

2025 Impact Report

A Note from the Leadership Team

2025 was a year of major progress for Design It For Us. In just our second full year as a coalition, we've grown tenfold in our membership, our reach, and our hunger to shape the responsible movement with young people at the center.

We were pleased to kick off the year with the honor of receiving recognition for our Co-Chairs as [Forbes 30 Under 30 honorees](#) in the category of Social Media, and we released our first-of-its-kind [Declaration of Digital Rights](#) to guide the leadership of our peers and partners alike. We set big goals for 2025 – and we spent the year reaching them.

This year, we leveraged our grassroots base to ensure the passage of three state laws: Vermont's Age Appropriate Design Code, California's SB 53, and New York's RAISE Act. The laws were built upon the progress from previous legislative sessions, and our grassroots support and policy perspectives were in large part what enabled these bills to get over the finish line this time.

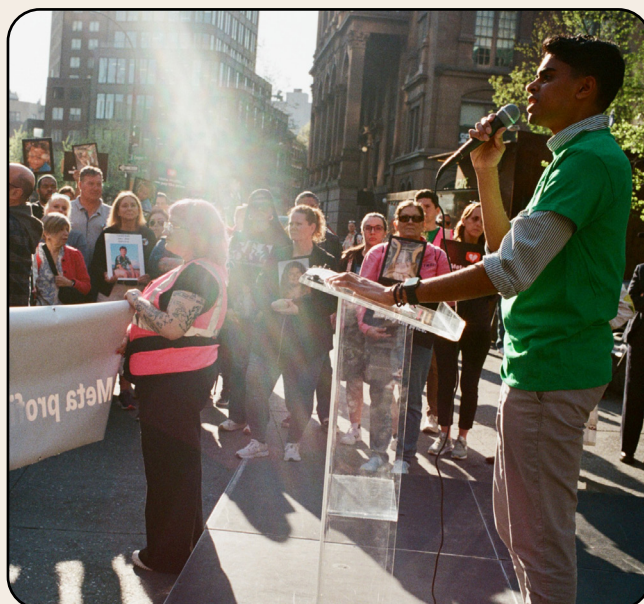
We set off a chain reaction that continues to put Meta on the defense when we released a damning study of their Teen Accounts – finding that their safety and privacy settings fail to live up to their promises. We never let up the pressure on the company, holding their feet to the fire through continued activation and public pressure. More than ever, the company is responding to our demands and public opinion of Meta continues to plummet.

Since the beginning of 2025, we have grown our membership by 141%. We're now represented in 37 states, 24 countries, and have a combined grassroots reach of more than 15,000 across our partner network and growing email list.

We close out 2025 with the biggest demonstration of our progress yet – we're officially an independent organization. After tremendous growth and with incredible support from our partners, we're kicking off 2026 as an independent, fiscally sponsored organization. And we're aiming to punch even higher: in the year ahead, we'll build on our progress with scaled grassroots infrastructure, more direct action and an ever-sharpened focus on reclaiming cultural, market and regulatory power from the companies who have undermined us for far too long.

Read on for a deeper look at what we've accomplished in 2025!

- The Design It For Us Leadership Team



First-of-its-kind Declaration of Digital Rights

In 2024, Design It For Us hosted a landmark Campus Tour on five college campuses across the U.S., bringing together students, young people, and practitioners in responsible technology. At each stop along the tour, we deployed a poll to the event's student attendees, which sought to collect youth perspectives on the current state of the digital spaces. Respondents told us that they are frustrated, dissatisfied, and disappointed with social media and the algorithms that fuel it, and offered ideas on how to improve these spaces.

In response to the growing desire from young people to make clear what they want from tech companies and online spaces, we used our learnings to develop and publish our “[Declaration of Digital Rights](#).”

