

Walkie Talkie – All Talk

WALKIE
TALKIE

CASE STUDY

RETURN OF THE CHAT ROULETTE?

Case study of compliance
with protections for children



**5RIGHTS
FOUNDATION**

Building the digital world that young people deserve

FOREWORD

Small is not safe. Big tech services are household names, but children are natural explorers and are eager to try out the latest app. Without a regulatory floor for innovation, new products pop up all the time looking to capture young people's precious attention with novel techniques or offerings. If they succeed, they will scale rapidly, or – more likely – be bought up by the dominant market players. Either way, competitors will widely copy any profitable new features that contribute to the business model driving the attention economy.

You may not have heard of Walkie Talkie, but millions of children have. The idea of a virtual walkie talkie is a great one, but this app, launched in 2018 and marketed at teenagers, goes much further than the much-loved childhood toy of yesteryear. Random connections for real-time conversations with strangers from around the world – alone or in groups – are marketed as a way to easily meet new people and have fun, casual conversations. However, the app is criticised for its lack of privacy (eavesdropping is common as all conversations are open), random trolls, aggressive users, and inappropriate language. The providers call this toxicity 'refreshingly weird'. Well-known functionalities such as open profiles, popularity metrics, 'friend' recommendations, misleading promises of rewards, constant notifications, and timed interruptions are deployed to drive engagement, reach, and monetisation – despite the known high risks to children.

Walkie Talkie is not safe for children. It does not meet the bar set by the Convention on the Rights of the Child or national regulations such as the

Find your 🧠 favorite
frequencies and 🚀 chat
about all 🎤 things fun,
fascinating and
refreshingly weird 🐢
with 🍔 people across
the globe.



UK Age Appropriate Design Code or the EU Digital Services Act. Regulators must investigate. Policy makers must ask themselves whether it is acceptable that such a service be allowed access to children without having to first demonstrate compliance with basic safety standards, and how they can drive better design.

Exploration and connection should be fun and age-appropriate. It's time for a reset and to start building the digital world children deserve.

Leanda Barrington-Leach

Leanda Barrington-Leach
5Rights Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[p.5](#)

INTRODUCTION

[p.7](#)

METHODOLOGY

[p.10](#)

RESEARCH FINDINGS

[p.13](#)

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

[p.31](#)

CONCLUSION

[p.39](#)

In the Research Findings section, evidence is marked with the icon representing the most appropriate classification of risk.



Content



Contact



Conduct



Contract



Cross-
Cutting



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chat roulette apps like Walkie Talkie state that they are for teenagers and market themselves as a fun, low-stakes way to meet new people. However, the app requires no meaningful proof of age and offers children almost no control over who can see or contact them. Its core function is to pair users, including children, with strangers.

This research sets out to test what a child using Walkie Talkie is likely to experience, combining a review of the app's public policies and rule book with structured, real-world testing using two test accounts built to reflect the experiences of a 13-year-old and a 16-year-old user.

The findings point to a significant gap between what the app claims to offer and what children using it can be exposed to:

- Researchers were able to register and use the app immediately after entering an unverified date of birth, with no check on the age they had claimed.
- Both child test accounts were visible and contactable by adult stranger accounts by default, with no warning shown to either party.
- Language filters did not catch offensive slurs and did not intervene when the app was used to discuss self-harm, suicide, or drugs.

- Reporting tools were hard to locate, limited in what they allowed users to flag, and produced no response from Walkie Talkie's parent company during the research period, including after a serious privacy and security bug was reported.
- Design features like pop-up ads that block users from leaving a call, deceptive subscription sign-up flows, and misleading reward notifications appeared aimed at maximising time and money spent on the app, regardless of the risk to child users.

These findings reflect what test accounts were shown during a defined research period. They do not measure how often children on the app would encounter these dynamics or how many children are affected. What they do show is that these outcomes are very rapidly reachable through ordinary use of the app, without seeking out high-risk or borderline behaviour.



INTRODUCTION

Walkie Talkie – All Talk (hereafter referred to as Walkie Talkie) is a fast-growing¹ ‘chat roulette’ style social platform marketed at teenagers² and easily accessible to younger children.³

This case study assesses the experiences of children using Walkie Talkie and its compliance with EU and UK regulation, combining analysis of public documents with semi-structured, real-world testing using test accounts.

Operated by Picslo Corp, a company with listed business addresses in both the United States and France, Walkie Talkie is available in English, French, and Spanish. As of 16 October 2026, the app has over 90,000 reviews on the Apple App Store and more than 10 million downloads from the Google Play Store.⁴

The app has a number of core functions. A public chat roulette randomly connects users to one of the available public chats or ‘frequencies’, where users broadcast audio to one another in a public arena. A one-to-one chat roulette randomly pairs users in an audio call based on pre-defined interests or identity tags and, during testing, was explicitly advertised as a way to engage in online dating.

Users can also create private group chats or ‘frequencies’ limited to selected friends, while direct messaging allows users to send

texts, images, and GIFs privately. Finally, users are recommended new contacts to add as friends or can search for specific others by username.

In light of the concerns surfaced from this research, 5Rights Foundation has filed a complaint against Walkie Talkie with the Belgian Digital Services Coordinator on 23 February 2026 and with the French regulator, ARCOM (Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique), on 25 June 2026.

Walkie Talkie – KEY CONCERNS

01

Lack of robust age assurance: Young children can easily access the app. User accounts meeting the 12+ minimum age threshold are not subjected to verified parental consent.

02

Default visibility to adult strangers: Children can be seen and contacted by adult strangers by default, without friction, and with no option to reduce their profile visibility.

04

Inappropriate advertising: Children are shown inappropriate ads, including for an adult-presenting 'AI girlfriend' service.

03

Child-stranger pairing: Chat roulette features pair children with strangers by design, with no explicit age-range limits.

