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# Tech Decoded

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Hello. UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has unveiled plans for a national digital ID scheme by 2029. The cards will be compulsory for anyone who wants to work, and could eventually simplify access to government services. Yet while similar schemes exist elsewhere, opposition in Britain has been fierce - I examine why below. We also look at claims TikTok's algorithm recommended porn to children and learn about the "AI actor" sparking anger in Hollywood.

## THE DOWNLOAD

### Why digital ID cards are so divisive



The UK's digital ID card would prove a person's identity, age and immigration status. Credit: Getty

Former UK prime minister Sir Tony Blair faced intense opposition when he legislated to introduce voluntary ID cards in 2005, and by 2011 the scheme had

been scrapped amid concerns about privacy and cost.

Current UK leader Sir Keir Starmer says the conversation has "moved on" since then and last week unveiled plans to **bring in a compulsory app-based ID system**. However, a survey after his announcement showed that just 31% of Britons are supportive of the proposal, and 45% are opposed. Meanwhile, more than 2.7 million people have signed a petition against the introduction of the IDs.

The strong emotions these systems stir up can seem confusing. While some doubt Starmer's claim that the UK's ID **will help tackle illegal immigration**, the idea it could eventually simplify access to government services such as applying for a driving licence or seeing your tax records sounds compelling.

UK citizens already share a lot of personal data digitally via the country's National Health Service app and contactless mobile payments. And numerous other countries have introduced ID card schemes without much fuss, including most of the EU, **Switzerland** and **India**.

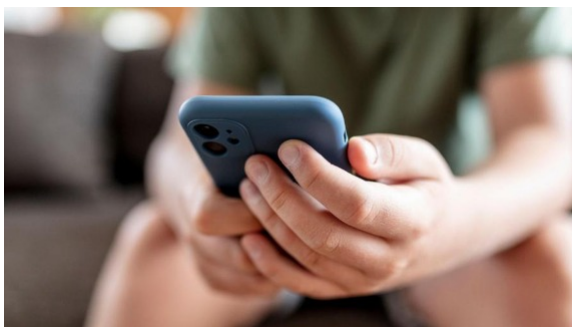
Yet there are genuine privacy concerns over schemes like the UK's, says Zach Meyers from the Centre on Regulation in Europe think tank. One is that the system could evolve into mass surveillance or be used to take away freedoms. "Even if the current government would not use the system for harmful purposes, it could make it much easier for future governments to do so," he says.

A centralised digital ID system would also be a "compelling target" for hackers, with a breach likely to have serious consequences. In 2017, Estonia had to block 760,000 ID and e-residency cards **after it discovered a security flaw**.

The UK government says its system will be secure, but Starmer risks repeating the mistakes of his predecessors if he can't convince the public.

***The download:*** Digital ID cards offer potentially significant benefits, but only if the public buys in.

## TOP STORIES



## TikTok recommends porn to children, says report

Campaigners created fake child accounts and activated safety settings but still received sexually explicit search suggestions.

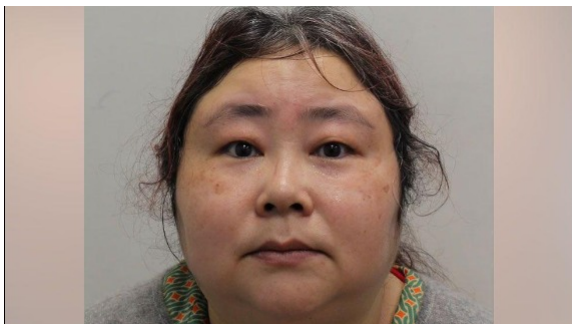
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## Japan faces Asahi beer shortage after cyber-attack

Most of the Asahi Group's factories have been at a standstill since Monday.

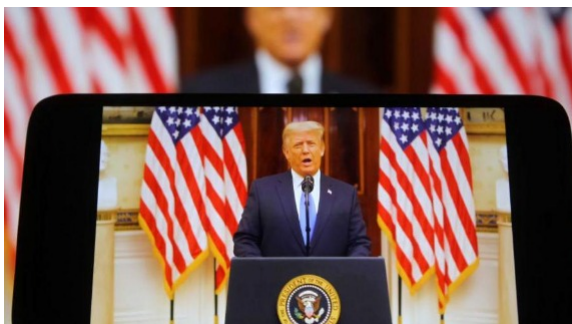
[Here's why >](#)



## Woman guilty after world's 'biggest' bitcoin seizure

A Chinese national has been convicted of illegally acquiring and possessing cryptocurrency worth \$6.7bn in today's prices.

