R/LINUX

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377 **points** (92% upvoted)
shortlink: `https://redd.it/1rr3f3n`

377

Discussion Follow-up to my bill text comparison: I traced who wrote the OS-level age verification template that covers Linux. Meta, Google, and Snap all supported it.

(self.linux)
submitted 3 days ago by aaronsb

> This is a follow up to https://www.reddit.com/r/linux/comments/1rmhxk1/i_pulled_the_actual_bill_text_from_5_state_age/
>
> I am disclosing that this text is written in collaboration with an AI assistant. It would take too much time to not take that approach.
>
> ## Who wrote Template 2? Following the money behind the OS-level age verification bills.
>
> Several people asked about the origins of Template 2 (the "Digital Age Assurance Act" that covers all operating systems including Linux). We traced Template 1 back to Meta via the Digital Childhood Alliance. So who's behind Template 2?
>
> ## ICMEC wrote the model bill
>
> Template 2 wasn't written by state legislators or Common

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Phreakiture   (edit)

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GNU/Linux is a free and open source software operating system for computers. The operating system is a collection of the basic instructions that tell the electronic parts of the computer what to do and how to work. Free, Libre and open source software (FLOSS) means that everyone has the freedom to use it, see how it works, and change it.

GNU/Linux is a collaborative effort between the GNU project, formed in 1983 to develop the GNU operating system and the development team of Linux, a kernel. Linux is also used without GNU in embedded systems, mobile phones, and more. These can include things like Android or ChromeOS. GNU itself is also used without Linux, some examples appear in projects like Debian/kFreebsd and Guix GNU/Hurd.

- What is free software? 🔗
- Basic history of GNU/Linux 🔗
- Linux announcement post from 1991
- The Linux Kernel 🔗

Sense Media. The model text was dr
International Centre for Missing & E:
Children (ICMEC). They published th
bill, a technical whitepaper, a consti
analysis, and an FAQ document, all
on their site. Bob Cunningham, ICMI
Policy Engagement, has been preser
directly to state legislatures includin
Joint Commission on Technology and

ICMEC is a much smaller org than y
something with this reach. Annual re
$3.8M. Their donors include Amazon
Motorola Solutions Foundation, BMW
America, and Airbnb.

Sources: ICMEC Model Bill PDF | ICN
Whitepaper | ICMEC Constitutional A
ICMEC Supporters

The revolving door into the (
legislature

California AB 1043 was authored by
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks. Befo
in 2018, Wicks served as California (
Director of Common Sense Kids Acti
2018), the political advocacy arm of
Sense Media. She went from running
political operation to authoring the b
ecosystem supports.

The bill's official co-sponsors were I(
Children Now, an Oakland-based chi
group funded by the Chan Zuckerbe
Gates Foundation, and Walton Famil

It passed 76-0 in the Assembly and
Senate. Not a single no vote.

Sources: Wicks bio on CSM site | As
Committee Analysis PDF | Senate Ju
Analysis PDF

Meta, Google, and Snap all s
Template 2

This is the part that ties the two ten
together. According to Wicks' own pi
Google, Meta, Snap, and OpenAI all
for AB 1043. The same companies b
Template 1 (app store level) throug

Frequently Asked Questions

Recent AMA's

- Rocky Linux
- PINE64
- Matthew Miller
- Tobias Zwick
- Greg Kroah-Hartman
- For more AMAs, check out our wiki link by clicking here.

GNU/Linux resources

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- Arch
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Debian based

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- LinuxMint
- MX Linux
- Pop!_OS
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RedHat

- Red Hat
- AlmaLinux
- CentOS
- Fedora
- NavyLinux🔗
- RockyLinux

Unique

- NixOS
- Bedrock

Linux with Proprietary Elements

- Chrome OS

Embedded

- OpenWRT

Childhood Alliance also backed Temp
level) in California.

They aren't picking sides between th
They support both. Either way, age
moves off their platforms and onto s
infrastructure.