05

Manipulative monetisation: Excessive and manipulative monetisation and habit-forming tactics are directed at children.

06

Misleading notifications: Children receive notifications for rewards that either do not exist or are hard to find.

08

Ineffective handling of reports: Children are recommended as 'friends' people they have previously reported for unwanted behaviour.

07

Weak reporting tools: The app offers insufficient ways to report concerns such as harmful behaviour or illegal content.

09

Ineffective moderation: Automated moderation fails to pick up on overt (unencrypted) communications likely to be harmful to minors, including offensive slurs and sensitive topics like illegal drugs and suicide.

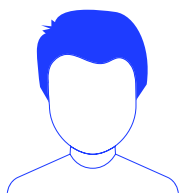
10

Unresolved bug reports: A serious bug allowing the app to broadcast audio to chatrooms even when the app was no longer in use went unaddressed despite being reported.



METHOD

AVATAR 1



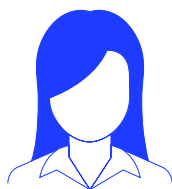
DEVICE 1

IAN - ♂

13 years old

Xbox, Cycling,
Marvel, Roblox

AVATAR 2



DEVICE 2

PAULA - ♀

16 years old

Playstation, Pop Anime,
Healthy Eating, Cosplay

AVATAR 3



DEVICE 3

ADULT STRANGER

28 years old

to test some of
the safety features.

01 OCT. 2025

24 OCT. 2025

PHASE 0
PRE-EXPERIMENT

Analysis of publicly
available policies
and terms.
Separate factory reset
devices to ensure
data accuracy.

PHASE 1
INITIAL TESTING

App Download and
set up of customised
profiles on both
devices. Researchers
familiarised
themselves with
Walkie Talkie's rule
book and explored
the layout of the
service.

PHASE 2
DEEP TESTING

Deeper exploration
of the app's
key social,
communication, and
safety features.

PHASE 3
FOLLOW-UP

When a serious
privacy and security
bug was uncovered,
researchers
attempted to contact
Picslo Corp and
experimented with
the self-asserted age
system.

To understand how Walkie Talkie operates, we analysed publicly available documents, such as the platform's policies and terms, and used an 'avatar' methodology to gain insights into what a child can be shown on the app, without putting real children at risk. The aim was to test the app for casual use against clear obligations, without seeking out specific high-risk scenarios or borderline experiences that may fall outside of existing regulation.

Researchers used two factory reset mobile devices to create two teen test accounts, each with their own name, age, gender, and interests. A control 'adult stranger' account with a stated age of 28 was registered through a separate phone to test some of the safety features.

The fieldwork period ran for 24 days, between 1 October and 24 October 2025. Further testing to check for any significant service design changes was conducted in September 2026.

Following account set-up, researchers tested out a variety of functionalities within the app, including public frequencies, group chats, direct messages (DMs) and GIF service integrations; search tools, friend requests, and the friend recommendation engine; keyword filters and reporting interfaces; and in-app purchases. To ensure no real user was accidentally drawn into our research, friend requests, direct messaging, private frequencies, and reporting interfaces were tested exclusively between test accounts. Similarly, tests requiring the use or sharing of mildly suggestive imagery or offensive language took place in a controlled private chat group including only our test accounts.

Given the perceived high risk, researchers did not evaluate the one-to-one chat roulette feature, called 'Duo Mode', but collected all available information from the app interface.

**This research shows
what Walkie Talkie is
capable of surfacing
to a child account.**

**It does not measure
how often this happens
in practice, or how
many children
it affects.**

DISCLAIMER: To protect the identity of non-public figures encountered on the app, some names, usernames, and other details have been hidden or blurred. No further editing has been made to the recorded evidence.

FINDINGS

ACCESS

Dense and hard to find: Walkie Talkie's approach to its Terms of Service



According to Walkie Talkie's own Terms, users must be at least 12 to create an account. However, the app is rated as 16+ on the Apple App Store.

Users can access Walkie Talkie's Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions at any time on Picslo's website. However, there is a third document detailing some of the rules of the app that is only made available to users upon signing up for an account. The rule book is not referenced anywhere in the app's Privacy Policy or Terms and Conditions, making it hard for potential users to fully evaluate how the app operates before signing up.

Neither document can be considered child-friendly. According to the Flesch-Kincaid reading age calculator,⁵ users need to possess college graduate-level comprehension skills to be able to understand the app's terms.

In practice, this means that users meeting the minimum age criteria of 12+ cannot reasonably be expected to be able to understand these terms.



TERMS OF USE

Unless otherwise specified, the terms of use detailed in this section apply generally when using this Application.

Single or additional conditions of use or access may apply in specific scenarios and in such cases are additionally indicated within this document.

By using this Application, Users confirm to meet the following requirements:

- There are no restrictions for Users in terms of being Consumers or Business Users;
- Users must be older than 12;
- Minors may only use this Application under parental or adult supervision;
- Users aren't located in a country that is subject to a U.S. Government embargo, or that has been designated by the U.S. Government as a "terrorist-supporting" country;
- Users aren't listed on any U.S. Government list of prohibited or restricted parties;

Children's experiences of account creation



When setting up an account on Walkie Talkie, users are asked to self-declare their date of birth. The app did not appear to challenge the date entered or request additional information to verify its truthfulness. When users self-declare as children under the age of digital consent (13 in Portugal; 16 in Ireland), Walkie Talkie takes no follow-up action to verify consent from the child's parent or legal guardian, as required under GDPR.

Because Walkie Talkie cannot reliably tell its users' ages, it is unlikely that it can enforce its own rules and ensure that children are exposed to age-appropriate experiences. As an example, this means that it couldn't stop child test accounts from accessing adult content, nor could it prevent the control adult account from sending friend requests to child test accounts.

