



Family  
Online Safety  
Institute

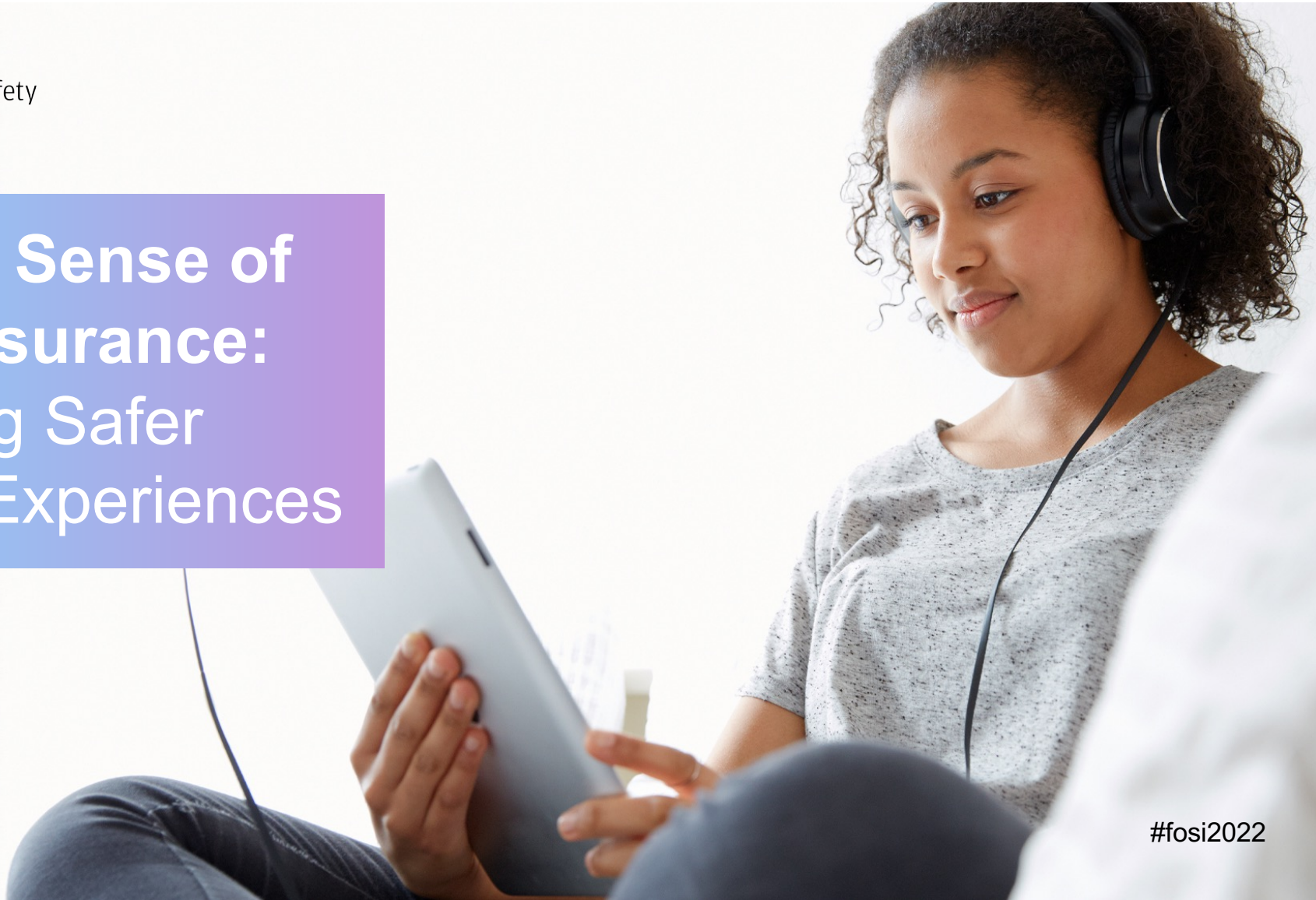
# Making Sense of Age Assurance: Enabling Safer Online Experiences

