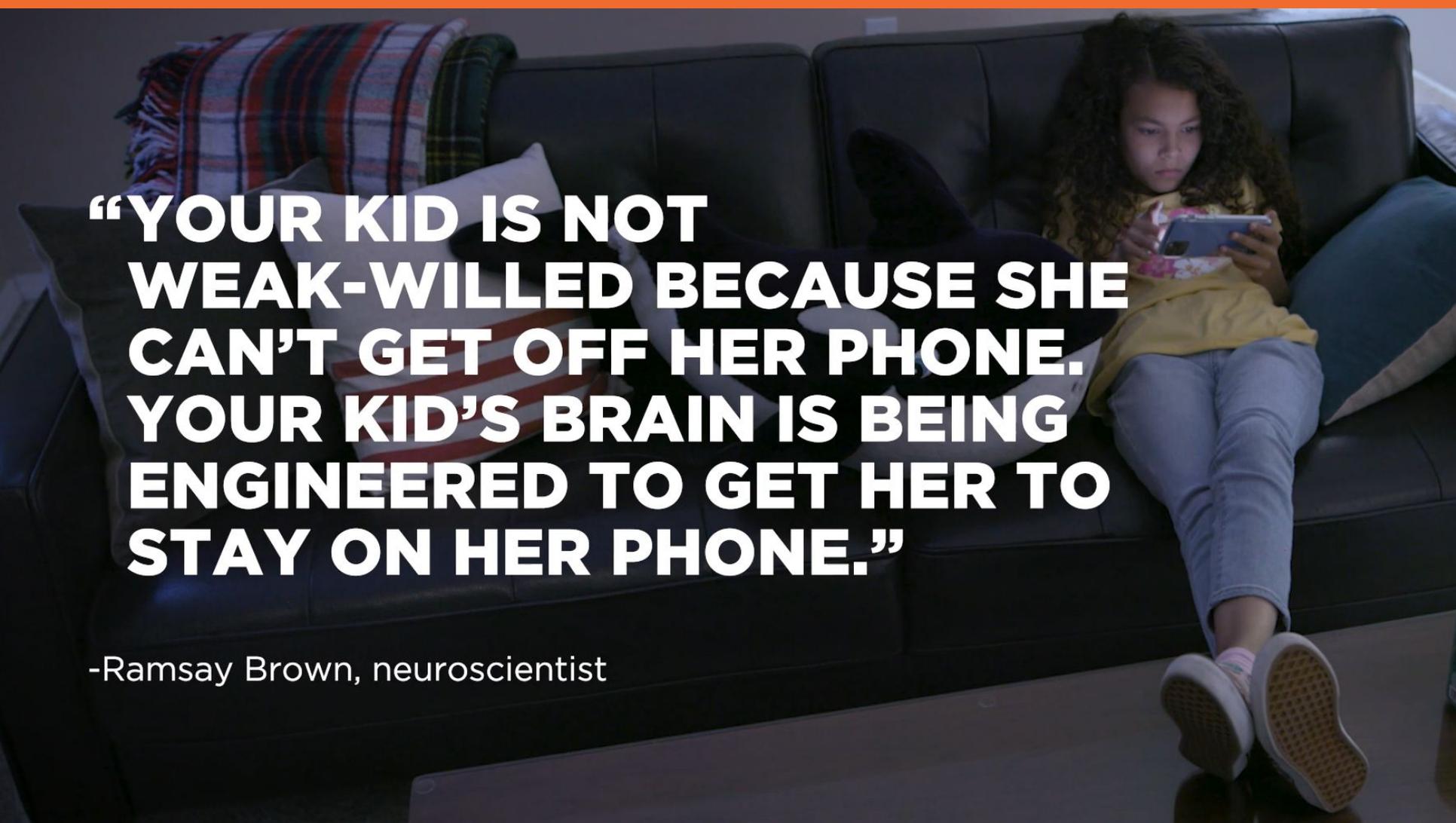




Protecting Children Online: Policy Solutions National Academies of Science

April 7, 2023





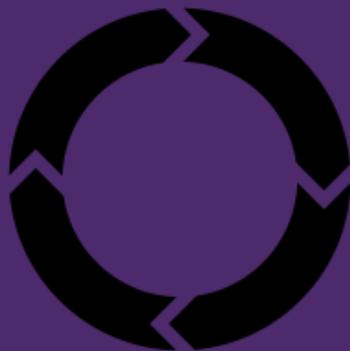
“YOUR KID IS NOT WEAK-WILLED BECAUSE SHE CAN’T GET OFF HER PHONE. YOUR KID’S BRAIN IS BEING ENGINEERED TO GET HER TO STAY ON HER PHONE.”

-Ramsay Brown, neuroscientist

All harms are linked to the business model

Use persuasive design to keep kids
on platforms as long as possible

Use that data to deliver
the content most likely to
keep kids on your platform



Track everything
kids do online

Use that data to deliver personalized
advertising to young people

*By the time a child turns 13, advertisers already hold over
