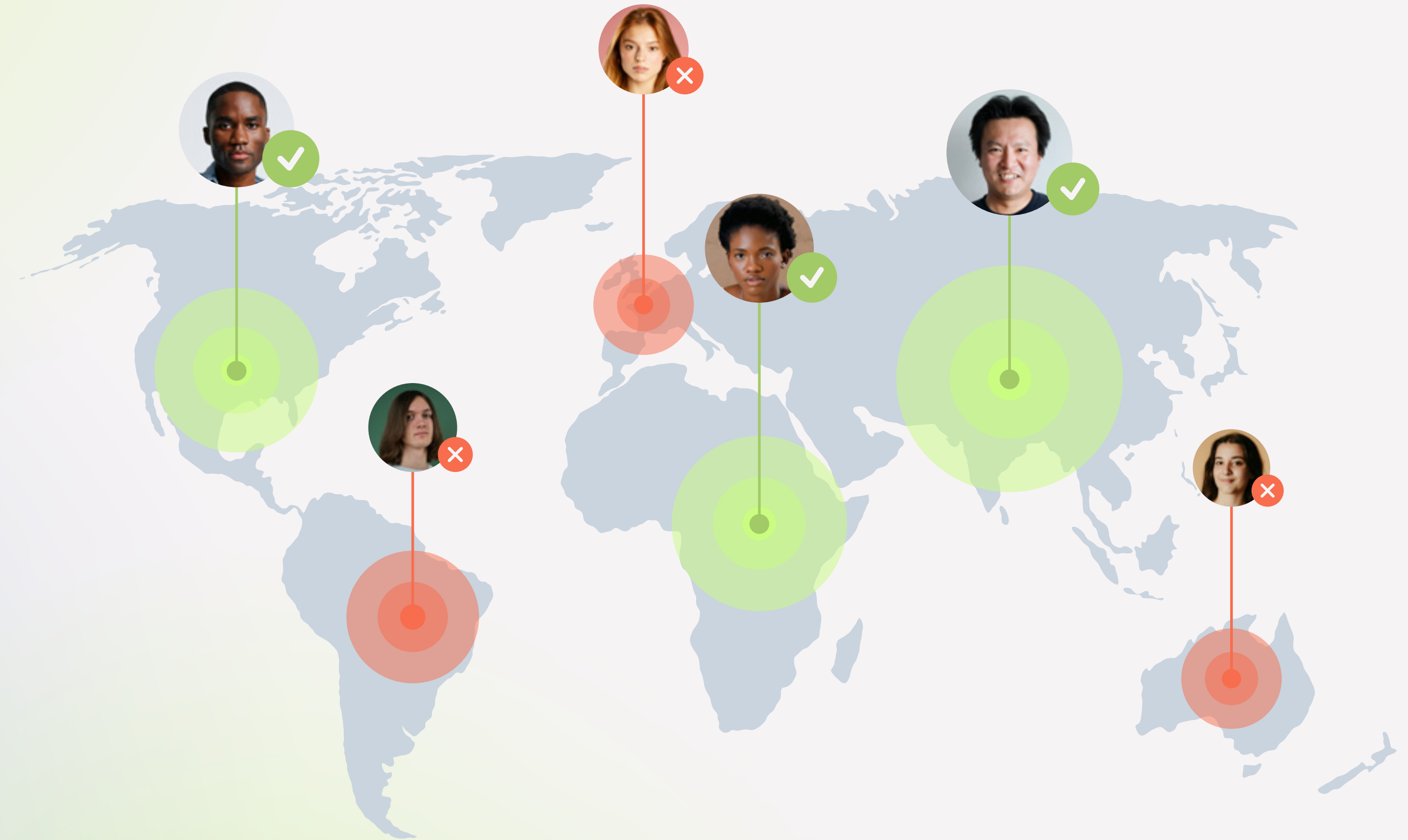


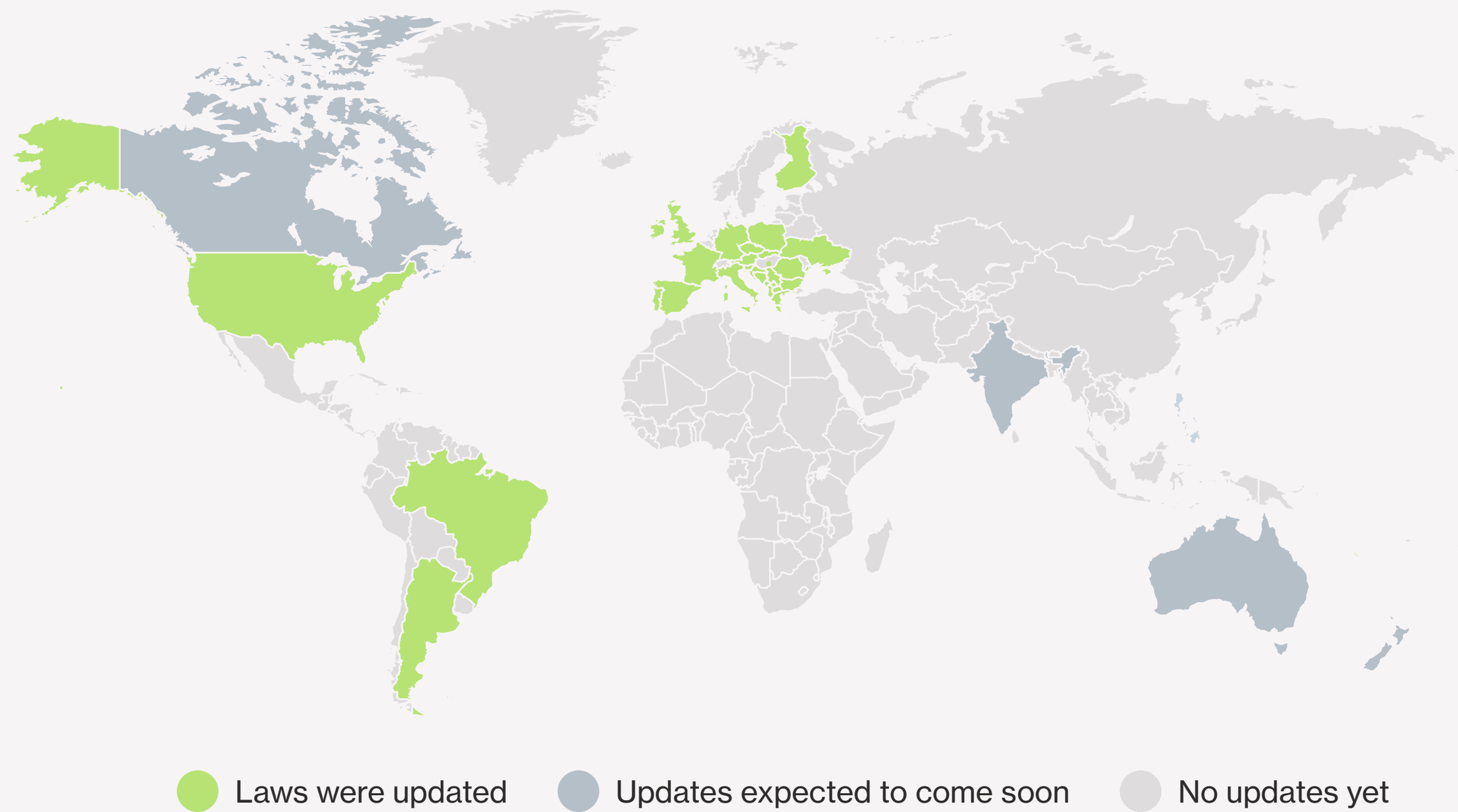
ondato

Age Verification Regulations Around the World



In response to growing concerns regarding children's safety online, more and more countries are updating their regulations on age verification. As many companies must now change their processes to adhere to the new regulations, we've compiled a comprehensive list of the newest laws affecting them.

Updated Age Verification Laws Across the Globe



The balance between online safety and data privacy is incredibly important as we move more and more processes online. At Ondato, we aim to make that balance easily achievable for any company with our robust technological solutions.



Liudas Kanapienis
CEO and Cofounder of Ondato

Worldwide Age Verification Solutions

Used by: OnlyFans fansly

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Key Trends to Note in Age Verification

Age verification for gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis sales commonly involves KYC protocols, which require customers to submit official identification.

Many industries, particularly adult content and social media, still rely on self-declaration, which is increasingly seen as insufficient.

Lawmakers across the world are discussing stricter age verification requirements for industries like adult content and social media.

EU Directives such as GDPR require businesses to implement effective and privacy-compliant age verification systems.

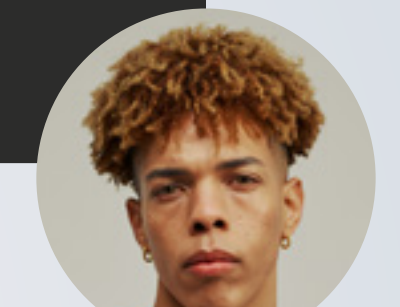
Gambling regulations mandate age verification, but enforcement is inconsistent across different places of the world, and many platforms rely on self-declaration.

Many countries, including China and South Korea, require users to verify their identities and ages through real-name registration when accessing certain online services.

In response to concerns about online gaming addiction, several countries enforce playtime limits for minors, often requiring age verification before gameplay can proceed.