Conducted by

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#fosi2022

# Goals for Today

Orient you to the FOSI 2022 study

Share the story of what we learned

Set the stage for discussion

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## Research Objectives

- Explore awareness, attitudes, and behaviors of both parents and children regarding age assurance
- Assess perceived effectiveness of current methods and receptivity to future solutions
- Identify similarities and differences among parents and children in the United States, United Kingdom and France

## Approach

### Qualitative

- 3-day online journal
- Parents and children aged 9-12 and 13-17 in the US and UK as well as children aged 10-14 and 15-17 in France

### Quantitative

- n=1,000 (combined parent and child responses) in the US, UK, and France, for n=3,000 sample
- Fielded among parents and children aged 13-17 years old



# Setting the Context

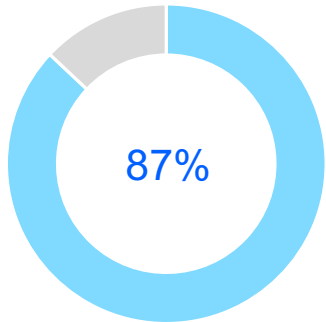


## Parents are engaged gatekeepers

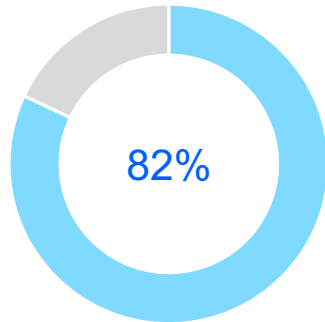
% of parents that use or have used tech tools to monitor their children's online usage



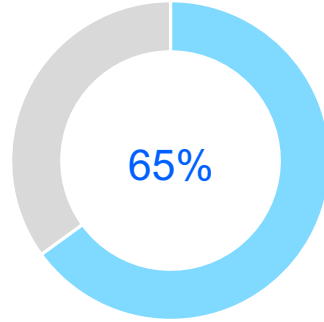
US



UK



FR



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\*Tech tools include parental controls for content (websites, apps), parental controls for in-app purchases, parental controls restricting access to certain online games, software to monitor where child/ren go online, apps to monitor usage/set controls on devices



## Parental oversight comes at a cost—time & tension

Average time parents spend monitoring online activity weekly (in hours)



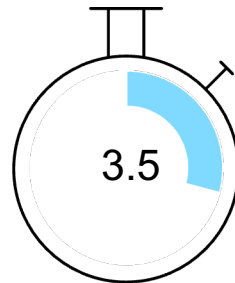
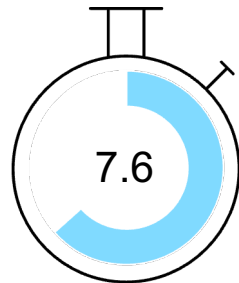
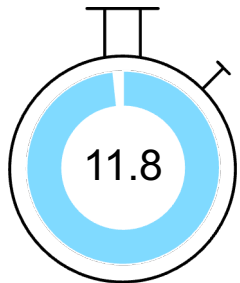
US



UK



FR



*“I want to monitor what my daughter is watching and who she is talking to, but I also want to respect her privacy. It’s a thin line that my wife and I discuss often.”*

Mother of 9 to 12 year-old, US

*“When younger, we could control exactly what was on his phone and then as he got older let him make more choices to control his phone.”*

Father of 13 to 17 year-old, US

# Monitoring sparks mixed emotions among children

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**% of children agree “my parents monitor my online activity to protect me from harm”**



**Child Impression: Find their parent(s) restrictive in managing online activity (Top-2-Box Agreement)**



## Children generally understand and accept the rules



*"I use [social media] and my mum has set the account to private to help me stay safe. Think the rules are there so other people are not inappropriate online and to not get cyber bullied." Child, 9-12, UK*



*"I don't have much choice, if my mum finds out I'm not following her rules she'll take my phone and get the controls back from the play. She managed to hold out for 3 months on the play. I don't want that kind of punishment anymore." Child, 15-17 years old, France*

