

Stop Trafficking! AwarenessAdvocacyAction

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter • July 2023 • Vol. 21 • No. 7

FOCUS: This issue highlights the National Center on Sexual Exploitation's annual Dirty Dozen list.

What is the Dirty Dozen List?

The Dirty Dozen List is an annual campaign calling out twelve companies or organizations for facilitating, enabling, and even profiting from sexual abuse and exploitation. Since its inception in 2013, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, NCOSE, through the Dirty Dozen List, has facilitated thousands of action alerts that have led to changes that will protect men, women, and children from exploitation. These include victories at Google, Netflix, TikTok, Hilton Worldwide, Verizon, Walmart, the United States Department of Defense, and many more.

The 2023 Dirty Dozen List was released on May 2. NCOSE included the twelve organizations for facilitating diverse sexual exploitation issues, including sex trafficking, image-based sexual abuse, child sexual abuse material, grooming children for exploitation, and childlike sex abuse dolls.



Snapchat is becoming an integral part of the online porn industry



Snapchat is the #1 parent-reported platform for sharing child-sex abuse material (Parents Together, April 2023)

Snapchat is the #1 platform where most minors reported having an online sexual interaction, and #3 for sexual interaction with an adult (Thorn Report, February 2023)

Snapchat is the #2 highest platform used for sextortion (Snapchat 38%, Instagram 42%) - "by far the most frequently used social media environments where victims were targeted."

Snapchat is the #3 parent-reported platform for sexually explicit requests to children and among the highest rates of parent-reported exposure to inappropriate sexual content

Since its inception over a decade ago, Snapchat has served as a hub for predators seeking to contact, groom, and abuse kids. Snapchat's disappearing messages and secrecy design make it an attractive platform to those who desire to harm children. Features that continue to put children at risk include the recently released MyAI, Snap Map and Live Location, and See Me in Quick Add. Meanwhile, the feature, My Eyes Only, has been called out by child safety advocates and police as a tool for keeping child sexual abuse material.

NCOSE requests that Snapchat:

- Automatically block sexually explicit images, especially those sent to minor accounts, and accompany them with warnings, resources, and prompts to report, block, and remove such accounts. In addition, provide messaging to minors who are about to send nude images about the risks.
- Automatically detect sexually explicit related text, images, and emojis, just as Snap does for drug-related content.
- Proactively identify, remove, and block accounts and bots posting and promoting pornographic content and/or selling sex with greater efficiency and proactive measures.
- Use available technology and blocking patterns to identify "suspicious adults" and further prevent them from engaging with minors.

Awareness

- Expand Family Center functions to allow parents to see what their children are exposed to on Stories and Spotlight, send alerts to parents when their children add or remove friends, settings are changed, or sexually explicit images are being sent or received.
- Default all minor accounts to the highest safety settings and make all safety tools available to all youth.
- Provide resources to parents and children regarding crimes and dangerous trends rampant on Snapchat, including sexting, sextortion, grooming, child sex abuse material, sex trafficking, and more.

Please click here to read more.

Microsoft's GitHub

Described as a mix between Google Docs and a social media app for programmers, GitHub is a platform designed for individuals to collaborate, manage, and share codes for developing software. Microsoft owns both GitHub and OpenAI, the creator of two of the most notorious AI technologies, ChatGPT and DALL-E.

GitHub involves over 100 million active developers, 413 million open-sourced contributions in 2022, and more than 4 million organizations. It allows anyone to access, use, change, and share software. Some of the biggest names in the tech industry, such as Google, Amazon, Twitter, and Microsoft, use GitHub for various initiatives. It has also been described as the most prolific space for Artificial Intelligence development.

Regrettably, GitHub is also a significant contributor to the creation of sexually exploitative technology.

It also enables creating and sharing of sexually explicit images without the subject's knowledge or consent. GitHub is the center for creating and commodifying synthetic media technologies, as well as 'nudify' apps that take women's images and "strip them" of clothing, such as DeepNude, a clear example of technology being developed to facilitate rather than oppose sexual exploitation and abuse.



