

2022 'Dirty Dozen List' Calls Out Big Tech for Blatant Sexual Exploitation

On Tuesday, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation announced its annual "Dirty Dozen List" of companies that it alleges are facilitating, enabling and even profiting from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Two years after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, sexual exploitation through the use of the internet remains a big problem. The inclusion of the names of familiar internet and entertainment companies like Google, Meta (Facebook) and Netflix should especially give parents a warning as to what their children are interacting with or watching.

Started in 2013, the Dirty Dozen list has motivated consumers across the country to call on corporations, government agencies and other organizations to change their policies and practices.

"Corporations and popular brands shape our culture and influence the ways we think, act, and feel about ourselves and others. And while many of these entities bring positive benefits and allow us to communicate, learn, work, and relax, unfortunately, many are also fueling sexual exploitation through their business practices, policies, and products," Lina Nealon, director of corporate and strategic initiatives for the NCOSE, said in a statement.

"Children and marginalized people, in particular, are being harmed at record numbers due to increased vulnerabilities created by the pandemic—yet corporations continue watching profits skyrocket without prioritizing user protection and well-being," the statement continued. "We cannot allow this reality to go unchallenged, and our annual Dirty Dozen List

advocates for crucial changes toward corporate social responsibility.”

Some of the companies who made this year’s NCOSE list include:

Discord, a popular communication platform for both adults and children, made the list again this year and it reportedly “consistently fails to address the extensive sexually graphic, violent, and exploitative content on its thousands of private and public channels,” according to the NCOSE. The organization explains “the platform’s inadequate age verification and moderation procedures means millions of children and teen users are left with near-unmitigated exposure to child sexual abuse material, non-consensual pornography trading, and the predatory grooming that are rampant on its platform.”

Even though the NCOSE notes that Google has taken remarkable strides over the past several years to combat sexual exploitation, the organization alleges the platform’s search feature gives “access to real and depicted content of sexual abuse, including graphic videos of sex trafficking, child sexual abuse, and nonconsensually recorded/shared content, as well as illegal and socially damaging-themed content.”

The tech giant has yet to establish sex survivor-centered practices to remove nonconsensual sexual content from its search results. So many victims suffer ongoing trauma as their abuse is replayed over and over online, according to the NCOSE.

Meta is a corporation that owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. NCOSE explains that all of these platforms have been scrutinized as “primary places for grooming, sextortion, child sexual abuse materials, and sex trafficking.”

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