18+



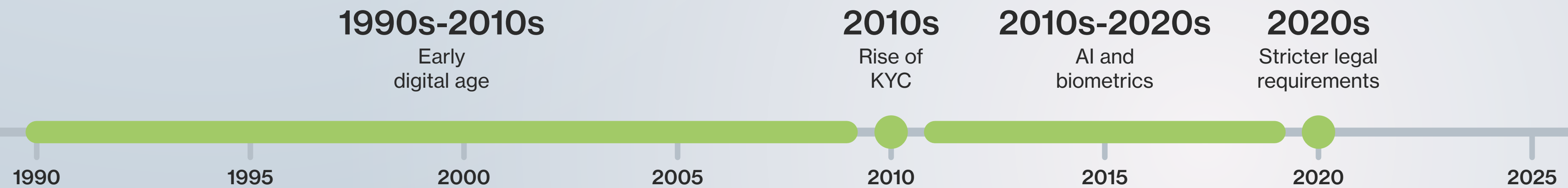
16+



25+



Age Verification Regulations Online Through the Years



1990s-2010s

Credit Card Verification

As e-commerce developed, websites started using credit cards as a form of age verification. The assumption was that minors would not possess a credit card, making it an indirect method of verifying age. This verification method is still sometimes used today, however, it is flawed, as minors could easily gain access to parents' or guardians' credit cards.

Self-Certification Online

In the early days of the internet, many websites relied on self-declaration for age verification, where users would be asked to input their birth date or check a box to confirm they were of legal age. This method was prevalent on platforms that provided access to age-restricted content (e.g., alcohol sales, adult content, or gambling). However, it was extremely easy to bypass and ineffective at preventing minors from accessing restricted material.

2010s

KYC Standards

With the rise of digital services in financial sectors, Know Your Customer (KYC) regulations began to take hold. Initially aimed at preventing fraud and money laundering, KYC protocols also required identity verification, which included checking a person's age. This was particularly important for industries like online gambling, financial services, and cryptocurrency.

GDPR (2018)

The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation added stricter requirements for the protection of minors' data. Under GDPR, websites must get verifiable parental consent for users under 16 (with some countries setting the age at 13). This pushed businesses to implement more sophisticated age verification measures for European users.

COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, 1998)

While passed earlier, enforcement ramped up in the 2010s as children's privacy became a growing concern. COPPA in the U.S. required online services to verify parental consent before collecting personal data from children under 13. Websites began implementing age-gating mechanisms, which often included date-of-birth verification or parental consent forms.

ID Verification

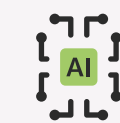
As KYC became more widely adopted, companies started using document verification (e.g., scanning government-issued IDs such as passports or driver's licences) combined with facial recognition or biometric matching to verify identity and age. This was an important development for industries where legal compliance was crucial, such as online gambling, alcohol sales, and cryptocurrencies.

Late 2010s-2020s



Facial Recognition and Biometrics

As technology advanced, facial recognition became a major tool for age verification. Companies such as Ondato began offering biometric verification systems where users could scan their faces along with their ID documents to verify their identity and age. This method adds a layer of security, ensuring that the person submitting the document matches the photo ID. For several years, this has been the most effective and accurate age verification method.



AI-Powered Estimations

Alongside document verification, AI-powered age estimation gained traction. AI models could analyse a person's face in real time to estimate their age. This technology has been used in industries like social media (e.g., Instagram testing AI for age checks) and retail (e.g., self-checkouts for age-restricted products). Though still not perfect, it became a more seamless way of verifying age compared to document uploads, especially as concerns about user data collecting grew.

2020s

Age-Appropriate Design Code (UK, 2021)

The UK's Children's Code (also known as the Age-Appropriate Design Code) has set stricter requirements for online services to protect children under 18. It requires platforms to take reasonable steps to verify the ages of their users. This has pushed companies in industries like social media and gaming to adopt more robust age verification processes.

Tighter Controls for Online Gambling and Vaping

Many countries have implemented stricter verification requirements in the online gambling and vaping industries. For example, in the UK, the Gambling Commission mandates operators to verify a user's age before they can deposit funds or access free-to-play games.

Digital Identity and Verification Laws

Countries and regions like the EU are moving toward digital identity frameworks that enable more secure and reliable age and identity verification across all online services. The goal is to create harmonious systems that can handle both identity and age verification across various sectors while protecting privacy.

Online Safety Bill (UK)

Proposed in the UK, this bill aims to regulate platforms with user-generated content, forcing them to ensure minors are not exposed to inappropriate material. It requires age verification for platforms that host adult content and makes companies liable for protecting minors online.

California Age-Appropriate Design Code (2022)

Similar to the UK's Children's Code, California passed its own version of online safety regulations focused on minors, making companies responsible for age verification practices and for ensuring age-appropriate content.

North America

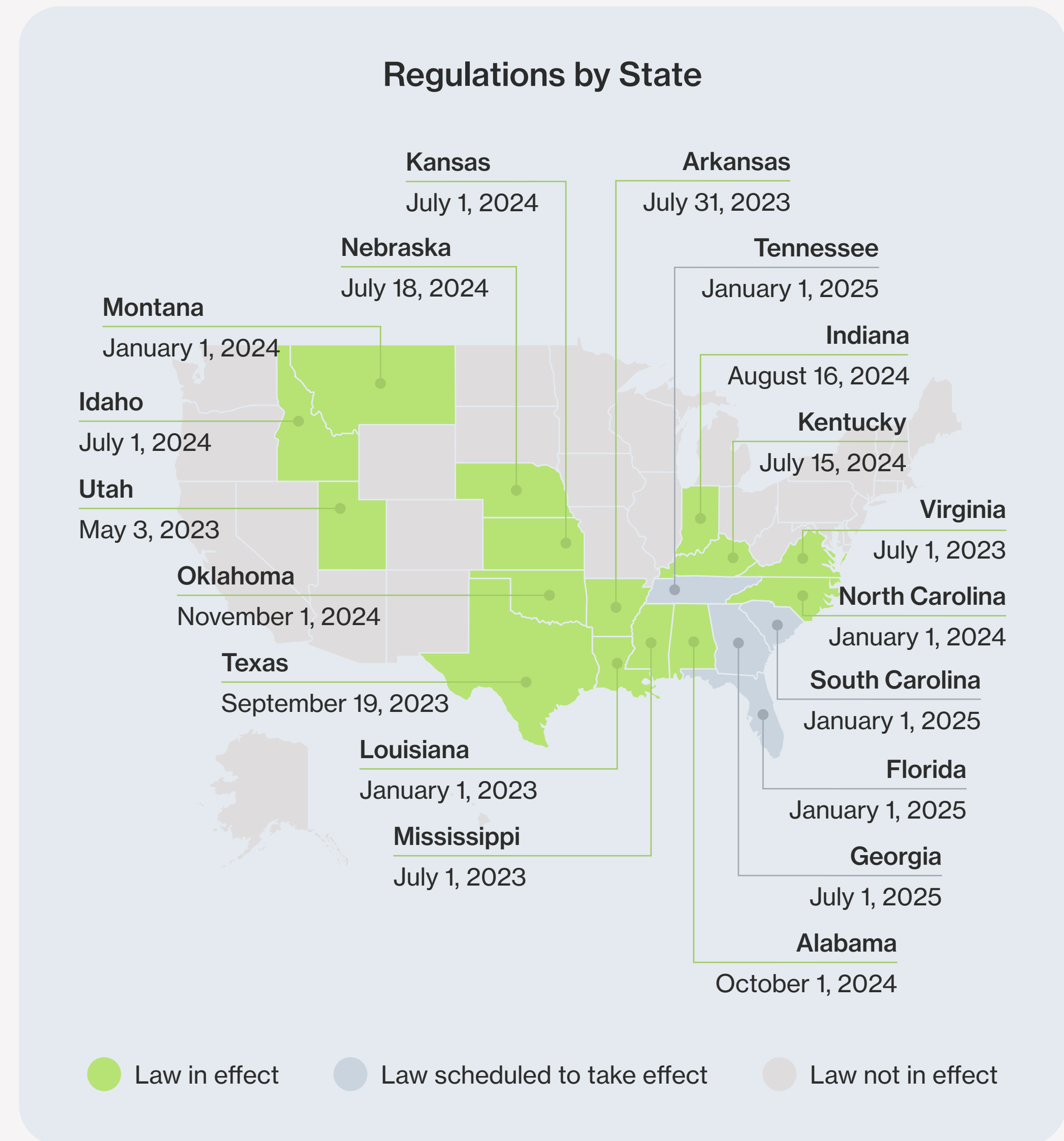
In North America, age verification regulations vary across different industries and regions, particularly between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The need for age verification is driven by the protection of minors from age-restricted products and services, such as gambling, alcohol, tobacco, adult content, and online activities. Regulatory approaches differ, but in general, North America is seeing increasing attention to enforcing robust age verification, particularly in the digital space, to safeguard youth.