NCOSE's requests for improvement include the following:

- Removing and banning private and public repositories dedicated to sexual deepfake, 'nudifying,' and Al-generated pornography software development from GitHub.
- Removing and banning private and public pornography and sexually explicit imagery scraping repositories from GitHub.

- Proactively moderate content and community forums on GitHub and default middle and highschool student repositories to 'private' to prevent minors' exposure to harmful content on GitHub.
- Implement basic industrywide safety standards: parental controls, teacher/administrative controls, and age-gate repositories inappropriate for minoraged users.

To read more about GitHub, please click here.

Spotify

Spotify is an audio streaming and media service with over 515 million monthly active users, including 210 million paying subscribers, as of March 2023.68% of teens have used Spotify for streaming services over the last six months, with 44% of teens

opting to subscribe/pay for Spotify services. Unfortunately, pornography, including content that normalizes sexual violence, child sexual abuse, and incest, can be easily found on Spotify in the form of thumbnails graphically depicting sexual activity and nudity.

Earlier this year, an 11-year-old girl was groomed by pedophiles on Spotify using playlists to send secret messages. Also, one podcast was titled "The Rape Show With The #1 Rapist In The Country," which included tips on how to commit rape and how not to get caught by the authorities.

NCOSE's Requests for Improvement:

- Improve measures to detect and remove prohibited content proactively.
- Improve measures to proactively detect grooming and child sexual exploitation and promptly remove all users who engage in this behavior and all content used in grooming cases.
- Implement a reporting category for child sexual exploitation and make reporting procedures easily accessible from mobile and desktop apps for all types of content.

- Improve measures to detect and filter any inappropriate content for teens proactively. These measures should apply to all types of content, whether images, text, or audio.
- Develop filtering options, including different levels/ age ratings or content categories.
- Default all safety settings and only enable caregivers to change these settings on a minor's account.

Please click here to learn more.

Kik

A convicted child sex abuser called Kik a "predator's paradise."

Kik is a free mobile messaging app that boasts over 300 million users, 70% of whom are between the ages of 13-24. Kik claims the app is "built especially for teens"



and provides a "fun, safe place to connect." However, children aged 9-17 reported Kik as the platform with the second-highest rate of online sexual interactions with adults

Users only need an email, which remains hidden from public view, and a chosen username to sign up for an account. However, the username can be arbitrary and need not reveal the user's identity making it difficult for law enforcement when required.

Therefore, those seeking to groom children can easily access their preferred victims, the young userbase, on Kik while pretending to be anyone they want. The app has a "Meet New People" feature, which pairs users with strangers to start conversations with. There are also public groups that anyone can join by searching for common interests, which results in much interaction with strangers.

NCOSE's Requests for Improvement:

- Use existing technology to proactively identify, block, and remove criminal activity and content, such as child sex abuse material, image-based sexual abuse, and pornography, and permanently ban offending users.
- Abolish features that place children at high risk for sexual exploitation, such as allowing users to add minors to group chats without their knowledge or consent, connecting minors with adults through the "Meet New People" feature, and pushing dating and prostitution apps to children.
- Develop and implement robust safety measures to protect minors and make your platform safer for all

users, including adding age verification, requiring valid email addresses upon account creation, agegating group chats, and easy-to-find reporting tools.

- Create pin-protected parental controls.
- Provide adequate warnings to users and the general public of Kik's risks through transparency reports, accurate age ratings and app descriptions, and in-app education.

For more information, please click here.

OnlyFans

OnlyFans was identified by 71% of creators of sexually explicit content as the top platform they use to sell their material. Therefore, OnlyFans facilitates prostitution and sexual exploitation with its platform based on revenue earned from vulnerable people's bodies – mainly the bodies of women and minors.

Users are not required to undergo age or consent



verification when they sign up for an account, and 8% of minors ages 9-17 reported using OnlyFans. Finally, law enforcement and service providers see evidence of sex trafficking and child sex abuse material (CSAM) increasing on the site.