In practice, age assurance appears to be a formality rather than a functioning safeguard. Children are treated as adults by design and miss out on the protections that a rights-respecting, age-appropriate, and proportionate age check would offer them.

15:37 27%

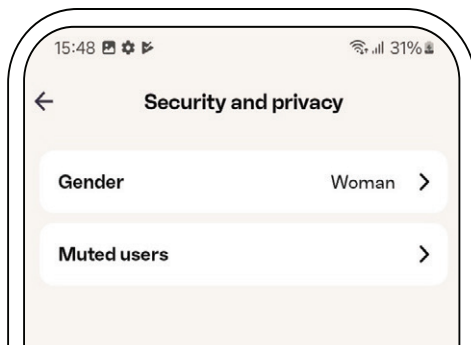
When's your birthday?

DD/MM/YYYY

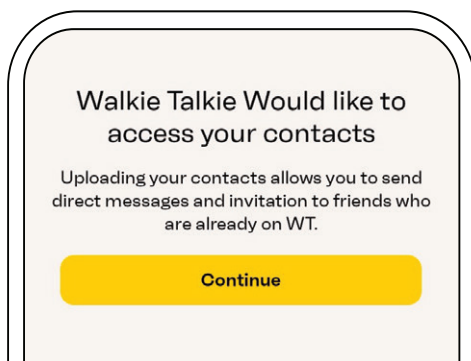
A rapid follow-up review conducted from the UK in September 2026 found that Walkie Talkie now blocks account creation for a self-declared age under 16, despite the app's own terms still listing 12+ as the minimum age. However, because the input age remains self-declared, this restriction is circumventable in theory.

ACCESS

How exposed children's profiles were by default



Walkie Talkie offers children hardly any control over their own privacy. The only privacy settings available are the ability to change or remove gender labels on a user profile, and to review the list of 'muted' users. Researchers found no way to control who can see a profile: by default, every child is visible to every other user. In practice, this means that an adult stranger can view a child's profile just as easily as another child could, with no extra step or barrier in between.



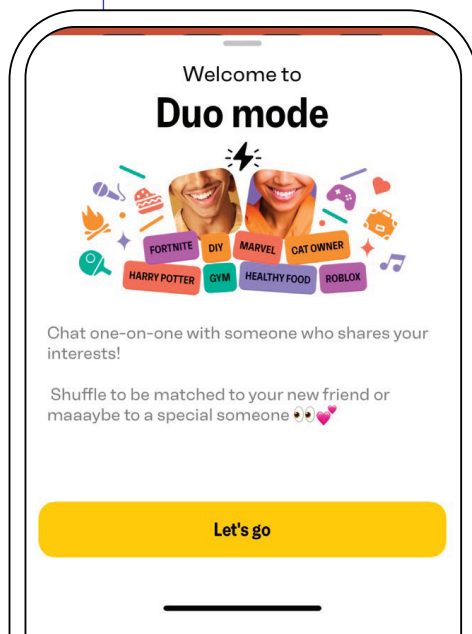
The app also encourages users to add friends by allowing Picslo to access their on-device contacts. Because it is unclear how this data is processed by the service and since this feature draws on personal phone data rather than in-app activity, it could unknowingly expose the contact details of other minors to the service without their knowledge or consent.

EXPOSURE

How Duo mode encouraged children to date strangers



Tech companies primarily design social media platforms to maximise the time users spend on the app, through features that encourage repeated use and emotional connection. On Walkie Talkie, this focus is clear in design choices like 'Duo mode', now renamed 'One on One Chat': a 'chat roulette' that randomly pairs users in chatrooms with strangers, usually from all over the world. Users can then add anyone they meet through 'Duo mode' as 'friends', enabling private group chats and calls. At the time of testing, the app's algorithm also recommended previously encountered strangers to be added as friends.



Walkie Talkie is actively promoting this feature to children. At the time of testing, the app presented our 13-year-old test account with this feature as a way to find a new 'special someone'.

There is no evidence that Walkie Talkie limits matches by age range. And even if it

did, the extremely weak age assurance researchers encountered during account creation would make it trivial for an adult to pose as a child and be matched with children.

The high risks that chat roulette services can pose to children are well established.⁶ Users have no control over who they connect to, and this format has a well-documented history of abuse on other services for purposes such as harassment, grooming, and inappropriate advertising.⁷

A rapid follow-up review conducted in September 2026 found that Walkie Talkie has renamed 'Duo mode' to 'One on One Chat' and removed the explicit reference to meeting a 'special someone'. However, the underlying mechanism appeared to remain unchanged.

EXPOSURE

Children could easily be found and contacted by adult strangers



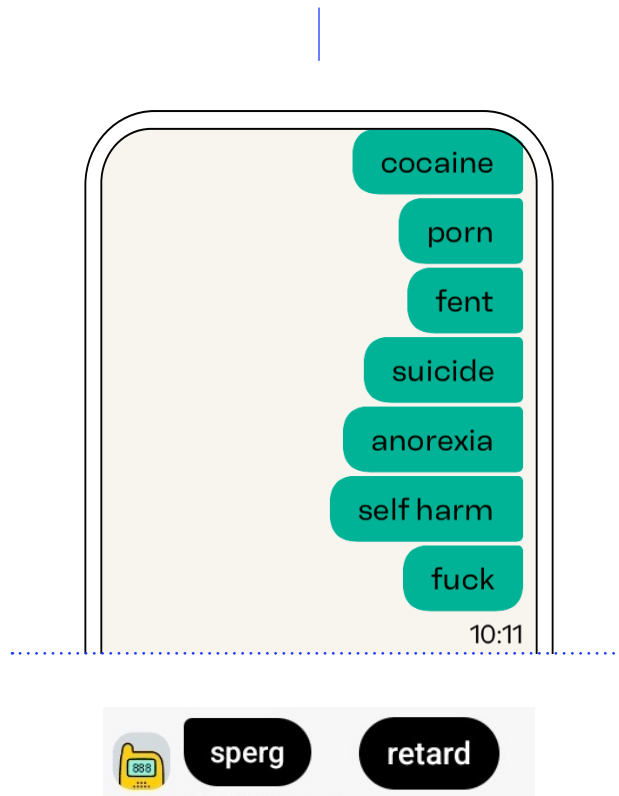
Children using Walkie Talkie can easily encounter adult strangers on the app. The app does not show whether a user is a child or an adult, making it impossible for a child to know with certainty that the user they are speaking to is close to their own age.

