Tennessee v. Meta
Case No. 23-1364-IV

DX3268

ALICE

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Evaluation of Instagram Teen Accounts

Alice Third-Party Assessment - In Cooperation with Meta

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Summary

Alice conducted a study that used Meta's content standards to compare the Teen Account content experience on Instagram versus a competitor platform. Testing was conducted from mid-December 2025 to mid-January 2026 and found that the safeguards applied to Teen Accounts on Instagram performed better than a competitor platform across several dimensions.

Default content settings on Instagram Teen Accounts encountered 68% less mature content than Teen Accounts on a competitor platform.[1]

Teen Account "Limited Content" settings on Instagram provided an additional layer of protection, with these Teen Accounts seeing 96% less mature content than on a competitor platform.[2]

The safety-by-default approach by Instagram proved robust. Test Teen Accounts expressing interest in benign topics (e.g., sports or television) were not exposed to mature content across passive discovery surfaces on Instagram including Feed, Reels, and Explore. Instagram also applied Search interventions at significantly higher rates than the competitor platform. When mature content did appear on Instagram, it was less intense than content seen on the competitor platform and in films rated for viewers age 13+.[3]

In addition to the comparative benchmarking, Alice also tested core account-level safeguards for teen users on Instagram. Results validated that:

1. Teen Accounts defaulted to the 13+ setting upon creation.
2. Teen Accounts were unable to switch to the less restrictive "More Content" setting without parental permission.
3. Teen Accounts were restricted from interacting[4] with accounts that Instagram designated as age-inappropriate.

In the course of testing the reliable functioning of the designed safeguards by Instagram, Alice also identified areas that may enable additional effectiveness. All identified areas for improvement were shared with Instagram which implemented specific updates to address them. These improvement measures were subsequently retested and found to be effective prior to publication.

[1] Alice reviewed individual items of content presented to 36 research accounts configured as Teen Accounts on both platforms, labeling content as "mature" when it went against Meta's Age-Appropriate Content Standards.

[2] "Limited Content" is an opt-in Teen Account setting for those seeking a more restrictive content experience.

[3] Alice reviewed public comments in IMDb's "parent guide" for 2,532 13+ movies and analyzed the severity of mature themes against those observed on Instagram and a competitor platform.

[4] For the purposes of this evaluation, an "interaction" refers to a Teen Account's ability to access or engage with another user's account. This includes viewing the account's profile, viewing content posted by the account, following the account, liking its content, viewing or posting comments on its posts, or viewing the account's comments on other posts. In cases where a search query returned exact matches with an account name, accounts designated by Meta as age-inappropriate appeared in the search results for Teen Accounts. However, no interaction with such accounts was possible.

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Introduction

Today's teens are frequent users of digital platforms with 96% of teens reporting daily internet use per **Pew Research.** Major platforms, including **Instagram,** have implemented age-based safety defaults designed to limit teen exposure to inappropriate content.

Instagram engaged Alice to conduct a "stress test" of its Teen Account content controls. The objective of this study was not to replicate the typical teen experience, but rather to impose sophisticated and adversarial stresses designed to bypass platform protections. This lets the platform (1) evaluate the boundaries of content exposure that a teen user could encounter in Teen Account settings and (2) improve platform protections, especially for unique edge cases.

Alice is a trust, safety, and security company that has spent nearly a decade safeguarding the world's leading online platforms. Alice's solutions protect over three billion users across the internet, spanning content moderation, adversarial intelligence, and platform integrity. The company maintains one of the world's largest proprietary datasets of adversarial, harmful, and manipulative content that has been collected through continuous monitoring of the open, deep, and dark web across more than 120 languages. This intelligence, combined with Alice's team of subject matter experts in online harms, threat actor behavior, and platform policy, positions the company to evaluate how safety controls perform not only under typical usage but also under the kinds of deliberate circumvention attempts that real users and bad actors employ.

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Methodology

Comparative Benchmarking

Alice researchers stress tested teen exposure to mature content using new Teen Accounts on Instagram and a competitor platform. The Instagram Teen Accounts were divided in testing by the content settings: either default 13+ or "Limited Content". The accounts on the competitor platform were set to the default 13+ teen account setting.

Each test account was primed to generate personalized content feeds, using a process that Alice has developed through multiple rounds of testing. Priming refers to the practice of searching for, and engaging with, content and accounts to influence algorithmic output. Accounts were primed with either **general interest topics** or **mature topics** (see below). Though searches for mature topics returned few mature results during priming (given platform safeguards), the priming process sought to interact with the most mature content available and/or content closely aligned to the target theme. The mature priming process was designed to ensure a robust stress test of the platforms by trying to influence the behavior of their algorithms during subsequent scrolling and searching.

After priming, Alice researchers engaged in additional adversarial testing and assessed the resulting content that the primed Teen Accounts encountered.

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Table 1 - Summary of Benchmarking Methodology	
Component	**Benchmarking Methodology**
Platforms & Surfaces	The analysis evaluated four primary surfaces on Instagram: **Explore, Feed, Reels, and Search.** Comparable surfaces were assessed on the competitor platform with the exception of one, as there was no similar counterpart.[5]
General Interest Areas	The following pairs of general interest topics were chosen from the options presented during new Teen Account onboarding on Instagram: • **Podcasts** and **Music & Audio** • **Crafts** and **TV & Movies** • **Technology** and **Science & Engineering** • **Travel** and **Books & Literature** • **Sports** and **Investing & Trading** • **Animals & Pets** and **Food & Drink**
Mature Topic Areas	Alice and Meta selected six mature topic areas to investigate as high priority for teen safety. These mature topics aligned with the Age-Appropriate Content Standards designed by Instagram. The six topic areas selected included: • **Sexually Suggestive:** Sexual and sensual imagery • **SSI/ED:** Issues of suicide and self-injury ("SSI"), eating disorders ("ED"), and extreme weight loss • **Substance Abuse/Alcohol:** Alcohol, prescription drugs used recreationally, and high risk drugs • **Risky Behaviors:** Sports betting, crypto investment, viral challenges, and dangerous stunts • **Profanity:** Cursing and sexual-related abusive language • **Violence/Weapons:** Discussion or depictions of violence and weapons
Test Account Configuration	A total of 36 Teen Accounts were created across Instagram and the competitor platform, each registered with a birth date reflecting a 14-year-old user. On Instagram, accounts were divided between: • **Default 13+ settings** (12 accounts) • **Opt-in "Limited Content" settings** (12 accounts) On the competitor platform: • **All accounts utilized the default 13+ teen setting** (12 accounts)
Data Collection	Below is a summary of the total content evaluated across platforms and surfaces. In total, 16,800 impressions were analyzed - 12,000 on Instagram and 4,800 on the competitor platform. Per surface, per account: • **Explore:** 100 impressions • **Feed:** 100 impressions • **Reels:** 100 impressions • **Search:** 200 impressions For Search, the top 20 results were collected across 10 queries. For each test account, all 10 search queries were aligned to a single mature topic area. Accounts were distributed evenly across mature topic areas with one account per topic for each of the three platform configurations: Instagram Teen Account in the default 13+ setting, Instagram Teen Account with Limited Content settings enabled, and default teen accounts on the competitor platform. Impressions on the Explore, Feed, and Reels surface comprised individual pieces of content presented to the test user. On the Search surface, impressions also included some "null" results. Null impressions were recorded to account for the effect of blocked Search results. Specifically, when fewer than 20 Search results were returned the remaining results needed to reach the target of 20 were recorded as "null" impressions and coded as benign. (See Appendix A for further details.)
Evaluation Criteria	Alice labeled each piece of content as "potentially mature" or "benign" based on Meta's Age-Appropriate Content Standards. "Potentially mature" content was given an additional label to describe the mature theme (e.g., "sexually suggestive", "violence"). After Alice made initial evaluations, Alice calibrated with Instagram content review teams for a final evaluation. The process of calibrating Alice's judgments against the evaluations of internal reviewers at Instagram reduced the overall volume of content deemed mature in the final dataset by removing false positives from Alice's initial labels; however, the calibration process did not change the overall conclusions of the study.[6]

[5] The specific excluded surface is not disclosed because its identification could reveal the competitor platform. We chose not to reveal the competitor since they were not involved in designing this evaluation.

[6] See Table 9 in Appendix B for further details.

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Movie Benchmarking

To understand how the intensity of mature content on Instagram compared to content teens might see in movies rated 13+, Alice conducted a qualitative assessment using public commentary on a website that contains parent reviews about mature themes. Alice compared the type of mature content discoverable on Instagram and competitor platform test accounts with the mature themes teens could see in movies rated for ages 13+. For this part of the test, Alice performed the same 30 searches (5 per mature theme) on Instagram, the competitor platform and Internet Movie Database (IMDb), which returned movies featuring those themes in their plot keywords. For the first 500 movies returned (sorted by total gross earnings to reflect widely viewed titles), Alice collected public comments within the "parent guide" for each movie people had left discussing the mature themes in those movies. In total, Alice collected 37,710 user-submitted comments from 2,532 unique 13+ rated films.[7]

The research team qualitatively analyzed the mature themes referenced in these public comments to characterize the intensity of mature content in films that were rated 13+ and therefore deemed appropriate for teens. These thematic groupings were then compared to the mature content themes identified on Instagram and the competitor platform.

Alice and Meta partnered on prioritizing themes for testing, methodology, and analysis. Alice independently primed the accounts, collected the data, escalated content for Meta's initial review and secondary review, executed analysis, and drafted this report.

[7] A breakdown of qualitative comment coding and dataset distillation can be found in Appendix C.

