

**Implementation of the Safer Social Networking Principles for the EU:
Testing of 20 Social Networks in Europe
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ONE.LT

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Introduction for the assessment

ONE.LT is a social networking site serving over one million internet users in Lithuania as well as a sizeable Lithuanian speaking internet user audience in other countries. It is the best known SNS among users under 18 years of age. ONE.LT offers a variety of social features helping people express themselves and stay in touch with their real-life and virtual friends. ONE.LT enables users to create and accessorize online profiles, establish friend connections with other users on the site, exchange private in-site messages, upload and showcase photos, post notes to forums attached to individual user profiles and user groups, rate user photos, join public online clubs dedicated to specific themes or topics, send virtual gifts to friends and participate in other online communication activities of similar nature. The possibility to use ONE.LT services exists only for the users over 14 years of age.

The test of ONE.LT that was performed on October 29th-30th, 2009. Observed that ONE.LT has various organizational and technical tools implemented that contribute to the privacy and safety of the users. Nevertheless, mismatches to the ONE.LT self-declaration pointing the areas where SNS service could be significantly improved were found as well.

Testing results

Principle 1: Raise awareness of safety education messages and acceptable use policies to users, parents, teachers and carers in a prominent, clear and age-appropriate manner.

According to the self-declaration signed by ONE.LT, SNS maintains a dedicated site section titled “Your Safety”, accessible from every page of the site, providing practical instructions and advice to users on ensuring their safety online. During the test web site “Your Safety” was found and investigated. The web site is divided into separate parts where dedicated information is presented differently for children and parents. Basic information concerning personal data safety, privacy, reporting places, threats on Internet and advice how to safeguard is provided. It was observed that the web site is lacking information related for teachers and advice on protection and parental control tools. There is not clearly distinguished which information or parts of the content provided for children and which provided for teenagers.

In the self-declaration SNS provides that “Terms of use” are clearly defined and accessible. During the test “Terms of use” description was easy to find and access. It was found that text could be difficult to understand for children and young people.

Principle 2: Work towards ensuring that services are age-appropriate for the intended audience.

In the self-declaration of ONE.LT is clearly stated that only users 14 years of age or above can register on the site. The test showed, that apart from the front page (login screen), no section of the site can be viewed by an unregistered user regardless of his/her age. When testing SNS, it was found that Terms of Use document provided in web site was also has restriction for service for users below 14 years of age. During the test, three users of age 11, 15 and 33 were successfully registered with detailed profiles. All three users were able to search and make connections with each other, including 33 years user contact to 11 years old child.

During the test it was observed that users are asked to use valid mobile phone number at account registration stage. By SNS self-declaration, it should limit the ability of young users to create multiple profiles and could make parental control easier. In practice it's not fully effective measure because of pre-paid mobile cards usage.

In a self-declaration of ONE.LT is mentioned that SNS has an image review process in place to ensure that attempts to upload inappropriate visual content are identified and infringing images are blocked before any minor users of the site could possibly be exposed to them. ONE.LT has implemented a collaborative peer review process and supporting site functionality that filters inappropriate images at the upload stage, before they can be displayed to the site audience. Images not passing collaborative peer review successfully are rejected and prevented from being displayed on the site pages. During the test, created profile got ONE.LT administrators offer to participate in the said collaborative peer review process, checking every profile image against a shortlist of approval/rejection criteria immediately after it is uploaded.

Principle 3: Empower users through tools and technology

According to the self-declaration, functionality has been implemented on ONE.LT enabling any user of the site to respond to unsolicited, inappropriate or otherwise unwanted contacts from any other site user by a) blocking the offending user entirely, thus preventing him/her from initiating any contact with the offended user in the future, or b) reporting any unsolicited message received as spam to the ONE.LT administrative team. During the test it was clear that user account can be "blocked" by any other user, preventing the blocked user from establishing any contact with the user who initiated the block. Also observed that any unwanted messages posted to a user's profile forum by other users can be removed by the user at will.

