# Cybersmile’s campaign reveals lasting scars of online abuse on children with AI tattoos



A new campaign from The Cybersmile Foundation is stirring significant discussion about the profound impact of language in the online sphere, particularly on children. Launched recently across the United Kingdom, the initiative, titled “Words Are Permanent,” has garnered attention for its striking visual aesthetic and powerful underlying message regarding the lasting scars left by online comments.

In collaboration with advertising agency adam&eveDDB, the campaign employs AI-generated images of children adorned with realistic facial tattoos, symbolising the abusive comments they have encountered online. This visual approach aims to drive home the point that while the tattoos may be digital, the psychological pain they signify is very real. Displayed prominently in national print media, social platforms, and high-traffic outdoor locations, these images resonate deeply with an audience increasingly aware of the emotional toll that casual online remarks can inflict.

The urgency of this campaign is underscored by alarming statistics from The Cybersmile Foundation’s 2022 Digital Wellbeing Report, which reveals that 88 percent of Generation Z respondents in the UK believe social media adversely affects their mental health. Many of these young people find online abuse to be an inescapable aspect of their daily digital interactions. Fundamental to the campaign’s objective is the hope of fostering greater accountability and empathy in online communication, encouraging users to reflect on the weight their words carry.

The initiative aligns with broader concerns over the mental health repercussions associated with social media use among youth. The 2022 study highlights that 89 percent of participants feel that social media negatively impacts their body image, while 86 percent report heightened anxiety due to online interactions. These findings suggest an urgent need for educational strategies addressing the nuances of respectful and safe digital engagement, reinforcing the necessity of understanding the insecurities that fuel online behaviour.

Additionally, the foundation's 2023 Comparison Culture Report sheds light on the detrimental effects of social media comparisons on young individuals. A staggering 93 percent of survey participants indicated they feel pressured to compare themselves to others online, with many expressing dissatisfaction with their own lives and considering drastic changes to cope with these comparisons. This backdrop amplifies the call for initiatives aimed at promoting self-acceptance and resilience among young users.

The Cybersmile Foundation's ongoing campaigns, such as 'Think Twice Before You Type' and 'Words Hurt IRL,' further illustrate the pressing need for mindful online interactions. These initiatives not only raise awareness about the potentially harmful interpretations of online comments but also empower individuals to challenge the culture of online hate.

Through the “Words Are Permanent” campaign, The Cybersmile Foundation seeks not just to illuminate a problem but to inspire transformative change in how people engage within digital spaces. The powerful imagery used serves both as a stark reminder of past hurts and a call to action for a more compassionate online community, underscoring the notion that words can leave indelible marks on the vulnerable and impressionable.

Ultimately, the message is clear: while words may be typed in an instant, their effects can resonate far longer, making it imperative for each individual to understand the lasting impact their online interactions can hold.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://filmindustry.network/cybersmile-campaign-shows-profound-impact-of-words-on-children/40803), [[2]](https://www.cybersmile.org/resource/digital-wellbeing-report-2022/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://filmindustry.network/cybersmile-campaign-shows-profound-impact-of-words-on-children/40803), [[3]](https://www.cybersmile.org/resource/comparison-culture-report-2023/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.cybersmile.org/2022/06/17/examining-the-impact-of-social-media-use-on-the-wellbeing-of-gen-z/), [[7]](https://www.cybersmile.org/2023/06/16/exploring-the-impact-of-social-comparisons-on-gen-z/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.cybersmile.org/campaign/words-hurt-irl-2022/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.cybersmile.org/news/cybersmile-launch-think-twice-before-you-type-campaign-to-mark-safer-internet-day)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://filmindustry.network/cybersmile-campaign-shows-profound-impact-of-words-on-children/40803), [[4]](https://www.cybersmile.org/news/cybersmile-launch-think-twice-before-you-type-campaign-to-mark-safer-internet-day)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://filmindustry.network/cybersmile-campaign-shows-profound-impact-of-words-on-children/40803> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cybersmile.org/resource/digital-wellbeing-report-2022/> - The Cybersmile Foundation's 2022 Digital Wellbeing Report presents a national UK study examining the impact of social media on Generation Z's mental health. Surveying 1,000 participants aged 16–24, the report reveals that 89% of respondents feel social media negatively affects their mental health, with 85% reporting adverse effects on body image. Additionally, 77% state that social media negatively impacts their physical health, and 86% experience increased anxiety due to online interactions. The findings underscore the need for early education on the safe and respectful use of social media.
3. <https://www.cybersmile.org/resource/comparison-culture-report-2023/> - The Cybersmile Foundation's 2023 Comparison Culture Report explores the profound impact of social media comparisons on Generation Z in the UK. Surveying 1,000 participants aged 16–24, the study finds that 93% feel pressured to compare themselves to others online, with 93% experiencing negative consequences from these comparisons. Notably, 89% feel unsatisfied with their lives when comparing themselves to others on social media, and 74% have considered permanent body changes due to online comparisons. The report highlights the need for education on healthy social media engagement.
4. <https://www.cybersmile.org/news/cybersmile-launch-think-twice-before-you-type-campaign-to-mark-safer-internet-day> - In recognition of Safer Internet Day, The Cybersmile Foundation launched the 'Think Twice Before You Type' campaign to raise awareness about the real-life impact of online comments. Collaborating with Area 23, the campaign features powerful images and videos shared across Cybersmile's social media channels, encouraging individuals to consider the potential misinterpretations of their online communications. The initiative aims to promote mindful and respectful online interactions, highlighting the importance of empathy in digital conversations.
5. <https://www.cybersmile.org/2022/06/17/examining-the-impact-of-social-media-use-on-the-wellbeing-of-gen-z/> - The Cybersmile Foundation's 2022 study examines the impact of social media on the wellbeing of Generation Z in the UK. Surveying 1,000 participants aged 16–24, the research explores topics such as mental health, body image, social comparisons, and social media addiction. The findings indicate significant negative effects, including increased anxiety and decreased self-esteem among young users. The study emphasizes the need for effective education and support services to address the challenges posed by social media use among young people.
6. <https://www.cybersmile.org/campaign/words-hurt-irl-2022/> - The Cybersmile Foundation's 'Words Hurt IRL' campaign, launched in partnership with Urban Decay, addresses the issue of online bullying and abuse. Featuring a video series starring actress Ava Michelle, the campaign highlights the real-life impact of online hate and encourages viewers to 'stop giving hateful words power' and to 'cancel online hate together.' The initiative aims to empower individuals to stand up against online abuse and promote a more inclusive and supportive online environment.
7. <https://www.cybersmile.org/2023/06/16/exploring-the-impact-of-social-comparisons-on-gen-z/> - The Cybersmile Foundation's 2023 study, 'Exploring the Impact of Social Comparisons on Gen Z,' investigates how social media comparisons affect young people in the UK. Surveying 1,000 participants aged 16–24, the research reveals that 93% feel pressured to compare themselves to others online, with 93% experiencing negative consequences from these comparisons. The study highlights the need for education on healthy social media engagement and the importance of fostering self-acceptance among young users.