

ThriveNet

Conscious Tech for Youth



Protect



Create

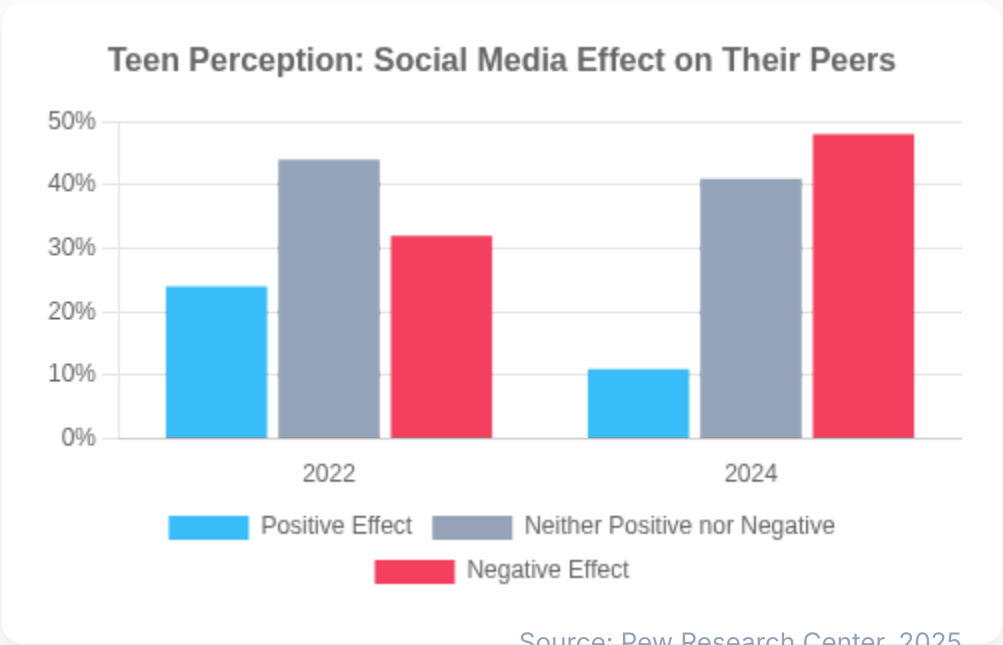



Connect

Fighting addiction, not art — preserving creativity while protecting youth

Executive Summary & Crisis Statistics


Digital platforms offer learning and creativity opportunities, but current designs fuel addiction and harm youth mental health



 **PROBLEMATIC SOCIAL MEDIA USE**


57% increase
From 7% in 2018 to 11% in 2022 among adolescents

Source: WHO Europe, 2024

 **TEEN SCREEN TIME AWARENESS**

45% of teens
Report spending too much time on social media, up from 27% in 2023

Source: Pew Research Center, 2025


 **MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT**

1 in 5 teens
Say social media has hurt their mental health; higher among girls (25%)


Source: Pew Research Center, 2025

The Problem: The Harm in Current Youth Tech


Today's platforms exploit youth vulnerabilities through design patterns that trigger addictive behaviors

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Infinite Scroll

Eliminates natural stopping cues, exploits curiosity gap, and increases dopamine-driven engagement. Teens report losing track of time and prolonged sessions.
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Streaks & Rewards