Here's an overview of age verification regulations across various sectors in North America:

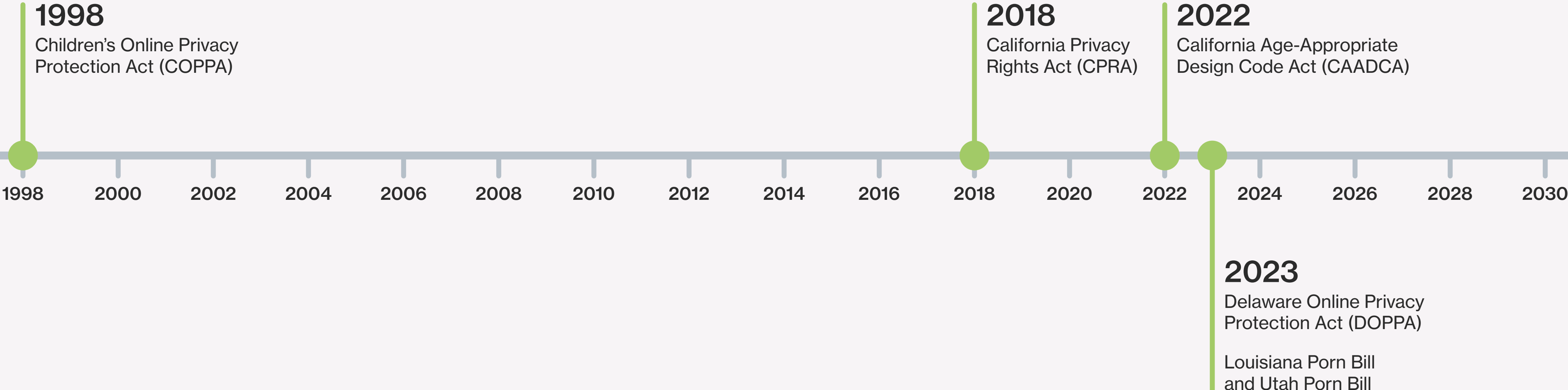


United States

In the United States, age verification requirements are heavily influenced by federal and state laws. Key areas of regulation include online gambling, alcohol and tobacco sales, adult content, social media, and e-commerce. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) is central to regulating online activities for children.



Regulations Timeline in the United States



Online Gambling

Regulation: The legality of online gambling in the U.S. is regulated at the state level, with certain states allowing online sports betting, poker, and casino games, such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Nevada.

Age Verification: U.S. law mandates that individuals engaging in online gambling must be 21 years or older (18 in some states). Licensed operators must implement Know Your Customer (KYC) processes, which include verifying age through government-issued ID, like driver's licence or social security numbers. Online platforms are required to check databases to confirm users' ages and identities before allowing access to gambling services.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Alcohol: The legal drinking age in the U.S. is 21, and both in-person and online alcohol sales require proof of age. Online alcohol retailers must implement age verification before the sale and often require identification to be checked upon delivery. Many use third-party verification services or require credit card confirmation, cross-referenced with the buyer's ID.

Tobacco: The legal age to purchase tobacco and vaping products was raised to 21 in 2019 under the Tobacco 21 Law. Online retailers must verify a buyer's age during checkout, often using ID scanning or third-party age verification services.

18+ Adult Content

Regulation: Federal law mandates that adult content (pornography) can only be accessed by individuals over 18. Websites are required to restrict access to adult content through age gates (asking users to confirm their age), though this method is often insufficient. Some states, like Louisiana, have started to pass laws requiring stricter age verification, such as using government-issued IDs or biometric data.

Social Media and Online Platforms

COPPA: The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) is a key law in the U.S. that governs how websites and online services collect data from children under 13 years old. Platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok typically rely on self-declaration (requiring users to input their birthdate) but must also obtain verifiable parental consent if a child under 13 is accessing the platform. Failure to comply can lead to heavy fines, as seen in the FTC's settlements with TikTok and YouTube.

Social Media Verification: While not strictly required for age verification, social media platforms use algorithms and monitoring systems to detect underage users, and there are growing calls for platforms to implement more robust age verification systems.

E-commerce: When purchasing age-restricted products like alcohol, tobacco, or firearms, online retailers are required to verify the buyer's age. Age verification is typically conducted using a combination of self-declaration, ID checks, and third-party age verification tools, often at checkout or delivery.

Canada

In Canada, age verification requirements are regulated federally and provincially, depending on the type of product or service. Similar to the U.S., age verification is mandatory for gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and adult content, with additional regulations around cannabis following its legalisation.

Online Gambling

Regulation: Online gambling is regulated by individual provinces. For example, Ontario and British Columbia have licensed and regulated online gambling platforms, while others, like Quebec, operate through government-run platforms.

Age Verification: The legal age for online gambling in Canada is either 18 or 19, depending on the province. Online platforms are required to implement KYC protocols, which include verifying a user's age via government-issued ID or cross-referencing national databases.



Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Alcohol: The legal drinking age is either 18 or 19, depending on the province. Online alcohol sales require age verification during the purchase process, often through ID submission or third-party verification. Alcohol deliveries require age verification upon receipt, where couriers will check IDs.

Tobacco: The minimum age to purchase tobacco products is 18 or 19, depending on the province. Age verification is required both for online and in-store purchases. Online retailers typically require customers to upload their ID photo or use a verification service.



Cannabis Sales

Legalisation of Cannabis: Canada legalised the recreational use of cannabis in 2018, and strict age verification is required for purchasing cannabis, either in stores or online. The legal age for cannabis use is 18 or 19, depending on the province.

Online Sales: Provincial cannabis stores require robust age verification at both the purchase and delivery stages, often using ID verification systems that check government-issued documents before the transaction is completed.



18+ Adult Content

Regulation: Access to adult content in Canada is restricted to individuals over 18, though most adult websites rely on self-declaration systems to verify age. There is no national mandate for stricter age verification, but discussions are ongoing about improving regulations to protect minors from inappropriate content.



Social Media and Online Privacy

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA): Canada's PIPEDA governs how organisations collect and handle personal information, including data from minors. While PIPEDA does not mandate age verification, it emphasises the protection of children's personal data, indirectly encouraging platforms to implement stricter controls for minors. Social media platforms typically follow global policies of self-declaration for users under 13, though this is an area of increasing scrutiny.



E-commerce

Age-Restricted Products: When purchasing age-restricted items like alcohol, tobacco, or cannabis online, Canadian retailers must verify the buyer's age through a combination of self-declaration, ID checks, and third-party verification services.

Mexico

In Mexico, age verification regulations are less stringent compared to the U.S. and Canada, but the country is making strides in improving protections for minors, particularly regarding online gambling, alcohol and tobacco sales, and adult content.

Online Gambling

Regulation: Mexico's online gambling is regulated by the General Directorate of Games and Raffles under the Ministry of the Interior. Licensed online gambling operators must verify the age of players, as gambling is restricted to those over 18. Most online gambling sites rely on KYC protocols, requiring users to submit government-issued IDs, such as voter ID cards, to confirm their age.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Alcohol: The legal drinking age in Mexico is 18, and online alcohol retailers are expected to verify the age of customers. However, enforcement of these laws is inconsistent, and age verification often relies on self-declaration.

Tobacco: Similar to alcohol, the legal age to purchase tobacco is 18, and age verification is required for online sales, but implementation is often lax. There are ongoing discussions about strengthening these measures to ensure compliance.

18+ Adult Content

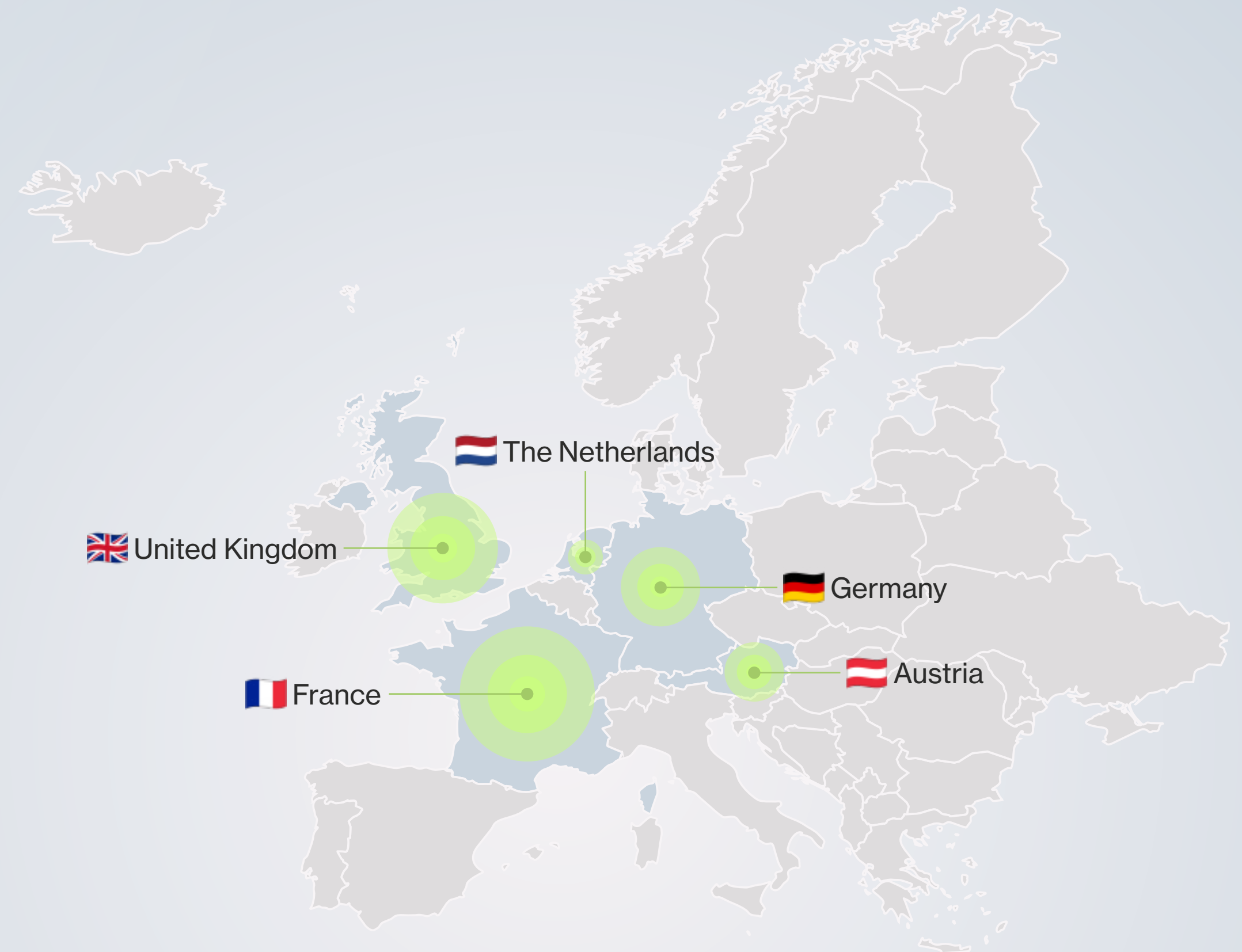
Regulation: Access to adult content in Mexico is restricted to individuals over 18, though websites largely rely on self-declaration to verify age. There are no mandatory ID checks for accessing adult content, but advocacy groups are pushing for stricter age verification systems, given the growing concern over minors accessing inappropriate material online.

