Children's Charities' Coalition for Internet Safety

Agenda for Action

We set out below the measures and messages we think are needed to make the Internet a safer place for children. These are categorised by the principal audience to whom they are addressed.

Government

- A new and wholly independent body is required which draws together representatives of children's organizations, consumer groups and other categories of Internet users, together with representatives of all parts of the Internet industry, Members of Parliament and the Government, to lead an informed public debate on public policy towards the Internet.
- Ensure that clear, mandatory and comprehensive guidelines are issued governing the safe use of the Internet within schools. This is particularly important in view of the fact that it seems shortly the Government will meet its target of giving every child attending state schools in the UK their own email address.
- Bring forward measures to Parliament to clarify and modernise existing laws to take account of the new possibilities created by the Internet for committing crimes against children, or for enabling other forms of civil wrongs which harm children's interests e.g. in relation to luring or tricking children into meetings in the real world, in relation to the Police's powers of entrapment to combat online crime, in relation to the commercial exploitation of children by online hard selling techniques, and in relation to data privacy.

Government and Internet Service Providers

- Internet Service Providers (ISPs) should be required to ensure that any staff employed to moderate children's chat or other child-oriented Internet services have been appropriately trained and police-checked.

Internet Service Providers

- ISPs that allow children onto their networks at all should have safety messages prominently displayed on their home page with a quick link that takes you straight to them on most if not all other pages. These safety messages should include information about where to obtain counselling or support in relation to inappropriate online contacts.
- ISPs that allow children on to their networks at all should prominently advertise the availability of child-friendly search engines.
- Every ISP should bar all access to telephone lines that have blocked Caller Line Identification.
- ISPs should develop chat-free services

ISPs and Other Chat Providers

- ISPs that allow children on to their networks at all and give access to Internet Chat Rooms or other chat channels should also provide and promote the availability of moderated chat aimed specially at children.
- Chat safety messages should be prominently displayed close to or in chat areas and mechanisms should exist which would allow suspicious behaviour towards children to be noted, reported and dealt with very rapidly.
- Current ISP procedures should be reviewed to include wherever possible the recording and storing of chat room conversations, as is already the practice with premium rate telephone services, linked to the given identities of the participants.

ISPs and Other Internet Based Services

- Minimum standards should be established governing sign up procedures for new Internet accounts. These standards should seek to ensure as far as possible that new account holders are fully aware of the hazards to children online, and that they are passing on this information to any children who might use their account from time to time.
- Greater efforts should be made to verify both the age and the true identity of account holders, and what relationship they might have to any children to whom they give sub-accounts.
- ISPs should not facilitate access to Newsgroups containing child pornography on a regular basis, or to Newsgroups or ChatRooms that suggest or encourage paedophile behaviour.
- Activities across the site as a whole should be kept under constant review so as to eliminate or reduce any and all hazards to children. In particular links which allow easy exits from children's areas to adult areas, or which provide an interface between them, should be closely scrutinised to determine whether they create an unacceptably high risk that children might be encouraged or enticed to move from one area to the other, or that sexual predators could locate children more easily.

ISPs and the wider industry

- Establish a trust to fund research into the new forms of abuse of children which the Internet is facilitating, including longer-term studies of the potential effects of the large scale or protracted exposure to a range of pornographic or violent images which the Internet uniquely allows or facilitates.
- Establish a well-funded and properly targeted off-line advertising campaign which focuses on education and awareness of Internet safety for children and young people.
- Establish and promote "walled garden" services specially for legal minors.

Internet Watch Foundation

- *Secure sufficient funding to allow a major online and offline advertising campaign about the role and availability of the UK's HotLine service.*

Retailers and hardware manufacturers

- Any computers sold into the domestic market should have child safety software pre-installed and set by default to a high level of security.
- All computers sold into the domestic market should be accompanied by a document explaining the basics of online safety for children written in language which is accessible both to parents and the young people themselves.

Software houses

- More research and development is needed to provide better, more robust and easier to use labelling, filtering and blocking software and other programmes which will allow parents and others with responsibility for children to provide a safe Internet environment which accords with their own values.

Internet publishers

- All material published on the Internet should, as a minimum, be rated using the ICRA system but the use of a diverse range of ratings systems is also to be encouraged.

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