SHOW for Platforms — SHOW v2.1 Platform Addendum

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Extends: SHOW Standard v2.1 (Spice · Heat · OMG · WTF)
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Scope: social media, video-sharing, livestreaming, messaging-with-feeds and any platform that serves user-generated content to minors

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Why this addendum exists

Governments are responding to youth harm online by banning young people from platforms outright. A ban treats every child, and every parent, the same. It removes the guidance diligent parents have given their children, and children who understand technology find ways around it.

SHOW for Platforms offers a different route: **every piece of content carries an open rating, parents set a ceiling for their own child, and an independent body checks that the ratings are honest.** Young people can take part safely. Parents decide. Platforms are measured on accuracy instead of fined because a child slipped through.

SHOW is free to adopt. No licence fee and no permission are needed to use it.

The rights basis

Australia signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, but has not written it into Australian law. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child asked Australia to do so in its 2012 and 2019 reviews. The articles this addendum is built on:

- **Article 5** — governments must respect the right of parents to guide their child "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child."
- **Article 12** — children's views must be given due weight in matters affecting them.
- **Article 13** — the child's right to seek, receive and impart information through any media of the child's choice.
- **Article 17** — access to information from a diversity of national and international sources, alongside guidelines to protect children from harmful material.
- **Article 18** — parents have primary responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- **General Comment No. 25 (2021)** — the UN Committee's guidance that restrictions on children's digital access must be necessary and proportionate, and that children's participation rights must be balanced with protection.

SHOW for Platforms gives effect to these together: protection through content ratings and flags, participation through access within a ceiling, and parental guidance through a ceiling the parent sets and raises as the child's capacity grows.

Part 1 — SHOW content levels on platforms

1.1 The content field

Every item a platform serves — post, video, reel, story, image, comment, ad, livestream — carries a SHOW rating as machine-readable metadata.

```
{
  "show": {
    "version": "2.1",
    "s": 1,
    "h": 0,
    "o": 2,
    "w": 3,
    "rated_by": "creator | platform | reviewer",
    "rated_at": "2026-11-05T09:00:00+11:00",
    "flags": []
  }
}
```

Inline display format: `SHOW S1·H0·O2·W3`

On web pages the rating is also published in page metadata so browsers, search engines and parental-control tools can read it:

```
<meta name="show-rating" content="S1·H0·O2·W3; v=2.1">
```

1.2 Who rates

Ratings are set in three layers. The highest credible rating wins.

1. **Creator** — four sliders at upload. Takes seconds.
2. **Platform classifier** — the platform maps its existing content-scanning results (nudity, violence, distress, etc.) onto the four axes. If the classifier rates higher than the creator, the classifier's rating stands.
3. **Reviewers** — viewer flags and disputed items go to human review. Disagreements use the SHOW suggestion sliders already used on r8rly.com.

1.3 Short-form rules

- **Peak rule.** Rate the strongest moment, not the average. A ten-second clip with one graphic second is rated on that second.
- **Clips inherit.** A clip cut from a film, series, game or book trailer carries the source work's rating unless a human reviewer re-rates it.
- **Audio counts.** Lyrics, sound effects and voiceover are part of the content.
- **Comments are rated on their own.** From Phase 2 (see 1.7), a comment above a viewer's ceiling is hidden from that viewer even if the post is within it.
- **Livestreams.** The streamer declares a rating before going live. If live monitoring finds the stream above a youth viewer's ceiling, the stream is age-gated for that viewer with a warning, rather than viewers being ejected automatically. This applies from Phase 3 (see 1.7).
- **Edits re-rate.** Any edit to content triggers a fresh rating.
- **Ads carry SHOW.** An ad may not be served to anyone whose ceiling it exceeds.
- **Unrated content.** During the phased rollout (see 1.7), unrated content falls back to the platform's existing teen content settings. Once a phase is complete, unrated content in that phase's scope is hidden from youth accounts.

