



Independent Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection

News release

Inquiry Concludes: ISPs must do more to keep children safe

The final Report of a cross-party Parliamentary Inquiry into Online Child Protection is published today. The panel of MPs concluded that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and the Government need to do more to keep children safe online.

The Inquiry recommended that:

- Government initiate a formal review of an Opt-In filter to access adult material on the internet;
- The Government should press for accelerated implementation plans for “Active Choice”; the content filtering system proposed for new internet customers by the largest ISPs;
- Within 12 months, ISPs should roll out “single account” network filters that provide one-click filtering for all devices connected to the same internet account;
- A single regulator should take lead responsibility on internet safety;
- Public Wi-Fi networks should have a default adult-content bar;
- Government and industry should draw up new guidelines to publicise existing safety settings on computers and internet-enabled devices;
- ISPs should provide more support and signposting for internet safety education.

Commenting, Claire Perry, the MP for the Devizes Constituency who chaired the Independent Inquiry said:

“Our Inquiry found that many children are easily accessing internet pornography as well as other websites showing extreme violence or promoting self-harm and anorexia. This is hugely worrying. While parents should be responsible for their children’s online safety, in practice people find it difficult to put content filters on the plethora of internet-enabled devices in their homes, plus families lack the right information and education on internet safety. It’s time that Britain’s Internet Service Providers, who make more than £3 billion a year from selling internet access services, took on more of the responsibility to keep children safe, and the Government needs to send a strong message that this is what we all expect”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The terms of Reference for the Independent Inquiry into Online Child Protection were:
 - *To understand better the extent to which children access online pornography and the potential harm that this may cause;*
 - *To determine what British Internet Service Providers have done to date to protect children online and the extent and possible impact of their future plans in this area;*
 - *To determine what additional tools parents require to protect children from inappropriate content;*
 - *To establish the arguments for and against network-level filtering of adult content;*
 - *To recommend possible forms of regulation that may be needed to provide further protection for children.*

2. More than sixty cross-party MPs and Peers have supported the Inquiry but a core team of 17 cross-party MPs led four oral evidence sessions

3. The evidence sessions drew from a variety of witnesses including industry, academics and charities and the Inquiry also received written evidence from similar organisations as well as private briefing meetings.

4. The main recommendations of the Inquiry are:
 - The Government should urgently review the implementation plans for “Active Choice” and press for an accelerated implementation timetable, more clarity on installation targets for all customers, and funding commitments from ISPs.
 - ISPs should provide better support for internet safety education and initiatives such as ParentPort and improve signposting for these services from their own web domains.
 - Government and industry representatives should draw up guidelines for improving the communication of existing internet safety settings, improving training for retailers, developing a family friendly kite-marking scheme for manufacturers and retailers and improving signposting to pre-installed security settings during device configuration.
 - ISPs should be tasked with rolling out single account network filters for domestic broadband customers that can provide one click filtering for all devices connected to a home internet connection within 12 months.
 - The Government should launch a formal consultation on the introduction of an Opt-In content filtering system for all internet accounts in the UK. The most effective way to reduce overall development cost and create the most flexible solution would be for ISPs to work together to develop a self-regulated solution.
 - Public Wi-Fi provision should have a default adult content bar otherwise home-based controls will be easily circumvented.
 - The Government should also seek backstop legal powers to intervene should the ISPs fail to implement an appropriate solution.
 - Finally, the Government should consider the merits of a new regulatory structure for online content, with one regulator given a lead role in the oversight and monitoring of internet content and in improving the dissemination of existing internet safety education materials and resources such as ParentPort.

5. A digital copy of the report is available at: <http://www.claireperry.org.uk/downloads/independent-parliamentary-inquiry-into-online-child-protection.pdf>