



Multi-annual Community programme on promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies 2005-2008

The Safer Internet Plus programme builds on the aims of its predecessor, the Safer Internet programme (1999 - 2004), in promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, and includes a new focus on empowering end-users - particularly parents, educators and children.

The programme will seek to involve and bring together the different actors whose co-operation is essential. These actors do not necessarily come together unless the appropriate structures are put in place. They include:

- Content providers, Internet service providers and mobile network operators;
- Regulators, standards bodies, industry self-regulatory bodies;
- National, regional and local authorities responsible for industry, education, consumer protection, families, children's rights and child welfare; and
- Non-governmental organisations active in consumer protection, families, children's rights and child welfare.

The Safer Internet programme 1999 - 2004 was a major element in the European Commission's activity in this field and ran from 1999 to 2004 with a total budget of 38.3 million euro. The programme set up a European network of hotlines, encouraged self-regulation and codes of conduct, supported development of filtering and rating systems and stimulated awareness actions. There are now new challenges both in quantitative and qualitative terms:

Qualitative challenges:

- New technologies include ever-increasing processing power and storage capacity of computers;
- Broadband allowing distribution of content such as video which requires high bandwidth;
- The increased capacity of the latest generation of mobile telephone networks.

The new generation of mobile phones will be able to distribute "adult" content and discussions are under

way how to restrict access to this type of content so that parents can have phones with blocking devices to prevent children stumbling across explicit Web sites and unsuitable online chat rooms.

In quantitative terms, the challenges are related to the technological changes already described. They contribute to an increase in the volume as well as in the types of content distributed.

The coverage of the Safer Internet Plus programme is therefore being extended to new online technologies, including mobile and broadband content, online games, peer-to-peer file transfer, and all forms of real-time communications such as chat rooms and instant messages primarily with the aim of improving the protection of children and minors. Action will be taken to ensure that a broader range of areas of illegal and harmful content and conduct of concern are covered, including racism and violence. The programme aims to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end user. As part of a coherent response by the European Union to illegal and harmful content on the Internet, the programme will focus on end-users, particularly parents, educators and children. The new programme also covers other media, such as videos, and explicitly addresses the fight against racism, as well as "spam".

The Safer Internet Plus programme is made up of four Actions:

1. Fighting against illegal content;
2. Tackling unwanted and harmful content;
3. Promoting a safer environment;
4. Awareness-raising.

International co-operation is an integral part of all actions.

Action 1:

Fighting against illegal content: hotlines that enable the public to report illegal content and which pass the reports on to the appropriate body for action. The programme will fund individual hotlines and network co-ordination, and will be extended to help lines for children worried by illegal and harmful content. Hotlines are required for all Member States and candidate countries where none currently exists and should link with national initiatives.

Approximately 25 to 30 percent of overall funding will be available for this action.

Action 2:

Tackling unwanted and harmful content: funding for technology that enables users to limit the amount of unwanted and harmful content they receive, or that can be used to test the effectiveness of available filters. Funding will also be available for developing better filters and promoting exchanges of information and best practice on anti-spam enforcement.

Measures will also be supported to increase take-up of content rating and quality site labels by content providers and adapting ratings and labels to take account of the availability of the same content through different delivery channels due to technological convergence. Better anti-spam enforcement is promoted as a complementary measure to the already existing legislative "ban on spam" in the ePrivacy Directive. Around 10 to 17 percent of the programme's budget will be available for these actions.

Action 3:

Promoting a safer environment: the EU supports self-regulation, which offers flexibility and understanding

of needs in an area combining high technology, rapid change and cross-border activity.

The Safer Internet Forum, set up in 2004 under the Safer Internet Action Plan should become a discussion forum including representatives of industry, law enforcement authorities, policy-makers and user organisations. It will provide a platform for national co-regulatory or self-regulatory bodies to exchange experience. It will drive consensus and provide recommendations and guidelines to national and European channels. Self-regulatory projects to devise cross-border codes of conduct could also be supported. Between 8 and 12 percent of the budget will be for this action.

Action 4:

Awareness-raising: the programme will support information exchange on safer Internet use, particularly for personalised, interactive and mobile applications. It will target content unsuitable for children and racist and xenophobic content and take into account related issues of consumer protection, data protection and information and network security. It will support awareness campaigns [?] especially using mass media, information for schools and Internet cafés [?] the promotion of dialogue and the establishment of partnerships with stakeholders. It will support work to inform users about hotlines, filtering software and services and self-regulation schemes.

Approximately 47 to 51 percent of the total budget is set aside for this action.

** the Safer Internet Plus programme has links with other initiatives. It is designed and implemented in close liaison with other initiatives including the follow-up to the recommendation on protection of minors and human dignity and the action plan of the World Summit on the Information Society.

The European Commission, assisted by a committee, is responsible for the implementation of the Safer Internet Plus programme. The commission, draws up a work programme and ensures that actions under the programme are subject to prior appraisal, follow-up and subsequent evaluation. The commission reports on the implementation of the actions and its own evaluation and forwards the results to the European Parliament and Council.

Participation in the Safer Internet Plus programme is open to legal entities established in the member states and to candidate countries in accordance with bilateral agreements to be concluded with those countries. The programme may be opened to legal entities established in EFTA States that are contracting parties to the EEA Agreement, in accordance with the provisions of that Agreement. Participation may also be opened, without financial support by the Community under the programme, to legal entities established in third countries and to international organisations, where such participation contributes effectively to the implementation of the programme.

The Safer Internet Plus programme will be executed through indirect action comprising:

a) shared-cost actions

- Pilot projects and best practice actions. Ad-hoc projects in areas relevant to the programme, including projects demonstrating best practice or involving innovative uses of existing technology;
- Networks bringing together a variety of stakeholders to ensure action throughout the EU and to facilitate co-ordination activities and transfer of knowledge. They may be linked to best practice actions;
- Applied Europe-wide research carried out on a comparable basis into the way people, especially children, use new online technologies.

Community funding will normally not exceed 50 percent of the cost of the project. Public sector bodies may be reimbursed on the basis of 100 percent of the additional costs.

b) accompanying measures

Accompanying measures will contribute to the implementation of the programme or the preparation of future activities. Measures devoted to the commercialisation of products, process or services, marketing activities and sales promotion are excluded.

- Benchmarking and opinion surveys to produce reliable data on safer use of the Internet and new online technologies for all member states collected through a comparable methodology;
- Technical assessment of technologies, such as filtering, designed to promote safer use of Internet and new online technologies. The assessment will also take into account whether these technologies are privacy-enhancing or not;
- Studies in support of the programme and its actions, including self-regulation, the work of the Safer Internet Forum, and the preparation of future activities;
- Prize competitions for best practice;
- Exchange of information, conferences, seminars, workshops or other meetings and the management of clustered activities;
- Dissemination, information and communication activities.

Context

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to:
31 December 2008

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€ 45 million

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