

A Message from Our CEO on the EARN IT Act

By Shar Dubey

How All Tech Companies Can Keep Kids Safe Online

Everyone agrees that they want to stop the sexual exploitation of children online. The problem is getting everyone to agree on how to do it.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) and Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) have offered a framework for how to do this by introducing the EARN It Act. Match Group supports their proposal because it would modernize our laws and offer new rules of the road for technology companies to better protect children online and combat human trafficking.

At Match Group, the safety of our users is at the heart of all we do and something we are constantly investing in. However, the EARN It Act rightfully acknowledges that online safety is a societal issue that demands action from leaders in the social media and tech space and on Capitol Hill. The EARN IT Act would help accomplish this by establishing a joint commission of lawmakers, experts and industry participants to set standards and best practices for internet companies to follow in addressing online exploitation of children.

As the mom of a teenager, I am constantly thinking about my own daughter's safety. And as the chief executive of a company that includes some of the world's leading dating brands—Match, Tinder, OkCupid, and Hinge—I find myself often awake at night thinking about my daughter's future, her digital footprint and the safety and privacy issues that

come with this territory.

I remember a time when tech didn't encompass every area of life. That's no longer true for today's kids. They have been immersed in a device-driven, always-on world since birth, and it's incumbent on us to give them the tools to thrive in this increasingly digital world.

Given our kids spend so much time with technology, we need to take bolder steps to protect them. We know that sex traffickers, pedophiles and other predators target children in places where they believe them to be most vulnerable. The internet will continue to fail our children without the entire internet ecosystem investing in and adopting new rules, technologies and practices to better govern online interactions and crack down on predatory behavior.

That is why Match Group has voluntarily chosen to make all of our platforms 18+. Beyond the age requirement, we vigilantly deploy a network of industry-leading automated and manual moderation and review tools, systems and processes designed to find and remove people from our app who should not be there. This includes both underage users and the bad actors that could prey on them. We work with partners like the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Polaris, RAINN, Thorn and others to solicit recommendations from these experts. We welcome the opportunity to work with regulators to ensure that we are all coming together to protect our next generation of citizens. And, like most tech companies, we will continue to invest in new technologies and adopt new practices to try to stay ahead of predators.

We don't casually lend our support to this legislation. We do it recognizing there is no cure-all to keeping the internet safe, just as there is none for keeping the world safe. But, even

still, we have to do every bit we can. These are complicated problems with many considerations. We must act together in a way that doesn't hurt start-ups or stifle innovation and new technologies. We must balance concerns around privacy with concerns around safety -- which sometimes can be in conflict. But sensible and innovative solutions can go a long way.

We as tech leaders should engage with lawmakers in thoughtful dialogue and work on establishing guidelines and practices to make the online world a safer place for our kids. While we will continue to work towards this goal on our own, we support this legislation and the beginning of this very important conversation.

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