



ARGOS GUARDIAN PLATFORM

BUSINESS CASE

A Unified Approach
to Protecting
Children,
Empowering
Families,
and Connecting
Agencies

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Executive Summary



For over three decades, rapidly evolving technology and the Internet of Things have enhanced our lives through improved connection, convenience, and entertainment. While we have embraced these advances, so have our children. However, we have often overlooked the darker side of these technologies, which have created channels for harmful activities with lasting and traumatic consequences for children and families.

In today's digital landscape, children are constantly exposed to technology that shapes their perceptions and behaviours. This often leads them down dangerous online pathways influenced by naivety, overexposure, and peer pressure. Trends such as online grooming, pornography, bullying, and exploitation have become disturbingly common, significantly impacting youth well-being. The prevalence of addictive and age-inappropriate content has led to increased victimisation and child mental health disorders, highlighting an urgent need for intervention. As technology providers largely overlook children's welfare, parents are overwhelmed and ill-equipped to navigate this evolving digital terrain.

Today's youth increasingly rely on their online world and relationships, seamlessly integrating their digital and real environments. This shift places immense pressure on child protection services, which often work in silos and struggle to keep pace with the rapidly evolving landscape. Consequently, they are constantly playing catch-up to address the repercussions of unprepared children navigating these dangerous cultural norms. The online world has become an ideal breeding ground for child sex offenders, enabling them to exploit children's vulnerabilities easily. Unchecked online exploration fosters a culture of unhealthy behaviours, exacerbating the risks children face.

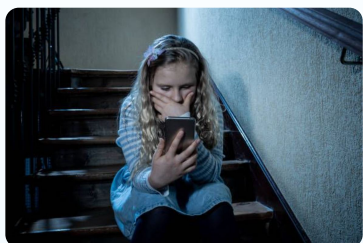
The Issue

**We estimate only
one in 10 report.
AFP, Dec2023**

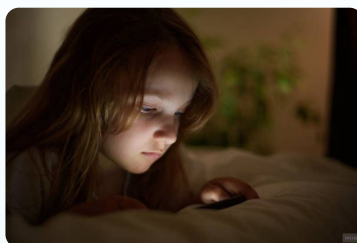


The regulator reported more than 9,000 instances of image-based abuse in the last financial year – a 117% increase on the previous year. eSafety said 68% of those related to sextortion. eSafety Commissioner, 2023. The Guardian

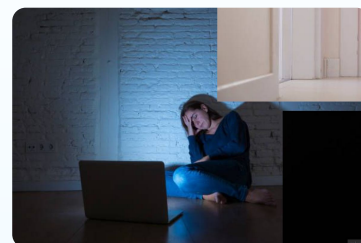
More than one in ten Australian teens now suffer mental health distress, with experts drawing a link in a rise in cases with the use of social media. Suicide and self-harm has skyrocketed in children under 19 and eating disorders are up 200 per cent over the last 12 years. Let them be kids' campaign, 2024 Herald Sun, 2024



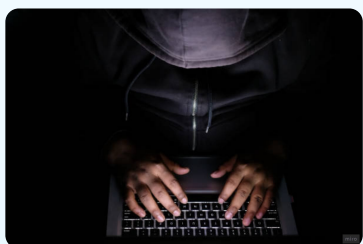
70% of teens have had a negative experience on social media



One in three teenagers have been exposed to disturbing or traumatic content



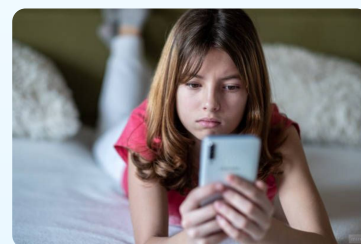
45% have been abused or harassed



One in four have been cyberbullied or sexually harassed



59% have been scammed



One in ten have been the victim of revenge porn. Let them be kids' campaign, 2024 Herald Sun, 2024

The Issue

44% of Australian young people report having a negative online experience in the last 6 months, this includes 15% who received threats or abuse online. eSafety Commissioner (2021)

For over three decades, rapidly evolving technology and the Internet of Things have enhanced our lives through improved connection, convenience, and entertainment. While we have embraced these advances, so have our children. However, we have often overlooked the darker side of these technologies, which have created channels for harmful activities with lasting and traumatic consequences for children and families.

