

## [DE] jugendschutz.net annual report once again highlights sexualised violence and extremist hate content as key challenges for the protection of young people online

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In its recently published 2025 annual report on the protection of minors on the internet, jugendschutz.net highlighted current risks and the need for action, once again identifying sexualised violence and extremist hate content as key problems online. AI, including AI-powered chatbots also known as AI companions, played a central role in this context. For instance, minors could be exposed to inappropriate content, including sexualised material, both when interacting with chatbots and on AI-powered social media services such as Butterflies.AI, without any effective age verification having taken place beforehand. For the second year running, jugendschutz.net had dealt with more than 15,000 cases involving depictions of child abuse. jugendschutz.net investigates breaches of child protection regulations both on its own initiative and in response to reports received via an online complaints portal. Sexualised violence accounted for 93% of the cases it had handled.

On Spotify and Discord, jugendschutz.net identified numerous instances of hate speech and criminal extremist symbols, while on TikTok it reported graphic fantasies of hatred and violence towards women and girls. Furthermore, the report criticised the glorification of eating disorders under the hashtag #skinnytok on TikTok, as well as the trivialisation and promotion of risky products such as psychoactive substances or painkillers on social media in general. Overall, TikTok in particular came under criticism, not only because of the content mentioned above, but also due to youth-oriented bait strategies in so-called social commerce or the exploitation of children through family influencing. However, Snapchat's "Spotlight" function also revealed that, despite the age restriction mentioned in the terms and conditions of use, videos of children were being shared by children themselves or their parents and were subsequently subject to sexual comments, for example. The report highlighted the lack of effective age verification in this regard.

Many risks were exacerbated by AI applications that were freely available and could also be used for criminal acts. Although platform operators were legally obliged – under both the Youth Protection Act (*Jugendschutzgesetz*) and the Digital Services Act – to take appropriate precautionary measures to ensure age-

appropriate use of their services, jugendschutz.net concluded that providers were not doing enough to protect children and young people. In this regard, the report focused on new features in services that were particularly popular with minors, such as the shopping feature on TikTok, purchase incentives during live streaming on YouTube, "Spotlight" on Snapchat and community features on WhatsApp. A special review of the music streaming service Spotify, conducted due to increased violations relating, amongst other things, to political extremism and sexualised violence, showed that even after being contacted by jugendschutz.net in its role as a public institution, only a small amount of content had been removed.

jugendschutz.net is the joint centre of expertise established by the federal government, the federal states and the state media authorities to protect children and young people online. It investigates risks in youth-oriented online services and works to eliminate breaches of youth protection regulations and to ensure that services are designed in a way that is appropriate for children and young people.

### ***Jahresbericht 2025 des jugendschutz.net***

[https://www.jugendschutz.net/fileadmin/daten/publikationen/jahresberichte/jahresbericht\\_2025.pdf](https://www.jugendschutz.net/fileadmin/daten/publikationen/jahresberichte/jahresbericht_2025.pdf)

*2025 jugendschutz.net annual report*

### ***PM von jugendschutz.net zum Jahresbericht 2025***

<https://www.jugendschutz.net/artikel/vorstellung-des-jahresberichts-2025-von-jugendschutznet>

*jugendschutz.net press release on the 2025 annual report*

