

## EU SNS Safer Social Networking Principles Self-declaration Form

*In the interests of transparency, providers supporting the EU Safer Social Networking Principles agree to self-declare how they have considered the Principles in relation to the Social Networking Services they offer, using the form below.*

### 1. About the Social Networking Service(s)

The following is a brief outline of Google's declaration, including a short description of the services it offers that fall into the category of "social networking" as outlined in the Principles.

Google is deeply committed to protecting children on the Internet and providing all of our users with a safe experience online through empowerment, education and protective measures. That's why we empower parents with tools to help them choose what content their children see online; educate children on how to stay safe online; and protect children through partnerships with law enforcement and industry. We incorporate these three key principles across all Google products and services as broadly as possible. Google's [Family Safety Centre](#)<sup>1</sup> is a great resource for any user looking for safety tools and resources. It is a one-stop shop for *children, parents, teachers, and carers* about staying safe online. We've recently updated it to include advice from leading child safety organisations around the world, tips and ideas from parents at Google, as well as information on how to use the safety tools and controls built into Google products.

The tools we offer are varied and depend on the services used. First, to help prevent access to unwanted content Google Search has implemented "SafeSearch," which can be easily chosen through the preferences tab on the Google home page. Many users prefer not to have adult sites included in their search results (especially useful if their children use the same computer). Google's [SafeSearch](#)<sup>2</sup> screens for sites that contain inappropriate content and eliminates them from search results. While no filter is 100% accurate, Google's filter uses advanced technology to check keywords, phrases and URLs. Users can modify their SafeSearch settings by clicking on the Preferences link to the right of the Google search box. On balance we empower users with tools to combat abuse with report mechanisms in YouTube or Blogger for example. This will be explored more in relation to Principle 4. Google also actively supports law enforcement efforts to keep kids safe online. Google also provides training and technical assistance to law enforcement officials investigating online crimes against children through forums such as the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) National Conference and the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT). Google has a specialized legal team dedicated to working with law enforcement officials, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.google.com/intl/en/landing/familysafety/>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.google.com/support/bin/static.py?page=searchguides.html&ctx=preferences&hl=en>

We're also leveraging Google tools to combat online child exploitation. Throughout 2007, engineers used some of their 20% time to create [innovative software tools](#)<sup>3</sup>. The keys here were organization, scalability, and search. In particular, the tools we provided will aid in organizing and indexing NCMEC's information so that analysts can both deal with new images and videos more efficiently and also reference historical material more effectively. This task has been time-consuming, and NCMEC analysts were simply getting overwhelmed by all of the data they had to sift through to help NCMEC track down child predators through video and image search. With these tools, analysts will be able to more quickly and easily search NCMEC's large information systems to sort and identify files that contain images of child pornography. In addition, a new video tool we built streamlines analysts' review of video snippets.

Google has also donated [Google Search Appliances](#)<sup>4</sup> and hundreds of thousands of dollars of in-kind advertising each year through our [Google Grants](#)<sup>5</sup> program to national clearinghouses for child exploitation cases in the U.S. (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children) and the U.K. (Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Center).

Google is a member of both NCMEC's Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography and Technology Coalitions. The Financial Coalition includes leading banks, credit card companies, third party payment companies and Internet services companies, and is dedicated to fighting child pornography over the Internet. The goal of the Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography is to eradicate commercial child pornography.

NCMEC's Technology Coalition's mission is to develop and deploy technology solutions that disrupt the ability of predators to use the Internet to exploit children or traffic in child pornography. In an offshoot of that industry initiative we discovered some other areas where Google could assist NCMEC in its mission to deny predators the use of the Internet to exploit children.

In relation to these principles, Google is not a social networking service; however, there are social elements to our video sharing platform YouTube. YouTube is a user generated video sharing platform around which communities form, have discussion and interact. Bearing this in mind, Google provides below how it maintains these principles on the YouTube platform, where the relevant principles can be applied.

## **2. How has the company considered these services in relation to the Principles?**

The following is an outline of how Google has considered the EU Safer Social Networking

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<sup>3</sup>[http://missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/NewsEventServlet?LanguageCountry=en\\_US&PageId=3644](http://missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/NewsEventServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=3644)

<sup>4</sup><http://www.google.com/enterprise/gsa/>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=126289>

Principles in relation to its Social Networking Service(s). This section will make reference to the recommendations made in the Principles document, where they are applicable and outline how they are applied.