By the self-declaration, links to all user profiles can be discovered by using the internal profile search function, but the actual content of a given profile can only be viewed by people belonging to the user's extended circle of trust (friends, friends of friends). Test with different created profiles confirmed that information exchange was possible only between community members. Created profiles were searchable for other users with name and contact info information by default only. During the test it was clear that the user has full control over his personal profile data (age, phone number, email address), allowing or prohibiting it from being shown to his friends and/or other users of the site.

Principle 4: Provide easy-to-use mechanisms to report conduct or content that violates the terms of service.

According to the self-declaration, any user-uploaded image on ONE.LT can be reported as inappropriate by any ONE.LT user, triggering a review of the image by ONE.LT administrative team. Additionally, all ONE.LT users are encouraged to report suspected

inappropriate behavior or content to ONE.LT administrative team by sending a message to the customer service with a link to such content. During the test, measures for reporting of inappropriate image or other content were available on site. Those measures were provided by e-mail contact to administrative team. For the test purposes, message was sent to ONE.LT administrative team asking for the help regarding scary message that user have got but no response and advice from SNS was provided during two days testing time.

Principle 5: Respond to notifications of Illegal content or conduct.

By the self-declaration, responding to notifications of illegal content or conduct ONE.LT customer service is able to do permanent removal of user accounts, review and removal of inappropriate or illegal visual content, review and removal of inappropriate or illegal user groups or their components (photo albums, forum posts, etc.). In cases when potentially inappropriate or illegal conduct or content reported to ONE.LT customer service unit or found by the unit's staff independently is suspected to be in violation of criminal laws of the Republic of Lithuania, ONE.LT declare to follows internal procedures requiring such cases to be reported to respective law enforcement institutions. During the test, no illegal content was found on site on which reports to the ONE.LT customer service could have reason. Anyway, the measures to make a report concerning illegal content are accessible on site.

Principle 6: Enable and encourage users to employ a safe approach to personal information and privacy.

According to the self-declaration, ONE.LT user can change privacy settings for his/her profile data, including the user's age, phone number and email address, by indicating whether every specific bit of profile information should be shared with everyone. During the test persuaded that user privacy data can be changed at any time when the user is logged on. Also was observed, that ONE.LT site has advice on the importance of protecting the user's passwords and properly logging out of the site after finishing a usage session. During the process of creating profile only age was calculated and automatically included in profile.

Principle 7: Assess the means for reviewing illegal or prohibited content/conduct.

According to the self-declaration, images reported to be inappropriate are reviewed by ONE.LT content moderators that are part of the ONE.LT administrative team. Additionally SNS has implemented site-wide filtering of inappropriate words and expressions in user messages and forum posts, preventing black-listed text strings from appearing on web site. ONE.LT customer service staff tasked with reviewing suspected illegal or prohibited content and conduct is undergoing periodic internal trainings to ensure they are able to identify actionable cases and have the knowledge required for taking appropriate action in every case. During the testing process, attempts to publish inappropriate content performed but their attempts was blocked by moderators.

Conclusions

Summarizing testing results, tester got general positive feeling of the testing object ONE.LT intentions to be socially responsible SNS. During the test of the ONE.LT conformity to the self-declaration, some positive and also weak points observed.

Positive remarks:

- dedicated site section “Your Safety” is a powerful awareness tool providing practical instructions and advice to users on ensuring their safety online;
- profile information is well protected and respond to notifications of illegal content or conduct is prepared.

Negative remarks:

- SNS self-declaration statement that only users 14 years of age or above can register on the site was not implemented at the time of testing and users under 14 years age is searchable by adults users;
- SNS do not have relevant information provided for users about parental control tools that allow them to manage their children's use of and how their can be used for benefit of parents and their children.

Assessment of the Principles vs. the Self-declaration

Principle	Compliant	Partially Compliant	Not Compliant	Not Applicable	Comments/Clarification
1		X			
2		X			
3		X			
4	X				
5	X				
6		X			
7	X				

Assessment of the Self-declaration vs. the measures implemented on the SNS

Principle	Compliant	Partially Compliant	Not Compliant	Not Applicable	Comments/Clarification
1	X				
2			X		
3	X				
4		X			
5			Not Tested		
6	X				
7			Not Tested		

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