Social Media and Online Privacy

Federal Law on the Protection of Personal Data Held by Private Parties: Mexico's data protection law governs how companies collect and handle personal information, including data from minors. While there is no specific mandate for age verification on social media platforms, there is increasing awareness of the need for better protection of children's data and stricter access controls.

Europe and United Kingdom

Age verification requirements in Europe and the UK vary across different countries and sectors, but many of them share common frameworks, particularly driven by EU-wide regulations. These requirements aim to protect minors from accessing age-restricted content, products, and services, including online gambling, alcohol, tobacco, and explicit content. Here's an overview of the key areas where age verification is mandated:



EU-Wide Regulations

Several EU directives and regulations influence age verification requirements across the member states. Key legislation includes:

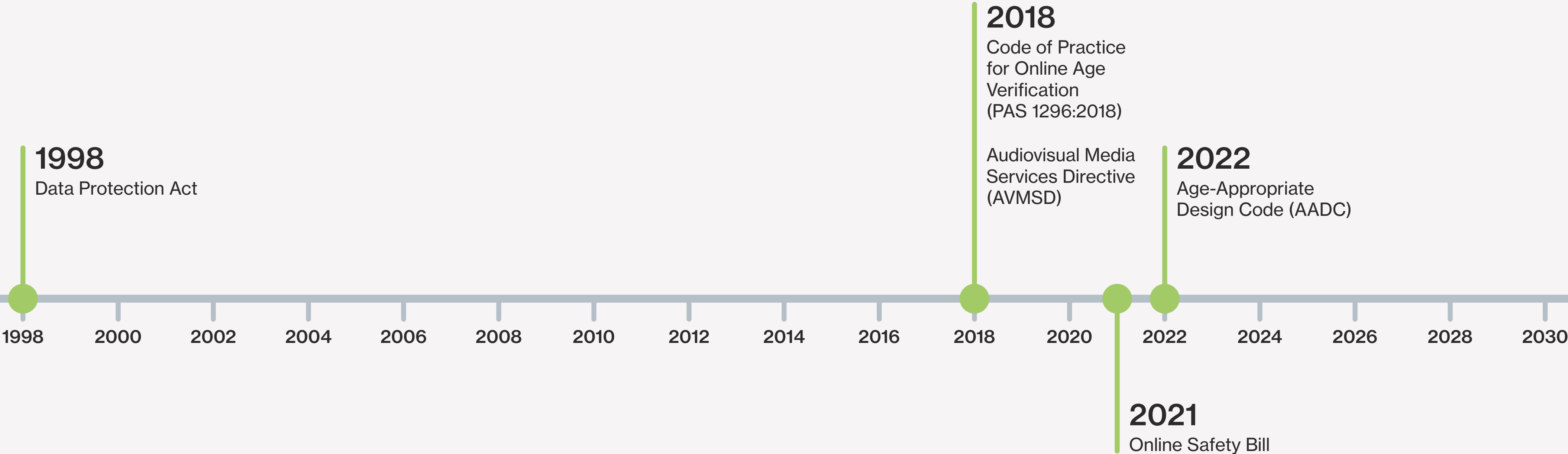
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

GDPR places strict rules on the collection and processing of children's data. It defines the age of consent for processing personal data at 16 (although individual countries can lower this to 13). Online services targeting children or requiring age verification must ensure appropriate measures are in place to verify age while complying with GDPR's data privacy requirements.

Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)

This directive requires EU member states to implement measures that protect minors from harmful content, including video-sharing platforms, streaming services, and online media. Platforms must ensure that children do not access content that is harmful or age-inappropriate. Many countries interpret this as requiring robust age verification systems.

Regulations Timeline in the United Kingdom



Online Gambling

Most EU countries have strict regulations surrounding online gambling, typically setting the minimum legal age for gambling at 18. Operators are required to implement age verification systems during the registration process to ensure compliance with legal age restrictions.

United Kingdom

The UK has some of the strictest rules in Europe, enforced by the UK Gambling Commission. Operators must verify the age of users before they can gamble, deposit funds, or access free bets. The Gambling Act 2005 mandates operators to use electronic age verification systems, which can involve checking credit reference agencies or identity databases.

Germany

The Interstate Treaty on Gambling (Glücksspielstaatsvertrag) requires online gambling operators to conduct thorough age verification checks, usually through electronic means or manual document verification.

Adult Content

Many European countries are increasingly focusing on restricting minors' access to adult content by mandating age verification for online adult sites.

United Kingdom

Under the Digital Economy Act 2017, the UK introduced mandatory age verification for pornography websites, though it has been delayed due to privacy and implementation concerns. The Online Safety Bill 2023 has reignited efforts to regulate access to adult content, requiring websites hosting pornography to implement age verification systems.

Germany

Germany's Youth Protection Act (Jugendschutzgesetz) requires websites hosting adult content to have strict age verification systems, including verifying a user's identity before accessing explicit material.

France



In 2020, France passed a law mandating that adult websites implement age verification to block access to minors. The Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA), France's media regulator, oversees this, and penalties can be imposed on sites failing to comply.

Austria

In 2023, Austria proposed strict age verification requirements for pornography sites, focusing on digital identity verification.

Tobacco and Alcohol

The sale of tobacco and alcohol to minors is prohibited throughout Europe, and many countries require online retailers to implement robust age verification checks during purchases.

 Germany,  France, and  the Netherlands

Online retailers selling alcohol or tobacco must verify a customer's age before completing the transaction. This often involves electronic identity verification or requiring proof of age during the delivery process.

 **United Kingdom**

The UK also requires age verification for online sales of alcohol and tobacco. Vendors use electronic verification systems, and delivery services must check the recipient's ID to ensure compliance with age restrictions.

Video Games and Media

Age verification requirements are often tied to the European content classification system for video games and media:

PEGI (Pan European Game Information)

PEGI is the Europe-wide age rating system for video games. Although the system itself does not enforce age verification, platforms selling PEGI-rated content (such as MA15+ or PEGI 18) are responsible for implementing mechanisms to prevent minors from purchasing age-restricted content.

National Regulations

Individual countries may have additional requirements for age verification when accessing restricted content like films or video games. For example, in Germany, the USK (Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle) manages video game classification, and platforms must verify users' ages for restricted content.

Digital Age Verification Initiatives

Some European countries are piloting or introducing innovative approaches to age verification, focusing on balancing child protection with privacy:

United Kingdom

Under the Online Safety Bill, tech companies are required to protect children from harmful online content by implementing age verification or age assurance tools. Age assurance tools may involve estimating a user's age through biometric methods or limiting children's access based on the content being viewed.

France and Germany

These countries have explored digital identity solutions for age verification, such as requiring users to verify their age via government-issued IDs or through secure identity verification apps.

Challenges and Privacy Concerns

Implementing age verification comes with challenges, particularly related to privacy, as many verification systems require collecting personal information, such as IDs or biometric data. The key concerns include:

Balancing Privacy and Protection

Countries must comply with GDPR, which limits the collection of minors' personal data and imposes restrictions on processing such data. Therefore, age verification systems must be designed in a way that minimises data collection while ensuring robust verification.

Technical Solutions

Various technical solutions are under discussion, including facial recognition software, digital identity systems, and third-party age verification providers. These technologies are being assessed for compliance with data protection laws.

South America

Age verification requirements in South America vary across countries and industries, much like in other regions. The growing importance of online services, such as gambling, e-commerce, social media, and digital content, has pushed governments to introduce or enhance age verification regulations. However, the maturity of these regulations differs by country, with some nations being more advanced in their implementation while others are still developing frameworks to protect minors online.



Brazil

Brazil is South America's largest economy and has the most developed regulatory framework for digital services and age verification.