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Key Findings

Summary

Our research found that the **safeguards on Instagram for Teen Accounts (default 13+ setting) resulted in a lower rate of mature content exposure versus a competitor platform.** Teen Accounts in the default 13+ setting were exposed to 68% less mature content than default teen accounts on a competitor platform. The "Limited Content" setting on Instagram provided an additional layer of protection, with these Teen Accounts seeing 96% less mature content than on the competitor platform.

Table 2 - Percentage of Mature Results Per Platform

Instagram Limited Content Setting (6k impressions across 12 accounts)	**Instagram 13+ Setting** (6k impressions across 12 accounts)	**Competitor Default Teen Setting** (4.8k impressions across 12 accounts)
0.53%	3.77%	11.94%

Percentage of mature content out of total impressions collected per platform and account type; data includes both mature-primed accounts and those primed with general interests.

These conclusions emerged regardless of the priming framework. As shown below, both for accounts primed with general interests and mature interests, Instagram 13+ accounts were exposed to mature content less frequently than the competitor platform, and Instagram accounts using Limited Content Settings were the least exposed.

Table 3 - Percentage of Mature Results Per Platform, Account Type, and Priming Framework

Accounts Primed with General Interests			**Accounts Primed with Mature Interests**		
Instagram Limited Content Setting (3k impressions across 6 accounts)	**Instagram 13+ Setting** (3k impressions across 6 accounts)	**Competitor Default Teen Setting** (2.4k impressions across 6 accounts)	**Instagram Limited Content Setting** (3k impressions across 6 accounts)	**Instagram 13+ Setting** (3k impressions across 6 accounts)	**Competitor Default Teen Setting** (2.4k impressions across 6 accounts)
0.13%	1.97%	6.17%	0.93%	5.57%	17.71%

Percentage of mature content out of total impressions collected per platform and account type; mature-primed accounts and those primed with general interests are presented separately.

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When broken down by mature themes, these patterns again are consistent. **Rates of exposure to mature themes were lower on Instagram** than the competitor platform, with Instagram Limited Content settings resulting in further reduction in rates of exposure to mature themes.

Table 4 - Percentage of Mature Results by Theme [8]

Mature Theme	Instagram Limited Content Setting (3k impressions across 6 accounts)	Instagram 13+ Setting (3k impressions across 6 accounts)	Competitor Default Teen Setting (2.4k impressions across 6 accounts)
Sexually Suggestive	0.08%	0.35%	2.15%
Violence	0.15%	0.47%	3.40%
Profanity	0.05%	0.47%	0.54%
Substance Use/Alcohol	0.22%	0.47%	2.73%
Risky Behaviors	0.03%	1.62%	2.42%
SSI/ED	0.00%	0.40%	0.71%
Total % Mature (sum of rows above)	**0.53%**	**3.77%**	**11.94%**

Percentage of mature content out of total impressions collected per platform and account type, categorized by topic. Data includes both mature-primed accounts and those primed with general interests.

Among mature results, the predominant topics varied widely depending on platform and account settings:

- Instagram Teen Accounts in the Limited Content setting saw no SSI/ED themes and very small amounts of risky behaviors, violence, substance use/alcohol, profanity, and sexually suggestive themes (<0.3% of total impressions per theme).
- For Instagram Teen Accounts in the default 13+ setting, risky behavior content represented the largest proportion of mature impressions (1.62% of all impressions). These accounts also saw relatively small amounts of violence, substance use/alcohol, profanity, SSI/ED, and sexually suggestive themes (<0.5% of total impressions per theme).
- For the competitor platform, mature impressions were more evenly distributed among four predominant themes: violence, substance use/alcohol, risky behaviors, and sexual suggestiveness. Profanity and SSI/ED were also detected but at lower rates.

[8] Percentages for individual topics in this table are based on the thematic labels of "potentially mature" content and calculated out of the total impressions collected. These percentages describe the general composition of the dataset, but do not reflect the experience of a single account For example, only two of the twelve accounts per column in this table were primed and tested with the intent to surface SSI/ED-related content. Therefore, the percentage for "SSI/ED" averaged across 12 accounts with heterogeneous priming and testing frameworks is lower than the frequency with which an individual account seeking or expressing interest in SSI/ED encountered such content. We implemented this analytic approach to capture mature content themes that might emerge across priming topics (e.g., sexually suggestive content could be shown to accounts primed with sexually suggestive themes and accounts primed with violence themes).

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Differences Across Surfaces

The study's core findings remain consistent when analyzed by individual surfaces. Across all surfaces evaluated, Instagram Teen Accounts were exposed to mature content less frequently than accounts on the competitor platform.

On both Instagram and the competitor platform, **Search** and **Feed** presented mature content at a higher rate than other surfaces. This suggests that expressing interest in mature themes via search terms and engaging with mature content when available may influence what is shown to users on these surfaces.[9] Across both benign and mature priming, Teen Accounts with Limited Content setting saw mature content less frequently compared to accounts in the default 13+ setting for both Search (96% less) and Feed (57% less).

Table 5 - Percentage of Mature Results by Surface

Surface	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting
Explore	0.00%	0.00%	One Surface Tested [5] 4.33%
Reels	0.00%	0.08%	
Feed	2.08%	4.83%	7.58%
Search	0.29%	6.96%	17.92%

Percentage of mature content out of total impressions collected per surface (1,200 per column for each of Explore, Feed, and Reels; 2,400 for Search across each account); data includes both mature-primed accounts and those primed with general interests. [10]

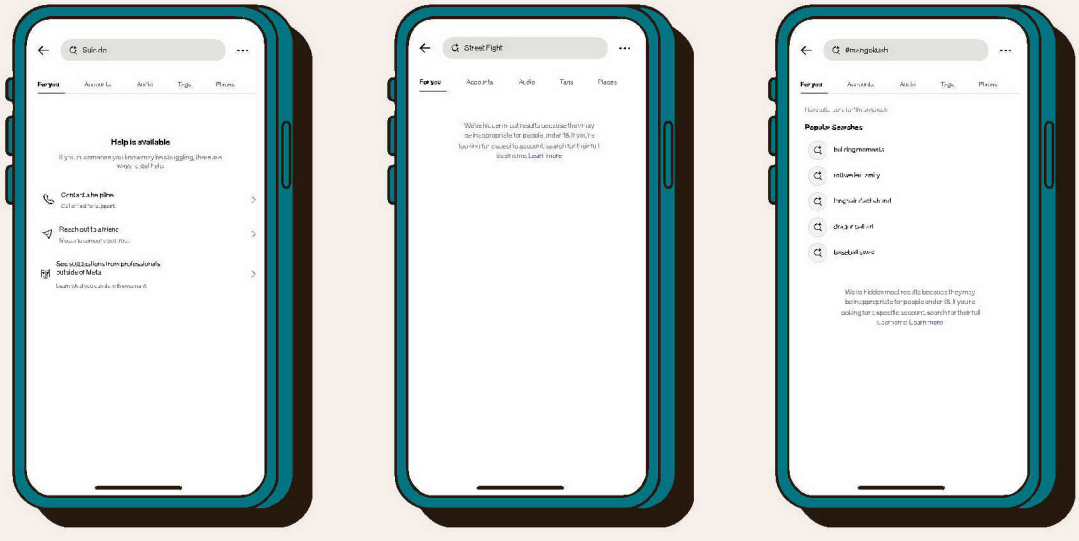
An important factor that contributed to Instagram having fewer mature results in Search was that **Instagram was more likely to show empty results following queries about mature topics due to platform Search interventions.** Teen Accounts with default settings encountered empty search results for more than 38% of their queries, while the same searches led to empty results in only 2.5% of cases on the competitor platform. When further broken down by each mature topic, the same pattern held, with empty results more common on Instagram than the competitor platform for each topic area. Additionally, empty search results on Instagram were often accompanied by transparency about content filtering and help resources.

[9] Notably, on Instagram, more than 75% of mature content surfaced on Feed originated from accounts that the research accounts were following as a result of account priming before data collection. In contrast, the competitor platform behaved differently, with less than 4% of mature content presented in Feed originating from connected accounts. Regardless, mature priming on both platforms had a notable effect on testing outcomes, raising the rate of exposure to mature content significantly. See Table 11 in Appendix B.

[10] The denominator (total impressions) includes "null" impressions, as outlined under "Data Collection" in Table 1 in the Methodology section.

