

Time for Transparency and Accountability

Op-ed by Utah State Senator Todd Weiler

Our lives -- and our children's lives -- are impacted daily by technology. The pace of innovation is astounding. Although companies make their products appealing to young people, very few are making them safe. Too many tech companies are more interested in making profit than protecting our kids.

In 1992, Mortal Kombat burst onto the scene with its gory fatalities and spurting blood. The backlash from parents prompted Joe Lieberman to orchestrate a Congressional rebuke. As a result, the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) was born. Much like the MPAA for movies, it provides ratings and oversight of video games.

We need an MPAA or ESRB equivalent for apps. Snapchat has become a hub for prostitution and pornography.¹ Instagram, with its family-friendly reputation, is chock full of hardcore porn,² drugs,³ and is increasingly being used for child grooming and exploitation.^{4,5} Both are rated 12+ by Apple's App Store.

Social media is not safe for our children, and the industry titans cannot be trusted. An independent rating system will inform parents of content and risks associated with social media, and other apps.

This is where you come in. I need your help. Join me in this fight for transparency.

We also need to insist that Apple and Android include more intuitive parental controls on their devices. Billion-dollar companies can do better. You can learn more at FixAppRatings.com.

References:

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