



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
يُؤْتِي الْعِلْمَ رُحْنًا وَإِنَّا بِرُحْنِنَا
Garden of Knowledge and Virtue

TAWHIDIC EPISTEMOLOGY
LEADING THE WAY

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KICT NEWSLETTER

SPECTRUM

June 2026

Issue 4

EISSN 3083-9904

Wishing all KICT students

بالتوفيق والنجاح

in your final examinations

THE HONEST MACHINE:

Proposing A Hybrid Verification Model for AI-Assisted Academic Research

THE IBIX FRAMEWORK:

Immersive Business Intelligence Experience Framework

NOT EVERY FRIEND IS FRIENDLY:

The Evolving Threat of Online Grooming in Malaysia

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Message from the Editor

Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

It is my pleasure to present this Issue No. 4/2026 of the KICT Spectrum, featuring the knowledge, achievements, and impactful contributions of our KICT community. In this edition, we are delighted to feature three insightful articles that explore the evolving relationship between technology, society, and human values.

Br. Muhd Rosydi Muhammad presents "The Honest Machine: Proposing a Hybrid Verification Model for AI-Assisted Academic Research," highlighting the importance of balancing AI capabilities with human verification and ethical judgment.

Ts. Dr. Aidrina M. Sofiadin introduces the "Immersive Business Intelligence Experience (IBIX) Framework," a forward-looking framework that reimagines traditional business models for the era of intelligent digital ecosystems.

Dr. Andi Fitriah Abdul Kadir addresses a critical digital safety concern through "Not Every Friend is Friendly: The Evolving Threat of Online Grooming in Malaysia," emphasizing awareness, protection, and shared responsibility in safeguarding children online.

This issue also celebrates the continuous achievements of our KICT members, including research accomplishments, new grants, appointments, and various academic and community engagement activities. These milestones reflect the dedication, innovation, and collaborative spirit that continue to strengthen KICT's excellence.

My sincere appreciation goes to all contributors, editorial team members, and everyone involved in making this publication possible. May KICT Spectrum continue to serve as a platform for sharing knowledge, inspiring ideas, and celebrating the success of our KICT community.

Happy reading!

Hazwani

Chief Editor

NOT EVERY FRIEND IS FRIENDLY:

The Evolving Threat of Online Grooming in Malaysia



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THE DIGITAL WORLD OUR CHILDREN LIVE IN

Children today are more connected than ever before. From social media to online games, digital platforms have become a central part of childhood. While these platforms offer opportunities, they also expose children to hidden dangers, especially online grooming.

THE SITUATION IN MALAYSIA

Online grooming happens when an adult builds trust with a child online to exploit them. It often begins with friendly conversations, making it difficult to detect. Online grooming is not a distant problem, it is happening locally and increasing:

- **100,000 Malaysian children** (aged 12–17) experienced some form of online sexual exploitation in a single year (UNICEF Malaysia, 2022)
- **Cases of online child sexual abuse are increasing** and may exceed 100,000 annually, reflecting a worrying upward trend (New Straits Times, 2025)
- **Many cases remain under-reported** due to stigma, discomfort, and lack of awareness (UNICEF Malaysia, 2022)

1 in 4 Malaysian children are exposed to harmful or sexual content online (The Vibes, 2024)

Online child sex abuse in Malaysia shows alarming rise, may exceed 100,000 this year - Women's ministry

By Mohamad Al As November 18, 2025 @ 3:23pm



Figure 1 Child sex abuse in Malaysia. New Straits Times, 2025.

Online grooming does not start with harm, it starts with attention, trust, and emotional connection. Because of this, children often fail to recognize danger until it is too late.

WHAT IS ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (OCSEA)?

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) refers to any form of child sexual abuse that involves digital technologies, whether it occurs entirely online or is combined with offline interactions. OCSEA may also involve exploitation, where abuse is linked to exchange, threats, or promises of rewards. Importantly, any sexual content involving children is considered child sexual abuse material (CSAM) rather than "child pornography" because children cannot consent to such acts, and the use of inaccurate terminology minimizes the severity of the crime (ECPAT, INTERPOL, & UNICEF 2022).

HOW DOES GROOMING HAPPEN IN MALAYSIA?

Online grooming is typically a gradual process in which offenders build trust and emotional connections with children before exploiting them. Groomers often contact children through social media, online games, messaging applications, and other digital platforms where young people spend significant amounts of time (UNICEF, 2022).

