The UK porn block is finally dead

The United Kingdom has finally scrapped a plan to require age verification for accessing porn online, following years of tortuous debate and setbacks. Nicky Morgan, the secretary of state for digital, culture, media, and sport, says the government "will not be commencing" Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 — which would have required internet users to prove they were over 18 before viewing pornographic sites. Instead, it will focus on protecting children through "wider online harms proposals."

The porn ban was already widely considered dead. It was shelved indefinitely in July, following multiple delayed deadlines. Critics pointed to potential privacy issues with the proposal, as well as the outsized power it could have given porn conglomerate MindGeek, which was set to provide its age verification system. But it's now officially been abandoned.

Morgan states that "the government's commitment to protecting children online is unwavering," and she suggests that some form of age-gating porn access is still in the cards. "We are committed to the UK becoming a world-leader in the development of online safety technology and to ensure companies of all sizes have access to, and adopt, innovative solutions to improve the safety of their users. This includes age verification tools and we expect them to continue to play a key role in protecting children online," Morgan writes.

Morgan also noted that the UK is continuing with other plans based on the Online Harms White Paper published in April. The white paper outlines a "duty of care" that internet companies

would bear to prevent illegal activity, and it covers far more issues than pornography — it's focused on bullying, terrorism, and general abuse of social media. The Queen's Speech, delivered earlier this week, stated that the government will publish draft legislation based on its proposals.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/10/16/20918025/uk-porn-age-block-proposal-dropped-online-harms-plan-future