

THE EMEA CHILD SAFETY SUMMIT 2018

Category: Dispute Resolution, Media and OTT, Privacy Law, Infosec, and POPIA
written by Diana Schwarz | May 24, 2018



The Europe, Middle East and Africa (“**EMEA**”) Child Safety Summit (“**the Summit**”) hosted by Google and Facebook took place on the 18 and 19 April 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. Various participants from around the world attended the Summit to offer their expertise in assisting with child safety online. NGOs, governments and industry from around Europe, the Middle East and Africa came together to meet the challenges of empowering parents and children with the tools and skills they need to make the most of everything the Internet has to offer. Both Google and Facebook showcased their advancement in technology in child safety and to unlock creativity. Many expert panels discussed very important issues in relation to children’s rights and child safety online.

Facebook had a variety of influential speakers on 18 April 2018, including Dr Geoffrey Shannon an Irish expert on Child and Family Law who discussed the “digital age of consent” as provided for in the General Data Protection Regulations (“**GDPR**”) and his view that it should not restrict a child’s access to the internet. The challenges such as cyberbullying and cyberharassment were highlighted and that legislation should target these challenges in each country.

Caroline Millen, Facebook’s Global Safety Policy Programs Manager showcased Facebook’s Safety Center, Bullying Prevention Hub, Parent Portal and Help Center. These are all technological advancements that Facebook has created to ensure child safety online. Antigone Davis, Facebook’s Head of Global Safety discussed the new Kids Messenger Application (“**App**”) being developed by Facebook for children under the age of 13 years who are not members of Facebook. Emily Sharpe, Facebook’s Privacy and Public Policy Manager discussed GDPR coming into effect on 25 May 2018 and Facebook’s new special features for young people and its holistic approach to data protection of teens. Facebook will be requesting parental consent for kids under the age of digital consent in the EU for two different things: sensitive personal information like sexual orientation and use of third party advertising. For adults consent will be requested for facial recognition.

Google showcased its efforts on 19 April 2018. The day was hosted by Fionnuala Meehan, Vice President EMEA Google, Dublin. She discussed technological advancements at Google, latest product plans and emphasised child safety online is bigger than any government and Google is committed to this area.

Elijah Lawal, UK Communications Manager, Google showed statistics, of 11 year olds globally, 52%

have tablets, 94% go online for nearly 13.5 hours per week. Rachel Madden, discussed YouTube Kids and explained that Google is working hard to ensure that no inappropriate content goes in, to give parents more control, limit screen time to minimum 30 minutes and maximum 60 minutes. Kate O' Donovan, Public Policy Manager, Google presented Google's three step approach to child safety online: technology development; communication and partnerships with NGOs and child safety organisations/projects.

Google's SafeSearch team explained how offensive content is removed and children are protected. SafeSearch uses a three pronged approach in respect of Child Sexual Abuse Imagery ("**CSAI**") CSAI is detected and immediately removed and abuse is reported to National Centre For Missing & Exploited Children ("**NCCMEC**"), Google invests in the best technology to detect CSAI and works with industry and NGO's to fight CSAI. In addition Google has a team of human content regulators who work all hours to review and remove any offensive and CSAI content.

All in all, a lot is being done to protect children online but more needs to be done. We all have a part to play. Use your talents to make a difference!