# THE BYRON REVIEW ON CHILDREN AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

# A RESPONSE BY
# CHILDNET INTERNATIONAL

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**This document outlines the response by Childnet International[2] to the UK Government's independent Byron Review[3], which addresses the risks to children from exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material on the internet and in video games[4].**

**This response is structured using the format from the call for evidence consultation document (i.e. responses to key questions). However we have also drawn out 6 key priorities which we believe the Byron Review team should consider as they make their recommendations to Government on how best to protect children and empower parents in using new technology gaming and mobile technology safely and responsibly.**

**November 2007**

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

Childnet International is a registered charity, established in 1995, working with children, young people, teachers, parents and carers, industry, government and policy makers to help make the Internet a great and safe place for children, both in the UK and on a global level. For the past twelve years, Childnet has sought to promote the positive use of technology, by highlighting the creative and beneficial things that children are doing with new technology, as well as responding to the potential risks.

Childnet is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this call for evidence and welcomed the chance to meet with Dr Byron and the review team early on. Childnet also welcomes the basis of the review which recognises the opportunities and the benefits that the Internet has to offer, and the pragmatic tone of the review in its acceptance that risks are part of life and that it is important for children and young people and indeed parents and carers to learn to understand, assess and manage risks, both offline and online, as part of the growing up process.

This does not mean however that children and young people should be left unsupported, and Childnet believes that there should be a shared responsibility, and clear roles for all relevant parties to play including government, industry, schools, the media, parents and of course children and young people themselves in ensuring the safety of young people and children online. Childnet has developed a number of resources in partnership with the UK Government and other partners designed to help young people and parents assess and manage the risks that they may encounter online. Some of these resources are mentioned in the main body of Childnet's response to the questions asked in the review document and a full list of Childnet's resources is laid out at Annex A[5].

As mentioned when the Childnet staff met with Dr Byron, it is vital that the review recognises what is already being done in this area, and the fact that in many ways the UK is leading on this issue of responding to the dangers for children on the Internet. Vital work has been undertaken for 6 years through the work of the Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet (HOTF). Further vital work in this area has also been undertaken by: Office of Communications (OFCOM), The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), and The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) - both in terms of child protection, legal reform, media literacy, education, and supporting parents. In addition a number of leading industry players have pioneered important education and awareness work for their customers and are showing their commitment to protecting children on line through membership of the HOTF and the DCSF Cyberbullying Task Force[6].

Childnet also firmly believes that the review should focus on how existing programmes of work could be strengthened rather than creating duplication through the introduction of another campaign and forum. That is not to say however that there is not room for further specific work and integration of new providers of services – especially those from the gaming industry – into the existing Government led programmes. There is a real need also to ensure that a full range of agencies including Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, those involved in setting the curriculum and teacher training (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Training Development Agency (TDA), as well as wider parenting initiatives, contribute in this area as E-safety issues become ever more mainstream.

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5 Childnet's Award-winning resources can also be accessed through the Childnet website www.childnet.com

6 Childnet has worked with the DCSF and the Cyberbullying Task Force members and produced clear guidance for schools on tackling cyberbullying and producing resources for schools  This guidance and film is available on the Childnet "DigitalCitizen" website www.digizen.org

At the outset it is important to reiterate that Childnet does not believe that there is a 'silver bullet' type solution that will act to ensure the safety of children and young people online overnight. Rather securing the safety of children and young people as they engage with and use new technologies is a long term process requiring education aimed at the behaviour of various user groups and providers of the technology. As we outline in this submission, Childnet believes that it is crucial that the subject of E-Safety is integrated into the formal curriculum both within primary and secondary schools and within the initial teacher training and school staff continual professional development programmes so that we will see an integrated, universal approach to educating and empowering children to use the internet and mobile phones safely. Furthermore this needs to go "upstream" and be something which OFSTED review as part of their inspection of child care and the wider Stay Safe and Every Child Matters agenda within the school community. [7]

Finally, it is worth stating the urgency of this review and the need for those responding to children and young people's use of the Internet and new technologies to keep abreast of the fast paced changes in this arena. For example, the new Web2[8] technologies are giving children far greater opportunities to engage in user-generated content and Childnet believes that parents and carers will find it increasingly difficult to supervise children's use of these interactive services on mobile platforms or by relying on tools to simply block or filter out services or content from the family computer. The Mobile Industry providers, handset manufacturers, retailers and software developers - as well as the Social Networking companies are therefore crucial players for the Byron Review to engage and consult with.

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7 Childnet has recently undertaken qualitative research with 400 initial teacher trainers to assess where the subject of E-Safety should be taught within ITT curriculum.   Childnet has also contributed to the recent QCA  review for KS3 and made recommendations on how the subject can be integrated into the Citizenship, PSHE, ICT and Media Literacy components of the curriculum.  See www.childnet.com/publications/policy/aspx  and news items on this work at www.childnet.com/news/aspx

8 A  phrase coined to illustrate the new user-generated social web with websites such as social networking and wikis.

## 2) OVERVIEW OF MAIN MESSAGES & SUGGESTED ACTIONS

Childnet's key messages for the Byron Review Team are laid out below with suggested possible actions. These are key points extracted from the main call for evidence contribution which follows.

| **1.**<br><br>**RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING & EQUIPPING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** | Childnet welcomes the very clear commitment the Byron Review Team has in involving children and young people in the call for evidence. However, it is crucial that their voice is heard throughout the process and their contribution included in the very tangible actions and recommendations coming from the review. It is crucial that young people consider carefully any education messages suggested in the Byron Review recommendations which are aimed at their peer group so that they are current and relevant. In assessing children and young people we must not see them as passive and powerless, purely to be protected. Indeed long-term it is only through children and young people playing an active part in supporting and protecting themselves and their peers, that they will feel confident and safe using these services. We negate young people's moral leadership at our peril and need all the time to consider how we can harness, equip, empower and learn from the "Digital Natives"[9] who are often the first to use and test many of the emerging technologies and services. Whilst children may be now be the "perpetual beta generation[10]" when it comes to ICT we need to ensure that they are not the first to encounter the risks and dangers unprotected. |
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**POSSIBLE ACTION:** Childnet believes that the review team should consider existing models of working with children and young people in this area, such as the Childnet Networker's panel[11], and also the young people who work with CEOP[12] and continually assess how children and young people can be active in any initiative resulting from the review. Furthermore we hope the final review makes strong recommendations on how stakeholders can actively involve children and young people in supporting their peers, developing education programmes, designing safer and more child-friendly services.

