

**Commercial radio inquiry:
terms of reference (ctd)**

Broadcasting Company Pty Ltd pursuant to any such agreement, arrangement or understanding has been included in the gross earnings of 5AD Broadcasting Company Pty Ltd in:

- (i) the financial accounts of 5AD Broadcasting Company Pty Ltd; and
- (ii) the statutory declarations made by or on behalf of 5AD Broadcasting Company Pty Ltd;

pursuant to section 205B of the Act; and

(m) whether 5AD Broadcasting Company Pty Ltd remains a suitable licensee within the meaning of section 41 of the Act.

(n) whether any consideration paid to or for the benefit of Southern State Broadcasters Pty Ltd pursuant to any such agreement, arrangement or understanding has been included in the gross earnings of Southern State Broadcasters Pty Ltd in:

- (i) the financial accounts of Southern State Broadcasters Pty Ltd; and
- (ii) the statutory declarations made by or on behalf of Southern State Broadcasters Pty Ltd;

pursuant to section 205B of the Act; and

(o) whether Southern State Broadcasters Pty Ltd remains a suitable licensee within the meaning of section 41 of the Act.

Radio 6PR

(p) the terms and circumstances of any arrangements, agreements or understandings entered into by or on behalf of;

- (i) 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited; or
- (ii) Mr Howard Sattler;


or a corporation associated with any of the above persons, with any third party or parties concerning the content of any program, comment or discussion to be broadcast on radio 6PR pursuant to the commercial broadcasting licence granted to 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited last renewed by the ABA on 6 May 1996;

(q) the effect of any such agreement, arrangement or understanding on the content of programs, comments or discussions broadcast on radio 6PR from 5 October 1992 to the date of commencement of this investigation;

(r) whether any consideration paid to or for the benefit of 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited pursuant to any such agreement, arrangement or understanding has been included in the gross earnings of 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited in:

- (i) the financial accounts of 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited; and
- (ii) the statutory declarations made by or on behalf of 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited;

pursuant to section 205B of the Act; and

(s) whether 6PR Southern Cross Radio Pty Limited remains a suitable licensee within the meaning of section 41 of the Act. 

International to the

There is a high level of public perception that along with the many advantages of the Internet, there are also some risks for users, a three-country survey on attitudes to the Internet has found.

The study shows that Australians support the idea of content labelling and reporting hotlines as measures to combat these risks, and would block certain types of content if they were able to do so.

'Australian respondents saw industry, government and Internet users as all having a part to play in the appropriate supervision and selection of Internet content,' said Mr Gareth Grainger, ABA Deputy Chairman. 'These results seem to indicate support for a co-regulatory approach to Internet content regulation. It is this kind of regulatory scheme that has been passed by Parliament and is being introduced by the ABA in partnership with industry and the community.'

The survey was undertaken in Australia, Germany and the USA by the German-based Bertelsmann Foundation in conjunction with the ABA in June 1999. It ascertained peo-

ples' views on perceived risks associated with the Internet and practical ways of managing these risks.

The majority of those surveyed in each country were concerned about the presence of pornographic material and racist messages on the Internet. In Australia, 53 per cent of those surveyed said they would block pornographic content in all circumstances, while a further 33 per cent said they block this content in certain circumstances. The equivalent figures for racist messages are 60 per cent and 21 per cent respectively.

The implications of the research findings will be discussed at the Internet Content Summit in Munich, Germany in September. The Summit is one of the most significant events in the development of a broad set of strategies for self-regulation of Internet content by industry, academia and government policy makers. The ABA will be an active participant in this international forum and has participated in the research project as part of its commitment to its new area of responsibility for Internet content.



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research on attitudes Internet

Australian findings

Advantages and risks

The enormous potential of the Internet is recognised by the majority of Australians with 70 per cent believing there are more advantages than disadvantages. Perhaps not surprisingly, Internet users are far more likely to say that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages with 92 per cent of those who have access at home and 84 per cent who have access somewhere else indicating this view.

At the same time, Australians recognise that there are risks with using the Internet. Three out of four interviewees (76 per cent) believe there are risks, while only 13 per cent believe there are none. The top five risks identified are:

- child protection, content that is unsuitable for minors;
- pornography;
- risks connected with financial transactions, e.g. credit card misuse;
- data protection, privacy issues; and
- criminality, illegal contents.

Those interviewees who had children in the household were asked if they thought that there was certain content

on the Internet that was inappropriate for their children. Eight out of ten thought there was (79 per cent), including 87 per cent of those with Internet access at home and 81 per cent of those with access somewhere else.

Given this high level of concern about the risks of being online, it is interesting to note that 76 per cent of Internet users have not discovered anything on the Internet that they personally found disturbing.

Action in relation to risks

A majority of Australians (62 per cent) think there are ways for parents to prevent their children from viewing inappropriate Internet sites or content. However, 21 per cent don't think there are ways for parents to do this, while 18 per cent are unsure.

When asked if they think it would be a good idea for people to be able to set their computers so that certain Internet content would be blacked out automatically, 77 per cent said it is a good idea, while 18 per cent believe that it is not useful. The percentage holding the 'not useful' view increased to 26 per cent

for those with Internet access at home and 23 per cent for those with Internet access somewhere else.

Pornography and racist messages are the type of content that people were most willing to block, if it were technically feasible to do so (see table over page).

