



THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

The Cybersmile Foundation Experiences 900% Increase In People Seeking Help For Chatroulette Related Problems

LONDON, UK, JUNE 8, 2020 - Since the beginning of the lockdown in March, The Cybersmile Foundation has experienced a significant increase in the number of support related enquiries from users of the controversial webcam-based online chat platform Chatroulette. Users are seeking help for a wide range of issues which include anxiety and revenge porn through Cybersmile Assistant, the foundation's AI support assistant.

“It is important that people understand the high level of risk associated with Chatroulette and other webcam-based platforms. The huge increase in requests for help with this particular platform indicates a need for more education and awareness - especially for parents and young people,” said Dan Raisbeck, Co-founder, The Cybersmile Foundation.

The surge of requests comes as an influx of younger internet users are feared to have signed up for Chatroulette accounts during the lockdown, with many of them not prepared or equipped to deal with the realities of the platform which is unsuitable for young people.

Chatroulette became a prominent social platform after launching in 2002 with widespread concerns that under-aged users were being exposed to explicit content and were open to blackmail by sexual predators.

“Many of these platforms do have policies to support users under 18 years of age, however we must reiterate to parents that there are very real risks for users – especially for the young and vulnerable,” said Dan Raisbeck, Co-founder, The Cybersmile Foundation.

Social media companies have an obligation to ensure that users are safe and that they can report unacceptable content or behavior. However, without adequate preventative measures to protect young and vulnerable users in place – children are being exposed to potentially harmful content on webcam-based chat platforms such as Chatroulette on a daily basis.

Many social media platforms including Twitter and Instagram have made huge strides in addressing safety issues on their platforms and the foundation seeks to encourage other companies to do the same. If a company is facilitating the connection between strangers online then they must do everything they can to protect their users, especially the young and vulnerable.

ABOUT THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION

The Cybersmile Foundation is a multi-award-winning nonprofit organisation committed to digital wellbeing and tackling all forms of abuse and bullying online. They work to promote kindness, diversity and inclusion by building a safer, more positive digital community and encouraging people to realise their full potential without the fear of ridicule and abuse.

Through education and the promotion of positive digital citizenship, The Cybersmile Foundation reduces incidents of cyberbullying and provides professional help and support services to children and adults around the world.

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The Cybersmile Foundation is an international nonprofit organization registered as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization in the U.S. and as a registered charity in the U.K. (No. 1147576).