



Intercultural school  
Talents pour le monde

**ÉPREUVES D'ADMISSION  
STRATEGIE DIGITALE INTERCULTURELLE**

**LANGUE DE TRAVAIL : ANGLAIS**

**Read the following article then complete the exercise below.**

## Social media is so addictive it should carry a health warning, leading charity says



Social media is so addictive for children that the Government should classify it as “social harm” and make it carry health warnings.

5Rights, a children’s charity founded by Baroness Kidron, accuses internet giants of deliberately keeping children online for as long as possible so they could profit from collecting their data.

An investigation by the charity identifies five psychological features designed by the tech industry to keep children online, including reward mechanisms such as likes, hearts and comments to elicit a dopamine hit, and competition for popularity through counting friends, followers, and retweets.

The charity says apps and websites should “clearly and succinctly” state when they use such hooks, alongside warnings of the potential impact on children’s mental and emotional health, their education, sleep patterns and concentration.

“The tech industry needs to look at their stratospheric share prices, then at our children and decide which is more important,” said Baroness Kidron, who as Beeban Kidron directed the film *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* and the award-winning television series *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

Her charity said it was supported by titans of the tech industry including Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the world wide web, Nir Eyal, the behavioural psychologist, and Sean Parker, Facebook’s co-founder.

It said the Government should name, grade and label the impact of persuasive design features in software and conduct impact assessments.

Baroness Kidron said there were parallels to the *Daily Telegraph’s* Duty of Care campaign to impose a legal duty on firms to safeguard children’s well-being and welfare online.

She said: "It's the duty of online services to treat children according to their status as a child. It's not the responsibility of the child to adapt to the commercial needs of these firms."

The 5Rights report recommends redesigning services to make it as easy to get offline as it is easy to get on, and setting functions such as auto-play of videos, notifications and summonses to the off default rather than on.

There should also be "streak holidays" so Snapchat-obsessed children can get a break from amassing consecutive days online, save buttons so children can leave an activity, and an end to the personalisation of services to extend their use meaning that companies are able to mine even more data.

"It is unreasonable to design services to be compulsive and then reprimand children for being pre-occupied with their devices," says the report.

Alex Chalk, the Tory MP who led a parliamentary inquiry into social media, said: "It is becoming increasingly clear that social media companies have deliberately sought to hook young children without any thought for the consequences."

A spokesman for Facebook and Instagram said: "We recognise that people are concerned about how technology affects our attention spans, relationships and our children in the long run.

"That's why we recently pledged \$1 million towards research to better understand the relationship between media technologies, youth development and well-being, as well as the factors that can pull people away from important face-to-face interactions.

## **Exercise**

Do you agree that social media should be classified as a "harmful substance", similar to tobacco or alcohol? Do you think that doing so would help improve the situation regarding young people's health? What other or alternative measures (if any) do you think that governments or tech companies could put in place to better protect young people from the negative aspects of social media?

Use ideas from the article above as well as your own knowledge of the digital world and any online examples you can think of to answer the above questions and justify and answers.

You should write around 500 words.