NCOSE requests OnlyFans to make the following improvements to their platform:

- First, create a designated law enforcement account to facilitate investigations.
- Implement dual verification for live streaming requiring creators and anyone in the live stream video to provide age, identity, and consent information by video submission to OnlyFans before beginning the live stream.
- Implement increased proactive detection and moderation measures specifically for private chats and live streams.
- Ban deepfakes and AI-generated pornography and invest in sufficient technology to identify and remove such content.
- Require users and creators to manually check a product warning for the website every time they log into the platform.

To read more, please click here.

• • • 3



Roblox

A five-year-old can sign up with no email or parental permission and access games where their character may be sexually assaulted.

Roblox is described as a global platform that brings people together through play. However, since Roblox's beginning, numerous children have been sexually abused and exploited by predators they met on Roblox. The platform has no age restrictions or age verification, and new accounts default to be able to access every 'experience'. Children under 13 are the primary users and are exposed to sexualized content and themes, such as pornography, rape, and "strip clubs," which normalize this type of activity to children. In addition, Roblox still allows adult strangers to direct message, chat, and "friend" children – even with proven cases of children being groomed and abused through the platform.



Numerous news outlets have covered the frequent reports of children being lured into dangerous situations by predators on Roblox. Moreover, law enforcement has spoken out continuously to warn parents of the risks of the app. At the same time, parents have also posted extensively on social media to alert other parents and caregivers to watch out for their kids. Roblox was recently named a top five platform for child exposure to inappropriate sexual content.

NCOSE's Requests for Improvement:

- Default minor accounts to the highest safest settings.
- Disable direct messaging between children and adults with whom they are not friends; consider blocking direct messaging for children 15 and under, as TikTok has done.
- Expand caregiver tools to help parents protect their children while using Roblox; obtain permission from parents for children 12 and under to access the platform.
- Implement age verification measures to restrict adult users from lying about their age and gaining access to children.
- Augment prevention and moderation measures to block and remove all inappropriate content and games that
 contain sexual themes or other explicit material and do not allow minors to access such games. An additional age
 rating of 17+ must be added if you continue to allow sexual and violent themes.
- Improve reporting system so that it is easier for users to report inappropriate behavior and take swift action to remove any users who are found to be engaging in inappropriate behavior.
- Increase transparency– especially to parents when it comes to reporting and handling cases of grooming and exploitation, as well as the dangers kids face on your platform and how your safety settings commonly fall short.

For more information, please click here.



Instagram



Share everyday moments!

For countless children and adults, that includes their worst moments. Grooming, child sexual abuse materials, and sex trafficking.

Instagram is the number one platform for the highest rates of sextortion. In addition, it is the number two platform where minors report a sexual experience with an adult and where children are most likely to see pornography.

Despite numerous news stories, scrutiny, and backlash Instagram still needs to make meaningful improvements.

4 • • •

NCOSE's Requests for Improvement include:

- Invest in technology to scan for and block sexually explicit posts and messages.
- Prohibit accounts and all content sexualizing minors, including hashtags, emojis, and comments on minors' accounts, as well as on adult-managed accounts for children 12 and under
- Remove or limit high-risk features for 13 15-yearolds such as direct messaging (as TikTok has done),
 Vanish Mode, and restrict all adults from seeing minors in "suggested user" or "discover people."
- Create pin-protected caregiver oversight tools so children can't change settings.
- Remove all prostitution and pornography accounts even if they are not posting sexually explicit content on Instagram - those should not be available on a platform so popular with teens.

To read more, please click here.

PornHub

In 2022, Instagram removed Pornhub from its platform indicating that the company understands the mounting evidence of Pornhub's criminality. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation have been sharing evidence of criminality on Pornhub with Instagram and requested that the social media company remove Pornhub.

More information can be found by clicking here.

