

Be wise – outsmart online ads and traps!

Click on the characters below to uncover the secrets!



**Discover the
hidden costs of
'free' platforms**



**Beware of
marketing traps**



**Know your
rights online**

The hidden costs of 'free' platforms

Many websites, social media platforms, and apps, like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, or Roblox appear to be totally free. But, **they are not truly free.**



Companies use clever tactics to earn money.



The hidden costs of 'free' platforms

Online ads



Ways to make money include **advertising** – a brand pays to show a commercial message or sponsors a filter on a messaging app such as Snapchat.



Personal data

They might also use or sell **personal data** about you, for instance, to be able to offer you an ad or a post that you will like.



Companies believe that if you like an ad, you will be more likely to buy their product.

The hidden costs of 'free' platforms

Now, when you visit websites or apps, they are like digital detectives.



They gather information about you—your name, age, hobbies, liked posts, followed accounts, location, uploaded pics, and even your device details. It's like they're building a profile, one piece at a time.

The hidden costs of 'free' platforms

Your personalised profile



Companies often advertise to young consumers, such as you. Why? Well, you have some superpowers:

pocket money to spend online

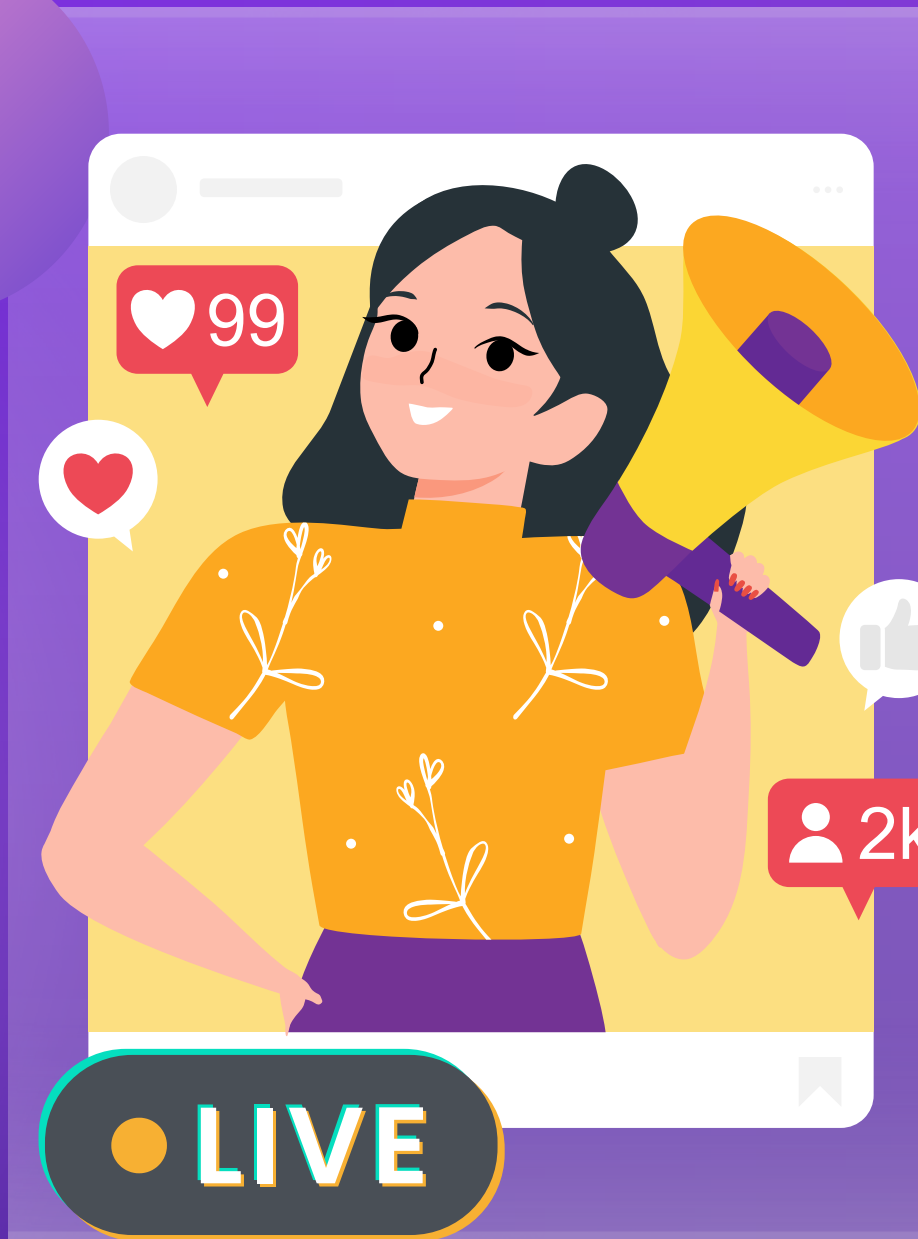
ability to convince your parents what to buy