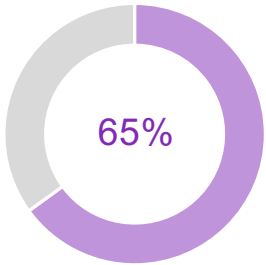


## Children want a seat at the table

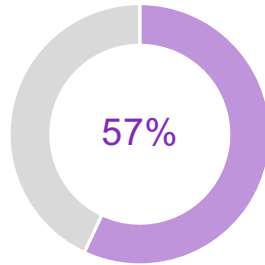
% of children agree “I wish my parents took my opinion into account more on what/how they manage technology use” (*Top-2-Box Agreement*)



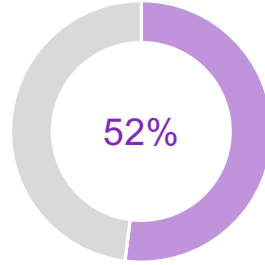
US



UK



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“My parents don’t trust me to safely use the Internet” (*Top-2-Box Agreement*)



49%



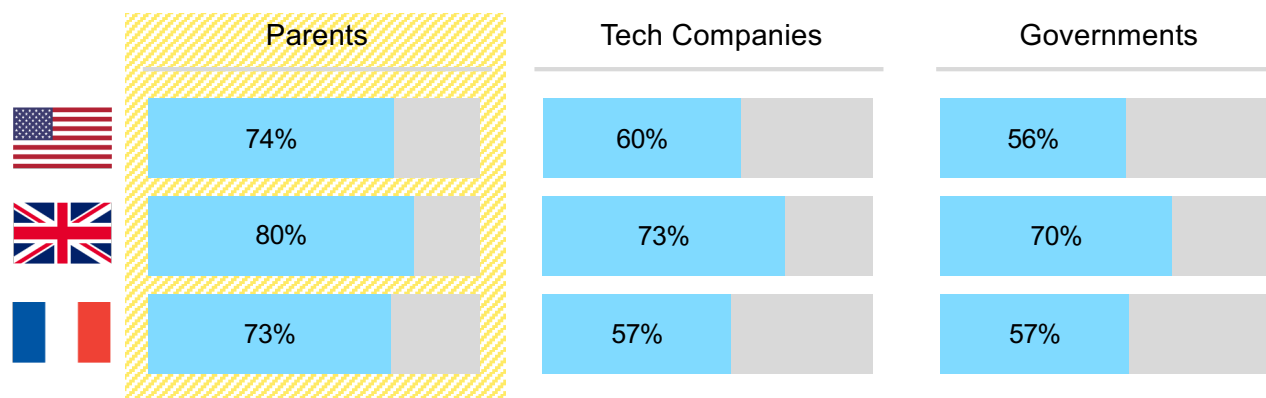
38%



33%

## Parents accept the onus of responsibility

### Parents View on Where Responsibility Falls on Groups Managing Age-Appropriate Content (Top-2-Box: High Responsibility)



