Senate Environment and Communications References Committee:

Internet Search Engine Services Online Safety Code inquiry

Meta Responses to Questions on Notice from the 28 October 2025 hearing (from transcript)

How many users across both Teen Accounts and regular user accounts do you believe you have under the age of 16, currently?

Globally, there are now hundreds of millions of young people placed into the Teen Accounts setting. However, we do not have precise numbers we are able to share at this time.

However, to give the Committee a recent insight into the possible range of under 16s on our services, as published in the *Behind the Screen* transparency [report](#) by the Office of the eSafety Commissioner in February 2025, between 1 January 2024 and 31 July 2024 we reported an average of 153,223 monthly active end-users between the ages of 13 and 15 (inclusive) on Facebook and an average of 351,135 monthly active end-users between the ages of 13 and 15 on Instagram.

Meta turned off advertising to children in the EU; however, it continues to advertise to children in Australia. Why is that the case?

In the European Region, we have started offering the "subscription for no ads" service for people aged 18 and up. We are continuing to explore how to provide teens with a useful ad experience given this evolving regulatory landscape. We have temporarily paused showing ads to teens in this period while we manage the complexity of multiple regulations in Europe.

What proportion of harmful content that reaches teens originates from your algorithmic recommendations rather than user searches or follows?

Meta is committed to minimizing the exposure of users to content that violates our Community Standards. It is bad for our business – people don't want to see harmful content and advertisers do not want their ads appearing in connection with it. Our systems are designed so that, to the greatest extent possible, policy-violating content is not recommended or amplified by our algorithms. When such content is detected, it is removed from feeds, recommendations, and search results. We are continually investing in improving our detection and enforcement systems to further reduce the risk of harmful content reaching users.

We provide details to track our progress in enforcing against our policies in the Community Standards Enforcement Report. For example, in Q2 2025, we actioned against 3 million pieces of content on Facebook and 5.4 million on Instagram for violating our hateful conduct policies, of which 87.5% and 96.7% respectively we found and actioned before people reported it; 4.1 million pieces of content on Facebook and 3.3 million on Instagram for violating our bullying and harassment policies, of which 75.3% and 86.8% respectively we found and actioned before people reported it; 14.1 million pieces of content on Facebook and 6.4 million on Instagram for violating our violent and graphic content policies, of which 98.1% and 97.4% respectively we found and actioned before people reported it; and 28 million pieces of content on Facebook and 9.6 million on Instagram for violating our adult nudity and sexual activity policies, of which 97% and 96.4% respectively we found and actioned before people reported it.

This has the effect of significantly reducing the likelihood of harmful content being seen by people on our platform.

Additionally, our Content Distribution Guidelines and Recommendation Guidelines, are designed to proactively reduce the reach of potentially harmful or violative content.

The Content Distribution Guidelines set out clear principles for how content is distributed across Meta's platforms. These guidelines are specifically designed to:
- Reduce the spread of content that may be problematic but does not necessarily violate our policies (e.g., clickbait, borderline content).

- Limit the reach of content that is found to violate our Community Standards by removing it from feeds, recommendations, and search results as soon as it is detected.
- Apply "demotions" to content that may be misleading, sensational, or otherwise likely to cause harm, even if it does not meet the threshold for removal.

The Recommendation Guidelines govern how our algorithms prioritize and recommend content to users. These guidelines are designed to:
- Prioritize content from friends, family, and trusted sources over potentially harmful or low-quality content.
- Downrank or remove content that is likely to be false, misleading, or violative of our policies.
- Prevent the recommendation of content from accounts or pages that repeatedly share policy-violating material.

Our safety tools and features provide additional protections. For example, we have started testing the ability of everyone on Instagram - including teens - to reset their recommendations. We want to make sure everyone on Instagram, especially teens, has safe, positive, age-appropriate experiences and feels the time they're spending on Instagram is valuable.

As another example, with Teen Accounts, as well as providing ways to curate the content seen in recommendations, we also offer a range of tools to help teens - and everyone - shape their Instagram experience. Teens in Australia can choose topics they want to see more of - everything from books and travel to cooking and sports. For example, teens can switch to a ['Following' Feed](#) to see content from accounts they follow in chronological order, with the most recent post first. Alternatively, they can add accounts to a 'Favorites' list so they see content from those accounts more often and higher in their Feed, and they can [see a dedicated feed of just their favorites](#) when they want to catch up on their posts quickly.

Features like [Close Friends](#) give teens more control over who sees their Stories, while the Your Activity section in Settings lets teens see and manage all their previous interactions in one place, giving them more control over their digital footprint. We also encourage teens to regularly review their following lists, to

make sure the accounts they're following are still accounts whose content they enjoy seeing.

How are your 'for you' feeds or Stories curated for accounts identified as under 18?

Meta's Feeds and Stories on Facebook and Instagram for accounts identified as under 18 are curated using a combination of age-appropriate content filters, algorithmic adjustments, and privacy-by-design features. Our systems are designed with the objective that teens are not exposed to content that is inappropriate for their age group. This includes restricting the recommendation of certain types of content, limiting interactions with unknown adults, and providing additional privacy protections by default.

We recently announced that starting in October Instagram Teen Accounts will be guided by PG-13 movie ratings by default. This means that teens will see content on Instagram that's similar to what they'd see in a PG-13 movie. Teens under 18 will be automatically placed into an updated 13+ setting, and they won't be able to opt out without a parent's permission. And because we know that all families are different, we're also introducing a new, stricter setting for parents who prefer a more restrictive experience for their teen.

