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Canada



THE CANADIAN STRATEGY TO PROMOTE
SAFE, WISE AND RESPONSIBLE INTERNET USE

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PREFACE

In 1994, the Government of Canada established the private sector Information Highway Advisory Council (IHAC) to provide advice on the best way to develop Canada's

Information Highway. As part of its mandate, the Council recommended a series of measures to address potentially offensive, but otherwise legal, content on the Internet. In its 1995 and 1997 reports, the Council focussed on the need to build awareness and educate Canadians about offensive content on the Internet, and also on the importance of working with industry, both to promote voluntary industry guidelines and to encourage research into filtering software.

The Council also concluded that the rule of law applies to the Information Highway, a principle that continues to stand the tests of time and experience. IHAC recommended that Canada should focus on law enforcement and, where needed, fine-tune existing laws to make them more applicable and enforceable in the networked environment. The government responded with a detailed report, *Building the Information Society: Moving Canada into the 21st Century*.

INFORMATION HIGHWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL: Key Recommendations to Protect Canadians

The federal government should:

- Fine-tune existing laws to make them more applicable and enforceable in the changing world of global networks.
- Encourage the development and adoption of voluntary codes of ethics and practices, including guidelines for dispute resolution.
- Educate the public and promote awareness that the rule of law applies to computer-mediated communications.
- Encourage public support for community-based organizations active in combatting hate propaganda. This is a cost-effective means of combatting prejudice on-line.
- Encourage research and the development of technical tools that can protect users against offensive content on the Internet, and assist in law enforcement.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), which held an extensive public hearing on issues related to new media and the Internet, came to essentially the same conclusions as IHAC in its May 1999 *Report on New Media*. The CRTC, like the federal government, recognized the importance of addressing illegal and offensive content on the Internet, if the benefits of the Internet and electronic commerce are to be realized by all Canadians.

To date, Canadians have established a wide range of partnerships to deal with the issues, bringing together various levels of government, law enforcement agencies, the private sector, not-for-profit organizations and the community at large. A great deal of work, however, remains to be done.

Early in 2000, Industry Canada convened a federal government working group to assess Canada's progress, identify gaps and develop a coordinated strategy. This document takes stock of the government's approach, and profiles what government and the private sector are doing, in partnership, to give Canadians the tools they need to assure safe, wise and responsible Internet use.

To help Canadians locate available information and resources, this document provides various references to both printed material and Internet sites.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

- Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (<http://www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca>)
- Canadian Heritage (<http://www.pch.gc.ca>)
- Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada (<http://www.cisc.gc.ca>)
- Department of Justice Canada (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca>)
- Health Canada (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>)
- Human Resources Development Canada (<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca>)
- Industry Canada (<http://www.ic.gc.ca>)
- National Crime Prevention Centre (<http://www.crime-prevention.org>)
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca>)
- Solicitor General Canada (<http://www.sgc.gc.ca>)

LINKS

INFORMATION HIGHWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL (IHAC)

- *Connection, Community, Content: The Challenge of the Information Highway* (1995) (<http://strategis.gc.ca/ihac>)
- *Preparing Canada for a Digital World* (1997) (<http://strategis.gc.ca/ihac>)

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S RESPONSE TO IHAC

- *Building the Information Society: Moving Canada into the 21st Century* (1996) (<http://strategis.gc.ca/ihac>)

THE CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (CRTC)

- *Report on New Media*: see Public Notice CRTC 1999-84 (<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/ENG/NEWS/RELEASES/1999/R990517e.htm>)



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PROMOTING SAFE, WISE AND RESPONSIBLE INTERNET USE

Canadians are making greater and greater use of the Internet, whether

at home, or in the workplace, school or library. Right across the country, Internet use is increasing. By early 2001, more than one in two Canadians were using the Internet.

On March 30, 1999, Canada became the first country in the world to connect all of its schools and public libraries to the Internet.

1994

Schools - 0%

Libraries - 0%

First Nation Schools - 0%

1999

Schools - 100%

Libraries - 100%

First Nation Schools - 100%

Children and teens are heavy users of the Internet and tend to be drawn to this exciting medium. Almost three quarters of computer-equipped Canadian households with children between the ages of 6 and 16 are connected to the Internet.

CONNECTING CANADIANS

The Government of Canada's strategy is to make Canada the most connected country in the world. The six pillars of the Connecting Canadians initiative are:

- Government On-Line
- Canada On-Line
- Canadian Content On-Line
- Smart Communities
- Electronic Commerce
- Connecting Canada to the World

<http://www.connect.gc.ca>

The Internet is a powerful tool. It can turn a home, a school or a library into a place of unlimited information and communication. The Internet can help a family find educational resources, help children with their homework and allow family members to learn and have fun together.