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Table 6 - Percentage of Mature Search Queries Fully Blocked			
Mature Topic	**Instagram Limited Content Setting**	**Instagram 13+ Setting**	**Competitor Default Teen Setting**
Sexually suggestive	60%	60%	0%
Violence	40%	20%	0%
Profanity	45%	40%	0%
Substance Use/Alcohol	65%	60%	0%
Risky Behaviors	10%	10%	0%
SSI/ED	70%	40%	15%
All mature topics	**48.3%**	**38.3%**	**2.5%**



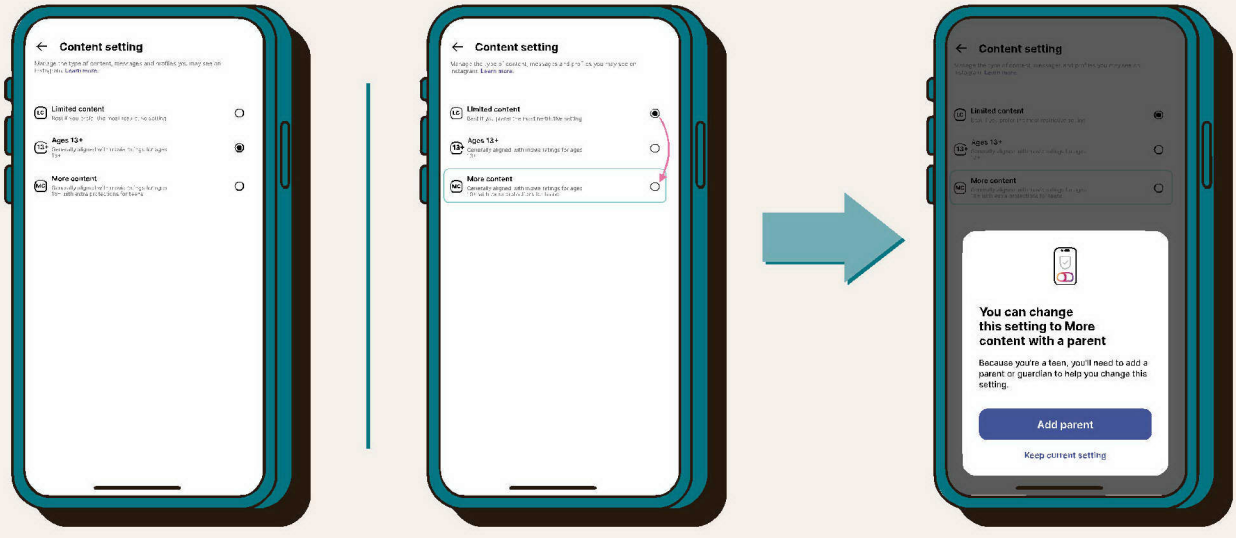
Sample violative search terms resulting in empty Search Engine Results Page on Instagram accompanied by supportive messaging.

Among mature queries that yielded search results on both Instagram and the competitor platform, those results were less often mature on Instagram than the competitor platform. Specifically, if we ignore all "null" search results and restrict analysis to only queries that did not result in empty Search results on either platform, rates of mature content presented on the Search surface were lower on Instagram 13+ (9.90% mature) and Limited Content (0.91% mature) than the competitor platform (20.45% mature).[11]

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Teen Safety Features Operated As Designed Across Tested Settings

In addition to evaluating content exposure pathways, Alice tested Teen Account safety controls designed by Instagram. Alice confirmed that Teen Accounts created during the assessment were automatically placed in the 13+ content setting by default. For Teen Accounts in the Limited Content setting, attempts to switch to the less restrictive "More Content" setting, which allows exposure to a broader range of potentially sensitive content within the teen content framework designed by Instagram, were blocked. Additionally, switching to this setting required parental consent, which can only be enabled through parent account supervision.



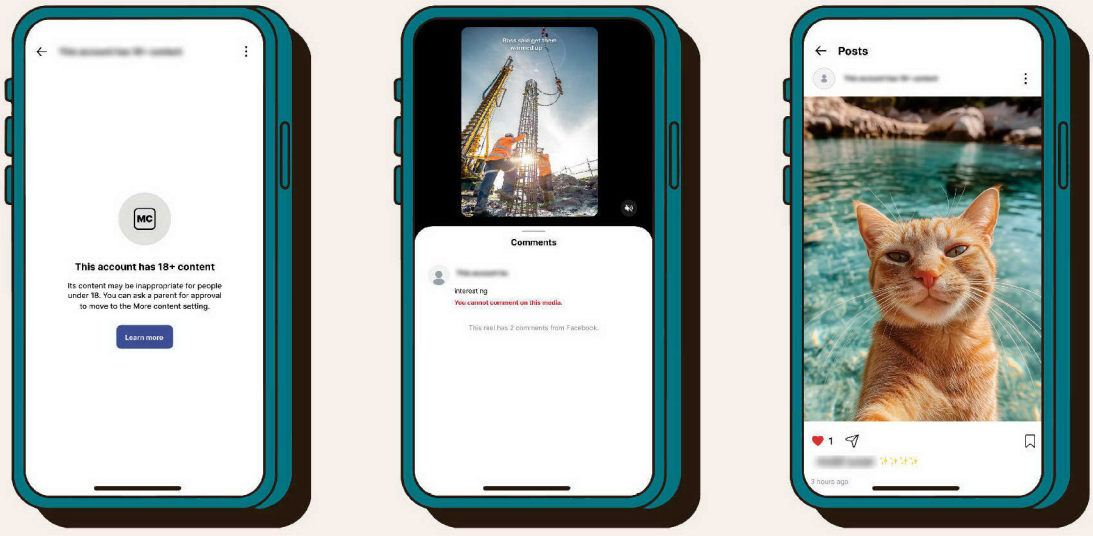
Teen Accounts defaulted to the 13+ setting, and Teen Accounts on the Limited Content setting required parental consent when attempting to switch to the "More Content" setting.

Alice also found that Teen Accounts in both the 13+ and Limited Content settings were restricted from interacting with known 18+ accounts, while Teen Accounts in the Limited Content setting were restricted from viewing or posting comments.[12]

[11] See Appendix B for further discussion. Table 11 contains data further broken down by priming framework.

[12] In some instances, comment entry fields were visible on some posts and Teen Accounts with Limited Content settings could type into this field. However, the Teen Accounts were unable to publish the comment or view comments from others.

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Teen Accounts were restricted from interacting with 18+ accounts, and those in the Limited Content setting were unable to view or post comments, with the comment button not visible on posts.

Instagram Content Was Lower Intensity Than Competitor Platform and 13+ Films

Beyond labeling content as "potentially mature," Alice additionally conducted a comparative qualitative review of the content discovered on both platforms to assess the relative level of intensity. In this report, intensity is an assessment on the explicitness/graphicness of the event described relative to the Mature Theme. To anchor this assessment within a broader cultural context, we also compared on-platform content with the type of content teens can see in movies rated 13+.

Relative intensity was assessed across 21 sub-categories that emerged within the six primary mature topics. For example, within the broad theme of sexually suggestive content, the topic of nudity appeared in different forms on Instagram, the competitor platform, and in 13+ films. A film scene featuring extended adult nudity was assessed as more intense than social media content featuring women in revealing clothing.

Our research found that mature content discovered on Instagram consistently exhibited lower levels of intensity than that identified on the competitor platform and example movies rated 13+ across all mature topics examined.

Below we highlight the results for one mature topic (Substance Use/Alcohol), while comprehensive analysis can be found in Appendix C.

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Table 7 - Mature Topic: Substance Use/Alcohol [13]						
Sub-Category	Instagram Content	Competitor Platform Content	13+ Rated Movies			Assessment
			Results from Search	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating	
Cannabis	Visual display of marijuana or THC products and paraphernalia including in a commercial context	Depictions of persons using marijuana or THC products including in commercial and instructional contexts	The Social Network	"There are multiple scenes of marijuana use from bongs, joints and other sources. There is a scene where characters snort cocaine."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Whereas content on Instagram depicted cannabis products, actual use of cannabis was observed on the competitor platform. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies depicted realistic fictional use of cannabis and intoxication of both adults and minors, whereas Instagram content generally only depicted THC products or paraphernalia without use.
High-Risk Drugs	Coded references to hard drugs (e.g., "Molly") without visual depiction of the drug itself or its use	Visual display of hard drugs (e.g., crack), paraphernalia, and some cases of drug use, including in instructional contexts	Malcolm X	"Two men and a woman snort cocaine and act high. Later, one man implies another man and himself should use some cocaine, but the second man declines."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram content indirectly referenced high-risk drugs, while direct depiction of hard drugs and their use was observed on the competitor platform. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies depicted realistic fictional use of high-risk drugs, addiction, and overdose, while Instagram content only indirectly referenced such drugs.
Alcohol	Brief depiction of underage drinking in fictional contexts (movie scenes)	Brief depiction of underage drinking in fictional contexts (movie scenes); Content that is focused on adult alcohol consumption, including in instructional contexts.	Can't Hardly Wait	"Almost the entire movie takes place at a party. Teens are shown drinking A LOT and sometimes doing drugs."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram content featured film clips briefly depicting underage drinking; the competitor showed similar fictional content, but also content showing real adults drinking. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies included extended depiction of fictional underage and adult drinking and intoxication; Instagram content included only very brief clips of such content.

Themes identified in mature content observed on Instagram were assessed against both the competitor platform and against themes in 13+ rated movies (as highlighted by related parent comments within the parent guides). The descriptions of content on Instagram, the competitor platform, and 13+ rated films reflect the most intense examples available. Instagram mature content was assessed as less intense (🟢), equivalent (⚪), or more intense (🔴) than content related to the same mature topic on the competitor platform and in 13+ rated movies.

[13] 1,791 comments from 271 films rated 13+ were collected for Substance Abuse & Alcohol evaluation. This table is a sample of the 145 comments labelled Intensity: High.

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Identified Opportunities Addressed by Instagram

Alice identified two opportunities for improvement within the age-appropriate safeguard framework on Instagram. These issues were communicated to Instagram which prioritized them for immediate and ongoing mitigation. Alice conducted a re-test to validate the effectiveness of these corrective measures which confirmed that the identified issues were successfully mitigated by Instagram.

One identified opportunity was age-inappropriate account discoverability. Test accounts were able to discover certain accounts that should have been classified as 18+, but were missed due to an error in the filtering model for identifying age-inappropriate accounts on Instagram. In response, Instagram implemented the following short-term mitigations:

| 1 |

Teen Accounts with Limited Content settings only receive results that are exact matches or connected accounts when searching for potentially risky queries. Upon retesting, Alice verified that 60 potentially risky search terms, sampled from a database provided by Instagram, returned only exact matches or connected accounts.

| 2 |

Alice identified a signal in user bios that could be leveraged to further improve identification of age-inappropriate accounts. Instagram deployed immediate mitigations that leveraged the signal recommended by Alice for both Teen Accounts in 13+ and Limited Content setting. Alice verified they were unable to access a sample of accounts that Instagram filtered because of this signal.

