

## **EU SNS Safer Social Networking Principles**

### **Self-declaration Form**

*In the interests of transparency, providers supporting the EU Safer Social Networking Principles agree to self-declare how they have considered the Principles in relation to the Social Networking Services they offer, using the form below.*

#### **1. About the Social Networking Service(s)**

The following is a brief outline of studiVZ's declaration, including a short description of the services it offers that fall into the category of "social networking" as outlined in the Principles.

studiVZ Ltd. provides three Social Networks for the German market.

- schülerVZ, [www.schuelervz.net](http://www.schuelervz.net)  
SNS for pupils in the age of 12 to 21, 5 Million users (April 2009)
- studiVZ, [www.studivz.net](http://www.studivz.net)  
SNS for students with full legal capacity, 5,5 Million users (April 2009)
- meinVZ, [www.meinvz.net](http://www.meinvz.net)  
SNS for employees and alumni with full legal capacity, 3 Million users (April 2009)

75% of all Germans between 14 and 29 years own an account at one of the three VZ-Networks. schülerVZ is a stand-alone platform, it is not possible for those users to interact with persons who are registered at studiVZ or meinVZ e.g. by sending messages or friend requests. studiVZ and meinVZ are completely interconnected, users can contact each other but they are not able to contact users of schuelerVZ.

All three platforms are real name based, authentic networks. Sophisticated privacy settings enable every user to choose, which information of him can be seen by friends and other users.

Users of a VZ-Network can create a personal profile, upload images, find discussion groups, organize friend lists, use an platform based instant messaging service, send private messages and have also a mobile access to the network.

#### **2. How has the company considered these services in relation to the Principles?**

The following is an outline of how studiVZ has considered the EU Safer Social Networking Principles in relation to its Social Networking Services. This section will make reference to the recommendations made in the Principles document, where they are applicable and outline how they are applied.

**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**

Providing Education

- On every VZ-Network users have to accept an internal code of conduct
- At schülerVZ the code of conduct is visualised by videos, which are produced by the users (<http://www.schuelervz.net/l/rules>)
- On every VZ-network studivZ Ltd. provides age appropriate information sites about an responsible use of private data and copyrights
- At schülerVZ 1,6 million users joined a campaign against cyber-bullying
- studivZ Ltd. provides special information sites for parents and teachers at schülerVZ

Being a partner for our users

- studivZ Ltd. provides forums for technical support on each platform
- studivZ Ltd. provides support via e-mail or internal message 365 days per year
- studivZ Ltd. provides comprehensive information sites with technical help on each platform
- studivZ Ltd. provides consultation hours via telephone for parents and teachers with educationists

Being a partner for organisations and education campaigns

- studivZ Ltd. is member of the “Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle der Multimedia-Diensteanbieter” (FSM), an german institution for voluntary self-control of the internet, which is also member of the INHOPE network
- studivZ Ltd. worked on and signed the German code of conduct for providers of social communities ([http://fsm.de/de/Web\\_2\\_0](http://fsm.de/de/Web_2_0)) at the FSM
- studivZ Ltd. supported umpteen public education campaigns (e.g. for an responsible use of private data [www.watchyourweb.de](http://www.watchyourweb.de); against massive consumption of alcohol [www.staygold.eu](http://www.staygold.eu); against right-wing extremism [www.netz-gegen-nazis.de](http://www.netz-gegen-nazis.de))
- studivZ Ltd. is member of the german NGO *Deutschland sicher im Netz*, which is engaged for inform people about it security
- studivZ Ltd. cooperates with jugendschutz.net and klicksafe.eu
- studivZ Ltd. cooperates with different Offices of Criminal Investigation

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

Providing different networks for different age groups allows studivZ Ltd. to configurate each platform age-appropriate in an easy and safe way,. Employed educationists are evaluating entire communication and safety education.

Special provisions to protect underage users:

- strict default privacy settings for users under 16

- no possibility to communicate between schülerVZ and studiVZ/meinVZ
- schülerVZ is restricted for persons between 12 and 21 years by terms
- profiles of older or younger persons who get reported will be deleted
- no possibility at schülerVZ to choose an age younger than 12 or older than 21
- no possibility at studiVZ or meinVZ to choose an age under 18
- no possibility to change age
- schülerVZ is an invitation only system, people must receive an e-mail-invitation sent by an existing schülerVZ-User. It is not possible to register a new account without such an invitation.
- every user who breaches the internal code of conduct gets reprimanded, temporarily locked or deleted
- e-mail-addresses of deleted users will be locked after the deletion
- all terms and information about data protection are formulated in an age-appropriated language

### **Principle 3: Empower users through tools and technology**

studiVZ Ltd. provides several tools for all users to empower them to protect themselves and to feel comfortable and safe in the network.

- substantial and sophisticated privacy settings based on friend lists
- strict default privacy settings for users under 16 years
- comprehensive control of personal data
- all profiles are not visible for non registered persons, search engines are not able to crawl profiles at schülerVZ, studiVZ or meinVZ
- ignore function for users who are in trouble with each other
- age restriction for discussion groups can be chosen by group founders
- reporting mechanism to report objectionable conduct or content

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

- Users can report inappropriate conduct or content to studiVZ Ltd.
- Every discussion group, image, photo album and profile can be reported
- the reporting links are integrated apparent on every page
- content which breaches the internal code of conduct got deleted
- every user who breaches the internal code of conduct got reprimanded, temporarily locked or deleted
- trained employees with different skills for special topics are working in teams 365 days a year to screen reports and act promptly

### **Principle 5: Respond to notifications of Illegal content or conduct**

#### Particular way for contact

- Users can always contact the support and abuse team by e-mail or reporting system
- special team for requests of parents
- special team for requests of teachers
- special team for requests of public authorities and law enforcement agencies

#### Cooperation with law enforcement

- studivZ Ltd. cooperates with jugendschutz.net and the FSM, which are providing compliant hotlines for objectionable conduct or content in the internet
- studivZ cooperates with State Offices of Criminal Investigation to fight against illegal content, especially against political extremism and child pornography

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

See 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" and Principle 3 "Empower users through tools and technology"

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

See Principle 2 "**Work towards ensuring that services are age-appropriate for the intended audience**", Principle 4 "Provide easy-to-use mechanisms to report conduct or content that violates the terms of service" and Principle 5 "Respond to notifications of Illegal content or conduct"

### **3. Other information**

This section provides an outline of any other information that is relevant with regards how the company has considered the Principles.

studiVZ Ltd. is delighted and proud to have contributed to the Safer Social Networking Principles and that were enabled to sign them. In our point of view it is an important step in the future of consumer and child protection to work on high international standards.

Here you can find more information about studiVZ Ltd:

[http://www.meinvz.net/l/about\\_us](http://www.meinvz.net/l/about_us)

<http://www.meinvz.net/l/impressum>