

# Child Online Protection







Stories of  
children online  
don't always have  
a happy ending.

## What's Happening Online

Computers have brought untold benefits to children around the world, with the number of connected households increasing each year. By the end of 2008, there were over 1.5 billion people online, up from under 200 million at the beginning of 1998.

But while the potential for good is undisputed, it has also raised new and disturbing issues, especially where children are concerned.

### According to surveys:

- Around 90% of teens and young adults use the Internet.

- Over 60% of children and teenagers talk in chat rooms on a daily basis.
- 3 in 4 children online are willing to share personal information about themselves and their family in exchange for goods and services.
- 1 in 5 children will be targeted by a predator or paedophile each year.
- While 30% of teenage girls say they have been sexually harassed in a chat room, only 7% tell their parents, for fear their online access will be limited<sup>1</sup>.

“If MySpace was a country, it would be the 8<sup>th</sup> largest in the world.”<sup>1</sup>



## What Many Parents Don't Know

There is a disconcerting gap between what parents think and children know. So while 92% of parents say they have established rules for their children's online activity, 34% of children say their parents haven't<sup>2</sup>. These patterns are consistent in other countries across the world:

- In France, 72% of children surf online alone, and while 85% of parents know about parental control software, only 30% have installed it<sup>3</sup>.
- In Korea, 90% of homes connect to cheap, high-speed broadband, and up to 30% of Koreans under the age of 18 are at risk of Internet addiction, spending two hours a day or more online<sup>4</sup>.
- In the UK, 57% of 9-19 year olds say they've seen online pornography, 46% say they've given out information they shouldn't and 33% say they've been bullied online<sup>5</sup>.
- In China, 44% of children said they had been approached online by strangers, and 41% had talked to an online stranger about sex, or something that made them feel uncomfortable<sup>6</sup>.





# The Bad & The Ugly

## Online Gaming & Addiction

There is a growing body of evidence that many children are developing an unhealthy addiction to spending time online. Often, this addiction takes the form of internet gaming, but essentially any online activity can become addictive. The dangers of such an addiction are an increased risk of health and social problems.

## Online Fraud

Many fraudsters like to specifically target children, as young people often don't have the experience and knowledge to distinguish legitimate requests from fraudulent ones. Fraudsters can use knowledge gained from children online to steal, blackmail, terrorize, or even kidnap.

## Pornography

While filtering programs and parental controls are getting better, many children around the world are still at risk of viewing images that they aren't mature enough to understand or appreciate. Even worse is when children themselves are used and depicted as sexual objects.

## Violence

While aggression is an unfortunate part of life, the sheer range and volume of online violence is something most of us don't want our children exposed to: images of war, domestic abuse, bigotry, misogyny and other vicious attacks.





“How it happened, God,  
I don’t know how it  
happened, but it did....  
My baby was in front  
of me on her computer.  
I mean in front of me.  
Not in her room.”<sup>7</sup>

Father of teen kidnapped by someone  
she met on the Internet



### Cyber-bullying

With the arrival of the Internet and mobile technology, children today are open to bullying and intimidation wherever they are – it’s no longer just a playground event. Surfing the internet can have severe consequences for a child’s self-confidence and personal development.

### Racism

The Internet has given us instantaneous global access. While this can promote greater communication, understanding and respect; it also makes it easier to spread racial abuse and hate.







# The Good: Connecting the World Responsibly

Children are among the most active – and most vulnerable – participants online. ITU's motto is “committed to connecting the world”, but we are also committed to connecting the world responsibly. That means working together to ensure cybersecurity, enable cyberpeace, and – perhaps most importantly – protect children online. That is why ITU established the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA).

## **GCA & COP**

Confidence and security in using ICTs are fundamental in building an inclusive, secure and global information society. Confidence

and security are also prerequisites for using ICTs effectively, as acknowledged by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

The Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) is an ITU framework for international cooperation aimed at proposing strategies for solutions to enhance confidence and security in the information society. It builds on existing national and regional initiatives to avoid duplication of work and encourage collaboration amongst all relevant partners.

Child Online Protection (COP) is a special initiative within the GCA framework. COP aims to bring together partners from all sectors of the global community to ensure a safe and secure online experience for children everywhere.

## **WSIS Mandate**

At the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), ITU was assigned Action Line C5: “building confidence and security in the use of ICTs”. As a response, ITU Secretary-General Dr Hamadoun Touré formally announced the launch of the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA) on 17 May 2007.

