

Media Literacy by Design Self-Assessment

Name of the platform: Pinterest

Date: 28/02/2025

Purpose of the document:

This document has been designed for online services¹ to demonstrate how their work and products align with the [Best Practice Principles for Media Literacy by Design](#). As you engage with this assessment, consider the following key areas:

1. **Proactivity, priority, transparency and accountability;**
2. **User-centric design and timely interventions;**
3. **Monitoring and evaluation.**

Ofcom recently became the UK's online safety regulator following the Online Safety Act 2023 (the Act) becoming law. Ofcom's media literacy work will make an important contribution to the implementation of the changes under the Act, in particular the changes to Ofcom's media literacy duties introduced by the Act. However, this work should not be interpreted as a statement of our policy on other guidance or our codes of practice under the Act or prejudice any further work to develop policy in relation to that Act. Whilst there are close links between the policy areas of media literacy and online safety, they are distinct. Our media literacy work, which includes these principles, is broader in scope than online safety, in terms of both the content and services to which it applies. In addition, as a voluntary initiative we have more discretion in the recommendations we make here than in the online safety codes. Our media literacy work goes beyond requirements specified in the Act to consider what more online services can do to support people to use, understand and create online media and communications in a variety of contexts.

With this in mind, materials submitted here may be repurposed for Ofcom's work under the Act.

We would like you to engage in a reflective process. This self-assessment form invites you to analyse how your organisation approaches media literacy on-platform (as part of the design process or through on-platform interventions).

- We specifically encourage you to identify potential areas for improvement you would like to focus on over the next few months. This approach allows us to better understand how platforms monitor and evaluate media literacy interventions on an ongoing basis, whilst allowing us to further encourage the adoption of the principles.
- We ask that you define what success looks like, and how this will be measured for each piece of work to promote media literacy on-platform. As per principle 11, we ask that you

¹ Platforms/online services include social media, search, video-sharing and gaming services.

establish media literacy outcomes and media literacy outcome indicators wherever possible.²

This self-assessment exercise is also an opportunity to share knowledge with a broader audience. Other services, academics, charities, and the general public can learn from what's currently working well and what challenges exist. We may wish to use some of the self-assessment completed to publish a summary of the work being undertaken by platforms. We would be in touch on the specifics before publication, however, it is worth flagging if there is anything commercially sensitive or confidential in your response at this point. Transparency and knowledge sharing has been [a recurrent ask from stakeholders](#). By fostering open communication and sharing insights, we can collectively enhance our understanding and drive positive change, leading to a collective commitment to media literacy.

In responding to the questions in this document, we encourage you to assess your practices and the extent to which they align with Ofcom's Best Practice Principles for Media Literacy by Design as part of actively contributing to a more informed and media literate society. We want to make knowledge sharing a formal aspiration for online services to ensure that everyone has clarity over the work that is being done and to foster collaboration between stakeholders.

Contact: If you have any questions about the Media Literacy by Design project, please feel free to get in touch with the MSOM team (makingsenseofmedia@ofcom.org.uk).

² Media literacy outcomes are ideally a benefit received by the target audience to be achieved as a result of the work. Media literacy outcome indicators are measurable pieces of evidence that allow users to track the change that has taken place as a result of their intervention.

Proactivity, priority, transparency and accountability

Please provide an update of how your platform already demonstrates adoption of at least one principle in this category. How is success measured (please provide media literacy outcomes and indicators wherever possible)?

Pinterest has demonstrated the principles of proactivity, priority, transparency and accountability through, for example, the development and evolution of our misinformation policies.

To determine which content categories are prone to misinformation or sensitivity, we employ a robust and adaptive approach grounded in established frameworks and multifaceted processes. These processes involve both proactive measures and reactive learnings:

Proactive measures:

- Partnerships with experts - We collaborate with external experts and industry leaders who provide critical insights and guidance on potential misinformation and sensitive topics.
- Trend analysis - We conduct continuous and detailed analyses of emerging trends, monitoring shifts in social, political, and cultural landscapes that could influence public perception and risk levels.

Reactive Learnings

- Review of past events - We systematically review and learn from previous episodes of misinformation and crises, identifying patterns and key factors.
- Feedback Loops - We incorporate feedback from users, moderators, and partners to refine our understanding and improve our content categorization strategies.

Pinterest partners with the World Health Organization to connect users who conduct vaccine-related searches on Pinterest with accurate and authoritative information on the subject. Pinterest also has partnered with the Electoral Commission to ensure that users who searched for terms related to the July UK election in the weeks leading up to the election received accurate and reliable information, including where and how to vote. For our search advisories related to self-injury, suicide, and disordered eating, we partner with Throughline to point users to free and confidential mental health support resources. The Throughline experience provides 100+ local helplines and other expert support resources globally. Users will be diverted to a location specific experience based on their location. For example, a user based in the UK who runs searches related to self-injury, suicide and/or disordered eating, will be directed to UK-specific support resources so a user can select a provider in their location. See

<https://pinterest.findahelpline.com/countries/GB/topics/suicidal-thoughts>

<https://pinterest.findahelpline.com/countries/GB/topics/eating-body-image>

Please provide an update of how your platform can make more progress to further demonstrate further adoption of principles in this category. How will success be measured (please provide media literacy outcomes and indicators wherever possible)?