Source: Wicks press release on tech
1043

Common Sense Media's mor

Common Sense Media didn't draft th
bill, but they're the advocacy engine
ecosystem that supports it. From th
filings:

Total revenue: $38M/year. About 65
($24.7M), 34% from program servic
($12.9M) which includes licensing th
ratings to Apple TV, Comcast, Verizo
Samsung. They make money from t
companies they advocate to regulat

Foundation funders include the Chan
Initiative (yes, Mark Zuckerberg's pl
Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation,
Newmark Foundation ($10.5M in rec
Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Omic
(eBay founder).

CEO Jim Steyer makes $582K/year.
Tom Steyer is one of the largest Der
in the country and a former presider
Their board includes Chelsea Clinton
Clinton White House Press Secretary
McCurry, KKR founding partner Geor
and TPG founding partner James Co

No current Meta or Google execs sit
But CZI money flows in, Google is a
partner, and the organization earns
licensing ratings to tech platforms. T
structural tension between CSM's re
and its advocacy targets, though CS
maintained aggressive positions on
despite these relationships.

Sources: Common Sense Media 990
| CSM Foundation Partners | Jim Ste

Other orgs pushing the DAA

Linux on Mobile:
- Android
    - Termux
- Jolla (SailfishOS)
- PostmarketOS
- Replicant🔗
- ZeroPhone

Movements:
- Free Culture
- Free Software
- Hack Bloc

Desktop Environments:
- Budgie
- Cinnamon
- Enlightenment / e17
- GNOME
- KDE
- LXDE / LXQt
- XFCE

Window Managers:
- awesomewm
- Openbox
- xmonad
- i3

Fluff
- LinuxMemes
- UnixPorn
- UsabilityPorn
- WildLinuxAppears

Learning/resources
- CommandLine
- Linuxadmin
- LinuxDev
- Linux From Scratch
- Linux Projects
- Software Freedom Law Center🔗
- Raspberry Pi Forums🔗
- OSdev

Creativity:
- Blender
- FOSSPhotography
- FreeCAD
- GIMP Chat🔗
- Krita Forums🔗/Chat🔗
- LibreDesign
- LibreOffice
- LibreStudio
- LinuxAudio
- LinuxFilmMaking

Help
- /r/linuxquestions
- /r/bash with [HELP] tag

Webcasts:
- Level 1 Techs🔗
- The Lunduke Hour🔗
- Linux Unplugged (formerly Linux Action Show)
- Bad Voltage🔗
- Hacker Public Radio🔗

ICMEC wrote it, but several organiza[tions are]
carrying it to state legislatures:

- Enough Is Enough (led by Don[na Rice]
  Hughes) testified in support of [it in]
  North Dakota and other states [as]
  Director of Government Affairs
- Children Now co-sponsored in [it;]
  funded by CZI, Gates, and Wa[lton]
  foundations
- NCOSE (the same org whose C[EO sat on the]
  DCA board for Template 1) has [published]
  its own model age verification [bill called]
  a "Children's Device Protection[…"]

The age verification vendor industry [has a]
trade group, the Age Verification Pr[oviders]
Association (AVPA), with 34 membe[rs]
including Yoti. AVPA has filed amicus [briefs at]
the Supreme Court and lobbied the [House Energy]
and Commerce Committee. These v[endors profit]
from any mandate regardless of whi[ch template]
passes.

The full picture

	Template 1 (App Store)	Te[mplate 2 (OS)]
Drafted by	DCA's attorneys	ICM[EC]
Primary pusher	Digital Childhood Alliance	ICM[EC / Con... Me...]
Tax structure	501(c)(4), donors hidden	ICM[EC (3)... 501...]
Confirmed funder	Meta (Bloomberg, 3 sources)	CZI (Zu... phi... fun... Chi...)
Tech supporters	Meta, X, Snap (joint letter)	Me[ta,] Sna[p] (Wi... rele...)
Legislator pipeline	—	Wid[...] dire[...]

