

Important Info:

Patreon Livestream 12th December 2024

Thank you for waiting on this write-up of Patreon's policy livestream of Thursday 12th December 2024.

A link to the archived version of the livestream will be added when Patreon e-mails it to me.

This write-up will only focus on the policy part that affects all users of Patreon (so I'll succinctly state that there will be a new Vice-President of Trust and Safety, a Mr Eric Han, and will leave it at that). Also, due to the stream constantly jumping back-and-forth between tangentially-related subject matter, I'll reorder things to be more concise and easily digestible. So any questions that were asked in the Question and Answer session at the tail end of the stream will be brought forward in relation to the itinerary presented.

As always, you can read these policy guidelines here: <https://www.patreon.com/en-GB/policy>

All images will be saved as attachments to download at their original size. A text-only file will also be available.

Patreon Connect: Live with the Policy Team

Thursday December 12, 2024 11am PT/2pm ET/7pm GMT

The Patreon Policy team's Courtney, Travis and Mariana will share a year end update on policy proposals. Discussions include:

- new commerce guidelines
- refund policy improvements
- clarifying guidelines on Harmful Acts and AI generated Adult/18+ content
- an appeals process revamp

Read the blog post for more context on these proposals here.

The presentation portion will be followed by a live Q&A.

[Photograph of a smiling lady with long blonde hair]

Courtney D.: Head of Creator Policy Engagement

Courtney is the Policy Team's primary liaison to the creator community and the founder of the Creator Policy Engagement Program, launched over three years ago. She focuses on developing and refining creator focused policies and programs in collaboration with the Policy Team, while championing Initiatives that prioritize creators' voices and perspectives. Courtney is also a leader in supporting the mental health and wellness of the Patreon community, advocating for resources and Initiatives that foster well-being. Her career bridges the worlds of tech, policy, communications, and the arts, reflecting her dedication to building meaningful connections between creators and their fans.

[Photograph of a smiling bald man wearing a white shirt]

Travis R.: Marketplace and Payments Policy Lead

Travis shapes and oversees policies that ensure the safety, integrity, and seamless functionality of Patreon's commerce and payment systems. Drawing on more than a decade of expertise in risk mitigation and emerging technologies, he empowers creators to monetize their work effectively while navigating the challenges of global e-commerce. Travis spearheads efforts on key areas including policies for digital and physical goods, benefits guidelines, back catalogue monetization, single-item payments, and fraud prevention. He collaborates across teams to design creator-first policies, streamline enforcement processes, and embed policy considerations into product development, fostering a secure and thriving creator economy.

[Photograph of

Mariana G.: Policy Enforcement Manager

Mariana plays a critical role in ensuring that Patreon's Community Guidelines and policies are enforced fairly and consistently. Based in Porto, Portugal, she has been with Patreon for over five years, beginning her tenure in content moderation with a focus on Hate Speech and Dangerous Organizations. She later transitioned to the Policy Team, where she focuses on enforcement and operational excellence. Mariana leads efforts to develop operational policies, revamp appeals, processes, and operationalise member enforcement.

The stream went as such:

AGENDA

01 New leader of Policy and Trust & Safety

02 Policy proposals and initiatives for your feedback

03 Additional updates and announcements

04 Pre-submitted Q&A

05 Live Q&A

06 Wrap up

The hosts began with: **“At Patreon, we want to build the most efficient creator marketplace in the world.”** To quote the Marketplace and Payments Lead, Travis: **“A marketplace without buyers is just a place; a market place without a market is just a meeting.”**

Proposed Updates: New Commerce Guidelines

Expanding beyond membership to govern all products, services, and benefits offered on Patreon and offered off-platform.

Key highlights:

- Prohibiting sale of harmful materials: Explicitly bans items like child sexual exploitation, pornography, gambling, hate content, recalled products, & more.
- Providing clearer guidance for sellers: Requires detailed product listings & descriptions to ensure transparency, reduce risks, and provide a seamless buying/selling experience.
- Protecting the community: Prevents bad actors from exploiting the platform while fostering a safe, trusted environment for creators & their fans.

To that end of commerce and ‘bad actors exploiting the platform’:

Proposed updates: Refund policy

Key highlights:

- 14-day refund window for digital* purchases
- Applies to items like benefits, products, or services purchased through Patreon (web & mobile). Creators retain full discretion & flexibility to honour refund requests beyond this window if they choose.