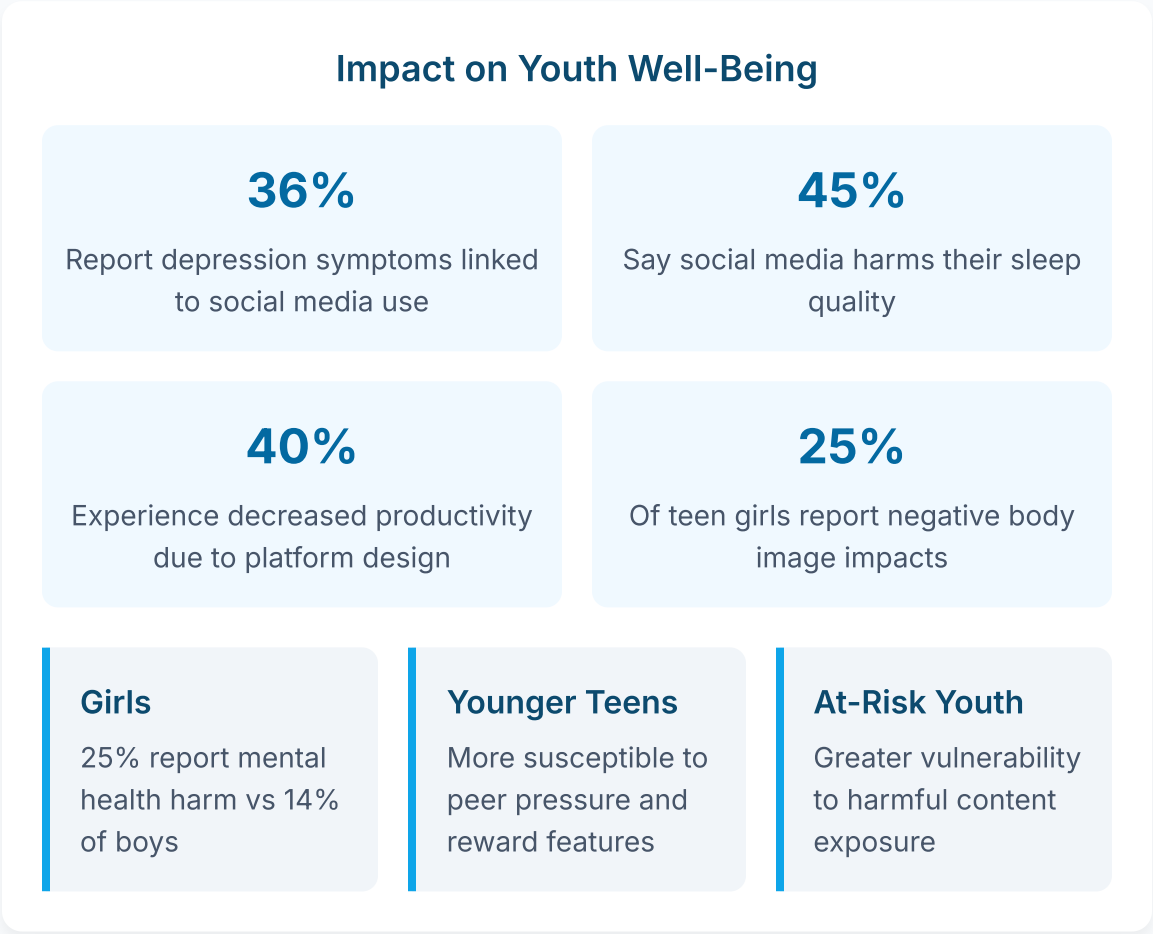
Creates artificial urgency and FOMO (fear of missing out), leveraging loss aversion. Drives compulsive checking behaviors, especially among younger users.
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Public Like Counts

Triggers social comparison and validation-seeking behaviors. Creates connection between self-worth and engagement metrics.
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Autoplay

Removes friction between content consumption, bypassing conscious decision-making. Creates "zone out" experiences that extend session time.



Sources: Pew Research Center (2025), WHO Europe (2024), Center for Humane Technology

ThriveNet's 10 Principles

A framework for conscious technology design that protects youth while preserving creativity

These principles establish a new standard for digital platforms that serve minors, balancing innovation with protection and ensuring young people can thrive online without exploitation.



1. Tool, not trap

Products used by minors must be consciously finite and purposeful, designed to serve users rather than capture their attention indefinitely. Content feeds should have natural endpoints and clear session boundaries.



2. Dignity by design

Safety and wellbeing features must be default settings, not opt-in add-ons. Platforms should protect privacy, prevent harassment, and limit harmful content exposure without requiring youth or parents to discover and activate these protections.



3. Right to attention

Children have a right to undisturbed sleep, school focus, and family time. Platforms must respect these boundaries with quiet hours, notification controls, and features that encourage healthy usage patterns rather than constant engagement.