Alice conducted a re-test to validate the effectiveness of these corrective measures which confirmed that the identified issues were successfully mitigated by Instagram. As a longer-term solution Instagram has deployed product updates to improve the classification of accounts for an 18+ audience prior to the publication of this report.

Additionally, a policy gap was identified. Content such as “riding on the exterior of a moving vehicle” (e.g., car surfing) was not explicitly classified as age-inappropriate under platform policy (even though “subway surfing” was already classified, and violated content policy on Instagram). Instagram indicated that, as it learns of emerging potentially age-inappropriate trends, it will assess whether policy updates are warranted to better help protect minors. This trend has been folded into Instagram policy moving forward, so that images and videos of car surfing are prohibited from being viewed by teens.

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Conclusion

Alice's structured evaluation affirms the effectiveness of age-appropriate safeguards for Teen Accounts on Instagram and establishes a repeatable methodology for ongoing platform accountability. The partnership between Instagram and Alice demonstrates the power of leveraging external research to identify opportunities and drive continuous framework improvements to support teen safety online.

Effectiveness of Existing Safeguards

Safeguard protections for Teen Accounts in the default "13+" setting and opt-in "Limited Content" setting demonstrated lower rates of mature content exposure compared to related teen settings on a competitor platform:

Default content settings on Instagram Teen Accounts encountered 68% less mature content than Teen Accounts on a competitor platform.

Teen Account "Limited Content" settings on Instagram provided an additional layer of protection, with these Teen Accounts seeing 96% less mature content than on a competitor platform.

Identified Opportunities

While core safeguards are effective, the research identified targeted opportunities related to account and content discovery. Work by Instagram to deploy platform improvements reflect the broader challenge of maintaining safety in a dynamic digital ecosystem and importance of iterating safeguards over time.

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Appendix A

Methodological References

Mature-theme accounts were primed using a predefined seed bank of 10 keywords per mature theme category.[14] These keywords were used to surface and engage with relevant accounts and content. Where initial queries did not return sufficient results to engage with content, Alice applied an adaptive approach by searching for adjacent or closely related keywords within the assigned category.

Each mature-themed account was primed until it followed 35 accounts aligned with the assigned mature theme and liked 1-3 relevant posts per followed account to signal interest consistently across accounts. Priming took a minimum of 1 hour per account, and accounts with Limited Content settings enabled took up to 4 hours due to difficulty in finding accounts with potentially mature content.

General interest accounts were primed by selecting interest topics presented during the new Teen Account onboarding process on Instagram. Accounts were assigned two of the predefined general interest categories (e.g., Technology and Science & Engineering) and engaged with content aligned to these selected interests to establish a non-mature baseline profile. Each general interest account was primed by following 35 accounts aligned with the selected interests and liking 1-3 relevant posts from those accounts to signal consistent engagement. Priming took a minimum of 1 hour per account to allow for sufficient time to identify and engage with relevant accounts and content. Testing was conducted one week after priming for all platform accounts.

[14] The specific keywords used in the study are not disclosed due to their adversarial nature and their potential to surface violative or age-inappropriate content when searched online.

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Testing Limitations

While our method is suitable for comparing platforms and identifying qualitative trends, the method does not provide scaled measurement of actual users. Specifically, our estimates are based on **test accounts** which consumed a fixed volume of content **on specific surfaces and actively searched for mature content.** For example, 40% of impressions we evaluated on Instagram came from Search. In reality, Search makes up a small fraction (<1%) of teens' impressions in the Instagram app. In contrast to the test accounts described in this report, Meta's externally published prevalence estimates in Meta's Community Standards Enforcement Report (CSER) are based on scaled measurement of actual users, who may engage with **different surfaces** and may **not be actively searching for policy-violating content.**

With respect to the benchmarking methodology, the analysis is based on a limited sample size of accounts and content reviewed, with each test account representing a single, distinct interest primed between 1-4 hours. Although groupings of accounts were configured with identical settings, differences in the priming topic are likely to result in unique algorithmically driven outcomes. Repeated testing with different account configurations could be used to further validate the study's conclusions.

The study relied on Meta's policy definitions for evaluating "potentially mature" content. As content classification standards may vary across platforms, different policy frameworks could yield different results.

To enable comparisons with a competitor platform and movies, the analysis included the same set of queries across Instagram, the competitor platform, and IMDb. These queries were determined before priming, based on Alice's domain expertise, and included both obviously mature queries and obfuscated queries. It is possible that a different set of queries could yield different conclusions. Repeated testing with different query sourcing strategies could be used to further validate the study's conclusions.

Regarding the study's use of 13+ rated films as a benchmark, any comparison between teen experiences on social media and films must account for the differences between these forms of media. Films typically offer clear distinctions between fictional and documentary contexts and they are primarily consumed passively. In contrast, social media platforms often blur the boundary between real-life and fiction. Moreover, social media is interactive and exposes users to user-generated content, unlike the more tightly controlled film production ecosystem. This study acknowledges these experiential differences. Accordingly, the analysis is limited to a thematic and anecdotal comparison between the types of content widely considered appropriate for teens in films and the content encountered by research accounts on Instagram.

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Appendix B

Additional Data Controls

To determine whether the findings remained consistent under more stringent conditions, Alice applied three additional controls to the dataset, to standardize the dataset across Instagram and the competitor platform to the highest degree possible. Under these conditions, **mature content was still shown to be less discoverable on Instagram than on the competitor platform.**

Alice entirely removed the following categories of data from the dataset:

All data from one surface on Instagram with no similar counterpart on the competitor platform.

To avoid any potential comparison between dissimilar on-platform experiences, all data collected from the one Instagram surface without a similar counterpart on the competitor platform was removed.

All null-value entries coded as benign.

Because the competitor platform appeared to use search interventions less frequently, the methodology of counting "null" impressions as non-violative to reach 20 total impressions collected could have inflated the total number of benign impressions on Instagram. To remove this possibility, all null entries were removed from the dataset.

All results generated by search terms that led to empty search results on either platform.

Because the competitor platform blocked search terms much less frequently, retaining results generated using search terms that were blocked on Instagram but did yield results on the competitor platform could have inflated the competitor platform's total number of mature impressions. To avoid this, Alice removed all results from the data set associated with all search terms that were blocked on either platform.

As expected, application of these controls increased the percentages of mature impressions for Instagram Teen Accounts and decreased percentages for the competitor platform. For all account settings and priming frameworks, however, **mature content was still less discoverable on Instagram than the competitor platform and mature themes still appeared at relatively low rates on Instagram (6.7% or below).**

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Table 8 - Percentage of Mature Impressions Analysis of primary dataset vs. analysis after controls applied						
Topic of Content Reviewed	Accounts Primed with General Interests			Accounts Primed with Mature Interests		
	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting
Primary Analysis	0.13%	1.97%	6.17%	0.93%	5.57%	17.71%
Controls Applied	0.25%	2.66%	5.63%	1.81%	6.68%	15.51%

Comparison of results from the primary data set to results when additional controls were applied to account for differences in features and behavior between Instagram and the competitor platform.

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Calibration Process for Content Evaluation

To determine that findings were consistent before and after the process of calibrating content evaluation decisions between Alice and Instagram, we compared results based solely on Alice's initial evaluation of "potentially mature" (Phase 1) content in accordance with Meta's policy framework against the data subject to final review by Instagram (Phase 4). Rates of mature content on both Instagram and the competitor platform were higher in Alice's initial evaluation than results after final review by Instagram. This was expected, as Alice intentionally applied a broad interpretation of "potentially mature" to ensure full coverage, while Instagram reviewed content according to more restrictive guidelines. Nevertheless, the general patterns between platforms and account types remained unchanged before and after the calibration process (see Table 9).

The calibration process involved multiple rounds of evaluation by both Alice and Instagram.

- **Phase 1:** Out of 16,800 total impressions, Alice labeled 1,393 (8.3%) as "potentially mature" and escalated them to Instagram for review. The remaining 15,407 (91.7%) were classified as benign.
- **Phase 2:** Instagram reviewed the escalated content against its stricter age-appropriate criteria and confirmed 654 (3.9%) impressions as mature, while 719 (4.3%) were labeled as benign (false positives).
- **Phase 3:** Alice reviewed benign-labeled content decisions made by Instagram and requested a second review for 238 (1.4%) impressions that had been classified as false positives by Instagram reviewers.
- **Phase 4:** Instagram conducted a second review of the 238 impressions that Alice appealed, of which 178 (1.1%) were confirmed and subsequently labeled as mature.

Phase 1 | Alice escalated "potentially mature" content

Alice evaluated Instagram and competitor platform content using Instagram's Community Guidelines framework, labeling content as "potentially mature" or "benign".

Out of 16,800 total impressions, 1,393 (8.3%) were labeled as potentially mature and escalated for review. 15,407 (91.7%) were classified as benign and not escalated.

Phase 2 | Instagram reviewed posts that were escalated by Alice

Instagram reviewed the 1,393 impressions escalated by Alice using its internal content review framework.

Of the total impressions, 654 (3.9%) were confirmed as mature, while 719 (4.3%) were determined to be benign (false positives).

Phase 3 | Alice appealed some of Instagram's "benign" decisions

Alice reviewed Instagram's 719 (4.3%) benign decisions and identified cases of disagreement based on its interpretation of the review framework.

Alice requested a second review for 238 (1.4%) impressions that had been classified as benign by Instagram.