How these refunds would work

- Fans request refunds directly through Patreon within 14 days.
- Creators can issue refunds themselves if they have sufficient balance.
- In rare cases (e.g., no response within 72 hours & the product is not as advertised), Patreon may step in to review the claims to protect trust.
- Apple In-App purchases
- Refunds must be processed directly through Apple’s support portal.

*Note: Membership refund process would remain unchanged

Some attendees raised some valid points that were not addressed in the above, namely:

Oftentimes, we have people who are frustrated because they sign up with one email and then with an Apple ID and end up being charged double. We have no way to help these people because we have limited information. How can we better help our patrons with this?

For the refund of digital products, what is there to stop someone from purchasing the digital product, demanding a refund and then keeping a copy of the digital product?

For refunds of digital items, will there be methods to clarify that the user who requests the refund did actually receive the product or would creators be limited to simply refunding everyone who demands it even after receiving the digital product?

To aggregate the separate answers the hosts provided into one singular paragraph, Patreon is still in the process of internally developing stratagems to address these scenarios. In essence, most purchased digital products should be more or less immediately accessible to the paying customer, and it is down to the Content Creator's discretion and relationship with said customer. However, the Payments Team actively try to minimise any fraudulent activity (irrespective of whether it is the Content Creator or the customer) in conjunction with Content Policy, so if Patreon are alerted to something, they are not acting out on fraudulent claims, like 'chargeback scams' for example. Any issues should be raised with the [Support Team](#).

In relation to this, the following question was asked:

How will the new Commerce Guidelines impact traffic and help bring new traffic to our pages?

The indirect response to this was that Patreon's ultimate goal was to have the platform house a more descriptive and customer-friendly experience. This would improve relations between content creators and fans as customers would be less likely to feel misled by services/products content creators provide, as the latter would have clearer guidelines to follow. As for specific strategies, [the Patreon Creator Hub](#) and the official [Patreon Discord channel](#) would be the best place to turn for advice on selling one's self and their wares.

Quite a fair bit of time was spent on clarifying what Patreon meant by “the sale of harmful materials”, in particular the contentious issue of artificially generated content.

Expanding upon what had been initially announced December 2023, Patreon currently does not allow deep-fakes, or any other sexually-gratifying hyper-realistic artificial intelligence (AI)-generated media. What Patreon’s definition of this meant was reaffirmed from July 2024:

Hyper-realistic	Illustrated or animated
Natural lighting & movement, anatomically possible with detailed body morphology (bones & elements of musculature, tendons), three-dimensionality, a detailed background.	Often stylized (exaggerated eyes, minimized nose/mouth, distorted features). May contain brush strokes & have a uniform or flat texture.

Additionally, Patreon seeks to prohibit tutorials or demonstrations of how to produce such content either outside of academic criteria (like a documentary exploring the ramifications of AI on real world artists or voice actors for example). The justification of this proposed ruling was the prevention of bullying, intimidation, ‘revenge porn’, and fraudulent portrayals of public figures beyond satire or obvious comedic effect (something the hosts were quick to point out).

Updates & announcement: Election Misinformation Policy

The October addendum balances open discourse and community safety while protecting the integrity of conversations on Patreon.

Key points

Permitted

Educational and journalistic works or discussions about elections, including opinions and satire

Prohibited

Sharing or spreading harmful misinformation or unverified claims about elections

Cited was a Guidelines Policy Addendum produced in October (now under ‘Inauthentic Behaviours’) concerning the 2024 US Presidential Election and misinformation that could potentially jeopardise the democratic process, endanger people and act as the catalyst for hate campaigns with serious consequences.

In response to this, an audience member raised an interesting point, namely:

So 3D work using Metahuman, DAZ3D, that is blurring the line between real and digital, that has shadows, wrinkles, very detailed background will not be permitted moving forward? These are industry standard tools and hyper realistic is where all these industries are going right now: animation, films, games all of it. If this is allowed, how would you differentiate between the permitted versus non-permitted? Because honestly, not allowing mature content

creation using industry standard tools sounds very counter-productive to the creative community.

For context, MetaHuman is a tool used to develop realistic-looking but fictional human models and is a part of Unreal Engine, a 3D graphics game engine and development kit. The 5th iteration went public in 2022 and an entire television show animation was produced with it that aired in 2024. DAZ 3D is an older unrelated 3D software company that ostensibly provided 3D human models in the past. It still exists today.