1.4 SHOW levels with platform examples

SHOW v2.1 levels, with platform examples in italics showing how each level appears in everyday platform content.

🌶 **Spice (0–6)** — Physical explicitness — on-page or on-screen intimacy and detail.
- 0 Untouched — Kissing only. Door fully closed. *Platform example: no sexualised content beyond a kiss.*
- 1 Suggestive — Fade-to-black, implied intimacy. *Platform example: innuendo, suggestive dance, implied intimacy.*
- 2 Open-Door — On-page intimacy with discretion. Sensation over anatomy.
- 3 Explicit — Anatomically clear, multiple scenes.
- 4 Carnal — High-frequency explicit scenes. Intimacy is load-bearing.
- 5 Hardcore — Kink, BDSM, power exchange at standard intensity.
- 6 Saturated — Explicit intimacy is the dominant content.

🔥 **Heat (0–5)** — Emotional temperature — longing, romantic intensity, intimacy of soul.
- 0 Cool — Romance incidental or absent.
- 1 Warm — Affection, light flirtation. *Platform example: crush posts, friendship affection.*
- 2 Glowing — Attraction acknowledged. Lingering looks, first kisses. *Platform example: couple content.*
- 3 Burning — Slow-burn intensity. Yearning.
- 4 Blazing — Vulnerable confessions, soul-bared scenes.
- 5 Wildfire — The relationship is the spine of the story.

⬤ **OMG (0–5)** — Darkness of tone — heaviness, peril, grief, violence, psychological weight.
- 0 Light — Sweet, cozy, comedy, family. *Platform example: pets, cooking, hobbies, learning.*
- 1 Shaded — Mild angst, mild peril. *Platform example: pranks, fails, mild scares.*
- 2 Dim — On-page violence, dark themes with restraint. *Platform example: news of injury or conflict shown with restraint.*
- 3 Dark — Captivity, stalker, trauma, MC/mafia, war. *Platform example: real violence or war footage.*
- 4 Black — Transgressive, dub-con, brutality.
- 5 Abyssal — Extreme — content-warning gated.

⚡ **WTF (0–10)** — Transgression — taboo dynamics, wildness of content choices.
- 0–2 Vanilla — Conventional, no taboo. *Platform example: ordinary content, silly humour.*
- 3–4 Edgy — Mild transgression, age gap. *Platform example: crude or shock humour.*
- 5–6 Wild — Step-relationships, captivity-coded, antihero.
- 7–8 Unhinged — Strong taboo, dub-con romantically framed.
- 9–10 Off the Rails — Non-con as central trope, extreme taboos.

Coarse language is recorded in the content-warning tags, not on the four SHOW axes.

1.5 The parent ceiling

Each youth account has a **SHOW ceiling** — a maximum value on each axis. Content above the ceiling on **any** axis is not served: feed, search, recommendations, comments, ads and livestreams.

The ceiling is set by the parent or guardian through the platform's family controls. The parent can raise or lower any axis at any time as the child shows capacity. This respects the parent's role in guiding a child "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child" (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 5).

Suggested starting ceilings (defaults only — the parent decides). WTF is banded in SHOW v2.1, so WTF ceilings sit at the top of a band.

Age	Starting ceiling	Closest film classification (AU)
Under 10	S0 · H1 · O1 · W2	G
10–12	S0 · H2 · O1 · W2	PG
13–15	S1 · H3 · O2 · W4	M
16–17	S1 · H4 · O2 · W4	MA15+

The classification column is a familiar reference point for parents, not an official equivalence.

For 16–17, a parent may raise Spice to 2, OMG to 3 or WTF to 6. These start lower by default; on social platforms OMG 3 includes real-world violence rather than fiction.

1.6 Mapping existing platform labels

Platforms may map their existing content labels and maturity settings onto SHOW values instead of rebuilding them. Each platform publishes its mapping to r8rly.org. The audit (Part 5) checks that the mapping produces accurate SHOW values. SHOW levels themselves are not altered by any mapping.