## **The Tunis Commitment**

“We recognize the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the protection of children and in enhancing the development of children. We will strengthen action to protect children from abuse and defend their rights in the context of ICT.”





# Child Online Protection (COP)

COP aims to tackle cyber-security holistically, addressing legal, technical, organizational and procedural issues as well as capacity building and international cooperation.

Our children are our future. This universal fact, coupled with young people's particular vulnerability in an online environment, made a specialized initiative within the larger GCA framework a necessity.

The legal, technical and institutional challenges posed by the issue of cybersecurity are global and far-reaching and can

only be addressed through a coherent strategy taking into account the role of different stakeholders and existing initiatives, within a framework of an international collaborative network.

## Key Objectives of COP:

- Identify risks and vulnerabilities to children in cyberspace
- Create awareness
- Develop practical tools to help minimize risk
- Share knowledge and experience







# ITU's Ongoing Commitment

## Extra Attention for Developing Countries

While there are many established projects and programmes in developed countries to protect children online, there are very few in the developing world. ITU already has a special “Children and Youth” initiative, supporting children and young people from developing countries to improve their access to, and use of, communication technologies to bridge the digital divide. Now with its COP initiative, ITU is reinforcing its commitment to connect the world responsibly.

## A History of Consensus

ITU has a long and successful history of forging consensus on how the world should manage global resources relating to ICTs, such as satellite orbits and radiofrequency spectrum, which

is why ITU was entrusted with the responsibility to lead international efforts to build confidence and security in the use of ICTs.

## Child Helpline

ITU is lobbying telecommunications administrations around the world to consider the allocation of the number 116 111 to give access to helplines run by organizations dedicated to the support and welfare of children. Already in use in several European countries, the universal use of this number would make it easier for children to access help when they need it, wherever they are.

## Working Together

COP has been established as an international collaborative network for action to promote

the online protection of children worldwide by providing guidance on safe online behaviour in conjunction with other UN agencies and partners.

ITU is working with the following organizations<sup>8</sup> on COP and would like to thank them for their support:

- Children's Charities' Coalition on Internet Safety (CHIS)
- Child Helpline International (CHI)
- Cyber Peace Initiative
- European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA)
- European Broadcasting Union (EBU)
- European Commission - Safer Internet Programme
- European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (eNASCO)
- eWWG
- GSM Association
- International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)
- International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children
- Microsoft
- Save the Children
- Telecom Italia
- Telefonica
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations Inter-regional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
- United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)



# WTISD 2009: Protecting Children in Cyberspace



This year, to mark **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD)**, ITU Council adopted the theme: “Protecting children in cyberspace”.

By focusing attention on this important theme, ITU hopes to ensure that children can safely access the Internet and its valuable resources without fear of falling prey to unscrupulous predators in cyberspace.

## What We Want

- We want to put child online safety on the global agenda.
- We want to make sure that everyone is aware of the dangers for children online.
- We want to promote and strengthen the many excellent efforts that are being made around the world to limit these dangers.



With your support,  
we can make every  
child's online  
adventure a safer one.



*“In this new digital world, we all have a special responsibility to ensure the safety and security of young people in the online world, just as we do offline. ”*

Dr Hamadoun Touré

## Contact us:

Website: [www.itu.int/cop](http://www.itu.int/cop)


E-mail: [cop@itu.int](mailto:cop@itu.int)

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1. Source: [www.chatalert.com/dangers/research.php](http://www.chatalert.com/dangers/research.php)
  2. Source: [www.isafe.org/channels/includes/content/statsGreen.html](http://www.isafe.org/channels/includes/content/statsGreen.html)
  3. Source: [www.innocenceendanger.org/index.php?id=677](http://www.innocenceendanger.org/index.php?id=677)
  4. Source: [www.nytimes.com/2007/11/18/technology/18rehab.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/18/technology/18rehab.html)

5. Source: [www.children-go-online.net](http://www.children-go-online.net)
6. Source: [www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-03/03/content\\_6500479.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-03/03/content_6500479.htm)
7. Source: [www.pcsndreams.com/Pages/Predator%20Quotes.htm](http://www.pcsndreams.com/Pages/Predator%20Quotes.htm)
8. As of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2009

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Place des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland  
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