The hosts stated that Patreon are currently exploring a means to permit this specific kind of CGI, non-AI-generated realistic work of fictional humans. However, their priority presently is to *protect against non-consensual violent and/or sexual media that could cause real world harm to innocent parties.*

One audience member disagreed with the proposal, stating:

The change is counterproductive, requiring the people to be real can lead to more harm than when they all created fantasy characters. Making adult Images of a virtual girl, such as my page does, keeps it all in the realm of fantasy, and there is no real person who can be harmed in any way, nobody can stalk etc. making it the safest way to run such a page. I think this change to forbid any realistic looking fantasy girls is very bad.

Make of that what you will, especially as the same person later appended this with:

If this adult AI will be forbidden, [then] how about the same content without ***? [I presume this was ass] Could I for example continue my page if it was for example, lingerie and bikini photos? And what then happens with all the posts far published almost 1000 posts with NSFW photos?

Moving on from artificial intelligence...

Proposed updates: Harmful Acts guidelines

Proposed updates aim to protect the community while fostering education, support, & recovery, offering clear guidance to creators to raise awareness, provide assistance, & maintain a safe, inclusive platform.

Key clarifications

Prohibited

- Real people expressing clear & immediate intent to self-harm or suicide
- Works detailing methods, timing, or location
- Graphic imagery of attempts or injuries
- Works that promote or glorify these acts

Allowed

- Educational works discussing prevention or intervention
- Resources like crisis hotlines
- Fictional or artistic storytelling, including animated depictions, as long as they are part of a greater narrative or otherwise contextualized in compliance with guidelines

Further expanded upon in the Guidelines here: <https://www.patreon.com/en-GB/policy/guidelines#harmful-acts>

A ton of support links were provided so I'll just simply list them:

<https://creatorhub.patreon.com/articles/how-creators-built-thriving-communities-with-clear-boundaries>

<https://creatorhub.patreon.com/articles/hot-topics-doubt>

<https://creatorhub.patreon.com/articles/7-practical-tips-for-navigating-and-avoiding-burnout>

<https://creatorhub.patreon.com/articles/coping-with-controversy>

The following was also stated:

Updates & announcements: Partnership with Crisis Text Line

To support the well-being of the Patreon community, we've partnered with Crisis Text Line to provide free, 24/7 confidential text-based mental health support in English & Spanish.

Crisis Text Line's impact:

- 10M+ U.S. crisis conversations facilitated since 2013
- 14M+ global crisis conversations since 2013

What's next:

- Collaborating with Crisis Text Line to bring new mental health resources in 2025
- Developing additional programming & partnerships based on creator feedback.

If you or someone you know may need support, we encourage you to seek help through trusted resources like the Crisis Text Line or other local mental health services.

And also:

Updates and Announcements: Public Policy Advocacy

Patreon joined a coalition of 20 tech platforms to support the bipartisan TAKE IT DOWN Act, championed by Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX, meaning Republican Senator representing Texas) & Amy Klobuchar (D-MN, meaning Democrat Senator representing Minnesota).

Key highlights

- **Protecting Victims:** The bill criminalizes the publication of non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII), including AI-generated content, & requires websites to remove or disable such material.
- **Empowering Action:** Aims to help victims regain control by enabling the removal of NCII content & stopping the cycle of harm.
- **Legislative Progress:** Passed the Senate unanimously; awaiting consideration in the House of Representatives.

Now, to focus on what I zeroed in on when I received notice of the stream...

Proposed Updates: Off-Platform Activity

Clarifies how off-platform behaviour impacts Patreon's Community Guidelines, addressing one of the most frequent topics creators & moderators ask about.

Key points

Prohibited activities

- Scams: Romance scams & other financial scams.
- General Platform Abuse: Activity intended to evade Patreon enforcement or that violates our policies (e.g. directing fans to private, password-protected chat apps for prohibited behaviour).
- Commerce: Empty listings that deliver goods offsite or circumvent compliance standards.

Allowed activities

- Linking to public social media pages
- Hosting policy-compliant video or audio content externally

We'd love your feedback on where clarification is needed or points of confusion.

Nothing has been enacted as of yet, but certain get-around methods may no longer work; just something to bear in mind going forward.

Related to this was an announcement of a revamped Appeals process. This was mentioned as being in-development back in July's livestream but has now been finalised as follows:

Updates and Announcements: Appeals process revamp

Developed with creator input, this new process provides a clearer, more accessible pathway for creators to navigate enforcement decisions while ensuring transparency & fairness.

Context

Enforcement actions vary based on the severity of a violation:

- **High-severity violations** (e.g., real-world harm or community safety risks) may result in immediate suspension or removal, sometimes without prior warning.
- **Moderate or low-severity violations** typically result in warnings or guidance, giving creators the chance to address specific content before further action.

