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are dealing with similar problems in a different context. INHOPE aims to do all that as well as consider some of the difficult policy issues that arise in this area. For example, the issue of hotline responses to Internet Relay Chat was the subject of a quite detailed paper that was produced for a meeting earlier this year where a number of suggestions were made.

Hopefully the benefits of the work that INHOPE is doing will extend to Australia and through your involvement in INHOPE, there'll be a forum where we can learn very directly from one another.

***What suggestions would you make to the ABA in terms of promoting the availability of its hotline?***

The crucial thing about promoting the availability of the hotline is remembering that you are aiming at the user. You have to think of the mechanisms whereby you can reach the user who may come across illegal content. An obvious way would be to negotiate the provision of a link to your online complaints form from the home pages or logon pages of the main Internet service providers in Australia. That is a priority which could be supplemented by 'offline' promotion.

***Nigel, I understand Childnet has been doing some work for the European Commission in the area of community awareness. Will you tell us what that work has involved and what it has found?***

It is a work project that we started in January this year. In essence we have been looking at existing attempts to communicate awareness of Internet safety.

We looked at projects in a number of different countries to establish what was good practice and what had and had not worked. We conducted focus groups in six different European countries and at the same time, invited one hundred experts on children and Internet use to fill in a similar exercise to the focus groups — but to fill it in on the Net Aware web site. We have been collecting all that information, absorbing it and drawing it together. We'll be producing our final report by the end of the year.

***What are the topline findings?***

Nobody has said to us, why on earth are you doing this? In fact, it has been the opposite. Everyone we have spoken to has said there is a huge need for an Internet safety awareness

campaign. There has also been a real concern about communicating effectively with the audience — you need to define carefully whether you are aiming your awareness program at parents, teachers, adults or the kids themselves. If you are aiming at children then you have to decide which age group and make sure the resources you produce are tailored to their needs. The third thing that parents have had a very clear view about is their concern that you don't tempt children into looking for material. Rather than telling children and teenagers what not to do, parents thought it was better to empower them by talking in a more informal style about the opportunities and dangers on the Internet.

We are currently doing some further testing with children, which will be completed by the end of the year. It's very important that we find out what they think, in addition to getting the views of their parents.

***When will the results of the full project be available?***

The report has to be submitted before the end of December and assuming the Commission will give us permission, we hope that it will be published on both their web site and our site in January.

***Are you aware of what the European Commission is planning following release of the report?***

The European Commission has already allocated a substantial budget for awareness programs. I understand that the Commission is planning to host one or more meetings to bring together all the different sectors who have an interest in this issue. Childnet would like to help that happen and hopefully sometime next year, there will be a significant Internet safety awareness program introduced in Europe.

**Childnet International is an international organisation committed to promoting children's interests on the Internet. It is based in London but operates around the world.**

**For more information about Childnet International, visit: <[www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)>**

**For more information about INHOPE, visit: <[www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org)>**

**For more information about the European Commission's support for hotlines, visit <[www.inhope.org/uk/ecprog/ecprog.html](http://www.inhope.org/uk/ecprog/ecprog.html)>**