Sextortion is the fastest-growing crime targeting children in North America and Australia. Incidents have increased by 1000% in the past 18 months.

Network Contagion Research Institute, 2024.

In today's digital landscape, children are constantly exposed to technology that shapes their perceptions and behaviours. This often leads them down dangerous online pathways influenced by naivety, overexposure, and peer pressure. Trends such as online grooming, pornography, bullying, sextortion and many other forms of exploitation have become disturbingly common, significantly impacting youth well-being. The prevalence of addictive and age-inappropriate content has led to increased victimisation and child mental health disorders, highlighting an urgent need for intervention. As technology providers largely overlook children's welfare, parents are overwhelmed and ill-equipped to navigate this evolving digital terrain.

Teens who were victims of cyberbullying were more likely to report elevated symptoms of depression or anxiety, and the use of social media in particular, was also associated with a high risk of depression and anxiety.

Children's Commissioner Anne Hollonds, ABC News, 2024

Today's youth increasingly rely on their online world and relationships, seamlessly integrating their digital and real environments. This shift places immense pressure on child protection services, which often work in silos and struggle to keep pace with the rapidly evolving landscape. Consequently, they are constantly playing catch-up to address the repercussions of unprepared children navigating these dangerous cultural norms. The online world has become an ideal breeding ground for child sex offenders, enabling them to exploit children's vulnerabilities easily.

The Issue

The myriad ways humans have found to weaponise online platforms, we will never create a safer online world if we wait for things to go wrong and then react

Inquiry into Social Media and Online Safety, eSafety Commissioner, 2022

The pace of technological change and the proliferation of new digital platforms make it difficult to keep up with emerging threats. The eSafety Commissioner's office, tasked with regulating and enforcing safety standards across a vast and constantly shifting digital ecosystem, is often outpaced by the volume of content and sophisticated methods used to exploit children. Moreover, the Commissioner must balance effective monitoring and intervention with respecting users' rights, amidst resistance from tech giants prioritising profit over children's welfare. These obstacles highlight the critical need for advanced technological tools, increased public awareness, and stronger collaboration with technology companies, law enforcement, and child protection agencies to ensure a safer online environment for children.

Mental health agencies are often overwhelmed by the volume and complexity of cases, making it challenging to keep up with new threats. The pervasive nature of online interactions exacerbates the psychological burden on affected children. Mental health professionals are calling for better tools and resources to monitor and address these issues, emphasising the need for comprehensive digital literacy education and robust support systems to help mitigate the mental health impacts of the digital age.

We are facing a massive crisis. Everyone thinks it will be someone else's child. But we are seeing suicides and self-harm every day.

