Every child is unique - Let us take action to keep them safe while being online!

Results of an expert survey on matters of safer Internet and youth protection in Europe

www.yprt.eu

Youth Protection Roundtable

Project co-ordinator

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About YPRT

The Internet should be a tool for gathering knowledge and information as well as for entertainment for users of all age groups. But nowadays more and more people are afraid of encountering unwanted and harmful content instead of useful information while being online.

A combination of technical tools with increased effectiveness and approved pedagogical measures seems to be the solution. To develop the ideal mix of both there is a need for collaboration between specialists from the technical side and experts from the pedagogical side. Therefore at the Youth Protection Roundtable we will bring together the relevant players at five bi-annual international meetings during the 30-month project term, from November 2006 till April 2009. Considering the various cultural backgrounds of European countries, the activities will emphasise the following elements:

- Facilitate and co-ordinate the exchange of views between technical experts and children's welfare specialists
- Find a common language
- Enable technicians to take account of the possible effects of newly developed technologies and their safe use by children
- Improve the usability of security technologies
- Provide European parents and educators with the information necessary to make decisions on adequate content in accordance with their cultural values
- Motivate children's welfare experts to include consultation on youth protection on the Internet into their portfolio
- Empower young people and responsible adults, in the case of minors, to use the Internet safely
- Identify good practice approaches

While many fruitful and distinct ideas are sure to blossom at the Youth Protection Roundtable, one overarching goal is to develop a common strategy embedded in the cultural situation to prevent children and young people from encountering unwanted and harmful content while using the Internet and to enable them to have safe and secure use of the vast opportunities digital media offer for their lives.

By January 2008 more than 30 members from 13 countries had joined the YPRT network.

About the survey

To identify the different viewpoints of technical experts and children's welfare specialists – pedagogues, scientists and practitioners – in European countries as regards youth protection on the Internet, an international survey was conducted between January and June 2007.
The purpose was to ask representatives from children's welfare organisations as well as from companies in the field of protective hardware and software how they judge the current situation of youth protection in their country.

Survey method data

Survey period:	between January 2007 and the end of June 2007
Target group:	experts from the area of child welfare and from the field of protective hardware and software in Europe
Objective:	measure the landscape of youth protection in Europe
Method:	questionnaire – answers by telephone interview, and in written and online form
Persons addressed:	675 experts from the area of child welfare and from the field of protective hardware and software in Europe
Number of respondents:	126 overall, thereof 86 experts from the area of child welfare and 40 experts from the field of protective hardware and software in Europe
Geographical area:	Europe
Countries of the respondents:	Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK
Regional clustering:	North: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Central: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, the UK and Israel East: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia South: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Spain, Turkey

Method

A set of questions was developed adjusted to the technical, legal and pedagogical requirements of youth protection. The questionnaire was sent out via email to prepare the interviewees for a phone interview carried out between January and the end of June 2007. Additionally the questionnaire was provided online. For Germany, the organisations were known to the co-ordinator of YPRT. For the other countries, the members at the roundtable provided the contact details of organisations from the areas of welfare and business.
To identify regional differences the countries were clustered to four different regions of Europe. By the end of June, 66 respondents from the central region, 21 from the northern, 19 from the southern and 20 from the eastern region had taken part in the survey. 86 experts thereof belong to the area of welfare and 40 come from companies in the area of protective hardware and software.

The Risks from real life are evident in the virtual world as well

63 % of the respondents mention media literacy, parental control and other activities for youth and parents to protect themselves with respect to youth protection.
The first question was intended as an opener to the interview and did therefore not specifically address the Internet. Nevertheless, more than one third of the respondents state Internet issues as being associated with the term "youth protection" in their view. From these experts' answers, it becomes clear that dangers and risks from real life – like abuse, violence and so on – are evident in the virtual world as well. Internet safety must therefore be seen as an important task for youth protection in general.