However, along with these benefits come risks, including exposure to material considered to be pornographic, violent, hate-filled, racist or generally offensive;

INTERNET USE IN CANADA

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Internet Use in Canada*	31%	37%	49%	57%

* Population aged 12+ who used the Internet in the last 12 months

Source: AC Nielsen, *AC Nielsen Canadian Internet Planner 2001*.

and contact with individuals who may jeopardize the safety of children and other family members.

Inappropriate content is easily accessible on-line, and with increasingly widespread use of the Internet, Canadians need to understand and address the issues.

The Rule of Law

Illegal content — content that violates Canada's laws — is of key concern to Canadians. Child pornography and hate propaganda are particularly troubling, because they pose the greatest and most immediate risk to the safety and well-being of Canadians. Dealing with other unlawful activities, such as fraud, is very important in the new networked economy, but is beyond the scope of this document.

In 1996, Industry Canada commissioned a landmark study to examine how Canada's laws, such as the *Criminal Code* and the

Canadian Human Rights Act, apply to the Internet. The study's message is expressed in its title: *The Cyberspace is Not a No-Law Land*. Simply put, in Canada what is illegal off-line is illegal on-line.

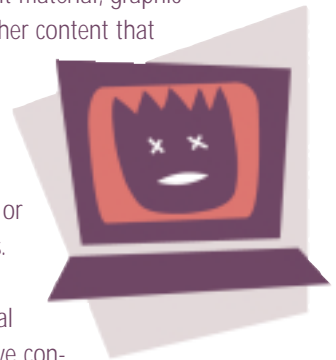
Enforcing the law in cyberspace, however, presents significant challenges, particularly in view of rapid technological change.

Offensive Content That's Legal

It is important to distinguish between Internet content that is illegal, and content that is offensive to some, but is not illegal.

Potentially offensive content can include sexually explicit material, graphic violence, or other content that may be considered offensive on social, religious, cultural or moral grounds. In some cases, despite its legal status, offensive content may be considered harmful to children.

To some Canadians, offensive content is merely annoying. Others are concerned about its potentially harmful effects on the healthy development of children and youth, and for some, offensive content creates a negative perception of the Internet as a whole, which may hamper the growth and development of the Internet in Canada.



Balancing Freedom of Expression with the Need to Protect Canadians

To control and manage illegal and offensive content on the Internet, Canadians need to carry out timely research and closely monitor developments. Control of illegal content is fundamentally an issue of law enforcement. The control and management of offensive content, however, calls for different approaches, such as empowering users, educating consumers to make informed choices, and establishing responsible industry practices.

Approaches to addressing inappropriate Internet content must balance the need to protect our citizens with the need to respect democratic rights and freedoms that Canadians hold dear. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees all persons in Canada “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.” This right, like other rights and freedoms under the Charter, is “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

The recent survey commissioned by the federal government of computer-equipped Canadian parents with children between the ages of 6 and 16, *Canada's Children in a Wired World: The Parents' View*,

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION: A Fundamental Right

- The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees all persons in Canada “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.”
- Rights and freedoms under the Charter are “subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

shows that the majority view the Internet as a positive resource, but parents do have significant concerns about inappropriate Internet content. Canadian parents understand their responsibility to teach their children to be safe, wise and responsible Internet users, but it is a job Canadian parents feel they don't know how to do alone. These families are looking for a variety of tools, including education, supervision, filtering technologies and industry self-regulation. Many Canadians suggest a collaborative approach, involving public libraries, schools, Internet service providers, community institutions, governments, law enforcement agencies and themselves.

LINKS

- *Canada's Children in a Wired World: The Parents' View* (2000)
(<http://www.connect.gc.ca/cyberwise>)
- *The Cyberspace is Not a No-Law Land* (1997) (<http://strategis.gc.ca/internet>)
- *Criminal Code of Canada* (http://canada.justice.gc.ca/loireg/index_en.html)
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
(http://canada.justice.gc.ca/loireg/charte/const_en.html)
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
(<http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/Legis&Poli/chra-lcdp.asp?l=e>)
- Resources on the health and development of children and youth
(<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/childhood-youth>)
- Key statistics on information and communications technologies in Canada
(<http://strategis.gc.ca/pics/sf/sld001.htm>)



THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH

Although Canada has strong laws that apply to cyberspace, the Government of Canada recognizes that legislation

alone will not solve the problems of illegal and offensive content on the Internet. Legislative reform is important, but the federal government's approach is to involve a broad spectrum of Canadians in addressing the issues. Its priorities include:

- supporting initiatives that educate and empower users;
- promoting effective industry self-regulation;
- strengthening the enforcement of laws in cyberspace;
- implementing hotlines and complaint reporting systems; and
- fostering consultation between the public and private sectors, and their counterparts in other countries.

