I-Link, an international conference in Taipei on 25 and 26 March, focused on fixed and mobile Internet safety issues. Andree Wright, ABA Director, Industry Performance and Review, represented the ABA.

2005 Asia-Pacific International Conference on Internet Safety

In Taiwan, 13 million people access the Internet daily. Taiwan is also a world leader in mobile telephony: along with Hong Kong, it has the highest mobile phone penetration rate in Asia. Ahead of a partnership by industry and the Government Information Office to introduce Internet safety ratings for websites later this year, fixed and mobile Internet safety issues were the focus of an international conference held by I-Link in Taipei on 25 and 26 March.

The conference was opened by the Director of the Children's Bureau, the Minister of the Government Information Office, the Vice-President of National Chengchi University and the Chairman of Taiwan I-Link.

In his keynote speech, Dr Peng Hwa Ang, Dean of the School of Communication and Information at Singapore's Nanyang Technology University, noted that while there is a tendency for governments to focus on the economic and positive aspects of the digital world, a variety of government, industry and NGO initiatives are helping to reduce dangers in the cyber world of new media technologies. Dr Ang also emphasised the importance of parents taking an active role in being educated about the Internet as troubled children offline become troubled children online.

Subsequent sessions focused on key initiatives, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, the USA and Canada. In each session a principal speaker was followed by a discussion panel which compared the international initiatives to programs being undertaken in Taipei. For some, the root of the problem is not the Internet but changing social values and interactions. They consider that it is important to share strategies that work as children and young people are less amenable than their parents' generation to being told what to do.

Strong interest in their children's education means that Singaporean parents will attend meetings on Internet safety issues and are therefore actively empowered to explore the Internet and its issues with their children. Dr Angeline Koo, from Singapore's Parents Advisory Group for the Internet (PAGI), said that research has shown that both Singaporean parents and children favour educational over control strategies to safeguard children from the problems and dangers that can be encountered online. The preferred educational strategies are, 'having mutual discussions of the dangers of the Internet' and 'learning more about the Internet', while control measures such as 'stop children from using the computer' and 'complain to the Internet Service Provider' were less favoured. What worked for PAGI was 'Make it Easy, Make it Fun and Make it Edgy'.

Judi Westberg Warren, President of Web Wise Kids in the USA set out its positive, proactive and preventative approach to reaching children. To change online behaviour, Web Wise Kids uses attractive media with messages that children and young people can understand. The Missing Computer Game is the centrepiece of the Web Wise Kids program. Developed for 11 to 14 year olds, the game is based on the true story of a 14 year old boy who was abducted as a result of online contact. The goal of the game is, through the

L–R: Andree Wright at the Government Information Office with Samuel Wu, Director, Department of Broadcasting, Taiwan Government Information Office, and Dr Vivian Huang, President of Cyberangels Pick and organiser of the Taiwan I-Link Conference.

players' initiatives, to bring the boy back home before he vanishes for good.

The Missing Computer Game was developed in Canada and is one of a number of innovative initiatives by Drew Ann Wake. Ms Wake told the conference that more than one million children have played the game and more than 150,000 copies are now in schools, mainly in the USA and Canada.

Australia's approach is similar to that of Korea which was presented by Do-Byung Jeong, the Chief Executive of the Korean Information and Communication Ethics Committee. The Committee employs a code of conduct, a complaints hotline, research and educative initiatives. Like Australia and Taiwan, Korea is a member of the INHOPE hotline association and is therefore able to deal with illegal and harmful material at the international, as well as the local, level. Mr Jeong set out their major goals for 2005, including the development of a regional co-operative system, the further spread of hotlines in Asia, university courses on Internet ethics, extension of the e-Clean Korea campaign to local regions in Korea, and the introduction of the Net Clover movement to reward those who have pledged to follow the ten commandments of Information Communication Ethics.