

What sits behind the age gate: three tests for child-safe social media

Dr CHEW Han Ei

Every generation finds a new threat to the young

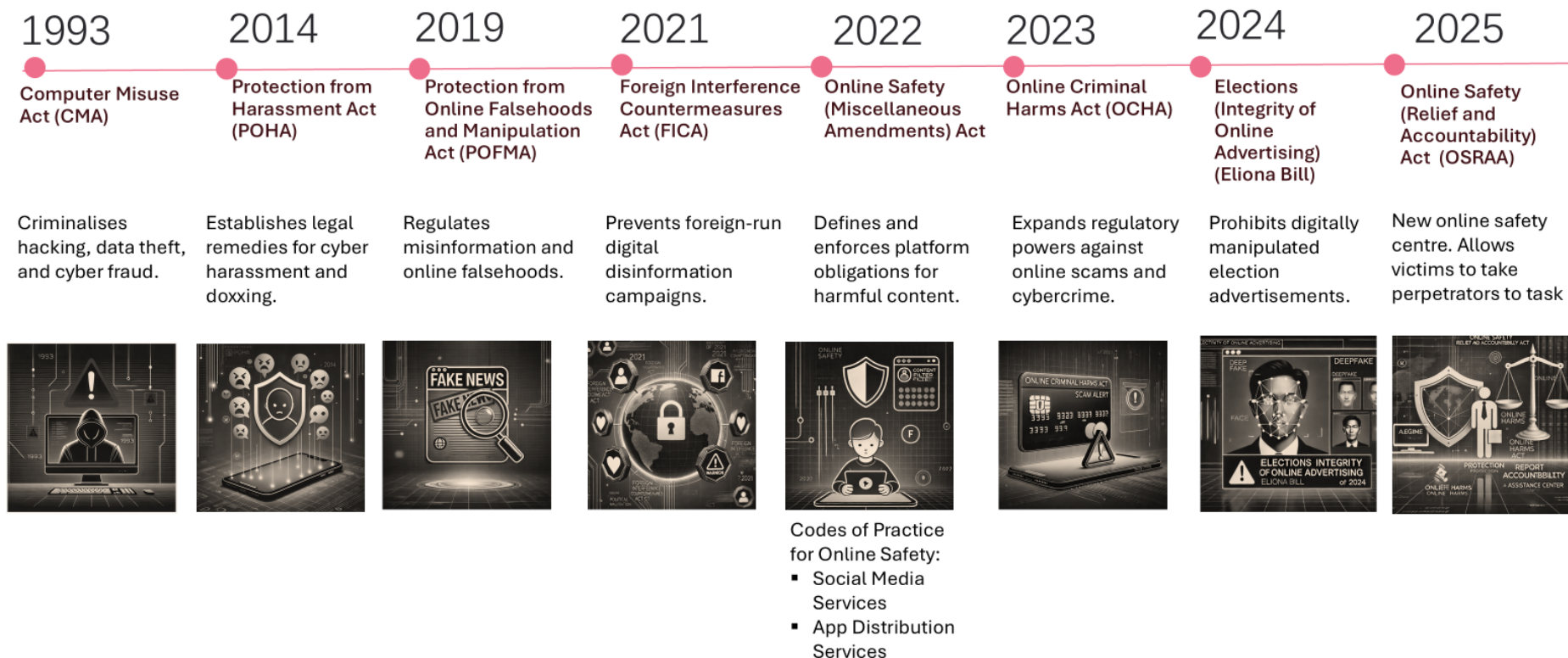


Yesterday: rock 'n' roll
Today: social media

Singapore's alphabet soup has a logic

Key Legislation Against Online Harms

SINGAPORE



Test 1: Are we regulating features, or only controlling entry?

**An age limit
controls entry
downstream.**

**Safety by design
reduces risk
upstream.**



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Commentary

Commentary: The problem with social media is bigger than who gets access

Social media regulation is necessary. But it has to be targeted, not sweeping; responsive to real harm, not preoccupied with suspicion, says the Institute of Policy Studies' Chew Han Ei.



Whether you can go on social media now is increasingly about fitting into the right category – by age, by location, by documentation – not just about how you behave online. (Photo: iStock/Orbon Alija)



Chew Han Ei

26 Jun 2025 06:00AM
(Updated: 06 Nov 2025 02:10PM)



Test 2: Are we reducing harm, or merely moving it?

