[IE] Code of Practice and Ethics for the Internet

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In January 2002, The Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI) published its first Code of Practice and Ethics. This is part of a largely self-regulatory approach aimed at eliminating and preventing harmful content on the Internet. The Code was drawn up in association with the Internet Advisory Board established by the Irish Government.

The Code is aimed at encouraging members of the industry to take responsibility for issues relating to enforcement, obligations and control. It sets out minimum practice guidelines for its members. For example, each member must: have an Acceptable Use Policy to which customers must adhere; provide information to customers about filtering tools; offer filtering software or filtering services to customers in accordance with best industry practices; include on their websites links to the ISPAI website and to the website of the child pornography hotline, . Members are also required to register with the hotline.

The Code recommends adherence to best practices, wherever reasonably possible, in relation to: respecting caching directions or restrictions upon the advice of their customers; providing information to their customers on software tools designed to protect customers' privacy; use of anti-spamming software; and investigation and prevention of hacking.

In regard to advertisements and promotions, members must endeavour to adhere to the standards of the relevant codes of practice for advertising and sponsorship (advertising and sponsorship are largely governed by self-regulation in Ireland).

Members must also comply with the Data Protection Act, 1988, and should have a privacy statement on their main website. There are also provisions regarding the transfer of domain names.

The Code set out a complaints procedure: initially the complainant and the member concerned must try to resolve the compliant themselves, but if this is not successful, the ISPAI may set up a Complaints Panel to investigate the matter. If a member is found to have breached the Code, the Board of Directors of ISPAI may impose sanctions. These range from requiring the member to remedy the breach of the Code, to suspending or expelling the member from the ISPAI.

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