

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Enough is Enough: Stop the Devastating Impact of Online Harassment!

Words matter, and the importance of online responsibility cannot be ignored in order to prevent devastating real-life consequences.

CYBERJAYA, 11 JULY 2024 — The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) emphasises the importance of fostering responsibility and respect in online interactions. In response to the rising incidents of online harassment and abuse, the Content Forum calls for collective efforts to create a safer and more supportive digital environment. Recent tragic incidents underscore the urgent need for effective measures to address the escalating issue of cyberbullying, which can have devastating real-world consequences, including severe mental health issues, social isolation, and even loss of life.

Let's be very clear - cyberbullying is not just an online issue. It has real, devastating impacts on individuals and communities. Recent statistics from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) revealed a worrying trend, with 51,638 cases of harmful content circulating on social media and over-the-top platforms in just the first three months of this year.

The broader impact of online interactions on mental health and well-being is undeniable. The urgent need for a compassionate and respectful approach to digital interactions has never been clearer, as we strive to mitigate the negative consequences of harmful online behaviours.

Additionally, responsible reporting and sharing of suicide news is crucial to respect bereaved families and encourage empathetic online discourse. Society has a collective responsibility to ensure discussions about suicide focus on prevention awareness, not finger-pointing or victim-blaming.

In this regard, the Content Forum is dedicated to promoting self-regulation and responsible content creation, as part of our mission to foster a culture of respect and empathy in all online interactions. Recently, the Content Forum held a webinar to address the issue of online hate speech, which is part of our ongoing efforts to conduct regular dialogues and training sessions with universities, schools, teachers, and academicians on combating cyberbullying and protecting themselves online.

While we continue to drive such initiatives, we believe that, fostering a digital culture of empathy and respect, where harmful behaviour is prevented, requires collective responsibility.

The Content Forum fully supports the government's efforts to address cyberbullying cases and protect individuals from online harms. This involves not only governmental action but also active participation from youth organisations, mental health experts, civil society groups, educators, parents, law enforcement agencies and technology companies.



Social media platforms must continue improving their content moderation processes and explore AI-driven tools that detect harmful content in real-time, potentially stopping cyberbullying before it escalates. These advancements should include more sophisticated algorithms that can accurately identify and flag abusive language, harassment, and other harmful behaviors without disproportionately affecting legitimate discourse.

Lastly, promoting digital literacy and awareness among users is vital. All parties should collaborate and engage in educational campaigns that teach users about responsible online behavior, the consequences of cyberbullying, and the importance of empathy and respect in digital interactions.

By working together, we can develop comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of cyberbullying, provide support to victims, and facilitate a safer online environment.

Rafiq Razali

Chairman, Content Forum

11 July 2024

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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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