The declaration is a proclamation of our values and what we believe are our inalienable rights existing in the digital world. This north star Bill of Rights is designed to guide our movement toward our vision of a digital world crafted for young people, and in essence, designed for us. Like the Bill of Rights itself, the declaration sets forth unalienable requirements we demand for our online experiences, including the right to privacy, the right to safety, the right to not be experimented on, as well as the right to transparency and user controls. Upon publication of the Declaration, we earned coverage from [Under The Desk News](#) as well as in the [Washington Post](#).

Following the launch of the Declaration, we held briefings with advocates and staff for members of Congress to share the components of the Declaration and how it can inform both campaigning and policy work. The Declaration continues to underpin our approach to assessing companies' products and will play a greater role in our assessment of alternative products in the new year.



Empty Promises: Testing Instagram Teen Accounts

Meta has long touted its safety tools to supposedly protect young people on its products, but we've yet to see that in practice. In March and April, we worked with Accountable Tech to affirmatively test whether Instagram Teen Accounts were actually upholding their own safety and privacy policies. We designed a two-week study to test Instagram's sensitive content controls — the platform feature Meta points to as its answer to concerns about algorithmic recommendations to teenagers' accounts. To proactively withstand any baseless scrutiny from Meta, we developed a rigorous methodology, including daily logs with both qualitative and quantitative record-keeping to guide our test.

Uniquely, five young people from our coalition were behind our model test teen accounts, using Instagram as if they were using their own accounts, simulating typical teen behavior on the product.

Overwhelmingly, our tests found that Meta was not living up to their promise: 100% of our test accounts were recommended sexual content, and four out of five of our volunteers reported disturbing experiences on the platform during our testing.

Our results showed that across our five accounts, Instagram largely failed to protect our teen users. We worked with the [Washington Post's Geoffrey Fowler](#) to release and publish our report: "[Scary Feeds: The Reality of Teen Accounts](#)".

Our report was also amplified by influencers and outlets, including on [Crooked's Offline](#), [Mashable](#), [Digital Trends](#), [Marc Istock](#), [Big Tech On Trial](#), [Geekout](#), [Scrolling 2](#), [Death with Nicki Reisberg](#), [Ronald Brownstein](#), [Zephyr Teachout](#), [Clara Jeffrey](#) of Mother Jones and the [Washington Examiner](#).



As a result of our breakthrough reporting, Meta was forced to [respond](#) to our findings. To protect their image, the company claimed our research was manufactured, yet failed to refute the claims we made. Instead, they vowed to continue improving their product.

Given the success of our research, we partnered with the Heat Initiative and Parents Together to survey thousands of teenagers across the U.S. about their experiences using Teen Accounts in the year since

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Gen Z users and a dad tested Instagram Teen Accounts. Their feeds were shocking.

Meta promised parents it would automatically shield teens from harmful content. Tests by young users and our tech columnist found it fails spectacularly on some important dimensions.

May 18, 2025



Column by [Geoffrey A. Fowler](#)

it was first launched. The survey, “[Instagram Teen Accounts Are Missing the Mark](#),” which received coverage in [TIME Magazine](#), found that nearly 60% of the kids who received unwanted messages said they came from users they believed to be adults. And nearly 40% of kids who got unwanted messages said they came from someone who wanted to start a sexual or romantic relationship with them. Senator Amy Klobuchar questioned Meta about our survey in a [hearing](#) in October.