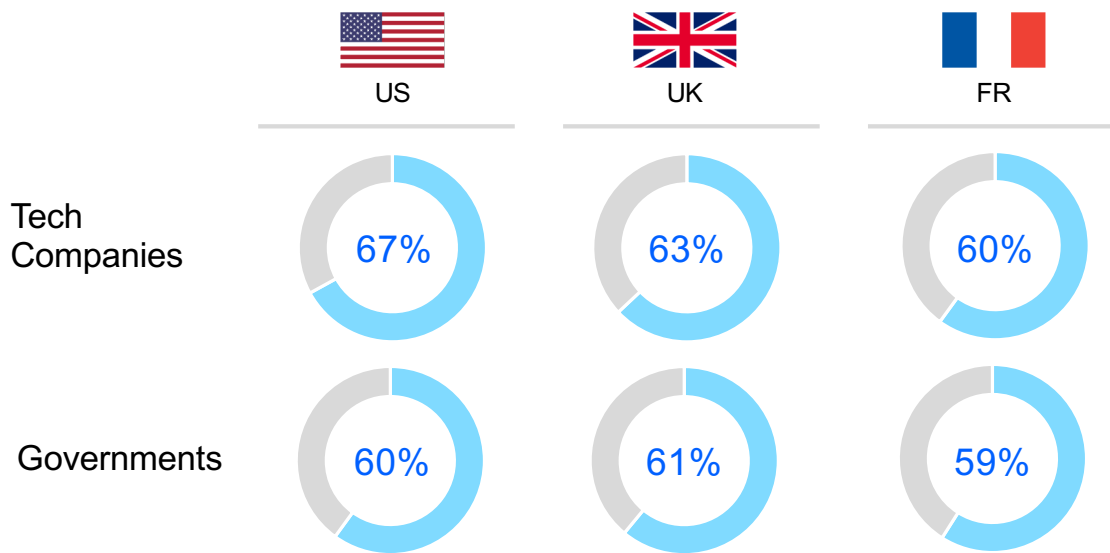
“My worries have increased over the years as there seems to be little policing of content by providers. I hope that I am doing enough, but fear that I am not.”

Mother of 13 to 17 year-old, US



## Examining the role of tech, government

% of parents that believe industry and governments should be more involved in protecting children online



*“They [industry companies] are also responsible because they are the ones who give the rules. They have a very important role to play.”*

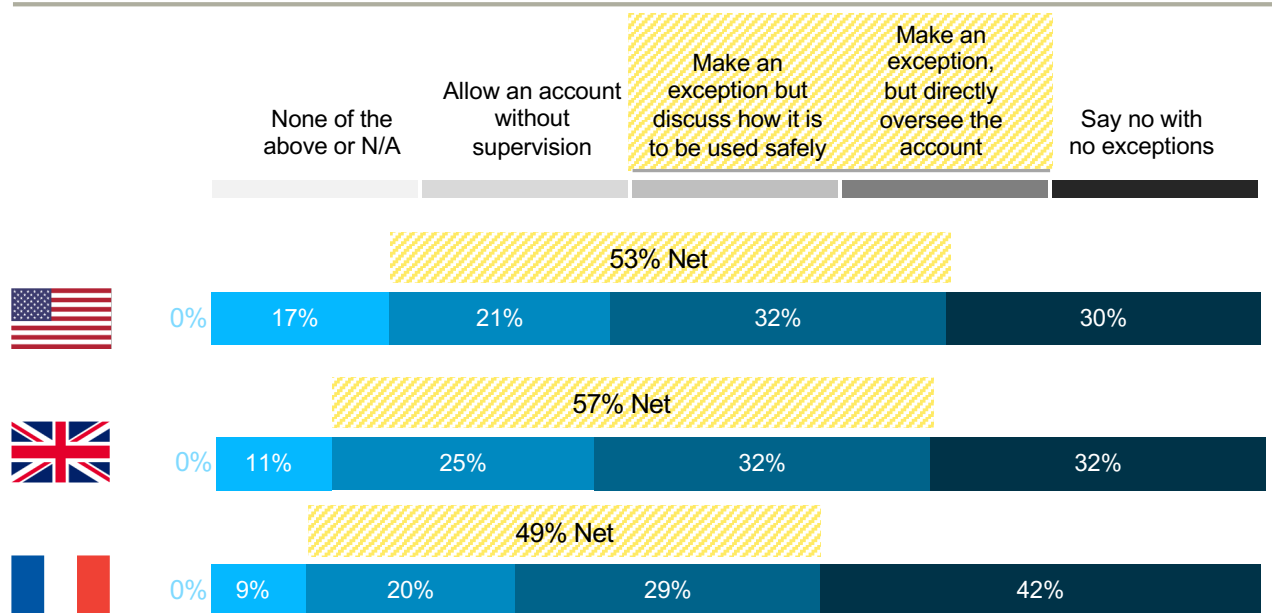
Father of 13- to 17-year-old, France

*“The government needs to play more of a role and ensure legislation for these platforms is more strict around verification and age-appropriate content and perhaps place hefty fines on these platforms that do not comply.”*