Beware of marketing traps



● Money matters: influencers



Influencers that you follow online, on platforms like YouTube or TikTok, sometimes **get paid** to talk about products (clothes, skincare, toys, food, etc.), events or travel destinations.

Lots of influencers don't tell you it's an ad (but they should!). They make it look like they're just sharing their real thoughts!



Beware of marketing traps



● Money matters: gaming

In the digital world, cool games and virtual hangouts (like the metaverse) might hide some ads.

You will notice some that are really obvious, like

pop-up ads



Others are less obvious, like

billboards or background surprises



Beware of marketing traps

Tip 1



Ask yourself

- Is this post trying to sell me something?
- Does this information sound reliable?
- How much is it in 'real' money?



Beware of marketing traps

Tip 2



Adjust settings

- Customise privacy settings on your phone, apps, or games.
- Some places let you choose to not see ads, for example, if you sign up or pay once.
- You can switch OFF personalised feeds, to change the kind of posts you see.



Tip 3



Understand your spending

- Discuss online spending with your parents, or an adult you trust.
- Be aware of whether the prices are shown in virtual or real currency.
- Understand the difference and 'real cost' before deciding to buy something.



Beware of marketing traps

Tip 4



Control your data

- Be aware of the terms and conditions of any platforms you use.
- Request information from companies collecting your data.
- Ask them to correct or delete your data, or stop using it for marketing.



As a young person, you have rights:

Know your rights online

1 To enjoy online time, share info, watch fun content, and play games without annoying ads.



2 To keep your personal data safe on social media, apps and games.



3 To be protected from commercial exploitation on social media, apps and games.

This means that companies cannot try to manipulate or influence you in a way that's difficult for you to make your own choice, for instance, to buy an in-game item.

4 To have your voice heard when new rules are made about the online world, and when new tools are designed.



5 To complain if your rights are not respected.

Influencers and companies must follow rules

Know your rights online

Influencers should:



Be open about ads

Ads in videos or pics must say it's an ad. They can use #advertising or #ad, tag brands, or use an app notice.



Companies should:



Keep your data private

New EU rules stop online platforms from showing you ads based on what they know about you.

Companies shouldn't:



Play with your emotions

Companies can't use tricks that make you feel bad or guilty to make you buy stuff.