| **2.**<br><br>**RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO THE VERY REAL CONCERNS AND FEARS OF PARENTS AND CARERS** | Parents and carers are increasingly concerned about their children's use of the Internet and many do not know how to best manage their own and their children's online experience. This is especially true when it comes to parents purchasing a mobile phone for their children. Despite the UK Mobile Operators Code of Practice, Childnet believes that very many parents are unaware of this Code which outlines certain provisions to better protect their children. In particular parents require authoritative, reliable and credible advice to help them ensure that their children's experience on the Internet and mobile phones are positive and safe. Childnet-led focus groups have revealed that parents trust information distributed via schools, and that they require practical resources which are easy to follow, such as Childnet's 'Know IT All for Parents'[13] resource which has now been distributed to 1 million parents in the UK. |
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**POSSIBLE ACTION:** Childnet believes that a consideration of how parents and carers can be better equipped with tangible help and resources to maximise the positive nature of their online experience. Furthermore it is crucial that particular attention is given to supporting parents who face greater barriers to accessing education and information and are "late adopters" to the Internet[14]. As one of the outputs of the Byron Review Childnet would like to see resources targeted to schools and agencies working with parents and carers to help those parents be better equipped and confident to engage with and help their children as they use these new technologies. However there is a balance to strike and it is not appropriate to simply shift the responsibility to busy parents without practical and dynamic action by other stakeholders including industry and government.

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9 A phrase coined by Marc Prensky – see http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/

10 A phrase coined by one of Childnet's staff Josie Fraser referring to the fact that Children are often the first testers of new services and products. As such they must not be the "canaries in the coalmine"

11 See http://www.childnet.com/about/networkers.aspx

12 The Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre has an active youth panel see www.thinkuknow.org.uk

13 See www.childnet.com/kia. Details on the Best Practice Award for this resource can be found at http://www.childnet.com/news/articles/121007.html. In addition the resource has been pre-loaded on thousands of computers sold by PC WORLD which has also distributed some 200,000 copies free to customers

14 Childnet's Know IT ALL for Parents resource has been translated into 8 languages including Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Polish, Mandarin, Urdu and BSL.

| **3.**<br><br>**RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING THE POSITIVE AND INSPIRING WAYS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES CAN USE THE TECHNOLOGY FOR GOOD** | It is crucial that the Review keeps a balance between recognising the very real fear and concerns that parents have, with the undoubted benefits and positive opportunities which the new interactive, mobile and gaming services provide for children – both within the family and within school. It is crucial therefore that any recommendations coming out of the Byron review help showcase the very real benefits for families of the technology. The research Childnet undertook in producing the Know IT ALL for Parents resource among "late adopter" households showed that although many accepted the educational value for their children, they needed to understand the positive benefits of the internet for themselves. Any education and awareness programme or campaign which is suggested by the Byron Review team should be positive and empowering. Childnet has proved over the last 12 years that one of the key strategies in helping children and young people avoid the potentially harmful, or engage in risky behaviour is to showcase and promote positive, exciting, creative fun and beneficial ways of using the internet and making a difference online. |
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**POSSIBLE ACTION:** Childnet believes that the review team should consider how to actively promote and profile the positive benefits to children in having access to the Internet and mobile phones. One specific deliverable could be in launching an annual national campaign or competition whereby children and young people are encouraged to submit examples of outstanding original, creative and beneficial digital media which they have completed (either in school or at home). Childnet has many years experience of running these types of award programmes[15] and is currently piloting a way of engaging with young people in the creation of education resources around misuse and cyberbullying.[16] We believe that the recommendations and actions from the Byron Review will ultimately be strengthened if there is an ongoing active promotion of the positive benefits of the use of technology for children in school and within the home.

| **4.**<br><br>**RECOGNISING EXISITING INITIATIVES & THE VALUE OF A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH** | There are various different initiatives on E-Safety underway, including government and industry working groups, education initiatives for teachers, parents and children and the development of better filtering and monitoring tools. It is important that real multi-stakeholder participation is achieved in order to produce a meaningful and consistent message, and that there is not duplication of work. Childnet has always stressed the shared responsibility for this work and the review must be careful not to polarize and proportion blame on any sector, but actively engage and appreciate the tremendous challenges that exist in catching up with the changes in technology and the global nature of the medium. Existing 'Good Practice' guidance has been produced with the industry on a range of issues such as Safe Search, Interactive and Chat services, and shortly to be published Social Networking services. |
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**POSSIBLE ACTION:** Childnet believes that the review team should focus on how existing programmes of joint working could be strengthened and expanded. There is a real need to ensure that a full range of agencies and industry bodies are represented in discussion and dialogue and that an audit of initiatives in this area is undertaken to prevent against duplication of work. Ongoing evaluation should be considered to assess the value of such initiatives and the need for further research as well as what other models exist in other parts of the world. The debate on this area should be consistently and continually informed by up-to-date qualitative and quantitative research on how children and young people use and engage with technology[17].

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15 See www.childnetacademy.org which celebrates what Childnet termed "The Dot hope Effect" of the net.

16 See http://www.digizen.org/digicentral/ and student's contributions at http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/students.aspx

17 Important European Research on Cultural, Contextual and Risk Issues in Children's Safe Use of the Internet and New Media is currently being undertaken see http://www.eukidsonline.net

| **5.**<br><br>**RECOGNISING THE NEED TO KEEP UP TO SPEED WITH FAST CHANGING TECHNOLOGY & WIDER CHILD PROTECTION RELATED ISSUES** | Any action that seeks to deal with children and young people's use of the Internet and new technologies needs to keep abreast of the ongoing and fast paced changes in this arena.  This includes the convergence of different technologies onto mobiles for example, and the rise of new technologies such as Web v2.0 and user-generated content which give children far greater opportunities to engage and be more creative online than previously.  Not all child protection related issues fit into the categories of harmful Content or Contact. Childnet also believes that we should pay attention to the third C,- that of Commercialism, to ensure that the protections that are established in this area are equally enforced and protect children online. It is important to consider the pressures of commercialism, for example the hidden persuasion techniques that are often employed, in the form of advertisements and commercial messages that cannot be easily identified by children and young people online. |
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**POSSIBLE ACTION:** Childnet will shortly be publishing ground-breaking report, together with the National Consumer Council and Dr Agnes Nairn, considering the extent and the nature of online commercialism on websites popular with children and looking at the views, perceptions and experiences of parents and children on this. This will be accessible on the Childnet website[18] as of the 6th December 2007, and Childnet would encourage the review team to consider its findings and practical recommendations this report makes alongside the other responses submitted to this call for evidence.

