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## **Digital Ethics Awareness: Children Should Not Be Social Media Content “Mules”**

*Content Forum supports NUTP's call for stricter regulations to prohibit teachers from using students as social media content*

**CYBERJAYA, 18 MARCH 2024** — In today's rapidly changing technological landscape, having access to a wide variety of learning resources can significantly benefit teachers and students. However, the ubiquity of technology brings challenges, particularly concerning the involvement of children in viral social media content in the classroom. In this vein, the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) underscores the importance of upholding digital ethics, particularly regarding social media content involving minors.

Confronting this obstacle head-on requires teachers to consider ethical issues that may arise from the content produced. In light of the possible social and emotional consequences that students might face due to the uploaded content, teachers must consider how they can keep students' classroom experiences uninterrupted and dispute-free.

Disregarding ethical considerations can pose significant risks to students' safety, as their identities become exposed to the public when such content is shared online. This not only leaves students vulnerable to breaches of privacy but also increases the likelihood of encountering severe threats such as cyberbullying and abduction.

Rafiq Razali, Chairman of the Content Forum, stated, "The Content Code defines the protection of children, including content that pays due attention to the welfare of children at all times." Referring to the Content Code Part 10, Paragraph 4.0 (b), all effort must be made to ensure that any Content provided will not result in causing, encouraging or promoting physical and emotional injury, abuse, or expose young children to moral danger.

Acknowledging our responsibility to shape a safe and respectful online environment is crucial, especially when children are part of it.

## **Safeguarding students**

Teaching is a noble and impactful profession that shapes students' futures. That is why exercising caution when sharing content is crucial to maintaining professionalism and trust. Therefore, teachers should not risk their students' safety by exploiting them as content, especially without their parents' permission. Such actions undermine the educational environment and violate the privacy of students and their families, potentially causing harm.

Proactive steps are necessary to address the spread of viral social media content involving students and teachers. In support of this, the Content Forum echoes the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) in advocating for stricter regulations and enforcement to tackle this issue effectively. This is crucial to prevent teachers from misusing social media for personal purposes during working hours. By doing so, all parties involved can curb the spread of inaccurate information on social media involving schools, teachers, and students so that it does not become a source of criticism from the public. Besides that, this can also help safeguard the reputation of schools and the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) within the community.

Rafiq emphasized the importance of prudent and proactive content management on social media, particularly regarding the relationships among teachers, students, and the Ministry of Education. This strategic approach is vital in safeguarding Malaysia's education system and preserving the integrity of all parties involved, especially within the digital-sphere.

Awareness of digital ethics and child protection is a shared responsibility. Teachers, parents, and other stakeholders must work together to ensure children's online and digital safety. With this, they can create an all-encompassing classroom setting that gives students a comprehensive and holistic educational environment.

We can protect our children from danger by implementing proactive safety measures and adhering to content guidelines stipulated in the Content Code 2022. In addition, we can also ensure that its use is in line with ethical values and involves all stakeholders involved in education.

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## **ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM**

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is an independent self-regulatory industry body registered under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and designated by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 (CMA'98) to oversee and promote self-regulation of content over the electronic networked medium. The Content Forum consists of key players in the content industry, i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting service providers, advertising agencies, internet service providers, and civic groups.

Aimed at facilitating self-regulation, which provides an additional layer of consumer protection that complements the legal framework, the Content Forum is committed to governing and promoting the creation, distribution, and consumption of electronic-networked content.

As an industry self-regulatory body, the Content Forum comprises key members of the communications and multimedia content industry, including broadcasters, advertisers, content creators, internet access service providers, and civic groups. This dynamic and robust representation of industry practitioners ensures that content standards continue to be developed with the objective of establishing a level playing field in the industry.

The Content Forum is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Content Code ("the Content Code"). The Content Code was prepared by the Content Forum and first registered with MCMC on 1st September 2004. The Content Code is the principal source for industry self-regulation as it contains governing standards and best practices for content dissemination within the communications and multimedia industry in Malaysia. The main objective of the Content Code is to outline procedures of self-regulation that provides the platform for creativity, innovation and healthy growth of a fast-evolving industry.

The Content Forum houses a Complaints Bureau that is empowered to address all complaints relating to content disseminated over electronic networks. The Complaints Bureau is empowered to investigate possible breaches of the Content Code, mediate disputes, adjudicate cases, publish orders, and impose sanctions where necessary. The Complaints Bureau accepts

complaints from industry players and the general public. Additionally, it plays an advisory role to any party that requires guidance on electronic content matters.

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**Issued by GO Communications on behalf of the Content Forum**

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