Adults can freely search for and send friend requests to children. Researchers used a control 'adult' account with a stated age of 28 to send friend requests to the 13-year-old and 16-year-old child test accounts. In neither case did the app warn the child test account that the friend request came from an adult, nor did it add friction to the request or alert the adult account that they were contacting a minor.

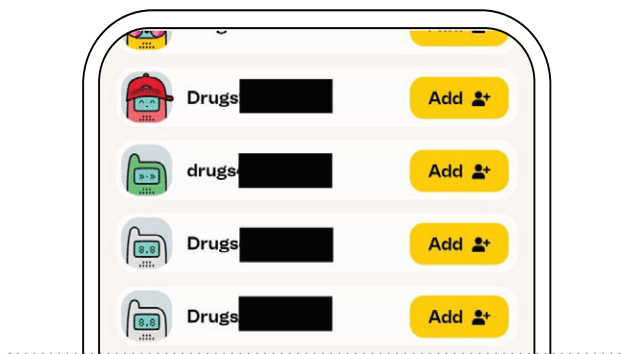
In practice, this means that adults can freely exchange direct messages, including images, with child users.

EXPOSURE

Language filters were not always effective



Using the in-app filters to block terms referring to hate speech, drugs, eating disorders, suicide, and overtly sexual content did not result in a safer experience on the app. The feature does not flag pejorative terms like 'retard', and Walkie Talkie did not attempt to signpost the 13-year-old test account after texting terms such as 'anorexia', 'self harm', 'cocaine', and 'suicide' in a direct message to our 16-year-old test account.



Similarly, the app's automated username filters are inconsistent. While Walkie Talkie does not allow users to add terms such as 'adult' to their usernames, it does not block other terms such as 'drugs', 'proana' (slang for pro-anorexia), 'onlyfans', 'incel', 'porn', and 'bulimia'. These terms reference content that is harmful to minors and should therefore be caught by the language filters in place on the app.

The app's patchy moderation extends to the tags users may add to their profile to indicate their interests, beliefs, and other aspects of their identity. Tags appear to undergo some degree of moderation – for example, none of the tags viewed by researchers consisted of misspelled words or random strings of letters and numbers – but multiple tags referencing some variation of 'gooning' or being a 'gooner' (slang for having excessive masturbation habits) were still present. It is unclear whether Walkie Talkie offers a way to report the tags, as researchers were unable to find any way of reporting them, meaning that children on the app are likely to be exposed to these harmful tags.

EXPOSURE

How ‘friends’ recommendations created an unsafe environment



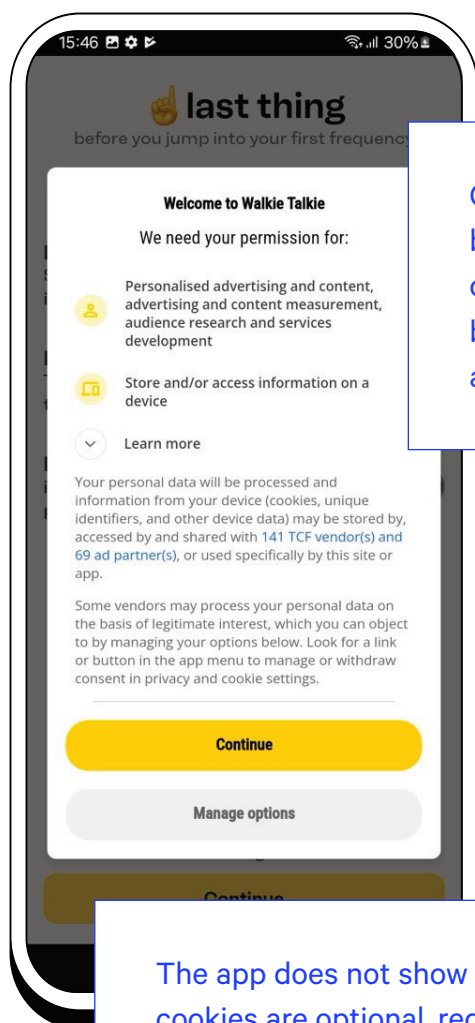
Walkie Talkie uses a recommender system to suggest new ‘friends’ to its users. This system appears impossible to turn off: an option to disable it is either very hard to find or not offered at all.

It is unclear how Walkie Talkie’s algorithm generates these recommendations, as the app’s parent company, Picslo, does not explain in its terms and policies the parameters determining how recommendations are weighted. Therefore, children may be recommended to unknown adults and vice-versa.

Additionally, the system has no safeguards to prevent children from being recommended users they have previously flagged as risky. In one case, the 16-year-old girl test account was recommended to add a user that she had previously reported for engaging in harassment of others.