| **6.**<br><br>**RECOGNISING THE NEED FOR THE INTEGRATION OF KEY E-SAFETY MESSAGES IN THE FORMAL CURRICULUM** | Childnet believes that it is crucial that the subject of E-Safety is integrated into the formal curriculum both within primary and secondary schools and also within the initial teacher training and school staff continual professional development programmes.  Childnet believe that this would help to facilitate an integrated, universal approach to educating and empowering children to use the internet and mobile phones safely. Childnet has worked with  the TDA, Becta and Microsoft to produce a range of resources called 'Know IT ALL for Teachers and Trainees' to help them embed E-Safety messages into lesson plans[19].   Childnet supported the QCA's proposals for the Curriculum aims for ICT Key stage 3 and 4, and particularly the over arching aims of the revised curriculum, and further called for attention to be drawn to the rapid development that characterizes ICT. |
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**POSSIBLE ACTION:**  Childnet would encourage the review team in their consideration of children and new technology to consider the importance of e-safety and digital literacy issues in supporting engagement and achievement across the whole curriculum.  It is important to recognise the Internet and new technologies not just as a source of media information, but also as an important tool for facilitating participation and political engagement.

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18 This will be available on the policy documents section of the Childnet website from 6th December at : www.childnet.com/publications/policy/aspx

19 These new resources, are called 'Know IT All for Teachers and Trainee Teachers, will be launched on 10th December 2007 – see www.childnet.com/kia

# 3) RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

**1 – 13.** As stated above, the Childnet response to this call for evidence focuses on the second half of the review's questions on the Internet. In relation to gaming, Childnet is specifically concerned about gaming in the online environment where Childnet's main concerns of Contact, Content and Commercialism come into play. As such, Childnet's considerations on gaming are included as part of the responses below.

## 14. What are the benefits of the internet to a) children and young people, b) society, c) the economy?

The Internet provides a wide number of benefits to children, young people, society and the economy alike. Over the last few years, the Internet has become an indispensable part of family life. 61% of homes in the UK now have Broadband access and 84% of those households have a broadband connection. [20]

Current academic and public policy research shows that the use of technology assists teachers and tutors, improves attainment and motivates students in new ways. This has most clearly been demonstrated by raised standards and improved learners' attainment in schools and further education colleges where technology had been effectively embedded.[21] Use of technology also helps children and young people to develop key skills required for thriving in today's economy.

While considering the benefits of the Internet, Childnet would also urge the review team to consider what the risk is to children in not being able to access technology, and how those who are not able to access the Internet regularly at home might be placed at a disadvantage. The current work being undertaken by Becta under the 'Home Access Task Force'[22] is a very important work for the Byron Review to engage with as is the work of the E-Learning Foundation[23] which works to reduce the effect of the "Digital Divide" by working with schools, parents and other stakeholders to ensure that all children have access to the learning resources.

## 15. What are the opportunities presented by the internet for a) children and young people, b) society, c) the economy?

The Internet presents a great number of opportunities for children and young people and Childnet has always grouped these advantages for children as **discover**, **create** and **connect**.

**Discovery:**
The Internet can be likened to the greatest library in the world, placing a whole host of information at the fingertips of children and young people. Search engines facilitate effective searches through vast reams of data which, with due care and caution, can be utilised by children and young people in doing their homework, and investigating subjects of personal interest.

**Creation:**
The Internet also empowers young people to create content in new and exciting ways. The Childnet Academy[24] awards programme acted to showcase some of the ways in which children around the world were creating content online and using the Internet for good. The awards were run for 8 years gaining over 1000 entries from 49 countries throughout their duration.

**Connection:**
The Internet can act to bring children and young people together, connecting them through diverse applications and in many instances the Internet offers the opportunity to break down barriers such as geography, thereby enabling peers to connect inter-globally as well as breaking down barriers created by disability that may be a block to conventional dialogue and interaction. Furthermore, the creation and development of applications such as Facebook, YouTube, Bebo and MySpace have added to the ways that children and young people are able to express themselves and publish material online giving them a

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20 National Statistics Omnibus Survey; Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey; Survey of Internet Service Provider, (28 August 2007)
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=8

21 Learning in the 21st century: The case for harnessing technology; (17 September 2007)
http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=33996

22 The Home Access Programme aims to ensure that every learner in England (5 to 19 years old and in maintained education) has access to increased educational opportunities via ICT resources at home. The programme is led by the Home Access Taskforce, chaired by Jim Knight, Minister of State for Schools and Learners

23 See http://www.e-learningfoundation.com/

24 See this for examples of previous winners: http://www.childnetacademy.org/

voice and enabling them to post creative content without the need to learn html and specific coding languages.

In addition to these advantages for children and young people there are tremendous advantages for society and the economy to the extent that it is now generally recognised that the internet is becoming an indispensable part of family life, and those without access are disadvantaged from access to cheaper products and 24/7 services, shopping, access to information, participation and the very democratization within society. Increasingly the skills required in the new '"Knowledge Economy" are the skills which the internet fosters such as creativity, presentation, networking, retrieving information, assessing value, analysing, reviewing etc. .

**16. What are the potential and actual risks to children and young people who use the internet and how should the Review approach defining and measuring those risks?**

Childnet believes that there are three main risks facing children and young people in the online world. Childnet has defined these risks as the three C's; **Content**, **Contact** and **Commercialism**.

**CONTENT:**
There is a risk that when using the internet or other online services and technologies, young people may be exposed to inappropriate content. This may be material that is pornographic, hateful or violent, encourages activities that are dangerous or illegal, or is just age-inappropriate or biased. One of the key benefits of the web is that it is open to all, but unfortunately, this also means that those with extreme political, racist or sexist views also have a voice. However it is important to clarify that both harmful and illegal material can put children at risk and children may be placed at risk by accessing content that may not be illegal or considered harmful in its rightful context.

Children and young people are put at risk by accessing content that may not be accurate. Use of unverified websites may put children and young people at risk from accepting content to be true when in fact it is not. Anyone can write what they want and post it on the internet, and as a result not all the information available online is good information. Inaccurate information can be misleading or even dangerous in some situations, for example when it covers health advice. Plagiarism and copyright are also key issues, particularly in relation to copying schoolwork and downloading music or games, as popularised by many filesharing services. Childnet believes that it is important that children and young people should understand that these activities can have serious moral, legal and financial consequences. The production of the Young People Music and the Internet[25] leaflet with the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), a guide for parents about P2P, filesharing and downloading aimed to provide parents and young people alike about the risks faced as a result of illegal use of the aforementioned technologies. This material is currently being updated to take into account use of mobile phones.

