

Parental Role in Creation and Preservation of Digital Identity of Children

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Abstract:

Parents mould their children's digital identity even before they venture into cyberspace. In this era of sharenting, it can be mortifying for a child to learn that their entire childhood is documented and shared publicly by their parents. This paper primarily addresses the need for awareness including development in the legal framework for digital identity of children. The objectives of this study are to analyse the association between awareness of digital identity among respondents of various age groups and to identify whether the opinion of male and female differs regarding the statement: "Sharing photos and other personal details of a child in public forums and social media can affect their safety." This paper has adopted mixed methodology including empirical and doctrinal research method. The study shows that male and females have different perspective regarding children's right to erasure online. Cyberspace opened a plethora of opportunities to parents and children to network and learn in the comfort of their home or school, however children by their inherent naivety can be prone to leave incriminatory digital footprints, which if not regulated can play havoc in their future. The tech savvy parents too, in their zeal to showcase their ward's various milestones inadvertently add to this digital footprints. This paper suggests that there cannot be any single formula to protect and preserve digital identity of children. Parental monitoring may be the best mechanism, however, it may not be possible without the backing of suitable legal process. It is high time India adopt a legislation in line with the European Union laws of "right to erasure".

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I. INTRODUCTION

Our children are born and growing up in a Dystopian world where computers and internet play an indispensable role in the choice of food they eat, the friends they make, the clothes they should wear, the games they should play and the future partners they may choose. They are born with the technology at their disposal, their entire childhood, adolescence and probably all their living years will be stored and

chronicled in various digital platforms. The enormous digital footprint they leave behind during their lifetime is unparalleled to any of our previous generations. The impact of this is unpredictable as these records are available for an infinite digital present. Having an adverse digital identity can be unchancy for children as it will affect their future chances of getting admission into an institution they may prefer or the employment they may choose.

This digital identity will be evaluated and assessed by the institutions and potential recruiters in the application process. It is in this context that “the right to erase certain data so that a third person can no longer trace them” gain momentum.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Eva Lievens and Carl Vander Maelen, (2019) The examination concentrated on Recital 65 of GDPR which clarifies that the right to erasure is significant in those surroundings where children have given their consent uninformed of the risks involved in handling such consent, and later wants to remove such personally identifiable information especially on the net. The study aims to find solution to challenging questions that have reverberation with other rights and interests, the required lucidity, the prospective to ask for erasure where others like parents have apportioned information about the child or given consent on behalf of the child. **Engelmann, J. M., Herrmann, E., & Tomasello, M. (2018)** The examination researches peer correspondence through birth year wise categorization of respondents and their inclination to maintain or aggrandize reputation online. Study shows that young children actively invest in the reputation of their gang by acting more unstintingly when their clan’s reputation is at stake. Children shared considerably more facts with imaginary peer group not only when their discrete benefactions were transude to public rather than nonpublic. **Nyst C, Pg (2017)** The goal of this examination is to analyse the enhanced children’s autonomy and independence on the net. The study points out that the cyberspace proffer young people a way to concatenate and assimilate knowledge away from the visible supervision of an adult authority. Dissemination of information that previously required the surreptitious passing of epistle behind teachers’ backs can now take place on social networking sites, and information that could formerly be accessed only under the circumspect eye of a librarian is now available in an intemperate way. **R Buchanan, SPSmith et.al (2017)** This

investigation has been intended to suggest strategies to the fundamental issue of protection of digital identity of children. The study points out the fact that children’s data can be collected from the instant of their birth, the sheer volume of digital data that is generated throughout the primary eighteen years of life, through multiple technological means raise serious concerns about children’s right to privacy. **Fu G, Heyman GD, et.al (2016)** The examination concentrated on the impact of positive reputation online and the likelihood of young children to cheat. The findings of this investigation shows that apprising children that they have a buoyant reputation to maintain can impact their upright comportment. **Macenaite, M. (2017)** The goal of the exploration is to understand the conundrums that the introduction of the customised pickney online privacy protection regime creates. It concludes that by favouring aegis of children over emancipation, the regulations limit children in their online opportunes and it fails to transmogrify the evolving dimensions of best interests of the child. **Rustad, Michael L. and Kulevska, Sanna, (2015)** The examination considers the effect of the Google Spain case and its impact on GDPR and the right to erasure. The examination endeavours to distinguish the right to erasure of private persons and public figures. Private persons will have the right to delete the links to communiques created by third parties, upon production of proof that the information serves no legitimate purpose.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the purpose of this study descriptive research is used to present accurately the impact of adverse digital identity on children and the parents role in the creation and preservation of it. Convenient sampling method is used for sample collection. 2038 is the sample size. Dependent variables are age, gender, education and occupation. Independent variables are awareness about digital identity, awareness of parental role in creation and preservation of digital identity and children's right to erasure.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION RESULTS