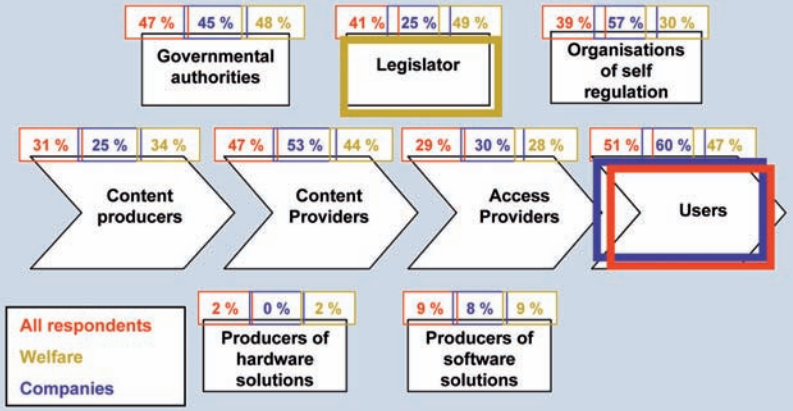
Question 1:
Which areas do you connotate with the term youth protection?

37 % mention Internet and online issues as relevant regarding matters of youth protection
15 % mention sexual abuse
13 % mention pornography
13 % mention violent content
9 % mention harmful content

Highest responsibility for the users themselves, low responsibility for producers of protective hardware and software

With a percentage of 51, all respondents agree that the highest responsibility is on the users themselves, but significantly more respondents from companies agree with 60 % as compared to respondents from the welfare area with 47 %. With 49 % the latter view the responsibility for youth protection as being with the legislator.

WHERE DO YOU LOCATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH PROTECTION ON THE INTERNET?



YPRT Survey On Matters Of Safer Internet And Youth Protection
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n=126

Question 2:
When it comes to the Internet, please imagine a value chain from the content producer to the user. You will see there: content producers, content providers, access providers and the users. They are supported by hardware and software solutions on the one side and by political, legal and executive authorities on the other side. Where do you locate responsibility for youth protection on the Internet?

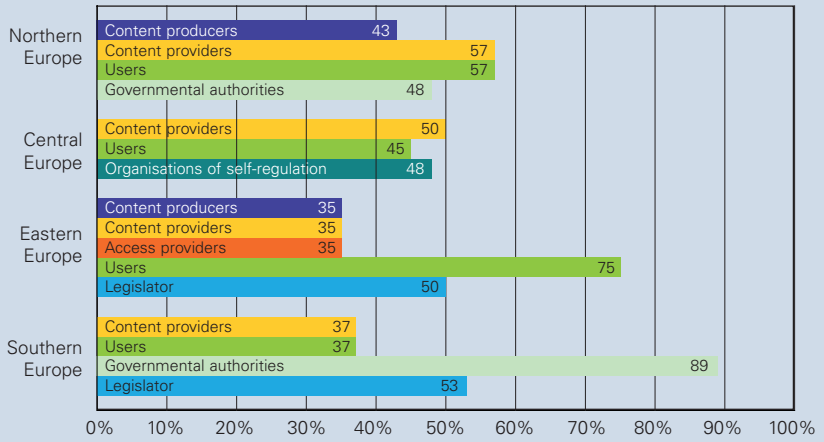
Great regional differences as regards responsibility for youth protection on the Internet

In a second step, the results were analysed considering the different geographical origin of the respondents. The answers from 26 countries were clustered into four regions to measure whether there are regional differences in Europe. The countries from the southern region locate most responsibility for youth protection on the Internet with the governmental authorities, while the countries from the central region see three main actors as responsible for youth protection on the Internet: content providers in first place followed by the self-regulation organisations and in third place the users themselves.

With 75 %, the users themselves were seen as most responsible in the eastern region and just as in the southern region, the legislator is located in the second place for taking responsibility.
With these answers, it becomes very clear how the different European backgrounds, with regard to the historical experiences and political situation, lead to different judgements about the responsibility for youth protection on the Internet.

Results differentiated according to four regions of Europe.