**CONTACT:**
The Internet is a fantastic tool for keeping in contact. However there is an element of risk involved in this and children and young people can be at risk from unwanted contact on the Internet from those who may seek to bully them and also sadly from sexual offenders. Childnet's youth panel highlighted a lack of awareness surrounding children and young people verifying new contacts and checking their reliability, perhaps most evident in the willingness to add 'friends of friends' to their personal contact lists in various online fora. The youth panel also underscored a lack of awareness regarding privacy online. This is an issue both in terms of sharing contact details and also in sharing financially sensitive details.

**COMMERCIALISM:**
The Internet is also a commercial environment. As young people and children have migrated online from other forms of entertainment so the marketing industry has developed sophisticated and innovative techniques to chase them. Children and young people may be placed at risk in the commercial environment online where data protection rules and marketing codes of practice are flouted, hidden persuasion techniques are employed in the form of advertisements and commercial messages that cannot be easily identified by children and where products and services that have a legal age limit are advertised indiscriminately such as gambling and dating. Childnet have done some work recently researching this with the National Consumer Council (NCC) and Dr Agnes Nairn, and a report titled 'Fair Game? Assessing commercial activity on children's favourite websites and online environments' is to be published on 6th December 2007.[26]

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25 http://www.childnet.com/music/

26 This will be available on the policy documents section of the Childnet website from 6th December at : www.childnet.com/publications/policy/aspx

Furthermore, children and young people often get caught out by 'free offers' online. In particular, many children have been caught out by signing up to premium rate subscriptions believing that they were making a one-off purchase of a product. Services such as those offering ring tones and logos and competitions paid for by premium rate do not make it clear for children and young that the agreements promoted required a reverse-billed subscription.[27] Childnet are aware of instances where children on a post-pay contract have run up a monthly bill in excess of £1,000. Childnet have worked with PhonePay Plus (previously ICSTIS) to try and raise awareness about the safe and responsible use of Internet services.[28]

In all three of these areas it is Childnet's aim to equip and to empower young people so that they are able to manage online risks when they are presented to them and to make sensible life choices and decisions, as well as informing policy makers, government and industry on these areas.

Childnet believes that the risks outlined above are extended by the ongoing convergence of technology. As the Internet is increasingly accessible from ever sophisticated mobile phones, the risks are extended by the fact that mobile phones are **personal,** meaning that children and young people can, and often do use them away from supervision. This acts to give them a sense of ownership and responsibility. Not only does this reduce their willingness to explain their phone use to their parent or carer, but also increases the likelihood that they will deal with any challenges that they encounter using the medium privately. The **portable** and **private** nature of mobile phones combined with the fact that children and young people are not discriminate about when they turn their phone off, renders it likely that are always reachable via their phone.

**17. What do a) children and young people and b) parents already know about the potential and actual risks of using the internet?**

**18. What do a) children and young people and b) parents think and feel about the potential and actual risks of using the internet?**

Childnet believes that there is a difference between the reality of the dangers experienced by children and young people online and the perception of their parents and carers of the extent of these experiences. This is evidenced by the UK Children Go Online report which revealed that although 57% of children and young people between the ages of 9 and 19 had come into contact with online pornography, online 16% of their parents thought that their child had seen pornography on the Internet. [29]

There is also a difference between the opinion of young people and their parents as to what constitutes online risk. Very often parents are unaware of the risks posed by technology, which in itself is a risk as lack of discussion on these areas may lead to potential isolation of the child or young person in their online experience leaving them more vulnerable than a young person or child exploring the Internet with parental supervision. For example, a child may not confide in their parent about a negative experience in a chat room if the child felt that their parent did not know what a chat room was and how it operated and thereby might not be in a position to give advice. Conversely, children and young people might be reluctant to share their experience through fear of the potential response of the parent or carer in dealing with the problem, such as their mobile being confiscated or their internet access limited.

In many instances, what parents perceive to be the key and immediate danger for their children is not the same thing as that which children perceive to be a danger. Focused Childnet discussion sessions with young people has suggested that their biggest fear online is their peers, with many concerned about suffering at the hands of their peers through a "practical joke", or through their email account being hacked into for example. Children and young people are often not aware of the subtlety of the risks that they may be facing. Many young people believe that they are capable of "spotting a pervert" easily and do not worry about who it is that they are talking to[30], whereas very often the driving parental concern in this area is 'contact' and the fear of whom their child might be talking to.

However, how far parents think about the risks of using the Internet is very dependent on their level of Internet use and to a certain extent the media's portrayal of the picture. In many instances this results in disproportionate parental concerns. Childnet's experience of speaking with parents[31] indicates that many

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27 Supported by evidence from the Safer Internet for Children Qualitative Study across 29 European Countries (May 2007), p.51

28 See http://www.phonebrain.org.uk/xtra/teachers/

29 UKChildrenGoOnline; Surveying the experiences of young people and their parents (July 2004)

http://personal.lse.ac.uk/bober/UKCGOsurveyreport.pdf

30 Childnet's work with young people in focus groups is further supported by evidence from the Safer Internet for Children Qualitative Study across 29 European Countries (May 2007), p.35

31 As part of Childnet's schools work, Childnet staff run parents evenings at schools to talk about online safety issues and to help address parent's concerns.

parents are concerned about the availability of adult content on the Internet and other 'extreme' risks. While many parents are concerned about viruses, this is often not associated with their children's use of the Internet.

There is also a split in perception based on parents' own user experience. Those who are more technology savvy themselves are aware of the subtle consumer manipulation and content related risks that in many instances may brought to bear on young people on the Internet. Those less familiar with the use of the Internet and new technology tended to panic when asked to consider the potential risks of using the Internet and had not thought how they would discuss their concerns with their children.

As one of the outputs of the Byron Review, Childnet would like to see tangible help and resources for parents and carers as a key priority in ensuring the safety of children and young people online and in using new technologies. Childnet's work with parents has highlighted some really important barriers that parents are faced with when it comes to taking responsibility for their children online, particularly attitudinal barriers that many late adopters of technology have. Many are unaware of the benefits that the Internet and new technologies can bring, apart from their child's education, and are fearful of not knowing what to do.

**19. What are the range of mechanisms that exist to help children, young people and parents manage the potential or actual risks of engaging with the internet?**

Childnet firmly believes that the key universal point of access in engaging with children, young people and schools in managing the potential and actual risks of engaging with the Internet is through schools.

