

Report and Advisory Vote on Minimum Age for Social Media

Whereas: Social media usage has detrimental effects on youth:

- Social media applications and websites are dangerous¹ and “have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents;”^{2 3}
- Social media platforms facilitate the spread of child sexual abuse material;
 - “The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has seen a 15,000% increase in abuse files reported in the last 15 years.”
 - “...Only six videos accounted for more than half of reported CSAM (child sexual abuse material) content across Facebook and Instagram—indicating that vast networks of individuals are relentlessly sharing pre-existing CSAM.”⁴
 - “Incidents of children aged between seven and 10 being manipulated into recording abuse of themselves have surged by two-thirds over the past six months, according to a global report.”⁵
- Social media addiction is linked to cyberbullying;⁶
- “Sextortion” incidents targeting children and teenagers online have risen exponentially in recent years, per the FBI;⁷
- “Other identified associated problems were sleep, addiction, anxiety, sex related issues, behavioral problems, body image, physical activity, online grooming, sight, headache, and dental caries.”⁸

Supporting Statement: Meta Platforms, Inc. (“Meta” or “Company”) owns and operates Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Messenger – four of the largest social media platforms in the world.⁹ Public agencies and protective groups have scrutinized Meta for the negative effects its products have on youth:

- Forty-one states and the District of Columbia sued Meta, alleging the company harms young users by intentionally designing its products with addictive features, and illegally marketing its products to users under the age of 13. According to the Tennessee Attorney General, “that’s tobacco-suit level, opioid-suit level commitment.”¹⁰

¹ <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/09/protecting-teens-on-social-media>

² <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf>

³ <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/23/surgeon-general-issues-new-advisory-about-effects-social-media-use-has-youth-mental-health.html>

⁴ <https://www.fastcompany.com/90654692/on-social-media-child-sexual-abuse-material-spreads-faster-than-it-can-be-taken-down>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/aug/09/self-generated-sexual-abuse-of-children-aged-seven-to-10-rises-two-thirds>

⁶ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/23727810.2020.1835420?journalCode=ucac20>

⁷ <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/fbi-warning-teens-sextortion-means-parents-need-take-steps-rcna62795>

⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9407706/>

⁹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

¹⁰ <https://www.wsj.com/tech/states-sue-meta-alleging-harm-to-young-people-on-instagram-facebook-f9ff4641>

- A separate suit filed by the New Mexico Attorney General’s office alleges that Facebook and Instagram “recommend sexual content to underage users and promote minors’ accounts to apparent child predators.”¹¹
- Meta submitted roughly 95 percent of the 29 million CSAM reports received by NCMEC in 2022.¹²
- The company’s researchers have been aware for several years that Instagram may negatively impact the mental health and wellbeing of young users.¹³ The company has done little to mitigate these risks.

Meta’s social media products endanger children and adolescents, presenting a growing legal and reputational long-term liability to the Company and its shareholders. Raising the minimum age for usage of Meta’s products may resolve many of these issues, as has been proposed in the United States Senate, and as adopted in Utah and Arkansas.¹⁴

Resolved: Shareholders of Meta Platforms, Inc., request the Board of Directors to commission a third-party report assessing potential risks and benefits of instituting a higher minimum age for users of its social media products.

After the report’s publication, shareholders request the Company conduct an advisory shareholder vote on whether to institute a higher minimum age for users.

¹¹ https://www.wsj.com/tech/facebook-and-instagram-steer-predators-to-children-new-mexico-attorney-general-alleges-in-lawsuit-b76a5b04?mod=Searchresults_pos1&page=1

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/dec/08/facebook-messenger-encryption-child-sexual-abuse>

¹³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-knows-instagram-is-toxic-for-teen-girls-company-documents-show-11631620739>

¹⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/04/25/incoming-senate-bill-would-set-age-limit-kids-social-media/>