1.7 Phased scope

SHOW for Platforms is adopted in phases:

- **Phase 1 (core)** — public content surfaces, new uploads, youth accounts, ads, flags (Part 2) and youth account defaults (Part 3).
- **Phase 2** — comments, and back-rating existing content.

- **Phase 3** — livestreams.

Private one-to-one and ephemeral messaging is out of scope.

Part 2 — Flags: auto-detected, country-gated

Some harms are not about how explicit or dark content is, so they sit outside the four axes. Platforms can already detect most of them. SHOW records them as **flags** — yes/no tags applied automatically on upload, each with an age gate.

Flag	Detected from	Default gate
`self-harm-ed` — self-harm or eating-disorder promotion	images, video frames, captions, audio, known code words	Hidden from all youth accounts; support resources shown instead
`dangerous-challenge`	video analysis plus trending-challenge lists	Hidden under 18
`bullying` — harassment or pile-on	comment patterns, reports, reply velocity	Hidden and held for review
`gambling`	outbound links, betting-site lists, odds and wagering content	Legal gambling age of the viewer's country
`scam`	outbound links, known scam patterns	Blocked for all ages

2.1 Jurisdiction table

Age gates for flags are read from a **jurisdiction table** — the same principle pubs and clubs follow for local liquor and gaming law. The platform applies the gate for the viewer's country or state.

```
{
  "jurisdictions": {
    "AU": { "gambling": 18 },
    "NZ": { "gambling": 18 },
    "GB": { "gambling": 18 },
    "US-NV": { "gambling": 21 }
  }
}
```

r8rly.org maintains the reference table; platforms may apply stricter local rules.

2.2 Honest limits

Automatic detection is not perfect. Communities promoting harm use coded language to avoid filters, and classifiers also flag innocent content. For this reason the SHOW audit (Part 5) measures **flag accuracy** as well as SHOW label accuracy.

Part 3 — Youth account defaults

Contact risk is about who can reach a child, not about content, so it is handled as account settings.

Every youth account must default to:

- No direct messages from adults the child is not connected to, unless the parent allows it
- No appearing in "people you may know" suggestions to unconnected adults
- Location sharing off
- Livestreaming off for under-13s; for 13–17, streams viewable only by connections unless the parent allows otherwise
- The SHOW ceiling for the child's age (Part 1.5) until the parent changes it

The audit checks these defaults are on.

Part 4 — The Learning Dividend

The mechanics that make platforms compulsive — streaks, rewards, personalised recommendations, "up next" — can be pointed at learning. Apps built on these mechanics already teach languages to millions of people. The Learning Dividend turns them toward education and pays for it.

The Learning Dividend is a separate, optional module. It is not a condition of SHOW Certified™.

4.1 How it works

1. **Curriculum tag.** A creator tags content to specific syllabus outcomes (for example NESA in NSW, ACARA nationally, or the equivalent body in other countries).
2. **Verification.** Teachers or education reviewers confirm the tag. r8rly.org rates the content's educational quality. Unverified tags earn nothing, which makes the tag harder to game.
3. **Push capacity.** Verified curriculum content receives algorithmic priority in youth feeds in the matching state or country.
4. **Creator income.** Creators of verified educational content are paid from a platform-funded education pool. Making good learning content pays better than making manipulative content.
5. **School-region income.** A share of the pool is paid to the school region where the student viewers are, counted in aggregate by region and never per child.