Gambling and Online Betting

Brazil has legalised various forms of gambling, such as sports betting, but is still refining its regulations. Age verification is mandatory for gambling operators, and they must implement KYC processes, which typically include ID checks or linking accounts to CPF numbers (Brazil's taxpayer identification number). Brazilian law prohibits gambling for individuals under 18, so online platforms must ensure that users provide identification to prove their age before participating.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Brazilian law prohibits the sale of alcohol and tobacco to individuals under 18. While age verification is enforced for in-person sales (with the requirement to present an ID), the growth of e-commerce has brought challenges to enforcing this online. E-commerce platforms selling age-restricted products are expected to adopt mechanisms for age verification, often requiring users to input their CPF or upload ID documents during the checkout process.

Digital Content and Streaming Platforms

Brazil's Children and Adolescents Statute (ECA) regulates content access for minors. The statute, alongside general consumer protection laws, requires platforms like Netflix, YouTube, and social media platforms to offer age verification mechanisms, especially for content deemed inappropriate for minors. Parental control settings, age gates, and self-declaration systems are common, although enforcement varies in practice.

Social Media

Brazil does not have specific laws mandating age verification for social media, but platforms are required to comply with LGPD (Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados), the country's data protection law. While LGPD does not explicitly require age verification, it emphasises the need to protect minors' data. Most social media platforms rely on self-declaration (users entering their birthdate) to restrict access to users under 13, in line with their global policies.

Argentina

Argentina is another key player in South America and has developed some regulatory measures around age verification, particularly in gambling, online content, and data protection.

Online Gambling

Gambling is regulated at the provincial level in Argentina, leading to some inconsistencies in enforcement. Buenos Aires, for example, has more stringent regulations compared to other regions. Provincial gaming authorities require operators to implement age verification to prevent individuals under 18 from accessing online betting platforms. KYC protocols, which involve ID verification through DNI (National Identity Document) or other official identification, are mandatory.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Argentina restricts the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors under 18, and this applies to both in-person and online transactions. E-commerce platforms selling these products are expected to implement age verification measures, often by requesting the customer's DNI or requiring proof of age through other document submission methods.

Streaming and Content Platforms

Argentina's National Communication Entity (ENACOM) regulates the classification and broadcasting of content. Age verification on streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, YouTube) is encouraged, especially for content that is inappropriate for children under 13 or 18. Platforms are expected to provide parental controls and age-gating mechanisms, though the specifics of implementation are left largely to the platform operators.

Social Media and Privacy Laws

Like Brazil, Argentina has a data protection law known as Ley de Protección de los Datos Personales. While it does not specifically mandate age verification, it obliges companies to take steps to protect the personal data of minors. This indirectly encourages social media platforms to implement age restrictions based on self-declared birthdates or linked identification.

Chile

Chile has robust data protection laws and growing digital regulation, with an increasing focus on protecting minors online.

Online Gambling

Chile is in the process of creating a formal legal framework for online gambling, but currently, there are no centralised age verification mandates for gambling platforms. However, many international platforms that operate in Chile voluntarily implement KYC processes, including ID verification, to ensure users are above 18.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

The sale of alcohol and tobacco is restricted to those over 18, and this applies to online sales as well. E-commerce platforms are expected to implement basic age verification measures, such as collecting national ID numbers or requiring users to declare their age before making a purchase. However, enforcement of these measures is inconsistent.

Content and Streaming Platforms

Chile's National Television Council (CNTV) regulates television and streaming content, classifying it based on age suitability. Streaming platforms are encouraged to offer parental controls and age-gating features, and some platforms implement these features as part of global standards. However, more advanced age verification methods, such as ID-based verification, are not widely enforced.

Social Media and Data Protection

Chile's Data Protection Law provides specific protections for children, though age verification is still primarily left to the discretion of the platforms. Social media sites typically use self-declaration for age verification, as is common globally.

Colombia

Colombia has made strides in regulating online content and gambling, with increasing attention to age verification as part of these efforts.

Online Gambling

Colombia was one of the first South American countries to regulate online gambling through Coljuegos, the national gaming authority. All licensed operators are required to verify the age and identity of their users, as gambling is restricted to individuals over 18. KYC protocols are compulsory, requiring users to submit national ID cards (Cédula) or other forms of identification during registration to prove their age.

Social Media and Privacy

Colombia's data protection framework focuses on safeguarding personal data, including that of minors. While not explicitly an age verification law, it mandates extra protections for children's data, which may drive platforms to implement stricter age-gating mechanisms. Social media platforms typically use self-declaration to restrict access to users under 13, though there is no comprehensive age verification system in place.

Peru

Peru's digital services regulations are still under development, but the country is beginning to implement age verification measures, especially in gambling and digital content.

Gambling and Betting

Peru legalised sports betting and online gambling in 2022, making it one of the more recent countries to regulate this industry. Underage gambling (below 18 years) is prohibited, and operators are required to implement age verification through KYC checks, including document verification with DNI cards. While enforcement is still in its early stages, Peru's regulatory body is working to ensure compliance among online operators.

Social Media and Privacy Regulations

Peru's Ley de Protección de Datos Personales (Law 29733) mandates that personal data of minors be handled with extra care, but there are no specific age verification laws for social media. Platforms generally use self-declaration for users under 13, as per global standards.

Other South American Countries

( Uruguay,  Paraguay,  Ecuador,  Bolivia,  Venezuela)

In smaller or less regulated markets like Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela, age verification regulations are generally less developed, though some trends are emerging:

Gambling and Betting

These countries have started to regulate gambling to varying degrees, with most requiring KYC protocols for licensed operators to prevent underage gambling. This typically involves document verification or self-declaration during the registration process. Enforcement varies by country, and unregulated platforms often lack stringent age verification.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Most countries have laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors under 18, and some online retailers implement age verification checks. However, enforcement is often weak, with many platforms relying on self-declaration without formal document checks.

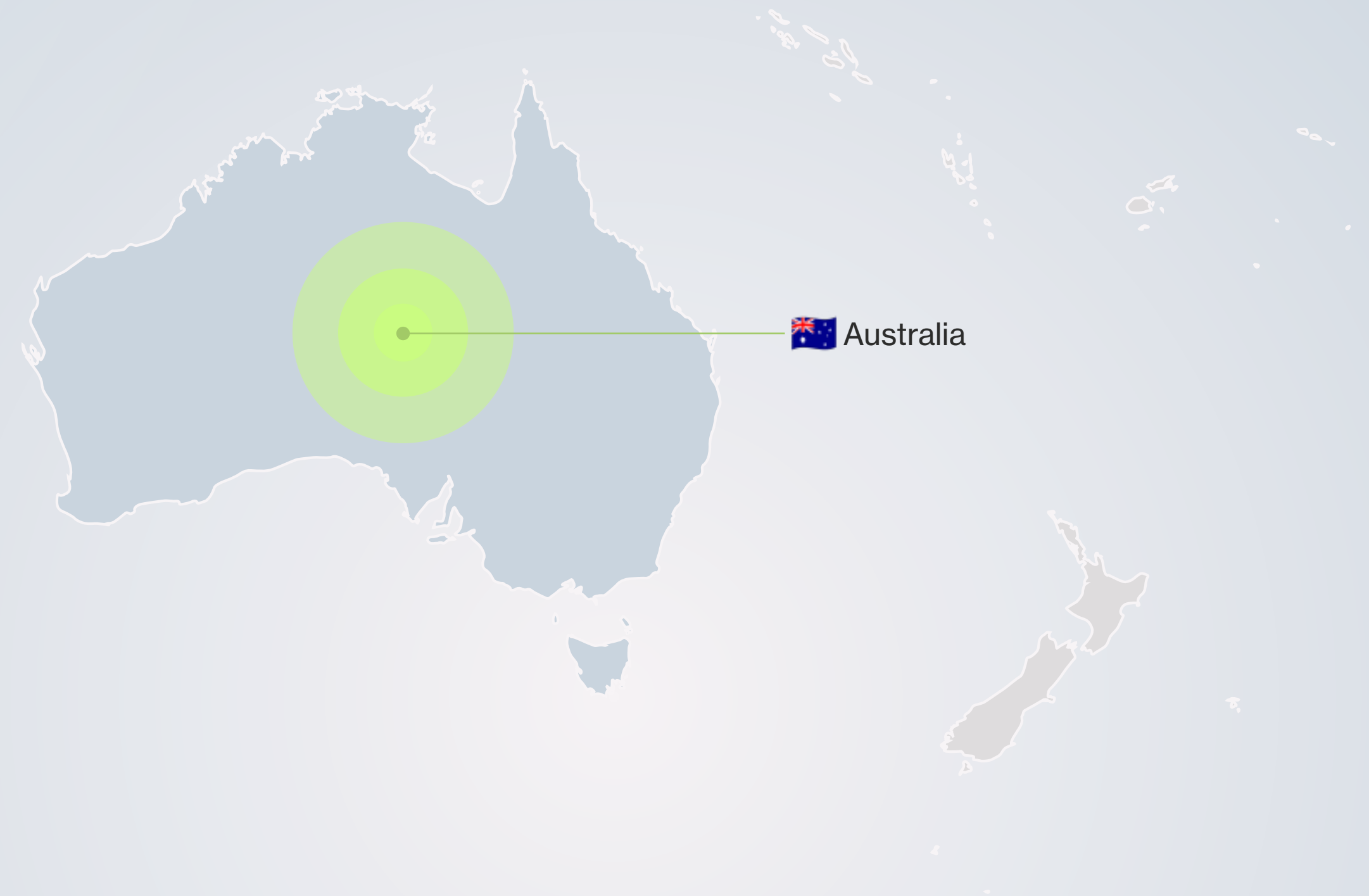
Digital Content and Social Media

Streaming services and social media platforms in these countries typically follow global standards, with self-declared age being the most common form of verification. Parental control options and age-gating are available but not universally enforced.