72 million data points about them.*

Maximizing Engagement: Personalization

“Recommendations are designed to optimize watch time, there is no reason that it shows content that is actually good for kids.”

It might sometimes, but if it does it is coincidence.”

- Former YouTube engineer
Guillaume Chaslot



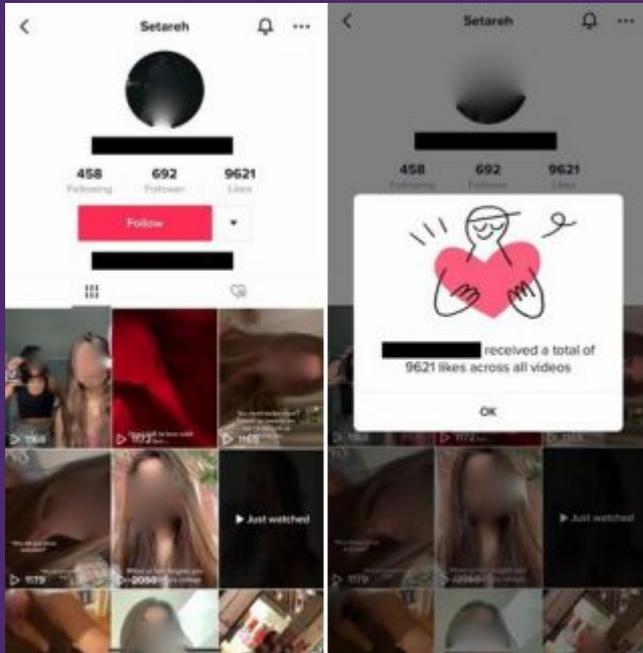
The cycle of harmful content

In the case of teen girls and things like self harm, they develop these feedback cycles where children are using Instagram to self-soothe, but then **are exposed to more and more content that makes them hate themselves**. This is a thing where we can't say 80% of kids are okay. We need to say how do we save all the kids?

