

A European Strategy for a better Internet for our children

Children need quality content online, as well as the skills and tools to use the internet safely.



Today, children in Europe are using multiple devices to go online, and they are doing so at younger and younger ages. Some children even start to use the Internet before being able to read or write. Despite this, many young children say there are not enough good things for them to do online.

There is no doubt that in today's environment children need the skills and tools for using the Internet safely and responsibly.

The European Commission set out a European Strategy for a better Internet for children. The strategy aims to give children the digital skills and tools they need to fully and safely benefit from what the Internet has to offer. It also aims to unlock the potential of the market for interactive, creative and educational online content.

The strategy proposes a series of actions grouped towards the following goals:

- stimulating the production of creative and educational online content for children as well as promoting positive online experiences for young children;
- scaling up awareness and empowerment including teaching of digital literacy and online safety in all EU schools;
- creating a safe environment for children through age-appropriate privacy settings, wider use of parental controls and age rating and content classification;
- combating child sexual abuse material online and child sexual exploitation.

The strategy brings together the European Commission, EU countries, mobile phone operators, handset manufacturers and providers of social networking services to deliver concrete solutions for a better Internet for children.

The Commission carries out its tasks in regards to the strategy mainly through the implementation of the Connecting Europe Facility, the instrument for co-funding the digital service infrastructure. Other programmes such as Horizon also contribute to the implementation of the Strategy. In the future, actions will be funded through the Digital Europe Programme.

The European strategy has influenced national policies in most EU countries. Each year, various actions and campaigns under the Strategy reach thousands of schools and young people but also parents and teachers. Around 1,000 youth events took place in 2019 and 2020, and more than 2,000 new resources were created on topics such as fake news, cyberbullying, privacy concerns, grooming, exposure to harmful content, and cyber hygiene.

Through Helplines, also funded under the Strategy, 63,000 children, parents and teachers got advice and guidance in 2020. It is estimated that in 2019 and 2020 around 61 million people in the EU were reached through different activities, especially around the EU's yearly Safer Internet Day, which in 2021 was celebrated in around 200 countries and territories globally.

The strategy document is available in 22 official languages.

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Safer Internet Day 2021: A better internet for children and young people

Last Tuesday, 9 February 2021, was Safer Internet Day. Launched in 2004 and promoted by the EU-funded network of Safer Internet Centres in Member States, the day was celebrated online in more than 170 countries worldwide. The theme "Together for a better internet" is a call for everyone to join in making the internet a safer and better place, especially for children and young people.

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Safer Internet Day 2020: together for a better internet

Safer Internet Day 2020 wants to put everyone together, to strive for a better internet for all.

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Safer Internet Day: Commission announces next steps to keep children safe online

A new Expert Group on Safer Internet for Children will propose concrete actions to keep children safe when online.

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Three online campaigns highlighting the importance of staying safe online have been rewarded by the European Commission.

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The strategy for a better Internet for children provides actions to empower young people as they explore the digital world.

See Also

Safer Internet Forum

The Safer Internet Forum is the key annual international conference on child online safety in Europe.

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day promotes a safer and more responsible use of online technology by children and young people around the world.

Self-regulation for a better Internet for kids

Self-regulation is one of the instruments of the European strategy to create a better Internet for children.

Expert group on Safer Internet for Children

The expert group on safer Internet for children helps improve coordination and cooperation among EU Member States to keep children safe when using the internet.

Safer Internet Centres

Safer Internet Centres inform, advise and assist children, parents, teachers and carers on digital questions and fights against online child sexual abuse.

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