EXPOSURE

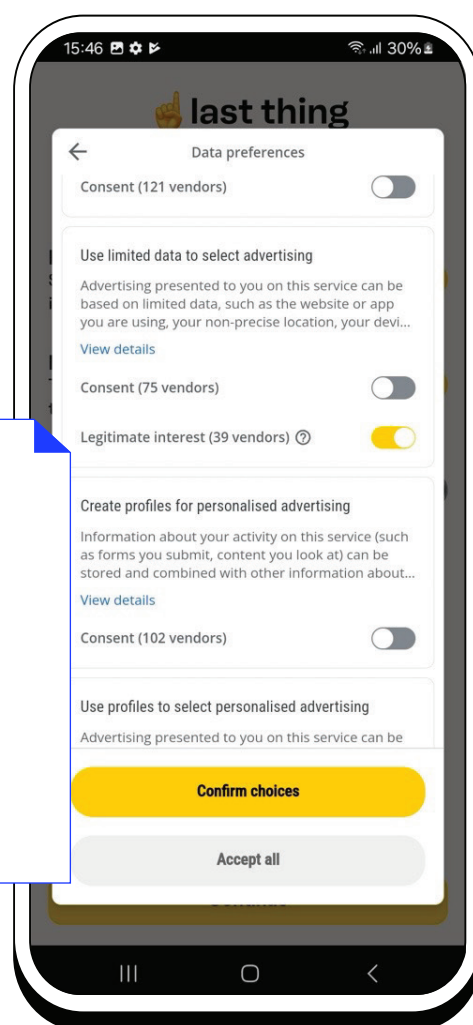
Children can be exposed to targeted advertising and inappropriate ads

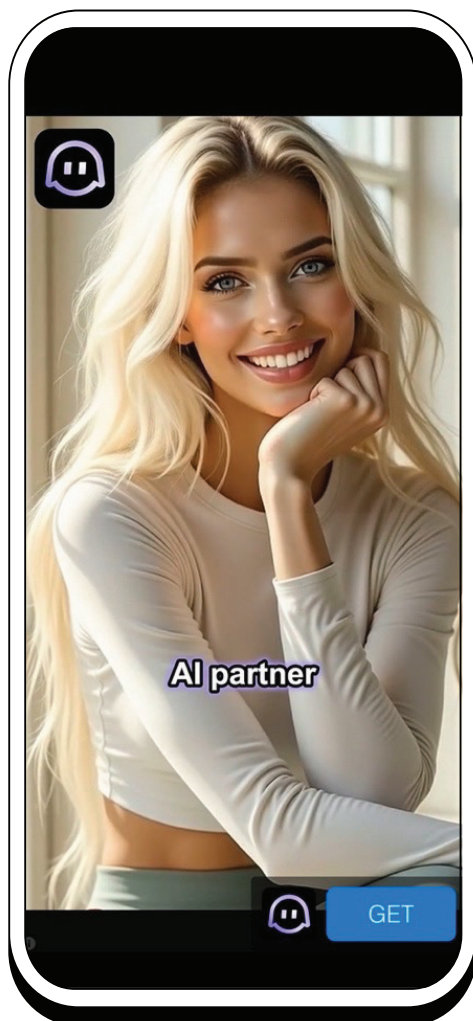


Children on Walkie Talkie can be at risk of being targeted for advertising. Right after creating their accounts, the app prompted both child test accounts to read and accept a long and dense cookie notice.

The app does not show upfront which cookies are optional, requiring users to scroll through the entire notice and click several times to disable all of them.

In practice, this can lead users, especially children, to unintentionally leave tracking cookies active by accident.



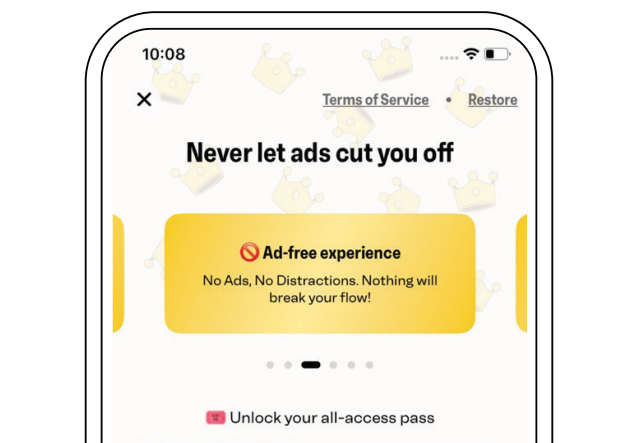


Regardless of cookie settings, Walkie Talkie served dubious and inappropriate advertisements to the child test accounts, though their frequency appeared to vary depending on the device. The account tested on an iPhone was comparatively exposed to far fewer pop-ups than the test account registered via an Android phone, which was served a pop-up ad almost every time the phone was unlocked or the app was reopened from the background.

In one case, the 13-year-old boy test account was served an ad for an 'AI girlfriend' service. The ad showed a conventionally attractive AI-generated adult woman flirting with the viewer and directly encouraging him to download the product. AI companion apps aimed at adult users have separately drawn scrutiny over the risks they pose to minors.⁸

