

# **Coalition to make the Internet a better place for kids**

Statement of purpose

# “A Better Place for Kids”

## Statement of purpose of the Coalition

### **Vision**

The expanding world of the Internet can be a hugely beneficial place for children. We have a duty to make sure that these benefits are made available to all the children of Europe.

In response to a call for action from the European Commission, we commit as global and local organisations to take positive action to make the Internet a better place for kids, and commit to contribute fresh efforts from our companies and organisations in order to achieve this goal in the European Union. We intend to work and learn together and as individual companies may take individual initiatives where faster progress is possible and we believe we can help to deliver it.

### **Action**

We have decided to devote resources from our organisations in order to achieve proportionate, pragmatic solutions to real problems, focusing on:

- Simple and robust reporting tools for users;
- Age-appropriate privacy settings;
- Wider use of content classification;
- Wider availability and use of parental control;
- Effective takedown of child abuse material.

The annexed Work Plan indicates the intended steps to be taken on each point. We are setting ambitious goals on a short timetable. We are conscious both that we may not hit all targets, and that we may identify new, better ways of achieving these goals.

### **Framework**

In taking together this initiative, we build on many well-established and successful endeavours, notably the Safer Social Networking Principles, Framework for the Safer Use of Mobile Phones, Pan-European Games Information System, Mobile Alliance against child sexual abuse as well as the Principles for a Safer Use of Connected Devices and Online Services.

While we wish to be part of the contribution to make the Internet a better place for kids, we do not pretend or claim that our efforts alone will achieve this.

We emphasise the role of parents and families, the roles of educators and civil society and the need for supportive awareness-raising and education around the actions we launch here.

We work, self-evidently, within the framework of established rules and regulations, but we also intend to act positively beyond legal compliance duties in the sectors in which our respective businesses operate.

### **Method**

Except in cases where companies' operations, products or services offer no opportunity to contribute to a given goal, we all commit to contribute on all work packages.

We may establish a working group or groups in order to pursue specific issues. Such groups will be established and coordinated with the help of the Commission, and we may bring into them other parties willing to support the process and to offer expertise and advice in specific fields.

We will work in a participative manner. We commit individually to engage with interested parties among our companies' stakeholders. We will as a coalition engage with interested parties, convened under Commission auspices. We will state clearly what our goals are and how we propose to achieve them, establish benchmarks for our performance, report on our execution and seek feed-back.

We will take stock of our progress, hear contributions from other interested parties and in the light of that shape our future work programs. We will hold our review, in the first instance, in the summer of 2012, and establish by then what subsequent review will be required.

### **Engaging others in the Process**

We call on all corporate actors in the full value chain, as well as related European-level or global associations of economic operators, to join us. We welcome regulators, civil society, other businesses involved in the provision of services to young people and other interested public parties as observers in our process: either as actors willing to commit resources to deliver agreed objectives, or as stakeholders ready to offer expert assistance, including input on established good practices, as we engage in a cycle of continuous improvement around our goals.

### **Founding Leaders**

[...]

Brussels,  
1, December, 2011.

# Work Plan, December 2011 – December 2012

## 1. Simple and robust reporting tools for users

Our vision is to deliver robust mechanisms for reporting content and contacts that seem harmful to kids. These should be available across specific online services and devices, covering clear and commonly understood reporting categories, while avoiding regulatory double jeopardy in areas regulated by other means.

### Issues

1. We want solutions such as single-click buttons or icons that are visible and easy to find. The mechanism must be context sensitive. A key objective, however, is to make these reporting mechanisms work with equal facility across - computer screens, smart phones, television or games consoles.
2. Behind the “report trigger,” we want to agree the characteristics of a clear, transparent and useable procedure for reporting and help develop a standard minimum reporting template, recognisable by parents and children and useable across the Internet.
3. We want to work together to agree acceptable performance criteria for the prompt handling of reports, including feedback, discuss appropriate mechanisms for referrals to helplines and law enforcement and help develop targets that we can commit to and report about.
4. We want to work with national actors, including the networks of help lines, and help develop common minimum protocols to interact with the relevant partners, in order to level up across Europe the effectiveness of this cooperation.