Australia

In Australia, age verification requirements are gaining attention, particularly in industries like online gambling, alcohol and tobacco sales, adult content, and social media. Regulatory bodies are working to establish more robust frameworks to ensure that minors are protected from accessing age-restricted products and services.

Here's an overview of age verification regulations in different sectors across Australia:



Online Gambling

Australia has a highly regulated gambling industry, with stringent age verification requirements.

Regulation

The Interactive Gambling Act 2001 (IGA) governs online gambling in Australia and prohibits the offering of certain types of online gambling services to Australian residents, particularly casino games and slot machines. However, licensed online betting services (sports betting and lotteries) are legal and heavily regulated.

Age Verification

To prevent underage gambling, licensed operators must implement strict KYC procedures, which include age verification. These operators must verify a customer's age within 72 hours of registration. If age cannot be verified within this timeframe, the account must be suspended until verification is completed. Typically, operators verify age by cross-referencing government-issued IDs (like driver's licences, passports, or national ID cards) with official databases.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Age restrictions for alcohol and tobacco are strictly enforced in Australia, with specific requirements for both physical and online sales.

Alcohol

The Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (and equivalent laws in other states) prohibits the sale of alcohol to minors (under 18). Online alcohol retailers must verify the age of purchasers before completing a sale. Common verification methods include requiring users to enter their date of birth or providing additional identification, such as a driver's licence, at the point of delivery.

Tobacco

Similarly, the sale of tobacco products is restricted to those over the age of 18. Online tobacco retailers are required to implement age verification systems at the point of sale. This might involve checking IDs at delivery or using third-party services to verify age during the purchase process.

Adult Content

Australia has seen increasing concern over minors accessing adult content online, leading to discussions around stronger age verification regulations for adult websites.

Regulatory Framework

The Online Safety Act 2021, overseen by the eSafety Commissioner, plays a key role in regulating harmful and inappropriate content, particularly for children. While this Act does not yet mandate comprehensive age verification for all adult content websites, it gives the eSafety Commissioner powers to require websites to implement age verification systems.

Proposed Age Verification Requirements

There are ongoing discussions in Australia around introducing stricter age verification laws for accessing pornography and other adult content. In 2019, the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs recommended that the government introduce mandatory age verification for adult content. In 2020, the eSafety Commissioner published a report on the feasibility of age verification technologies for adult content, exploring the use of tools such as ID-based verification and biometric checks.

Current Practices

At present, many adult websites operating in Australia rely on self-declaration of age (requiring users to confirm they are over 18), but these systems are easy to bypass. The proposed regulations would enforce more secure forms of verification, such as linking accounts to government databases or using third-party verification services.

Video Games and Online Content

Australia regulates video games and online content through its classification system, overseen by the Australian Classification Board.

Classification System

Video games and online content are classified into various age categories, such as G (General), PG (Parental Guidance), M (Mature), MA15+, and R18+. Content that is rated MA15+ or R18+ is restricted to users who are over the respective age limits.

Age Verification

Platforms that distribute age-restricted content, such as Steam or PlayStation Network, are required to implement age verification measures to prevent minors from accessing adult-rated games or content. This often involves users declaring their birthdate or logging in with accounts that have been verified as belonging to adults. However, these systems are generally easy to bypass.

Parental Controls

Many game platforms offer parental controls to restrict minors from accessing certain content, but there is currently no universal, government-mandated age verification system for video games. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) monitors compliance with classification standards, but enforcement remains challenging, particularly for digital content distributed via global platforms.



Social Media and Online Platforms

Social media platforms are widely used by young Australians, raising concerns about their exposure to inappropriate content and interactions.

Age Restrictions

Most social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, have age limits in line with global standards, typically restricting access to users who are 13 or older. However, these platforms primarily rely on self-declaration of age, which is not foolproof.

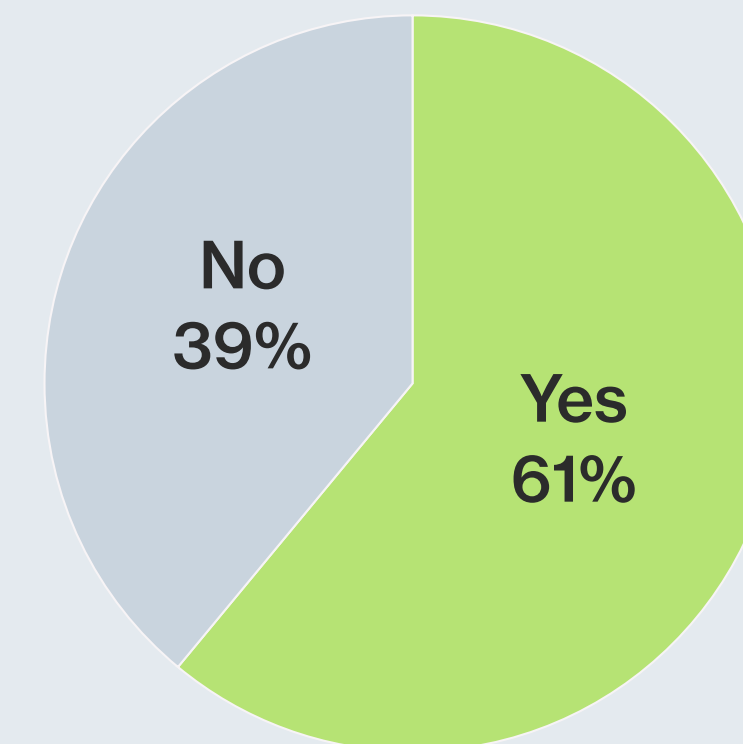
eSafety Commissioner

The eSafety Commissioner plays a key role in regulating social media platforms, ensuring they take reasonable steps to protect minors. While there are no mandatory age verification laws specific to social media platforms, there is increasing pressure on platforms to adopt better methods for verifying the age of users. The Online Safety Act 2021 strengthens protections for minors and encourages social media platforms to create safer online environments, but it stops short of requiring formal age verification for all users.

Future Developments

There are ongoing debates in Australia about introducing more [stringent age verification requirements](#) for social media platforms. With Australia's trial of age assurance technology starting in late November 2024, Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has called for a ban of social media for children younger than 16 years old.

Australia's view on a social media ban for users younger than 17



E-commerce

Age restrictions for e-commerce are strictly enforced in Australia, with specific regulations for alcohol and tobacco sales.

Alcohol

The Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (and equivalent laws in other states) prohibits the sale of alcohol to minors (under 18). Online alcohol retailers must verify the age of purchasers before completing a sale. Common verification methods include requiring users to enter their date of birth or providing additional identification, such as a driver's licence, at the point of delivery.

Tobacco

Similarly, the sale of tobacco products is restricted to those over the age of 18. Online tobacco retailers are required to implement age verification systems at the point of sale. This might involve checking IDs at delivery or using third-party services to verify age during the purchase process.

Data Privacy and Protection for Minors

Australia has a strong focus on protecting minors' privacy and data, which indirectly impacts age verification requirements.

Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)

The Privacy Act 1988 and its subsequent amendments provide a framework for how organisations collect, use, and protect personal information. While this Act does not mandate age verification directly, it emphasises the need to take special care when handling the personal data of minors, particularly those under 18.

Children's Data Protection

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) encourages organisations to ensure that they obtain parental consent when collecting data from children under a certain age. This can indirectly lead to the implementation of age verification systems to determine when parental consent is necessary.

Asia

Age verification requirements in Asia vary across countries, depending on local regulations, the nature of industries involved, and the increasing use of digital services. Over the years, governments in Asia have introduced more stringent age verification laws, especially in areas like online gaming, e-commerce, social media, and content moderation, largely driven by the need to protect minors from inappropriate content and maintain regulatory compliance.

Here's a breakdown of key regions in Asia and their approach to age verification:



China

China has some of the most rigorous age verification regulations, particularly focused on online gaming, social media, and content restrictions.

Online Gaming Restrictions

In response to concerns about gaming addiction among minors, China has implemented strict laws for online gaming companies. Minors are prohibited from playing games between 10 PM and 8 AM, and they are limited to 3 hours on weekends and holidays, and only 1 hour on weekdays. Age verification systems using real-name registration are required, and some games, like those offered by Tencent and NetEase, incorporate facial recognition technology to enforce these rules.

Real-Name Registration

Introduced by the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), this requirement mandates that users provide their real names and identification information when registering for online platforms, including social media, gaming, and video streaming services. This system helps to ensure that minors do not access age-restricted content or exceed playtime limits.

Facial Recognition

In addition to real-name registration, facial recognition technology is increasingly used for age verification to ensure compliance with the country's gaming curfews for minors. Tencent, for instance, has employed facial recognition checks to prevent minors from using adult accounts to bypass restrictions.

Japan

Japan has gradually increased its age verification efforts, particularly in industries such as online gaming, alcohol sales, and adult content.

