



**The Interview Series**

# **Marjolein van Tilburg**

**CEO & Founder of ChatLicense**



## HOW DO YOU CONVINCe BOTH BUSINESSES AND PARENTS THAT CHILDREN NEED STRUCTURED DIGITAL ‘LICENSES’ FOR ONLINE ENGAGEMENT?

As we find it perfectly normal that kids need a ‘diploma’ to ride a bike in some cities or a license to drive a car everywhere, why should we hand them the keys to a small supercomputer connected to the internet without at least first showing them the ‘rules of the road’?

We say: “First get your ChatLicense, then scroll & swipe, share & like!” Parents get it immediately because they’re often stuck between wanting to protect their kids and needing them to be connected. Kids feel empowered when they have gained the skills we teach them. Lastly, businesses get it when they realise today's digital citizens are tomorrow’s customers, employees, and leaders, and better-educated users make better choices and safer online spaces are good for everyone.

**We’re not here to wrap kids in bubble wrap - we’re here to hand them a roadmap and teach them how to steer.**



## WHAT'S BEEN THE HARDEST PUSHBACK YOU'VE FACED WHEN ADVOCATING FOR STRUCTURED DIGITAL LITERACY?

One of the toughest challenges is balancing two very real - and very human - expectations: people want the highest quality solution to teach kids digital responsibility... but they also hope it's completely free. And I get it. As a parent myself, I'd love for everything that keeps kids safe to be accessible to all, no strings attached. This is where our B2B2C approach comes in: our clients enable their customers to get free access to this quality product. Building something that's truly effective - engaging, research-based, and regularly updated to keep pace with the digital world kids are growing up in - that takes time, expertise, and yes, investment. A driver's license program wouldn't be much good if it was cobbled together on a shoestring budget, right?

We constantly work to strike that balance: making ChatLicense affordable, broadly available and scalable without compromising on quality. Because when it comes to preparing kids for the digital road ahead, "good enough" isn't really good enough.



## WHAT'S ONE CHANGE YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN HOW TECH COMPANIES APPROACH CHILDREN'S DIGITAL SAFETY?

I would love to see tech companies move from “compliance” to “care.” Instead of ticking legal boxes to keep regulators happy, what if they designed their platforms as if their own kids were using them? Would not hurt them to put “social” not just in their company description but actually in their values - and put that value first.

I want to be optimistic: we can build safer roads and teach better driving. One doesn't replace the other.

## SHOULD TECH COMPANIES BE REQUIRED TO DISCLOSE IN THEIR ESRS REPORTS HOW THEY ASSESS CHILDREN'S DIGITAL SAFETY RISKS?

Absolutely! If you have products that children use - or that could impact them - you should prove that you have done your homework. Children's safety isn't just a side note; it's a key responsibility and an important human right. ESRS reporting allows companies to turn "we care about kids" into measurable action. Just show it!

**Plus, the act of measuring often leads to improvement. Or as they say: "What gets measured, gets managed".**

## WOULD MANDATORY REPORTING ON CHILDREN'S DIGITAL SAFETY HELP ACCELERATE INDUSTRY-WIDE ADOPTION OF DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVES?

I think so. And already under CSR-D people's impact needs to be made tangible. When your product or online tool is used by children, you will already need to report on this. Mandatory reporting shifts the conversation from "Should we do something?" to "How do we explain what we do and how well are we doing compared to others?". That healthy sense of competition can drive real change.

## WHAT'S ONE POLICY CHANGE YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN TECH COMPANIES' REPORTING ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

A child-centric impact lens should be applied to every decision. It's not enough to have a page in a report that says, "We care." I want to see policies that explicitly ask: "How does this decision affect children's well-being, their privacy, and their learning?"

Bonus points if they involve young people in those conversations, listen to them and implement the knowledge gained from them. After all, they're the ones we're building the future for.