



Kirra Pendergast

Founder of Safe on Social and The Online Safety Agency



The Online Safety Agency

Kirra Pendergast is an international expert in online safety, with a career commencing in 1991. Her extensive experience includes groundbreaking projects such as whole-of-government cybersecurity initiatives and post-9/11 counter-terrorism strategies. Kirra's pioneering work in cybersecurity since 1993, social media risk management since 2008, and her development of industry-first social media safe use policies and training programs highlight her deep expertise and innovative approach.

Whilst she has been recognised as a thought leader and expert in online safety and risk management since the mid-90s, throughout her career, Kirra has served as a "tech translator," bridging the gap between complex technology and those who struggle to understand it. Whether working with executives, politicians and their advisors, educators, students, parents, or police, she simplifies technical jargon, demystifies online trends, and often predicts what's coming next, turning complex technical innovation into something practical and easy to grasp.

Kirra's lived experience of being the target of a relentless adult cyberbullying campaign by someone she once trusted at 43 years of age has uniquely shaped her expertise. She now calls this experience her "superpower," as it has deepened her understanding of the real-world impacts of online harm and sharpened her ability to offer practical solutions.

While many parenting experts speak about online safety, Kirra stays firmly in her lane. She doesn't claim to be a parenting expert but a large part of her work focuses on helping parents understand the intersection of the physical and digital worlds their children occupy. She identifies risks, teaches mitigation strategies, and writes, speaks and educates hundreds of thousands each year on the subject. Kirra breaks down the complexities of algorithms, GenAI, cryptography, cybersecurity, and social media, empowering people to make informed decisions and protect themselves and their families online.

Based in Florence, Italy, Kirra works internationally and remains dedicated to her Australian roots, spending at least three 6-week blocks each year speaking in schools to students K-12, their parents and educators across Australia. Her first-of-its-kind "eRisk review" of social media presence across three networks of 50+ schools in 2018 - 2020, along with strategic consulting for writing safe use of social media policy and training for multiple government agencies with 4000 to over 12,000 staff, exemplifies her thought leadership and positive impact.

Kirra is an engaging and entertaining public speaker who reminds us that we can control how we consume technology without letting it consume us. This blend of tech expertise, clear communication, her empathetic nature, and ability to really hear people and help however she can has defined her career and is more critical now than ever.

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