

U.S. Regulators Propose New Online Privacy Safeguards for Children

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The Federal Trade Commission recently proposed substantial changes to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 ("COPPA"). COPPA restricts internet tracking of children by several sources such as social media, video games, and digital advertisers. While Congress has attempted to introduce more comprehensive children data safety legislation, COPPA is the main federal law that protects children's online data. These changes would charge apps and other services with the safety of children's data and limit the use and monetization of such data.

These proposed changes would require online service providers to turn off targeted advertisements for children under the age of thirteen and prohibit the use of personal data to target children via push notifications. Additionally, the proposed revisions of COPPA require increased security measures for children's data and decreased retention periods for such data. The change would also narrow an exception which allows these services to collect identification codes for children to improve internal processes, such as product improvement or fraud prevention.

These proposed changes come after the F.T.C. began reviewing COPPA in 2019. Recently, there have been growing concerns regarding children's privacy protections as regulators and state representatives have filed complaints for poor age-gating systems against several large tech companies, including Meta. The F.T.C.'s proposal also attempts to answer public concern over the mental and physical health risks that popular online services pose to children, especially if left unchecked. Social media platforms are the main concern among parents, pediatricians, and school officials due to the harm they cause to the health and education of children. Several states are also responding to these concerns, as states have enacted more than a dozen laws that restrict children's access to social media and adult websites. Notably, the public has 60 days to comment on the proposed changes, after which the F.T.C. will vote.

For more information, check out the full article [here](#)!