Mother of 9- to 12-year-old, UK

# Age requirement circumvention happens

## Parent Response to Allow Child to Bypass Age Requirements - Net



*“The age should help to ensure that the children are getting the correct and appropriate material. I think this is great, but at times can limit the children too much.”*

Mother of 13 to 17 year-old, US

*“Sometimes the parameters are so tight that they have to come to us to gain access to things that are okay. This has happened recently. My son was trying to watch an animal documentary, and because of the restrictions set, he had to ask for my permission.”*

Father of 9 to 12 year-old, US

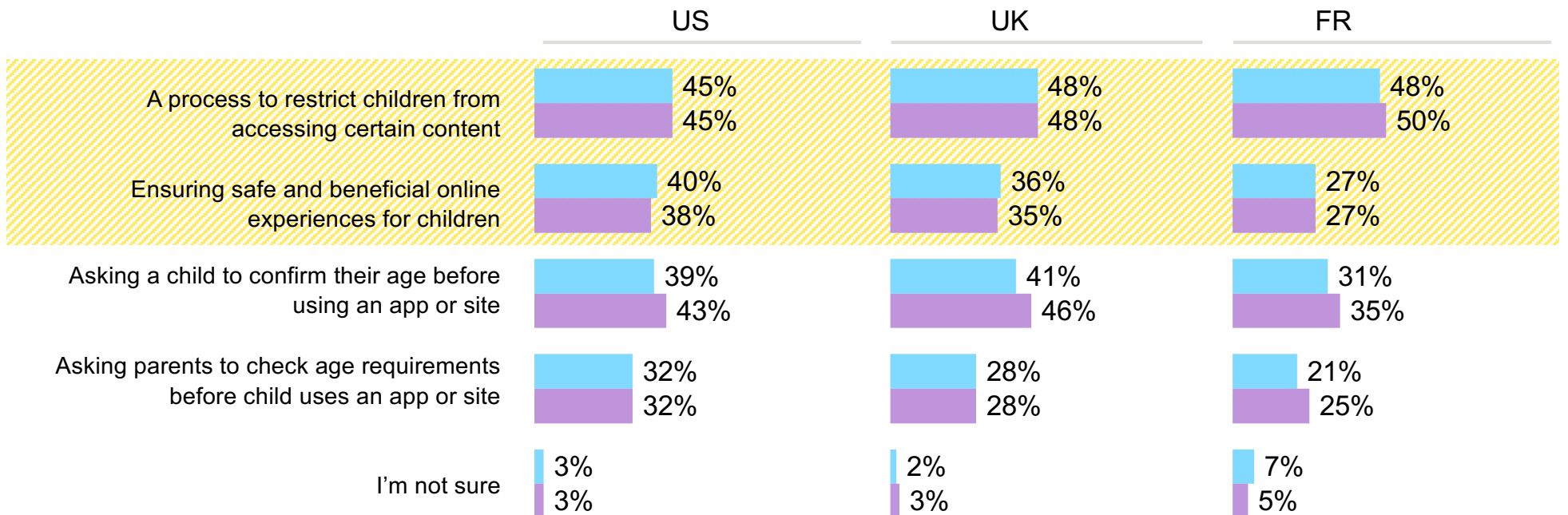


# Understanding Age Assurance

# Opportunity exists to communicate the value of age assurance

Based on your understanding, age assurance is... (Select Two)

