Safer Internet Forum
Luxemburg, 22nd October 2010

Minutes from plenary session "Report mechanism and stakeholders responsibility towards users"

The Safer Internet Forum has been organized by the Safer Internet Programme as an annual conference on safer internet issues since 2004. It brings together representatives of industry, law enforcement authorities, child welfare organizations and policy makers. The 2010 edition focused on the results of two major research projects: *EUKidsOnline II* and *European Online Grooming Project*.

Materials are available at:
- http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/events/forum/index_en.htm
- http://www.slideshare.net/saferinternetforum (presentations)
- http://twitter.com/SaferInternet

The second day of the Forum consisted of three plenary sessions:
(1) How does mobile Internet affect the growth and usage of social networking sites by youngsters?
(2) Report mechanism and stakeholders responsibility towards users, and
(3) Online games – what role do they play in the lives of children.

Richard Swetenham, Head of Unit of the eContent&Safer Intenret unit of the European Commission opened the plenary session of 22 October. Prof. Sonia Livingstone (London School of Economics and Political Science) moderated all plenary sessions of 22.10.2010.

Minutes of these sessions were taken by Dariusz Kloza.

The following panellists contributed to this session:

Elisabeth Staksrud, research fellow at the Dept. of Media and Communications, University of Oslo, specializing in research on digital risks, rights and regulations. Member and national coordinator in the EUKidsOnline network
Richard Allan, Director of Policy, EU, Facebook
Nine Ludwig, Hoofdredacteur, Hyves
Lien Louwagie, Community Director, Netlog
Alex Amneus, Swedish Media Council, Safer Internet Centre, Sweden
Michel Stora, French psychoanalyst, Santé Digital Interactive
Marta Wojtas, Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje, Safer Internet Centre, Poland

You will find below the main points they raised and defended during this session:

Elisabeth Staksrud (Uni. Oslo) presented the first assessment of the social networking principles for the EU, discussing in details the principle No. 4: "Easy to use mechanisms for reporting violations." Majority of analysed services have a link or information available at all times on where to report abusive content or abusive behaviour of other users. These reporting mechanisms were found easy to use. More than a half acknowledges reports from users. She also discussed how these SNS were tested and concluded her speech with recommendations.

Alex Amneus (Swedish Media Council) presented a summary of the results from a review of 17 Swedish SNSs performed in 2009, which showed a generally poor response rate to reports made by the users on these sites. He concluded that there is difference between theory and practice, i.e. site owners say they follow reports but in fact they often do not respond or follow-up, not even in accordance with their own membership policies.

See the full report (in Swedish) here:

http://www.medieradet.se/upload/Rapporter_pdf/Rapport%20-%20Hur%20s%c3%a4kra%20%c3%a4r%20sociala%20n%c3%a4tverkssajter%20f%c3%b6r%20barn%20och%20unga.pdf

Marta Wojtas (Polish Safer Internet Centre) talked about reports on cyberbullying. Not every child knows that he or she could make a report, nor knows how to navigate. Moreover, some SNS do not answer. She underlined that it is highly important that SNS should help.

Nine Ludwig (Hyves) presented the responding practices in Dutch SNS Hyves. In general, they respond within 24 h, and sometimes even 4 h. There is a team of 20 officers, 7 days a week who does content blocking and also answers questions.They work closely with the Dutch law enforcement. There is a special page with tips for parents.

Lien Louwagie (Netlog) mentioned that the reporting solutions of Netlog are similar to those of Hyves. She also pointed out that Netlog has a team of employees who respond to users' inquires, also check every 15 minutes the published content. Netlog works on getting the feedback from the police if they denounce paedophiles. When asked whether users are satisfied with Netlog's solutions, the answer was positive, except for the authors of the content taken down.

Michel Stora (Santé Digital Interactive) spoke about suicide practices on SNS. The teen crisis happens "in" and "on" screens. The "report" button is not sufficient, rather peer-support but not peer-moderation. There is a need for trained professional to deal with in serious situations. He concluded with the example of a teenager who said would commit suicide and has received 3000 clicks and 400 comments.

Richard Allan (Director of Public Policy at Facebook) talked about their practices with regard to abusive conduct. When report comes in, content is being identified, then the review takes place and the content at issue might be removed. No response is given to individual (in general); only in case reply is needed (e.g. more data needed, need to inform parents etc.) In certain cases they might go to law enforcement agencies or to suicide prevention institutions.

Finally, Sonia Livingstone moderated the discussion. The questions concerned the scope of responsibility, answers to reports submitted to the operators of SNS and qualifications of reviewers.