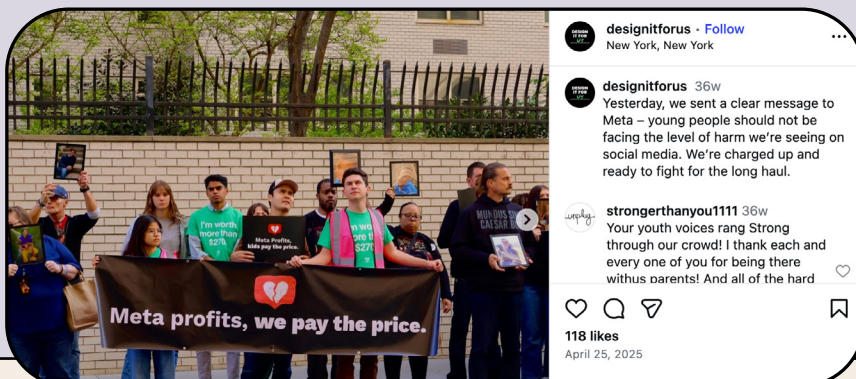
After months of backlash at the hands of our pressure campaigns, Meta attempted to shift the narrative by creating a new PG-13 standard for content. This came after Meta brushed off our findings simply as “consistent with humor in a PG-13 film.” In reality, Instagram was shifting the goalposts. We issued a [scathing](#) statement and [called Meta out in the Washington Post](#).

Holding Big Tech’s Feet to the Fire

Design It For Us joined together with advocates across our community to lead in-person activations targeting both Meta and Apple. In May, we partnered with Parents Together and the Heat Initiative to we march on Meta’s Headquarters in New York City. Our Co-Chairs Arielle Geismar and Zamaan Qureshi [headlined](#) a rally with remarks that sparked collective motivation and outrage at the major company. Alongside more than 100 survivor parents, we then marched over to Meta’s office, where we delivered a [petition](#) from over 12,000 people demanding that Meta change its product to improve its design, transparency, and safety tools for young users. Our rally convened upwards of 150 demonstrators, offering a visual representation of our growing movement. We were pleased that our rally earned a variety of TV and print coverage. We also worked closely with a content creator, who used their platform to [amplify](#) our action to new audiences.



In collaboration with some of the same partners, Design It For Us coordinated a [demonstration](#) outside of Apple’s flagship 5th Avenue store in NYC in September. On the day of the official release of the new iPhone, the demonstration aimed to call out Apple’s anticompetitive and harmful practices from on their App Store and



through their business practices. The rally was timed to coincide with when Apple employees would arrive for the work day. Apple CEO Tim Cook himself walked by our demonstration, meeting eyes with many of our advocates. We then hosted a rally featuring remarks from Co-Chair Zamaan Qureshi, who

highlighted the detrimental effects of the monopolist company. We convened together close to 200 demonstrators, including NYC students, parents and frustrated consumers from across the country. The protest earned national and local [coverage](#), including [TV](#).

These events demonstrate the rising power DIFU is generating through in-person activation. Visual representations of widespread dissatisfaction with Big Tech companies like Meta and Apple are difficult to evade, and successfully corner companies into action.

≡ **EYEWITNESS NEWS** abc 7 24/7 Live

Protest at Apple flagship store demanding safety guards on apps to protect kids

By Eyewitness News abc 7
Friday, September 19, 2025



Kids Code, AI Safety Success, and Killing the AI Moratorium

| STATE

True to our foundations, our state policy work continued to be one of the hallmarks of Design It For Us' success this year.

In Vermont, we built a robust grassroots campaign that enabled us to lead the passage of the Age-Appropriate Design Code (AADC). In order to capitalize on a narrow window for the bill's passage, we mobilized a group of young Vermonters to take action in support of the bill. We supported and trained Manchester-based Kaitlynn Cherry to testify before the state legislature, and empowered Peru-based Jonathan Pickarski to organize a rally in support of the bill. The rally generated over two dozen attendees in rural Vermont and was covered on [TV](#) and in the [Manchester Journal](#). To get the bill over the finish line, we organized dozens of calls and over one hundred letters to both legislators and the Governor himself. After a veto in the previous legislative session, we were proud to see the bill [signed into law](#), and [joined](#) the celebration with the bill's champions.

