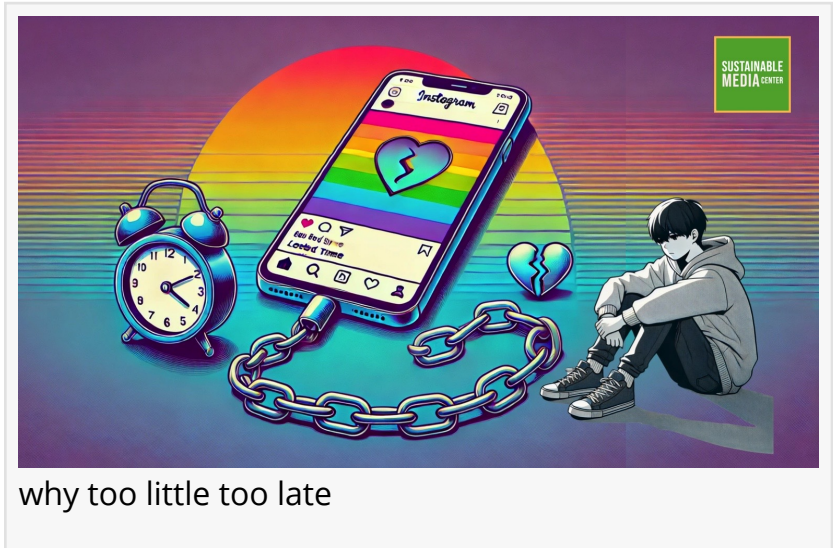


Sustainable Media Center Responds to Instagram's New Teen Controls: 'Too Little, Too Late'

Advisors and NextGen Leaders Criticize Meta's Performative Response to Growing Congressional Pressure

NY, NY, UNITED STATES, September 17, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) approaches a critical vote in the House of Representatives, Meta has announced new parental controls for Instagram. The [Sustainable Media Center](#) (SMC), a leading voice advocating for tech accountability, calls this move a

superficial effort designed to avoid meaningful regulation. Key voices from the SMC Board of Advisors, including Roger McNamee and Arturo Bejar, along with SMC NextGen leaders, are speaking out against what they see as Meta's attempt to dodge real responsibility.



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“This Puts Parents in an Impossible Position” — Steven Rosenbaum, SMC Executive Director

Steven Rosenbaum, Executive Director of the Sustainable Media Center, echoed these concerns, emphasizing the performative nature of the changes.

“We're hearing from our advisors in tech, media, teen mental health, parent activism, and Gen Z leadership that this move by Meta is deeply suspicious. With KOSA actively moving to a vote in the House, these new tools are nothing more than performative window dressing. Rather than

Instagram accepting responsibility for the harms their platform is causing, they are putting parents and teens in conflict.”

“Too Little, Too Late” — Roger McNamee, SMC Advisor

Roger McNamee, a long-time advocate for tech reform and member of the SMC Board of Advisors, criticized Instagram’s new features:

“This last-minute move by Meta to forestall Congressional action is much too little, much too late. It does nothing to address the root issues: data collection from and monetization of minors, or the rampant bullying taking place on these platforms.”

McNamee added that the timing, on the eve of a crucial House markup, only underscores the company’s intention to delay true reform. “The fact that these changes come now is convenient, to say the least. We cannot keep waiting for these companies’ better angels to decide to act. We need laws that compel them to.”

“We Need Laws, Not Performative Tools” — Zamaan Qureshi, SMC NextGen Board

Zamaan Qureshi, a NextGen leader at SMC, pointed to the broader need for legislative action: “On the eve of a crucial House markup, the timing of this is nothing but convenient. These tools do nothing to address the addictive design and harmful content that teens are being exposed to. We cannot rely on platforms to self-regulate. We need laws that protect kids online, and we need them now.”

Qureshi added, “Meta is asking parents to sign off on their kids being exposed to harmful content, rather than fixing the underlying problems themselves.”

“What About the Existing Teen Accounts?” — Arturo Bejar, SMC Advisor

Arturo Bejar, former Facebook executive and expert in tech accountability, questioned the impact of these controls:

“The first big question here is: what about all the existing teen accounts? Why aren’t these new settings the default for every current teen account? The reality is, new accounts aren’t the problem — it’s the millions of teens already entrenched in Instagram’s algorithms.”

Bejar shared a poignant anecdote from his own family: “My daughter told me last week, ‘A song has more protections than a kid online.’ If you post a video with a copyrighted song, you get a warning. Why? Because they’re compelled to by law. Why aren’t we doing the same for protecting kids from online harm?”

About the Sustainable Media Center

The Sustainable Media Center is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to fostering positive change in the media landscape. By empowering young media consumers and creators, the SMC works to ensure that digital platforms prioritize the safety and well-being of future generations. The SMC connects a diverse coalition of experts from media, technology, teen mental health, and

intergenerational activism to ensure measurable impacts on the future of media accountability.

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