When users search for content in sensitive categories or content categories prone to misinformation, we surface an advisory that connects them to additional context from authoritative bodies. We continue to improve these advisories, partnering with authoritative bodies to further connect users with important information and resources.

We regularly check in on our policies and enforcement across surfaces including for search. This means that we have processes in place to regularly check in on:

- Existing policies and areas for policy development;
- Guidelines for search and search advisories; and
- Partnerships both existing and needed.

To evaluate the effectiveness of each search advisory, we primarily assess the following metrics:

- Number of views of the advisory; and
- User behaviour after viewing the advisory (e.g. clicking to the domain of authoritative sources and/or interacting with the approved content when it exists).

In addition to responding to certain types of user searches – such as those relating to vaccinations – with a search advisory followed by search results for content from authoritative agencies, we also show search advisories when we block user searches that relate to areas like adult content, self-harm or child safety. Those advisories explain why the user is not presented with search results in response to their query and can take the form of an error message or can direct the user to accurate and reliable support resources, expert information, etc. We monitor users' efforts to evade search-blocking measures and accompanying advisories by reviewing other searches that users may attempt after being blocked, and we update our search block list on an ongoing basis to help prevent users from accessing prohibited content.

User-centric design and timely interventions

Please provide an update of how your platform already demonstrates adoption of at least one principle in this category. How is success measured (please provide media literacy outcomes and indicators wherever possible)?

Pinterest launched its body type ranges tool in the US in March 2024 and by October 2024, the tool was available in the UK, Canada, Germany, France, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand markets.

Please provide an update of how your platform can make more progress to further demonstrate further adoption of principles in this category. How will success be measured (please provide media literacy outcomes and indicators wherever possible)?

As stated in our initial self-assessment, Pinterest is evaluating expanding the body type ranges feature beyond women's fashion to include men's fashion. For more information about this tool and our technology please see our Newsroom articles here:

<https://newsroom.pinterest.com/en-gb/news/pinterests-new-body-type-ranges-deliver-better-more-inclusive-search-results/>

<https://newsroom.pinterest.com/en-gb/news/pinterest-announces-industry-first-body-type-technology/>

Monitoring and evaluating

Please provide an update of how your platform already demonstrates adoption of at least one principle in this category. How is success measured (please provide media literacy outcomes and indicators wherever possible)?

We primarily rely on adoption (i.e., are more users adopting those features over time) and retention (i.e., do users continue to use the feature over time) to evaluate the success of new tools and features. For example, the number of times Gen Z users used skin tone ranges increased 190% year-over-year from 2023 to 2024, and the number of times they used hair pattern search increased 225% in the same period.

To understand user sentiment about the platform, we conduct qualitative user interviews and quantitative surveys asking users about their experiences with our platform and areas to improve, such as how to make a feature more useful and easier to understand and use.

We recently developed a social media wellbeing benchmarking tool that can be utilised by any technology platform to better understand their impact on user wellbeing. We used this tool to assess the impact of our platform, as well as other online platforms, on users' wellbeing. Results demonstrated that Pinterest leads the industry in user wellbeing, with a statistically significant stronger social media wellbeing score than other social media platforms. This finding is backed up by third party researchers, including the Neely Ethics & Technology Indices, which finds that Pinterest users report fewer adverse events and more beneficial learning experiences compared to other social media platforms.

For more information, see Pinterest's 2024 ESG Report at page 38:

<https://newsroom.pinterest.com/impact>

In addition, in October 2024 we commissioned a survey of Pinterest users in the US, UK, Germany, France, and Brazil, asking them to compare Pinterest against other online platforms. Our findings included that:

- Pinterest is the #1 social media platform in instilling feelings of self-worth and purpose;
- 7 in 10 Pinterest users agree that what they discover on Pinterest often leads to positive, real-world experiences, more so than other social platforms; and
- Nearly 6 in 10 Pinterest users agree that their time spent on Pinterest makes them more confident in themselves, more so than other social platforms.

Please provide an update of how your platform can make more progress to further demonstrate further adoption of principles in this category. How will success be measured (please provide media literacy outcomes and indicators wherever possible)?

User feedback is an essential part of our feature development process, which informs both what we build and how we build it. For instance, when developing our Hair Pattern Search feature we conducted user interviews and held sessions in which we explored initial design possibilities with a cohort of diverse Pinterest users and iteratively developed the experience, receiving feedback from participants at multiple points throughout the development process to deepen our understanding of user needs and sentiments and to inform our designs. As one example, we learned that “Protective” hairstyles are essential for some users and so we added an option to hair pattern search for “Protective” styles. For more information, see our Medium post: <https://medium.com/pinterest-studio/co-creating-hair-pattern-search-ae701ae95f57>.