



Microsoft's #Pledge2Youth: Creating privacy: Co-designing a privacy experience for youth

During 2020, BIK Youth Ambassadors launched a #Pledge2Youth campaign working alongside industry members of the Alliance to better protect minors online to consider and run a design challenge, focusing on an aspect of age-appropriate design or data privacy, exploring innovative ways to give children and young people a space to express their views and ensure their voice is listened to and acted upon. The protocols for the challenge were derived from Lundy's Model of Participation and guidance from the TTC Labs Design Jam Toolkit. This enabled a decentralised but coordinated programme of work where industry members were free to shape the co-design consultations as they deemed appropriate while complying with the protocols.

Various Alliance industry members took part in the original #Pledge2Youth challenge: Facebook/TTC Labs, the LEGO Group, Samsung, Sulake, SUPER RTL and Twitter. This information sheet describes the specific activities of Microsoft which have continued since the original challenge was set out in 2020, with a workshop taking place in March 2022.

Further information is available in the [best-practice guideline on age-appropriate design with youth](#).

See also the [Better Internet for Kids \(BIK\) portal for further information on the Youth Pledge initiative](#).

Why Microsoft engaged

In announcing the European Year of Youth, President von der Leyen encouraged young people to become actors of change. The BIK+ strategy offers them a voice in the digital sphere as well as enhanced measures for their digital well-being, skills and safety.

Microsoft welcomes the [new European strategy for a Better Internet for Kids \(BIK+\)](#), adopted on 11 May 2022, a flagship initiative of the European Year of Youth 2022. It is highly supportive

of **youth digital empowerment** to give them the necessary skills and competencies to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly. It also supports **youth active participation** by giving young people a say in the digital environment, with more youth and child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences, as core pillars of the strategy.

Microsoft's [Privacy for young people](#) page covers information about privacy practices in language aims to be easy for young people to read and understand. Microsoft partnered with educators, students, and the teens who serve on its US Council for Digital Good to develop the language on this page.

Focus of the Microsoft workshop

On 25 March 2022, Microsoft hosted and facilitated a workshop to gather youth-generated design ideas for an age-appropriate design of its [Privacy for young people](#) page.

The focus of the Microsoft workshop was to:

- Engage with youth between the ages of 13-17 about the importance of privacy transparency and control, and to invite them to co-design an experience of the page that is visually appealing and accessible for young people. This event was an initiative under the EU Commission's [Youth Pledge for a Better Internet](#), where the European Commission is partnering with industry to sponsor co-creation and co-design activities, so that young people's perspectives and ideas are at the heart of design.
- Promote digital skills by providing a good set of privacy knowledge, including what children can do to protect and exercise their rights on data, how to manage their privacy and how to handle personal information shared online. The aim was to establish a framework for the concept of online privacy and provide tools to understand children's right to privacy.

The event was jointly organised by Microsoft's Privacy and EU Government Affairs teams. It included youth participants from [European Schoolnet](#), [Better Internet for Kids \(BIK\)](#), and Microsoft's EU Council for Digital Good Youth Ambassadors.

What happened?

Microsoft is a world leader in devices and services that help people and businesses realise their full potential: its mission is to empower every person and organisation on the planet to achieve more.

Microsoft is committed to creating software, devices and services that have features, functionality and security considerations built in from the ground up, and because a wide range of its products are used by children and youth, Microsoft wanted to help educate young people by providing them with the tools to understand their right to privacy and by giving them the opportunity to "co-design" the Microsoft [Privacy for young people](#) page.

As part of the Youth Pledge project, Microsoft organised a one-and-a-half-hour workshop for young people on the importance of the right to privacy and control over one's personal data.

The focus was on defining the concept of online privacy, how to protect and exercise one's rights to personal data, and why children's right to privacy deserves special attention. The learning session was followed by breakout sessions with participants to suggest design ideas for the 'Privacy for Young People' page.

Microsoft is aware that engaging and working with young people is the best way to create a safer and more inclusive online space.

Outcomes of the event

- Fourteen young people aged between 14 and 18 years from 11 countries participated in the event. In six breakout groups, they discussed design ideas and presented their ideas to the large group.
- As Microsoft is committed to leveraging youth development and evaluation of digital products and services and digital policies, the participants' design ideas were collected and passed to Microsoft's Privacy Marketing team to inform a re-design of the page.
- Design concepts are already underway that incorporate the participants' recommendations. Microsoft expects to have a proof of concept in the coming months, although a longer time frame is expected for engineering resources to implement the new design.

Participant take-aways at the close of the workshop

- "I liked being able to talk to other kids my age about problems to do with privacy. It turns out despite us being from different backgrounds, we all share the same issues online."
- "How important it is to make everything accessible for people with differing needs along with how age affects understanding so much! Thanks so much for having me!"
- "It was great to have the chance to discuss privacy for young people and how we could make it better. Thank you for this workshop :)"
- "I learned a lot of different ideas I would have never thought of on the topic. Thank you so much!!!"
- "Thank you to everyone. This was such a great experience and I learnt so much! My main takeaway was how different privacy was for all age groups :)"
- "How important it is for everyone, even people who aren't that tech focused to know how our data is being used."
- "Thank you so much for this amazing opportunity to hear the voice of children."

Key youth recommendations for Microsoft Privacy for young people page

The participants' recommendations contained common themes around bringing the language on the page to life through images, animations, and video. They were sensitive to nuances around the types of users that access the Privacy for young people page, including that different age groups have different needs, as well as the importance of making the page accessible to people of all abilities. For example, they suggested that animations and kid-friendly illustrations would be best for younger children, whereas teenagers would prefer to see images of other teenagers when learning about their privacy.

Additionally, the youth suggested more dynamic ways to interact with the information, such as being able to search for key terms and to click on words to learn their definition.

One participant suggested "gamifying" the content and created a mock-up of a Minecraft-themed privacy game as an example. While the information in the Privacy for young people page is applicable to all Microsoft products and services, the special importance of protecting the privacy and safety of young gamers is understood. The participant's mock-ups were shared with Microsoft's gaming privacy team for consideration in designing privacy experiences for young people within Xbox.

Next steps

- Microsoft are committed to implementing changes to its Privacy for young people page that reflect suggestions made by the workshop participants.
- Microsoft has started working on design concepts that incorporate the participants' recommendations and expect to have a proof of concept before the end of 2022.
- Once a final proof of concept is agreed, Microsoft will work on the implementation timeline for the new design with its engineering teams. The changes are expected to be implemented before the end of June 2023.
- Digital safety for young people remains a key priority across all of Microsoft's products and services.