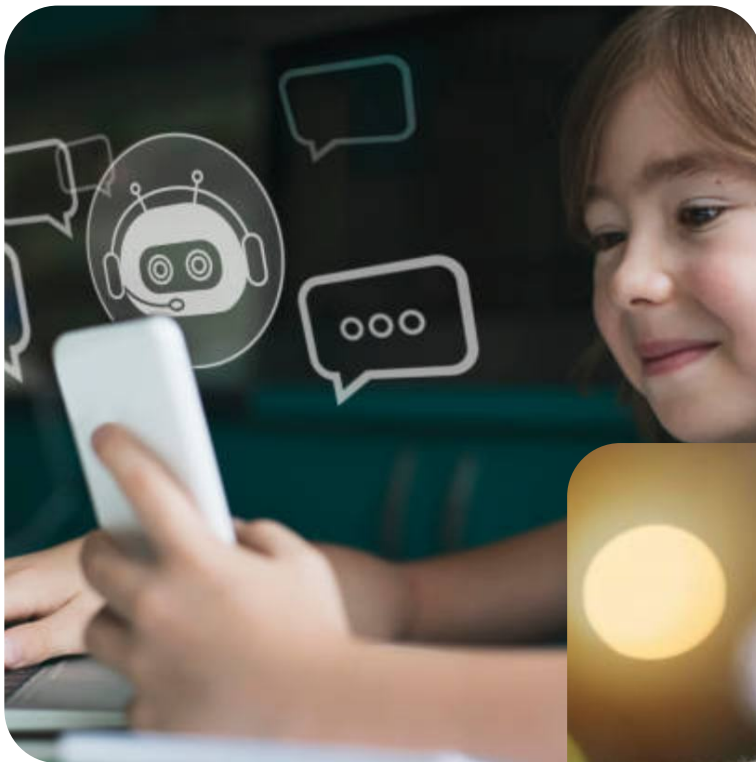
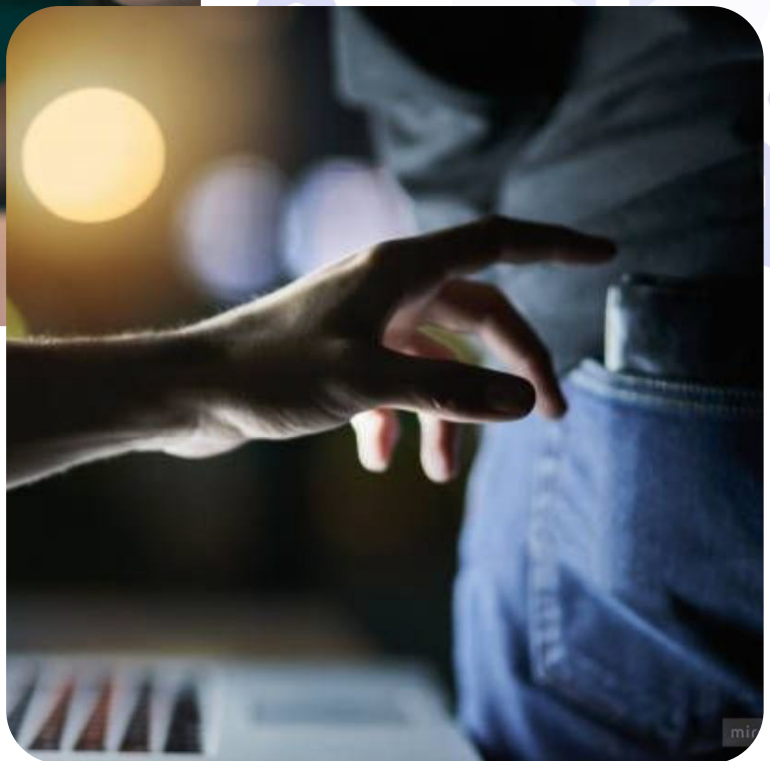
Professor Selena Bartlett, neuroscientist and author, Herald Sun, 2024

Parents are increasingly anxious and feel ill-equipped to monitor and manage their children's internet use effectively. Child protection agencies are overwhelmed by the rising number of cases related to online harms, while educators and support service providers struggle to equip children with the necessary knowledge and resilience to navigate the digital world safely. Experts from various fields, including online safety, child protection, education, and mental health support services, are calling for a comprehensive, coordinated response to these challenges. They emphasise the need for prevention, early intervention, and collaboration among all stakeholders involved in child protection.

The Issue

In response to this growing crisis, the Argos Guardian initiative presents a unique opportunity to understand how children engage with technology, unify the child protection community, and implement well-informed early intervention strategies in real time.

The initiative aligns with growing concerns among parents and experts who advocate for age verification systems. This call to action is driven by the alarming rise in mental health issues among children, such as anxiety, depression, and self-harm, directly linked to excessive social media use. Argos Guardian will leverage advanced technology and target hardening principles to empower families to protect themselves and shape a new generation of well-equipped, resilient young Australians.



About us

Inside Argos, the police task force that has rescued thousands of children from their abusers.