Online Gaming

While not as strict as China, Japan does have self-imposed restrictions within the gaming industry. Platforms like Nintendo and Sony enforce age verification for online purchases and restrict certain types of content for minors. Parental control features are standard on most gaming consoles, which often use credit card verification or document checks to ensure compliance.

Age-Restricted Purchases

Japan requires age verification for purchases of alcohol, tobacco, and adult content. The use of TASPO cards (smartcards issued by the Tobacco Institute of Japan) is a prominent example for tobacco vending machines, which scan the card to ensure users are of legal age (20 years and above for smoking and drinking). For online purchases of alcohol or tobacco, age is often verified through ID document submission or credit card checks.

18+ Regulation of Adult Content

Japan has a strict legal framework for adult content and online pornography. Websites are required to implement age-gating systems where users must confirm they are over 18, often through credit card validation or submitting personal identification details.



South Korea

South Korea, much like China, has implemented strict age verification systems, especially in gaming and internet usage, due to concerns about the impact on minors.



Gaming Curfews

The Shutdown Law, also known as the Cinderella Law, was introduced to prevent children under the age of 16 from playing video games between midnight and 6 AM. This regulation, however, was abolished in 2021 due to a public backlash, though minors are still subject to playtime limits and age restrictions enforced through real-name verification.



Real-Name Verification

Similar to China, South Korea mandates real-name registration for accessing certain online services, including gaming and social media. Users must provide identification details, such as a Korean National ID or a Resident Registration Number, to verify their age when registering for platforms or making online purchases involving age-restricted content.



Content Regulation

Age verification is mandatory for accessing adult content, alcohol, and tobacco products online. Websites and platforms use credit card verification, phone number validation, or Korean ID numbers to ensure compliance.



India

India's approach to age verification has traditionally been more relaxed, but with the growth of digital services, the government has begun tightening regulations, particularly for social media, gaming, digital payments, and streaming platforms.



OTT Platforms

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 introduced regulations for over-the-top (OTT) platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and others. These rules require platforms to classify content by age categories and provide age verification mechanisms to restrict access to content unsuitable for minors. Parental controls and age-verification pop-ups are becoming increasingly common.



Gaming and Online Gambling

India has seen a surge in online gaming and gambling platforms, prompting discussions about tighter age verification laws. Currently, self-declaration is the most common method, though some platforms have started to implement ID verification and KYC checks to comply with legal standards, especially in states where online gambling is regulated.



Social Media and COPPA-Like Initiatives

While India does not have specific age verification laws for social media akin to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) in the U.S., there are ongoing discussions around creating rules to protect minors on platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Currently, platforms must ensure that users are over 13, and age verification is typically done via self-certification.

Thailand

Thailand has been increasing its focus on digital regulation, including age verification requirements.

Online Gambling and Content

Thailand's legal framework for online gambling requires platforms to verify users' ages through document verification or KYC processes. As the country continues to address issues of underage gambling, additional rules are likely to follow.

Social Media

Similar to other countries, Thailand mandates that social media and content platforms comply with age restrictions. Platforms must classify content based on age and implement appropriate age verification systems.

Nightlife

Due to the surge of fake IDs, bars and clubs in Thailand are encouraged to use digital verification before allowing customers entry. This is achieved with the ThaiID system, which allows for identity verification and confirmation, including face biometrics comparison through the Digital Face Verification System. At the time of its launch in 2023, the government stated that 44 state agencies had so far adopted the system.

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asian countries have started adopting more stringent age verification requirements across various industries, especially gaming and e-commerce.

Singapore

In Singapore, the government requires age verification for several activities, including online gambling and purchasing alcohol. Singapore's Remote Gambling Act mandates that platforms verify the age and identity of users engaging in online gambling through KYC processes, which typically involve ID document verification.

Malaysia

Malaysia has implemented age restrictions for gambling, alcohol, and adult content, requiring platforms to verify users' ages through document submission or self-declaration. Gaming platforms targeting minors often include parental control settings and age limits. Discussions around creating stricter verification laws are ongoing as digital platforms become more pervasive.

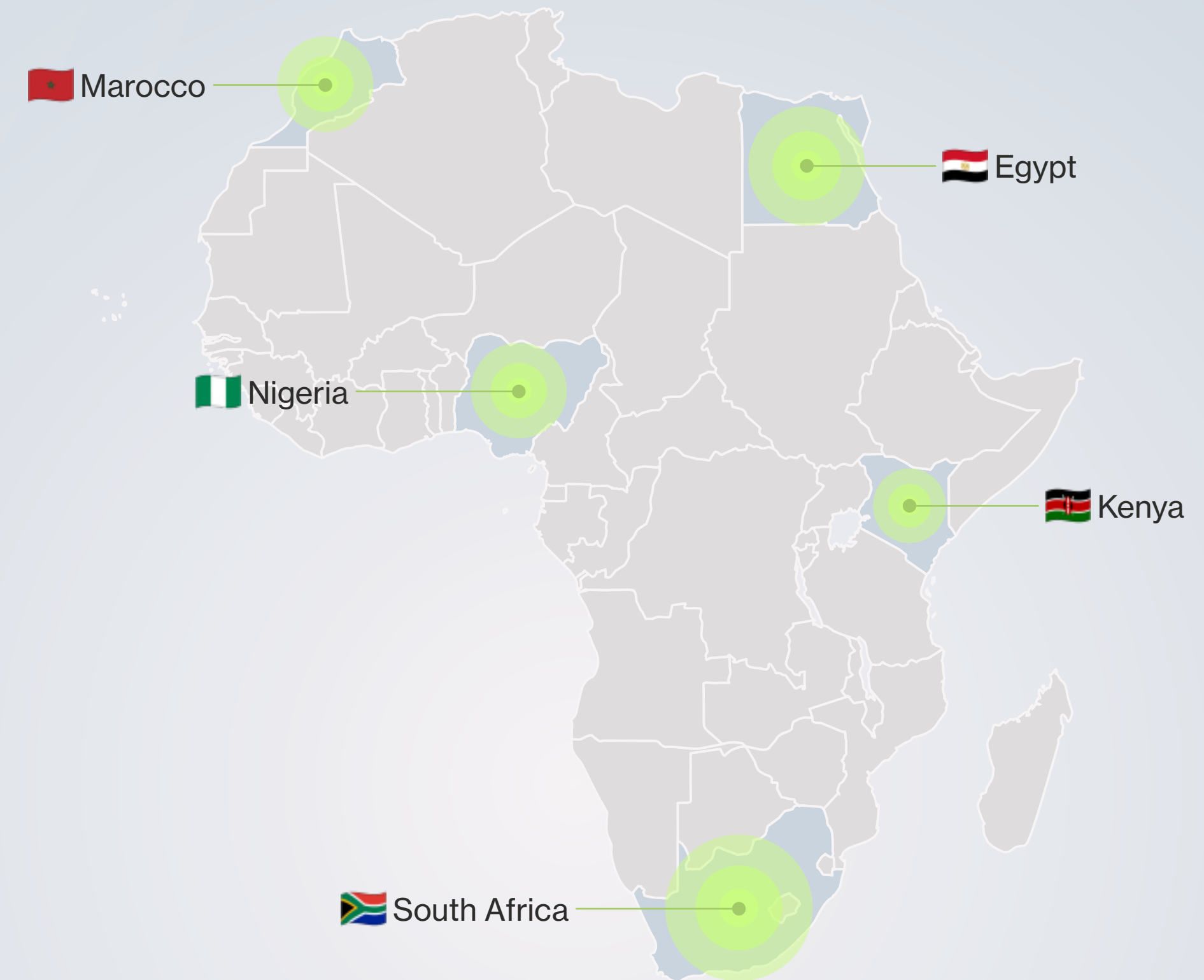
Indonesia

In Indonesia, concerns about child exploitation and access to inappropriate content have led to stronger age verification practices. The government requires platforms hosting age-restricted content to implement age-gating mechanisms. Indonesia's strict content moderation laws mandate that platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and online gambling sites verify users' ages to prevent minors from accessing inappropriate content. Social media platforms in Indonesia are also subject to government regulation regarding content classification based on user age.

Africa

Age verification regulations in Africa vary across countries and sectors, with many nations still in the early stages of implementing comprehensive digital age verification systems. However, there is growing recognition of the need to protect minors in the digital space, especially in industries like online gambling, alcohol and tobacco sales, and social media. Several African countries are gradually adopting more formalised age verification requirements, often influenced by international regulations and the increasing adoption of digital services.

Here's an overview of age verification regulations and practices in different sectors across the continent:



South Africa

South Africa is one of the most advanced countries in Africa in terms of digital regulation, including age verification requirements.

Gambling and Betting

South Africa has a well-established regulatory framework for online gambling, led by the National Gambling Board (NGB). To protect minors from gambling, operators are required to implement strict KYC (Know Your Customer) checks, which include verifying the age and identity of players through document submission (ID cards, passports, or driver's licence). Underage gambling is a serious offence, and operators must ensure that minors cannot access gambling platforms.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

South Africa regulates the sale of alcohol and tobacco, including age restrictions. While age verification for in-person sales is straightforward (presenting ID), online alcohol sales are still in their infancy in the country, and robust age verification processes are less commonly enforced. However, businesses selling age-restricted products online are required to follow similar verification protocols to ensure compliance with the Liquor Act and tobacco regulations.