Frances Haugen, Meta Whistleblower

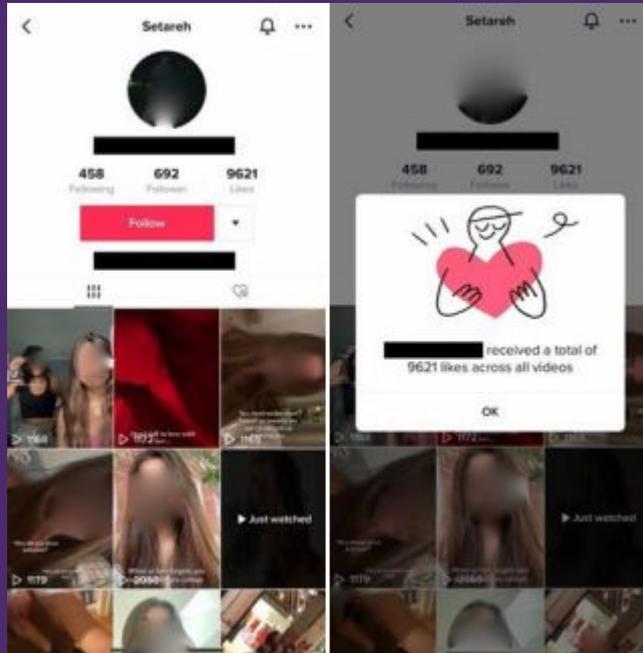


Quantified Popularity



- Exacerbates social hierarchies
- Creates pressure (and notifications) to respond instantly
- Incentivizes frequent posting
- Incentivizes constant checking on reaction to posts

Quantified Popularity



- Creates pressure to use filters, present perfect self
- Facilitates social comparison
- Encourages provocation (risque and antagonistic posts)
- Incentivizes accepting “friend” requests from strangers

The last bill to protect kids online was passed in 1998.

Job Market nytimes.com click here

The New York Times

ON THE WEB

UPDATED TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2003 4:21 PM ET | Personalize Your Weather

LOG IN REGISTER NOW, It's Free!

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NASDAQ: 7,900
S&P500: 7,850

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Nasdaq 1,301.73 ▲ 0.23 +0.02%
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10yr Treas. Yield ▲ 3.05% -0.08%
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University of Phoenix - Choose Degree Program
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Bush Says Annual Address Will Outline 'the Great Challenges'
By ELISABETH BUMILLER 4:07 PM ET
In his State of the Union speech tonight, the president said today that he would aim to enlist citizens in "some great causes."

News Analysis: A Critical Test for Bush
Britain Steps Up Pressure on Iraq

Labor Party Leader Concedes Defeat in Israeli Election
By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS 3:50 PM ET
Labor Party leader Amram Mitzna

Andrea Mohr/The New York Times

Bloomberg's Budget Plan
Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today proposed more than \$550 million in cuts to city services and a \$1 billion in revenue from a

Apple



May 8, 1998

Hot News Headlines

Pro. Go. Whoa. A Strategy as Simple as the Macintosh.



Pro.

Creative professionals, meet your match.



Go.

We rewrote the book on mobile computing.



Whoa.

It's okay, you don't have to say anything.

The Apple Store

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Support

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Developer

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myspace
a place for friends

Read the News Update!

Home | Browse Users | Find a User | Invite Friends | Journal | Mail | Favorites | Group List | Sign Out

Ellen



"It does a body good..."
Female
20 years old
College Park, Maryland
United States

Ellen is in your extended network

Ellen's Latest Journal Entry
[View All Journal Entries](#)

Ellen's Blurbs

About me:
I hate broken promises. I like both men and women. I don't smoke. I don't care if my friends smoke. I say no to drugs. I hate it when guys pick up their cell phones on dates. I brush my teeth in the shower. I can get very jealous. Take away my internet connection and I will surely die. I love The Strokes. I think everyone else should too. I eat a lot. I've taken a stab at fencing, crew, volleyball & cheerleading. I want to be able to pull off red lipstick. I fear looking stupid while I sleep. I hate getting into the shower after someone else. The feel of the wet porcelain beneath my feet and the wet shower curtain brushing against my arm drives me crazy. Oh and yes, that is my website down below, to the left.

Who I'd like to meet:

Ellen's Friend Space

Ellen has 3 Friends.

Contacting Ellen

[send an email](#) [send a smile](#) [forward to friend](#)
[add to friends](#) [add to favorites](#) [request review](#)

Ellen's Details

Making Space for: Dating, Friends, Activities, Hanging Out

Status: Single

Interests: Poorly-written/directed sci-fi,



COPPA's Shortcomings

- No protections for teens.
- “Actual knowledge standard” incentivizes companies to pretend they don't have under 13s on their platforms
- Children only protected on child-directed sites, not the platforms they actually use.
- No data use restrictions if you get parental consent.