The most comprehensive work in the UK to date which identifies the risks that children and young people are faced with is the UK Children Go Online Survey (2004). However, nearly one third (30%) of children and young people questioned in the study reported having received no lessons at all on using the Internet, risking the dangers of ill-informed use. Childnet firmly believes that a three pronged approach comprising of inspection, curriculum and continuing professional development should be implemented in the UK, and would like to see e-safety as a mandatory part of the national curriculum.

Managing, guiding and regulating children's internet use is a delicate and challenging task and one that Childnet believes will most effectively be pursued with children's cooperation, particularly by empowering them to manage their own online experience.

After 12 years of working in schools Childnet has sought to fill the vacuum on e-safety training in schools by creating an award winning range of resources designed to help children, young people and parents manage their expectations of the Internet as well as highlighting the benefits but also the dangers of using the Internet. This includes the award wining resources Know IT All for Parents[32] which is available in 8 languages, Young People, Music and the Internet (translated in 26 languages) and the Kidsmart schools resources and outreach programme[33]. Childnet has also produced practical websites on key issues such as chat – (www.chatdanger.com) and working with young people www.childnet.com/sorted which gives advice to young people about information security issues. All of Childnet's resource have been produced in careful consultation with children, young people and parents as well as subject matter experts to ensure that the resources are useful and effective and providing the right messages. A full list of Childnet's resources can be found at Annex A.

Other mechanisms also exist to help children, young people and parents. The majority of ISPs in the UK are committed to helping and supporting their customers to manage their own online experience. Many ISPs provide access to forms of parental control that users can apply themselves through a selection of various levels of protection. Equally, ISPs provide advice and guidance on a range of other issues as well as operating help lines for their customers. There are also a wide range of tools offered by ISPs to their customers on a cost basis. However, despite the many filtering tools on offer there are still parents who are unaware how to use these tools or who deactivate them as a result of over-blocking.

As an international organisation, Childnet has had the opportunity to share its resources on a global and level and also to review online safety initiatives else where in the world. In particular, considering this review's remit, Childnet was interested to note that in Australia, a government implemented scheme, announced in 2006, aimed to provide every family with a free Internet filter[34]. Crucially, as part of this work

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32 KIAfP won the Nominet Best Practice Award for diversity 2007. KIAfP makes use of video and interactive elements rather than text to reach those challenged by lack of literacy in English or disability and made a summary section in 8 languages, including British Sign Language, Urdu, Bengali, Arabic, Polish and Mandarin.

33 See www.kidsmart.org.uk Childnet runs school internet safety activity days through this programme which is in very high demand

34 Australian government implemented a scheme in June 2006 whereby every family would be provided with a free Internet filter as part of a $116.6 million comprehensive package of measures to crack down on the scourge of Internet pornography. Under this scheme, called the National Filter Scheme, families were

a comprehensive national community education campaign was conducted to ensure that all Australian families were aware of the benefits of regulating their children's Internet experience by using a safe and effective computer filter.  It was envisaged that the filters would allow parents to set access limits based on their own family values to protect children from offensive content on the Internet and emerging new mobile content services.  An important and key part of the approach involved educating parents about the dangers present on the Internet and equipping them with the tools they needed to make sure their children remained safe online.

In highlighting this initiative, Childnet would urge the review to team to include a consideration/investigation of this project as part of their research in their discussions regarding possible solutions, possibly to inform dialogue with parents in the UK.

It is important to reiterate that software tools are not 100% effective and should not be seen as panacea to internet safety, but rather as a helpful aid.

**20. Are children, young people and parents aware of the tools available and to what extent do they use them?**

As outlined in the response to question 19, there are a good range of mechanisms available for children, young people and parents. Childnet believes that many parents are not aware of the very basic tools that are built into the browser that they can utilise, such as tools to check the history of websites visited so that they can verify whether their child has kept within what they consider to be the parameters of safe activity online. It is important to make sure that people are aware of the existence of such tools and that they understand how to use them.

Because children will be increasingly accessing the internet on their mobile phone, it is crucial that they and their parents/carers are aware of the tools which exist assist them in this area. For example, the Mobile Operators in the UK have signed up to a Code of Practice around helping parents keep their children safe, and this includes several commitments to provide information and tools to help protect children from certain types of content[35]. However Childnet has found that despite these tools being available to parents, not all parents whose children have mobile phones are aware of these tools, or even of what services are available on their child's phone. To respond to this Childnet have developed a Checklist for parents[36] who are thinking of getting their child a phone, containing questions that the parent needs to ask the mobile operator to ensure that all the available protections for their child's phone are in place. O2 are using this Checklist in their communications with their customers, and Childnet is continuing to work to get more operators to take on this Checklist to help ensure parents are taking up all the information and protections that are available to them.

This Childnet mobile checklist for parents illustrates a really important point, namely that there is a need for companies to better promote the existing tools and services they have established to parents at the point of sale.  Having tools is one thing, helping parents use and feel confident about them, evaluating their impact and value in protecting children is quite another thing. Childnet is committed to working with various partners[37] in promoting and also distributing Childnet's resources. We believe this resource is so important that we have included a copy of the checklist as an **Appendix B** of this submission as an example of how parents could be made more aware of tools and how to better use them.

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offered a filtered service or a free filter for their home computer either for download from a dedicated website or delivered to them on CD-ROM.  ISPs were also be required to offer filters to new and existing customers at no additional cost

35 The UK Mobile Operators – Orange, O2, T-Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone and 3 - signed up to a Code of Practice in January 2004 with the stated aim of helping parents keep their children safe (see www.imcb.org.uk/assets/documents/10000109Codeofpractice.pdf).  As part of this code they agreed to certain conditions concerning the provision of new content and services on mobiles, including Internet content and services.

36  See http://www.childnet-int.org/downloads/mobilesQ.pdf

37 Such as the DCSF who distribute a range of Childnet resources to schools through their prologue distribution service

**21. In what other ways do a) children and young people and b) parents seek to manage the perceived risks of using the internet and how do they feel about their ability to do so?**

**22. How well do these different approaches and mechanisms work?**

Many parents are still not confident about tackling the risks that their children may face online, due to the fact that in many instances they are unsure about the technology that their children may be utilising. This is particularly evident in late adopters of technology.

In addition to working with children, young people and teachers, Childnet has sought to provide parents with the information that they need to protect their children through running parents seminars in schools and also in places of work. In the last six months Childnet's Know IT All for Parents resource has been distributed to over one million parents, which indicates that parents are coming up to speed on these issues and seeking more assistance in this area. Becta has recently committed to promoting another print run in order to satisfy the high demand for this resource. It is vital to get the engagement and involvement of parents with their children's use of new technology.

