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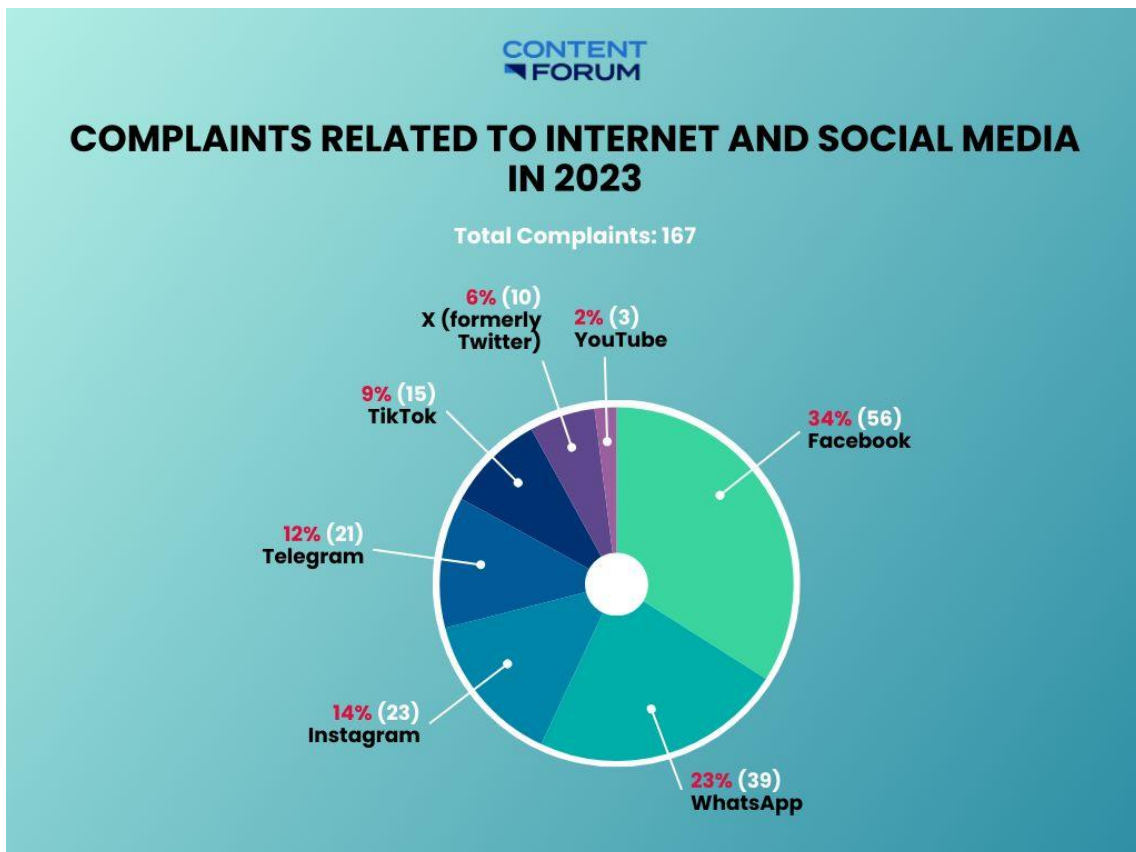
Understanding Online Risks: Content Forum's 2023 Case Statistics Revealed

Continued surge in online and social media-related reports reflect need for self-regulation and heightened vigilance in digital content consumption

CYBERJAYA, 26 FEBRUARY 2024 - The Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (Content Forum) released its annual Complaints Bureau Case Statistics for 2023, which saw Facebook, accounting for 34% of reported cases in 2023, surpassing WhatsApp in the volume of reported cases. This latest report represents a clear reflection of rising concerns around online safety, particularly on social media.

As an advocate for responsible content consumption and creation, the Content Forum emphasises the vital role of self-regulation and self-censorship in maintaining a safe online environment for all users.

In 2023, the Content Forum's Complaints Bureau noted a decrease in the number of complaints, with 239 cases reported, of which 167 pertained to internet or social media content. Despite the overall decline, the increase in complaints related to internet and social media content underscores the importance of self-regulation and vigilance in these platforms.



The breakdown of cases by platform in 2023:

- 1) Facebook - 34%
- 2) WhatsApp - 23%
- 3) Instagram - 14%
- 4) Telegram - 12%
- 5) TikTok - 9%
- 6) X (formerly Twitter) - 6%
- 7) YouTube - 2%

The cases spanned a variety of categories, with online content (47%) and scam issues (35%) dominating the complaints. Notably, scam issues were particularly prevalent on WhatsApp, highlighting the platform's vulnerability to such threats. Other complaints included fake accounts, threats, hacked accounts, cyberbullying, and fake news, painting a complex picture of the online challenges users face.

A Call to Safeguard the Digital Space

Rafiq Razali, Chairman of the Content Forum, iterated the need for self-regulation and a collective responsibility in safeguarding the digital space.

“As we navigate the complexities of the digital age, it is imperative that all of us — individuals, communities, and platforms alike — commit to the principles of self-regulation and vigilance. Self-regulation serves as a cornerstone of digital citizenship, requiring us to consciously uphold standards of integrity and respect in every click, post, and interaction. This self-directed governance is our collective shield against the plethora of threats that pervade the digital landscape. Self-regulation empowers us to foster an online environment that is not only safe but also thriving with positive engagement,” he said.

He added that scam-related WhatsApp complaints show increased reliance on messaging platforms. Scammers exploit these platforms' trust and convenience, creating complex deceptions that are hard to detect. This trend highlights both the persistence of scammers and a need for digital literacy among users. Addressing this gap through education is essential to protect the digital space from predatory tactics.

Fostering Digital Resilience

The Content Forum stresses the need for diverse educational efforts to boost digital literacy, including empowering the public with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify scams from the outset. Recognising red flags, such as unsolicited requests for personal information, suspicious links, or too-good-to-be-true offers, becomes critical in this context. Moreover, understanding the psychological tactics employed by scammers, such as urgency, fear, or the promise of rewards, can empower users to approach digital interactions with a healthy scepticism.

Equally important is the cultivation of safe online habits, such as verifying the identity of contacts, using secure and reputable online platforms for transactions, and regularly updating privacy settings on social media and messaging apps. The Content Forum advocates these practices not just as temporary measures but as integral components of digital citizenship.

Meanwhile, the evolving nature of scam tactics, including deepfakes, AI-generated voices, and highly personalised phishing attempts, means that education and vigilance must be

ongoing. As new technologies emerge, the digital landscape is ever-changing, and so are new vulnerabilities. The Content Forum is committed to staying ahead of these trends, continuously updating its educational resources and outreach efforts to address the latest threats.

“The Content Forum encourages the public to remain proactive in reporting online issues through the MCMC Complaint portal. Through collective effort and shared responsibility, we can create a digital ecosystem that respects safety, privacy, and integrity. As we move forward, the Content Forum remains dedicated to fostering a balanced digital environment where freedom of expression and safe content consumption coexist harmoniously,” said Rafiq.

The Content Forum is open to collaborating with anyone interested in promoting community empowerment through self-regulation. Visit www.contentforum.my for further details.

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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 of the content industry i.e., advertisers, advertising agencies, broadcasters, content creators/distributors, audiotext hosting services 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 govern and promote 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.

Issued by GO Communications on behalf of the Content Forum

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