FaiFCast🔗

Other operating systems:

- AROS🔗
- BSD
- FreeBSD
- Genode🔗
- Haiku
- HelenOS🔗
- HURD
- Minix
- Plan 9

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  Try r/findmeadistro.
- **No spamblog submissions** - Posts
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  source with the original title. Posts that
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  Some reasons for removal are that
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  there's another discussion on the
  topic, the link is welcome to be
  submitted as a top level comment to
  aid the previous discussion. Please
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  follow Reddiquette. Reddiquette is ever
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  or not "Remembering the human" aka
  being hostile or incredibly impolite.
  Additionally, sexism/racism/other isms
  are not allowed. See also:
  /r/linux/wiki/rules/userconduct
- **Relevance to r/linux community /
  Promoting closed source
  applications over FOSS** - Posts
  should follow what the community
  likes: GNU, Linux kernel, developers of
  open source software, or other
  applications on Linux. Take some time

	Template 1 (App Store)	Te... (OS...
		CSI... arn...
States active	UT, TX, LA, SD, AL, AK, AZ, HI, KS, KY + federal	CA, ND

Meta shows up on both sides of the
fund the DCA pushing Template 1. T
philanthropy funds organizations in
ecosystem. They voiced support for
submitted a joint letter with X and S
app store bills in South Dakota.

The two templates aren't competing
complementary. Template 1 handles
exposure on mobile. Template 2 cov
browser gap. Meta benefits from bot
only people who lose are OS provide
Linux distributions) who have to bui
infrastructure, and users who get a
verification layer baked into their de

37 comments   share   save   hide   report   crosspo

to get the feel of the subreddit if you're not sure!

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a community for 18 years

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Discussion Follow-up to my bill text comparison: I traced who wrote the OS-level age verification template that covers Linux. Meta, Google, and Snap all supported it.
381 points | 37 comments

Discussion I pulled the actual bill text from 5 state age verification laws. They're copy-pasted from two templates. Meta is funding one to dodge ~$50B in COPPA fines — and the other one covers Linux.
1868 points | 239 comments

Awesome 💥 ‼ The best and creepiest robot I've ever seen.
2489 points | 244 comments

Event I traced $2 billion in nonprofit grants and 45 states of lobbying records to figure out who's behind the age verification bills. The answer involves a company that profits from your data writing laws that collect more of it.
11.8k points | 477 comments

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account activity

all 37 comments

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[–] **siodhe** 119 points 2 days ago*

It's clear that ICMEC - if they're the ones behind the California and Colorado texts, should never be allowed to write legal text again, ever, due to the simple fact that the texts are sloppy, poorly defined, vague, and can be interpreted in various ways by reasonable people to:

- Include every computing device on earth with users and an Internet connection
- Include only those that **exclusively** provide downloadable programs (even a single shell script would make them exempt (OR)
- Include **no computers at all** - literally have no applicability to anything

Same law/bill, multiple entirely justifiable interpretations, depending on which parts you lean on harder. Moreover, my impression is that bill is attempting **subterfuge**, letting itself look like legislation around smartphone app stores **on purpose**, while actually targeting everything with users and Internet instead.

The situation inside the text is so bad it could easily have been used in a high school government class as an exercise in critical bill reading.

I have a teardown of the Colorado bill, but it's about 20 KB and still a rough draft.

It doesn't matter if it's currently enforceable, however, because even if the state bills are DoA, a national level version of an "age signal" mechanism - something KOSA (Kids Online Safety Act) explicitly recommends exploring - could mandate implementation of this seriously legislatively-vulnerable mechanism without the colossal incompetence that weakens the Colorado text.

It is extremely dangerous and unfortunate that lawmakers will vote for **anything** with a title that makes them look more electable - even counterproductive slop.

The irony, of course, is that the "age-signal" mechanism exposes the youth of kids browsing the web, leaving them open to kid-manipulative advertising and other risks. I cannot understand why parent would want their child's youth to be stamped on their forehead on the Internet.

Knowing now that this was never about protecting kids to begin with, but protecting companies from fines for failing to protect them, explains a lot.

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> [–] **crb3** 29 points 2 days ago
>
> > It is extremely dangerous and unfortunate that lawmakers will vote for anything with a title that makes them look more electable - even counterproductive slop.
>
> Maybe point out to them that what they're doing makes it easier for predators to zero in on their prey. New Mexico is currently inspecting Zorro Ranch for signs of "think of the children".
>
> permalink embed save parent report reply

> [–] **philosophical_lens**   2 points 2 days ago
>
> I wonder why the subterfuge? Why not just target mobile app stores directly?
>
> permalink embed save parent report reply

> > [–] **siodhe** 3 points 2 days ago

One set of the bills at least mentions mobile phones. The other one (CA, CO) doesn because it's a wild grab at not just spreading the cost of age verification to everyon except the companies that have to do it (while escaping all responsibility for the results, i.e. **Meta**), but also to get this 'age signal" into **everything** that has users.