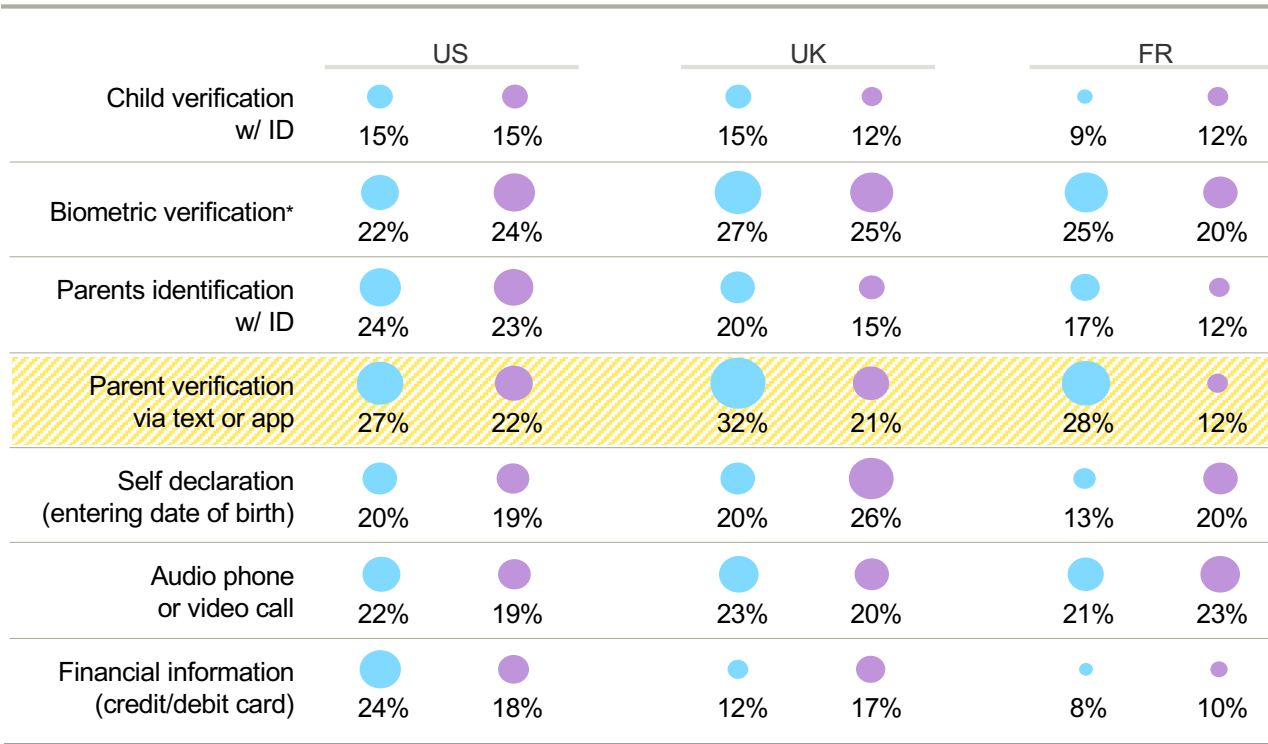
Parents Children



# There's no clear winner among the methods

## Preference of Age Assurance Methods

■ Parents ■ Children



*“Parental validation [via text or app] seems to me to be the most appropriate and effective method. Parents can control and prevent if necessary.”*

Father of 15 to 17 year-old, France

*“It should always be parental verification [via app or text] as it is safer for parents to monitor usage and sites they're visiting.”*

