

This is the young people's version of the official document - the UNCRC general comment No. 25 (2021) - that sets out children's rights in the digital world. It is in their words and explains their rights.



# In our own words - children's rights in the digital world

Over 30 years ago (1989) the United Nations wrote the Convention

countries must give children and young people under 18 years old.

on the Rights of the Child to set out the freedoms and protections that

That was the same year as the world wide web was invented. This means that the people who wrote the Convention had no idea of the change that digital technology would bring to young people's lives. Now the Committee on the Rights of the Child, who look after the Convention, have written down how children should be treated in the digital world. This shorter version was written by young people between the ages of 11–17 to make it easier for other young people

to understand. Did you know?

in history: 196 countries.

Introduction Children around the world want and need to use the internet and digital services for school, entertainment, to get information and to be in contact with families and friends. They want it to be fair and keep them safe.

The UN Convention on the Rights of

the Child is the most ratified agreement

## **General Principles** There are four principles of children's rights:

Non-discrimination Children must be protected from discrimination, and treated fairly whoever they are.

When making any decision, adults - including governments and

Children must be supported to grow up into what they want to be



Best interests of the child

Survival and development

without harmful interference.

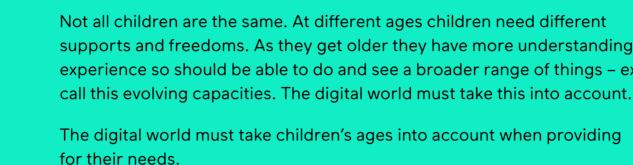
Respect for children's views

businesses - must do what is best for children rather than themselves.



## Children have opinions that must be taken into account in all the things they care about.

Not all children are the same. At different ages children need different supports and freedoms. As they get older they have more understanding and experience so should be able to do and see a broader range of things – experts



Protect children's rights online.

Ensure that everyone understands the rules, including government officials, businesses, parents, teachers and children themselves.

Make rules that support children's rights online.

Listen to children when they have a problem.

Stop businesses putting profit above children's rights.

or people who break the rules.

How this should be done:

Boy, 13, Nepal:

By the means of digital technology

we can get the information from all

around the world by sitting in the

Make sure that there are consequences for organisations

has been taken.

one corner of the room.

available, unless it is likely to cause harm.

**Accessing information** 

Freedom of expression

Freedom of thought

Companies and other people must not push children to do things for money or at the request of others. Freedom of association Children want to meet and spend time with their friends and enjoy being part of their community in every environment. Governments or

and other people should not spread lies or attack others.

Violence against children

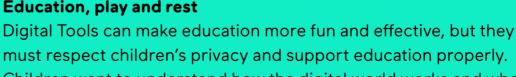
Children have the right to protection from violence, including political violence, encouragement to self-harm, eating disorders and suicide, bullying and images of sexual violence or sexual contact with adults. Children need to have helplines and places to get help when they need it. Family life

Governments and businesses should make sure that children

with disabilities are able to join the digital world. Subtitles and voice support, and any other help they might need, should be the normal settings, rather than children with disabilities having to find them

Health information must be accurate and health services must be private and confidential. No digital service should be allowed that interferes with a child's wellbeing. Governments should make sure

that children are not exposed to health misinformation.



Children of different ages in different situations from all over the world deserve the same protections. Digital services should be accessible to all children and available in all the languages that children speak. Governments

standards as offline businesses. Children should not have their

or videos and comments, used by others to make money.

personal information, including their photos, private conversations,

and suggestions are in this document but they particularly wanted to

rights online.

- write this document we are very proud of it and hope you are too.
- Girl, 12, Croatia:

and suggested that this should be done more often. 5Rights is very grateful to the children and young people who helped

something that was about them written by and for young people

Make sure children know and understand what action

Children have the right to information, freedom and privacy

Information that children find online should be true, relevant and easily

Children should be able to say what they think, but children, companies

businesses should not interfere with that, except for reasons of safety.

Children must have privacy to act and grow in the way that they wish; this includes privacy from parents, school, governments, businesses

**Birth registration** Children may need to prove who they are online in order to be part

We usually know most of our rights in real life but we don't talk much about our rights

in the digital world.

Governments should not assume that all children have families or support. They should make sure that the digital world looks after children's needs from the start and that families and caregivers are supported to support children.

Children with disabilities

and turn them on.

Health and wellbeing

Children want to understand how the digital world works and who is benefitting from it. Children want to play in the digital world and see people face to face. **Businesses and governments** Businesses online must be fair, clear and be held to the same

should make sure that all children and adults know about children's rights in

Over the last year 5Rights Foundation has supported the Committee on the Rights of the Child to set out how children's rights should be seen online.

**Background** 

make the following points. → **Children** need and want access to the digital world.

→ Governments should be responsible for protecting children's

→ **Parents** should be supported in understanding the digital world.

They also said that it was fantastic that there was a version of

This has involved taking advice from hundreds of experts, from many

opinion of hundreds of children and young people from 27 countries.

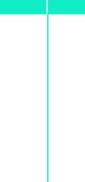
At the same time as setting out children's rights for governments in the general comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, we thought it important for children to have a version in language that they like and understand. All of their thoughts

countries, and has taken many months. It also involved asking the

Technology is very important, and it will continue to be in the future... The world is moving forward, and

of their community. Online identities should not be used in ways that are unfair or attack a child's privacy or other rights. Girl, 17, Morocco:

**Privacy** 



the digital world.

**Building the digital world** 

info@5rightsfoundation.com 5rightsfoundation.com

that young people deserve

we must do the same.