ABC 2021



The Argos Guardian platform was born from the frontlines of child protection, conceived by the dedicated investigators of Argos, a specialist unit within the Queensland Police Service focused on combating online child exploitation. These investigators, who witness the trauma and devastating impact of these heinous crimes on victims and their families daily, envisioned a more effective solution. They recognised the need for an early intervention system that prioritises victims and fosters collaboration among stakeholders.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children processed 36.2 million reports of child sexual abuse material in 2023.

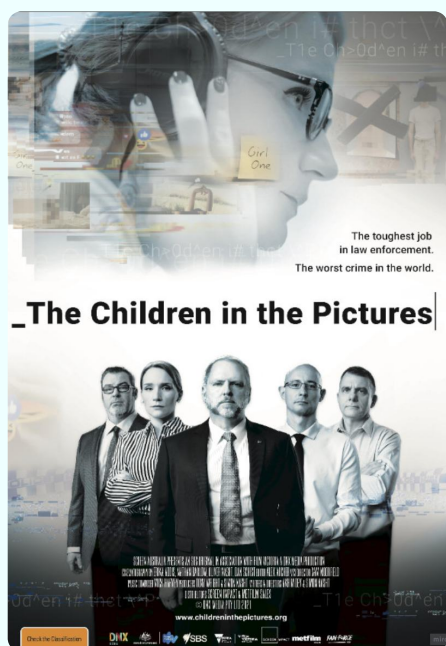
NCMEC, 2024

Argos has been at the forefront of investigating organised paedophilia, child exploitation, and computer-facilitated child exploitation since its establishment as a multi-disciplinary task force in February 1997, initially known as Task Force Argos. A passionate team driven by visionary leaders, Argos has gained a world-renowned reputation for pushing the boundaries of investigative strategy and innovation to protect children from the most egregious crimes.

Argos being part of the Queensland Police Service is guided by its strategic purpose of 'Together, we prevent, disrupt, respond and investigate'. The organisation promotes a victim-centric approach to policing that emphasises understanding, responding to, and managing victimisation and the harm it causes to individuals and the community.

About Us

The Argos Guardian platform is founded on these principles of prevention and early intervention. By leveraging advanced technology, the system aims to shift from a reactive 'Who's to blame culture', to a proactive, community together, victim-centric approach. It will prioritise efforts to protect children from victimisation by emphasising education, identifying risks in real time, and connecting users to critical support when it is most needed.



The platform is not designed to replace the existing services and experts that provide education and support to families and children. Instead, it aims to enhance service delivery and redefine collaboration by connecting all organisations involved in child protection through a unified technological platform.

News Headlines

QUEENSLAND POLICE INTERNET INVESTIGATIONS TRAP PAEDOPHILES GLOBALLY
Police minister Judy Spence 2006



Heroes of Task Force Argos went to extreme lengths to track Shannon McCoolle and shut down sickening pedophile site The Courier Mail 2015

Taskforce Argos is making a difference across the world,
Mark Ryan 2020



Crack Aussie unit joins international hunt for paedophiles and victims.
9News 2021



By analysing risky online behaviours and fostering a collective effort, Argos Guardian serves as a delivery mechanism for a coalition of agencies and service providers dedicated to working together to protect children across Australia.

9NEWS
'They walk amongst us': Top cop's urgent advice for protecting kids from predators online
9 news 2019

Courier Mail
"Moment cops took down Brisbane dad trying to auction off child"
Courier Mail 2023

News Headlines

9NEWS

The Queensland Police Service's Taskforce Argos leads the world in hunting paedophiles.
9 News 2021

"There are paedophiles all over the world who fear the words Task Force Argos,"
Police Minister Mark Ryan 2020

ABC NEWS

Between 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, the Queensland Police Service charged 1,587 people with 8,005 child sex offences.
ABC News 2023

ABC NEWS

Task Force Argos: Top Aussie cops help rescue three abused kids
ABC News 2023

9NEWS

"Shocking dark web find by Aussie cops leads to child abuse arrests in Colombia"
9 News 2023

Our Mission

Mission Statement

To establish a secure digital world where children can interact and explore safely through a revolutionary digital system that leverages advanced technology to protect children, empower parents, and strengthen agencies.