4.2 Rules

- **No advertising to children funds the pool.** The pool is funded by the platform — through its certification commitment or a set share of revenue — not by profiling-based ads to minors. (Article 28(2) of the EU Digital Services Act already bans profiling-based advertising to a user where the platform is reasonably certain the user is a minor.)
- **Privacy by design.** Regional counts come from aggregated viewing data. No individual student tracking.
- **Open learning library (index).** r8rly.org keeps an open youth-learning catalogue of verified educational content: title, creator, curriculum tags, SHOW rating, educational-quality rating and a link to where the content lives. The content itself stays hosted by the platform or the creator. Creators opt in, and only content they hold the rights to may be listed. Content the creator chooses to release under CC BY-SA is marked as freely reusable. A partner host for CC BY-SA copies may be added later.

4.3 Open questions

The Learning Dividend needs agreement between platforms, education authorities, creators and families on: the size and source of the pool, who verifies curriculum tags in each jurisdiction, and how payments reach school regions. These are set out for consultation, not settled by this addendum.

Part 5 — Oversight and audit

5.1 Free to adopt, paid to be audited

- Any platform may use SHOW labels, flags and ceilings at no cost.
- A platform that wants to claim **SHOW Certified™** must be certified by an independent certification body after passing its audit.

5.2 Who does what

- **r8rly.org is the governing body for the SHOW Standard.** It publishes the SHOW Standard, this addendum, the SHOW audit criteria (so every certifier tests the same way) and the jurisdiction table. It licenses use of the SHOW Certified™ mark to independent certification bodies and keeps a public list of platforms that independent certifiers have certified. r8rly.org does not certify platforms or run audits.
- **Independent certification bodies certify.** They take platforms on as clients, run the audits at their own cost and risk, carry their own liability and insurance, and obtain their own accreditation. One certification body may cover several countries.
- **Who pays whom.** Platforms pay the certification body for the audit. Certification bodies pay r8rly.org for use of the mark. Platforms pay nothing to r8rly.org. Part of r8rly.org's licence income goes to the open youth-learning catalogue and to community and not-for-profit education programs.

5.2a Fees

r8rly.org's fees never depend on the number of platforms certified or on whether a platform passes or fails.

5.3 What the audit checks

- **Label accuracy** — a random sample of content is rated blind by trained reviewers and compared with the platform's SHOW labels.
- **Flag accuracy** — sampled content is checked for missed and false flags.
- **Gate integrity** — youth accounts are tested to confirm content above the ceiling, and flagged content, is not served.
- **Youth defaults** — Part 3 settings are confirmed on.
- **Mapping accuracy** — where a platform maps existing labels (1.6), the mapping is checked to produce accurate SHOW values.
- **Learning Dividend reporting** — applies only to platforms that opt in to the Learning Dividend; pool size, payments and privacy are checked.

5.4 Audit reports and the public register

The certification body delivers the full audit report to the platform and the relevant regulator. The platform has a right of reply before the report is finalised. The certification body notifies r8rly.org of the platform's certification status, and r8rly.org lists that status only — certified or not certified, and the date — on a public register built from those notices. A platform below the threshold is not certified until the issues are fixed and re-audited.

5.5 Regulatory fit

SHOW for Platforms is designed to help platforms meet duties they already have:

- **Australia** — eSafety's Phase 2 industry codes on age-restricted material, and a basis for proposing youth services certified against the SHOW audit criteria as a class of service for exemption under the social media minimum age rules
- **European Union** — Digital Services Act duties on the protection of minors (including the Article 28(2) ban on profiling-based advertising where the platform is reasonably certain the user is a minor) and annual independent audits for very large platforms
- **United Kingdom** — Online Safety Act children's safety duties

The Australian position. Australia's social media minimum age law requires platforms to take reasonable steps to prevent under-16s holding accounts, regardless of parental consent, so SHOW certification does not override it. Exemptions under the Minister's legislative rules apply to classes of service; youth services certified against the SHOW audit criteria are put forward as a proposed class of service for exemption. In the EU, UK and other countries without a ban, SHOW for Platforms applies directly as a way to meet existing child-safety duties.

