

Social Media Ban in Australia

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Protecting Teens: Social Media Ban in Australia

Context : The Australian Senate recently passed a landmark law banning children under 16 from using social media, making it the first of its kind globally.

Background

- While countries like France and some U.S. states require parental permission for minors to access social media, **Australia's ban is absolute.**
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Key Provisions of the Law

1. **Strict Platform Liability:**
 - Platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Reddit, X, and Instagram face fines of up to **AUD 50 million (£26 million)** if they allow users under 16 to create accounts.
 2. **Enforcement Timeline:**
 - A trial of enforcement methods begins in **January**, with the law taking full effect in a year.
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Concerns and Criticism

1. **Political Motivations:**
 - Critics argue the law is a **political move** to win parental support ahead of elections by addressing concerns about **children's addiction to social media**.
 2. **Privacy Issues:**
 - Concerns over user privacy, as proving age may require sharing **sensitive personal information**.
 3. **Unintended Consequences:**
 - Risks of teenagers turning to the **dark web** or feeling **socially isolated**.
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Challenges in Implementation

1. **Age Verification:**

- Current platforms rely on **self-declared dates of birth**, allowing minors to provide **false information**.
2. **Bypassing Restrictions:**
- **Virtual Private Networks (VPNs)** enable users to access platforms by **masking their location and age**.
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Significance

Australia's approach aims to address **social media addiction** among children but raises critical questions about **user privacy**, enforcement challenges, and the broader **social implications** of banning minors from online platforms.



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