WHERE DO YOU LOCATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUTH PROTECTION ON THE INTERNET? REGIONAL CLUSTERING



Percentage of respondents, who chose 3 out of 9 given options.

n=126

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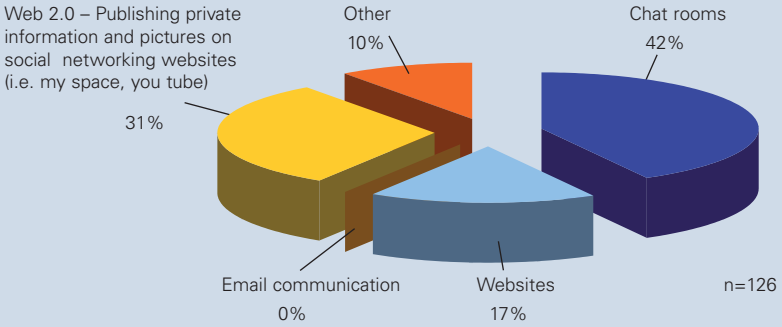
Interactive areas of the web are estimated to be the most dangerous

The Internet and the services available on it are not only growing but also rapidly changing. Enhanced possibilities for communication, interactivity and the publishing of content by the user are accompanied by new threats and risks. And the measures undertaken to protect children and young persons have to be adjusted to the new landscape of the web.

It is therefore not astonishing that 31 % of the respondents declared Web 2.0 appliances as more risky than e.g. classic websites. One-to-one communication via email does not seem to bear remarkable risks, but communication with many unknown people in chat rooms is estimated to be the most dangerous activity on the web.

Interactive Areas Of The Web Are Estimated Most Dangerous



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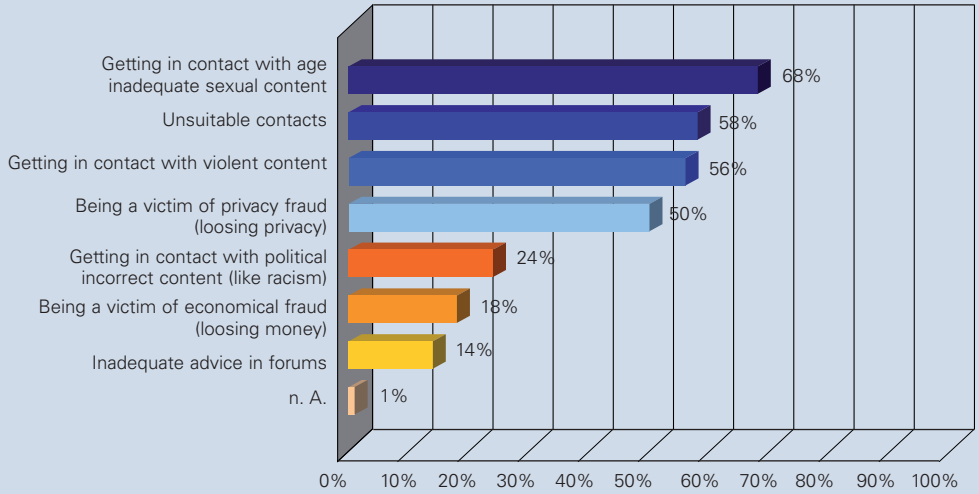
Question 3:
Which areas of the virtual world do you estimate the most dangerous for kids and teens?

Inadequate sexual content is seen as most harmful

68 % of the experts fear that young people and minors are facing age-inadequate sexual content while being online, more than 55 % see unsuitable contacts and getting in contact with violent content as an unbearable threat. Following closely with 50 % being a victim of privacy fraud is seen as a high risk, whereas getting in contact with politically incorrect content (like racism etc.) with only 24 % and being a victim of economic fraud (loosing money) as well as inadequate advice in forums with less than 20 %, which was judged by the experts as less risky.

Inadequate Sexual Content Is Seen As Most Harmful



Percentage of respondents who chose this as one of three out of seven given options. n=126

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Question 4:
What do you think most harmful for kids and teens?