### Timeline

In the year ahead, we intend to:

- a. Establish a working group to compare current practice on each of these issues;
- b. Open the working group to conversations with national actors and other interested parties, in order to advance both on this action point (improving broader cooperation and establishing whether the scope of reporting mechanisms as at present practiced is fit for purpose) **and on other action points;**
- c. Develop programmes and beta versions of single-click buttons or icons, forms and protocols and work with the Commission and standards bodies with a view to delivering in faster than normal timescales, standards-based initiatives that contribute to these goals.

## **2. Age appropriate privacy settings**

Privacy is a universally applicable right, and is especially strongly defined for minors. In any area of human activity, default-setting for data management has a significant influence on the behaviour and practices of individuals of all ages. Our vision is to manage default age-appropriate settings for kids in ways that ensure they are as safe as is reasonably possible.

### **Issues:**

1. We intend to pool our current practice, experience, knowledge and user data in order to establish how far there is a single appropriate level of privacy settings across services and cultures and to commit to settings that take into account the concerns of users (parents, children) and the age of users. This will require outreach to interested parties.
2. We also intend to share current practice on the protocols by which we give clear information and warnings to users of the potential consequences of any changes they may choose to make in our default privacy settings.

### **Timeline**

In the year ahead, we intend to work with the Commission in order to compile a database on these issues, and to use our joint working group with other interested parties to present that data and seek feed-back.

## **3. Wider use of Content Classification**

In this field, we will build on many successful existing and ongoing initiatives, including PEGI and other age-rating systems, and content classification systems already well-established in certain sectors and countries. Our vision is to ensure that there is a comprehensive network of content classification, so that such information is available, wherever needed, to children and their families.

### **Issues**

1. Without establishing any presumption that broader scope is needed, we wish to examine with an open mind areas which are not covered today by current systems for age-rating and content classification (user generated content, app stores, etc..). We wish to have a generally valid approach to age-rating, which could be used across sectors and provide parents with understandable age categories, while recognising that the same content may be rated as appropriate for different age categories in different countries.
2. We wish to consider any evidence that the Commission and technology companies can bring to the table, concerning the scope to move classification systems towards machine readability, so that future technological developments do not leave content classification behind, and so that all possible means to enable content classification at lower threshold costs for users are taken by the market.
3. We also intend to explore a range of validation or review mechanisms, including user-based approaches, could help us to align our classification systems more accurately with evolving social taste and need.

### **Timeline**

We intend to make a proposal on challenge one by June 2012. We intend to address content classification once technology input is available. Once data is to hand, we intend to use our joint working group with other interested parties to present that data and seek feed-back. First progress should be achieved in the year ahead.

## **4. Wider availability and use of parental controls**

We are committed to empowering parents to manage children's engagement online. Our vision is to generate broader and more effective use of parental control tools, providing choices in the settings and features of specific products and services. This may include default steps depending on the evidence of relative effectiveness of the solutions. Such tools need to be simple to configure, as well as effective. They will be placed in appropriate locations in devices and services, and will be promoted in such a way that they achieve the widest possible take-up. We are committed to measuring our progress and to sharing more proactively our findings.

### **Issue**

We intend to pool our current practice, experience, knowledge, and user data, in order to establish what initiatives are under way and to provide a basis for establishing whether further action is needed.

### **Timeline**

Given that technology is already available, we intend to address this set of issues in the coming 6 months. We intend to use our joint working group with other interested parties to present that data and seek feed-back.

## **5. Effective takedown of child abuse material**

We are committed to doing all within our power, including by proactive steps, to remove from the internet child sex abuse material, in addition to necessary measures defined in the Directive on combating sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography.

### **Issues**

Concretely, we intend to use our planned working group in liaison with national actors to level up cooperation and procedures between ourselves, hotlines, and law enforcement bodies.

We will work with the Commission to establish a database describing what our internal procedures and benchmark timetables are for taking down material of concern that has been notified to us. We will also share best practice and examine currently available technologies and tools.

### **Timeline**

In the year ahead, on the basis of contributions from the Commission and expert actors, we will review whether more can be done with available technology.