**Principle 1: Raise awareness of safety education messages and acceptable use policies to users, parents, teachers and carers in a prominent, clear and age-appropriate manner**

YouTube as a video platform not only demonstrates its own safety features but also provides information to parents, teachers and young people on how to remain safe online, many of whom we partner with and support. Users are able to access YouTube's [Community Guidelines](#)<sup>6</sup>, [Help Centre](#)<sup>7</sup> and [Safety Tips](#)<sup>8</sup> from every YouTube page. All of these pages are written in an easy to understand, user-friendly format. YouTube's terms of use require all users to abide by our [Community Guidelines](#)<sup>9</sup> before uploading videos. Our Community Guidelines are purposefully written in easy-to-understood language and are designed to provide users with clear advice on what content is acceptable and what is not (e.g., hate speech, pornography, images of drug abuse, and graphic violence). We have zero tolerance for predatory behaviour, harassment, revealing other users' personal information, or any activity that endangers the safety or privacy of a child. Content deemed "age-restricted" after staff review is only viewable by signed-in users who represent that they are 18 years of age and older and who've clicked through a warning message. Users under the age of 13 are prohibited from using YouTube and are blocked from creating accounts by a permanent cookie.

The Help Centre provides advice on a vast array of topics from changing personal settings to privacy complaint guidelines. Our Abuse & Safety Centre, linked to at the bottom of each page on our site, provides safety tips to our users, including advice on keeping personal videos private, protecting online identities, appropriately managing interactions with other users, being responsible cyber-citizens, and using the community flagging system (see [www.youtube.com/t/safety](http://www.youtube.com/t/safety)).

We have also recently added [Educator](#)<sup>10</sup> and [Parent](#)<sup>11</sup> Resources pages which are targeted specifically at those audience.

We also support child safety organizations' efforts to educate Internet users through new media, including YouTube. YouTube has partnered with many organisations in multiple countries and languages who have their own channels and whose expertise we've incorporated into our help

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<sup>6</sup>[http://www.youtube.com/t/community\\_guidelines](http://www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines)

<sup>7</sup><http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/>

<sup>8</sup><http://www.youtube.com/t/safety>

<sup>9</sup>[http://www.youtube.com/t/community\\_guidelines](http://www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines)

<sup>10</sup><http://www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=157105>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.google.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=126289>

resources and safety tips. Some examples are [Beat Bullying](#)<sup>12</sup>, [Childnet](#)<sup>13</sup>, [eEnfance](#)<sup>14</sup>, [Save the Children](#)<sup>15</sup>, [ICMEC](#)<sup>16</sup>, [Ad Council](#)<sup>17</sup> and others. The Help Centre is available in the language of each localised European site, for example Czech, French, German, Italian, Polish and Swedish.

We also teamed up with online safety organisation iKeepSafe to develop a [curriculum](#)<sup>18</sup> that educators can use in the classroom to teach what it means to be a responsible online citizen. The curriculum is designed to be interactive, discussion filled and allow students to learn through hands-on and scenario activities. The site also provides a resource booklet for both educators and students that can be downloaded in PDF form, presentations to accompany the lesson and animated videos to help frame the conversation.

We've also launched a number of videos from our Safety Center, [one](#)<sup>19</sup> of which focuses exclusively on how to stay safe on YouTube.

## **Principle 2: Work towards ensuring that services are age-appropriate for the intended audience**

Within YouTube's safety tips page and the Terms of Service it is clearly stated that the YouTube service is for people of 13 years and older. If, upon registration, a user puts a birthdate in under that age, they will be refused use of YouTube. In order to prevent a young person from trying to create a new account with an older birth-date, YouTube places a cookie on the user's browser which prevents the user from registering with a different age.

Our [Community Guidelines](#)<sup>20</sup> are clear about what is allowed on YouTube and what is not. There is however a category of content that is not illegal, does not breach our terms of use but still could be determined to be inappropriate for users under the age of 18. Should a user come across such a video and are not signed into the service they will be greeted with an interstitial page stating:

**This video or group may contain content that is inappropriate for some users, as flagged by**

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/user/Beatbullying>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/user/childnet>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/user/eenfance>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/user/savethechildrenuk>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/user/DontYouForgetAboutMe>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/user/adcounci>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.google.com/educators/digitalliteracy.html>

<sup>1</sup><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI2tmiKdPnU>

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.youtube.com/t/community\\_guidelines?hl=en\\_GB](http://www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines?hl=en_GB)

### YouTube's user community.

To view this video or group, please verify that you are 18 or older by [signing in](#)<sup>21</sup> or [signing up](#)<sup>22</sup>.