This is the most significant update to [Teen Accounts](#) since we introduced them last year, and builds on the automatic protections already provided by TeenAccounts to [hundreds of millions of teens](#) globally. We know teens may try to avoid these restrictions, which is why we'll use [age prediction technology](#) to place teens into certain content protections — even if they claim to be adults.

Just like you might see some suggestive content or hear some strong language in a PG-13 movie, teens may occasionally see something like that on Instagram - but we're going to keep doing all we can to keep those instances as rare as possible. We recognize no system is perfect, and we're committed to improving over time. We hope this update reassures parents that we're working to show teens safe, age-appropriate content on Instagram by default, while also giving them more ways to shape their teen's experience.

Teen Accounts were already designed to protect teens from inappropriate content and, over the past year, we've further refined our age-appropriate guidelines to hide even more potentially inappropriate content in the updated default 13+ content setting.

We decided to more closely align our policies with an independent standard that parents are familiar with, so we reviewed our age-appropriate guidelines against PG-13 movie ratings and updated them accordingly. While of course there are differences between movies and social media, we made these changes so teens' experiences in the 13+ setting feel closer to the Instagram equivalent of watching a PG-13 movie.

We spent several months improving and refining our technology to proactively identify content that goes against our updated guidelines, and we're using this improved technology across Instagram, including:

Accounts: Teens will no longer be able to follow accounts that we've found regularly age-inappropriate content, or if their name or bio suggests the account is inappropriate for teens. If teens already follow these accounts, they'll no longer be able to see or interact with their content, send them DMs, or see their comments under anyone's posts. We won't recommend these accounts to teens, and we'll make it harder for teens to find these accounts in . These protections work both ways: these accounts won't be able to follow teens, send them DMs, or comment on their posts.

We already block terms related to certain sensitive topics, like suicide, self-harm, and eating disorders. Now we'll block teens' ability to see content results for a wider range of mature terms, such as 'alcohol' or 'gore'— and we're working to make sure these terms will still be blocked if they're misspelled.

Content Experience: Teens shouldn't see content that goes against our updated guidelines in recommendations (Explore, Reels, and in-Feed), Feed, and Stories — even when shared by someone they follow — or comments. If someone sends a teen a link to such content in DMs, they won't be able to open it.

AI: We've also updated our AI experiences for teens to be guided by PG-13 ratings by default, meaning AIs should not give age-inappropriate responses that would feel out of place in a PG-13 movie.

We provide transparency about the signals that factor into what people experience in their [Feed](#) and [Stories](#) on Facebook, and [Feed](#), [Stories](#) and [Explore](#) on Instagram.

We regularly undertake and fund [research](#) and conduct consultations with parents, young people and experts on how young people are using our services. For example, we published the underlying [research](#) that shaped the development of our Teen Accounts feature when we first announced them in September 2024.

What percentage of users utilise those time management tools [in Teen Accounts]?

Time management tools are a default feature of all Teen Accounts on Meta platforms. These tools are automatically available to every teen user, not something they need to opt into or discover separately. Specifically:

- *Daily time limit setting:* Teen Accounts are automatically set to receive a daily time limit reminder after 60 minutes of active use on the app. When a teen reaches the 60-minute threshold, they receive an in-app notification encouraging them to take a break and log off. Teens can dismiss or snooze the reminder, but the notification is persistent and designed to nudge healthy usage patterns. For teens under 16, parents can set stricter limits or require approval to change these settings via the Family Center supervision tools.
- *Sleep Mode:* this is automatically enabled for all Teen Accounts, muting notifications between 10pm and 7am. During Sleep Mode hours, notifications are silenced and auto-replies are sent if someone tries to message the teen, helping to prevent late-night disruptions.

For under 16 year olds, parents can adjust these settings. For 16-18 year olds, the individual teen can adjust these settings. We do not have data on how many have done so.

How many child safety incidents have you reported to eSafety or law enforcement in the last 12 months?

We provide transparency about how many government requests we receive with respect to user data in our Government Requests for User Data report. During the July to December 2024 time period, with respect to the tens of millions of Australians who regularly use our services, we received 2,523 government requests for data, including 242 emergency disclosure requests from Australian law enforcement and including in relation to child safety incidents. Emergency disclosure refers to Meta's process for providing user data to law enforcement or government agencies in urgent situations, outside the standard legal process, when there is an imminent risk of serious physical harm or death to a person. We provided some data in 85% of the requests we received, in accordance with applicable law and our terms of service.

This is a question to Meta, Snap and TikTok—there is a capacity to provide information to the committee on a confidential basis, and I'm very confident that will be respected—on notice. I'm interested to understand what future innovations each of you are currently considering or exploring in regard to improving online safety for young people

The safety of young people online is a top priority for us, and we are continually investing in new ways to protect and empower them on our platforms. We provide a timeline of our ongoing investments in and releases of safety tools and features to support teens and parents here, as well as a Safety Center that we regularly update with new tools and resources.

Currently, we are exploring a range of innovations, including:
- Enhanced parental controls and tools that give families more oversight and flexibility.
- Advanced AI and machine learning to better detect and prevent harmful content or interactions.
- Age-appropriate experiences and privacy settings tailored for younger users.
- Educational resources and in-app prompts to help young people make safer choices online.

We are also actively engaging with child safety experts, NGOs, and regulators to ensure our approach reflects the latest research and best practices. While some of these initiatives are still in development, we are committed to ongoing improvement and transparency as we roll out new features.