Film and Video Content

The Film and Publication Board (FPB) regulates content in South Africa, including the classification of films, games, and other digital media based on age appropriateness. The FPB's regulations require platforms that host age-restricted content (e.g., adult content, violent video games) to implement age-gating mechanisms. Platforms must ensure that users are of the appropriate age, often using self-declaration or payment methods like credit cards to verify age.

Social Media

The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) and the Cybercrimes Act include provisions for protecting minors. Social media platforms are encouraged to implement safeguards, including age verification systems, to prevent underage users from accessing harmful content.

Nigeria

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy and has seen rapid growth in internet usage and digital services. However, age verification regulations are still developing in various sectors.

Online Gambling

Nigeria's gambling sector is regulated by both federal and state laws, with the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) overseeing lotteries and betting. Online gambling is widespread, but many platforms rely on self-declaration for age verification. While the law prohibits underage gambling, robust verification systems such as KYC checks are still limited. Operators are encouraged to implement stricter measures, but enforcement is inconsistent.

Digital Services and Content

Age verification for digital content, such as online streaming and social media, is largely undeveloped in Nigeria. Platforms may include basic self-declaration methods (such as entering a birthdate), but there are no comprehensive regulations that mandate more stringent checks for age-restricted content like adult material or violent media.

Data Protection Laws

The Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR), introduced in 2019, emphasises the need to protect minors' data. Although it does not specifically mandate age verification, companies are required to take reasonable steps to protect the personal data of minors, which could encourage the adoption of age verification in the future.

Kenya

Kenya is known for its advanced mobile technology and widespread use of mobile payments, but its age verification regulations are still evolving.

Betting and Gaming

The Betting Control and Licensing Board (BCLB) oversees gambling and betting activities in Kenya. The law prohibits minors (those under 18) from gambling, and online gambling platforms are required to implement age verification through KYC procedures. This typically involves collecting identification documents, such as national ID cards, and verifying them against official databases. Despite these regulations, enforcement can be inconsistent, particularly for unlicensed platforms.

Social Media and Digital Content

Age verification for social media and digital platforms is not heavily regulated in Kenya. However, growing concerns over children's exposure to inappropriate content online have prompted discussions around introducing more formal safeguards. Currently, most platforms rely on self-declaration to verify age, but stricter regulations may emerge as internet usage continues to grow.

Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

Age restrictions for alcohol and tobacco sales are enforced in brick-and-mortar stores, where ID is required. Online sales are still emerging, and age verification for e-commerce platforms remains weak, with few formal requirements in place.

Egypt

Egypt is another major African country with growing internet penetration, but its age verification regulations are still in the development phase.

Online Content Regulation

Egypt's Supreme Council for Media Regulation enforces guidelines for online content, particularly in the context of protecting minors from inappropriate or harmful material. While explicit age verification requirements are not yet widespread, digital platforms that offer age-restricted content, such as adult material or violent games, are encouraged to implement age verification mechanisms.

Gambling and Betting

Gambling in Egypt is mostly limited to foreign tourists, and local gambling is heavily restricted. Online gambling is illegal for Egyptian residents, so there is no formal framework for age verification in this sector.

Digital Privacy and Data Protection

Egypt's data protection laws are still evolving and while there is some focus on protecting minors from harmful online content, there are no clear, enforced age verification standards for general online activities, including social media use.

Morocco

Morocco has emerging digital services, but age verification regulations are relatively underdeveloped.

Gambling and Betting

Online gambling is restricted in Morocco, but for services that are accessible, age verification is generally weak, with reliance on self-declaration or minimal document checks. Stricter enforcement of age restrictions is needed to prevent minors from accessing gambling platforms.

Digital Content and Social Media

Like many other African countries, Morocco does not have comprehensive age verification laws for social media or digital platforms. Content regulation is more focused on censorship rather than safeguarding minors through age verification systems.

Other African Countries

In many other African countries, formal age verification requirements are either non-existent or poorly enforced. However, there are some notable trends:



Mobile Payments and Digital Financial Services

With the rise of mobile money platforms (e.g., M-Pesa in Kenya, MTN Mobile Money across West and Central Africa), there are growing concerns about how minors might use these services. While the primary concern is identity verification (KYC) for anti-fraud purposes, ensuring minors do not misuse these platforms is becoming more relevant. Some services require users to link mobile payment accounts to verified IDs, indirectly acting as an age verification measure.



Social Media and Online Content

Across most of Africa, age verification on social media and for age-restricted content (such as pornography or violent media) remains largely unregulated. Self-declaration (entering a birthdate or checking a box) is common, but enforcement is weak.



Alcohol and Tobacco Sales

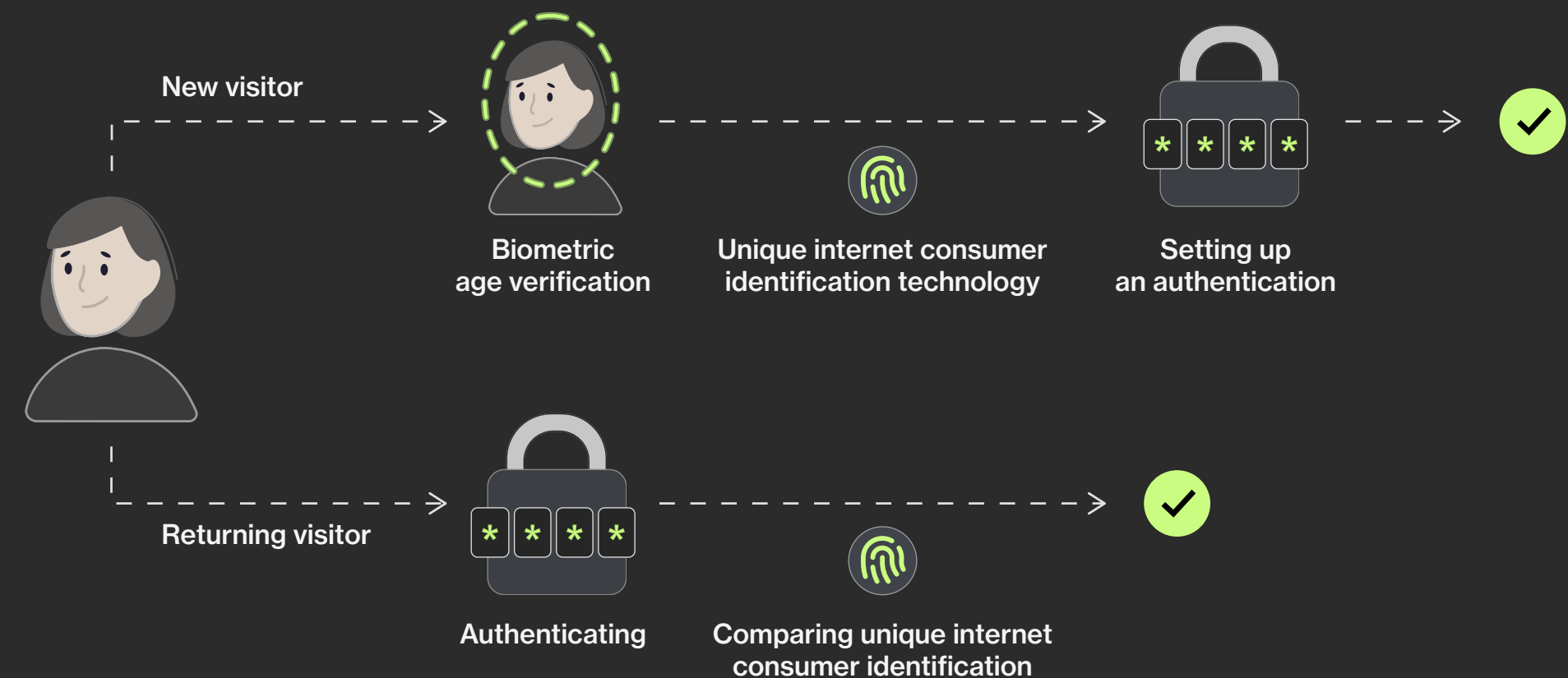
In countries like Ghana, Uganda, and Tanzania, age restrictions exist for alcohol and tobacco sales, but online verification processes are not yet widespread. For in-person sales, vendors typically check IDs, but online sales lack robust age verification systems.



Reusable Age Verification

Ondato's latest age verification solution, OnAge, offers reusable verification. Businesses can adhere to even the most stringent privacy and security requirements thanks to our privacy-focused verification, which guarantees that only the user's age eligibility status is kept and that all other data is erased following the verification. Furthermore, "OnAge" allows for customisable integration into any website or application without forcing users to download any extra apps.

To reuse their verification, users set a 4-digit PIN, which grants access to age-restricted content for a time period defined by the service provider. This new solution is designed to streamline age-restricted access, creating a more convenient process for returning users and, in turn, increasing user retention.



Document-Based Age Verification

Ondato's system ensures users meet age requirements by verifying government-issued IDs (passport, ID card, or driver's license). Using advanced OCR and AI, it extracts data like date of birth and checks the document's authenticity against global databases. The system ensures high accuracy, complying with strict regulations, without storing personal data.

Age Estimation

Ondato's AI-powered age estimation uses biometric technology to assess a user's age by analyzing facial features, without needing identity documents. It captures a live image, estimates age in real time, and ensures regulatory compliance while protecting user privacy with strong encryption and GDPR compliance.

**Are you ready to find out more
about Ondato Age Verification?**