

## **DC on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment Annual Report 2024**

### **1 Reporting period**

January, 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2024

### **2 Compiler**

Stiftung Digitale Chancen | Digital Opportunities Foundation Germany (DC Co-Chair)

### **3 Background info about the DC**

The Dynamic Coalition on Child Online Safety (DC COS) was established at the 2nd IGF in Rio de Janeiro in 2007 by organizations working with and for children and youth with ECPAT int. as the chair and Stiftung Digitale Chancen as the co-chair. The objective was to establish a dialogue among stakeholders from various backgrounds and address fundamental and practical issues impacting on child safety on the Internet.

Since 2007, there have been significant evolutions in the scale and nature of opportunity, risk and harm to which children are exposed in digital environments, thus the relevance of the group's work continues to expand and grow. When in 2021 the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted General Comment # 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment the members decided to strengthen their focus on children's rights and renamed the DC to **DC on Children's Rights in the Digital Environment**

In 2024, the position of Head of Child Protection and Technology at ECPAT was vacant and with it the chairmanship of the DC. So, the Digital Opportunities Foundation, Germany took over the chairmanship of the DC temporarily.

### **4 Key objectives**

- To ensure a safer and more secure online environment for children and youth
- To establish on-going exchange of experiences between all stakeholders
- To encourage procedures for the improvement of legal regulations as well as self-regulation instruments towards child safety online
- To strengthen efforts on all levels to fight child sexual abuse images of all kind
- To strengthen efforts for the empowerment of children and youth themselves
- To discuss how to ensure that all tools such as web-based reporting mechanisms or age verification solutions restricting access for younger users to certain types of content and services provided to children such as awareness raising campaigns or educational content through digital platforms are employed reasonably

- To ensure that the needs of children as users are respected in the development and provision of new services and applications online
- To create a platform for child rights agencies and freedom of expression advocates to dialogue on issues of mutual concern.

## **5 Activities conducted in 2024**

### **5.1 Activities within the annual IGF**

#### *5.1.1 Joint session with DC IoT in Riyadh, Saudi-Arabia*

#### [IGF 2024 DC-CRIDE & DC-IoT Age aware IoT - Better IoT](#)

Wednesday 18 December 2024

#### *Description*

The Internet of Things offers many opportunities to make our everyday lives more convenient, safer and more efficient. Due to the advancing use cases, digital applications will be omnipresent in the future and also offer the benefit of being at our side almost unnoticed. However, this can also result in risks, such as unwanted data processing, the provision of information that may be inappropriate or even harmful to individuals or the initiation of processes that are based on false assumptions. These risks can be countered by identifying the users. If the devices in the surroundings know who the user is, the Internet of Things can work adequately according to their needs and with specific measures and serve the user. One area of identification is the verification of age or assignment to an age group. Knowing this, smart speakers would, for example, generate information in child-friendly language for very young users or sensors that check whether older residents have fallen and may be lying helplessly on the floor would not be triggered incorrectly if a child is playing on the carpet in the living room.

According to the DC IoT Internet of Things Good Practice aims at developing IoT systems, products, and services taking ethical considerations into account from the outset, in the development, deployment and use phases of the life cycle, thus finding an ethical, sustainable way ahead using IoT to help to create a free, secure and rights enabling based environment: a future we want.

DC CRIDE based their understanding on the findings of the Global Age Assurance Standards Summit held with about 700 participants from around the world in Manchester in April 2024. The Summit's Communiqué sets out the assumption that age assurance is a way to create a safe environment for users of all ages where they can exercise their rights and securely enjoy also the benefits of new and emerging technologies.

#### *Speakers*

Dr Jonathan A.K. Cave, Alan Turing Institute, Academia, UK

Mr. Dan Caprio, Providence Group, Private industry, USA

Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics, UK

Abhilash Nair, onsite (academia, WEOG)

Pratishtha Arora, onsite (Social Media Matters India, Asia-Pacific)

Sabrina Vorbau (European Schoolnet, WEOG)

*Onsite Moderator* Maarten Botterman, Technical Community WEOG

*Online Moderator* Torsten Krause, German Digital Opportunities Foundation, CSO WEOG

