselves access the Internet. Meaningful access to digital technologies can support children to realize the full range of their civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights. However, if digital inclusion is not achieved, existing inequalities are likely to increase, and new ones may arise.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has just said...

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Digital services should not take your personal information and use it in ways that are unfair or unjust, or allow others to use your information in ways that don't benefit you.

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO HEALTH, EDUCATION AND JUSTICE

Digital technology can help you access services, but it must be accurate and not undermine your other rights.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Digital services should not be used to stop you saying what you think (so long as it does not hurt others) or joining others to make a better world.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PLAY AND REST

Playing online should not mean that you are targeted to do or buy things that make money for others. It should be fun and appropriate to your age. All digital services should be designed to 'give you a break'.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE

You should not be sent pictures, videos and messages that harm you or suggest that you harm yourself. You should be protected from anyone who contacts you who may harm you in real life.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT NOT TO BE EXPLOITED

Digital services must not target you with advertising, selling your information or allowing others to do so. You must be protected from violence of all sorts.

Information online should be true, clear and understandable to you - in a language you speak.

"YOUR RIGHTS APPLY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD"

<https://5RightsFoundation.com/resource/know-your-rights/>

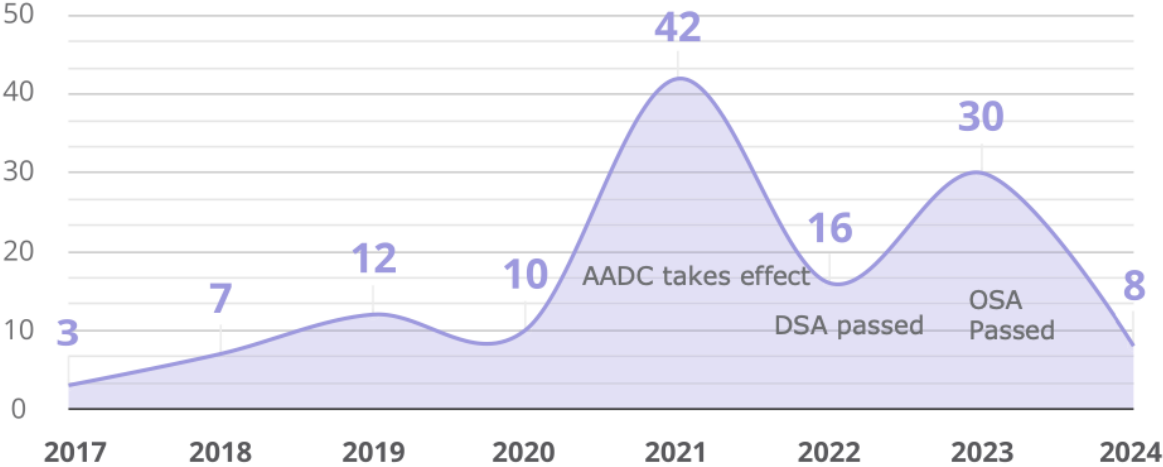


International Landscape

- United Nations (2024), [Global Digital Compact](#)
- International Telecommunication Union (2020), [Guidelines for industry on Child Online Protection](#)
- African Union (2024), [Child Online Safety and Empowerment Policy](#)
- OECD (2021), [Recommendation of the Council on Children in the Digital Environment](#), and [Guidelines for Digital Service Providers](#)
- Global Privacy Assembly (2021), [Resolution on Children Digital Rights](#)
- UK (2021) [Age-Appropriate Design Code](#)
- IEEE 2089-2021, [Standard for an Age Appropriate Digital Services Framework](#)



The Impact of Regulation



Towards Global Coherence

- Systemic, tech neutral and outcome-based.
- Respect children's rights (based on UNCRC and General comment No. 25) and best interests, including their right to participate.
- Corporate responsibility to design products with children in mind, taking into account their rights, needs, vulnerabilities, and evolving capacities.
- Privacy and safety by design and by default at the heart of product development, including risk assessment and mitigation (based on the 4Cs framework covering content, contact, conduct and consumer/contract risks).
- Accountability, transparency, and oversight.



Thank you!

Marie-Ève Nadeau

marie-eve@5rightsfoundation.com