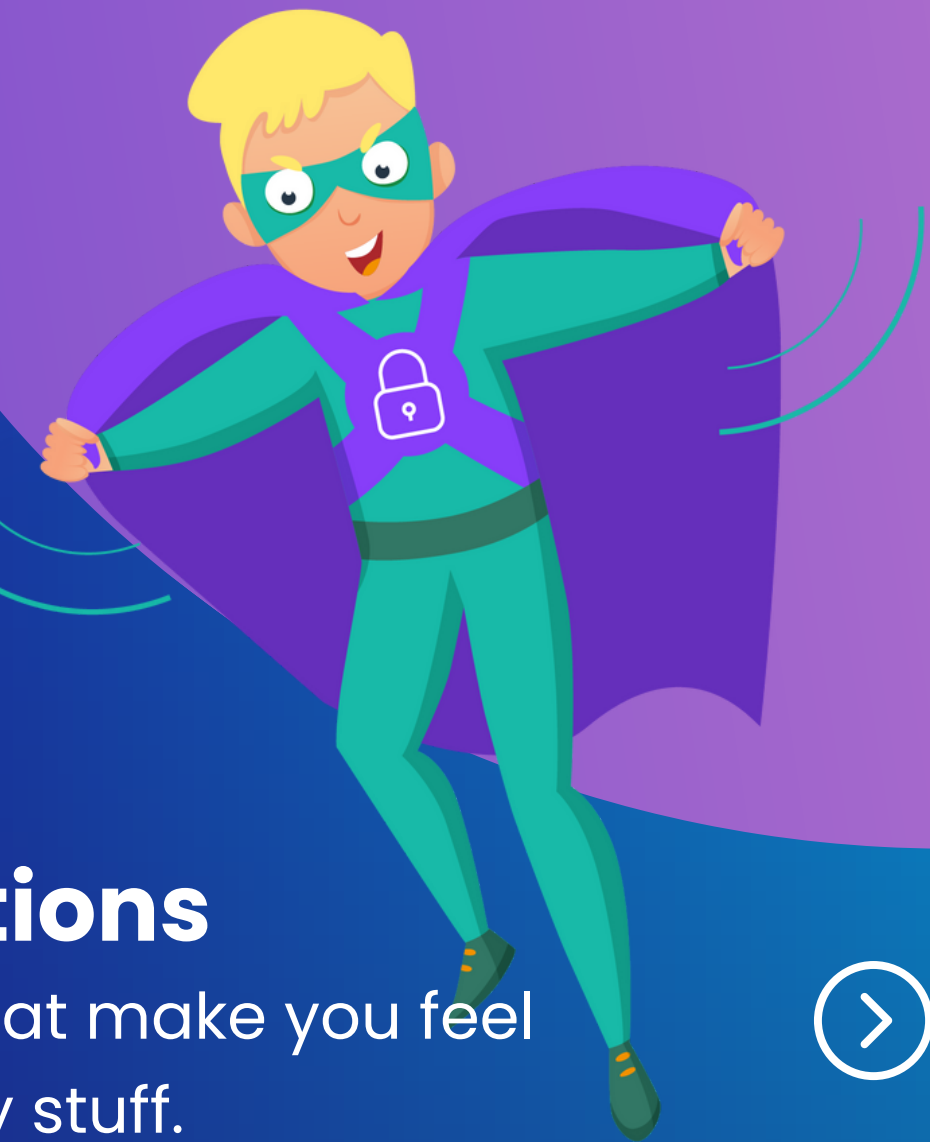
Protect your info

Companies must limit the amount of personal data they collect, especially if used for marketing.



Pressure you

Ads shouldn't pressure you to buy things, or encourage you to ask your parents. Tactics such as countdown timers or rushed offers in games are not allowed.



Know your rights online

Report unsafe content

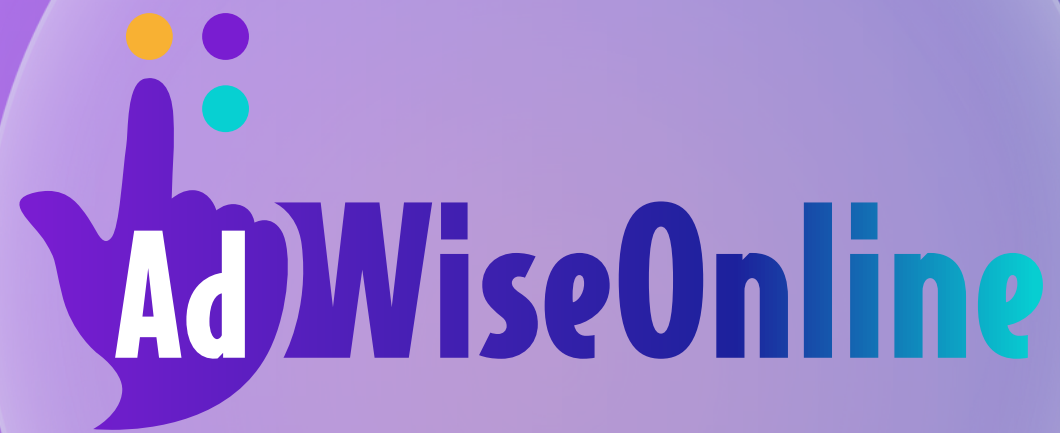
- Report any content that concerns you, or that you think might be harmful.
- Discuss these situations with someone you trust.



Ask for help



If you believe your rights aren't respected, contact your national [Safer Internet Centre](#) for help with reporting or reaching the right authority.



To learn more, check out [AdWiseOnline resources](#) and the [Educational Toolkit for Young Consumers](#) from the European Consumer Centres Network.



Better Internet for Kids