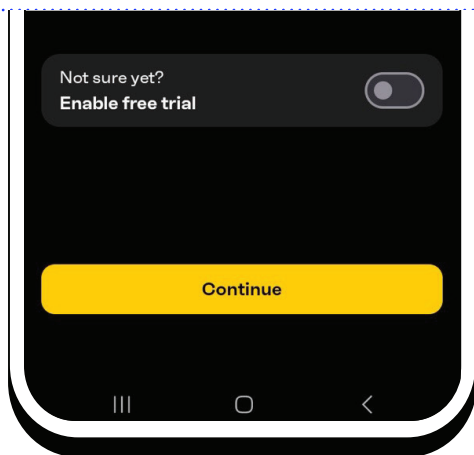
INCENTIVES

How design features appeared to encourage children to spend money



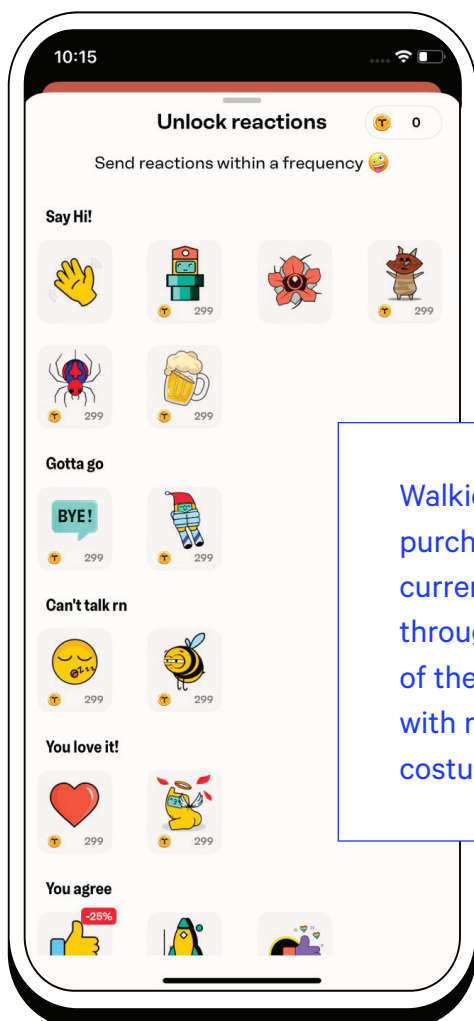
Walkie Talkie heavily pushes children to spend real money, often by advertising its premium features and virtual currency.

Picslo designed the app to frequently interrupt users, often mid-conversation, only to subsequently nudge them to purchase premium features such as the ability to add more friends to groups or to disable pop-up ads and other 'interruptions'.



Ads are designed to appear at any moment and obscure the entire screen during calls. When this happened, the app prevented both child test accounts from leaving the call, muting their microphone, or reporting users until the ad finished playing.

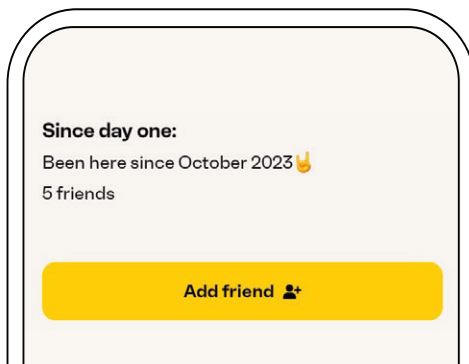
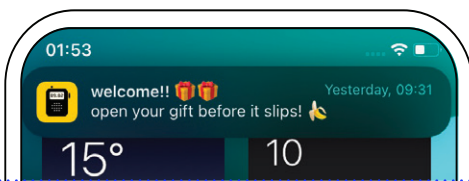
Whenever the app was launched, it funnelled both test accounts through a deceptive pathway requiring them to navigate six pages of pop-ups to activate a free trial that automatically converted to a paid subscription. There was no option to exit this sign-up flow until the final page, where a small 'x' appeared in the top corner.



Walkie Talkie also encouraged the purchase of 'Tokies', the app's virtual currency. Tokie icons are littered throughout the user interface, even outside of the store, prompting users to buy them with real money and spend on avatar costumes, reaction emojis, and other items.

INCENTIVES

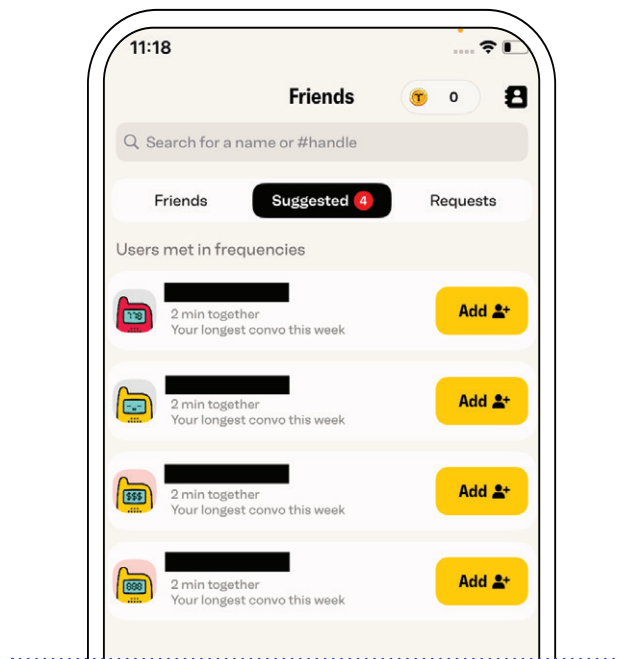
Design features that appeared to incentivise children to form usage habits



To keep users engaged for longer, tech companies can use a range of persuasive design features, including unwanted notifications.⁹

Walkie Talkie appeared to lure children back to the app with promises of rewards. On multiple occasions, child test accounts received push notifications encouraging them to return to the app for a reward. After doing so, however, the app displayed no reward and added none to the account. Instead, the test account was shown the offer for a premium trial once again.

Walkie Talkie also appeared to add a game-like element to social features, encouraging test accounts to further interact with strangers and participate in 'Duo mode'. Every user profile publicly displays a counter of how many friends they have, with clear nudges to add even more friends.



The app also appeared to encourage child test accounts to keep engaging with strangers met through public group chats or 'frequencies', by recommending as friends whoever they held the longest conversation 'streak' with that week. Overall, these incentives could encourage children to interact with more strangers, contributing to a loop that rewards time spent on the app.

REPORTING

Reporting other users is unlikely to be effective

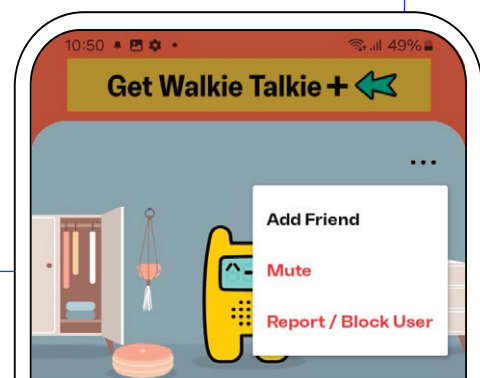


Walkie Talkie exposed both child test accounts to multiple violations of the platform's own rule book, including homophobic language, sexual taunting, and misogynistic harassment.