Parents, teachers and social youth workers are the preferred carers all over Europe

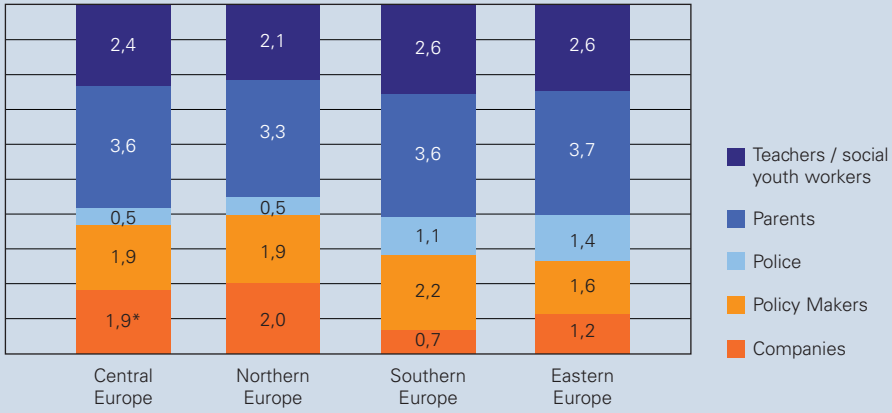
Respondents from all European regions agree that primarily parents and pedagogues should take care of young people online.
Respondents from the southern European region state that companies should take care of young people least of all. They allocate more relevance to actions of the policy makers.

Both the southern and the eastern European region assign more relevance to action undertaken by the police than by companies.

Answers differentiated according to four regions of Europe.

The results were evaluated in two ways. When the results were analysed considering the organisational background of the respondents it revealed that – contrary to the expectations – there are relevant differences between the experts from the different geographical regions of Europe in the answers to some questions, but at this point only marginal differences between the two groups of representatives, the technical experts and the welfare specialists.

Who Should Take Care For Onbline Safety Of Children?
Regional Clustering



*ø Priority points 1-5 (highest priority 5)

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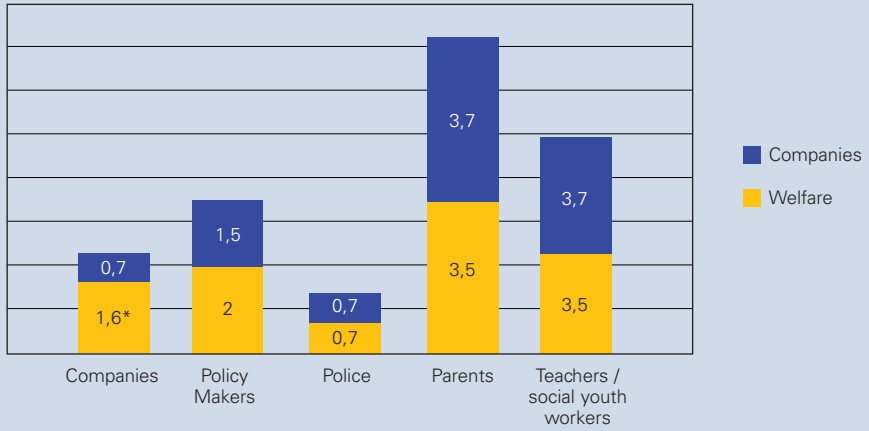
Who Should Take Care For Online Safety Of Children?



*ø Priority points 1-5 (highest priority 5)

n=126

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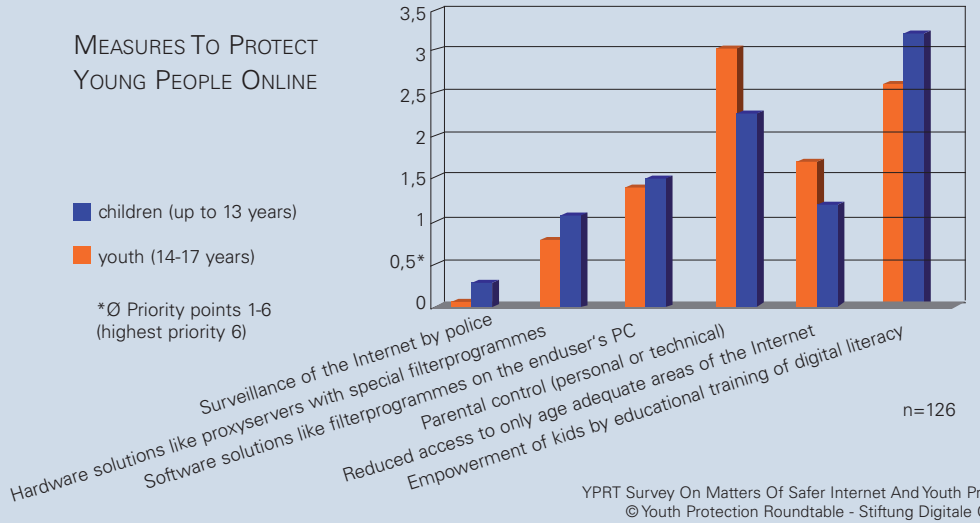
Question 5:
Who should take care? Please rank according to priority.