The last thing any thinking citizen should want is a mechanism in every computer they use than is controlled by the whims of whatever Party is currently in control.

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[–] **cake-day-on-feb-29** 50 points 2 days ago

> this text is written in collaboration with an AI assistant.

i can't believe this is why RAM is $1200 and GPUs are unaffordable now :(

> It would take too much time to not take that approach.

God forbid you research and write yourself. Nah, let's pump more carbon into the atmosphere!

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[–] **Livid-Debate-8652** 21 points 2 days ago

made me stop reading, it would absolutely not "take way too much time"

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[–] **BronzeLogic** 17 points 2 days ago

I laughed so hard at that line. This entire thing is less than 20 small paragraphs.

permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **SpaceGuy99** 10 points 2 days ago

I want to support this kind of research and analysis and investigation but fucking AI? like really? Just write it yoursef it's not hard

permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **Livid-Debate-8652** 9 points 2 days ago

This kind of research and analysis was to ask a LLM for news on this, click the links to make sure they weren't hallucinated and then tell it to write the post. It then ends up with this unreadable slop.

Then instead of reading the unreadable post you have to ask a LLM to summarize it for you and answer in a comment, as I have seen some comments do already.

In the end it's your AI talking to someone's AI. No one learnt anything because you didn't bother to condense the information or do the proper research / follow up on these stories.

permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **siodhe** 26 points 2 days ago

People need to make it clear to these pathetic legislators that we know that the bills are sloppy garbage and that the thrust is not to protect children but to protect corporate interests.

In particular, the Democrats should be allergic to anything backed by the Heritage Foundation. I can only hope they just haven't been told yet....

It's possible that some Heritage Foundation members want to use a national "age signal" mandate **specifically** to force creation of this new "age-signal" mechanism. Further, should it come to exist, it's possible they will realize what it could become, then will work to change it into something much more privacy invasive, affecting all new network connections relating to users, and force sending a data chunk with enough info to filter, drop, degrade, and/or log connections "fake news", porn, diversity discussions, , and other "undesirable" sites.

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **Mr_Lumbergh**   19 points 2 days ago

Easier to mine customer data when they have to type it right in.

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[–] **baeverkanyl**   15 points 2 days ago

> I am disclosing that this text is written in collaboration with an AI assistant.

What did the AI do? Rewrite it for you? Did it collect information and structure it for you?

And did you, especially if the latter above, at least check if it's correct?

(Telling an AI to include sources means nothing, the sources may or may contain what the AI is claiming.)

permalink embed save report reply

> [–] **aaronsb** [S] 14 points 2 days ago
>
> Yeah of course I followed up all the links. I don't blindly throw slop out there. I present carefully curated slop, like a 1970s jello ham and pimento thanksgiving dish.
>
> permalink embed save parent report reply
>
> > [–] **undrwater** 3 points 2 days ago
> >
> > I'm coming and bringing the Boones Farm Strawberry Hill.
> >
> > permalink embed save parent report reply
>
> > [–] **cescross** 2 points 1 day ago
> >
> > ✊🏽 Thanks for doing this work
> >
> > permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **vicethal** 14 points 2 days ago

this is solid work, but in the spirit of precision:

Claim	Issue	Fix
Bob Cunningham is "Director of Policy Engagement"	**Wrong title.** JCOTS report says "Global Head of Policy." He was previously CEO until Oct 2024	Change to "Global Head of Policy"
CSM licenses ratings to "Apple TV, Comcast,	**Samsung not confirmed.** CSM's distribution partners page lists Apple TV, Comcast Xfinity,	Drop Samsung or find a source