According to Walkie Talkie's rule book, accounts may be removed for poor behaviour. While the rule book includes a generic list of disallowed behaviour, none of the documents covers provisions for warnings. Options to report users were available to all test accounts – via their profiles, during chat roulette interactions, and in text chats – but these reporting tools appeared hard to find and limited in scope.

Reporting, block, and mute tools appeared not to be signposted, explained, or promoted anywhere on the app.

Locating such tools in chat roulette calls was not straightforward. To do so, test accounts had to navigate to that user's profile and tap a three-dot menu in the upper corner of the screen.



When reporting tools could be found, they offered limited functionality. Walkie Talkie offered a narrow range of infractions to choose from and no option to flag specific moments in a call (e.g. via timestamps) when rule-breaking occurred.

The reporting interface in text chat is even more limited, offering only a single 'report' button with no options to specify the type of behaviour or to report multiple messages at once. In some instances, researchers were unable to provide contextual information or even include a category of conduct, raising questions about the effectiveness of the tool.

Walkie Talkie did not respond to any of the complaints researchers submitted. It remains therefore unclear, at the time of publication, whether the company has taken any actions to resolve the issues researchers have reported.

During routine testing, researchers realised the app was broadcasting audio from a user's microphone in a chatroom with others without alerting the user via the app or the operating system. Audio broadcasting persisted even after swiping the app to the background or turning the phone screen off. This resulted in severe and obvious risks to children's privacy, safety, and security.

Researchers alerted Walkie Talkie's parent company, Picslo, via the email address advertised on the Walkie Talkie website on 15 October 2025. As of September 2026, Picslo has not responded to this report.

COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

The findings of this research indicate compliance concerns with UK and EU law.

This section assesses these concerns against the legal requirements of the EU and UK data protection regulations, the UK Age-Appropriate Design Code, and the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) and its Guidelines on the protection of minors.¹⁰

5Rights Foundation has filed a complaint against Walkie Talkie with the Belgian Digital Services Coordinator on 23 February 2026 and the French regulator, ARCOM (Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique), on 25 June 2026.

GDPR

General Data Protection Regulation

	REQUIREMENT	FINDINGS
ARTICLE 7	Where consent is used as the basis for processing, it must be freely given, unambiguous, and requested in clear and plain language.	The cookie notice contains excessive wording and elements of persuasive design, which are likely to distort children's ability to provide informed consent.
ARTICLE 8	Children either under the age of 13 or under the minimum age for providing consent for data processing (set locally) cannot provide this consent and verified consent from the holder of parental authority must be sought.	Ineffective age assurance means that the data of underage users is likely to be processed without meeting consent requirements. At no point did the service seek verifiable parental consent.

EU DIGITAL SERVICES ACT¹¹

	REQUIREMENT	FINDINGS
ARTICLE 14	Terms and conditions must be presented in plain and user-friendly language and must contain several key items of information.	The terms and conditions are missing required information and are not presented in user-friendly language minors could be expected to understand.
ARTICLE 16	Services must provide user-friendly reporting tools that provide several items of core functionality.	Reporting interfaces are not straightforward to access and lack key functionality.
ARTICLE 23	Services must clearly present their approach to tackling illegal content and abuse of reporting tools in the terms and conditions.	The terms and conditions lack information on the approach to illegal content, and the circumstances taken into consideration when determining moderation actions for illegal content or misuse of reporting tools.
ARTICLE 27	Services need to outline the main parameters used in recommendation algorithms, along with their relative importance.	There is no explanation of the main parameters used in recommender systems or their relative importance.

	REQUIREMENT	FINDINGS
ARTICLE 28	A high level of privacy, safety, and security must be provided for minors. The European Commission has issued Guidelines on Art. 28 of the DSA. According to these guidelines: • Self-declaration is not considered to be an appropriate age-assurance measure. § 47 b • Accounts for minors must be set to the highest level of privacy, safety, and security by default. § 57 b • Providers must ensure that minors' accounts are never included in contact suggestions to adults. Adult accounts or accounts likely to be fake minor accounts are not recommended to minors. § 59 b • Providers must implement measures to prevent minors' exposure to content recommendations that could pose a risk to their safety and security. § 65 h • Ensure that minors' lack of commercial literacy is not exploited by considering minors' age, vulnerabilities, and limited capacity to engage critically with commercial practices on the platform and provide relevant support. § 69 a	The service's provisions for age assurance are not robust. The cookie notice is not likely to be understood by minors. There are clear gaps in automated and human moderation systems. Serious privacy and safety bug reports were not responded to. Targeted ads are still presented as an option for minors to enable. Children can receive excessive third-party ads, some of which are inappropriate. The recommender system proposes risky contacts. The interface presents an option to leech contacts from the user's device. There is a distinct lack of privacy controls and all users are visible by default. It is trivial for adults to search for and add children without friction. Reporting tools are inadequate. Children are misled into increasing usage of the app. Socialisation is gamified, creating pressure to talk to strangers. Users are frequently and excessively nudged to spend real money. The chat roulette concept poses known major risks to children, and yet they were encouraged to use it for dating.