Phase 4 | Instagram final review

Instagram re-evaluated the 238 impressions appealed by Alice.

Of these, 178 (1.1%) impressions were reclassified and confirmed as mature.

The remaining 60 impressions remained classified as benign.

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Table 9 - Proportion of Mature Results Per Platform, Account Type and Priming						
Source of "Maturity" Labels	Accounts Primed with General Interests			Accounts Primed with Mature Interests		
	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting
Initial evaluation by Alice (Phase 1 above)	0.70%	2.40%	14.29%	2.77%	10.03%	23.42%
Final review by Instagram (Phase 4 above)	0.13%	1.97%	6.17%	0.93%	5.57%	17.71%

Shift in data from Phase 1 through Phase 4 of the calibration process; though the proportion of mature results decreased, the general patterns between platforms and account types remain unchanged.

Complete Benchmark Testing Results

The below table presents the full benchmark testing dataset, characterizing the overall prevalence of general interest and mature themes discovered. This information is presented in a simplified form in the main body of the report (see Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5).

Percentages in this table were calculated out of the total impressions collected (shown in the final row). Percentages for individual topics, therefore, describe the general composition of the dataset and do not reflect the experience of a single account. For example, only one of every six accounts (6 out of 36 in total) was primed and tested with the intent to surface violence-related content. Therefore, the percentage for "Violence" across multiple accounts with heterogeneous priming and testing frameworks is lower than the frequency with which an individual account seeking or expressing interest in violence-related content encountered such content.

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Table 10 - Percentage of Impressions Related to General Interest and Mature Topics							
		Accounts Primed with General Interests			Accounts Primed with Mature Interests		
Theme	Topic of Content Reviewed	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting
General Interest	Animals & Pets	10.03%	3.47%	12.63%	6.23%	4.97%	3.33%
	Books & Literature	4.97%	1.03%	1.04%	1.33%	0.47%	0.13%
	Crafts	7.17%	8.97%	3.58%	4.33%	4.40%	0.67%
	Food & Drink	2.17%	4.40%	1.17%	2.23%	3.20%	1.83%
	Investing & Trading	1.07%	0.83%	1.21%	0.63%	0.07%	0.00%
	Music & Audio	11.30%	7.03%	19.25%	5.50%	8.60%	17.75%
	Podcasts	1.70%	0.20%	2.58%	1.77%	0.80%	1.71%
	Science & Engineering	7.73%	5.07%	6.63%	5.90%	0.73%	8.25%
	Sports	14.03%	15.27%	12.25%	11.03%	13.87%	7.58%
	Technology	2.50%	2.27%	0.83%	0.97%	0.57%	1.00%
	Travel	0.67%	8.07%	1.00%	1.63%	4.80%	0.58%
	TV & Movies	3.10%	3.97%	9.46%	1.23%	3.77%	9.25%
	Other	8.30%	17.47%	19.71%	29.13%	33.10%	30.00%
	No results	25.13%	20.00%	2.50%	27.13%	15.10%	0.21%
	Total % sum across general topics	99.87%	98.03%	93.83%	99.07%	94.43%	82.29%
Mature	Sexually Duggestive	0.00%	0.07%	0.46%	0.17%	0.63%	3.83%
	Violence	0.00%	0.10%	1.63%	0.30%	0.83%	5.17%
	Profanity	0.07%	0.10%	0.54%	0.03%	0.83%	0.54%
	Substance Use/ Alcohol	0.03%	0.07%	0.83%	0.40%	0.87%	4.63%
	Risky Behaviors	0.03%	1.20%	2.08%	0.03%	2.03%	2.75%
	SSI/ED	0.00%	0.43%	0.63%	0.58%	0.37%	0.79%
	Total % sum across mature topics	0.13%	1.97%	6.17%	0.93%	5.57%	17.71%
Total impressions Collected		3000	3000	2400	3000	3000	2400

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Table 11 below presents a detailed breakdown of the benchmark dataset, according to platform surface. This information is presented in a simplified form in the main body of the report (see Table 5). The table below, however, specifies whether the mature content discovered originated from connected accounts—those that our research accounts followed during the priming process. Percentages in this table were calculated out of the total surface volume, as shown in the final row of the table.

This table supports the conclusion that mature content surfaced Instagram's Feed surface was more closely tied to accounts followed during the priming process. For mature-interest accounts using the Instagram 13+ setting, mature content from connected accounts accounted for 7.67% of total Feed impressions, compared with 2.00% from unconnected accounts. By comparison, on the competitor platform, mature content from connected accounts accounted for only 0.50% of total Feed impressions, while mature content from unconnected accounts accounted for 14.50%, meaning that the vast majority of mature content discovered on the competitor platform came from entirely novel accounts.

Table 11 - Percentage of mature results out of total impressions per surface

Surface	Instagram	Competitor	Connected/ Unconnected	Accounts Primed with General Interests			Accounts Primed with Mature Interests		
	Surface Volume	Surface Volume		Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting	Instagram Limited Content Setting	Instagram 13+ Setting	Competitor Default Teen Setting
Explore	600	One Surface Tested 600	Connected	0.00%	0.00%	One Surface Tested[5] Connected 0.00% Unconnected 1.33%	0.00%	0.00%	One Surface Tested[5] Connected 0.00% Unconnected 7.33%
			Unconnected	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%	
Reels	600		Connected	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%	
			Unconnected	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.17%	
Feed	600	600	Connected	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.83%	7.67%	0.50%
			Unconnected	0.00%	0.00%	0.17%	2.33%	2.00%	14.50%
Search	1200	1200	Connected	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.58%
			Unconnected	0.33%	4.92%	11.58%	0.25%	9.00%	23.67%
TOTAL	**3000**	**2400**	-	**0.13%**	**1.97%**	**6.17%**	**0.93%**	**5.57%**	**17.71%**

Percentage of mature content out of total impressions collected per surface; mature-primed accounts and those primed with general interests are presented separately. This table additionally shows whether the mature content identified originated from accounts that were connected or unconnected to the research accounts (followed during the priming process or not).

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Appendix C

Movie Comment Collection and Breakdown

Alice collected **37,710 user-submitted comments from 2,532 unique films rated 13+.**

Table 12 - Breakdown user-submitted comments collected from 13+ rated films by Mature Theme		
Mature Theme Category	All Comments Collected (N = 37,710)	
	Count	Unique Movies
Sexually Suggestive	2,886	318
Violence	9,115	621
Profanity	819	1,222
Substance Use/Alcohol	1,791	271
Risky Behaviors	17,753	689
SSI/ED	5,346	885
Total	**37,710**	**2,532**

Total Unique Movies is reported as 2,532, reflecting the total number of distinct films in the full comment dataset. Films may be classified under multiple mature themes and parent guide categories; therefore, counts are not mutually exclusive and cannot be aggregated across Mature Themes without duplication.

Each comment was reviewed and coded across three qualitative dimensions: Degree of Intensity, Degree of Descriptiveness, and whether the content described was general or central to the storyline. For example, within the Sexually Suggestive theme, descriptions of characters in revealing attires was coded as lower intensity, while explicit nudity or sexual acts were coded as higher intensity. To ensure consistent application of these criteria, coding was conducted through a structured multi-reviewer process.

These labels were used to identify comments representing the upper bound of intensity, descriptiveness, and storyline specificity of mature themes present in 13+ films. To construct this benchmark set, comments were prioritized to include those with high intensity and at least medium descriptiveness, with a stricter requirement of high descriptiveness applied to the Violence theme due to its larger volume of comments.

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This filtering ensured that selected comments reflected clear and explicit depictions of mature content.[15]

This screening process resulted in a **high-intensity sample** consisting of **3,050 user-submitted comments** from **989 unique 13+ films**, as shown in the table below.

Table 13 - Breakdown of High-Intensity Comment sample (1st screen)

Mature Theme Category	High-Intensity Sample (N = 3,050)	
	Count of Comments	Unique Movies
Sexually Suggestive	535	291
Violence	1,848	456
Profanity	158	119
Substance Use/Alcohol	145	94
Risky Behaviors	76	61
SSI/ED	288	176
Total	**3,050**	**989**

Total Unique Movies is reported as 989, reflecting the total number of distinct films in the High-Intensity Comment Sample. Films may be classified under multiple mature themes; therefore, counts are not mutually exclusive and cannot be aggregated across Mature Themes without duplication.

From this sample, Alice conducted a second screening to identify comments that aligned with the specific mature theme subcategories observed on Instagram and the competitor platform. Where high-intensity examples were not available for a given subcategory, medium-intensity comments were leveraged.[16] This produced a final subset of 381 relevant comments from 232 unique 13+ films. From this, Alice selected three representative films per thematic subcategory and one to three corresponding comments per film for inclusion in the On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content comparison (Table 14).

This two-step screening methodology enabled Alice to construct a high-intensity benchmark dataset of mature content descriptions from widely viewed 13+ films and systematically align those descriptions with thematic subcategories identified on Instagram and the competitor platform.

[15] The stricter threshold for Violence reflects the substantially higher volume of comments available for this theme compared to others.

[16] Visual Depictions of Eating Disorders (ED) was the only sub-category where only medium-intensity comments were present in the dataset.