4. Age-smart, not age-blind

Different developmental stages require different defaults. Products must provide appropriate protections for under-13, 13–15, and 16–17 age groups, with graduated features and freedoms that align with cognitive development.



5. Transparency over mystery

Platforms must explain how content feeds work and provide simple off-ramps like chronological or interest-based sorting options. Young users should understand why they're seeing content and have agency to adjust their experience.



6. Privacy as protection

Behavioral advertising and manipulative targeting should not be permitted for minors. Platforms must respect privacy as a form of protection, not just compliance, and avoid exploiting youth data for commercial gain.



7. Creativity protected

Fun, innovative content and creative expression must be welcomed and protected; exploitative engagement loops are not. The goal is to eliminate addiction without stifling the positive aspects of digital creation and sharing.



8. Evidence-based

Platforms must support independent audits and provide open data to researchers (with strong privacy protections). Policies and features should evolve based on evidence about impacts on youth wellbeing, not business metrics alone.



9. Shared responsibility

Families, schools, platforms, and policymakers each have distinct roles in protecting youth online. Clear responsibilities and coordinated efforts across stakeholders are essential for creating a safe digital environment.



10. Global cohesion

Standards must be harmonized internationally so safety doesn't end at a border. A consistent global approach prevents regulatory arbitrage and ensures all children receive similar protections regardless of location.







The Age-Tiered Approach: Defaults by Age

Different developmental stages require different protections while preserving appropriate creative freedoms



Under 13







Learn & Create

-  No public social graphs or profiles; private-by-default
-  No DMs from strangers; parental approval required
-  No infinite scroll, autoplay, or streaks; feeds are "finished" with max of 20 items/day
-  Likes are private only; no public counts or metrics
-  Educational and creativity tools prioritized in UI/UX
-  Heavy filters on violent/sexual content; age-appropriate content only



Ages 13-15







Explore with Guardrails

-  Strict "youth mode" default: finished feed, time caps, no public like counts
-  Opt-in "Cultural Digest" replaces FOMO scrolling with curated content
-  Verified adult-only spaces fully blocked
-  Behavioral advertising banned; contextual ads only
-  Automatic quiet hours during school and night time
-  Enhanced privacy controls with simplified language



Ages 16-17

Transition to Autonomy

-  Youth mode on by default with clear opt-out options
-  Chronological feed option prominently displayed
-  Night-quiet hours (9pm-7am) defaulted on
-  School-quiet hours automatically enabled
-  Weekly usage recaps with contextual benchmarks
-  Digital literacy resources for transition to adult accounts

Based on developmental psychology research and expert consultations from pediatricians, educators, and youth advocates

Product Design Standards for Youth Protection

Setting clear boundaries between engaging features and harmful exploitation of youth vulnerabilities

Banned Patterns for Minors



Infinite Scroll

Replace with paginated content or "finished feeds" with clear endpoints. Example: "You've reached today's 20 updates from friends."



Autoplay

Disable automatic video progression and require conscious choice to continue viewing. Default pause between content.



Streaks & Gamification

Eliminate "days streak" counters and other artificial urgency mechanics designed to drive daily compulsive use.



Public Like/View Counts

Make engagement metrics private to reduce social comparison and validation-seeking behaviors.



Loot Box-Style Rewards

Prohibit variable reward mechanisms that exploit gambling psychology in youth-accessible features.

Required Healthy Defaults



Time-Bounded, Purpose-First Design

Clear session endings with positive alternatives: "You've reached today's end—go create, learn, or move." Offer creative prompts, local events, or offline challenges.



Healthy Notification Boundaries

No push notifications during school hours (8am-3pm) or nighttime (9pm-7am) unless urgent safety matters. Batch non-urgent notifications.



Contextual Friction & Awareness

Mood check-ins after 10 minutes; easy "end session" choices; weekly usage recap in plain language with cognitive load indicators.



Transparent Feed Controls

One tap to see why each item appears; one tap to adjust inputs (interests, time). Chronological option always available and prominent.



Privacy-Preserving Age Assurance

Device-level or third-party attestation with no retention of sensitive IDs. Private-by-default for all youth accounts.

