

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sharenting Under Scrutiny: Content Forum Supports Call to Protect Children's Privacy Online

KUALA LUMPUR, 18 DECEMBER 2024 – The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) fully supports the recent statement by Minister of Communications, Fahmi Fadzil, highlighting the risks of 'sharenting'—a growing concern where parents, often unknowingly, expose children to online dangers by sharing personal information and content.

While sharing milestones and proud moments is common, the practice, if done without careful consideration, can have serious unintended consequences, including emotional harm, online exploitation, and long-term reputational damage. Children whose private moments are shared online without their consent may face bullying, embarrassment, and emotional distress as they grow older. Their digital footprint, created before they have a say, can impact future opportunities, from education to employment.

YB Fahmi's call for greater parental awareness is timely as it underscores the growing need for vigilance and discernment in managing children's online presence. The risks are not theoretical—globally, cases of online crimes involving children, such as identity theft and online grooming, continue to rise.

The practice of sharenting also raises concerns under the Child Act 2001, which emphasizes the protection of children's privacy, safety, and overall well-being. Parents and guardians have a fundamental responsibility to ensure their children's rights, including their right to dignity and security, are not compromised through online activities.

Commenting on this, Rafiq Razali, Chairman of the Content Forum, said, "We often teach children to be cautious online, yet parents can unknowingly undermine those very lessons. Oversharing, even with good intentions, may unintentionally compromise our children's safety, privacy, and emotional well-being. It is essential to pause and reflect before hitting 'post' because the internet never forgets."

Globally, several countries have begun addressing this issue through legal reforms. In France, children can take legal action against parents for sharing personal content without consent, while courts in Italy have required parents to remove posts harming a child's privacy. Similar discussions are ongoing in Australia and the United States to strengthen digital privacy protections for minors.

In Malaysia, while specific laws on 'sharenting' are yet to be introduced, the Communications and Multimedia Content Code places strong emphasis on safeguarding children's dignity, privacy, and emotional well-being.

"Nonetheless, the growing opportunities to monetize content increase the risks of exploitation, overexposure, and misuse of children's personal information. When parents, teachers, or



guardians prioritize profit over a child's well-being, society must advocate for stronger protections to uphold their rights and dignity," says Content Forum CEO, Mediha Mahmood.

To address these challenges, the Content Forum has and will continue to work with tech and social media platforms, educators, parents, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to raise awareness and provide tools to safeguard children's safety online. Key initiatives include:

1. Workshops and Training: Programs for parents and educators to understand the risks of oversharing and adopt safer online habits.
2. Tech Platform Collaborations: Partnerships with platforms like TikTok, META and Google to amplify privacy tools and enhance safety mechanisms for families.
3. Advocacy Campaigns: Public initiatives like #ThinkTwice that promote media literacy and responsible content sharing.

The Content Forum urges all stakeholders, including parents, educators, and policymakers, to work together in addressing the challenges of sharenting and building a safer, more responsible digital ecosystem. Every post shapes a child's digital legacy— we must work together to make it one that empowers, not exploits.

For more information about our initiatives or to get involved, visit www.contentforum.my or follow us on our socials @mycontentforum.

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ABOUT THE CONTENT FORUM

The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) is an industry forum 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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