**23. What roles do the retail and advertising sectors play in child safety online?**

Online commercialism aimed at children is one of the key strands of Childnet's focus.

There are two elements that must be factored into a consideration of the role of online advertising. The first is that online advertising can be used in reaching out to children in a positive manner. Previous Home Office campaigns to promote child safety have made use of online advertising in attempt to highlight some of the risks that may be present online[38].

Childnet has also worked successfully with PC World in the offline retail sector to distribute the KIA resource, both in store and also by pre-loading content onto computers. It is vital that information is given to parents in a timely fashion, and point of purchase is a good opportunity to give advice.

However, the other element of online advertising that must be considered is that just as children can be vulnerable online to 'risky' contact and content, they can also be open to commercial pressures. Online advertising is an obstacle that children and young people have to navigate in their online activities. Childnet's soon to be published research[39] on the commercial pressures placed upon children and young people (written with the National Consumer Council) found that they are not always able to clearly identify advertising material, particularly where this is built into and integrated into editorial content and where it takes the form of 'adver-games'.

**24. What opportunities exist for children, young people and parents to learn about safe, responsible and fulfilling internet use – and do they help?**

Childnet believes that it is important that schools are equipped to talk about the opportunities as well as the issues that children and young people are presented with online. The recent technological developments of cameras on mobile phones and increase in incidents of the use of technology in bullying led to Childnet and the Department for Children Schools and Families developing guidance for schools on preventing and responding to cyberbullying.[40] Childnet have also developed resources for teachers including a film on cyberbullying, 'Let's Fight it Together'. The film is designed for children and young people, parents and carers and also school staff to develop a whole school community understanding of the impact and responses to this issue. The character interviews accompanying the cyberbullying film are aimed to help facilitate discussion around the issues raised in the film. .

Childnet believes that it is important to provide advice for parents and young people on the Internet and new technologies both off and online, and to this end Childnet's wide ranging resources are available on CD Rom, online and in also leaflet form.

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38 http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/Protecting_Children_Online_When_?version=1

39 Due for release 6 December 2007

40 http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/

It is Childnet's experience that parents trust information that they receive from schools. In keeping with this Childnet's valuable and free resource Know IT All for Parents is distributed through schools. While industry in the UK is communicating many of the right messages, these are not always being conveyed in the ways that are most accessible to and trusted by parents. Childnet believes that by distributing resources and making key messages available in the format most suited to the audience, the impact of these useful resources will be further supported.

**25. What, if anything, needs to be changed in order to help children, young people and parents manage the potential or actual risks of going on line and what are the pros and cons of different approaches?**

Childnet believes that there is a need for ongoing education and awareness initiatives as new generations continue to come online and with the advent and development of new technologies and applications.

While filtering and monitoring can be a useful tool, there is no substitute for parental involvement in communicating key messages regarding online safety.

With regards to industry, the self regulatory regime set out in the Communications Act is ongoing, and while widely considered to be successful it is not monitored. There are strong industry best practice messages coming from industry bodies such as the Internet Services Providers Association (ISPA) and the best practice guidelines set out by the HOTF, but these valuable guidelines are not mandatory and there is currently no way to easily verify how far industry is conforming with good practice advice. It is crucial that industry do take up the recommendations outlined in the industry good practice to ensure that the key child protection issues have been addressed and built into the services that they provide.

**26. What are the emerging opportunities for developing other ways of supporting children, young people and parents?**

Childnet recognizes a number of emerging opportunities and strategic initiatives which are opening up which will enable better ways of supporting children, young people and parents in this issue. These fall under a number of key categories including:

A) **The exciting opportunities that exist to harness and utilise the new technologies themselves in reaching, engaging, interacting and promoting education, peer communication, peer support, sharing of knowledge and resources for both parents, teachers and children and young people.**

   Childnet has pioneered and supported exciting online activities including chat, interactive resources, forums -for example the "Connect Safely" forum[41] which links parents directly to each other and provides space for them to discuss social networking services and wider online safety issues for their children. We would hope that the Byron review recognizes and showcases examples such as these, especially how schools are equipping young people in the creation of their own digital resources to educate their peers, for example see
   http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/students.aspx.

B) **The integration of technology within the classroom, particularly evidenced by the expanding Virtual Learning Environments and the new National Education Network which will make it possible for students to access protected school networks and interact, by contributing and sharing rich online education resources from home. In addition this will act to strengthen the ICT link between home and school.**

   The establishment of a central virtual "Online Safety Centre" could be created aggregating the best e-safety advice and curriculum resources and serve as a central gateway to 'Acceptable Use Policy' information and material for inducting both young people, parents and teachers as they use these new services. A short tutorial and lesson on safe and ethical use of the technology could be an essential part of the induction for new users as they begin to use these services.

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41 See http://www.connectsafely.org/

**C) The recognition that E-Safety should be integrated into both the KS2 and KS3 school curriculum as well as within initial teacher training.**

Childnet and others have championed the issue of E-Safety arguing that it is supremely relevant to the Citizenship, PHSE, ICT schemes of work and curriculum taught in schools[42]. A recommendation from the Byron Review that schools should address this E-Safety issue will help strengthen this integration and help ensure that there is a better universal support and education for children on using the new technologies safely and responsibly. This needs to go hand in hand with education of parents and hands-on practical support for teachers as part of their continual professional development in understanding the new issues. Childnet's 'Know IT ALL for teachers and Trainees' could be utilized in this way.[43]

**D) The commitment by the Government to the Every Child Matters and Stay Safe agenda, including the equipping of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) to work more directly with local communities.**

Becta has already begun to support the work of LSCB's in the area of E-Safety issues and this should be recognised by the Byron Review.[44] Furthermore many organisations have submitted recommendations as part of the Stay Safe consultation to including a call to keep children safe online. These recommendations should be assessed by the Byron Review Team. The Children's Commissioners in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland also have an important role in ensuring that children's rights are protected and promoted online.

**E) The industry's growing commitment to better serve, protect and educate young users and respond to very genuine concerns and fears from parents.**

Industry players in the UK have made good progress in addressing many of the online child protection issues and are working hard to integrate better education, reporting and privacy settings for young users. They should be commended for this, and this work needs to be recognized by the Byron Review. However, more needs to be done to create greater choice for parents in the provision of online and mobile services for children and young people offering them greater granularity of choice. The practical recommendations coming out of the NCC/Childnet report on children and commercialism online should be reviewed carefully by the Review.