Reddit

Reddit is an American social news aggregation, content rating, and discussion website. Registered users submit content to the site, such as links, text posts, images, and videos, which other members then vote up or down. Much of this is image-based sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse material, hardcore pornography, and prostitution. Reddit hosts over two million user-created "communities" and over 57 million daily users. Over 30 percent of minors 9-17 have used Reddit.

As of April 2023, researchers from NCOSE found posts and threads with high indicators of adult image-

based sexual abuse within 3 seconds of searching. Moreover, the NCOSE Law Center has worked on behalf of a child sexual abuse survivor whose abuse was uploaded to Reddit and has yet to receive confirmation that the content was removed.

The platform appears to ignore the requests of survivors to take down sexual abuse material.

NCOSE is recommending the following changes:

- Implement robust age and consent verification measures ban pornography and sexually explicit content until such standards are enforced to prevent image-based sexual abuse and child sex abuse content on Reddit.
- Require mandatory email verification for current and future users, as anonymity allows for abuse without accountability.
- Make Reddit 17+ and prevent minors from accessing your platform. Given that pornography is so easily accessible and harmful to children, children should not be on Reddit.
- Implement accessible and easy reporting mechanisms. Reddit currently has insufficient measures for users to report
 other users or offending moderators, and moderators don't have adequate means to report and remove prohibited
 and illegal content.
- Ban external links to pornography and sexually explicit media.

For more information, please click here.



"Whatever it is, you can get it on eBay."



Unfortunately, that includes childlike sex abuse dolls and spycams advertised specifically for filming women without their consent.

eBay is one of the world's most visited online marketplaces, second to Amazon. Unfortunately, eBay provides a platform for and profits from products that normalize child sexual abuse, promote image-based sexual abuse, and grossly objectify women. Furthermore, its lack of filters exposes users to pornography and

other sexually explicit content (real and depicted). eBay has strong policies on paper against these forms of exploitation. However, they are not being enforced.

Several of eBay's industry peers, such as Amazon, Etsy, and Wish, have taken steps to delete childlike sex dolls and spy cams used for nonconsensual filming and sharing of sexually explicit images. These products perpetuate the exploitation of women and children.

Please go to the action section and urge eBay to do the same.

NCOSE's Requests the following recommendations from eBay:

- Remove all products that normalize child sexual abuse and permanently ban sellers. This includes all sex dolls.
- Prohibit products and advertising encouraging recording women without their knowledge or consent and add explicit policies against promoting image-based sexual abuse.
- Enforce existing policies, such as eBay's ban on pornography and listing requirements under their "adult items policy," including blurring nudity (depicted or actual) or sexually explicit images. Prohibit sellers from violating these policies.
- Develop a filtering mechanism to protect users who do not wish to see explicit content and set it as the default.

Please click here for more information.

Apple

Two in three parents consider an app's age rating when deciding whether it is appropriate and safe for their child.

The App Store, an app marketplace designed and maintained by Apple, describes itself as allowing "people around the world a safe and trusted place to discover apps that meet our high standards for privacy, security, and content." With almost 90% of US teens owning an iPhone, Apple can accurately be called a primary "gatekeeper" to what children are accessing online...as well as who is accessing them.

Most parents and caretakers rely on Apple's App Store age ratings and descriptions to determine what apps are safe and appropriate for their children. Unfortunately, many of these descriptions are deceptive, and Apple's app descriptions may be serving to endanger children further. Moreover, Apple does not enforce its Developer Guidelines, which state that ads must be appropriate for the app's age rating.

Also, there is no system to report apps that fail to explain the types of content a user might experience adequately.



Child safety experts and mental health professionals warn that America's children are in crisis due mainly to social media. Unfortunately, Apple's app descriptions may be serving to further endanger our children at a time when Apple has the unparalleled ability to drastically improve children's safety and well-being.

NCOSE requests Apple to provide the following:

- Accurate Ratings A universal standard for ratings must be created with penalties for misrepresentation.
- Accurate Content Descriptors App descriptions must be expanded to include detailed content descriptors and summaries of risks unique to the app.