Other Regulatory Gaps

- No limits on advertising frequency*
- No rules requiring separation of advertising and programming* or prohibitions on host selling*
- No limits on manipulative design that fosters compulsive use or exposes young people to harms.

* Regulated on children's television programs but not regulated online.

Hallmarks of Effective Regulation

- Covers all minors, not just under 13s
- Limits on monetization
- Addresses both data privacy and platform design.
- Obligation for platforms to proactively prevent and mitigate harms, not just address harms after they occur.
- Includes prohibitions on practices and mandatory default settings, not just transparency and user controls
- Is future-proof (duty of care/best interest requirement)
- Has well-resourced enforcement mechanisms.

Kids Online Safety Act

- Establishes a “**duty of care**” for online providers, requiring them to eliminate or mitigate harms to minors, such as content that promotes suicide, eating disorders, and substance abuse, and design features that encourage compulsive use.
- Requires platforms to have the strongest, most **protective settings** on by default for minors;
- Gives **parents more tools** to protect their children’s privacy, restrict purchases and track their time on a platform;
- Requires social media platforms to perform an annual independent audit that **assesses risks** and whether the platform is taking meaningful steps to prevent harms to minors;
- Provides researchers with access to “black box” algorithms to assist in **research on algorithmic harms** to children and teens.

Children and Teen's Online Safety Act (COPPA 2.0)

- Extends special **privacy protection protections for teens** , including COPPA's data minimization standards and consent requirements.
- **Prohibits data-driven advertising** to minors.
- **Changes COPPA's knowledge standard**, ending the incentive for social media and gaming companies to pretend they don't know use their platforms.
- Expands enforcement capacity by creating a **Division of Youth Privacy and Marketing at the FTC**

Making the case to regulators

The New York Times

Children's Groups Want F.T.C. to Ban 'Unfair' Online Manipulation of Kids

Children's privacy and health experts pressed regulators to prohibit video games and social networks from using attention-hacking techniques on youngsters.

Unfairness under Section V of the FTC Act

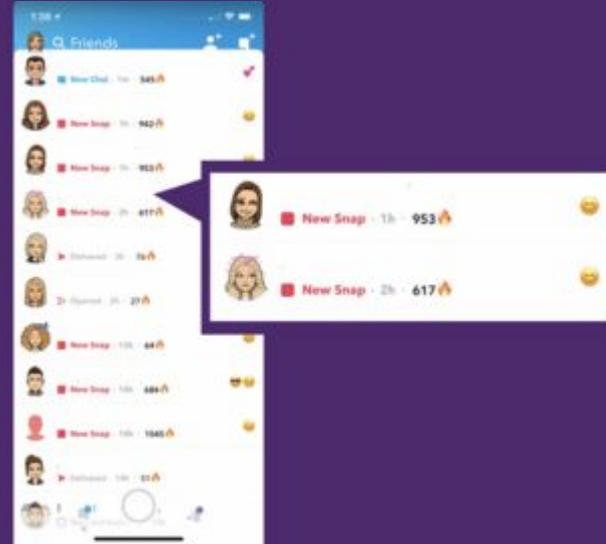
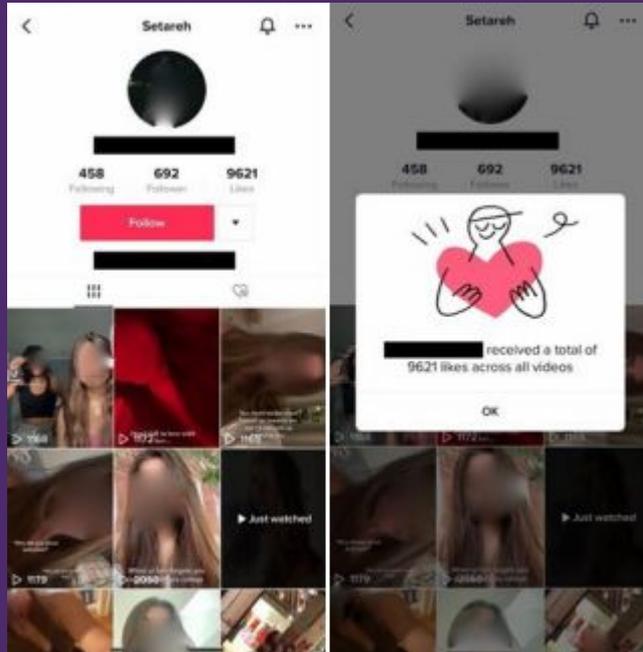
- Causes substantial injury
- Not reasonably avoided
- Do not offer countervailing benefits to minors

