



In its report to the ABA, the Children and Content Online Task Force recommends that the Government fund a community education campaign to provide information about the beneficial aspects of the Internet, as well as issues relating to the protection of children from harmful and unsuitable content.

Industry task force recommends community education

An online industry task force looking at children's use of the Internet has recommended that the Government fund a community education campaign to provide information about its beneficial uses as well as issues relating to the protection of children from harmful and unsuitable content.

The recommendation is contained in the report of the Children and Content OnLine Task Force to the Australian Broadcasting Authority.

'One of the objects of media regulation is to ensure that a high priority is put on the protection of children from exposure to material which may be harmful to them,' said Professor David Flint, ABA Chairman. 'It is encouraging to read that the Task Force recommends funding to develop and implement a community education campaign about online issues relevant to children.'

Initiatives

The Task Force recommenda-

tions include three key initiatives that could be used to protect children in the online environment.

First, the Task Force recommended that, as part of a community education campaign, information about technological tools and strategies for managing children's access to the Internet be made available to the Australian community.

Second, that the community education campaign include key messages aimed at reducing the risk of children being contacted by paedophiles and others wishing to exploit children, and address the issue of misleading advertising and marketing which targets children online.

Third, the Task Force recommended that a hotline for the reporting of child pornography be established and that the Internet industry develop practical 'notice and take down procedures' for the removal of illegal content hosted by service providers once they have been given notice of it.

In relation to the use of rat-

ing, filtering and labelling tools, the Task Force recommended that these be voluntary for both content providers and users. It also said that Australian interests may be best served by the development of rating and labelling schemes which accommodate the range and diversity of Australian views and values.

The Task Force recommended that content providers should be encouraged to rate and label their sites with the aim of assisting parents and children to locate suitable content online. Australian content providers should also be

encouraged to provide general information about their content in metadata labels. This would make it easier for parents to access a wide range of suitable content through the use of more effective searching strategies and techniques.

The development of a database of useful online resources for parents and children, both online and in printed form was also recommended by the Task Force.

Task Force

The ABA set up the Task Force

