General Comment No. 25 (2021)

Children's rights in relation to the digital environment

Glossary

Term:	Definition:[1]
Assistive technology	Technology developed to support or improve an individual's independence, including adaptive and rehabilitative systems and devices for people with disabilities such as a screen reader or speech recognition.
Automated processing	The process of making a decision by automated means, i.e. using software configured to analyse the data provided and to follow set rules to reach decisions based on algorithms, without human involvement.
Automated search	The process of assessing user data to filter the content they access online, primarily for commercial interests. Content is usually chosen based on perceptions of the user's reaction to other content, or based on content that other users who acted in similar ways went on to seek out.
Automated systems	Software and hardware programmed to perform a function automatically without the need for human intervention to provide inputs and instructions for each operation.
Behavioural targeting	Analysing users' online activity in order to target them with advertising, messaging, suggestions for further content or contacts with other users based on their previous preferences, often with the intention to manipulate their future behaviour.
Content, contact, conduct and contract risks	Content risks: Potential harm to users based on the nature of online content, including age-inappropriate (e.g. pornography), unreliable (e.g. misinformation or disinformation) or certain other categories of content (e.g. promoting risky behaviour or methods of self-harm or suicide).
	Contact risks: Potential harm created by the opportunity for users to contact each other using online services, e.g. enabling strangers or people hiding their identity to contact children.

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[1] Sources: Broadband Commission, Council of Europe, European Commission, Information Commissioner's Office, Mozilla Web Glossary, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Techopedia, UK Safer Internet Centre, World Health Organization and Wiktionary.

Conduct risks: Potential harm based on the behaviour or conduct of the user or their peers, e.g. deliberately using online platforms to threaten or harass other users, including cyberbullying, "sexting" and hateful comments, sometimes also unintentionally by disclosure of private information of other users.

Contract risks: Potential harm wherein a user is exposed to inappropriate commercial contractual relationships or pressures, e.g. compulsive use, gambling, targeted advertising, hidden costs, unfair terms and conditions, and loss of control of personal data.

Content moderation	The practice of monitoring and reviewing user-generated content against pre-determined rules to remove content deemed impermissible, either automatically or using human moderators. Content moderation can be performed simultaneously with content generation, as in chat services or with a time delay, as in forums.
Cyber-aggression	Acts of harm enacted by individuals or groups, online or through the use of digital technology, often with the intention of causing offense or hurt to another individual or group.
Data minimization	The principle of only collecting the minimal amount of relevant personal data necessary to the purpose for which it is being processed, and retaining that data only so far as it is necessary to the purpose.
Data processing	Includes processes of data collection, recording, retention, analysis, dissemination and use.
Digital literacy	The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate. Related terms include 'media literacy', 'information literacy' or 'media and information literacy', among others.
Digitization	The adaptation of environments, practices, businesses and daily life to include and benefit from digital services and infrastructure. This also refers to the conversion of information into a digital format.
Disinformation and misinformation	Disinformation: When false information is knowingly shared. Misinformation: When false information is shared, but no intentional harm is meant.
Emotional analytics	The collection of data to determine or infer an individual's mood, often conducted by assessing video, voice and written communication, or personal data, to identify markers such as facial expression and tone that are correlated with specific emotions using machine learning techniques including algorithms.
Identity theft	The fraudulent impersonation of another individual, e.g. in order to access their wealth, damage their reputation, gain access to their online contacts or otherwise profit.
Immersive advertising	The seamless integration of advertisements into online content or digital services, allowing users to remain immersed in the content and services features whilst simultaneously being exposed to brand marketing and messaging.
Implant technology	A microchip that can be implanted into a person to store, track or retrieve information contained in an external database, such as

	personal identification, and/or medical or law enforcement or contact information.
Information filtering	The use of a programme to screen digital content and identify or hide content that matches set criteria. Common uses of information filtering include hiding offensive content from appearing in search engine results, or sorting which results appear first.
Neuromarketing	The study of how people's brains react to marketing content, and the application of this in developing more effective marketing campaigns. Reactions can be measured in a wide range of ways, from brain activity scanning to engagement time, click-throughs and time spent on a website.
Privacy-by-design	The practice of designing online services with the aim of protecting users' privacy as much as possible, e.g. by setting the accounts of underage users to be private-by-default or by minimizing the amount of data collected.
Profiling	The practice of using an individual's personal data to infer, predict or analyse characteristics about that person, e.g. their likes, dislikes, preferences, views, opinions or behaviour, to recommend content, products or services based on the person's data profile.
Safety-by-design	The practice of designing online services with the aim of ensuring users' safety as much as possible, e.g. by default safe settings for accounts of underage users or by preventing adults from contacting underage users.
Targeted advertising	The practice of showing particular adverts to users based on data collected about them, e.g. their online activity, purchases, location, gender, age, preferences, etc.
Virtual and augmented reality	Virtual reality: The computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special digital equipment, such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves fitted with sensors. Augmented reality: A simulation of the physical world with altered characteristics or supplemented items, usually experienced through a screen to enable the overlay of virtual objects over a live image or video of reality.