Helping our community stay safe while having fun on TikTok

At TikTok, we love seeing the joy, connection, and inspiration that our platform brings to millions around the world. Fostering an environment where this creative expression thrives requires that we also prioritize safety for our community, and especially our younger community members.

That’s why we launched a global project to better understand young people’s engagement with potentially harmful challenges and hoaxes. While not unique to any one platform, the effects and concerns are felt by all – and we wanted to learn how we might develop even more effective responses as we work to better support teens, parents, and educators. We also hope to contribute to a wider understanding of this area.

We surveyed people and consulted experts from around the world:

- Surveyed more than 10,000 teens, parents, and educators from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Indonesia, Mexico, UK, US, and Vietnam.
- Commissioned Praesidio Safeguarding, an independent safeguarding agency, to write a report to capture key findings and recommendations. The report, written by Dr. Zoe Hilton, Director and Founder of Praesidio Safeguarding can be read here.
- Convened a panel of 12 leading youth safety experts from around the world to review and provide input into Dr. Hilton’s report.
- Partnered with Dr. Richard Graham, a clinical child psychiatrist specializing in healthy adolescent development, and Dr. Gretchen Brion-Meisels, a behavioral scientist specializing in risk prevention in adolescence to guide and advise us.

What we learned about how online challenges and hoaxes are experience:

Online challenges:

Online challenges or dares typically involve people recording themselves doing something difficult, which they share online to encourage others to repeat. The majority are fun and safe, but some promote harmful behaviors including the risk of serious injury.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Online Challenges</th>
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<td>said recent challenges they had seen were safe, categorising them as fun or light-hearted</td>
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<td>said they included some risk but were still safe</td>
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<td>wanted more information and help to understand risk</td>
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We surveyed 10,000 teens, parents and teachers to understand their experiences of online challenges and hoaxes:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Suicide &amp; Self Harm Hoaxes</th>
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<td>felt hoaxes are difficult to talk about without prompting interest in them</td>
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<tr>
<td>teens have felt a negative impact from hoaxes</td>
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Suicide and self-harm hoaxes:

A specific subcategory of dangerous challenges where the element of challenge is fake, but they are designed to be frightening and traumatic and thus have a negative impact on mental health. Hoax challenges are ones that include distressing self-harm or suicide narratives such as Momo or Blue Whale.

What to do if you see an online challenge or hoax

STOP:
Pause a moment.

THINK:
Is it safe? Is it harmful? Is it real? If you're unsure, check with an adult or friends, or look for more information from authoritative sources online.

DECIDE:
If it's risky or harmful, or you're not sure if it is, don't do it. It's not worth putting yourself or others at risk.

ACT:
Report harmful challenges or hoaxes in-app. Don't share them.

What we're doing to build on our existing safeguards:

Strengthening our protection efforts

- Removing warning videos: The research showed how warnings about self-harm hoaxes – even if shared with the best of intentions – can impact the well-being of teens since they often treat the hoax as real. While we currently remove and take action to limit the spread hoaxes, to protect our community we will start to remove alarmist warnings that could cause harm. We will continue to allow conversations to take place that seek to dispel panic and promote accurate information.

- Expanding our enforcement measures: Having strong policies is an important part of our safety strategy, and it's essential that they are coupled with strong detection and enforcement measures. The report identifies enforcement as an important focus for all online platforms. We have expanded technology that helps alert our safety teams to sudden increases in violating content linked to hashtags.

Offering new resources to support our community

- Building on our Safety Center: We've developed a new resource for our Safety Center dedicated to online challenges and hoaxes. This includes advice for caregivers that we hope can address the uncertainty they expressed about discussing this topic with their teens.

- Improving our warning labels and PSAs: Should community members attempt to search for content related to challenges or hoaxes, we have worked to improve the language used in our warning labels and to nudge community members to visit our Safety Center to learn more.