Claim	Issue	Fix
Verizon, Google, and Samsung"	Charter Spectrum, Cox Contour, DirecTV, Verizon Fios, OpenAI, Target.com. No Samsung	
Craig Newmark Foundation "$10.5M in recent years"	**Imprecise/possibly understated.** One source says $14M over the past decade. Documented: $3M (2023) + $2M (2024) = $5M in two years alone	Either cite a specific source for $10.5M or adjust
CSM board "includes" these names	**Nuance:** Some are on the advisory board, not the formal board of directors	Specify "board and advisory board"
Ford Foundation listed as CSM funder	**Not confirmed** on CSM's own foundation partners page	Drop unless sourced elsewhere

after reviewing your sources, I think we can **additionally claim that:**

- **Meta as ICMEC donor:** The post doesn't mention this, but Meta is listed on ICMEC's supporters page. Meta funds both the DCA (Template 1) AND ICMEC (Template 2 drafter). The post says Meta "shows up on both sides" but only via CZI funding CSM/Children Now. The direct Meta -ICMEC link is even more damning.
- **ICMEC "going concern" flag:** ProPublica shows auditors flagged "substantial doubt about its ability to meet financial obligations." A $3.8M org with a going-concern warning is drafting model legislation for the entire country. That's worth noting.
- **Bob Cunningham was ICMEC's CEO until Oct 2024:** He wasn't just a policy staffer: he ran the organization, then moved to the policy role. The revolving door is internal to ICMEC not just Wicks/CSM.

I also think people should know:

- Google *opposed* AB 1043 in April 2025, then six rounds of amendments rewrote the liability shield to their specs (§1798.502(b) "good faith" provision), and by September they called it "thoughtful."
- It's not necessarily 4D chess going on, and these poorly written laws may open *different* liability for the sponsors. AB 1043 creates "deemed actual knowledge" that locks app developers into COPPA obligations, with the OS doing the data collection.
- This doesn't seem like a strictly right-wing culture war project (where is [ALEC](#) on this?) Co sponsors include bipartisan lobbyists: California Catholic Conference, CFT-AFL-CIO, #HalfTheStory, The Source LGBT+ Center.

You can compare and contrast my research at https://agelesslinux.org/lobbyists.html - I'll be incorporating some of this post's research on that page soon

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **spiralenator** 16 points 2 days ago

Has potential to severely hamper FOSS, is backed by big tech. Ofc

permalink embed save report reply

> [–] **ThinDrum** 8 points 2 days ago
>
> Big tech benefits enormously from FOSS. It's more about making age verification someone else's problem.

permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **spiralenator** 6 points 2 days ago

On the backend, where none of this applies, yes. For consumer facing applications, foss is competition

permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **ThinDrum** 2 points 2 days ago

It's a headache for everyone flogging consumer devices, regardless of whether the software running on them is FOSS or proprietary.

permalink embed save parent report reply

[–] **Ill_Net_8807** 12 points 2 days ago

we should keep repeating, this isn't about kids it's about squashing dissent

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **MatchingTurret** 7 points 2 days ago

Of course they want to make this someone's else problem.

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **parky85s** 6 points 2 days ago

Big tech pushing for age verification is not about protecting kids. Its about data collection and control. Once that infrastructure exists they can expand it to everything. Same playbook every time. FOSS and privacy get wrecked in the process and nobody in government seems to understand or care how any of this actually works. Thanks for digging into the text, this kind of tracing matters.

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **natermer** 5 points 2 days ago*

This is how all laws work.

Politicians and their aides are lawyers and politicians. They have no experience in life outside of university and government. That is, very literally, what it means to be a professional politician and professional bureaucrat in government. All they know is the internal structure of the government.

Which means they understand very little about how things "in the real world" actually work. They don't understand computers, they don't understand industry, they don't understand how cars work, etc etc.

Which means that when they draft legislation they go to large corporations for advice. The people that best now how to regulate industry are the people that run the industries. Also large corporations pay for lobbyists and those lobbyists, lawyers, advisors, and executives from those corporations end up on committees and help draft bills.

Which means, in effect, that when the government goes and tries to regulate things like operating systems, software APIs, social media companies... It is those companies that they are regulating that help them design and draft the legislation.

What is going on, right now, is there is a bubbling outrage in the American public about children getting exposed to adult content (not just porn) on the internet.

And by using the government to force age verification on OS vendors and application developers these social media companies can say that they are doing everything they can to shield kids from the government without actually having to do the work of verifying ages themselves. They just want the OS to tell them. They just want the applications to tell them. That way when kids get exposed to adult content and get predated on the internet they can avoid the blame because it is the OS fault or the application was hacked by the kid or whatever. It isn't their fault.

