

[GB] New Proactive Approach to Seek Out Child Pornography

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*Tony Prosser
University of Bristol Law School*

On 18 June 2013, the UK Culture Secretary announced an agreement with the internet industry that the self-regulatory Internet Watch Foundation will actively seek out images of child abuse on the internet.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) was established in 1996 by the internet industry. It receives reports from internet users of sexually abusive images of children, and provides for the industry a 'notice and takedown' service, which alerts internet service providers and hosting companies of such content so that it can be removed. The Culture Secretary arranged a summit of major internet service providers (Virgin Media, BskyB, and TalkTalk), search engines (including Google and Yahoo), mobile operators and social media companies (including Facebook and Twitter). It was agreed that the IWF would take a proactive approach and seek out illegal images of child abuse on the internet. In doing so it will work closely with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). This is within the department of the Serious Organised Crime Agency, part of the UK police service specialising in combatting child pornography.

The four leading internet service providers agreed to provide a GBP 1 million to help fund the new proactive approach and to help tackle the creation and distribution of child sexual abuse material online. All the companies present signed a 'zero tolerance' pledge on child sexual abuse imagery. It was also agreed that all providers will introduce 'splash pages' so that when someone tries to access a page blocked by the IWF they will see a warning message stating that the page may include indecent or illegal content.

The effect will be that IWF will no longer have to wait until illegal material is reported. It estimates that there are a million images of child abuse online yet it receives only 40,000 reports each year. The work with CEOP will also facilitate more effective prosecution of offenders.

Progress was also reviewed on a number of other means to protect children; it was noted that the four main service providers are now offering an active choice on parental controls to all new customers; that the main Wi-Fi providers will offer family-friendly Wi-Fi in public places; the major service providers are committed to delivering home network parental controls by the end of the year; and that customers are being told of such controls through e-mails and their bills. Further

meetings will be help in future to ensure that further progress is made.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 'Tacking illegal images - new proactive approach to seek out child sexual abuse content', Press Release 18 June 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tackling-illegal-images-new-proactive-approach-to-seek-out-child-sexual-abuse-content>