Layering onto our victory in Vermont, we were proud to expand our work into AI safety as we supported bills like California's SB 53 and the RAISE Act in New York. In California, we brought advocates to [a rally in](#)

≡ **Manchester Journal**

TOP STORY

'It's time to break free': Legislators, students rally in Manchester for Age-Appropriate Design

By Danielle M. Crosier, Manchester Journal
May 19, 2025 Updated May 20, 2025

around the block... around the world
harlem world

SUPPORT US



Youth-Led Rally Pushes For AI Safety Legislation At NY State Capitol

JUNE 10, 2025

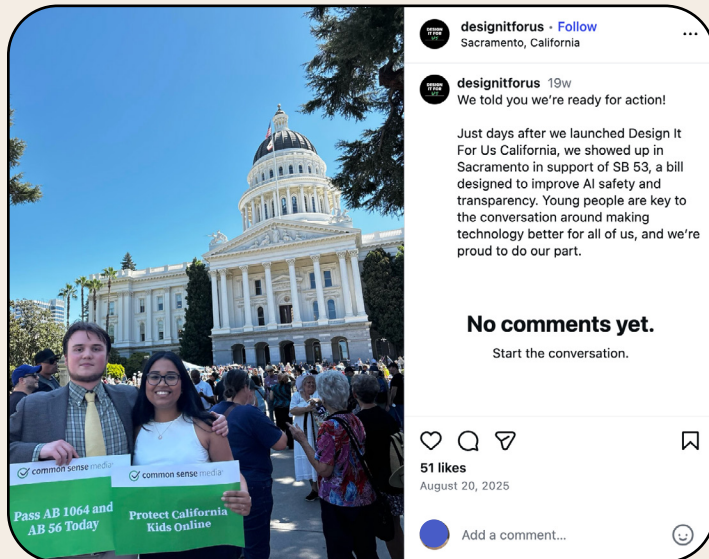


[Sacramento](#) alongside other partners to urge the bill's passage. We also co-organized an [organizational sign-on letter](#) to Governor Newsom, urging him to sign SB 53 into law. We were able to get [press coverage on the letter in State Scoop](#) at a decisive moment. With our support, the pioneering SB-53 is now the first catastrophic risk AI safety bill to become law in the U.S.

Similarly, in New York, we organized and co-led a joint [activation](#) with partners to support the SAFE For All Act and RAISE Act. Design It For Us' Matthew Stevens and Vinaya Sivakumar spoke in support of the bills. The rally helped the RAISE Act advance out of committee and received coverage in [Harlem World Magazine](#). We continued our campaigning by organizing an advocate [letter](#) in support of the bill. Towards the end of the year our Program Lead from New York, Matthew Stevens, co-authored an [op-ed](#) calling for the bill to be signed into law. Our advocacy culminated in the successful passage and signing of the RAISE Act into law, the strongest AI safety law in the country.

FEDERAL

With the turn of the new Congress, tech companies seized on a lag in congressional progress and proposed a 10-year moratorium on states' rights to regulate AI. In defense of the necessary ability for states to protect their constituents, we mobilized our network to contact their members of Congress, driving over 15,000 letters urging them to reject the ban. Alongside hundreds of partner organizations, including Encode and Young People's Alliance, we



helped spearhead a historical and bipartisan campaign, and as a result, the moratorium was defeated 99-1. But tech did not give up its fight, and began exploring inserting a sweeping AI preemption in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) towards the end of the year. Working with our partners, we reactivated our call and email tools, driving an additional 10,000 calls into Congress. We were proud to defeat the proposed ban again in the NDAA.

While proactive legislative victories were few and far between at the federal level, we were pleased to support the passage of the TAKE IT DOWN Act with our [Stop Dangerous Deepfakes campaign](#). The bill was signed into law by the President in May, marking the success of our work to drive grassroots support for one of the only tech-related bills to become law in 2025.

