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Office of the Director
Bureau of Consumer Protection

CLOSING REMARKS FOR FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION'S WORKSHOP ON
AGE VERIFICATION TECHNOLOGIES

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* The views expressed in these remarks are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Trade Commission.

Good afternoon. I am Chris Mufarrige, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. I would like to thank everyone who made today's workshop possible, including the staff from the Division of Privacy and Identity Protection who organized today's event, and the thoughtful speakers and panelists we've heard from today.

It is fitting that we are discussing children's privacy and age verification ("AV") on Data Privacy Day. This is a perfect time for me to reiterate that there is no consumer protection work more important than protecting our children online. As Chairman Ferguson said this morning, the Trump-Vance FTC is dedicated to vigorous enforcement of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA")—both because of our commitment to enforcing the laws Congress has entrusted to us, and because vindicating parents' ability to make decisions about their children's online activity is critical to a flourishing society. Our COPPA-related enforcement actions speak for themselves. For example, we are taking action against the operators of the Sendit anonymous messaging app for allegedly unlawfully collecting personal information from children.¹ We also settled actions alleging violations of COPPA with Disney, as Chairman Ferguson described, as well as with robot toy maker Apitor.² And we are using Section 5 to protect kids online, such as our action against the operators of Pornhub and other pornographic sites for allegedly deceiving consumers about efforts to crack down on child sexual abuse material and other nonconsensual sexual content.³

As we've heard today, age verification technologies will play an enormously important role in protecting kids online. But, currently, using certain AV technologies may be in tension with COPPA because some technologies require collecting personal information to verify a child's age before parental notice and consent is possible. COPPA—a statute designed to empower parents and protect children online—should not be an impediment to the most child-protective technology to emerge in decades. The Commission is exploring potential solutions to this apparent inconsistency between COPPA and certain AV technologies.

¹ Press Release, FTC, *FTC Alleges Sendit App and its CEO Unlawfully Collected Personal Data from Children, Deceived Users About Messages, Subscription Memberships* (Sept. 29, 2025), <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/09/ftc-alleges-sendit-app-its-ceo-unlawfully-collected-personal-data-children-deceived-users-about>.

² Press Release, FTC, *FTC Takes Action Against Robot Toy Maker for Allowing Collection of Children's Data without Parental Consent* (Sept. 3, 2025), <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/09/ftc-takes-action-against-robot-toy-maker-allowing-collection-childrens-data-without-parental-consent>.

³ Press Release, FTC, *FTC Takes Action Against Operators of Pornhub and other Pornographic Sites for Deceiving Users About Efforts to Crack Down on Child Sexual Abuse Material and Nonconsensual Sexual Content* (Sept. 3, 2025), <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/09/ftc-takes-action-against-operators-pornhub-other-pornographic-sites-deceiving-users-about-efforts>.

As we move towards wider adoption of AV technologies, we need to continue to learn more about them. The Commission has long played an important role in encouraging empirical work on technological issues. Indeed, next month, we'll be holding a workshop on Injuries and Benefits in the Data-Driven Economy that will convene economists, academics, and other experts to examine how the agency can better understand and measure consumer injuries and benefits that may result from the collection, use, or disclosure of consumer data.⁴

We need empirical work related to AV technologies. Some panelists have raised important issues about accuracy, ease of circumvention, and privacy, which suggest that certain AV technologies may be better in certain contexts. As the marketplace adopts AV technologies, the Commission needs to understand which methods, and which contexts, mitigate these concerns. I encourage those of you listening today—and the policy, business and research communities as a whole—to advance empirical work to support the adoption of AV technologies for the protection of children online.

⁴ FTC Workshop, *Consumer Injuries and Benefits in the Data-Driven Economy* (Feb. 26, 2026), <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/events/2026/02/consumer-injuries-benefits-data-driven-economy>.