A user can then sign in and choose to watch the video or not. Only users with a birth-date putting them over the 18 year old threshold will be allowed to watch the video. In order to prevent a young person from signing out of their account and then trying to create a new account with an older birth-date, YouTube places a cookie on the users browser preventing the user from re-registering with a different age.

Upon notification or if YouTube reasonably suspects that a particular user is less than thirteen years old, that account will be closed. YouTube will send a confirming email to that user in those suspect cases. YouTube specifically created Safety Mode, which allows users to choose not to see potentially objectionable content they may find offensive, to give parents additional controls over their children's account. When users opt in to Safety Mode, videos with potentially objectionable content will not show up in video search, related videos, playlists, shows and movies. While no filter is 100% accurate, we use community flagging, hide objectionable comments and porn image detection to identify and hide inappropriate content. Like Google SafeSearch, Safety Mode on YouTube does not remove content from the site but rather keeps it off the page for users who opt in.

In order to make it less likely for users to stumble upon this type of content it are excluded from certain listings and areas of the site such as the "most Viewed" page. YouTube has implemented automated systems to help classify content based on their content and meta-data and where videos are determined to be unsuitable for younger viewers, such content is demoted in browse pages, for example.

### Principle 3: Empower users through tools and technology

Principle 3 is designed to encourage service providers with tools and technology to assist children and young people in managing their experience on their service, particularly with regard to inappropriate or unwanted content or conduct. YouTube provides users tools to fully manage their use of the platform.

YouTube does not have profile pages in the same way as social networking services. As mentioned before, YouTube is a platform for sharing user created content rather than sharing a social profile of one's self. Instead, YouTube users have 'Channels' on which to place their videos and view other's videos. Users come to YouTube to view and share videos and so when they're doing a search on the

<sup>21</sup>[http://www.youtube.com/login?next=/watch%3Fv%3DcO7NpM9cfpU%26playnext\\_from%3DPL%26feature%3DPlaylist%26p%3DD1A5275F1CC2216B%26playnext%3D1%26index%3D19](http://www.youtube.com/login?next=/watch%3Fv%3DcO7NpM9cfpU%26playnext_from%3DPL%26feature%3DPlaylist%26p%3DD1A5275F1CC2216B%26playnext%3D1%26index%3D19)

<sup>22</sup>[http://www.youtube.com/signup?next=/watch%3Fv%3DcO7NpM9cfpU%26playnext\\_from%3DPL%26feature%3DPlaylist%26p%3DD1A5275F1CC2216B%26playnext%3D1%26index%3D19](http://www.youtube.com/signup?next=/watch%3Fv%3DcO7NpM9cfpU%26playnext_from%3DPL%26feature%3DPlaylist%26p%3DD1A5275F1CC2216B%26playnext%3D1%26index%3D19)

service it is not to find other people's 'profile pages' but to look for videos. Nonetheless YouTube does provide users with a variety of tools and advice to help them protect their privacy and to control how others interact with their videos.

Users are able to add some personal information on their channel should they choose to do so. In fact, the default information on a users channel shows the user name, not their actual name, but the user and channel name that is chosen when the user signs in. For example, you may be John Smith but choose to have a channel and user name of randomvideoviewer5 and his channel would become [www.youtube.com/user/randomvideoviewer5](http://www.youtube.com/user/randomvideoviewer5). Once the user has set up their channel they have the option to add information through their account settings. Users can also have the option to prevent videos from being embedded on 3rd party pages, to prevent other sites from putting the user's video elsewhere on the web. In this context, users are advised about protecting their privacy in the safety tips page, which is clickable from any page on YouTube.

When a user uploads a video they can choose whether or not to allow other users to make comments on it, to pre-moderate comments before allowing them to become public or to post-moderate comments. Users can also report abuse for violation of privacy, harassment, and cyberbullying. Users can also block others from making comments in future. Users can also choose to only share a video between a certain number of friends or family members.

All these tools are designed to be self-explanatory and easy to find, but just in case we've also put instructions and guidance on how to use them in our [Help Centre](#)<sup>23</sup>.

