



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Content Forum Urges Responsible Social Media Use Amid Rise in Hateful and Violative Content**

**CYBERJAYA, 3 APRIL 2024** — In light of recent escalations in the dissemination of hateful, offensive, and violative content across various social media platforms, the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum (the Content Forum) as a leading industry forum and self-regulatory organization, is issuing a stern call to action for responsible social media engagement.

The surge in harmful content on social media platforms is a growing concern, affecting individuals, communities, and societies. While these platforms have revolutionized communication with their immediacy and interconnectedness, bad actors have exploited these features for the rapid spread of divisive and damaging content.

### **Offline Ramifications of Online Misconduct**

As advocates of self-regulation within the digital sphere, the Content Forum recognizes the urgent need for collective action to address this issue. "We are deeply concerned by the rise of content designed to provoke outrage or entice engagement through sensationalism, often at the expense of civility and decency, with potential spillover effects into real-life consequences and harm," says Mediha Mahmood, the Content Forum's CEO.

It is imperative that social media users exercise discernment and responsibility in their online interactions. This entails refraining from sharing, reposting, or engaging with content that is hateful, offensive, or violative in nature. By abstaining from interaction with such materials, users can mitigate its reach and minimize the inadvertent amplification of harmful narratives.

### **Critical Thinking and Media Literacy**

Furthermore, the Content Forum emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and media literacy in navigating the digital landscape. By cultivating an awareness of manipulation tactics employed by purveyors of divisive content, individuals can empower themselves to make informed choices about their online behaviour.

When encountering content that is clearly provocative, racist, sexist, or otherwise offensive, users can recognize it as an attempt to provoke negative discourse and opt not to engage with it.

### **User Empowerment and Collective Responsibility**

All individuals who encounter violative content are urged to take proactive steps in addressing it. Should the content violate community guidelines or legal standards, users are strongly encouraged to report it immediately to the respective social media platforms to mitigate its spread. In cases where the content constitutes a criminal offense or poses a threat to public safety, users are encouraged to lodge reports to the relevant authorities promptly. By taking swift and decisive action, we can collectively contribute to creating a safer and more conducive digital environment.

### **Influencing Responsible Social Media Practices**

In addition, the Content Forum calls upon thought leaders and influencers to lead by example in promoting responsible social media use. “As individuals with significant influence and reach, they possess a unique opportunity to shape online discourse positively. We urge them to leverage their platforms to amplify messages of tolerance, empathy, and critical thinking, while refraining from endorsing or amplifying harmful content,” says Mediha.

By championing constructive dialogue and ethical engagement, thought leaders and influencers can play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of responsibility and respect within the digital sphere.

In closing, the Content Forum reaffirms its commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and responsible digital environment, and urges social media users to join this endeavour by exercising vigilance, compassion, and integrity in their online interactions.

For further information or to learn more about content standards and best practices, visit [www.contentforum.my](http://www.contentforum.my)

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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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