Grooming typically follows a four-step pattern:

- **Contact:** Approaching children through social media, online gaming environments, or messaging apps like WhatsApp and Instagram.
- **Trust Building:** Engaging in friendly chats, offering compliments, and providing emotional support.
- **Secrecy & Isolation:** Encouraging the child to hide their conversations from parents.
- **Exploitation:** Requesting images, videos, or physical meetings.

Child grooming on TikTok appears normalized due factors of FYP that curates based on user interactions which groomers may repeatedly engage with minors and reinforcing harmful behavior. (Shariffuddin & Zulkifli, 2025).

Predators are also weaponizing algorithms. The recent "Abang Bas Sekolah" scandal on TikTok highlighted how groomers use "For You Page" (FYP) recommendations to normalize inappropriate interactions with minors. Furthermore, a study found that 51% of Malaysian adolescents using internet-connected phones were invited to offline meetings by people they met online; terrifyingly, 30% complied, sometimes resulting in physical or sexual assault (Mohamad Hussain & Ismail, 2023)

BREAKING THE TABOO: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



Figure 2 Protecting Children From Online Grooming. AI-generated image by NotebookLM, 2026, Google. <https://notebooklm.google.com/>

To protect Malaysian children from OCSEA, Malaysia is actively fighting back by introducing pioneering legislative measures:

- **The Sexual Offences Against Children Act (SOACA) 2017:** Officially criminalizes "child grooming" and "sexually communicating with a child," carrying severe penalties (Government of Malaysia, 2017).
- **The Online Safety Act 2025 & The Under-16 Ban:** As of June 1, 2026, the government banned children under 16 from opening social media accounts on major platforms (Kathirgugan, 2026).
- **Strict Platform Codes:** The MCMC launched the Child Protection Code (CPC) and the Risk Mitigation Code (RMC), fining non-compliant platforms up to RM10 million (Bernama, 2026).

Importantly, legal frameworks alone are not enough. Stigma and cultural taboos surrounding sex and sexuality remain massive barriers; 82% of surveyed frontline workers in Malaysia stated that community stigma actively prevents the reporting of online grooming and exploitation (ECPAT, INTERPOL, & UNICEF, 2022). Research shows that due to cultural modesty norms, many Malay Muslim mothers face discomfort in discussing sex education, often relying entirely on schools (Norazman et al., 2025). When parents avoid these conversations, children are left to navigate complex online risks alone.

PREVENTION, PROTECTION, AND AWARENESS

Protecting children from online grooming requires a collective effort from parents, schools, communities, and children themselves. While technology can help detect threats, awareness and open communication remain the most effective forms of protection.

✔ What Parents Can Do

- Discuss online risks regularly and monitor online activity responsibly, as children can be groomed even while at home.
- Adopt the S.A.F.E. Internet principles (CelcomDigi, n.d.):
 - **S - Smart:** Share with care and review privacy settings regularly.
 - **A - Aware:** Recognize the grooming process. Strangers may disguise themselves as peers to build trust.
 - **F - Fortify:** Secure your devices, minimize the personal data you share online, and actively monitor your children's browsing activities.
 - **E - Empathy:** Be a safe space for your child so they know they can talk to you if they feel uncomfortable, without the immediate threat of having their devices confiscated.

✔ What Schools Can Do

- Integrate digital citizenship and online safety awareness into the curriculum.
- Educate students about real-world online risks, including grooming, cyberbullying, and scams.
- Encourage a culture of trust where students feel safe reporting suspicious online interactions.
- Organize awareness campaigns, workshops, and talks on responsible internet use.
- Collaborate with parents to reinforce online safety practices both at school and at home.

✔ What Children Should Remember

- Never share personal information such as your address, school name, phone number, passwords, or location.
- Be cautious when interacting with people you only know online, even if they seem friendly.
- Never keep secrets about online conversations from your parents or trusted adults.
- Report any inappropriate messages, requests, or content to a parent, teacher, or trusted adult.

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CALL FOR ARTICLES

Do you have research insights, innovative ideas, project stories, or field experiences that you'd like to share with the KICT community? Spectrum welcomes contributions from our members, researchers, and partners!

We invite you to submit articles for our upcoming issue. Please submit your article through the following Google Form.



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