#### **Principle 4: Provide easy-to-use mechanisms to report conduct or content that violates the terms of service**

Every minute, 24 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube, totaling hundreds of thousands of videos every day. Because it is not possible to proactively review this much content, we have developed an innovative and reliable community policing system that involves our users in helping us enforce YouTube's rules. Millions of users report potential violations of our Community Guidelines by selecting the "Flag" link when they encounter inappropriate content. Users are able to select from a list of over a dozen reasons for flagging a video and are given the opportunity to provide additional information, such as the specific time when the objectionable material appears in the video. Every flagged video is promptly reviewed for compliance with our Community Guidelines. Dedicated YouTube staff review videos 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Users can also contact us directly with privacy or harassment complaints and other policy violations through our Help & Safety Tool. We respond proactively to threatening situations and report all instances of child exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

We are continually developing innovative tools to keep our community safe. For example, we use digital hashing technologies to prevent the re-upload of files that have been removed pursuant to policy violations. We also offer our users tools to protect their privacy on the site, such as the ability to hide personal information, make videos private, remove videos from public listings, or share videos

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<sup>23</sup><http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube//bin/static.py?page=start.cs&hl=en-GB>

selectively with family and friends. Our Help & Safety Tool lets users report concerns to the YouTube team (such as harassment, privacy violations and cyberbullying), block comments from specific other users and disable the video comments feature on videos. Users who repeatedly violate our policies will have their accounts terminated.

Earlier this year, we launched YouTube Safety Mode, which allows users to choose not to see potentially objectionable content they may find offensive, even though it's not against our Community Guidelines. When users opt in to Safety Mode, videos with potentially objectionable content will not show up in video search, related videos, playlists, shows and movies. While no filter is 100% accurate, we use community flagging, hide objectionable comments and porn image detection to identify and hide inappropriate content. Like Google SafeSearch, Safety Mode on YouTube does not remove content from the site but rather keeps it off the page for users who opt in.

You Tube's Help Centre also has a section on [Safety Resources](#)<sup>24</sup> which includes contact information to report issues to local organisations such as Suicide Hotline, National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the Anti-Defamation League.

#### **Principle 5: Respond to notifications of illegal content or conduct**

YouTube takes reports of illegal content on the site seriously. When YouTube becomes aware that a video violates the law, YouTube cooperates with law enforcement agencies to deal with the video quickly and in the proper legal framework. For example, content that includes child pornography is reported directly to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Content that demonstrates imminent threats to life or limb can be reported to relevant US law enforcement agencies. Content that is flagged or reported through the Help & Safety Tool is reviewed expeditiously and dealt with appropriately.

#### **Principle 6: Enable and encourage users to employ a safe approach to personal information and privacy**

YouTube always encourage users to employ a safe approach to personal information and privacy. As mentioned above YouTube does not have profile pages in the same way as social networking services; YouTube users use Channels to share user created content. YouTube does provide the option for users to make their channel private, share their videos privately to a limited number of people, or remove their videos from public listings. When setting up an account, users are advised in the [Safety Tips](#)<sup>25</sup>, also accessible from every page, on how to protect their identity. Privacy complaints can be submitted to YouTube through our [online tool](#)<sup>26</sup>.

Users are able to add some personal information on their channel should they choose to do so. In fact, the default information on a users channel shows the user name, not their actual name, but the

<sup>24</sup>[http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/bin/request.py?contact\\_type=abuse](http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/bin/request.py?contact_type=abuse)

<sup>25</sup><http://www.youtube.com/t/safety>

<sup>26</sup><http://help.youtube.com/support/youtube/bin/answer.py?answer=78346&topic=10545>

user and channel name that is chosen when the user signs in. For example, you may be John Smith but choose to have a channel and user name of randomvideoviewer5 and his channel would become www.youtube.com/user/randomvideoviewer5. Once the user has set up their channel they have the option to add information through their account settings. Users can also have the option to prevent videos being embedded on 3rd party pages, to prevent other sites from putting the user's video elsewhere on the web. In this context, users are advised about protecting their privacy in the safety tips page, clickable from any page on YouTube.

### **Principle 7: Assess the means for reviewing illegal or prohibited content/conduct**

Every minute, 24 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube, totaling hundreds of thousands of videos every day. Because it is not possible to proactively review this much content, we have developed an innovative and reliable community policing system that involves our users in helping us enforce YouTube's rules. Millions of users report potential violations of our Community Guidelines by selecting the "Flag" link when they encounter inappropriate content. Users are able to select from a list of over a dozen reasons for flagging a video and are given the opportunity to provide additional information, such as the specific time when the objectionable material appears in the video. Every flagged video is promptly reviewed for compliance with our Community Guidelines. Dedicated YouTube staff review videos 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Users can also contact us directly with privacy or harassment complaints and other policy violations through our Help & Safety Tool. We respond proactively to threatening situations and report all instances of child exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

### **3. Other information**

This section provides an outline of any other information that is relevant with regards how the company has considered the Principles.

#### **You can contact YouTube at:**

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**San Bruno, CA 94066**

**USA**

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