In addition to content blocking, the research also sought attitudes to content rating and the operation of hotlines as responses to the perceived risks of the Internet. Nearly eight in ten respondents (78 per cent) thought that a ratings system like the one used for movies would be useful in relation to Internet content.

Respondents were subsequently informed of the availability of end-user filtering and provided with a brief description of the way it works. Ninety per cent of Australian respondents see this as a useful system and 57 per cent see the filtering of Internet content by Internet service providers (ISPs) as an important aspect in choosing an ISP. This latter issue was raised with respondents by describing a hypothetical provider who 'tries to attract new customers by offering to filter out Internet content that is harmful or dis-

turbing to young people before it even appears on the screen'. While more than half the respondents identify this as an important aspect in choosing an ISP, one in three say that other options are more important.

On the issue of hotlines for the reporting of dangerous Internet content, 70 per cent of respondents think it is a good idea for hotlines of this kind to operate in some countries, while 17 per cent think that they don't help much. In terms of setting up and financing these hotlines, 30 per cent see this as the responsibility of government, while 27 per cent identify the 'major companies that run the Internet' as being responsible. Of the remainder, 15 per cent nominate individual

Research results

The full report of the research is now available on the ABA web site, <www.aba.gov.au>, and the Bertelsmann Foundation's web site,

<www.stiftung.bertelsmann.de/internetcontent/english/frameset_home.htm>

See ABA Update no. 79, August 1999 for a report on the top line findings, released in late July.



Internet service providers, 11 per cent say private organisations, and 14 per cent do not nominate anyone or don't know who should be responsible.

Responsibility for action in relation to risks

It is evident that Australians see government and the Internet industry as having a responsibility for setting up and financing hotlines. In terms of responsibilities for the supervision and selection of Internet content more generally, this theme is continued and extended to include Internet users themselves.

The majority of respondents (71 per cent) have doubts that the police alone can effectively combat misuse and illegal content on the Internet. They see industry, government and Internet users as all having a part to play in the appropriate supervision and selection of Internet content. When asked who they have most confidence in to undertake this role, respondents indicate a range of players including:

- Internet users themselves (48 per cent),

- the major online providers (42 per cent),
- other agencies such as government or independent agencies (37 per cent),
- producers of web sites (33 per cent), and
- the courts (28 per cent).

The research

The research was conducted with representative samples of the adult population in each country (Australia, Germany and the USA). The Australian component of the research was conducted by Newspoll between 8 and 11 June 1999. A total of 1200 telephone interviews were conducted with a national representative sample of people 18 years of age and older. Sixty per cent (718) of those interviewed were Internet users, with 30 per cent saying they had access at home and 46 per cent saying they had access somewhere else.

The full report, which is available at the web sites of the ABA and Bertelsmann Foundation, contains detailed comparative data for the three countries that participated in the study.

Blocking unsuitable content

Content	Block in all circumstances	Block under certain circumstances
	%	%
Racist messages	60	21
Pornography and sex scenes	53	33
Depictions of violence	41	45
Obscene language	38	36
Nudity	26	45

Question:

There are also things on the Internet which are not actually illegal, but which some people consider unsuitable for themselves or their children and would block out or block access to. Other people don't think these things are unsuitable and would like to view them. If it were up to you, which contents would you personally block in all circumstances, if it were technically possible, which would you block only under certain circumstances and which would you not block at all?

International Network of Experts on Content Self-Regulation

In February 1999, Mr Grainger was invited to join the International Network of Experts on Content Self-Regulation. The network is an initiative of the German-based Bertelsmann Foundation. Through the network, the Foundation aims to facilitate the development of a coordinated international system to ensure responsibility and security on the Internet, particularly for minors. The network comprises key players and distinguished decision-makers in the area of Internet content and responsibility.

The network's mission is to facilitate the development of an integrated system of approaches to dealing with harmful and illegal content on the Internet through self-regulation. Its work in developing this self-regulatory system is focused on four key areas of responsibility: industry codes of conduct, self-rating and filtering mechanisms, hotlines, and law enforcement.

The International Internet Content Summit, to be held in Munich in September 1999, will consider the network's recommendations in the four key areas of responsibility.

Internet content regulation in Australia

The *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Online Services) Act 1999* establishes a co-regulatory scheme for Internet content based on the investigation of complaints by the ABA and the development of codes of practice by industry. The ABA is working in partnership with industry and the community to implement the scheme and will operate a complaints hotline from 1 January 2000.

The ABA will be the first point of contact for people wishing to complain about Internet content defined as prohibited. The Act defines prohibited content as material that has been classified RC (Refused Classification) or X by the National Classification Board. Content hosted in Australia that has been classified R but does not have an adult verification mechanism to restrict access will also be prohibited.

Codes of practice are being developed by industry to govern the activities of Internet service providers and Internet content hosts. Industry is required to consult with the community in the development of these codes. The ABA will register the codes if it is satisfied that industry has undertaken appropriate community consultation and that the codes contain appropriate community safeguards.

In performing its role, the ABA will be guided by the principles laid down in the legislation of minimising the financial and administrative burdens on industry and encouraging the supply of Internet carriage services at performance standards that meet community needs.

Australian families guide to the Internet

In relation to its community education role, the ABA provides the Australian families guide to the Internet web site, <www.aba.gov.au/family/index.html>

The site provides extensive information and numerous links to other sites with the aim of helping parents and carers of children to make their children's online experience as safe and rewarding as possible.