Number 1 measures are empowerment and parental control

When asked about protecting minors against inappropriate sexual content or violence on the Internet parental control and teaching of media literacy are stated most frequently.
While empowerment by educational measures like teaching media literacy seems to be the most adequate measure for young persons from 14-17 years old, parental control is seen as the most adequate measure to protect younger children up to 13 years.

The third highest priority is different for both groups: the experts say reducing access to only age-adequate areas is an adequate measure to protect young children, while young people are better protected with software solutions.
Surveillance of the Internet by the police is seen as the least adequate measure to protect young people of both age groups.

Measures To Protect Young People Online



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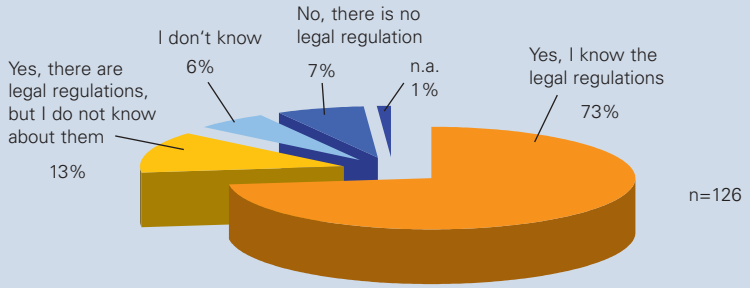
Question 6:
Which measures are adequate to protect children and youth in your opinion?
Please differentiate between children (up to 13 years old) and youth (from 14 – 17 years)?
Please rank according to priority.

Vague knowledge about the legal situation

About 75 % of the respondents have more or less some knowledge about the legal situation in their country and the authorities, who care for the compliance with the law. Nevertheless one quarter did not answer the question or stated not to have any knowledge. In the eastern countries there are more people who report that they do not know about the legal situation, but overall there are only slight differences.

Vague knowledge about the legal situation Of Youth Protection



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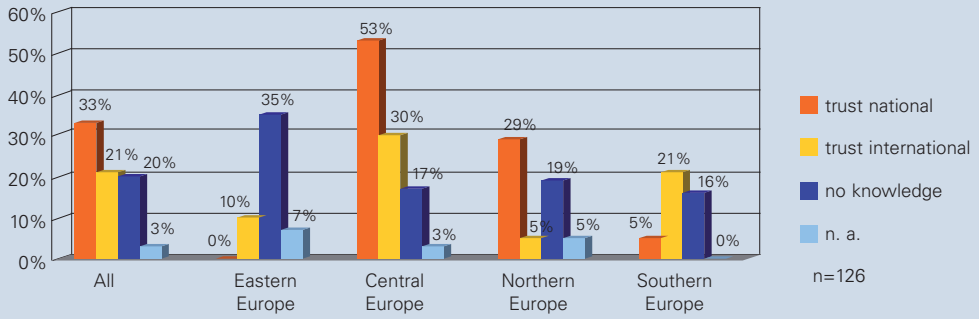
Question 7:
Do you have knowledge on the legal situation in your country?
Are there laws and legal regulations to protect youth?
Are there authorities to care for the compliance with the laws?

However the picture looks different when it comes to knowledge about self-regulation, as the following chart shows.

Self-regulation: little knowledge - little trust



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From all respondents only one third trusts in national instruments of self-regulation, but more than one fifth of the respondents have no knowledge of it.
Considering that more than half the respondents of the central European region trust in national instruments and almost one third trust in international instruments, the results from the eastern and the southern region are worrying. None of the respondents from the eastern region trusts in national instruments of self-regulation and only 5 % of those from the southern region do so. 35 % of the respondents from the eastern region and 16 % from the southern region do not have knowledge about self-regulation on a national or international level.