- Highly Visible Content Ratings App ratings and descriptors must be prominent, so parents and children are fully informed of the risks.
- Uniform and Accountable System It's time for companies like Apple and Google to work together to create a uniform and accountable rating system.

Prior to the release of the Dirty Dozen list on May 2, 2023, Apple representatives reached out to NCOSE with an offer to renew meetings around safeguarding concerns. NCOSE is hopeful that Apple will step up its efforts to protect children in the App Store.

For more information, please click here.

Twitter

Twitter is the online platform where young people were most likely to have seen pornography.

With over 330 million users, Twitter is one of the largest social media companies in the world. It is also one of the most prolific distributors of sexual exploitation material—including material soliciting, advancing, advertising the sale of people for sex acts through prostitution and sex trafficking, and material depicting the sexual abuse of children.

Twitter has adopted an active role in the dissemination and knowing promotion and distribution of this harmful material. Twitter's own policies, practices, business model, and technology architecture encourage and profit from the distribution of sexual exploitation material.



When John Doe was only 13 years old, he was exploited by sex traffickers into creating sexually explicit images which were later posted on Twitter. When Twitter was first alerted to harmful and illegal material and the ages of the children, Twitter refused to remove it and instead continued to promote and profit from the sexual abuse of the children. Twitter even reported back to one survivor that the video in question did not in fact violate any of its policies and would not be taken down.

This refusal resulted in the child sexual abuse material accumulating over 167,000 views before direct involvement from a federal law enforcement officer finally induced Twitter to remove the child sex abuse material.

It is on behalf of John Doe and countless other survivors like him that the National Center on Sexual Exploitation Law Center—along with The Haba Law Firm and The Matiasic Law Firm—has brought a lawsuit against Twitter. Please click here to sign the petition to support John Doe and to read more about this case.

Discord

"When she was 11, the victim attempted suicide for the first time."

"Discord failed to verify the victim's age or obtain parental consent before allowing her to open accounts, despite their policies requiring users to be over 13 years old."

"Discord's 'Keep Me Safe' feature promised to filter out harmful content but did not protect the victim from abuse and exploitation by sexual predators on the platform."

https://endsexualexploitation.org/discord/

Tragically, cases like the ones described above are common. Discord, which describes itself as the platform to "talk and hang out," is popular with predators who want to groom children and find image-based sexual abuse (nonconsensual capture and sharing of sexually explicit content), child sexual abuse materials and hardcore pornography, which also is easily accessible to minors, and many other forms of sexual exploitation. Moreover, parental controls are ineffective.

• • • 7



Given how unsafe the platform is for children, NCOSE recommends that Discord ban minors from using the platform until it is radically transformed. They also suggest that Discord consider banning pornography until substantive age and consent verification for sexually explicit material can be implemented.

At the very least, Discord must prioritize and expedite the following recommendations to ensure all users are safe and free from sexual abuse and exploitation.

NCOSE Requests from Discord:

- Prioritize image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) and child sexual abuse (CSAM) prevention and removal by instituting robust age and consent verification.
- Automatically default all minors' accounts to the highest level of safety and privacy available on the Discord platform.
- Age-gate servers that contain any age-restricted channels (i.e., channels hosting sexually explicit content) automatically block minors from joining such servers.
- Develop and implement caregiver controls, so parents can monitor their child's experience on Discord and ensure their safety.
- Permanently suspend Pornhub's verified Discord account.

For more information, please click here.

Telegram

Telegram is often cited as a Discord alternative. However, Telegram is a hub for sharing women's sexually explicit content without their consent.



Tell Apple: Fix App Age Ratings

With Apple's near limitless resources, there can be no excuse for the deception of consumers and caregivers on such a massive scale: it's time Apple finally fixes its app rating system. Please click here to urge Apple to fix its app age ratings.



Demand Discord Stop Rampant Exploitation

Please click <u>here</u> to express concern with the rampant number of adults grooming minors for sexual abuse online and Discord's lack of robust safety features which allows such abuse to not only happen regularly, but actively thrive in Discord's environment.

eBay: Prioritize Customer Well-Being

At a time when we are suffering a worldwide epidemic of child sex abuse and witnessing an increase in violence against women and girls, please click here to call on eBay to prioritize customers' and the global community's well-being over their bottom line.

