

Alongside the increasing use of social media services is a likely increase in the potential for online risks. The diffusion of information and communications technologies in Australia's economy and society and increasing participation in the digital economy mean that risk mitigation strategies are relevant for all users.

Minister releases ACMA's second annual report on **online** protection measures for consumers

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator the Hon. Stephen Conroy, released on 22 April 2009 the second of ACMA's annual reports on international developments in promoting online safety, *Developments in Internet Filtering Technologies and Other Measures for Promoting Online Safety*.

ACMA's first report on online safety, released in February 2008, identified that there is no 'silver bullet' solution to the problem of online safety risks and that a range of measures is required to mitigate the variety of risks. The second report has found that a coordinated approach to improving cybersafety and security can improve the effectiveness of consumer protection measures.

One observation of the report is that alongside increasing use of social media services by both adults and children is a likely increase in the potential for online risks for all age groups. The diffusion of information and communications technologies in Australia's economy and society and increasing participation in the digital economy mean that risk mitigation strategies are relevant for all users.

The report observes that a coordinated and overarching strategy that defines specific roles for all parties (industry, government, educators, parents) is being implemented in the UK to reduce online risks, replacing a previously more

fragmented or piecemeal approach. Online risks can vary depending on how users interact with internet technologies, and include:

- content risks, where users may be exposed to online content that is illegal or inappropriate
- behavioural risks associated with online communication, where children may be exposed to cyberbullying or contact with sexual predators
- e-security risks, where users' personal information online may expose them to online fraud, viruses and spam.

An optimal online risk-mitigation strategy is likely to include a suite of measures targeted at different points in the supply chain. Measures deployed across the supply chain may include network-wide blocking by internet service providers (ISPs) of illegal content and user deployment of filtering technologies; monitoring by parents of children's activities; and education initiatives and hotlines to report potentially illegal content that support investigation and law enforcement.

Examples of measures to promote online risk and safety mitigation, and the points in the supply chain at which they can be implemented, are outlined in the diagram opposite.

The report explores strategies to mitigate these risks that aim to achieve one or all of the following:

- reducing the availability of illegal content, where filtering technologies can be employed by ISPs as a means of blocking access to illegal content
- restricting access to content deemed to be inappropriate by way of mechanisms such as age verification, website user guidelines and moderation
- developing behavioural skills through targeted education initiatives to build resilience against a range of risks including cyberbullying, and exposure to illegal or inappropriate content.

Individuals who are concerned about material they have seen online can report it to www.acma.gov.au/hotline.

Developments in Internet Filtering Technologies and Other Measures for Promoting Online Safety is available on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au. Go to About ACMA > Publications & research: Research > For consumers.

POINTS OF INTERVENTION IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN FOR PROMOTING ONLINE SAFETY

	REDUCING AVAILABILITY							BUILDING RESILIENCE
			RESTRICTING ACCESS					
SUPPLY CHAIN	PRODUCER	CONTENT AGGREGATOR	CONTENT HOST	INTERNET INFRA-STRUCTURE	SEARCH AND NAVIGATION	ISP	CONSUMER DEVICE	USER
REDUCING ILLEGAL ACTIVITY	POLICE INVESTIGATION	STOPPING OF PAYMENTS	MODERATION	DISCONNECTION OF HOST	BLOCKING OF ILLEGAL CONTENT	NETWORK-WIDE BLOCKING OF ILLEGAL OR DANGEROUS CONTENT	PARENTAL CONTROLS	RESPONSIBLE USE POLICES
			ORDER TO CEASE SPAMMING				SPAM FILTERING	WARNINGS OF DANGEROUS CONTENT
			NOTICE TO TAKE DOWN CONTENT	ERASURE OF CONTENT ADDRESS				
EFFECTIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS								EDUCATION AND AWARENESS
PROMOTING A SAFER ONLINE ENVIRONMENT			VERIFICATION OF AGE			PARENTAL CONTROLS	PARENTAL CONTROLS	DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP
								RESPONSIBLE USE POLICES

ACMA is continuing to develop and add to its range of programs for promoting online safety.

Initiatives include:

- establishing a knowledge base on cybersafety through commissioned research on children's use and perceptions of social networking sites, their online behaviours and practices for managing online risk
- an ACMA hotline for reporting prohibited and potentially prohibited content under Schedule 7 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (BSA)
- referring cases of online child sexual abuse to law enforcement agencies for investigation and prosecution
- providing to the Internet Industry Association family-friendly filter providers ACMA's index of content assessed as prohibited and potentially prohibited under Schedule 7 of the BSA (often called the 'ACMA blacklist'), in accordance with the IIA Content Services Code of Practice
- providing improved cybersafety websites that offer comprehensive, up-to-date and age-appropriate educational resources aimed at parents, teachers and children
- establishing ACMA's professional development program for teachers.