



NEWS RELEASE

PARENTS' FEARS FOR GENERATION INTERNET

Worried parents in the dark about children's online shopping habits

Half of parents fear their children are using the internet to purchase harmful items like legal highs and e-cigarettes, new research reveals.

Online age verification system, AgeChecked, revealed that online purchasing is a major concern for parents in its '[Parents' Concerns for Generation Internet](#)' report.

More than half of parents are concerned about their children buying expensive in-app purchases, while 44% fear their children will obtain their bank details and spend money without their approval. More than a third of parents are concerned their children may buy restricted items like knives.

It comes as 57% of parents say that current online age restrictions designed to protect children are not going far enough. While half of parents are calling for online retailers to introduce better age controls.

Earlier this year, an [AgeChecked study](#) found that three of the biggest supermarket chains were amongst retailers failing to prevent under-18s from purchasing e-cigarettes online. Out of 25 retailers, more than half did not have mechanisms in place to prevent an illegal purchase.

Alastair Graham, CEO of AgeChecked, said: "The online experience is reinventing childhood. In the UK, children are spending twice as much time online as they did a decade ago.

It is more important than ever to ensure that effective protections and age filters are in place to protect children from purchasing harmful and inappropriate items online. It is not in retailers' interests, or the general public, that children can get access to such goods online.

"The solution needs to be delivered by a range of organisations. Not just parents and schools, but site owners, government, technology companies and emerging media and communication services.

"While the internet is a valuable learning resource for children, more needs to be done to make this digital playground safe for generation internet and generations to come."

CASE STUDY



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Valentina Nicosia from Manchester is mum to two children under the age of five. She said: “As the world of technology progresses, my children are probably going to become even more tech-savvy than I am and as they grow up, it would be detrimental to deny them a tool like the internet, which is so widely used and has such an amazing potential for good. However, while the internet is a great source of education and a real eye-opener for youngsters to the wider world of learning, there’s also many risks that concern me. As my children get older, I worry as I won’t be able to watch them all the time to monitor their activity online and through social media.

“If retailers and website owners supported parents by installing age checks onto their websites then I think this would really help to reduce risks to children while they’re surfing online. In fact, I think that as much as it’s a parent’s responsibility to ensure the safety of their children, it’s a web owner’s responsibility to make sure they have the right protections in place. Children certainly shouldn’t be able to easily purchase knives, e-cigarettes, legal highs or any other kind of harmful items online if they’re underage.

“Age verifications which ask you to enter a date of birth or password would definitely help reduce the chances of younger children purchasing dangerous goods, and would ultimately help parents feel more reassured that there are safety precautions in place.”

For more information and to download the full report, please visit:

<https://agechecked.com/#/news/5>

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Notes to editors

* Online survey of 1,500 households conducted in June 2016