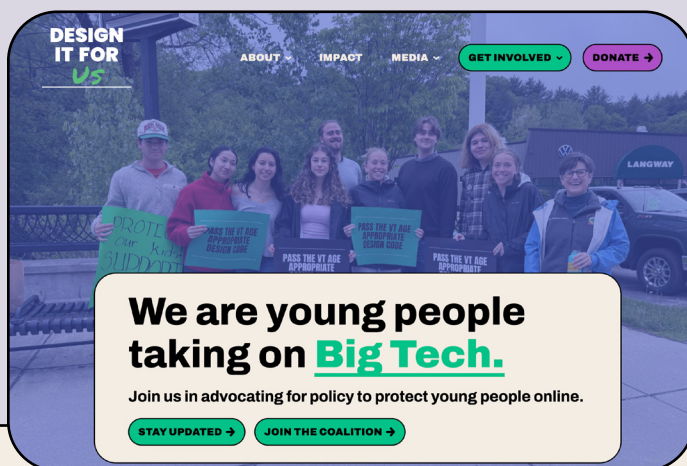
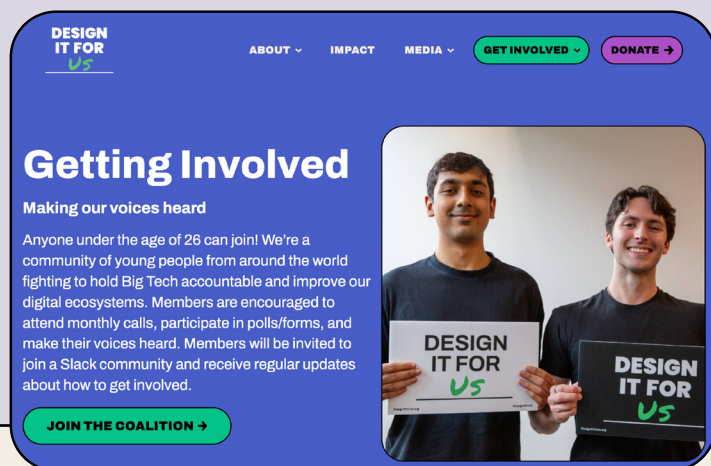
A New Look

Over the past couple years, our coalition has grown from just a handful of young people to hundreds of advocates demanding a change to Big Tech's status quo. Heading into the final quarter of 2025, we determined that it was time to update our website to reflect our tremendous progress!

It's not just what we did, but how we did it. We sought and incorporated feedback from coalition members and community stakeholders throughout the process of the redesign, from functionality, to content, to visuals. Using their notes, we were able to center the youth activists on the ground, make it easier to take action, and launch a refreshed look that reflects our vibrant community and bold vision.

Notably, we launched a "Get Involved" section of the website to streamline members' ability to take action and use our resources, such as our Advocacy page that outlines the progress of key bills on the state and federal level. We also created an Impact page so we can quickly share some of our wins with members and partners.

Thanks to our members and supporters, we're gearing up for the long fight to disrupt Big Tech's toxic business models. Over the next few years, we'll continue to mobilize young people and convene tech leaders to shape a better digital world for everyone, together.