What we preserve: Art, creativity, discovery, innovation, and connection

Policy Framework: Legal and Regulatory Backbone

A coordinated approach to youth protection across global, federal, state and local levels

Global Coordination

- ✓ UN/OECD "Digital Childhood Convention" to harmonize core standards
- ✓ International cooperation on cross-border enforcement
- ✓ Alignment with EU Digital Services Act child protection provisions

Federal Level

- ✓ Youth Online Wellbeing Act: Access age, design standards, ban on behavioral ads to minors
- ✓ Mandatory annual Safety & Wellbeing Audits by third parties
- ✓ Per-child, per-day penalties for violations with whistleblower protection

State/Local Level

- ✓ Procurement standards for schools/public agencies: Youth Mode compliance
- ✓ State-level research hubs for wellbeing-by-design tools
- ✓ School districts: phone-free classrooms and digital literacy mandates

Core Requirements Across All Levels



Age Assurance: Privacy-preserving verification without ID retention



Design Bans: No infinite scroll, autoplay, streaks for minors



SafeSearch Default: Age-appropriate content filtering on by default



Ad Restrictions: No behavioral advertising targeting minors



Regular Audits: Independent verification of platform compliance



Privacy by Default: Accounts private, DMs require mutual approval

Collaboration Framework: Shared Responsibility



Platforms



Families



Schools



Policymakers



Researchers

Current Platform Solutions Analysis

Major social platforms have implemented partial youth protection measures, but significant gaps remain in effectiveness and implementation

Instagram

✔ Working Solutions

- Teen Accounts with stricter defaults
- Sensitive content filtering
- Family Center for parental supervision
- Auto-private accounts for under-16s

⚠ Remaining Gaps

- Infinite scroll still enabled
- Weak verification of parent-child relationship
- Algorithm prioritizes engagement over wellbeing
- Easy to bypass age restrictions

TikTok

✔ Working Solutions

- 60-minute daily limit for under-18s
- Family Pairing with parental controls
- Screen time dashboard and reminders
- Restricted Mode for filtering content

⚠ Remaining Gaps

- Teen can override time limits without parent
- Highly addictive algorithm still in place
- Limited transparency on recommendation system
- Challenges with dangerous trend moderation

YouTube

✔ Working Solutions

- YouTube Kids separate application
- Supervised accounts for pre-teens/teens
- Bedtime reminders and break alerts
- Age restriction verification on content

⚠ Remaining Gaps

- Autoplay still enabled by default
- Age verification easily circumvented
- Algorithmic rabbit holes for harmful content
- Limited content moderation on short videos

Snapchat

✔ Working Solutions

- Family Center for monitoring contacts
- Private-by-default for teens
- Friend suggestion limitations
- Parental location sharing tools

⚠ Remaining Gaps

- Streaks feature promotes addiction
- Challenges in preventing underage access
- Ephemeral content complicates monitoring
- Limited oversight of private messages

Common Gaps Across Platforms

- Business incentives still prioritize time-on-site over wellbeing
- Limited transparency into algorithm functioning
- Weak age verification systems easily bypassed
- Parental controls often circumvented by tech-savvy teens

Legislative Landscape: US, EU, UK, CA

Key youth protection regulations worldwide with common elements and implementation gaps

Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) - US

Establishes a duty of care for platforms to prevent harms to minors and provides tools for parents. Sets requirements for platforms to mitigate risks to children.

- Age verification
- Parental controls
- Risk mitigation
- Default protections

Digital Services Act (DSA) - EU

Comprehensive framework requiring platforms to ensure "high level of privacy, safety, and security of minors" with risk assessments and protections.

- Risk assessments
- Transparency requirements
- Age-appropriate design
- Platform accountability

Online Safety Act - UK

Mandates platforms to protect children from harmful content through risk assessment, age verification, and "Children's Codes" for various harms.





- Children's Codes
- Age-appropriate design
- Duty of care
- Content moderation

Age-Appropriate Design Code - California


First US state law requiring platforms "likely to be accessed by children" to prioritize children's safety and privacy by default.