- **Exposure**
Did harmful exposure fall?
- **Displacement**
Did risk move elsewhere?
- **Exclusion**
Who lost beneficial access?

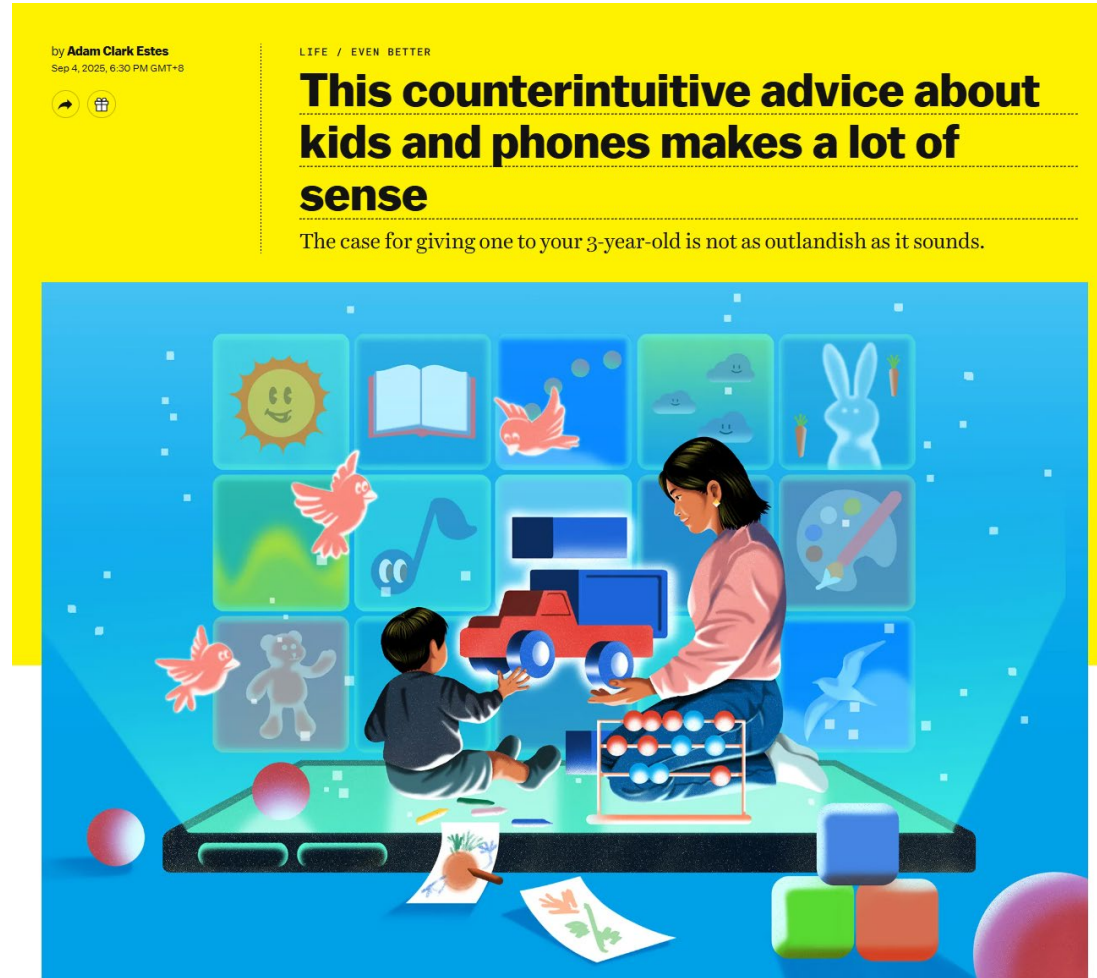
Protection that only hides risk is not protection.

Test 3: Are we building judgement alongside access?



“Everything about technology is conversation”

Andrew Przybylski



Shared responsibility, clearly assigned

- **Government**
Set and enforce standards
- **Platforms**
Redesign products and demonstrate outcomes
- **Parents and schools**
Guide progressively and build capability
- **Communities and young people**
Identify gaps, support those harmed and help shape safer environments

2021: Sunlight Alliance for Action to Tackle Online Harms, especially for Women and Girls



Singapore's online-safety ecosystem has been built through government, industry and community action.

Three tests for child-safe social media

1. Are we regulating features, or only controlling entry?
2. Are we reducing harm, or merely moving it?
3. Are we building judgement alongside access?

Thank you