Vision Statement

To develop a sustainable, unified, world first digital platform equipped with tools and services that enable parents and children to work together to safeguard themselves and others online.

Value

Innovation**Empowerment****Compassion**
Fairness**Collaboration****Excellence**



Our Mission

Focus Areas



Education

Harness the power of technology through user analysis and digital connectivity to truly understand and respond to the learning needs of users.



Prevention

Adopt a preventive mindset to eliminate online victimisation through innovative technological solutions that provide age verification and timely education, resources, and support to families.



Early Intervention

Use real-time insights into children's online behaviours to promptly identify and address high-risk activities, enabling parents and agencies to respond effectively.



Harnessing Advanced Technology

Utilise cutting-edge technology, including AI and machine learning, to proactively identify and mitigate threats to children and families.



Strategic Partnerships

Cultivate collaborative partnerships to enhance early intervention mechanisms and leverage technology to educate and support communities.



Focus Areas

Prevention Framework



Respond

System outputs will inform opportunities to collaborate with partners to refine early intervention strategies and maximise technology capabilities. Streamlined reporting functions will optimise criminal investigations with clearer insights into offender methodologies, eroding their anonymity and resulting in more successful prosecutions



Tertiary prevention

When something goes wrong—real time support for the victim and family while targeting the perpetrators

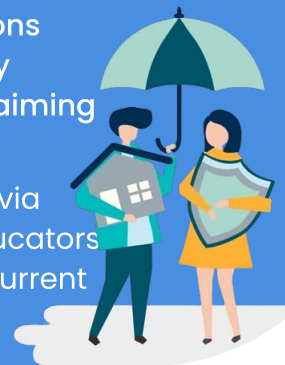
Through agency collaboration and data sharing, the system will inform best practice strategies for contributing stakeholders to enhance service responses to further educate and support families. Offenders are targeted with efficiency, informed from quality reporting mechanisms. Real time reporting to police will expedite the apprehension of offenders and disrupt their capability for further abuse.



Secondary prevention

Early intervention – system analytics recognising unhealthy deviations and trending behaviours will alert users to potential risks and deploy cohort or user specific education strategies and support pathways aiming to change the trajectory of children at higher risk.

Alerting parents to system recognised risks and providing guidance via education and support pathways Automatic notifications inform educators and agencies to trending behaviors enabling them to adapt to the current needs and vulnerabilities



Primary prevention (Child abuse immunisation)

Earliest intervention—preventing harm before it occurs, education focused, developing and refining initiatives to better understand offender methodologies and the vulnerabilities of children leading to victimisation.

Educating parents and children based on known drivers and contributors to child victimisation. Families understanding the risks and learning how to self-protect System analytics determining what's important now and delivering relevant information to all stakeholders



Prevention Framework



04

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Respond



03

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Tertiary prevention



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Secondary prevention



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Primary prevention

The Argos Guardian Platform



Product Overview

At its core, Argos Guardian operates a sophisticated data lake and backend machinery, meticulously analysing non-identifiable data to understand online behaviours and activities. With privacy as a paramount concern, the system ensures children's anonymity while providing critical insights into app usage, web activity, and potential risks. Informed from principles of behavioural analysis and driven by the power of AI, the system is intended to develop predictive capabilities to identify children most at risk. System-initiated early intervention solutions will deliver education and support to children and families giving them the tools to navigate risk prevent harm from occurring.

Argos Guardian offers a dual interface, catering to both parents and children directly from their devices. Additionally, key stakeholders and partners gain access to the system through a dedicated web portal, facilitating seamless information exchange and collaborative efforts.



Product Overview



Parent Mobile App

Offering parents a user-friendly application with real-time insights into their child's device usage, customisable settings, and alerts for high-risk activities to ensure proactive protection and intervention.