Part 6 — Governance

6.1 r8rly.org

- r8rly.org is the governing body for the SHOW Standard, in the way a standards body governs a standard. It does not certify or audit. It is separate from r8rly.com.
- r8rly.org is funded by the r8rly.com ratings site and puts those funds back into communities and not-for-profit organisations. Mark licence fees paid by certification bodies add to that funding.

6.2 Independence

- r8rly.org keeps a written conflict-of-interest policy covering its relationship with r8rly.com, published at r8rly.org.
- A written separation charter between r8rly.org and r8rly.com, published at r8rly.org, sets out that r8rly.com has no role in audits or certification decisions.
- Certification decisions are made by the independent certification body under the published SHOW audit criteria, not by r8rly.com.
- The audit criteria are published in full.
- **Open changes.** Proposed changes to the SHOW audit criteria are published for public comment before they take effect.

- **Advisory panel.** An advisory panel of parents, educators and child-safety specialists will be formed to review proposed changes to the audit criteria. The panel advises; r8rly.org remains the governing body for the standard.
- **No commercial use by r8rly.com.** The separation charter also provides that r8rly.com does not publish ratings of certified platforms or use SHOW certification in its own marketing.
- Certification bodies seek accreditation to ISO/IEC 17065 (for example through JAS-ANZ) to certify against the SHOW audit criteria, with IAF multilateral recognition in member countries.

6.3 Independent certification bodies

- r8rly.org does not set up an organisation in each country. Existing accredited certification bodies that already audit companies internationally can take SHOW platforms on as clients, under a licence to use the SHOW Certified™ mark.
- Each certification body carries its own liability, insurance and accreditation. One body may cover several countries, and a small number can cover the major platforms worldwide.

6.4 Contracts, publication and privacy

- Every audit runs on a signed agreement between the certification body and the platform, covering scope, fee, data access, confidentiality, the platform's right of reply, reporting to the relevant regulator, notice of certification status to r8rly.org for the public register, and a liability cap.
- The public register shows certification status only, released under the platform's contractual consent.
- **Safe harbour.** Certification is not an admission of liability, and audit findings are given under the agreed audit terms.
- Platform data handled during an audit is covered by a data-processing agreement complying with the Australian Privacy Act and, for EU users, the GDPR.

6.5 The marks

- The SHOW Standard is free under CC BY-SA 4.0.
- SHOW Certified™, SHOW Standard™, the R8rly Compass mark and "R8rly-verified" are marks of r8rly.org. Only platforms certified by an independent certification body licensed to use the mark may display SHOW Certified™.

Part 7 — Rollout

1. **Publish** this addendum on GitHub (R8rly/show) and r8rly.org, with plain-language explainers for parents, platform providers, education departments and government, and a one-page platform integration guide.
2. **Submit to eSafety** showing SHOW for Platforms as a way to meet the Phase 2 codes, and proposing youth services certified against SHOW as a class of service for exemption.
3. **Engage with the European Commission** under the Digital Services Act.
4. **Pilot in Australia** with one platform and one independent certification body.
5. **Expand** to further certification bodies covering the EU and UK.
6. **Consult** on the optional Learning Dividend with education authorities, creators, platforms and families.

What SHOW for Platforms does not do

- It does not replace a platform's legal obligations.
- It does not rate a child, track a child or decide for a parent.
- It does not certify that content is "safe" — it tells parents and platforms what is in it, so each family can decide.

Sources

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child — Articles 5, 12, 13, 17, 18
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 25 (2021) on children's rights in relation to the digital environment — https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3906061
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- eSafety Commissioner, "Platforms restrict access to 4.7 million under-16 accounts across Australia" — https://esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/platforms-restrict-access-to-47-million-under-16-accounts-across-australia
- eSafety Commissioner, "Early insights from eSafety's comprehensive evaluation project" — https://esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/early-insights-from-esafetys-comprehensive-evaluation-project
- SHOW Standard v2.1 — https://github.com/R8rly/show · https://r8rly.com/categories/books-media/#show-standard

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