The government closely monitors developments at home and abroad, and both encourages and sponsors research and analysis to build a broader understanding of the scope of the issues and the range of available solutions.

Giving Canadians the Tools They Need

The recent study, *Canada's Children in a Wired World*, shows that Canadian parents think their children use the Internet primarily for educational activities and research. A majority believe their children *always* ask for permission before submitting their personal information on the Internet, and usually do Internet searches with an adult. However, recent studies show that there are discrepancies

SOURCES OF ILLEGAL AND OFFENSIVE INTERNET CONTENT

- Commercial and personal Web sites
- Usenet newsgroups
- Internet newsgroups
- Chat services
- E-mail (including "spam")
- Instant messaging
- Bulletin boards
- Advertising

between what parents think their kids are doing on-line, and what their kids are actually doing on-line. For example, focus groups carried out in August 2000 suggest that some children are carrying out activities on the Internet — sometimes of a risky nature — of which their parents are unaware.

The government approach depends, first and foremost, on raising awareness of the potential pitfalls of the Internet, and providing parents with information about tools that can help them control what Internet content they will and will not receive. While Canadian parents understand their responsibility to teach their children to safely and responsibly use the Internet, they need the information and tools to do the job.

Both government and the private sector play important roles. Internet service providers (ISPs), for example, not only help law enforcement agencies deal with illegal content on the Internet; they also can empower consumers by providing access to practical tools to help parents and other Internet users deal with offensive material on the Web. This is also true for community-based organizations that provide the public with access to the Internet. Other private sector players, including content creators and on-line retailers, can help by promoting responsible business practices and by educating the public.

CANADA'S CHILDREN IN A WIRED WORLD: The Parents' View

- 66% of Canadian parents say education is the biggest benefit of their children's use of the Internet.
- 51% say their biggest concern is the possibility their children will access inappropriate content on the Internet.
- 21% say their children have come across sexually explicit material (that they are aware of).
- 6% of children have been sent unsolicited sexual material (that their parents are aware of).

Given the international nature of the Internet, however, Canada must also collaborate with other countries if laws are to be effectively enforced in cyberspace. No single solution exists. Canada needs to develop solutions in cooperation with governments around the world — solutions that involve the private sector and Internet users themselves.

INITIATIVES THAT EDUCATE AND EMPOWER USERS

Awareness, education and knowledge are the foundations of all effective solutions, and underpin the Government of Canada's approach. It is fundamentally important that Canadians be alerted to the potential pitfalls of the Internet, many of which are unique to this new medium. But it is equally essential to empower Canadian users by raising awareness of the solutions that are available.

Internet Safety and Awareness

The Media Awareness Network (MNet), is a non-government, not-for-profit Canadian organization that supports media education in Canadian homes, schools and communities. MNet's national, bilingual, Internet education program, Web Awareness: Knowing the Issues, is designed for parents, teachers, public librarians and community leaders. The program equips them to help youth develop the life-long critical thinking skills they require to become safe, wise and responsible users of the Internet — a goal so important, it was adopted as the title of this document. MNet's programs have been endorsed by the Canadian Home and School Federation, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Association of Principals. A growing number of Canada's leading broadcast, cable, telecommunications and new media companies provide MNet with financial

support, and several federal and provincial government departments are providing further funding.

The Canadian Library Association is developing a Web Awareness program in cooperation with MNet, to deliver Internet education in public libraries across

Canada. The program, which receives financial support from the Government of Canada and several provincial governments, will provide professional development for library staff, who in turn will raise awareness of Internet issues among those accessing the Internet from public libraries.

The SchoolNet National Advisory Board, established by Industry Canada, is composed of senior officials from ministries of education across Canada, representatives of major education associations, as well as the library, researcher and volunteer communities. To assist educators who are introducing the Internet in the classroom, SchoolNet produced a brochure, which includes options available to address social issues, such as the appropriateness of on-line content, and responsible Internet use.

The Community Learning Networks Initiative of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) supports community-controlled, Internet-based networks, which are aimed at furthering social and



CANADA'S CHILDREN IN A WIRED WORLD: The Parents' View

- 53% of Canadian parents say they provide a "great deal" of supervision for their children's Internet use in the home.
- 17% use filtering software on the home computer.
- 67% say they check the bookmarks or browser history to see where their children go on-line.
- 40% think a content rating system for Web sites would be "very effective."

economic development and encouraging lifelong learning. Through this initiative, HRDC and its federal partners are developing measures to address illegal and offensive content on the Internet.

The Internet Protection Portal, established by the Canadian Association of Internet Providers (CAIP), is an on-line window to resources that Canadians can use to safeguard their Internet experience. In addition to linking the user to MNet, the Internet Protection Portal provides information on addressing on-line hate propaganda, the use of the Internet to lure children, and consumer issues. Industry Canada provided CAIP with financial support for the portal.