*Rapporteur* Jutta Croll, German Digital Opportunities Foundation, CSO WEOG

### *Key Takeaways*

- Need to have a global understanding of good practice, backed up by (global/industry) standards and (regional/national legislation), all informed by global insights
- Capacity development for all stakeholders to (1) be aware; (2) be able to express; (3) be able to act
- Accountability is key: who is accountable to what

### *Call to Action*

- Involve governments in the design development and backing of good practice standards regarding children in and their use of IoT (including child's rights impact assessment)
- Identify good practice examples and approaches from around the world (including privacy preserving age verification methods) and consider shared lessons regarding children's rights

### *5.1.2 Involvement of DC members in other sessions at the annual IGF 2024 (selection)*

#### 5 Rights Foundation

- [WS #172 Regulating AI and Emerging Risks for Children's Rights](#)

#### Digital Opportunities Foundation

- [WS #14 Children in the Metaverse](#)
- [High Level Session Protecting Children's Rights in the Digital World](#)

#### European Schoolnet

- [#10 First Aid Online: Making the Difference for Children](#)

#### NetMission.Asia - DotAsia Organisation

- [WS #25 Multistakeholder cooperation for online child protection](#)

UNICEF

- [Open Forum #29 Multisectoral action and innovation for child safety](#)
- [WS #134 Data governance for children: EdTech, NeuroTech and FinTech](#)
- [WS #234 AI Governance for Children's Global Citizenship Education](#)

**5.2 Intersessional Activities and Outputs beyond the annual IGF**

Members of the DC are active beyond the annual IGF on the themes and questions addressed by the DC. While these are not necessarily coordinated by or through the DC, they nevertheless contribute to the broad and deep collective knowledge base upon which the DC operates, and they inform the thinking of the DC and its approach to presenting key child rights issues to the IGF community.

*5.2.1 Participation in NRIs*

- *EuroDIG*

Jugendschutz.net Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in “European Dialogue on Internet Governance, session: Protecting vulnerable groups online from harmful content - new (technical) approaches”, 18 June 2024</li> <li>• Participation in “European Dialogue on Internet Governance, session: The Framework Convention on AI and human rights, democracy and the rule of law”, 19 June 2024</li> <li>• Participation in “European Dialogue on Internet Governance session: Identification of AI generated con-tent”, 19 June 2024</li> </ul>
Stiftung Digitale Chancen / Digital Opportunities Foundation Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in EuroDIG from 17-19 June 2024 and organisation and implementation of workshops “Child safety online – update on legal regulatory trends combatting child sexual abuse online” and “Protecting vulnerable groups online from harmful content – new (technical) approaches”</li> </ul>

- *African IGF*

Digital Opportunities Foundation: Participation in the 2024 African Internet Governance Forum on Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>, session on Internet shut-downs, 11.00 – 12.00 CET, moderated by Godsway Kubi.

### 5.2.2 Other Conferences and meetings

Childfund Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted symposium on generative-AI CSAM in Tokyo, in cooperation with Internet Watch Foundation.</li> <li>• Took part into Meta’s “APAC AI Literacy and Safety Summit” in Singapore.</li> </ul>
Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk   German Children’s Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosting of the six-month meeting of the expert group on Children’s Rights in the digital world, 21 May and 8 November 2024</li> <li>• Steady exchange panel, consisting of the media regulation bodies in Germany and 6 youth representatives, to develop guidelines for better youth participation in media regulation</li> </ul>
Digital Futures for Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On 11/6/24, the DFC held a consultation with 13 experts on digital marketing to children (from the US, Australia, Philippines, UK, Canada) to discuss the pressing child rights issues arising, with a focus on unhealthy foods and obesity.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S. Panellist, “Making the Digital Services Act Work for Children”, Intergroup on Children’s Rights, European Parliament, February 2024</li> <li>• Livingstone, S. ‘Child Rights by Design.’ Presentation to the Roundtable on Safety by Design, UNICEF China, online, May 2024. • Livingstone, S., ‘Children’s online activities and evolving capacities in a digital world.’ Applying the evidence: Children’s evolving capacities and rights – UNICEF Innocenti, June 2024</li> <li>• Julie Inman-Grant Roundtable (in-person). The DFC hosted multidisciplinary academics to share perspectives regarding children and the digital environment. 15 November 2024.</li> </ul>
ECPAT International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organised a series of eight regional workshops to take stock at the trends and changes taking place across the world in the</li> </ul>