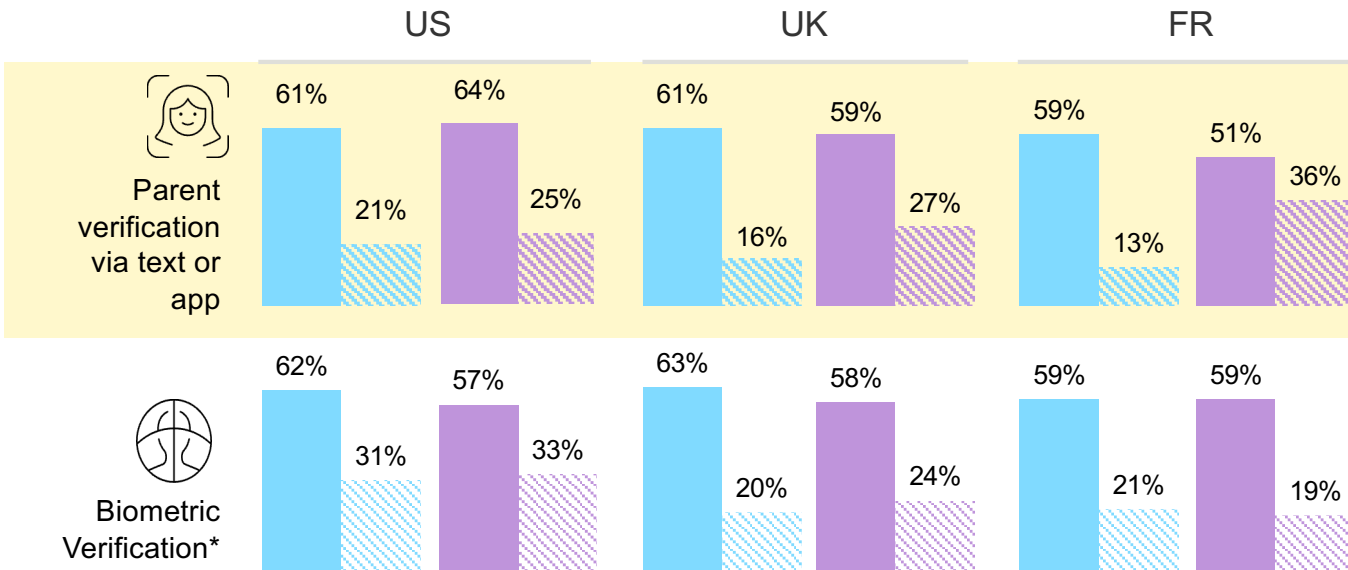
Mother of 9 to 12 year-old, UK

# Striking a balance between effectiveness and invasiveness

## Perceived Effectiveness and Invasiveness

Parents Children

Effectiveness Invasiveness



*"I think asking for a picture or a fingerprint seems a bit much but I personally wouldn't mind, as it would make me think the site was super secure."*

Mother of 9 to 12 year-old, UK

*"Parental validation seems to me to be the most appropriate and effective method. Parents can control and prevent if necessary. Difficult to circumvent as a process."*

Parents 15 to 17 year-old, France





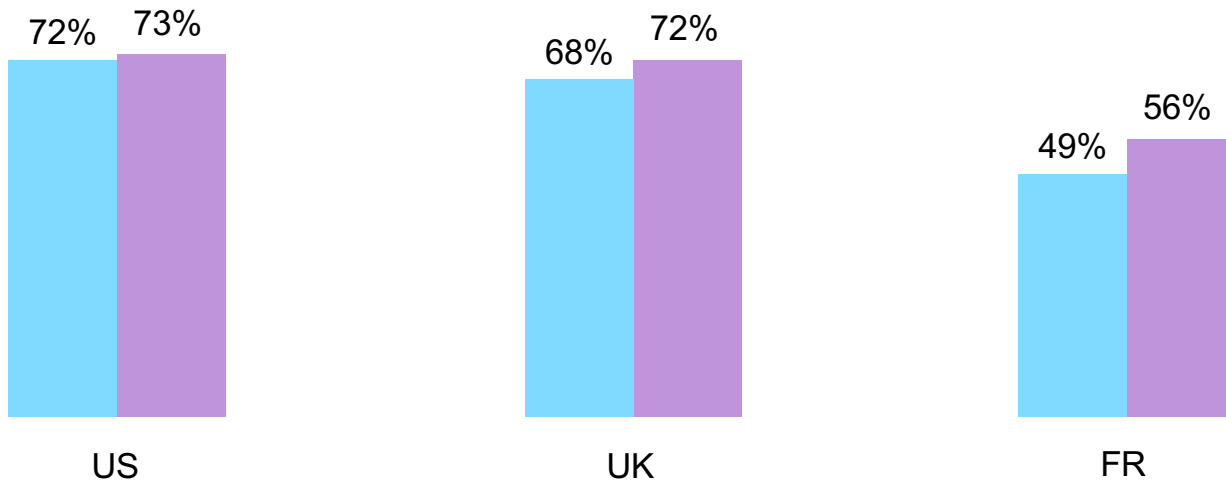
Looking forward

# Opportunities for biometric methods of age assurance

## Likelihood of Using Biometric Methods\* for Age Assurance

(Top-2-Box: Likely or Very Likely to Use Method)