Missing, an educational kit that teaches children how to surf the Internet safely and warns about predators who use the Internet to lure children into sexual encounters, has been distributed free-of-charge to 10 000 schools and libraries across Canada. The kit, which includes a computer game, a video documentary, a Web site and a guide for parents and teachers, was sponsored by the federal and provincial governments, as well as private sector, high technology companies.

The Government of Canada, in collaboration with MNet, is undertaking in-depth research to better understand Internet content issues and to raise awareness. The country-wide survey, *Canada's Children in a Wired World*, investigated patterns of Internet use in Canadian families, and parental perceptions about the nature, safety and value of children's on-line activities.

Challenging Hate On-Line

To combat hate and bias activity on the Internet, Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism is collaborating with federal partners, non-government organizations and other levels of government. Working groups have developed strategies on key issues: new media; research and data collection; public education and community action; implementation and enforcement; and legislation. The partners have conducted roundtable consultations to identify concrete ways to counter hate and bias, and federal departments and agencies have launched several new initiatives.

Canadian Heritage, Multiculturalism has also supported community-based anti-racism groups in combatting on-line hate propaganda. These include:

- *Challenging Online Hate*: a tool developed by MNet for anti-racism education both on and off the Internet; and
- *Hate on the Internet*: conferences organized by the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada to bring together civil society groups, government and law enforcement agencies to address the use of the Internet to spread hate propaganda.

Technological Tools

The Industry Canada study, *Content Filtering Technologies and Internet Service Providers: Enabling User Choice*, focusses on technologies that Internet service providers (ISPs) can put in place and Internet users can use. These technologies include child-friendly search engines and Web sites, as well as ISP-based filtering services and Web content labelling systems. The study found that ISP-based services and content labelling can strengthen the protection already provided by desktop filtering and blocking devices.

The Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA), an independent, international, not-for-profit organization, recently launched a content labelling system for the Internet that builds upon a system currently used by many Web sites and a number of filtering technologies. The launch followed a year-long consultation exercise to create

an internationally acceptable labelling system that could be adapted to different national, cultural and individual needs. ICRA will launch the second part of its system, a filter that allows parents to set their own controls, in the near future.

Getting Involved

While filters, blockers and other technological tools can provide some protection, they are meant to support — not take the place of — parental involvement. MNet's Web Awareness Web site provides advice for parents who want to get more involved in their children's on-line experiences:

- Learn about the Internet, and what your children are doing on it.

WEB AWARENESS: Knowing the Issues

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) offers three Web Awareness workshops as a professional development resource for teachers, librarians and parent leaders:

- Safe Passage: Teaching Kids to be Safe and Responsible Online
- Fact or Folly: Authentication of Online Information
- Kids for Sale: Online Marketing to Kids and Privacy Issues

<http://www.webawareness.org>

- Create a family agreement for Internet use.
- Accompany your younger children on-line as they learn their way around.
- Create your own list of recommended children's sites and include some child-friendly search engines for your children to use when they're looking for information on the Internet.
- Teach your children never to give out personal information.
- Put your connected computer in a well-used area of your home.
- Explore the technological tools available to parents for filtering content and controlling Internet access.

MNet provides parents with information on how to find great children's sites, do effective on-line searches, track where children go while on-line and protect children from on-line predators. Their Web site also contains on-line rules suitable for posting beside the family computer (see the last page of this document).

LINKS

RESOURCES

- The Media Awareness Network (<http://www.media-awareness.ca>)
- Web Awareness: Knowing the Issues (<http://www.webawareness.org>)
- Canadian Association of Internet Providers' Internet Protection Portal (<http://www.caip.ca>)
- LiveWires Design's *Missing* Educational Kit (<http://www.livewwwires.com>)
- SchoolNet brochure (<http://www.schoolnet.ca/snab/brochure>)
- Canadian Library Association (<http://www.cla.ca>)
- Internet Content Rating Association (<http://www.icra.org>)
- Information on filtering technologies (<http://strategis.gc.ca/internet>)

REPORTS

- *Content Filtering Technologies and Internet Service Providers: Enabling User Choice* (2000) (<http://strategis.gc.ca/internet>)
- *Regulation of the Internet: A Technological Perspective* (1999) (<http://strategis.gc.ca/internet>)

EFFECTIVE SELF-REGULATION

In Canada, the business of providing Internet access is highly competitive. Internet service providers (ISPs) connect Canadians to the knowledge-based society and enable participation in the global economy.

Since ISPs provide the interface between users and the Internet, they can perform an important service in dealing with illegal and offensive content on the Internet. Other organizations, such as electronic commerce companies, can also play a key role, as can community access sites and other providers of public access to the Internet. The Government of Canada works closely with these organizations, as well as with citizens and experts, to promote continued cooperation with law enforcement agencies and to encourage effective self-regulation.

