

Supporting and promoting online safety in video games

Our industry has a track record of making video games that are played in a fun and safe way. Game companies offer a range of tools, controls and settings that empower players and give parents the ability to control what games their children play, when and how they play games, and whether they communicate with others. We support sensible and appropriate online safety laws, and we will continue to work together with Australia's eSafety Commissioner and New Zealand's Netsafe on community awareness-raising.

Are online video games a safe place for children?

Online video games are some of the safest places for children to be connected to the internet, and video gaming is among the safest online activities that children can participate in. Unlike many popular online platforms, social media services, and messaging services, most video games allow little to no interactivity outside of the gameplay experience, have limited and filtered chat functionality, and provide a wide range of family tools and settings that enshrine online safety.

How does the video games industry help to protect children from harm?

Across the digital sector, video game companies have arguably implemented the broadest and most proactive range of safety features to provide a safe and fun online environment. Our industry takes a layered and multi-pronged approach to online safety that spans all platforms, games, consoles, and devices. Key safety features include online safety companion apps, activity monitoring tools, account restrictions, privacy settings, age limits, internet filters, chat filters, and options for reporting, muting, and blocking others. Many video game companies also have behaviour-focused codes of conduct which are actively enforced through warnings, suspensions, and bans. Our industry is constantly investing in and improving these tools, and regularly providing information and resources to educate players, parents, and carers on their use.

How can governments most effectively support online safety in gaming?

We believe that the most effective way that governments can support our industry's action on online safety is to focus on community awareness-raising, particularly among children and their parents and carers, and to improve knowledge of safe digital practices and the usage of the family settings, tools, and functionalities that already exist that help to make gaming safe. Our research tells us that while only around 11 per cent of Australian and New Zealand parents were unfamiliar with family controls, around a third had only limited familiarity. We would love to do more work with Australia's eSafety Commissioner and New Zealand's Netsafe to help reach those parents.

While we believe awareness-raising should always be at the centrepiece of Australia and New Zealand's approach to online safety, we support other policies if they are well-designed and evidence-based. However, we urge caution against unnecessary regulatory interventions, especially where they take a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that treat games like other, higher-risk, digital platforms, or impose the same expectations on companies regardless of size or risk.

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