	<p>way children are sexually exploited. In 2024 these workshops involved 449 participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2022, ECPAT began exploring the positive potential of online gaming communities to support children and young people, in particular boys to seek advice and support in the face of sexual abuse and exploitation. This resulted in a series of three expert roundtables held in London in 2022, New York in 2023 and Seoul in 2024.</li> <li>• ECPAT convened two key panel discussions with online gaming companies at the 2024 ASEAN ICT Forum in September 2024 in Indonesia.</li> <li>• In June 2024, ECPAT International organised a multi-stakeholder workshop in Brussels to present and engage on recent findings and key informant interviews with gaming companies.</li> <li>• ECPAT organised national workshops in Jordan and in Tunisia to shed light on the latest trends regarding sexual exploitation of children, including when facilitated by technologies.</li> </ul>
Jugendschutz.net Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance „Ministerium für Schule und Bildung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen/West Lotto: Expertenanhörung Jugendschutz in digitalen Spielen“, 22 February 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at “Google Summit "Growing up in the Digital Age", 5 March 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at conference „MFFKI Rheinland-Pfalz: Fachtagung Kinderrechte, sexualisierte Gewalt“, 7 March 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to conference “INHOPE: Annual General Meeting”, 19 April 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at conference „Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Bundestagsfraktion: "Shaping AI - demokratisch. nachhaltig. innovativ", 19 April 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to exchange „Save the Children Germany: Fachaustausch zu Leitfaden für</li> </ul>

	<p>Aufklärung über Alltagsdarstellungen Kindern“, 3 June 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to conference „29. Präventionstag in Cottbus“, 10 June 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to conference “APRO-Projekt „Werkzeuge gegen Cyber-grooming“, 26 June 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to exchange „Bayerisches Bündnis für Toleranz: Hass und Hetze im Netz – Ausmaß und Gegenstrategien“, 27 June 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at conference „ECPAT: Digitaler Fortschritt: Innovative Schutzmaßnahmen gegen sexualisierte Gewalt an Kindern und Jugendlichen“, 23 September 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to conference „International Network Against Cyber Hate: Annual Conference“, 27 September 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at Meeting with UN Special Rapporteur on sale and sexual exploitation of children, 17 October 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to conference „10-Jahre Meldeplattform Nicht-Wegsehen“, 24 October 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to exchange „DKHW: Expert*innenkreis Kinderrechte“, 8 November 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at conference “INHOPE: Digital Child Safety Forum”, 3 December 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at conference „BzKJ: ZUKUNFTSWERKSTATT: Nur noch 10 Minuten! – Exzessive Mediennutzung bei Kindern und Jugendlichen“, 6 December 2024</li> </ul>
<p>Stiftung Digitale Chancen / Digital Opportunities Foundation Germany</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at the Council Working Group on Child Online Protection of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 22-23 January 2024</li> <li>• Contribution to the Belgian Presidency's Conference on the support of influencers and online content creators, 27 February 2024</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at the conference 'Speaking Up for Child Safety Online - VOICE Project' by ECPAT, 8 April 2024</li> <li>• Participation in the 'Global Age Assurance Standards Summit' (8-12 April 2024) and holding a workshop, 12 April 2024, Presentation on a data minimising and privacy preserving age assurance methodology</li> <li>• Attendance at the High Level Internet Governance Group of the European Commission: Open Forum on Governance of Virtual Worlds, 23 April 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)+20 Forum High-Level Event 2024 (27-31 May 2024)</li> <li>• Participation in the Internet Governance Forum Germany and hosting of the workshop 'Children, their rights and the metaverse', 11 September 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at the meeting of the EC High Level Internet Governance Group, Open Forum on Governance of Virtual Worlds, 17 September 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at the Council Working Group 'Child Online Protection' of the ITU from 30 September to 1 October 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at the INHOPE Summit 2024 on 8 October 2024</li> <li>• Attendance in the HLIG Open Forum on Metaverse and Virtual Worlds on 16 October 2024</li> <li>• On-site participation in the expert discussion of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children as part of her state visit to Berlin on 17 October 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at the Global Digital Compact Town Hall Meeting on 24 October 2024</li> <li>• Attendance at the conference 'From Awareness to Action - Tackling Child Sexual Abuse in Europe through Prevention and</li> </ul>
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	<p>Collaboration' by Save the Children Finland on 30 October 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with EC DG CNECT, Renate Nikolai, Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>, 14.30 – 16.30 on the implementation of DSA Art. 28.</li> <li>• Attendance at the Safer Internet Advisory Board on 5 December 2024</li> </ul>
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### 5.3 Other processes