Child-Friendly Learning Interface

The children's app delivers an age-appropriate, interactive learning environment that delivers ongoing educational content, guidance, and support to help them navigate the digital world safely.



Support Portal AI Driven support

Facilitates direct, anonymous access to relevant support services and resources for both parents and children, promoting self-education and providing tools for self-protection and well-being.



Prevention through Education Delivery System

Delivers targeted educational resources and programs to children, parents, and the schools on topical issues, ensuring timely and relevant information to enhance digital literacy and safety.



Data Driven Real-Time Insights

Using AI and machine learning to continuously scan and analyse online activities for potential risks, providing real-time insights and predictive analytics to identify at-risk children and prevent harm.

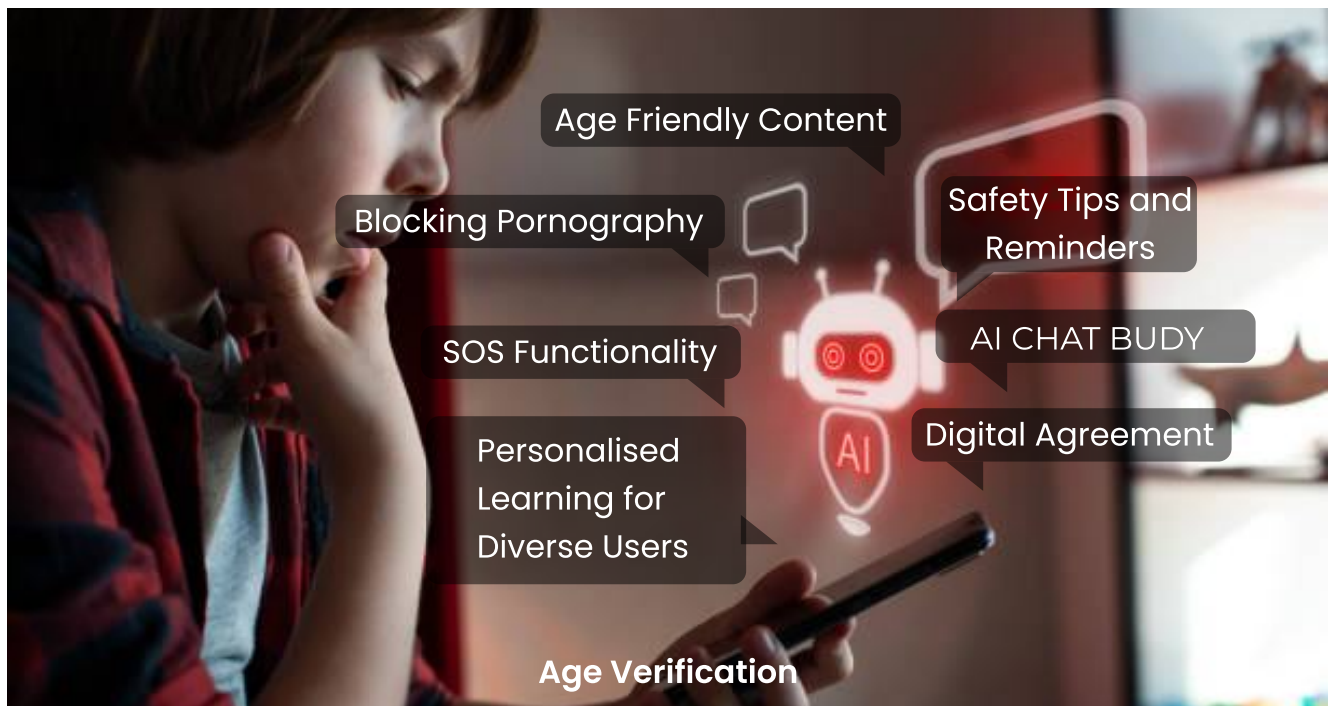


Stakeholder Collaboration and Access Portal

Connects Government and Non-Government agencies and service providers through a dedicated web portal, enabling seamless information exchange, collaborative efforts, and comprehensive dashboards for tracking incidents, trends, and the effectiveness of interventions.

