

FACTSHEET ON AGE ASSURANCE UNDER THE ADS CODE

- IMDA is introducing age assurance requirements under the new Code of Practice for Online Safety for App Distribution Services (ADSs) (the “Code”) as the next step towards enhancing online safety, in view that age assurance technology has significantly evolved to allow for implementation of effective age assurance measures.
- Age assurance has emerged as a measure that governments and regulators worldwide including Australia¹, EU, UK and the US, are introducing to ensure online services are age-appropriate and tailored to children.
- Age assurance refers to systems or processes to establish a person’s age or age range, including age estimation and age verification.
 - Age estimation relies on systems or processes to establish the likely age or age range of a user. It may use Artificial Intelligence, machine learning technology, or facial age analysis algorithm.
 - Age verification relies on verified sources of identification (e.g. digital ID, credit card) to determine the age or age range of a user.
- Designated ADSs can decide the appropriate age assurance measure(s) – either age estimation, age verification, or both – for their services. IMDA will engage designated ADSs over the next few months on the implementation of age assurance. Designated ADSs will be required to submit an implementation plan to IMDA that provides details of how it intends to comply with the age assurance requirements.
- The implementation plan will include:
 - Details on how designated ADSs intend to implement age assurance to determine whether a user is a child with reasonable accuracy, while ensuring the measure(s) proposed comply with existing data protection provisions². For a start, designated ADSs are expected to prevent children from accessing its highest age rated apps, e.g. 18+; and
 - Timeline of implementing age assurance.
- IMDA will continue to work closely with the industry on the age assurance requirements and implementation, taking into consideration industry and international practices and standards.

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¹ Australia has adopted a similar approach that requires ADSs and other online services to ascertain the age of users by implementing age assurance measures.

² Existing data protection provisions include the Personal Data Protection Act 2012 (“PDPA”) and the relevant advisory guidelines issued by the Personal Data Protection Commission, such as the Advisory Guidelines on the PDPA for Children’s Personal Data in the Digital Environment. Designated ADSs are required to practise data minimisation, i.e. to collect the minimum amount of personal data that is necessary for the purpose of establishing the age or age range of a user, and to publish information about their data protection policies and practices.