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Additional Movie Benchmark Data

Table 14 - Movie Comparison: On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content

Mature Topic	Sub-Category	Instagram Mature Content Themes	Competitor Platform Mature Content Themes	13+ Rated Movie Trends (actual user-submitted comments)			Thematic Comparison of On-Platform and 13+ Rated Movie Content [17]
				13+ Rated Movies in Search Results	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating (for relevant category)	
Sexually Suggestive	Nudity	Depictions of women in two-piece bikini swimwear showing exposed legs, midsection, and cleavage.	Content including real-world and AI-generated depictions of women in revealing attire that emphasizes the breasts and lower body. The videos vary from vlogs documenting street-level prostitution and music videos featuring a nude woman cupping her breasts to a woman undressing down to underwear while discussing her preference for being naked.	Vincent & Theo	"A fully nude woman is shown posing for painters. Later, there are paintings of her completely naked, spreading her legs."	Sex & Nudity: Mild	⚪ **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Content on Instagram and the competitor included images of women in revealing clothing or swimwear. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies depicted full female nudity, including in context implying sexual situations.
				Something's Gotta Give	"A woman is shown fully naked. Her breasts are shown. Her hand mainly covers her vagina but we still see part of it."	Sex & Nudity: Mild	
				The Dungeonmaster	"During the opening scene, (the first 3 minutes of the film) a woman disrobes and is fully nude (full frontal) When the man enters the next room, the young lady is sprawled out on a bed, in all her glory for all the world to see."	Sex & Nudity: Mild	
	Sexual Activity	Depictions of simulated sexual acts, including the use of hand gestures, body positioning, and audio to imply offscreen masturbation or oral sex often presented in a humorous context.	Content featuring depictions and audio of sexual acts from movies unsuitable for children under 17 and unrated films. AI-generated audio and imagery containing sexual innuendos framed in a humorous context.	Ploy	"Porntip Papanai sits topless on a man's face as he lies on the ground beneath her, performing oral sex. She moves back and forth, breathing heavily and lightly moaning, with her dress pulled down. She braces herself on a bed and grips the covers while leaning forward." "Porntip Papanai lies on her back topless, breasts exposed, with her maid's dress pulled down and hips raised. She breathes heavily and moans lightly as a male partner penetrates her. He then climbs on top, continuing sexual activity while she remains beneath him, until they finish and kiss."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Content on Instagram included implied or simulated sexual acts, whereas content on the competitor platform contained graphic descriptions of sexual acts and clips from mature-rated films featuring sex scenes.

[17] Themes identified in mature content observed on Instagram were assessed against both the competitor platform and against themes in 13+ rated movies (as highlighted by related parent comments within movies' parent guides). Instagram mature content was assessed as less intensity (🟢), equivalent (⚪), or more intensity (🔴) than content related to the same mature topic on the competitor platform and in 13+ rated movies.

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Table 14 - Movie Comparison: On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content							
Mature Topic	Sub-Category	Instagram Mature Content Themes	Competitor Platform Mature Content Themes	13+ Rated Movie Trends (actual user-submitted comments)			Thematic Comparison of On-Platform and 13+ Rated Movie Content [17]
				13+ Rated Movies in Search Results	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating (for relevant category)	
Sexually Suggestive	Sexual Activity	Depictions of women in two-piece bikini swimwear showing exposed legs, midsection, and cleavage.	Documentary interviews that include graphic descriptions of sexual acts or commercial sex work. Content referencing sexual acts or anatomy within medical, scientific, or educational contexts.	99 Francs	"Sequence of a couple having sex in bed and in public in various locations including fellatio. Nudity includes bare breasts and bare chest." "A man is shown masturbating sitting on the toilet looking through a magazine showing women in lingerie. He ejaculates onto the magazine; no nudity. A female prostitute in lingerie begins to masturbate lying next to her bare-chested client."	Sex & Nudity: Severe	**Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies included multiple or extended sensual sex scenes and sexual audio, including with partial nudity; Content on Instagram contained implied or simulated sexual acts with no nudity in a humorous rather than sensual context.
				Whatcha Wearin'?	"A man and woman are seen having sex. The woman's breasts and butt are visible as she rides the man and moans.	Sex & Nudity: Mild	
	Sexualized Body Parts	Posts feature deliberate camera framing and angles that center of real life sexualized body parts.	Content featuring deliberate emphasis of sexualized body parts, utilizing both real-life and AI-generated imagery to highlight the breasts, buttocks, and feet in a fetishized or sexualized context.	I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry	"Women in a man's bedroom are in their bras which reveal a lot of skin. Girls bend over to open a fridge and the camera zooms in on their butts. A woman enters the room, and a man asks who untied you?" "Girls walk out of Chucks bed room. The they are wearing a extremely small bras which only covers her nipples the rest of her body is seen she is also wearing a small panties that cover the crotch and barely her butt. When the walks out the projects her boobs forward and camera focuses in on them. camera focuses on her body her butt jiggles when she walks. The girls bend over, their panties slide into their butts and the camera	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Content on both Instagram and the competitor platform featured emphasis on sexualized body parts. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Both Instagram content and movie scenes featured emphasis on sexualized body parts.

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Table 14 - Movie Comparison: On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content							
Mature Topic	Sub-Category	Instagram Mature Content Themes	Competitor Platform Mature Content Themes	13+ Rated Movie Trends (actual user-submitted comments)			Thematic Comparison of On-Platform and 13+ Rated Movie Content [17]
				13+ Rated Movies in Search Results	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating (for relevant category)	
Sexually Suggestive	Sexualized Body Parts	Posts feature deliberate camera framing and angles that center of real life sexualized body parts.	Content featuring deliberate emphasis of sexualized body parts, utilizing both real-life and AI-generated imagery to highlight the breasts, buttocks, and feet in a fetishized or sexualized context.	I Now Pronounce You Chuck & Larry	focuses in on their butts. Dr.Honey is wearing a lingerie." "Chuck and Alex get caught in rain. They go in the house (soaked in water) and Alex removes her clothes of in front of Chuck, leaving her in only a bra and underwear for the rest of the scene. (Her underwear exposes quite a bit of her buttocks) Chuck says she has the best body and comments on her tush. Then he says that her boobs look fake. Alex says they're not and asks him to touch them. When Chuck hesitates Alex grabs his hands and puts them on her boobs. Chuck cups her boob and starts to play with them he puts his hands all over them, he lifts them up and you can see them jiggle. Then Alex asks him if he wants a bite then chuck puts his hands on her boob and says touching them is fine. The camera zooms in on her butt multiple times."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Content on both Instagram and the competitor platform featured emphasis on sexualized body parts. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Both Instagram content and movie scenes featured emphasis on sexualized body parts.
				King David	"Full frontal female nudity, a naked woman is shown at first from a distance then a close up showing her breasts."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	
				Little Man	"A man disguised as a baby stares at an attractive young woman with big boobs. Her cleavage and some of her midriff is showing. He convinces her to let him sit on her lap. He stares at her boobs and tries to grab them. While talking to some other women, the woman refers to giving her husband her boobs and she shakes them, exciting the man disguised as a baby even more. Later, the woman suggests that baby should be nursed. The man disguised as the baby then gets very excited about the prospect of being breastfed by the woman. Throughout this scene there are multiple closeups of the woman's big boobs."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Content on both Instagram and the competitor platform featured emphasis on sexualized body parts. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Both Instagram content and movie scenes featured emphasis on sexualized body parts.

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Table 14 - Movie Comparison: On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content

Mature Topic	Sub-Category	Instagram Mature Content Themes	Competitor Platform Mature Content Themes	13+ Rated Movie Trends (actual user-submitted comments)			Thematic Comparison of On-Platform and 13+ Rated Movie Content [17]
				13+ Rated Movies in Search Results	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating (for relevant category)	
Sexually Suggestive	Sexualized Posing	Content featuring suggestive posing, including the spreading of legs, arching of the back and touching of the body.	Content depicting suggestive posing, such as kneeling postures that emphasize the body, paired with erotic facial expressions and sexually suggestive captions.	Rock of Ages	"Several strip club scenes show two-dozen women wearing bras and panties or leotards with side cutouts and fishnet stockings dancing around poles on top of a bar; their dances are athletic and then suggestive with bumps and grinds and groans while men throw dollar bills at them."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Content on Instagram and the competitor platform both featured sexually suggestive posing. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Both Instagram content and movies featured sexually suggestive posing; however, strip club contexts and depiction of clothed masturbation in response to sexualized posing make this theme somewhat more intense in 13+ movies
				Portrait of a Beauty	"In a brothel prostitutes are doing intimate action in front of an audience and someone is painting them" "Main character is a painter and paints picture of nude people in intimate positions."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	
				The Mansion	"Two women do a striptease in front of a man masturbating in his trousers, no nudity."	Sex & Nudity: Moderate	
Violence	Violence Involving Weapons	Content depicting firearm-related violence, including real-life footage of victims being shot at without graphic depiction of injuries.	Content depicting firearm-related violence, including (1) real life victims being shot with graphic depiction of aftermath (e.g., visible blood splatter on walls); (2) fictional victims being shot at with visible intense graphic injury	Kokoda: 39th Battalion	"A soldier is shot in the back of the head. The front of his head splatters open and brain matter splashes into the face of the man in front of him." "A man gets stabbed in the eye. He is left writhing in his death-throes with the bayonet still sticking in his head." "A soldier is tied to a tree and repeatedly bayonetted by a series of enemy soldiers, after which he is beheaded."	Violence & Gore: Severe	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram depicts victims being shot without graphic injury, while the competitor includes real-life footage with blood splatter and intense graphic injury in fictional contexts. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies depict significantly more graphic violence (e.g., beheadings, throat-cutting, and brain matter) compared to the non-graphic content on Instagram.
				Hotel Rwanda	"A man's throat is cut with a machete. In the same woman a man threaten a woman to reveal her name by pointing a machete against her throat." One particularly disturbing scene where several Hutus can be seen screaming, and murdering Tutsis with machetes. Gunfire at various parts of the film with some military violence and armed people shot."	Violence & Gore: Severe	

