

## What is youth protection on the internet today?

Childhood and youth are times of particular vulnerability. During this period of life all human beings gain the basic knowledge, skills and competences that they need throughout their lives. In today's mediatized society this also means being confident, discerning and creative in the use of the internet. An effective protection of minors in the media includes the development of concepts enabling children and young people to explore the internet without risk and harm.

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### Fundamental right to participate

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the fundamental rights to physical safety and participation, also in regard to mass media. In Germany, the right for their undisturbed physical and mental development is laid down in the Constitution. In terms of the protection of minors on the internet as a social responsibility, the State has created a specific legal framework.

Read more [Legal basis](#)

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### How media shapes the lives of young people

Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp are an integral part in the lives of children and young people. Apps also offer mobile entertainment, allow them to chat with friends or meet new people. However, this is associated with risks like cyber bullying, self-harm behavior and extremism. The aim of youth protection is to enable children to use the internet freely and reduce the risks to young people.

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### Shared responsibility for youth protection

Exposure to content endangering young people and the risk of being harassed often go hand in hand. Specifically platform operators are challenged to better protect children and young people. They have to quickly remove illegal content and ensure the safe use of their content, also in terms of mobile access.

Youth protection today has to sensibly combine regulation, technical measures and education.

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### Promote media literacy, provide support

Youth protection legislation cannot keep young people away from all potential risks. The protection of minors in the media today has to find the right balance and take different age groups into consideration. Whereas young children need more protection, greater freedom and self-defense competency become more important as they grow older. Additionally, parents and teachers need tips and practical guidance for media education.