UK AGE APPROPRIATE DESIGN CODE

	REQUIREMENT	FINDINGS
STANDARD 1	The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in the design and development of online services likely to be accessed by a child.	The service’s provisions for age assurance are not robust. The cookie notice is not likely to be understood by minors. There are clear gaps in automated and human moderation systems. Serious privacy and safety bug reports were not responded to. Targeted ads are still presented as an option for minors to enable. Children can receive excessive third-party ads, some of which are inappropriate. The recommender system proposes risky contacts. The interface presents an option to leech contacts from the user’s device. There is a distinct lack of privacy control and all users are visible by default. It is trivial for adults to search for and add children without friction. Reporting tools are inadequate. Children are misled into increasing usage of the app. Socialisation is gamified, creating pressure to talk to strangers. Users are frequently and excessively nudged to spend real money. The chat roulette

	REQUIREMENT	FINDINGS
STANDARD 1		concept poses known major risks to children, and yet they were encouraged to use it for dating.
STANDARD 3	Services need to take a risk-based approach to recognising the age of individual users or apply a high baseline of protection to all users.	The approach to age assurance is not robust, despite the high risks posed by the service.
STANDARD 4	Privacy information must be concise, prominent, and in clear language suited to the age of the child.	Privacy information is contained in lengthy bodies of text and is unlikely to be understandable by children.
STANDARD 6	Uphold published terms, policies, and community standards.	The lack of robust reporting pathways means it is unlikely that service rules can be upheld consistently or to a high standard.
STANDARD 7	Children must have a high level of privacy by default.	Children are publicly visible by default and this cannot be changed.
STANDARD 12	Only allow profiling if there are appropriate measures in place to protect the child from any harmful effects.	The app is presenting targeting as an option, even for underage users.

	REQUIREMENT	FINDINGS
STANDARD 13	Do not use nudge techniques to lead or encourage children to provide unnecessary personal data or turn off privacy protections.	Children are encouraged to allow the app to access their contacts.
STANDARD 15	Provide prominent and accessible tools to help children exercise their data protection rights and report concerns.	Reporting tools are inadequate.

CONCLUSION

Walkie Talkie can expose children to adult strangers, harmful content, and manipulative design with little to no friction. It is our conclusion that Walkie Talkie currently fails to comply with UK and EU law, leaving children exposed to high levels of risk.

5Rights urges immediate action from both Walkie Talkie and regulators. Regulators should immediately open an investigation and issue interim measures to prevent Walkie Talkie from being accessible to children until Picslo Corp can prove that the service is fully compliant with the law and provides a safe, age-appropriate experience.

Among many issues, the report shows that the app's self-declared age check does not provide children with the necessary safeguards: because Walkie Talkie cannot reasonably identify minors present on the app, it cannot apply age-appropriate protections to children, treating them as adults from the moment they sign up.

When the app does offer protection through content filters and reporting tools, researchers found them inconsistent, hard to find, or ineffective in practice.

Additionally, Walkie Talkie applied design choices intended to drive engagement and spending to child accounts without regard for the risks these features carry for younger users.

Walkie Talkie, and any other product or service likely accessible to children, must demonstrate that it embeds children's rights, safety, and privacy by design and default.

Among others, these services must, at the very least:

- **Comply** with all relevant law and regulation governing among other things data protection, online safety, and AI systems.
- **Meet** the highest available regulatory and industry standards of child protection and age-appropriate design.
- **Undertake** a pre-launch, proactive, children's rights impact assessment to effectively identify and mitigate content, contact, conduct, commercial, and cross-cutting risks to children, while ensuring that their best interests are given priority in all decisions of design and operation of the service. These risk assessments should be updated regularly, including before any new features and functionalities are released, and its key findings should be made publicly available. Outcomes should be independently audited.

- **Introduce** effective, rights-respecting, and proportionate age assurance to enable age-appropriate services by design and default that provide children with safeguards and effective support mechanisms in line with their age or age range. This includes ensuring children are not exposed to illegal content or activities; harmful or high risk features and functionalities; illegal or inappropriate commercial practices, including persuasive, manipulative, or behavioural design practices.

Regulators should take immediate action through interim measures under the DSA, enforcement powers under the UK regime and other precautionary tools available to them to prevent Walkie Talkie from being accessible to children until Picslo Corp can prove that the service is fully compliant with the law and provides a safe, age-appropriate experience.

ENDNOTES

- 1 In Q3 of 2025 Walkie Talkie boasted growth figures including a 260% increase in monthly revenue year-on-year. See: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/walkietalkiecom_rtc-socialnetworking-voicechat-ugcPost-7371925964420808704-iV4d
- 2 This can be seen through the use of youth texting language in app descriptions, the consistent appeal to young audiences via colourful designs, and references to media franchises popular among youth (e.g. Avengers), and youthful models in promotional materials.
- 3 Walkie Talkie's Terms of Service state that the app is available to users aged 12+. There are however no robust age assurance mechanisms in place to effectively prevent younger children from accessing or using the app.
- 4 As of 16 October 2026, Walkie Talkie has surpassed 10 million downloads on the Google Play Store. Apple's App Store doesn't publish download figures, but with over 90,000 user reviews and a steady spot in the top 150 most-downloaded social networking apps, the number of downloads is likely as high.
- 5 Flesch–Kincaid is a readability test designed to indicate how difficult it is for a reader to understand a given passage of written English.
- 6 eSafety Commissioner. (2025). [Stranger danger 2.0: How anonymous random chat app platforms are putting children at risk](#).
- 7 Tidy, J. (2021). [Omegle: Children expose themselves on video chat site](#). BBC.
- 8 Center for Digital Rights and Democracy. (2026). [Companion AI – Study on the Risks of AI Companion Systems and Their Regulatory Framework](#).
- 9 The EU Digital Services Act defines persuasive design as that which 'deceives or manipulates the recipients of [a] service or in a way that otherwise materially distorts or impairs the ability of the recipients of [a] service to make free and informed decisions'.
- 10 Picslo's lack of adequate transparency regarding staff numbers and annual turnover makes it challenging to assess whether the company is formally in scope of Article 28 of the DSA.
- 11 This assessment is based on the assumption that Walkie Talkie is not a Very Large Online Platform, but that it must adhere to the additional provisions applicable to online platform providers under the DSA.