- DotKids Foundation is in continuous partnership with IWF through CleanDNS and is currently looking at developing graylists and proactive measures for keeping .KiDS a kids-best interest domain space. Also working with positive examples and showcasing good positive usage of the .kids domains encourage more positive usage.
- DotKids case study is part of the teaching module in the 2024-2025 Netmission Academy, an 8 week capacity building program for all APAC youth to learn about Internet Governance. The network of NetMission alumni and ambassadors, then share their knowledge gained to their local community and organize their own youth-led initiatives to inspire more youth to care about the Internet. NetMission.Asia provides a platform for young people in Asia with shared interests on Internet issues to connect, advocate and channel the ideas to the global policy dialogue. As part of the Government Advisory Committee capacity building, .kids was also used as a positive case study in part of a briefing done at the end of 2024 and also in Feb 2025 for delegates seeking to improve the Applicant Support Program as well as understand the needs and requirements of a community application.
- Ayca Atabey, for DFC, submission to the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, call for submissions: Artificial intelligence in education: human rights-based use at the service of the advancement of the right to education (2024).
- Childfund Japan supported Japanese translation of Protect Children's "Our Voice" project.
- Childfund Japan conducted a grooming advocacy campaign with youths including awareness short videos and evaluations.
- Childfund Japan recorded online lecture on grooming for teachers and school stakeholders in Japan.
- Childfund Japan Briefing on CSAM in Japan for US Senate Judicial Committee visiting to Japan.
- Childfund Japan formed the Working Group to regulate the generative-AI CSAM in Japan.
- Childfund Japan organised online seminar on US and Korea good practices for responding to the generative-AI CSAM.

#### 5.4 Publications

<p>Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk   German Children's Fund</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claßen, Jörn et al. (2024): Kindeswohlgefährdung durch kommerzielle Veröffentlichung von Kinderfotos und -videos im Internet. DKHW. Campact.</li> <li>• Heinz, Daniel/Scholz, Linda (2024): Recht auf inklusives Gaming. DKHW Kinderrechte Dossier.</li> </ul>
<p>ECPAT International</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• published case studies on South Korea and Thailand regarding the situation of boy victims of sexual exploitation</li> <li>• conducted a comprehensive study to understand the complexities of child sexual exploitation in humanitarian settings, with three country case studies focusing on internally displaced communities and refugees in Ethiopia, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Kenya</li> <li>• produced a report examining the preventative role of the police in addressing sexual exploitation of children, including a case study on the Philippines and one on Indonesia.</li> <li>• The VOICE project (executive summary; child-friendly version), conducted by ECPAT International, Eurochild, and Terre des Hommes Netherlands on behalf of the Down to Zero Alliance, engaged children and caregivers in 15 countries to inform policy discussions on digital safety.</li> <li>• produced a series of reports on the Voices of survivors of child sexual exploitation and abuse on justice and effective remedies.</li> <li>• ECPAT's Country Overview on Nigeria provides a comprehensive summary of all forms of sexual exploitation of children in the country.</li> </ul>
<p>Jugendschutz.net Germany</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report "Straßenumfragen auf Social Media. Unterhaltungsformat auf Kosten der Befragten", April 2024</li> <li>• Report "Demokratiefeindliche Anbahnungsrisiken auf Discord."</li> </ul>

