

Global Threat Assessment 2025

Staying safe online: What the Global Threat Assessment 2025 means for you

Technology is changing faster than ever. Apps, games, and tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI) shape how young people live, learn, and connect. Today, there are over 6.0 billion internet users worldwide.

This brings amazing opportunities, but also new risks. Just like in real life, some people online harm others, whether they mean to or not. Harm can come from people you know, like friends, family, schoolmates, or neighbours, or someone you meet online. The Global Threat Assessment 2025 shows that while dangers are increasing, we can prevent them together.



Where does harm happen?

Many cases of abuse online go unreported, so it is hard to know exactly where most abuse happens.

However, many cases have been reported on platforms used by young people. Higher numbers of reports can actually mean a platform is better at spotting and acting against abuse. In 2024, reports of suspected child sexual exploitation appeared on:*

- » **Social media:** Instagram (more than 3.3 million reports) and TikTok (more than 1.3 million reports)
- » **Messaging apps:** WhatsApp (more than 1.8 million reports) and Snapchat (more than 1.1 million reports)
- » **Gaming platforms:** Roblox (more than 24,000 reports)

Abuse often starts in public spaces like social media and moves into private chats. Anyone can cause harm online, including family, friends, teachers, or people you meet virtually. Many support groups are safe, but some online spaces can be misused.

* These numbers come from the 2024 CyberTipline Reports by Electronic Service Providers, NCMEC.



What types of harm can happen online or on your phone?

It is normal to make friends online, share photos, and send messages. Problems start when your messages, images, or videos are misused or shared without your permission. Remember that **sexual harm or exploitation is never your fault – and help is available**. Some of these problems include:**

- » **Sexual photos, videos, or drawings of children:** In 2024, there were nearly 30 million reports of this kind of material online. Help is available. You can report it and remove harmful images.
- » **Online grooming:** Someone may try to build trust to take advantage of you, asking for photos, private chats, or to meet. This is **never your fault**.
- » **Financial sexual extortion:** Some people trick young people (often boys) into sending private images and then threaten to share them unless they get money. Around 100 reports happen every day. You are **not to blame**, and help exists.
- » **Gaming chats:** Sexual bullying, harassment, or grooming can happen in game chats. Feeling pressured is not okay.
- » **Fake or edited sexual images (deepfakes):** AI can create fake photos or videos that look real, even if they're not. If this happens to you, it is **not your fault**.

** These numbers come from the 2024 CyberTipline Report, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC).

Why this matters and what is being done to keep you safe

These risks can feel overwhelming, but here's the key point: they are preventable, not inevitable. Efforts to keep you safe include:

- ★ **Stronger laws and global agreements:** The 2024 UN Cybercrime Convention made online grooming and sharing harmful images illegal worldwide. This means you have the right to be safe online—no one is allowed to trick you, share your private images, or post things about you without your permission.
- ★ **Better tools and technology** working behind the scenes to keep you safe:
 - » **AI detection:** AI can spot illegal or harmful content, so they get removed quickly.
 - » **Platforms preventing abuse:** Social media sites and messaging apps are catching suspicious accounts and blocking harmful content.
- ★ **Reporting and support:** Sites like [Take It Down](#), child helplines, and survivor-led groups make it easy to report worrying content and get help.

Your voices matter: Young people, like you, are helping shape safer digital spaces.



How can you stay safe online?

Dos

Protect your privacy. Think carefully before sharing images or messages, even with people who seem friendly.

Be kind to others online. Consider what you say, ask for, and share.

Trust your gut. If something feels wrong, tell a trusted adult or report it on the platform or to a child helpline.

Block and report anyone who engages in harmful behaviour, such as sending threats, sexual requests, or fake images.

Only connect with people you know or share friends with.

Think carefully before sharing personal details online like your number, address, or full name—even with someone you feel close to.



Don'ts

Send money to people you meet online.

Share or forward other people's photos or videos without permission.

Ignore uncomfortable situations. Always seek help.



“The future of our digital world doesn't have to be scary—it can be exciting and enriching.”

Youth advocate

Looking Ahead

The Global Threat Assessment shows that while the online world can be risky, it doesn't have to be that way. Together, we can make the internet a safer place to learn, play, and connect.

Getting Help

You are not alone. If you experience harm:

- ★ Tell an adult or friend you trust, or report to local authorities.
- ★ Find survivor support services: [Brave Movement – Get Help](#)
- ★ Reach out to country-specific child helplines: [Child Helpline International](#)
- ★ For questions about your own sexual thoughts, feelings, or behaviours: [Stop It Now! Helpline](#) or [What's OK](#)

“... with the opportunity and benefit comes the threat of harm, and the harm is a part of this internet. We have to learn to navigate it if we want to benefit.”
17-year-old male, Pakistan

REMEMBER:
If someone sexually harms or exploits you online, it is **not your fault**. More resources will become available. Keep an eye out through school, community, or trusted adults.