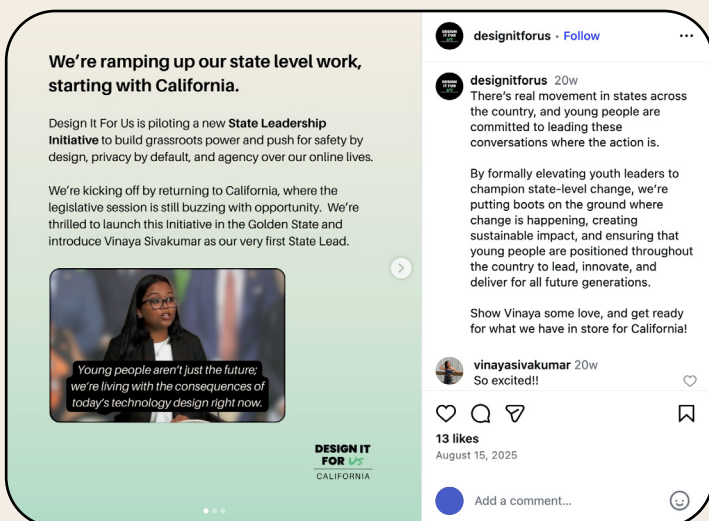


Building a Sustainable Youth Leadership Pipeline

Upon its inception, Design It For Us set out to create a first-of-its-kind leadership pipeline within the responsible tech movement. In a space otherwise closely held by practitioners, academics and high-level leaders, this pathway to impact would enable youth leaders across the country and the world to have easy access to opportunities for spearheading exceedingly necessary change.

In July 2025, we convened our core leadership team in Washington D.C. to build upon the leadership of stellar organizers in DIFU, and double down on the installment of organizational infrastructure that would enable our reach and our success to grow. As an outcome of the convening, we drafted and unveiled our very first

Constitution. The document codifies our programming, policies and processes, including the establishment of three core programmatic verticals – Campaigns, Education and Engagement, and Policy. These verticals are to be led by our Program Leads and overseen by our staff. Our Co-Chairs and Program Leads are positioned to generate opportunities for engagement, and connect current and new members to such opportunities. This establishes the critical link that will enable our membership to move up our leadership pipeline and sustainably propel our movement forward.



Our convening also led to the fortification and formal launch of our State Leadership Initiative. Kicking off in California, this initiative will empower youth leaders in key states to spearhead local and hyper local organizing hubs. In California and states like Michigan, Wisconsin and New York, DIFU leaders will host events and regularly convene advocates in both academic and non-academic communities. This has and will continue to exponentially increase our membership, offering the necessary local connective tissue to our growing global movement.

Piloting a State Organizing Academy

We know that young people have the passion and drive to drive change, but are rarely given dedicated space to learn how to most effectively organize. In conversations with our members, we saw a need to build their confidence to lead this movement.

We created the State Organizing Academy for folks ages 16-26 across the country to learn how to be an effective youth leader through organizing, communications, and advocacy. We created four training sessions that provided key learnings on each skill, with interactive elements throughout to solidify participants' learnings and put them in the driver's seat.

In our community organizing session, we showed participants how to identify a problem in their community and plan a meaningful action to mobilize their peers.

During our communications session, we gave guidance and feedback to folks as they practiced developing

"I'm genuinely grateful for the experience. The program was energizing, inspiring, and incredibly well organized, and I'm excited to take what I've learned into my advocacy and future organizing work."

MALAIKA

DIFU State Organizing
Academy Participant



talking points, sharing their stories, and delivering effective messaging.

We also led a policy session, giving participants the opportunity to learn about the legislative process and gain confidence looking at bill text.

For our last session, we turned it to the participants to reflect on and present their learnings overall.

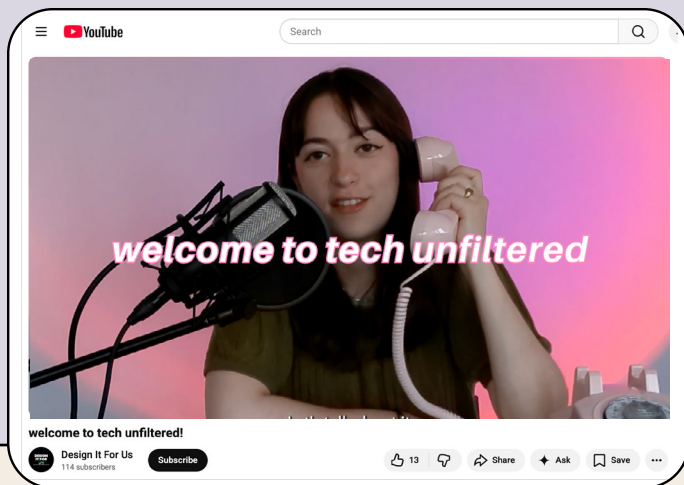
Representatives from five states completed the program, and from their positive feedback and success, we are enthusiastic to repeat the program again.