Take Action:

Click on the buttons below to make your voice heard

Ask Spotify to fix filters and remove pornographic pictures

Express your concern with the sexually explicit content and predatory behavior facilitated on Kik

Tell Microsoft's GitHub to get rid of image-based sexual abuse

Tell Snapchat to step up child safety measures

Insist Instagram prioritize child safety

Demand the U.S. Attorney General investigate OnlyFans for sex trafficking and child sexual abuse material

Express concern & anger over the failure of Roblox to adequately protect children from sexual predators & other dangerous individuals Tell Reddit to delete all images of sexual violence from its platform

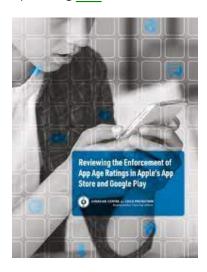
New Review Available

The Canadian Centre on Child Protection recently released Reviewing the Enforcement of App Age Ratings in Apple's App Store and Google Play which may be accessed by clicking here.

Help Pass the EARN IT Act!

The EARN IT Act is the strongest piece of bipartisan legislation to confront the explosion of online child sexual abuse material. Having been introduced in previous sessions and passed unanimously by the Senate Judiciary Committee twice, the EARN IT Act has been reintroduced by Senators Richard Blumenthal and Lindsey Graham in the Senate, and by Representatives Ann Wagner and Sylvia Garcia in the House of Representatives.

Please click <u>here</u> and scroll to the bottom to contact your Members of Congress, urging them to Co-Sponsor the EARN IT Act.





U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking Newsletter Sponsors

Click on the links below to visit the websites of our sponsors.

- Adorers of the Blood of Christ
- Adrian Dominicans
- Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
- Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, KS
- Benet Hill Monastery
- Congregation of Notre Dame
- Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
- Congregation of S. Joseph
- Daughters of Charity, Province of the West
- Daughters of Charity, Province of St. Louise
- Daughters of the Holy Spirit
- Dominican Sisters of Houston, TX
- Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, CA
- Dominican Sisters of Peace
- Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, CA
- Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, WI
- Dominican Sisters of Springfield, IL
- Felician Sisters of North America
- Franciscan Sisters of Peace
- Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
- Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
- Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
- Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Marianites of Holy Cross
- Maryknoll Sisters
- Medical Mission Sisters
- Medical Missionaries of Mary
- Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary
- Northern California Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking
- Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
- Presentation Sisters, Aberdeen
- Presentation Sisters, San Francisco
- Racine Dominicans
- Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
- Religious Sisters of Charity
- School Sisters of Notre Dame, North America
- School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King
- Sisters of Bon Secours
- Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati
- Sisters of Charity of Halifax
- Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

- Sisters of Charity of New York
- Sisters of Charity of St. Joan Antida
- Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word Houston
- Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
- Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill
- Sisters of Christian Charity Mendham, NJ & Wilmette, IL
- Sisters of Mercy Catherine's Residence
- Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
- Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States
- Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, USA
- Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province
- Sisters of St. Dominic Racine, WI
- Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton
- Sisters of St. Francis of Colorado Springs
- Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque
- Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
- Sisters of St. Francis of Redwood City
- Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God
- Sisters of St. Francis Rochester, MN
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Chestnut Hill Philadelphia
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, USA & Canada Provinces
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, KS
- Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange
- Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament
- Sisters of the Divine Savior
- Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- Sisters of the Holy Cross
- Sisters of the Holy Family
- Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
- Sisters of the Humility of Mary
- Sisters of the Precious Blood
- Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sisters of the Sacred Hearts
- Society of the Divine Savior
- Society of the Holy Child Jesus
- Society of the Sacred Heart
- Southern CA Partners for Global Justice
- St. Mary's Institute of O'Fallon
- Tri-State Coalition Against Human Trafficking & Slavery
- U.S. Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union