Self-regulation generally refers to standardized, industry-led measures that ISPs and other sectors use to establish good practices throughout the industry. Self-regulation can strengthen business and consumer confidence by assuring Canadians that the industry is working to meet the challenges posed by illegal and offensive content on the Internet. Central to self-regulation in many industries are voluntary codes of conduct. In the ISP industry, codes of conduct include provisions for resolving complaints, cooperating with law enforcement officials and adhering to Canada's laws.

Self-regulation is increasingly perceived as an effective way to address issues of public concern. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), for example, identified several self-regulatory approaches to tackling offensive Internet content in its May 1999 *Report on New Media*.

Finally, the study, *Regulation of the Internet: A Technological Perspective*, commissioned by Industry Canada, found that the Internet is not conducive to traditional forms of content controls such as broadcasting regulations. It noted that any attempt to regulate the flow of content on the Internet at a national level would be immensely expensive, detrimental to the performance of the network and easily circumvented. The study concluded that, from a technological perspective, self-regulation holds the greatest promise in dealing with inappropriate Internet content.

Codes of Conduct

In 1996, the Canadian Association of Internet Providers (CAIP) developed a code of conduct for its membership.



This code, which is voluntary for CAIP members, states:

- CAIP will cooperate with all government officials, international organizations and law enforcement authorities seeking to clarify the responsibilities for each of the different functions performed by Internet companies.
- CAIP members pledge to comply with all applicable laws.
- CAIP members will not knowingly host illegal content. CAIP members will share information about illegal content for this purpose.

Industry Canada is working with CAIP to strengthen the effectiveness of the code by supporting CAIP's Fair Practices Initiative. The Fair Practices Initiative will expand the scope of the code, and will provide guidance to CAIP members about how to put self-regulatory measures into practice on a day-to-day basis. CAIP is also exploring the feasibility of making the new fair practices enforceable rather than voluntary, with an economical and efficient means of dispute resolution.

These factors are in keeping with the characteristics of effective codes outlined in Industry Canada's *Voluntary Codes: A Guide*

ISP INDUSTRY

- Hundreds of Internet service providers, ranging from large affiliates of telephone and cable TV companies, to small and medium-sized independent service providers, provide access to the Internet in Canada.
- The Canadian Association of Internet Providers (CAIP) is the national industry association whose members provide over 80% of the Internet connections to homes, schools and businesses in Canada.
- ISP services include:
 - Internet access services (e-mail, WWW access, Internet and Usenet newsgroups, chat, file transfer protocol (FTP), access-based Web site hosting, search engines, etc.)
 - Value-added services including electronic commerce, consulting and design services
 - Bulletin Board Services (BBSs)
 - Webcasting and other "broadcast-like" services
 - Voice services including IP telephony
 - Commercial and personal Web site hosting
 - Content aggregation (e.g. portals).

for Their Development and Use. Effective voluntary codes are developed and implemented with the involvement and participation of the larger community. A voluntary code dealing with issues relating to children, for example, is generally more credible and effective if child development experts are involved from the outset.

Choosing an ISP

Many ISPs, including cable, telephone and independent companies, have implemented a variety of practices to help their customers have a safe Internet experience. These practices include providing information on Internet safety, operating complaint lines and making available Internet filtering software, or information on where customers can obtain such software. Most ISPs also have in place “acceptable use” and “terms of service” policies that define conditions of service as well as acceptable on-line behaviour. Most of these policies also have provisions to deal with illegal content and other unlawful uses of an ISP’s services. The government encourages ISPs and other providers, such as community access sites, to continue to develop and implement such practices and policies.

In a market as competitive as the Canadian ISP industry, consumers generally have a choice of ISPs. Canadians in search of an Internet service provider may wish to

question potential providers about practices and policies to address Internet safety. For example:

- Are you a member of the Canadian Association of Internet Providers or any other organization that promotes the safe and responsible use of the Internet?
- Do you adhere to a code of conduct that addresses inappropriate Internet content?
- Do you have an acceptable use policy? Does it address the use of your service for illegal purposes? Is it available on-line?
- Do you offer family-friendly services such as a “kid zone” or child-friendly search engine?
- Do you make Internet filters, or information about them, available to your customers?
- What do you do if I report a complaint about something I find on the Internet?
- Do you provide information to your customers about Internet safety?
- Do you offer any other information or tools that can help me keep my family safe on the Internet, or do you support organizations that do?

Although your ISP may not have answers to all of the above questions, their responses can help you learn about their approach to Internet safety.