Child Mobile App

Key feature



The Argos Guardian Child-Friendly Learning Interface is designed to provide children with a safe, engaging, and educational online environment. This interface offers age-appropriate interactive content that guides children through essential online safety practices. It promotes critical thinking, self-awareness, and protective behaviours, helping children understand and navigate digital risks. The interface is intuitive and visually appealing, ensuring that children are both informed and entertained. Through interactive modules, quizzes, and educational games, the Child-Friendly Learning Interface equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to protect themselves online, all while maintaining their privacy and security.

Privacy Protection

Ensures children's privacy and anonymity while using the interface.

Protective Behaviour Training

Teaches children how to identify and respond to potential threats and risky situations.

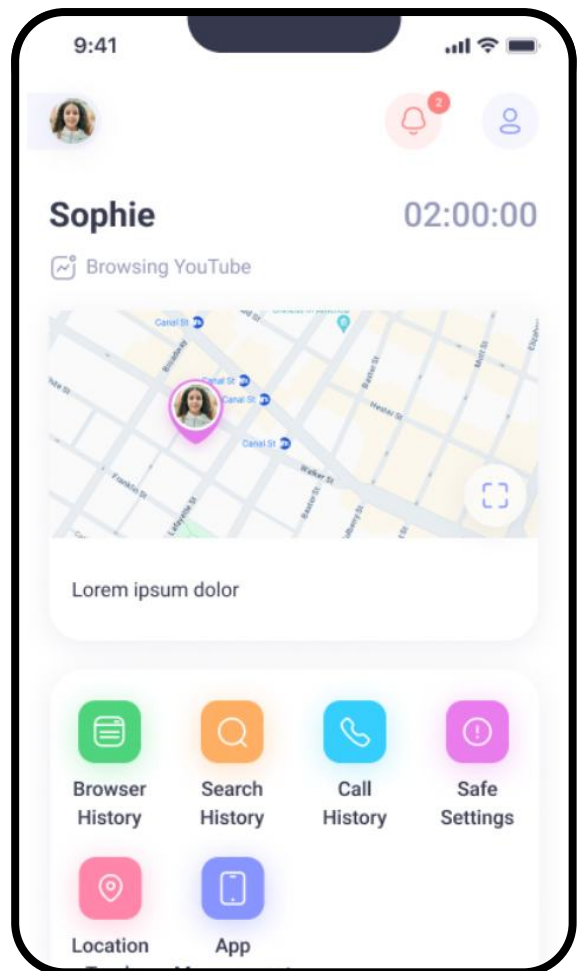
Resource Library

Parental Involvement Features

Encourages parental involvement through shared activities and discussion prompts.

Parent Mobile App

The Argos Guardian Parental Interface offers a comprehensive, user-friendly application that provides parents with real-time insights into their child's online activities. It features customisable settings and alerts to monitor high-risk behaviours and ensure proactive protection. Through the interface, parents can access detailed reports on app usage, web activity, and potential risks, enabling them to take timely action. Additionally, the platform offers educational resources and support tools to help parents guide their children in navigating the digital world safely and responsibly.



Interactive Dashboard and Controls

All children and devices linked

Manages multiple linked child accounts and devices from a single account.

Parent-Child Digital Agreement

Parent-child digital contract setting agreed digital usage rules and expectations.

Real-Time Monitoring

Safe Browsing Mode

Age Verification & Content Filtering

Blocks inappropriate content based on age and preferences.

Screen Time Management

Resources & Tips

Access to Support & Help



Parent Mobile App

App Management and Monitoring

Usage Analytics

In App Messaging

Alerts to Risky Activities

Activity Reports

SOS Alerts

Opt in -

The platform prioritises user privacy by design, ensuring anonymity. Some features and functions that may require the collection of sensitive information will be provided as an opt-in for parents who prefer an optimised user experience. These features include:

Family Locator & Geolocation Tracking

Social Media Monitoring

Detailed User Profiles

