

Youth Protection Roundtable



youth protection roundtable newsletter nr. 7

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news from the field

20.11.08 Summary report of the results of the Public Consultation

17.11.08 UK identities sold for £80 online

12.11.08 Young people - online by themselves and often a victim of annoyance

07.11.08 Germany: Spreading, purchasing and possessing 'youth pornographic scripts' are explicitly a criminal act

29.10.08 'My Space' Generation less exposed to online advertising clutter than their parents

YPRT editorial

Dear Readers,

the Youth Protection Roundtable has had its 4th Meeting in London on October 23 to discuss the draft guidelines, which will be published at the **Final Conference on April 3, 2009**. Please read about age verification and the development of the guidelines in the YPRT report on page 2 of this issue.

From December 3-6, the Internet Governance Forum organised by the United Nations will take place in Hyderabad, India. Global stakeholders, in general from governments, inter-governmental agencies and industry, but also global NGOs and representatives of the civil society will discuss about the Internet and their interest in privacy and freedom of speech. This implies a huge opportunity to reach and influence new and important audiences in regard to child and youth protection on the Internet. The Youth Protection Roundtable will attend the IGF and promote the work of the online safety initiatives of the EU and raise awareness for this important issue. We will report regularly from the IGF on the website, so please be kindly invited to visit www.yprt.eu

Please take kindly note of the news, events and research in this newsletter.

Yours


Katharina Kunze, project manager





Dr Tanya Byron and Baroness Thornton (Member of the House of Lords) opening the 4th YPRT meeting

YPRT report

Eeny, meeny miny moe - how old are you?

An old children's counting rhyme asks for your age to decide whether you are allowed to join the game or not. The same procedure applies to various websites. But mostly the user has to prove that he is old enough to join the closed user group. While for social community platforms it would make more sense the other way round to ensure that only younger children are allowed to join the community, so they can be sure that they are among themselves.

Up to now only the Belgian Kids card provides a functionality to prove that the user in question is as young as he pretends to be. The card was presented at the Safer Internet Forum in Luxembourg in September 2008 in a panel dealing with age verification systems. While most participants welcomed age verification systems as an improvement of children's protection from harmful content, also concerns were raised that the identification process could affect the users' privacy.

A differentiation between identification and age verification could help to avoid infringement of privacy and to ensure that personal data are requested only when they are needed for the transaction. With a process of age verification, where not even the date of birth but only the actual age is transferred to the service provider, it could be ensured that people can make use of services or purchase whatever they like without revealing their personal identity.

With the new German identity card that shall be issued from the year 2010 on, a tool will be available to technically enable such a process. The Stiftung Digitale Chancen has therefore pleaded for providing the card for children from the age of 12 years on, to ensure that also this age group can share such a technical improvement to be better protected from grooming attacks on age appropriate social community platforms, see page 3 of this newsletter.

Within the development of the YPRT Guidelines, the Youth Protection Roundtable has dealt with this issue. Age verification systems are one of the main technologies the YPRT members have assessed with regards to their effectiveness against risks of the digital world. Even if the effectiveness of age verification systems depends on the circumstances of its use and the different legal regulations in European countries, it certainly can support the efforts to restrict access of children to age inappropriate content and furthermore also help to ensure that in special areas of the web children are only communicating to their peers and not being molested or cheated by adult grooming attacks. But it is also undeniable that age verification as a supportive technology has its limits and should not be taken as an all round shelter. Up-to-date technologies are able to minimise the exposure of children to online risks, but they cannot be a stand-alone solution. The YPRT Guidelines will therefore not only recommend to apply age verification systems where adequate, but also recommend to teach children how to be aware of grooming attacks and how to behave when stumbling across adult content unintentionally. The importance of children's resilience in the digital world was also emphasised by Dr Tanya Byron in her speech at 4th YPRT meeting.

The YPRT Guidelines will address different stakeholders, developers and providers of Internet appliances but also children's welfare organisations counselling parents, pedagogues in their guidance to children. The Guidelines will help technicians to take into account the possible effects of their newly developed technologies on the safe use by children and young people. They will also inform responsible adults about the effectiveness of supportive technologies for youth protection and how these shall be accompanied by teaching digital literacy and other pedagogical measures to improve online safety.

At the Final Conference of the project on April 3, 2009 in Berlin, the YPRT Guidelines will be presented to the public and examples for implementation will be introduced. Please be kindly invited to take part in this outstanding event and register free of charge at www.yprt.eu/registration

research in the field

Virtual Worlds - Real Money

Online gaming fraud is an increasingly serious threat- according to a new ENISA report. The failure to recognise the importance of protecting real-money value locked up in this grey-zone of the economy has led to a 'year of online-world fraud'. A survey in the report shows that 30% of users have recently lost some form of virtual property through fraud. In less than a year, more than 30,000 new malicious programs have been detected specifically targeting accounts and property in online games and virtual worlds - "this is a jump of 145%", says Kaspersky labs.

Policy paper with regard to the new identity card in Germany

Germany will release a new electronic identity card for all citizens from the year 2010 on. The German associations Deutschland sicher im Netz e.V. (DsiN), the Stiftung Digitale Chancen and the Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter e.V. (FSM) are claiming for an evaluation whether the identity check and age verification functionality of the new electronic identity card in Germany could be enlarged to younger age groups. The electronic identification allows for the use of the identity card for electronic commerce and e-government via the Internet. The draft law submitted by the German government this year stipulates the age limit for the electronic identification for people over 16 years old.

Study Highlights Risk of Fake Popup Warnings for Internet Users

A new study by researchers at North Carolina State University shows that most Internet users are unable to distinguish genuine popup warnings messages from false ones - even after repeated mistakes. The fake ones were designed to trick users into downloading harmful software.

"This study demonstrates how easy it is to fool people on the Web," says study co-author Dr. Michael S. Wogalter, professor of psychology at NC State. The study examined the responses of undergraduate students to real and fake warning messages while they did a series of search tasks on a personal computer connected to the Internet.

The real warning messages simulated local Windows operating system warnings, whereas fake messages were popup messages emanating from an exterior source via the Internet.

Virtual worlds and social networks

Web 2.0 and virtual 3D-worlds are more and more melting together. Playing games, chatting, shopping and social networking by the help of the browser is now available in three-dimensional applications. According to the analysts from the US market research company 'InStat' 3D applications and Web 2.0 are melting together more and more to one and the same Internet application. The user profile from Web 2.0 find its equivalence in Avatar, the virtual 3D world, i.e. in Second Life. In both virtual world the user oneself is designing and creating own content, which consists mainly of pictures, videos, music and nowadays also news items and advertisement.

events in the field

25.11.08 - 28.11.08 World Congress III against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

01.12.08 Safer Internet and Networking
Berlin, Germany

03.12.08 - 06.12.08 Internet Governance Forum
Hyderabad, India

12.12.08 Finished - Benefits and Risks of computer games
Berlin, Germany

15.12.08 Content Rating and Mobile Internet Safety Conference
Prague, Czech Republic

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