Creators can appeal all enforcement decisions, including account removals, by submitting additional evidence for review.

Key points

- Creators have up to 6 months to appeal account removal decisions.
- Appeals can be submitted through the Help Centre with detailed reasoning & supporting evidence.
- A new intake form streamlines the process, providing a clearer pathway for creators to navigate appeals while ensuring greater transparency.

[Image of a drop-down menu in the Patreon Help Centre with options listed]

--Please choose a request type below--

I have a question about Community Guidelines (English only)

Your email address: [blank space to enter]

Please select one of the options below:

- ☐ Appeal my account removal for a Community Guidelines violation
- ☐ I have a question about age verification.
- ☐ I received a hint and I don't know what to do
- ☐ Community guidelines questions
- ☐ I want to report a community guidelines violation
- ☐ Visit the Help Centre for more information on the appeals process.

Naturally, all this generated a fair few questions but frustratingly, there wasn't enough time for all queries to be addressed directly. Like for example:

As an NSFW creator, content that is allowed on Patreon and content that isn't exist on separate platform. However, the changes to the social media (off- platform) policy has me question if my Patreon is in jeopardy if I share content on social media that isn't allowed on Patreon. What is Patreon's position on this?

The response was **'things are still currently in development, nothing has yet been finalised'.**

And:

Will Patreon implement a warning system for unintentional policy violations?

Given someone in the audience observed:

The question about warning system was not answered – [the hosts] just repeated what to do if your page is shut down. The question was about warning creators that what they have created may violate or does violate before any shut down happens...

I suppose erring on the side of caution is Patreon's remit, and one has to use the Appeals process to argue their case. As for what the hosts actually said, well, if your Patreon is suspended, you can simply create a new one but you have to contact the Trust & Safety Team and outline what you intend to do, and provide evidence as such. It will then be down to the sole discretion of the human moderator to see if your appeal goes through.

The remaining hitherto unmentioned aspects of the stream I'll briefly address now.

Updates & announcements: ID verification & inactive Adult/18+ pages

Ensures compliance with payment processor requirements while supporting platform integrity and safety

Key update

Inactive Adult/18+ pages will be unpublished (moved to "draft" state) starting in January if they meet all these criteria:

- ✓ ID verification not completed
 - ✓ No posts in the past 365 days
 - ✓ No payments or memberships received during that time
-
- Unpublished pages become undiscoverable & cannot accept memberships
 - Creators can re-launch at any time by completing ID verification

And some quick questions-and-answers:

Why are adult content pages excluded from search results?

Happily, this is something I personally noticed was rectified recently. But to echo what the hosts said, by default, any Patron who has previously pledged to an 18+ Content Creator now has the ability to search for other Content Creators of the same vein by default, on mobile (irrespective of whether it's via the app or your browser of choice) and on desktop. Otherwise, you can toggle this on and off in your search settings.

What's the difference between feeding someone in a video versus force-feeding? Is all feeding by another individual considered 'force-feeding' and not permitted?

To put it succinctly, it all depends on context: as long as it is clearly denoted to be affirmative and consensual, it is permitted. This also includes something akin to a medical setting, in which someone is aiding someone to eat if they are too frail to do it themselves.

What kind of nudity can be posted without being 18+?

Akin to the above question and answer, context; it was stated that human nudity that is not sexually explicit, i.e. for medical and health-related educational purposes can be posted without it being denoted 18+. This includes breastfeeding, anatomical study, surgery and childbirth.

How is Patreon protecting my work from theft or scraping?

For legal reasons, the hosts were not allowed to detail the processes. But Patreon is actively fighting and has blocked web-scrapers and programs used to train AI data-sets from using Patrons' content posted on Patreon itself.

WRAPPING UP & STAYING IN TOUCH

01 EVENT FEEDBACK SURVEY – SHARE YOUR INPUT TO HELP US IMPROVE

02 EVENT RECORDING – WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU.

03 POLICY TEAM EMAIL – REACH US AT CREATORPOLICY@PATREON.COM

04 POLICY CONVERSATION ON DISCORD – OPEN THROUGH THURSDAY 12/9

05 HELP CENTER CONTACT FORM: REACH THE TRUST & SAFETY TEAM WITH QUESTIONS

To echo what was said at the very end of the stream, you can reach out to Patreon's Policy Team directly via email at creatorpolicy@patreon.com.

For the next seven days until 19th December 2024, there will be a thread on this on Patreon's official Discord here: <https://discord.gg/patreon>

The stream ended here.

Thank you for reading.