Participants characteristics and user attributes:

As the sample was composed of a cohort of urban people from Chennai, aged 13 and above. Table - 1 shows that the overwhelming majority of them are between the age group of 26 - 35 and Table - 2 shows that gender of the participants are evenly distributed (57% Female, 43% Male).

Table 1: Frequency table with respect to Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	13-18	435	21.3
	19-25	420	20.6
	26-35	660	32.4
	36-45	367	18.0
	Above 45	156	7.7
	Total	2038	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the number of respondents based on their age. 21.3% of respondents were below 18 years , 20.6% of respondents belonged to the group of 19-25, 32.4% of respondents belonged to the group of 26-35, 18.0% of respondents belonged to the group of 36-45 and 7.7% of respondents are 45 and above.

Table 2: Frequency table with respect to Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	877	43.0
	Female	1161	57.0
	Total	2038	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The table shows the number of respondents based on their gender where 57.0% of participants were female and 43.0% of them male.

Crosstab analysis with respect to age and Awareness about the digital identity

H0 - There is no relationship between awareness about the digital identity and age of the respondents.

Ha - There is a relationship between awareness about the digital identity and age of the respondents.

Table 3; Chi Square test: Awareness of digital identity and Age

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	232.444 ^a	16	.000

Source: Primary Data

Using Chi square test, it was found that p value is less than 0.005, hence null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between awareness about the digital identity and age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are highly aware of digital identity.

Crosstab Analysis between age and parental role in creation and preservation of digital identity

H0 - There is no significant relationship between parental role in creation of digital identity and age of the respondents.

Ha - There is a significant relationship between parental role in creation of digital identity and age of the respondents.

Table 4; Chi Square test: Parental Role in creation of digital identity and Age

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	295.058 ^a	16	.000

Source: Primary Data

Using Chi square test, it was found that p value is less than 0.005, hence null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between parental role in creation of digital identity and age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are aware of parental role in creation of digital identity.

Crosstab Analysis between gender and Children's right to erase the data of their past mistakes online and get a chance to start afresh

H0 - There is no significant relationship between gender and respondent's belief that children should have a right to erase the data of their past mistakes online and should get a chance to start afresh.

Ha - There is a significant relationship between gender and respondent's belief that children should have a right to erase the data of their past mistakes online and should get a chance to start afresh.

Table 5; Chi Square test: Awareness about children's right to be forgotten and Gender

	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	77.328 ^a	4	.000

Source: Primary Data

Using Chi square test, it was found that p value is less than 0.005, hence null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between gender and respondent's awareness about children's right to erasure. The opinion of male and female differs regarding the statement: "Children should have a right to erase the data of their past mistakes online and get a chance to start afresh". Compared to male respondents female respondents strongly agreed with this statement.

V. CONCLUSION

The results reported in this study indicated that today's children might have a high digital footprint, which may have long repercussions on their future education and employment. Parents have a tedious responsibility of deciding the balance of interest

between their inclination to post content about their children and children's future digital identities. Parents can help their children to take control of how others see them online and create an online reputation that will highlight their strengths and passions to serve them in the future. It would be a superior plan to suggest from this study that all the stakeholder's including parents, social media platforms should respect children's rights to privacy and help them to have a clean digital identity. It is the need of the hour to lay down a legislation similar to that of European Union's GDPR to protect our children's privacy online. Joint collaboration of governmental agencies, educational institutions and social media platforms are essential to remove incriminatory content against children and implement the right to erasure on these platforms.

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