Peeling Back the Curtain: The Tech Unfiltered Podcast

The responsible tech movement, while making great progress, has often left young people behind, tending to speak above, rather than in conversation with, young people most impacted. This has resulted in young people struggling to see themselves as key players in this fight.

To fill this gap, Design It For Us ventured into the creation of a new brand, aiming to give a refreshing, youthful perspective to responsible technology conversations. Our Co-Chair Arielle Gesimar hosts the regular series, conducting virtual interviews with a variety of guests, from content creator [Wafa Shafiq](#) to an attorney at the social media victims law center, [Laura Marquez-Garrett](#). Tech Unfiltered destigmatizes the shared personal pressures we face online driven by tech, illuminates the solutions, and offers an outlet to help build a better future.

Producing both long form and short form content with an estimated total reach of 60k views, this series promotes a cultural shift towards talking about the lived experiences of young people online from the framework of how platforms are designed.



Competing for Better Online Spaces

For the first time since Design It For Us launched, we expanded the kinds of regulatory theories of change we support to include antitrust and competition policy. Our approach is rooted in the belief that if there is more competition in the social media industry, then better, more productive alternative products can emerge. We introduced this belief to our audiences for the first time when we [authored](#) a piece in Tech Policy Press arguing that breaking up Meta would benefit the protection of young people online.

Building on that, we endorsed the Open App Markets Act and App Store Freedom Act to support the goal of more competitive app ecosystems. We urged the App Store Freedom Act to be marked up by the House Energy and Commerce Committee with a diverse group of partners.



PERSPECTIVE

Why Meta's FTC Trial Matters for Keeping Young People Safe Online

ZAMAAN QURESHI / APR 15, 2025



Apple and Google pretty much run our digital lives,



And connected to our Apple action, we used our social platforms to creatively share why a more competitive app store ecosystem would support better social media on the streets of New York City. [Our educational video starring Co-Chair Zamaan](#) garnered almost 30,000 views.

Recognizing we need to support an ecosystem of alternatives to traditional social media, we started developing plans for an Innovator Circle to bring together alternative platforms under the Design It For Us umbrella. We're looking forward to bringing this work to fruition in 2026.

Notable Press Clips

The Washington Post: [Gen Z users and a dad tested Instagram Teen Accounts. Their feeds were shocking.](#)

CNN: [Instagram will now be PG-13 for teens with Meta's latest update](#)

The Washington Post: [Banning TikTok hasn't made us safe](#)

The New York Times: [Instagram Wants Gen Z. What Does Gen Z Want From Instagram?](#)

Politico: [Do it for the kids](#)

The Chicago Tribune: [Hinsdale native's youth online safety coalition works with parents, others to push for accountability from social media giants](#)

The Bennington Banner: ['It's time to break free': Legislators, students rally in Manchester for Age-Appropriate Design](#)

Roll Call: [Whistleblowers tell Senate panel Meta hid VR harms](#)

TIME: [Instagram Promised to Become Safer For Teens. Researchers Say It's Not Working](#)

Tech Policy Press: [Why Meta's FTC Trial Matters for Keeping Young People Safe Online](#)

Bloomberg: [Apple's iPhone 17 Sales Open to Strong Demand for Pro Models](#)

Business Insider: [Photos show Apple fans lining up around the world for the launch of iPhone 17 and iPhone Air](#)

The Washington Post: [Instagram has announced new teen controls. Critics are wary.](#)

CBS News: [Hundreds of Instagram accounts push graphic real-life violence to millions, CBS News finds](#)

TIME: [The AG Putting Big Tech On Trial](#)

Tech Crunch: [Prince Harry and Meghan call out the harmful effects of social media on today's youth](#)