- Privacy by default
- Data minimization
- High privacy settings
- Age-appropriate terms

Common Elements Across Legislation

-  **Age verification requirements** - All require some form of age assurance, though implementation methods vary
-  **Default safety settings** - Protective features must be enabled by default for minors
-  **Privacy protections** - Limitations on data collection and use for minors
-  **Platform accountability** - Legal responsibilities for protecting minors with penalties

Implementation Challenges & Gaps

-  **Patchwork enforcement** - Inconsistent standards across jurisdictions create compliance challenges
-  **Privacy vs verification tension** - Age verification methods often conflict with privacy goals
-  **Global harmonization lacking** - Platforms face multiple regulatory regimes
-  **Design standards ambiguity** - Lack of specific technical standards for implementation

The Cultural Digest: Solving FOMO Without Endless Feed

A curated daily or weekly summary of cultural moments that replaces addictive scrolling with intentional connection



What Is The Cultural Digest?

A once-daily (or weekly) newsletter or video summarizing major cultural moments - music, memes, sports, science, and local events - curated specifically for different age groups.



Co-Created Content

Developed collaboratively with educators, youth councils, and content experts to ensure relevance, diversity, and age-appropriateness.



Beyond Passive Consumption

Includes links to deeper learning opportunities and creative prompts that inspire action, creation, and community engagement rather than endless consumption.



School & Family Integration

Opt-in system for schools and families allows customization and creates shared cultural touchpoints for discussion between peers, teachers, and parents.

Traditional Social Media

- ✗ Endless scrolling with no finish line
- ✗ Algorithm maximizes time spent
- ✗ Reactive content consumption
- ✗ Promotes FOMO and anxiety
- ✗ Addiction-driven engagement

Cultural Digest Approach

- ✓ Defined start and finish
- ✓ Intentional, time-bounded experience
- ✓ Thoughtful curation by humans
- ✓ Alleviates missing out worries
- ✓ Connection without exploitation

Tuesday Cultural Digest

Ages 13-15

🎵 Music Spotlight

New releases from trending artists, upcoming local concerts, and music creation challenge of the week.

😊 Creative Corner

This week's viral creative trends, community art showcases, and DIY project ideas.

🌐 In Your Community

Local events, volunteer opportunities, and highlights from nearby schools and community centers.

📖 Learn Something New

Fascinating facts, educational challenges, and resources for exploring interests deeper.

The Cultural Digest creates a healthier relationship with digital culture without sacrificing connection.

Implementation Roadmap

A strategic, step-by-step approach to building conscious technology that protects youth while preserving creativity



Coalition

Build partnerships across stakeholders



Standards

Establish clear design guidelines



Pilots

Test interventions in schools & platforms



Policy

Create legislative framework



Scale

Expand & measure impact

From principles to practice: Making conscious tech the new standard

Success Metrics & Public Dashboard

Transparent monitoring and independent audits to track progress and ensure accountability

AVERAGE DAILY MINUTES

87 min ↓

Target: Reduce average daily screen time for minors year over year

HARMFUL CONTENT EXPOSURE

12% ↓

Target: Decrease exposure rates to adult/violent content

SELF-REPORTED WELLBEING

63% ↑

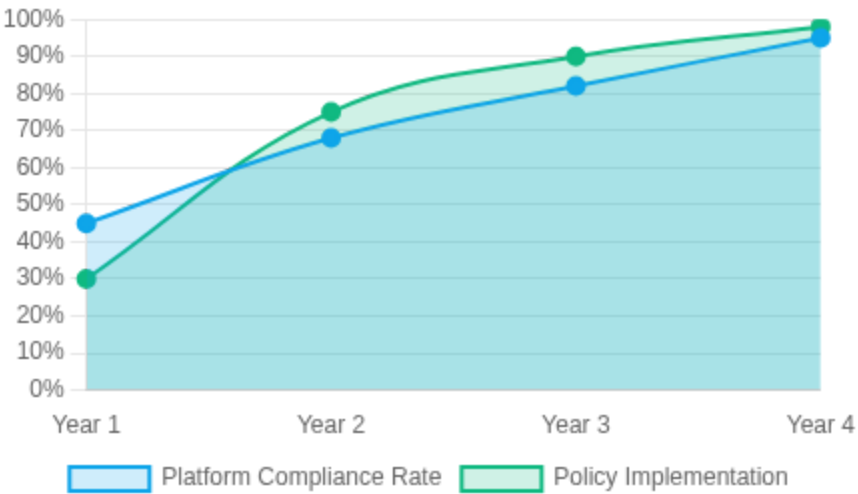
Target: Increase positive responses on standardized wellbeing surveys

