

Digital Futures Commission submission to the Global Digital Compact, April 2023

Noting that the Global Digital Compact (GDC) will “[outline shared principles for an open, free and secure digital future for all](#)”, we write to urge that ‘all’ includes children. In so doing, we point to both (UNCRC) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

When promoting a trustworthy internet, children must be consulted in the process and when evaluating the adequacy of the outcome. These and many more requirements are set out in General Comment 25, and all are relevant and important for the GDC.

[The Digital Futures Commission](#) (DFC) is an exciting research collaboration of unique organisations that invites innovators, policymakers, regulators, academics and civil society to unlock digital innovation in the interests of children and young people. It seeks to put the needs of children and young people into the minds and work plans of digital innovators, businesses, regulators and governments. It calls for a critical examination of how innovation is reconfiguring children’s lives to reimagine the digital world in value-sensitive ways that uphold their rights and take practical steps to meet their needs.

The work of the DFC has just concluded with a report and toolkit to advance [Child Rights by Design](#) in the development and governance of digital services, systems and products. We took our lead from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s authoritative statement, [General Comment No. 25](#), on how to implement the UNCRC in relation to the digital environment. We consulted innovators, practitioners, experts and children to make develop the guidance and make it practical. To find answers for them, we drew on the collected wisdom of many rights-based, ethical and value-sensitive organisations and [a consultation with children around the country](#). The resulting [toolkit](#) sets out principle-based design considerations to help digital innovators embed children’s rights into digital products and services.

In sum, our submission to the Global Digital Compact urges that:

- Children’s rights are explicitly recognised and included through an explicit reference to the UNCRC and General Comment 25.
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Note:

We consulted 143 children about their rights in the digital environment

<https://digitalfuturescommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/July-consultation-methodology-Final.pdf>

We reviewed available consultations with children to identify their concerns regarding the

digital environment here <https://digitalfuturescommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Children-and-Young-Peoples-Voices.pdf>

We consulted over 100 experts and professionals, UK and international, about how the digital environment could and should be respect, protect and promote children's rights in its

policy, design and practice. [https://digitalfuturescommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DFC\\_report-online.pdf](https://digitalfuturescommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DFC_report-online.pdf)

We built on the framework of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment 25 and its global consultation with 700 children in 26 countries

<https://5rightsfoundation.com/our-work/childrens-rights/uncrc-general-comment.html>