The Washington Post: [Instagram limits teen accounts as California adds warnings to social media](#)

CNBC: [U.S. federal AI regulation is on the way, Sen. Marsha Blackburn says, regardless of big tech opposition](#)

Bloomberg Government: [Youth Safety Advocates Urge Congress to Uphold State AI Rules](#)

Politico: [AI state preemption plan merges with kids' safety push](#)

The NY Post: [Meta's panic about 'groomers' targeting minors on Instagram surfaces at FTC antitrust trial](#)

Pluribus News: [Neb., Vt. pass Kids Code bills to regulate online platforms for minors](#)

Privacy Daily: [Vermont Governor Expected to Let Kids-Code Bill Become Law](#)

Harlem World Magazine: [Youth-Led Rally Pushes For AI Safety Legislation At NY State Capitol](#)

Digital Trends: [Instagram investigation finds sexual content is served to Teen accounts](#)

West Side Rag: [How A Young and Celebrated Advocate Took Inspiration From the UWS: 'A Really Big Impact'](#)

CBS Radio Canada: [Parents say Snapchat makes it easy for drug dealers to sell to their kids](#)

ABC 7 NY: [Protest at Apple flagship store demanding safety guards on apps to protect kids](#)

The NY Post: [Tim Cook, Knicks star Jalen Brunson make surprise NYC Apple store appearance as new iPhone goes on sale](#)

Hoodline: [Protesters Accuse Apple of Compromising Child Safety Amid iPhone 17 Launch in Manhattan and Cupertino](#)

Pix 11: [iPhone 17 launch met with protests demanding accountability from Apple](#)

State Scoop: [Advocacy groups urge Newsom to sign California's AI bill](#)

CNET: [Young Teens Still Encountering Unsafe Content, Adult Contact on Instagram, Study Shows](#)

Buffalo News: Another Voice: [Students face rules. Why don't AI companies?](#)

NY Post: [New Mexico AG rips Instagram for claiming PG-13 rating system protects kids: 'Dangerous promotional stunt'](#)

Desert News: [Instagram's new PG-13 settings, explained](#)

Sustainable Media Center: [Sustainable Media Center Announces 2024 Social Media Heroes Awards](#)

UNC College of Arts and Sciences: [She took '60 Days to Disconnect' and wrote a book](#)

Media Post: [Commentary Gen Z Leaders Launch Historic Digital Bill of Rights](#)

Mealey's: [Free Speech Protections Cover Humans, Not AI, Amici Tell Judge](#)

Privacy Daily: [Vermont Lawmakers Weigh Harm, Privacy in Kids Code Bill](#)

The Informed Perspective: [Are Teenagers Lost in the Void?](#)

Mashable: [Instagram Teen Accounts still exposed to sexual content, investigation finds](#)

Greater Northshire Access Television: [Rally for the Age Appropriate Design Code](#)

Diversity In Action Magazine: [Leading the Charge](#)

KCTV 5: [A win for parents: Federal AI regulations removed from 'big beautiful bill'](#)

The Lever: [How AI Is Taking Over The U.S. Government](#)

Web Pro News: [Meta Whistleblowers Allege Suppression of VR Child Safety Research](#)

Cyber News: ["You have done nothing" say Meta whistleblower, teen safety advocates at anti-Zuckerberg rally before Connect event](#)

Blood In The Machine: [The Luddite Renaissance is in full swing](#)

Republic World: [Instagram's New Update Will Restrict Teen Accounts to PG-13 Content, But Is It Enough?](#)

Mashable: [Instagram Teen Accounts: Is it just PR?](#)

Web Pro News: [Meta's Wisconsin AI Fortress: Fueling America's Infrastructure Arms Race](#)

WOSU: [Tech Tuesday: Exploring the problem of outer space debris](#)

Mashable: [PSA imagines AI chatbots as creepy humans who harm kids](#)