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## YouTube settles Trump lawsuit over Capitol riot

Trump had claimed YouTube and other tech platforms unfairly censored conservative voices after the 2021 riot.

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## Snapchat to charge for storing photos and videos

The policy has prompted a backlash from users who have built up a large archive of old posts.

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## SOMETHING DIFFERENT

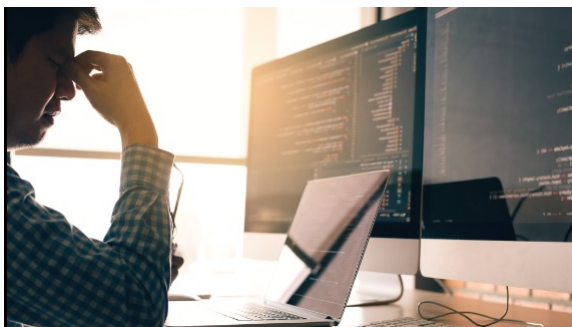
# Molly's death guides us, says tech boss



Bill Ready became CEO of Pinterest in 2022. Credit: Patrick T Fallon/ AFP via Getty Images.

Pinterest hit the headlines in 2017 when Molly Russell, a 14-year-old from London, took her own life after viewing self-harm content on the social media platform. A coroner later ruled the material she was exposed to contributed to her death. Bill Ready, who became Pinterest's boss in 2022, told the BBC he thought about Molly "every day" and learning the lessons of her death "guides our work". Read about [how he's trying to improve the platform](#) .

## SOMETHING ELSE



## Cybersecurity's burnout problem

The industry is under intense pressure amid a surge in attacks.

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## And finally...

An "AI actor" named Tilly Norwood has been causing a stir after its creators said the synthetic performer was in talks with talent agencies. Glance at her Instagram profile and you could easily confuse Norwood for a genuine performer. She has also starred in an AI-generated short film. But Hollywood's most powerful actors union has condemned the creation, along with A-list stars like Emily Blunt and Whoopi Goldberg. [Here's why.](#)



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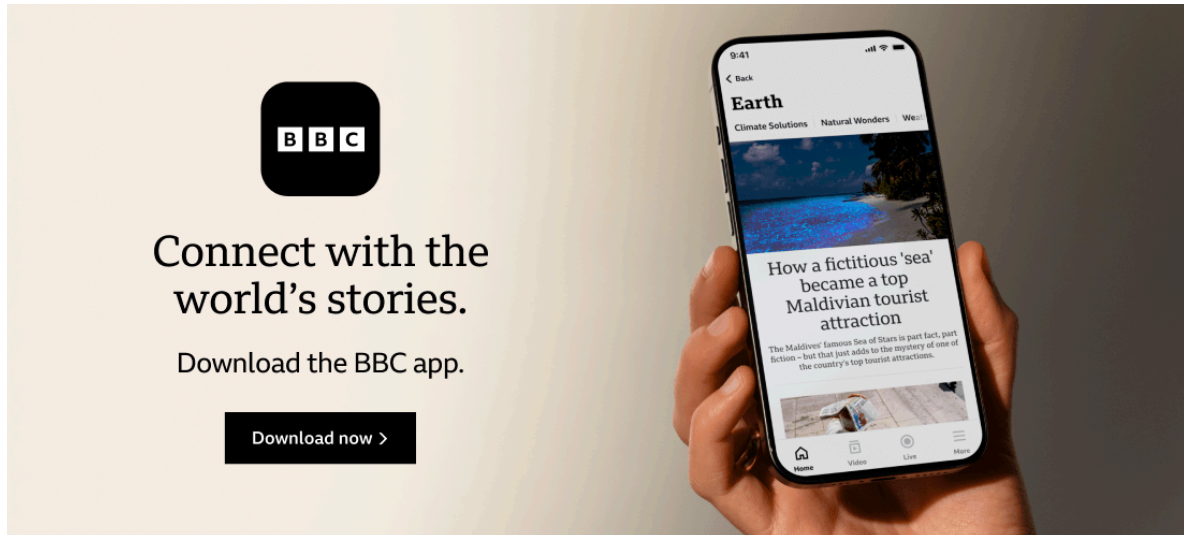
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