Question 8:
Do you have knowledge of any national or international instruments of self-regulation, i. e. Codes of Conduct?

Many institutional activities undertaken to protect children and youth, but demand for more information material

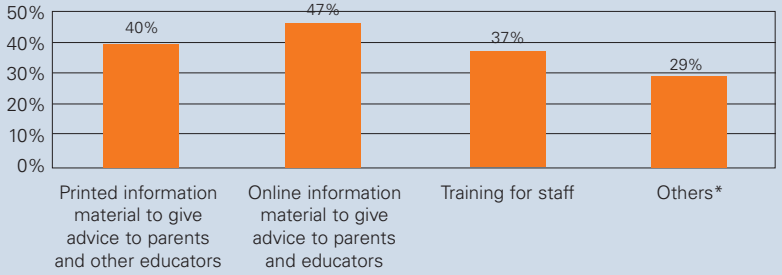
86 % of the respondents do undertake activities for youth protection, i.e.

- Educational training in digital literacy for parents, young persons, teachers and social workers
- Awareness campaigns and projects
- Influence legislation
- Promotion of new filter technologies
- Networking / lobbying
- Help lines
- Research

Only 8 % of the respondents report that activities for youth protection are not relevant for their target group or that they have never thought about it.
These answers underline that the
experts who participated in the survey have huge experience in the field of youth protection in practical work as well as in theory. The results are therefore a good validation for the significance of the survey findings in general.

Question 9:
Does your organisation undertake any activities in the field of youth protection? If yes, which activities?

Demand For Support For Youth Protection Activities



*Other: financial support, support the dissemination of the knowledge of the particular organisations, networking, involvement of the local services et.

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The demands identified by the respondents show that printed or online information addressing their respective target groups is needed. Obviously almost every second expert would need information to improve the measures which are undertaken by the organisations. 37 % need educational training for staff and 29 % say that financial support, networking and involvement of local services is required.

Question 10:
If youth protection on the Internet turns out to be a hot topic for your organisation, what would you need to realise a project or campaign?

Index of the graphics

Members of the YPRT

ADICONSUM – Associazione italiana difesa consumatori e ambiente, Italy

AOL, UK and Germany

Arbeitskreis Neue Erziehung e. V., Germany

BAGFW – Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege, Germany

Citizens Online, UK

Comenius Foundation for Child Development, Poland

D.O.M. Datenverarbeitung GmbH, Germany

Deutscher Kinderschutzbund – Bundesverband e.V., Germany

Extreme Media Solutions Ltd., Greece

Family Online Safety Institute, UK

F-Secure GmbH, Finland and Germany

Forum des droits sur l'internet, France

Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter e. V. – FSM, Germany

eco-Verband, for ICRAdeutschland.de GbR, Germany

ISFE – Interactive Software Federation of Europe, Belgium

Internet-ABC e.V., Germany

Johannisches Sozialwerk e. V., Germany

Jugendschutz.net, Germany

Landeszentrale für Medien und Kommunikation Rheinland-Pfalz – klicksafe.de, Germany

Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, Finland

Microsoft, France

Nobody's Children Foundation, Poland

NCH, UK

NICAM – Nederlands Instituut voor de Classificatie van Audiovisual Media, Netherlands

ÖIAT – Österreichisches Institut für Angewandte Telekommunikation, Austria

Pegasus GmbH, Germany

Protégeles, Spain

Safer Internet Institute, z.s.p.o, Czech Republic

Save the Children, Italy

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Slovenia

Websense (SurfControl), UK

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Youth Protection Roundtable is to establish an intercommuni cable socio technical approach to youth protection. Users responsible adults in the case of minors should be empowered to make their own decisions on how to deal with harmful and unwanted content on the Internet.

In addition to action to fight illegal content at its source, users may need digital literacy as well as technical tools. Accessibility to these tools may be promoted in order to empower users. The Youth Protection Round table's overarching goal is to facilitate and co-ordinate exchange of views be tween child welfare specialists and technical experts on technical and pedagogical measures against unwanted and harmful content.

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