

Safer Internet Day 2025: Rethinking safety in a digital world



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With insights from eSafety Youth Council members Will, Aditi, Raghu & Grace.

*These are the thoughts and opinions of the contributing eSafety Youth Council members and not eSafety.

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For the 2025 Safer Internet Day, we're here to redefine what online safety actually means - and how we, as young people, can help shape a better internet.

Too often, online safety is perceived as a restriction: limiting what we can do, see, or share. But real safety is about creating conditions where freedom, trust, and wellbeing can thrive.

“A safer internet is a place [...] where young people feel confident to explore themselves and the world around them because they know they're protected by both online platforms and government regulations.” – Grace, 23

Trust, belonging and connection

A safer and more positive internet for young people is a place where their needs are prioritised against corporate interests. Where if they have concerns or problems, they have a place to go to resolve them.” – Will, 21

Safety should be about rebuilding trust and humanising interactions—making digital spaces where people feel heard, valued, and safe to engage in meaningful conversations. If we want an internet that fosters belonging, we need to rethink how we interact with each other and challenge the algorithms that amplify outrage over empathy.

“It looks like a place where we are all about to collaborate and meet - without feeling the need to suppress or obscure some of the things that make us unique.” – Aditi, 17

Protecting us

“Being safe online is [...] also emotional and psychological safety such as through the content we consume and how we feel about it.” – Will, 21

“In recent years (being safer online) also meant knowing how to balance time on the off-line and online worlds, for example, not spending too much time scrolling!” – Raghu, 16

We all know that platforms are designed to keep us scrolling and it is hard to resist the urge to watch the next Reel on Instagram. More than just wasting time, the imbalance in over-consuming media content online can take an emotional toll on young people.

“Social media platforms must be more proactive and take meaningful action when harm is reported, rather than only acting when facing government intervention and social pressure.” – Grace, 23

How to protect our long-term autonomy should also be considered. We need stricter privacy protections, including who has access to our personal data, how it’s being used, and have more power to control it.

“Knowing how to protect my information, avoiding scams, and seeing more transparency about how our data is used.” – Raghu, 16

Right now, young people are expected to adapt to a system with deep flaws. But what if platforms actually adapted to us instead?

Hear us out

Real change requires action. It's time for governments, tech companies, and the broader public to step up - with young people in the driver's seat.

"I particularly like a feature that Instagram is trialing in some countries where it's possible to reset your algorithm and get shown completely different content."
– Raghu, 16

"It's important for me to evaluate the content I engage with online, to make sure I have a well-rounded and informed understanding of complex subjects, and don't fall victim to misinformation." - Grace, 23

Being digital natives, we know what's working and what's failing. So why not listen to us?

"Young people need to have a say in how these changes happen—we're the ones using the internet on a daily, sometimes hourly basis!" – Raghu, 16

Can 2025 be the year where young people are empowered and supported by governments, tech companies and our communities to be part of the decision-making for our future?

Our 5 quick tips for a safer internet

- 1. Think critically** – Always question what you're reading or watching. Is it reliable? What is its intent?
- 2. Protect your data** – Use strong passwords, enable two-factor authentication, and check your privacy settings.
- 3. Report harmful content** – If something doesn't feel right, block it or report it.
- 4. Be kind** – Treat others online the way you'd want to be treated.
- 5. Take a break** – The internet can wait. Prioritise your mental health