



### ***How are Children impacted in the Wi-Fi/Sci-Fi World and what should we do to help them?***

We as responsible adults must have a plan to help children capitalize on the opportunities of emerging wireless technologies while minimizing the risks – not just on ensuring that a competitive environment ensures the success of wireless services.

We spend much time talking about spectrum allocation, a strategy for digital rights management, and the killer app. Americans devote insufficient time thinking about how we will protect children in a world of wireless, mobile, portable devices. Faster, less expensive, hand-held devices combined with better wired and wireless networks are enabling our children to be connected to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Today's wireless device is cell phone, pda, digital camera, game boy, MP3 player, web browser, and e-mail in/out box. In ten years these devices will be more ubiquitous, smaller and more mobile (easily hidden), and more intrusive in their capabilities. The networked world our children live in is filled with both opportunities and challenges. Our children can travel the world over the internet without leaving home. They can connect with and meet anyone, anywhere, anytime online. Unfortunately, with this networking and connectivity comes inherent problems. Material that parents may find inappropriate can reach them from anywhere, anytime, from anyone. Kids in high school can take a picture of an overweight child in the locker room and send it to hand held devices across the classroom. Marketers can reach your children on their handheld. Pornographers and pedophiles too! Mobility has made it more difficult to know who your children are talking to, who is contacting your children, and what material they are being sent.

How are other countries dealing with these changes?

- In Germany, the Youth Protection Act 2003 requires companies who wish to provide content that is not suitable for minors to offer a youth protection scheme. These schemes have to be validated by a new official body. The act makes no distinction between mobile and fixed internet services.
- Britain's mobile operators have announced a new Code of Practice designed to prevent under-aged and unauthorized users from accessing pornographic images and other adult content and services on their mobile phone.
- The EU is holding an exploratory meeting called "Towards a European Code of Conduct for ISPs" focused on the issue of illegal & harmful Internet content.
- In Japan, new laws promoting self-regulation address child protection issues, especially in relation to mobile dating services. Public funds are available for education campaigns and for developing improved filtering technologies.

The solution to protecting children online is a complex one – there is no silver bullet. Technology alone does not protect children, but it is a start. Government regulation is not the answer. Technology, industry self-regulation, and consumer education bring us closer to the goal. We educate our children in all other areas of life; we need to do the same in the wireless world. We teach our children how to make good choices because we can't be with them every minute of every day. A good beginning:

- A public/private partnership for a major public education campaign that promotes awareness of technologies and methods to protect children online and educates parents about strategies, best practices and options for safe and constructive Internet use, and provides practical tools to execute those strategies.
- Encourage content providers to label their sites; integrate label-based filtering technologies into Web browsers; provide easily implemented parental controls; focus on the end user.
- A platform that can read/support labels and metadata (privacy, DRM, adult content) across all forms of digital media.

In addition to ensuring a competitive environment for wireless services, we must also help Internet users find what they want, trust what they find and avoid material that, for whatever reason, they choose not to see. We have an obligation to help our children maximize the value of new technologies while minimizing risks.

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