**F) Strategic international programmes, partnerships and initiatives which are helping to put the agenda of child safety on the agenda.**

There are a number of international developments including the Council of Europe's Convention to Protect Children, the development of the Virtual Global Task Force, the work of INHOPE[45] in supporting and promoting the work of hotlines internationally, The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Global Cyber Security Agenda (GCA) and the commitment to include child protection issues as part of the Internet Governance Forum[46]. These international efforts illustrate the opportunities that governments and other stakeholders have to address the child safety issues within ICT on a global level.

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42 See key message 6 at the start of this submission

43  See http://www.childnet.com/kia/

44 See http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=25933&page=1835

45 Childnet was involved in helping to establish the Internet Hotline providers in Europe association – see www.inhope.org which brings international hotlines – including the UK's Internet Watch Foundation see www.iwf.org.uk together

46 "One particular area of hope, but also concern, is the relationship of children and young people with the Internet. The Internet has opened new doors to them, to knowledge and culture. Yet, it can also present a threat to their safety. The program of this year's meeting has a strong focus on the protection of children. And I hope that it will contribute to making them safer." UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon statement of the importance of protecting children online at the inaugural session of the second IGF in Rio "

**27. What impact will new ways of accessing media have on the questions being considered in this review?**

Childnet believes that new ways of accessing the media are profoundly exciting. However, alongside this enthusiasm for positive uses of new technology, Childnet firmly believes that it is crucial to put the right protection tools in place and also to use new mediums to communicate messages.

In particular, mobile phones and interactive television both encourage 'spontaneity' of response. To this end Childnet believes that it is crucial to work with children and young people on an ongoing basis, staying informed of the latest technological trends in order to help embed key media-literacy messages in children and young people's consciousness so that they are part of their thought processes prior to experiencing a negative experience. Targeting children as they form their behaviour on particular technologies is a crucial step.

Childnet believes that it is important that child protection is considered prior to children being hurt, and at the point of development of exciting new products rather than after their launch. In March 2003 Childnet held a conference in Tokyo Japan, with the Internet Association Japan, to look at the potential impact of mobile phones and the mobile internet on children, both looking at the potential positives and the potential negatives. It was an industry representative at this event that said we must not let the children, who are often pioneers with new technology, become the canary in the coalmine, and it is vital that we look at child protection issues at the outset of new technologies.

**For further information about Childnet and our recommendations to the Byron Review contact:**

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## Annex A: Childnet Resources

Childnet has developed an exciting range of award-winning online projects resources and offline resources for children, young people, parents/carers and teachers.

**BUYING A MOBILE PHONE - A CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS**
Childnet worked in conjunction with The UK Mobile Operators to provide parents with a checklist of important questions to ask their Mobile Operator when purchasing a mobile phone so that they can ensure that they  have the tools and support to help their protect children and to  make sure they get the most out of using their mobile phones safely.
http://www.childnet.com/downloads/mobilesQ.pdf

**CHATDANGER**
Chatdanger is a site all about the potential dangers on interactive services online like chat, IM, online games, email and on mobiles.  Aimed at children and young people it offers tips about keeping safe and presents true life stories of how some young people have been affected by danger online.
http://www.chatdanger.com/

**CYBERBULLYING GUIDANCE**
In 2007, Childnet was commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to produce advice and guidance for schools on preventing and responding to cyberbullying.  Childnet worked in close consultation with a wide range of sectors including children and young people, schools, industry, law enforcement, professional bodies, parent groups and child welfare organisations in producing this material.
http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/

**DIGIZEN**
Digizen is Childnet's latest online offering aimed at promoting 'digital citizenship'.  Digital citizenship isn't just about recognising and dealing with online hazards, rather it is about building safe spaces and communities, understanding how to manage personal information, and about helping an individual use their online presence to grow and shape their world in a safe, creative way, and also to inspire others to do the same.   The website offers information, advice and resources for using Social Networking Services with young people, a competition and the opportunity customize a personal Digizen widget and information and advice on recognizing and tackling cyberbullying.
http://www.digizen.org/

**JENNY'S STORY**
Jenny's Story" is a hard hitting film based on the true story a young teenager who chats to a stranger online using Instant Messenger. The film shows how through online chatting, Jenny reveals personal information which results in her being contacted in real life, and ultimately hurt.

The film and accompanying supporting resources aim to challenge young people about the dangers of chatting to strangers on the Internet, but also help them reflect on important issues such as trust, flattery, personal information and how they can develop strategies to avoid being manipulated or feeling "trapped". The teachers' resources will help teachers prepare this as a classroom activity for secondary school pupils from KS3 and upwards. http://www.childnet.com/jenny/

**KIDSMART**
Kidsmart is a unique Internet safety programme run by Childnet in schools throughout the UK and beyond. With sections for young people, teachers and parents and careers the resource contains games designed to test online safety knowledge, lesson plans, leaflets, posters, information on activities and interactive and resources, facts on filtering, and practical steps to help create a safer environment for young people online.
http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/

**KNOW IT ALL**
Know IT All is a set of award-winning resources developed by Childnet to help educate young people, parents and teachers about safe and positive use of the internet.
http://www.childnet.com/kia/

- **Know IT All for Parents** contains advice for parents and carers but the section for children and young people is designed to be shown to them. There is also an interactive section where families can create and print out their own agreements about using the Internet.

  The DCSF have made the latest version of the **Know IT All for Parents** CD-ROM available to all maintained schools in England free of charge.

- **Getting to Know IT All** was a special presentation designed for volunteers to deliver in schools. The programme was piloted in 2005 and has now been updated and rolled out by the Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre) as part of their education programme called Think U Know.

- Previous resources in this series included **Know IT ALL for Schools**.  Know IT All for Schools was originally distributed free of charge to every school in the UK in 2005. This has now been replaced by Know IT All for Parents which includes the earlier modules from the schools pack, plus new content presented by young people themselves and advice for teachers.

- **Know IT All for Teachers** and **Know it ALL for Trainee Teachers** are currently in production and will be launched on 10 December 2007.  These resources have been designed to empower teachers and trainee teachers with the knowledge and understanding to effectively teach e-safety in the class-room. Supported by The Training Development Agency, Becta and Microsoft, these new resources reflect the growing supporting role teachers play, alongside parents, in teaching children about e-safety.  KIAfTT will include a DVD with support for tutors to deliver E-safety training face to face in initial teacher training, including a lesson plan.


