

UK to require porn sites to verify users are 18 or older

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Britain's government said Tuesday all pornography websites will be legally required to verify that users are 18 or older as part of new online safety rules.

Under the government's draft online safety bill, [porn sites](#) will be legally required to put "robust checks" in place to protect children from

accessing them. Companies could use secure age verification technology to confirm a user has a [credit card](#), or use a third-party service to confirm a user's age against government data.

Officials said that if sites fail to conform they can be fined up to 10% of their annual global turnover. Their sites could also be blocked in the U.K. by the communications regulator, and the companies' bosses could be held criminally liable.

"It is too easy for children to access pornography online. Parents deserve peace of mind that their children are protected online from seeing things no child should see," said Chris Philp, the digital minister.

Currently the online safety bill, which was published in May, only covers commercial porn sites that allow user-generated content. The proposed update announced Tuesday means that all commercial porn sites will be regulated.

Officials said that while the communications regulator could recommend the use of age verification technologies, the onus will be on companies to decide how best to comply with the new rules.

Research has suggested that half of 11 to 13 year olds in the U.K. have seen pornography, and many [younger children](#) have stumbled upon porn online.

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