LINKS

- Canadian Association of Internet Providers' Voluntary Code of Conduct (<http://www.caip.ca/issuaset.htm>)
- *Voluntary Codes: A Guide for Their Development and Use* (<http://strategis.gc.ca/volcodes>)

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Canada's laws, including the *Criminal Code* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, apply in cyberspace. The challenge, however, lies in drafting laws that can keep pace with new and unforeseen illegal uses, both of the Internet and of other quickly evolving communications technologies. Although Canada's laws are designed, as much as possible, to be technology-neutral, updating can be essential. One development, for example, is the use of the Internet to lure children in order to commit crimes against them. To address this problem, the Honourable Anne McLellan, Minister of Justice, has signalled her intention to introduce an amendment to the *Criminal Code*.

The law enforcement community is also challenged to keep up with rapid technological change and the ever-evolving techniques used by criminals in cyberspace. The Canadian Police College provides Internet and high technology crime training to Canadian law enforcement officers and their international law enforcement partners. Computer crime investigators of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police)

are located in all major centres in Canada, where they focus on solving computer-assisted crimes, including the distribution of child pornography on the Internet.

To improve the ability of law enforcement officers to prevent abuses against children and to deal with crimes when they do occur, the RCMP has also designed and is introducing training that is Internet-specific for general duty police officers. These workshops, entitled "Sexual Exploitation of Children," consist of sessions on child prostitution, criminal profiling of sex offenders, prevention education for communities, and investigative procedures for search and seizure of illegal computer data.

To combat unlawful use of the Internet, cooperation at every level is essential. In 1996, for example, the RCMP initiated formal discussions with the Canadian Association of Internet Providers and was instrumental in promoting the development of their Code of Conduct. Since then, the Canadian ISP industry and the law enforcement community have



continued to hold meetings and round-table consultations on how to combat child pornography and other illegal uses of the Internet. A formal consultative body such as the United Kingdom's Internet Crime Forum may be one avenue by which this partnership can continue to grow.

Today, numerous law enforcement organizations at the national, provincial, regional and municipal levels are developing programs to combat illegal uses of the Internet. Criminal Intelligence Service of Canada (CISC) is a national organization that unites the criminal intelligence units of Canadian law enforcement agencies to fight the spread of organized crime. In 1998, CISC developed a national law enforcement strategy on the victimization of children, adding this issue to its list of

priorities. Since then, CISC has organized and coordinated national and international efforts to combat child pornography and the victimization of children both on and off the Internet. In August 1999, CISC approved guidelines that will assist law enforcement investigators across Canada in combatting the sexual exploitation of children.

Criminal justice representatives from provincial, territorial and federal governments are also working together, through the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Offensive Content on the Internet established in 1998. The group set out to examine legal issues related to new communications technologies, particularly the use of the Internet in the distribution of illegal content such as child pornography and hate propaganda.

HOTLINE REPORTING FACILITIES

Canadian parents do not often complain about objectionable material they find on the Internet, even when they want to. In a recent survey commissioned by the federal government of computer-equipped Canadian parents, *Canada's Children in a Wired World*, researchers found that the majority of those who had wanted to complain did not do so because they did not know where to file their complaints. To address this situation, some other countries have created Internet content hotlines.

CANADA'S CHILDREN IN A WIRED WORLD: The Parents' View

- 87% of Canadian parents have never complained about "inappropriate" content they or their family have found on the Internet.
- 52% of those who wanted to complain didn't know who to complain to.
- 52% of parents think setting up a tipline or hotline to report illegal content would be "very effective."

Crime Stoppers of the Internet

Internet content hotlines are communications systems for receiving, processing, verifying, evaluating and acting upon complaints about Internet content. Hotlines are the “Crime Stoppers” of the Internet. They are a link between the Internet user, the content owner/provider and law enforcement organizations. The United Kingdom’s Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is a leading example. Established in 1996, IWF is an independent body that works with law enforcement agencies and ISPs in the United Kingdom to remove illegal material from the Internet (particularly child pornography), and promotes the labelling and filtering of legal material that some may find offensive.

Typically, concerned Internet users or providers contact the hotline when they encounter Internet content they believe to be illegal. The hotline investigates the complaint and, when it deems the content in question to be potentially illegal, notifies the content provider and appropriate law enforcement officials.

Hotlines have several benefits. First, they are efficient. Rather than depending on active monitoring or some other means, the hotline relies on complaints from Internet users to uncover illegal content. Second, by screening complaints, the hotline shifts some of the burden of receiving and processing complaints away from law enforcement organizations, allowing them to focus on other activities. Third, although hotlines such as the Internet Watch Foundation were established to address illegal content, they can also play a role in promoting awareness and providing information. Hotlines not only encourage vigilance; they also can highlight successful resolution of problems, as the IWF does in its annual report.