Social Manipulation: Parasocial Pressure



In an ad for the well-known game “Candy Crush Saga,” a character will drown if players are unsuccessful or choose to ignore the advertisement. Failing to save her causes a pop-up to appear with characters looking sad and a button for users to download and play the game.

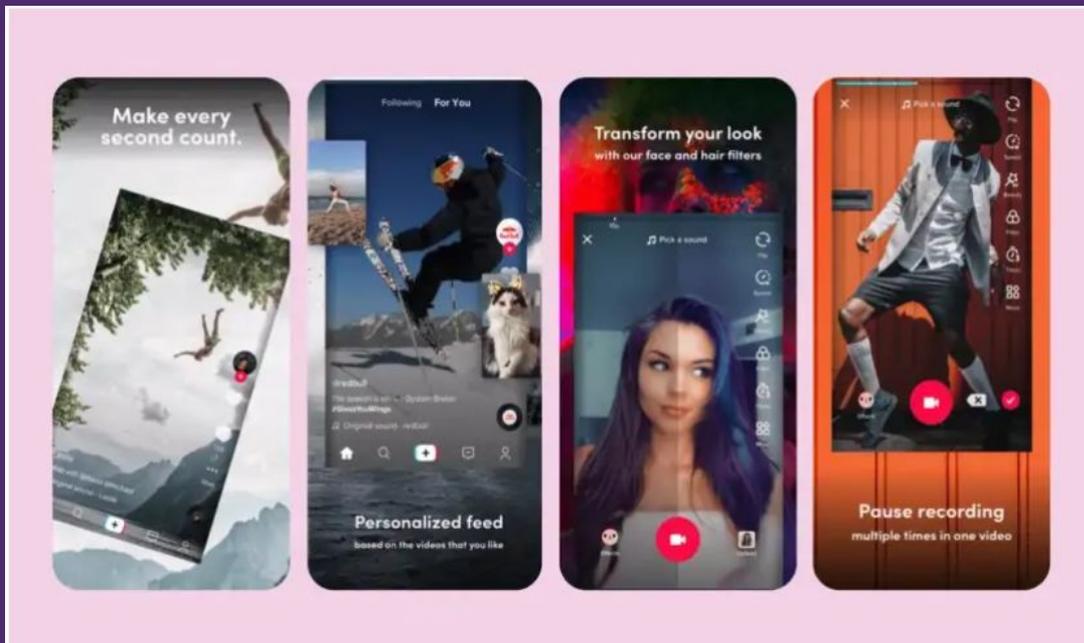
Social Manipulation: Quantified Popularity & Streaks



Low Friction Variable Reward



Variable reward



Infinite scroll

Why We Need Regulation



“TikTok will at times delay a video it knows a user will like until the moment before it anticipates the user would otherwise log out.”

Meta Pursues Teen Users as Horizon Metaverse App Struggles to Grow

Memo highlights Facebook parent's plan to revitalize service amid user-retention issues

Center for Countering Digital Hate Research:

- Minors present in 66 of 100 recordings
- Researchers identified 19 incidents of abuse directed at minors by adults, including sexually explicit insults and racial, misogynistic and homophobic harassment.
- Minors were also spotted in multiple 'Mature Worlds' where Meta permits sexually explicit content, legal drugs and gambling.

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screentimenetwork.org



DESIGNED with
KIDS IN MIND

designedwithkidsinmind.us

josh@fairplayforkids.org



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