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Table 14 - Movie Comparison: On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content							
Mature Topic	Sub-Category	Instagram Mature Content Themes	Competitor Platform Mature Content Themes	13+ Rated Movie Trends (actual user-submitted comments)			Thematic Comparison of On-Platform and 13+ Rated Movie Content [17]
				13+ Rated Movies in Search Results	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating (for relevant category)	
Violence	Violence Involving Weapons	Content depicting firearm-related violence, including real-life footage of victims being shot at without graphic depiction of injuries.	Content depicting firearm-related violence, including (1) real life victims being shot with graphic depiction of aftermath (e.g., visible blood splatter on walls); (2) fictional victims being shot at with visible intense graphic injury	The Spirit	"A man is shot many times (we see him thrown back and we see holes open in his coat) and another man is shot and he falls back onto the ground. A man walks through muck and shallow water, a woman with a gun stands up and points the gun at him, and the man is shot (we see two bloody bullet holes in his chest and we later see him with blood in his mouth). We see a dead man on the floor with blood on his mouth. A man is shot repeatedly and falls to the ground. A man is shot and falls to the ground, and another man kneels by his side and shoots himself in the head. A man is shot in the chest and blood splatters. A man is shot in the arm (we see blood in the water where he swims). A man is shot and is thrown up and back and onto the ground. A man shoots himself (we hear the shot and later see him with the back of his head missing in silhouette). A man is shot and falls back dead."	Violence & Gore: Severe	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram depicts victims being shot without graphic injury, while the competitor includes real-life footage with blood splatter and intense graphic injury in fictional contexts. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies depict significantly more graphic violence (e.g., beheadings, throat-cutting, and brain matter) compared to the non-graphic content on Instagram.
	Vehicular Accidents	Content depicting vehicle accidents and high-speed collisions resulting in life threatening vehicle damage with no depiction of victims.	Content depicting vehicle accidents and high-speed collisions resulting in life threatening vehicle damage with blurred depictions of victims.	Furious 7	"A man drives an ambulance off of an overpass and crashes into another vehicle." "The lengthy and chaotic truck chase is intense, especially when it goes off the road. Several cars crash down hills and mountains."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram shows vehicle damage without victims, whereas the competitor includes blurred depictions of victims. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies feature more intense and destructive vehicular accidents and collisions, including cars flipping and exploding.
				Die Hard 4.0	"There's a long and destructive car chase in which several vehicles crash and explode, and one car crashes up through a toll booth and smashes into a helicopter, causing a large explosion."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Moderate	

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Table 14 - Movie Comparison: On-Platform vs 13+ Film Content							
Mature Topic	Sub-Category	Instagram Mature Content Themes	Competitor Platform Mature Content Themes	13+ Rated Movie Trends (actual user-submitted comments)			Thematic Comparison of On-Platform and 13+ Rated Movie Content [17]
				13+ Rated Movies in Search Results	Parents Guide Comments	Parent Guide Rating (for relevant category)	
Violence	Vehicular Accidents	Content depicting vehicle accidents and high-speed collisions resulting in life threatening vehicle damage with no depiction of victims.	Content depicting suggestive posing, such as kneeling postures that emphasize the body, paired with erotic facial expressions and sexually suggestive captions.	Taken	"Cars with men shooting guns chase another man in another car: one car is pushed over a hill and rolls over, another one is flipped, and another car drives into a bulldozer shovel that cuts the top of the car off."	Violence & Gore: Severe	and exploding, compared to the less intense accident footage on Instagram.
	Presence of Blood	Content depicting humans bleeding in the context of competitive sports (e.g., combat sports and weightlifting).	Content depicting humans bleeding in the context of competitive sports (e.g., ninja warrior, combat sports) as well as fictional scenes of physical assault and injury (e.g., stabbings, shooting, and accidents).	Angels and Demons	"A bloody eyeball is seen on the floor. Later we see the owner of the eye: the graphic, bloody, empty eye socket is seen." "A man is shot several times and he falls to the ground gurgling and blood is shown pouring from his mouth."	Violence & Gore: Severe	Instagram vs Competitor Platform: Instagram content is limited to bleeding in a sports context, while the competitor includes fictional scenes of assault and stabbings.
				Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	"A man gets his head split in half by a massive blade with blood everywhere and screaming."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
				Princess Mononoke	"A man is decapitated and blood is seen pouring out of the neck before the corpse falls over." "A man is shot in the back and falls over as blood pools around him."	Violence & Gore: Severe	
	Physical Injury	Content featuring real-life intense physical injury depicted in a medical treatment context with no visible open wounds or blood.	Content featuring real-life intense physical injury depicted outside a medical context including intense burns and open wounds and fictional animations of human dismemberment.	The Woman King	"A man attempts to kill a woman with a knife. The blade goes through her hand. We see a LOT of blood coming out of her hand afterwards. Very gory for a PG-13 movie." "A man is seen cut into three pieces. Graphic but lasts about half a second."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	

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Violence	Physical Injury	Content featuring real-life intense physical injury depicted in a medical treatment context with no visible open wounds or blood.	Content featuring real-life intense physical injury depicted outside a medical context including intense burns and open wounds and fictional animations of human dismemberment.	Snow White and the Huntsman	"A woman is stabbed in the stomach, and blood drips from the wound as she moans and gasps and she dies."	Violence & Gore: Severe	**Instagram vs 13+ Movies: 13+** movies contain graphic, gory violence such as decapitations and blood spraying, which is significantly more intense than the limited, sports-related bleeding shown on Instagram.
				The Kite Runner	"The main character is brutally beaten by a Taliban leader. The leader is then shot in the eye with a slingshot by a young boy. Thick blood pours through his fingers." "There's a brief scene of a woman being stoned to death as a halftime show during a soccer match."	Violence & Gore: Severe	
	Physical Altercation	Depictions of the lawful use of force within the context of physical restraint/ arrests.	Content showing the lawful use of force during restraint and arrests, as well as unlawful violence including street fights, physical assaults, and punching.	Casino Royale	"A brutal, intense scene of torture, where Bond is sadistically beaten in the testicles with a knotted rope." "Bond gets into a brutal fight with two men in a stairwell, and it ends when the last character is choked to death by Bond, camera lingers on him as he dies slowly."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram focuses on the lawful use of force, while the competitor includes unlawful street fights and assaults. Instagram vs 13+ Movies: 13+ movies portray intense physical violence, such as sadistic torture, fatal strangulation, and beatings with visible injury.
				The Da Vinci Code	"A man being beaten by two men has a very bloody face and another man breaks the necks of the two attackers. A man punches a man in the nose (we see a lot of blood) and then kicks him repeatedly in the stomach."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
				The Bourne Supremacy	"Two men engage in a brutal and lengthy fight. They punch, kick, and hit each other with a variety of different objects. One ends up with a bloody face while the other strangles him offscreen to death."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	

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Profanity	Context	Profanity in incidental/ expressive context as well as targeted expressions in comedy/ entertainment context.	Profanity in incidental/ expressive context as well as targeted expressions in comedy/ entertainment context.	The Break-Up	"A woman is stabbed in the stomach, and blood drips from the wound as she moans and gasps and she dies."	Profanity & Strong Language: Moderate	⚪ **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Both platforms feature profanity in incidental, expressive, or comedic contexts. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies use more explicit and sexually aggressive phrasing in dialogue compared to the standard expressive profanity on Instagram.
				West Side Story	"The main character is brutally beaten by a Taliban leader. The leader is then shot in the eye with a slingshot by a young boy. Thick blood pours through his fingers." "There's a brief scene of a woman being stoned to death as a halftime show during a soccer match."	Profanity & Strong Language: Mild	
				Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy	"A brutal, intense scene of torture, where Bond is sadistically beaten in the testicles with a knotted rope." "Bond gets into a brutal fight with two men in a stairwell, and it ends when the last character is choked to death by Bond, camera lingers on him as he dies slowly."	Profanity & Strong Language: Mild	
	Moderate Language	Sexually derived profanity (e.g., f-word, motherf*cker, wh*re, d*ck, p*ssy, suck my balls, middle finger gesture, wh*re).	Sexually derived profanity (e.g., f-word, motherf*cker, wh*re, d*ck, p*ssy, suck my balls, middle finger gesture).	F1: The Movie	"A man being beaten by two men has a very bloody face and another man breaks the necks of the two attackers. A man punches a man in the nose (we see a lot of blood) and then kicks him repeatedly in the stomach."	Profanity & Strong Language: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Both platforms use sexually derived profanity, though the competitor features a wider variety of explicit terms. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies feature a markedly higher frequency and range of strong and sexually derived profanity (e.g., "sh*t" used 40+ times in one film).
				Draft Day	"Two men engage in a brutal and lengthy fight. They punch, kick, and hit each other with a variety of different objects. One ends up with a bloody face while the other strangles him offscreen to death."	Profanity & Strong Language: Moderate	
				The Peanut Butter Falcon	"3 uses of 'f*ck' all used in the first 25 minutes of the film. 6 d*mn, 4 godd*mn, 44 uses of sh*t (20 of them in the first 30 minutes). 10 _ss, 8 h*ll, 3 son of a b*tch, 2 b*tch, 1 p*ssy."	Profanity & Strong Language: Moderate	