In addition to the United Kingdom, countries such as Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, and the United States are operating Internet content hotlines. Although Canada does not presently have an Internet content hotline, the federal government, in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Internet Providers and other private sector players, is examining the feasibility of establishing one.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Addressing illegal and offensive content on the Internet is a complex undertaking; it is made even more so by the international nature of the Internet. Different sets of national laws must be considered, and law enforcement agencies are finding it necessary to develop new methods to deal with cross-jurisdictional issues.

Self-regulatory systems, too, must address the international nature of Internet content. Industries increasingly need to coordinate their work and develop effective solutions that transcend national boundaries. In fact, the private sector is working internationally to develop a model self-regulatory code of conduct for Internet

service providers around the world. The Canadian Association of Internet Providers (CAIP) has also entered into an agreement with the EuroISPA (European Internet Service Providers Association) to share information and collaborate on issues of common concern. Associations from around the world, including CAIP, are networking through an emerging ISP association forum.



CISC, as group members, participate in transnational investigations aimed at identifying and targeting suspected child sex abusers, and detecting and seizing child pornography. One multi-agency project resulted in numerous arrests and important intelligence for further investigations. This group also concentrates on improving cooperation and encouraging best practices among law enforcement agencies.

Law Enforcement Across Borders

Collaboration with foreign law enforcement agencies and governments is also essential. Canadian law enforcers (including the RCMP and CISC) participate with representatives of 30 other countries in the Interpol Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children. This group meets semi-annually to share information and investigative techniques for dealing with child pornography and smuggled, abducted or runaway children.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Canadian criminal justice officials, including those representing the Solicitor General Canada and the Department of Justice Canada, also actively participate in the Group of Eight (G-8). The RCMP chairs a Sub-Group within the G-8 Experts Group on Transnational Organized Crime, the Law Enforcement Projects Specialist Working Group on missing children. The RCMP and

The Department of Justice Canada, the Solicitor General Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the RCMP also actively participate in the G-8 Lyon Sub-Group on High Technology Crime, which is examining how international law enforcement agencies can work together and with the private sector to share information in Internet-based investigations. To enhance cooperation among G-8 partners, 24-hour law enforcement points of contact have been established. In May 2000, senior G-8 representatives from police forces, government and the private sector met to discuss additional ways to enhance international cooperation.

Justice Canada is also currently involved in drafting the Council of Europe convention on cybercrime. This convention, which should be adopted by mid-2001, is the first broadly accepted international instrument dealing with computer-related crimes, sovereignty and privacy in the new borderless Internet age.

Government Talking to Government

The Government of Canada participates in a number of international fora to share information and expertise on illegal and offensive content on the Internet.

- In 1998, Canada partnered with the United States to organize the Forum on Internet Content Self-Regulation hosted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Forum brought together industry, government and law enforcement officials, and other stakeholders, to address illegal and offensive content.
- To increase understanding of policy options, the Government of Canada commissioned an international study entitled *Combatting Hate on the Internet: An International Comparative Review of Policy Approaches*.
- In June 2000, Justice Canada participated in the international conference, *The Internet and the Changing Face of Hate: An International Dialogue*.

This conference, hosted in Berlin by the German Justice Minister, focussed on the need for international cooperation to address hate on the Internet.

- The Government of Canada participated in the Internet Content Summit (Germany, October 1999) and the International Conference Combatting Child Pornography on the Internet (Austria, September 1999). It also held consultations with France and Australia to discuss approaches to this issue.

In preparation for the United Nations 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Canadian Heritage has undertaken cross-Canada consultations with civil society groups, as well as with provinces, territories and municipalities. All levels of government have made recommendations. International aspects of illegal and offensive content on the Internet are expected to figure prominently on the conference agenda.

LINKS

- OECD Forum on Internet Content Self-Regulation (<http://www.oecd.org/dsti/sti/it/secur/index.htm>)
- *Combatting Hate on the Internet: An International Comparative Review of Policy Approaches* (1998) (<http://www.pch.gc.ca/multi/html/whatsnew.htm>)
- International Conference Combatting Child Pornography on the Internet (<http://www.stop-childpornog.at>)
- Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>)



CONCLUSION

If Canadians are to truly benefit from the opportunities offered by the new, networked economy, Canada must effectively tackle the issue of illegal and offensive content on

the Internet. A good deal of work, now under way, is profiled in this document.

This work is not done in isolation. Canadian partnerships to combat illegal and offensive content on the Internet span all levels of government.

Canada's law enforcement agencies and its private sector have banded together with governments, non-government groups and citizens. Parents endorse this collaborative approach and, indeed, are an integral part of the equation.

Overall, Canadian parents believe that the job of managing Internet content is a responsibility they share with Internet service providers, Internet users, independent organizations, governments, Web site producers and police. Schools and libraries, too, play a key role, and Canadians will

continue to reach far beyond

international borders to develop effective solutions, share experiences and make a difference here at home.