SCHOOL ATTENTION METRICS

76% ↑

Target: Improve focus and engagement during school hours

Projected Compliance & Implementation



Source: ThriveNet Compliance Projections, 2025

Independent Third-Party Audits

- 1

Quarterly safety audits by independent researchers examining platform compliance
- 2


Annual wellbeing impact assessments measuring psychological outcomes
- 3

Transparent reporting of all metrics on public dashboard with raw data access
- 4


Penalties for non-compliance and remediation timelines clearly established

Global Coordination

Creating an international framework for digital childhood protection through unified standards

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Digital Childhood Convention

Push for OECD/UN-backed international agreement establishing baseline protections for children across borders. Create enforceable standards that prevent platforms from offshoring risks to regions with weaker protections.
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Harmonized Standards

Align core requirements across jurisdictions: privacy-preserving age verification, design pattern prohibitions, data transparency requirements, and enforcement mechanisms to prevent regulatory arbitrage.
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Research Collaboration


Establish international research consortium with shared methodologies, data access protocols, and cross-cultural validation of wellbeing measures. Enable platforms to implement improvements based on findings.

Global Policy Network

Connect legislators, regulators, and civil society across borders to share best practices, coordinate enforcement actions, and respond to emerging challenges and platform innovations.


Core Elements of International Framework






Privacy Protection

No behavioral advertising to minors; strict data minimization requirements; default privacy settings




Age Assurance

Standardized, privacy-preserving methods without retaining sensitive identifiers



Design Bans

Universal prohibition of infinite scroll, autoplay, and other manipulative patterns for minors



Transparency

Open researcher access; regular audits; shared compliance reporting framework

90-Day Action Plan

Concrete implementation steps to launch ThriveNet's conscious tech framework for youth



Days 1-30: Formation & Foundation

- 1 Convene coalition of parents, pediatricians, educators, creators, youth representatives, and supportive platforms
- 2 Establish working groups for design standards, research, policy, and outreach
- 3 Publish one-page Youth Mode specification document and Design Ban list



Days 31-60: Pilot Programs

- 4 Launch school district pilot: quiet hours + phone parking + Cultural Digest
- 5 Partner with one major platform to pilot finished feeds and hidden likes for minors
- 6 Develop wellbeing dashboard template with comparable metrics across platforms



Days 61-90: Scale & Formalize

- 7 Draft and introduce state and federal legislation using the core clause templates
- 8 Collect and publish initial pilot data with youth impact assessments
- 9 Expand coalition to international partners and establish Global Youth Tech Alliance

Key Stakeholders

Think Tomorrow Today

Nonprofit convener and coordinator

School Districts

Implementation partners for education pilots

Tech Platforms

Product design and implementation partners

Policymakers

Legislative and regulatory framework

Expected 90-Day Outcomes

- ✓ Published youth protection standards
- ✓ Two active pilot programs with data
- ✓ Draft legislation in minimum 2 states
- ✓ Coalition of 100+ organizations

Call to Action: Protect Youth, Power Their Potential

Let's build a digital world that fights addiction, not art — preserving creativity, innovation, and connection while protecting young minds



Join the Coalition

Connect with parents, educators, platforms, and policymakers to build the ThriveNet standard



Pilot in Schools

Implement the Cultural Digest and digital wellbeing education in your community



Advocate

Support legislation for youth-protective design standards and meaningful platform accountability

Join the Movement

[Learn more and sign on at thrivenet.org](https://thrivenet.org)

ThriveNet: Fighting addiction, not art. Powering youth potential through conscious technology.