	<p>Extremist:innen können direkten Kontakt mit Kindern und Jugendlichen suchen“, April 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report “Wie sicher ist Fortnite. Neue Funktionen, bekannte Risiken“, April 2024</li> <li>• Report “Gore im Wandel. Wie sich Gewaltinhalte im Netz durch Social Media und Gamification verändert haben“, May 2024</li> <li>• Report “Der Israel-Hamas-Konflikt online. Antisemitismus, Israel-Hass und drastische Opferbilder“, June 2024</li> <li>• Report “Lootboxen. Analyse der viel diskutierten Beutekisten unter Jugendschutzgesichtspunkten“, June 2024</li> <li>• Report “Islamistisches Influencing. Demokratie- und Menschenfeindlichkeit unter dem Deckmantel des Islam“, September 2024</li> </ul>
London School of Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atabey, A., &amp; Hooper, L. (2024). International regulatory decisions concerning EdTech companies' data practices. Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE and 5Rights Foundation.</li> <li>• Hooper, L., Atabey, A., &amp; Pothong, K. (2024). Enforcement action improves privacy for children in education: more is needed. A brief analysis of recent changes to policies and practice in Google’s Workspace for Education. Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE and 5Rights Foundation.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S., Cantwell, N., Özkul, D, Shekhawat, G., and Kidron, B. (2024). The best interests of the child in the digital environment. Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE and 5Rights Foundation.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S., Hooper, L. and Atabey, A. (2024). In support of a code of practice for education technology. Briefing by the Digital Futures for Children centre for Amendment 146 to the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill. Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE and 5Rights Foundation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood, S. (2024). Impact of regulation on children’s digital lives. Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE and 5Rights Foundation.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S., Third, A., and Lansdown, G. (2024) Children vs Adults: Negotiating UNCRC General comment No.25 on children's rights in the digital environment. In Puppis, M., Mansell, R., and Van den Bulck, H. (Eds), Handbook of Media and Communication Governance. Edward Elgar Publishers.</li> <li>• van der Spuy, A., Witting, S., Burton, P., Day, E., Livingstone, S. &amp; Sylwander, K. (2024). Guiding principles for addressing technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse. Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE, Rephrain &amp; 5Rights Foundation.</li> <li>• Rahali, M. Kidron, B, and Livingstone, S. (2024). Smartphone policies in schools: What does the evidence say? Digital Futures for Children centre, LSE and 5Rights Foundation.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S., Nair, A., Stoilova, M., van der Hof, S. &amp; Caglar, C. (2024). Children’s rights and online age assurance systems: the way forward. International Journal of Children’s Rights, 32(2). 721—747.</li> <li>• Day, E., Pothong, K., Atabey, A., and Livingstone, S. (2024). Who controls children’s education data? A socio-legal analysis of the UK governance regimes for schools and EdTech. Learning Media and Technology, 49 (3), 356—370.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S., &amp; Ringmar Sylwander, K. (2025). There is no right age! The search for age-appropriate ways to support children’s digital lives and rights. Journal of Children and Media, 1–7.</li> <li>• Livingstone, S. Pothong, K. Atabey, A. Hooper, L. Day, E. (2024) The Googlization of the classroom: Is the UK effective in</li> </ul>
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	<p>protecting children's data and rights?, Computers and Education Open (7).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Livingstone, S., Lievens, E., Graham, R., Pothong, K., Steinberg, S., Stoilova, M. (2025). Children's Privacy in the Digital Age: US and UK Experiences and Policy Responses. In: Christakis, D.A., Hale, L. (eds) Handbook of Children and Screens. Springer, Cham.</li> </ul>
<p>Stiftung Digitale Chancen   Digital Opportunities Foundation Germany</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Krause, Torsten (2024): „Jugendmedienschutz: (How to) Do the Right Thing“ in KJuG 02/2024</li> <li>Croll, Jutta/Krause, Torsten (2024): “Das Metaversum schlägt zurück!? Eine kinderrechtliche Perspektive“ in merz. Medien und Erziehung. Zeitschrift für Medienpädagogik. 3/2024</li> </ul>

## 6 Updates on internal processes

Since February 2025 the position of the Head of Child Protection and Technology at ECPAT Int. is occupied by Salla Huikuri. Henceforth ECPAT and Digital Opportunities Foundation will co-chair the DC together.

**Report finalised on March, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025** by the Co-Chair of the Dynamic Coalition on children's rights in the digital environment: Jutta Croll and Torsten Krause – Stiftung Digitale Chancen | Digital Opportunities Foundation Germany – [jcroll@digitale-chancen.de](mailto:jcroll@digitale-chancen.de), [tkrause@digitale-chancen.de](mailto:tkrause@digitale-chancen.de)