It helps control liability.

This is how things work in the USA Federal government, on the state level. It is also how things work in Europe and China and the rest of the world that has this western-style corporate environment.

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[–] **DustyAsh69**   6 points 2 days ago

Why am I not surprised?

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **Correctthecorrectors** 5 points 2 days ago

We need crowd fund a law firm with a fucking spine. Clearly NetChoice EFF and ccia are completely compromised at this point otherwise they wouldn't have let it get this far. If anyone wants to get the ball rolling on this, we can find a decent attoney who's not scared to take on big tech, old political dynasties, and oligarchs.

permalink embed save report reply

[–] **Chronigan2** [   ] 6 points 2 days ago

You can't collaborate with an AI, it is not alive. It is simply a tool that you use.

permalink embed save report reply

> [–] **OverdueBoring** 5 points 2 days ago
>
> I suspect OP used the word collaborate as a synonym for the word assistance.
>
> permalink embed save parent report reply

> [–] **aaronsb** [S] 1 point 2 days ago
>
> Of course. It's more nuanced than that. I collaborated with myself. But yeah I get the gist.
>
> permalink embed save parent report reply

>> [–] **Enthusedchameleon** 1 point 1 day ago
>>
>> As the other commenter mentioned; what I personally do is disclose "AI assistance". Fits better. "AI was used in the production of .." is also viable.
>>
>> permalink embed save parent report reply

>>> [–] **aaronsb** [S] 1 point 1 day ago
>>>
>>> I am learning it doesn't matter what I say people get all spun up about it.
>>>
>>> permalink embed save parent report reply

[−] **FlyingBishop** 4 points 2 days ago

> Either way, age verification moves off their platforms and onto someone else's infrastructure.

Um, no. Google and Meta both are OS vendors. Google loves age verification because it means they know your age when you log into your phone with your Google account, which makes it easier for them to spy on you. it also opens up a world where you can't open *any* device without logging into your account with a company like Google or Meta, because only companies can validate age.

permalink　embed　save　report　reply

[−] **Jman43195** 2 points 2 days ago

Where do you see anything on the VA Technology and Science commission discussing this?

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[−] **Aurelar** 　2 points 2 days ago

This is very useful information. Thank you for taking the time and effort to assemble it.

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[−] **SystemAxis** 1 point 2 days ago

Interesting thread. Both proposals basically move age verification down to the OS or app store layer, which makes sense for big platforms.

But for Linux there's no single vendor, so implementing something like that across distros would be pretty messy.

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[−] **AdadIptv** 1 point 2 days ago

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[−] **cubic_thought** -3 points 2 days ago*

Everyone's freaking out, and and rightly so for how poorly they're written, but I think that *in theory* what the California bill is aiming for is the better outcome to age-gating apps and internet things than the way things have been going, or alternatives like the New York bill.

Everyone and their llm has already talked about its problems in regard to broad, vague language and slippery slope arguments. But I think making it that the OS is responsible for providing a user's age bracket that certain "content-delivery" apps and web services would be obligated to recognize, could be a more privacy respecting, pro-consumer, and pro-developer outcome than what's happening now where we have companies all doing much more privacy-invading versions on their own or outsourcing it to third parties. I'll remind that the California bill does not require any verification despite using the term in the title and intro, just an age *indication*. It would and should be the responsibility of parents to set up child accounts and this would enforce that the ability be available in the OS instead of parents having to chase down the options, if they even exist, in everything their kids can access.

This obviously doesn't solve the kid-targeting advertising problems, but that should probably be addressed separately anyway. But IF they cleaned up the poor definitions so that it applies specifically to user accounts and content-delivery apps and services, then it could be a decent bi Yes you can still make slippery-slope arguments, but I'd counter that the slope we're already sliding on may be worse.

Addendum: Assuming they fixed the vagueness problems, this would also help any small platforms or projects that may have be forced to shut down under the threat of other age-gate laws that would push excessive responsibility onto small-time developers or website owners. Wit something like this widely legally supported, they would be safe to just use the age bracket sign

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