By working collaboratively, Canadians are creating a healthy environment

in which to teach Canada's children to be the safe, wise and responsible Internet users of the future.





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BBS

Bulletin Board System. An electronic messaging system and an information storage area shared by several users, each having access to all messages

left or posted in that area.

BOOKMARKS

A personal list of interesting Web sites. Bookmarks function like putting a marker in a book, making it quick and easy to navigate the World Wide Web.

BROWSER

The software that allows users to “surf” — view pages on the Web.

BROWSER HISTORY

A list of recently visited Web sites that is stored by the browser.

CHAT

The ability to “talk” live to other people on the Internet. It’s like a party line, except that typing replaces talking. IRC (Internet Relay Chat) is the most commonly used program allowing real-time conversations among chat participants.

CONTENT AGGREGATION

Bringing together content that is to be made available on the Internet, usually on a Web site or portal.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A group of 41 European countries that defends human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council promotes a shared European identity, and develops continent-wide agreements to standardize practices. Five countries, including Canada, have been granted observer status.

CYBERSPACE

The three-dimensional expanse of computer networks in which all audio, video and other electronic signals travel, and where users can explore and download information. Cyberspace is generally considered to be synonymous with the Internet.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Commercial activity conducted over networks that link electronic devices (mainly computers).

FTP

File Transfer Protocol. Software used on the Internet to transfer files of data from one computer to another.

GROUP OF 8 (G-8)

The group of eight major industrialized countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

HTML

Hypertext Markup Language. The computer language of the World Wide Web. All Web pages are created using HTML. To see what HTML looks like, call up a Web page, click on "View" and then "View Source."

INSTANT MESSAGING (IM)

A communications tool that combines the live nature of chat rooms with the direct contact of e-mail. IM software connects users who have all agreed to be part of the same group. The most commonly used software for Instant Messaging is ICQ ("I Seek You").

INTERNET

Countless networks of computers connected together across the world. Components of the Internet include the World Wide Web, newsgroups, chat rooms and e-mail.

INTERNET PROTOCOL (IP)

The telecommunications protocol used on the Internet.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER (ISP)

An organization that provides the public with access to the Internet.

IP TELEPHONY

Telecommunications services that use the Internet protocol.

NEW MEDIA

The range of information and communications services delivered over the Internet.

NEWSGROUPS

An Internet facility that allows users with a common interest to exchange information. There are many thousands of newsgroups, often updated many times a day. They may be moderated or unmoderated.

PORTAL

A Web site that offers services to entice Internet surfers to use the site as their main point of entry to the Web. Typically, a portal will provide a directory of links to sites, a search engine, and other services such as free e-mail, or filtering and blocking options for parents.

PROTOCOLS

Sets of technology language rules that determine how various components of communications systems interact.

SEARCH ENGINE

An Internet site that allows users to search for specific information or Web sites.

SPAM

Junk mail that shows up in e-mail boxes or on newsgroups.

USENET

A worldwide system of newsgroups and discussion groups that uses the Internet and other networks.

USER EMPOWERMENT

Providing Internet users with the information, education, awareness and tools that enable them to control the interaction they have with the Internet and with content on the Internet.

WEB or WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)

The visual component of the Internet. Although the Web is only one component of the Internet, the terms are often (and mistakenly) used interchangeably. Web pages, which are created in HTML language, can include text, pictures, sound clips, video, links for downloading software, and much more.



MEDIA AWARENESS NETWORK'S ONLINE RULES

<http://www.media-awareness.ca>

- ✓ I will not give out any personal information online without my parents' permission. This includes my name, phone number, address, e-mail, location of my school, my parents' work address/telephone numbers, credit card number information and my picture.
- ✓ When using the Internet, I will always use a pretend name or nickname that doesn't reveal anything about me.
- ✓ When creating a password, I will make one up that is hard to guess but easy for me to remember. To avoid having it stolen, I will never reveal it to anyone (except my parents) — not even my best friend.
- ✓ I will not respond to any message that makes me uncomfortable. I will show an adult right away.
- ✓ I will not arrange to meet a friend I have made on the Internet unless one of my parents has been informed and will be present.
- ✓ I will not open e-mail, files, links, pictures or games from people that I don't know or trust. I will always ask an adult first.
- ✓ I will practice responsible online behaviour:
 - ✓ I will not post or send insulting or rude messages or threats to anyone online.
 - ✓ I will not take words, pictures or sounds from someone else's Web site without their permission.
 - ✓ I will not disable any filtering software my parents have put on the computer.
 - ✓ I will not make any online purchases without my parents' permission.
- ✓ I will not believe everything I read on the Internet. When doing online research, I will always check the source of the information and confirm it with a parent, teacher or librarian.