Parents Children



*["You mention you have used the facial recognition feature on your phone before. What are your thoughts on using it to assess a user's age?"]:*

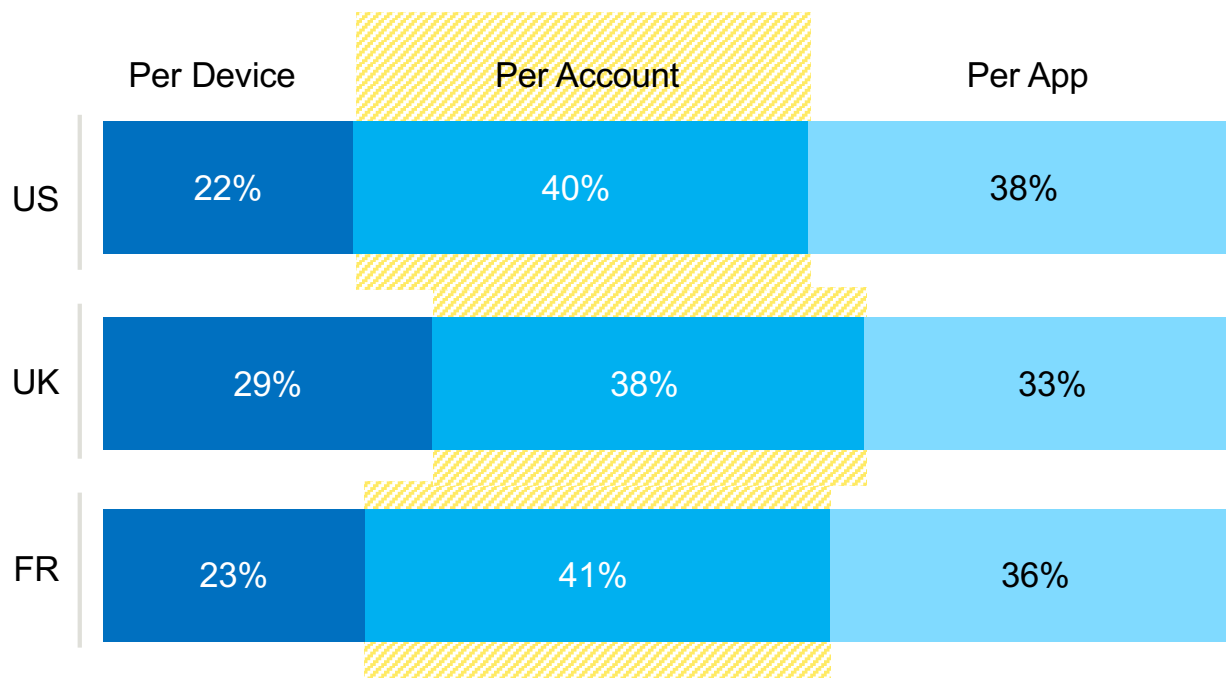
*"It's funny now that you mention it, I do use an iPhone with facial recognition. I never really thought about it in comparison to the biometric [age] screening. I will say it took me some time to be okay with using the facial recognition feature. This could be the same nervousness I felt initially."*

Mother of 9 to 12 year-old, US

## 'Per account' settings are most ideal for age assurance

### Preferred Ways to Set Age Assurance

■ Parents



*"I think a phone should have an age tied to it so that it could be a check that is put in place by the parent."*

Father of 13 to 17 year-old, US

*"Verifying my child's age should be used for every new download since everything the internet is different and appropriate for certain ages."*

Father of 9 to 12 year-old, UK

## Paving the way forward

- 1 Educate and empower users
- 2 Elevate the voice of children
- 3 Address tensions & competing needs
- 4 Set a common vision for the future

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Thank you and  
enjoy #fosi2022!

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