**LET'S FIGHT IT TOGETHER – CYBERBULLYING FILM**
'Let's Fight it Together' is a powerful film produced by Childnet for the Department for Children Schools and Families to help sensitize young people to the pain and hurt which can be caused through cyberbullying.
http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/film.aspx


**MUSIC & THE INTERNET**
Childnet has produced a special website and leaflet which gives advice on Peer2Peer, file-sharing and downloading on the Internet for parents and young people.  This is currently being updated, and the updated resource will include special advice for teachers.
http://www.childnet.com/music/


**PARENT'S RESOURCE**
Childnet has produced a number of resources for parents including the world's first interactive safety resource for parents and a special audio seminar for parents. The animation is designed to be accessible and represent the main concerns that parents have for children from a range of ages and backgrounds
http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/POL_IPSA_Mac%2BPC/main.html


**STAY SMART ONLINE**
Staying SMART Online is a special interactive learning module produced by Childnet for Microsoft, aimed at 8-12 year olds.  Staying SMART Online has been designed to deliver the safety messages regarding children's use of the Internet  in a fun and interactive way to primary aged children. It can be used as a presentation tool for teachers, or as a stand alone tool for children. By playing, reading and answering multiple choice questions, children will be encouraged to think about Internet safety.
http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/stayingsmart/

## Annex B: Mobile Operators Checklist

See http://www.childnet.com/publications/policy.aspx (click on July 2006 second line down)

### BUYING A MOBILE PHONE?
### DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GETTING?
### A CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

You can now access the Internet on most mobile phones and whilst this access brings a world of incredible opportunities in terms of communication, interaction and entertainment, there are certain risks to children posed via the Internet. These risks include accessing potentially harmful content, such as pornography, possible dangerous contact with strangers in chatrooms and commercial pressures like spam and intrusive advertising.

The UK Mobile Operators have recognised these risks and have taken steps to help you protect your child from potentially harmful content accessible via your mobile phone. There are also things you can do to block premium rate calls and texts.

This guide written by children's internet charity, Childnet International, gives you a **checklist of important questions to ask your Mobile Operator** when purchasing a mobile phone so that you can ensure you have the tools and support to help protect children and make sure they get the most out of using their mobile phones safely.

#### 1. SAFETY ADVICE

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Ask for information and advice about the phone and the services that are available on it, so that you can ensure your children know how to use it safely. | Your mobile operator is committed to providing you with information and advice on safe use of their service. Be sure to check that they are keeping you informed. |

#### 2. INTERNET ACCESS

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Does this phone have Internet access? Is there a filter to help block Internet content that is potentially harmful for children? Is the filter switched on? If no, can you switch it on (please)? | All the UK Mobile Operators have to provide an Internet filter on their phones to help block accessing material that is potentially harmful to children, such as pornography. However, with most operators you will need to ask your Operator to activate the filter. |

#### 3. REGISTERING THE PHONE

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Is the phone registered for a child or for an adult user? | Being registered as a child user will mean that you cannot access material provided by your mobile operator or its partners that is rated as 18+, ie unsuitable for children. All mobile phone users are considered to be children by their mobile operator unless or until they have proved to their mobile operator that they are 18. Proving your age is a one-off action, so if you 'inherit' a phone check with your operator whether the phone is registered as a child or an adult user. |

With the stated aim of helping parents keep their children safe, the UK Mobile Operators – Orange, O2, T-Mobile, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone and 3 – signed up to a Code of Practice in January 2004 (see www.imcb.org.uk/assets/documents/10000109Codeofpractice.pdf) whereby they agree to certain conditions concerning the provision of new content and services on mobiles, including internet content and services. In this Code the Mobile Operators give certain promises to users and at the same time the Code gives mobile phone users certain expectations of their Mobile Operator.

#### 4. BLUETOOTH-ENABLED PHONES

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Is this phone 'Bluetooth-enabled'? How can I turn this off, or set it so the phone is not visible to others? | Bluetooth technology essentially enables your mobile phone to find and 'talk' to other bluetooth-enabled mobile phones in the vicinity, or other enabled phones to talk to your mobile. When activated on your child's mobile phone, for example, it means that your child may receive unexpected and unwanted messages from other bluetooth-enabled phone users nearby, and any personal information stored on your child's phone – for example their contact list - could be vulnerable. Switching off the bluetooth option is safer as it makes the phone 'invisible' to other bluetooth users. |

#### 5. PREMIUM RATE CALLS AND TEXTS

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Can you put a bar on all premium rate numbers (ie all number starting with 09, or 5 digit shortcodes for premium rate texts), (please)? If you can't bar these numbers, what services do you provide to protect the user here? | Calling premium rate numbers can be expensive. If you have a complaint about such a service you should contact ICSTIS the Premium rate service regulator, www.icstis.org.uk or 0800 500212. If you do find you have signed up for a reverse-billed premium rate service (where you pay to receive rather than send text messages, for eg ringtones or football score updates) and you do not want to continue this, then text STOP to the shortcode number you got the text from. This will end the service and your payments to it. |

#### 6. CHATROOMS

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Can this phone access chatrooms or games where users can chat to each other? Are these chatrooms (or games) moderated? How are the chatrooms (or games) moderated? | Chatrooms or games (where you can chat to other users) that are provided by your Mobile Operator or its partners and which do not have 18+ age-restrictions must be moderated. Different mobile operators may have different moderation policies and systems, which may affect the level of safety, so ask your Mobile Operator about this. In Childnet's opinion, a view shared by the Home Office in their guidance issued on this subject, moderation by a person is better than purely technical moderation (a filter blocking out bad words for example). Remember that chatrooms accessed on the Internet via mobile phone (ie which are not provided by the Mobile Operator or its partners) may not be moderated. |

#### 7. NUISANCE/MALICIOUS CALLS

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| What number can I call to report receiving unwanted or abusive calls or messages? | Your Mobile Operator should have systems and procedures in place to help you deal with nuisance and malicious phone calls. |

#### 8. REPORTING ABUSE

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| Where do I report abuse of service? If for example I receive unwanted adult (18+) material on my phone while the filter is switched on, who should I report this to? | It is important to let your mobile operator know if their system is failing, both in order to protect yourself and others using the same service. |

#### 9. SPAM

| QUESTIONS TO ASK | BACKGROUND |
|---|---|
| What action is your Mobile Operator taking to prevent Spam? | Your Mobile Operator will take action against spam, whether it is text, picture or e-mail. Find out what action your mobile operator is taking and report any spam received on your phone to them. |