

Australia Imposes Strict Social Media Ban for Children



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SYDNEY, Dec. 10— Australia is set to enforce a landmark ban on social media use for children

under 16, forcing major tech companies to implement age-verification measures, drawing global

attention. The law, effective December 10, requires platforms to take “reasonable steps” to prevent underage accounts, marking the world’s strictest approach to youth online access.

The policy has left social media giants scrambling. Meta, Snap, YouTube, and TikTok have argued that the ban could compromise safety, restrict connectivity, and overstep parental authority.

Executives, including Snap CEO Evan Spiegel, reportedly lobbied Australian officials, while companies have suggested that app stores like Apple and Google should handle age verification.

Former Facebook Australia chief Stephen Scheeler said the debate reflects a broader reckoning in the industry over its impact on children’s wellbeing. Critics point to mental health concerns, body image issues, and allegations of addictive platform design, which are currently the focus of multiple U.S. lawsuits. Meta and Snap have maintained that they are committed to protecting teens and providing tools to ensure online safety.

Australia’s new law prohibits parental exemptions, setting it apart from policies in the U.S. and Europe. Experts warn it may inspire similar regulations worldwide, highlighting growing scrutiny of tech firms on child safety and harmful content.

As enforcement begins, social media companies face both legal compliance and reputational challenges, signaling a pivotal moment in regulating the global digital landscape.