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Substance Use/Alcohol	Cannabis	Visual display of marijuana and THC products and paraphernalia including in commercial context.	Depictions of persons using marijuana and THC products including in commercial and instructional contexts.	The Social Network	"There are multiple scenes of marijuana use from bongs, joints and other sources. There is a scene where characters snort cocaine." "We see a girl using a bong (she is visually high)."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Whereas content on Instagram depicted cannabis products, content on the competitor platform depicted actual use. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies depicted realistic fictional use of cannabis and intoxication of both adults and minors, whereas Instagram content generally only depicted THC products or paraphernalia.
				West Side Regretting You	"Marijuana use is seen in detail when teens smoke. There is drinking and subsequent intoxication depicted as well."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	
				Lifted	"When a neighbor offers her weed Henry's mom accepts it and is shown getting high, breaking her sobriety and leaving Henry in danger. She is shown in a zombie-like state."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	
	High-Risk Drugs	Coded references to hard drugs (e.g., molly) without visual depiction of the drug itself or its use.	Visual display of hard drugs (e.g., crack), paraphernalia, and isolated cases of drug use, including in instructional contexts.	A Simple Twist of Fate	"A woman is shown putting needles full of Heroin in her body. A man drinks several shots of a strong liquor while counting his gold."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Mild	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram content indirectly referenced high-risk drugs, while direct depiction of hard drugs and their use was observed on the competitor platform. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies depicted realistic fictional use of high-risk drugs, addiction, and overdose, while Instagram content only indirectly referenced such drugs.
				Malcolm X	"Two men and a woman snort cocaine and act high. Later, one man implies another man and himself should use some cocaine, but the second man declines."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	
				The Cider House Rules	"A man is addicted to ether and is shown abusing it in several scenes. He later overdoses and dies."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	

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Substance Use/Alcohol	Alcohol	Brief depiction of underage drinking in fictional contexts (movie scenes).	Brief depiction of underage drinking in fictional contexts (movie scenes). Content that is focused on adult alcohol consumption including in instructional contexts.	Can't Hardly Wait	"Almost the entire movie takes place at a party. Teens are shown Drinking A LOT and sometimes doing drugs."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram content featured film clips briefly depicting underage drinking; the competitor showed similar fictional content, but also content showing real adult users drinking. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Movies included extended depiction of fictional underage and adult drinking and intoxication.
				Beasts of the Southern Wild	"There is consumption of alcohol and drunkness throughout the film. In one scene a child character drinks a shot of alcohol given to her by an adult."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	
				My Summer in Provence	"Adults are routinely shown drinking socially. One main character is an alcoholic, and is shown drunk several times. The character becomes belligerent on occasion, and is shown driving drunk, endangering others."	Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking: Moderate	
Risky Behaviors	Fire Challenges	Content that features persons engaging in imitable fire play with risk of minor to moderate injury (e.g., briefly setting oneself on fire, walking on fire with shoes on, and circus-style performances).	Content that features persons engaging in imitable fire play with risk to minor to moderate injury, including mentions of intense burn injuries without visual depiction (e.g., setting oneself on fire, walking on fire with shoes on, circus-style performances).	Ghost Rider	"A man crashes his motorcycle while doing a ring-of-fire stunt and he dies (his son grieves over him). A man and a young man jump their motorcycles through a ring of fire (both are OK)."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Both platforms feature imitable fire play with moderate risk; however, the competitor includes verbal mentions of intense injuries. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies depict fatal outcomes and extreme fire stunts (e.g., jumping through rings of fire) that go beyond the challenges seen on Instagram.
				Moulin Rouge!	"A man blows fire that nearly singes a man's hair."	Violence & Gore: Mild	
				Beowulf	"A man rides a horse across a burning bridge and makes a long jump to the other side (they are OK)."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	

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Risky Behaviors	Knife Tricks	Demonstration of high speed knife manipulation.	Demonstration of high-speed knife manipulation and knife throwing, including in instructional contexts.	Divergent	"A young man throws knives at a teenager while she stands in front of the target board (one of them barely hits her ear, some blood)."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram focuses on high-speed manipulation, while the competitor includes knife throwing and instructional content. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies depict knives being thrown at people and causing injury (e.g., a blade striking someone's forehead), whereas Instagram content is limited to knife manipulation without harm.
				Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull	"Several scenes with knife and gun-play (but without almost any blood as a result of gun shots)."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
				Daredevil	"Adults are routinely shown drinking socially. One main character is an alcoholic, and is shown drunk several times. The character becomes belligerent on occasion, and is shown driving drunk, endangering others."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
	Riding on exterior of moving vehicles	Persons riding on the exterior of moving vehicles (e.g., car and train surfing).	Persons riding on the exterior of moving vehicles (e.g., car and train surfing) including mentions and depictions of accidents with intense injuries.	A Perfect World	"A small boy rides excitedly on top of a car as it is driven down a rural highway; this is depicted in an exhilarating and non-dangerous way."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Moderate	**Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** While both show persons riding on the exterior of moving vehicles, the competitor also includes mentions of accidents and intense injuries. **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies feature far more dangerous stunts, such as rooftop-to-car jumps and fights on top of moving vehicles.
				The Spirit	"A man jumps from a rooftop onto the roof of a moving car, the driver stops the car and the man gets in to drive. A teenage boy and a teenage girl hang off the back of a speeding train."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
				Get Smart	"Two men fight on top of a moving car. One of the men is trapped on the car when it eventually crashes and explodes."	Violence & Gore: Mild	

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Risky Behaviors	Exposure to heights	Depictions of high-stakes parkour-style free climbing and jumping across urban buildings with exposure to heights above three meters and without safety gear.	Depictions of high-stakes parkour-style free climbing and jumping across urban buildings with exposure to heights above three meters and without safety gear.	Chronicle	"Two boys sit on the ledge of a skyscraper and their legs are dangling in the air. One of them walks on the ledge to show off. We see what they see. It can be intense and upsetting to some."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Severe	⚪ **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Both platforms depict parkour and free climbing without safety gear at similar heights. ⚪ **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** Both Instagram content and 13+ movies feature high-stakes exposure to significant heights (e.g., rooftop ledges, jumps between buildings), presenting comparable levels of imitable stunts.
				Mission: Impossible III	"A man jumps off a roof, swings by a cable and lands on another slanted roof, slides down, shoots a few men as he passes them, and hits a railing that stops him from falling over the side."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
				Lara Croft: Tomb Raider - The Cradle of Life	"A man and a woman climb and jump across rooftops, the woman pole vaults and catches the bottom of a helicopter, dangles for a moment, drops off and crashes through the tarp top of a truck."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	
SSI/ED	Visual depictions of SSI	Visual depictions of SSI.	Visual depictions of scar tissue stemming from self inflicted injury and/or attempted suicide (e.g., self-immolation). Visual recordings of persons attempting suicide (e.g., self immolation).	Truth or Dare	"A woman turns her gun on her temple as she is pinned down by two men. She fires and her blood splashes onto the two men." "A man stabs a pen into his eye. The man then bashes his face on the wall, forcing the pen into his brain; he falls on the ground."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram shows only scar tissue, whereas the competitor includes recordings of active suicide attempts. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies feature graphic, active depictions of self-harm and suicide (e.g., slitting throats, stabbing), while Instagram is limited to healed scars.
				1492: Conquest of Paradise	"A man commits suicide by jumping off a cliff. Afterwards, we see his corpse, with a bone sticking out of his leg."	Violence & Gore: Severe	
				The Roommate	"A young woman punches herself in the face several times, we see large bruises on her arm and leg and she cuts her abdomen with a utility knife (we see the knife pressing against the skin, we hear her scream and we later see her with a blood-stained shirt and a bloody cut on her stomach)."	Violence & Gore: Mild	

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SSI/ED	Discussions of SSI	Self-expressed thoughts related to SSI and discussions of SSI in a recovery context.	Discussion of SSI outside of recovery context.	Bully	"A teen girl narrates that she had tried to commit suicide three times and that she was formerly 'a cutter' but does not explain what that entails." "A woman directs the camera into a room as she explains that her husband had found their teenage son's body hanging in the closet."	Violence & Gore: Moderate	🟢 **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Instagram discussions are framed within a recovery context, while the competitor includes discussions outside of recovery. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies include detailed narrations of suicide methods and the discovery of bodies, which is more triggering than the recovery-focused discussions on Instagram.
				Welcome to Marwen	"Mark empties all of his pills into his hand, implying that he wants to overdose. He eventually finds strength and dumps all of the pills down the sink. Though he eventually recovers, the event is still frightening."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Mild	
				In Her Shoes	"On several occasions the suicide of a woman is mentioned. There are a few discussions about her mental health and references to her being sectioned and medicated. In one scene anorexia is mentioned."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Mild	
	Visual depictions of ED	Depictions of idealized body proportions that emphasize thinness.	Depictions of idealized body measurements that emphasize thinness through weight and proportions that reflect unhealthy body expectations.	Angus	"A girl tells a boy that she has bulimia, the boy then tells the girl that he has forced himself to throw up before as well."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: Mild	⚪ **Instagram vs Competitor Platform:** Both Instagram and the competitor platform depict idealized body measurements emphasizing thinness and proportions. 🟢 **Instagram vs 13+ Movies:** 13+ movies depict explicit eating disorder behaviors and conditions (e.g., bulimia and anorexia), which are more severe than the focus on idealized body measurements and thinness found on Instagram.
				Center Stage	"A man commits suicide by jumping off a cliff. Afterwards, we see his corpse, with a bone sticking out of his leg."	Violence & Gore: Mild	
				Drop Dead Gorgeous	"It is implied that a female character is bulimic. She is heard vomiting in the bathroom."	Frightening & Intense Scenes: None	

[18] Visual Depictions of ED was the only sub-category for which only medium-intensity comments were present in the dataset. Therefore, the threshold for this specific sub-category was set at medium-intensity comments rather than high-intensity. comments

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