VHA

VODAFONE HUTCHISON AUSTRALIA

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VHA RESPONSE TO THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON CYBER-SAFETY

7th April 2011

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL COMMENTS

Executive summary

Vodafone Hutchison Australia Pty Limited (VHA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety.

VHA supports the submission to the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety from the Internet Industry Association (IIA)[1] and their recommendations, particularly concerning the role of education and the call for further research tailored to cyber-safety issues faced by Australian children and their parents.

VHA strongly believes in a collaborative approach to addressing cyber-safety, working within the wider mobile and online industry in Australia and internationally and with child safety experts.

This is evident in our participation in, and support of, the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA)'s child safety initiatives, as described in AMTA's submission to the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety[2]. Most recently this has seen AMTA's Mobile Muster raise funds through the donation of old mobile handsets for The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, broadening awareness of cyber-bulling via the 'Old Phones Safe Kids' campaign launched in March 2011.

Internationally, Vodafone Group Ltd. has a long history of both encouraging collaboration on industry-wide standards for child online safety and education for parents and children. Vodafone Group is a founding member of the Mobile Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Content, established by the GSMA. The European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children was developed by Vodafone Group together with other leading mobile operators.

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[1] Internet Industry Association (IIA) submission to the Secretary of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber Safety (Submission No. 88) 9 July 2010 http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jscc/subs/sub_88.pdf
[2] Australia Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) submission to the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety July 2010 http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jscc/subs/sub_117.pdf

Research on Cyberbullying commissioned by Vodafone

Mobile devices, the internet and digital media are constantly evolving. Research commissioned by Vodafone in October 2010 revealed that while technology is becoming ever more ingrained in the lives of children, Australian parents are not feeling equipped to help their children mange the potential challenges and risks in the digital world[3].

The research showed that while Australian children are remarkably active online- with one in every three children aged 6-18 years old, spending over 10 hours each week outside of school hours, online[4]- just one in two parents surveyed believe they understand cyberbullying and are proactively discussing the issue with their children[5]. One in five parents surveyed believe their child had been exposed to bullying[6], one in ten acknowledged their child may have been a witness to bullying[7], and a startling 0% responded their child was a bully[8].

VHA's efforts have focused on encourage parents to get involved in their children's digital world, understand how they are using mobile devices and the internet and the websites they are visiting. Social networking websites can be a very positive experience for many children, but it is also important that parents are aware of the potential risks, the tools they can use and the child safety features offered by many of the larger social media websites, and where they can get more help.

[3] *Vodafone Digital Parenting Report-Safety*, October, 2010. Omnibus. 1500 respondents
[4] ibid
[5] ibid
[6] ibid
[7] ibid
[8] ibid

Resources for Parents

VHA offer a brochure for parents and carers in all of our Vodafone and 3 stores, as a quick reference guide on key cyber-safety issues and where they can get more information and help.

Many Australians also access Vodafone's Parents Guide website, with detailed information provided in partnership with several chid safety organisations. There are tips focused on children at different age groups http://parents.vodafone.com

A more detailed print magazine version is also available from Vodafone, with in-depth articles on many cyber-safety issues from leading international child safety experts and contributions from the online industry.
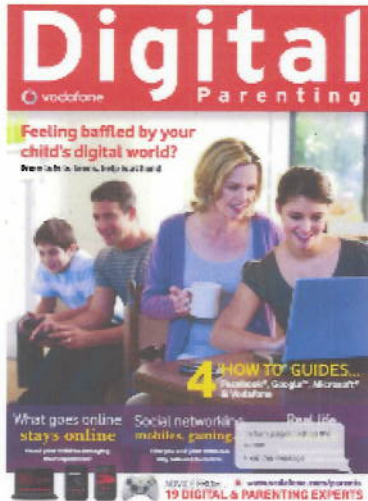
Support and Education for Australian Youth

In recognition of the growing issue of cyber bullying and the importance of education, in 2010 the Vodafone Foundation in partnership with SchoolAid launched an anti-cyber-bullying initiative called Cure the Bullies. Developed with input from young people aged 8-12 years old, the http://www.curethebullies.com.au website focuses on raising children's awareness of the behaviours around bullying and encourages and empowers children to take a stand against cyber-bullying.

From March 2011 VHA is now offering free calls to critical support services, including Kids Helpline for all Vodafone and 3 customers. This will go a long way to removing the cost barrier for children seeking help if they have been bullied or are worried about what's happening in their online world.

Parental Controls

Vodafone and 3 customers have free access to parental controls to restrict access to R18+ adult content that we host.

Our approach to parental controls is in line with that taken by the wider mobile and internet industry. We recognise that we have a responsibility to offer protection for children from exposure to R18+ content, however we support the opinion of the IIA that "while many families and schools find filters useful, they are not to be seen as a substitute for parental guidance or well-founded education programs."[9] This is why we have primarily focused our efforts on educational tools and resources for parents and children.

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[9] Internet Industry Association (IIA) to the Secretary of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber Safety (Submission No. 88) 9 July 2010 http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jscc/subs/sub_88.pdf

media release

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Australian parents struggling to understand cyberbullying: Survey

Monday 28 February, 2011 (SYDNEY): While technology is becoming ever more ingrained in the lives of children, Australian parents are not feeling equipped to help their children mange the potential challenges and risks in the digital world, a report[10] by Vodafone has revealed.

Vodafone's Digital Parenting Report-Safety[11] has uncovered that while Australian children are remarkably active online- with one in every three children aged 6-18 years old, spending over 10 hours each week outside of school hours, online[12]- just one in two parents surveyed believe they understand cyberbullying and are proactively discussing the issue with their children[13].

"Parents really need to start getting their heads around the idea of cyberbullying, what it means and how it works", advises popular social commentator, parent and Mamamia blogger, Mia Freedman.

"Contrary to the experience of most parents- children are using technology long before they learn to read or write. And while parents want to know how they can encourage their children's enjoyment of the digital world, many are understandably bewildered by this generational digital divide, which can lead to a sense of trepedidation and helplessness."

The Vodafone report[14] revealed just one in five parents surveyed believe their child had been exposed to bullying[15], one in ten acknowledged their child may have been a witness to bullying[16], and a startling 0% responded their child was a bully[17].

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[10] *Vodafone Digital Parenting Report-Safety*, October, 2010. Omnibus. 1500 respondents
[11] ibid
[12] ibid
[13] ibid
[14] ibid
[15] ibid

"The statistics prove that many parents don't understand what cyberbullying let alone that their own child may be a victim or perpetrator, The sad truth is that it's happening and it's prevalent- one in every four Australian children are affected by bullying[18], said Freedman.

"While Australian parents are mostly aware of the need to be vigilent with internet security controls, there also needs to be more focus placed on providing children with the confidence and skills to navigate the digital world in the same way as we teach them real world skills like road safety and sun protection. , The first step for parents is learning about it," recommends Freedman.

A unique online campaign currently making its way into Australian schools is Curethebullies.com.au. Designed to educate and empower children in primary school about bullying behaviours, this joint initiative between Vodafone and SchoolAid, has been developed by kids for kids and is a fun and interactive way for children to learn and identify passive bystander behaviour in themselves.

"Sitting down with your child and going through the curethebullies test is a good place to start, as it will not only open your childrens eyes to the different behaviours that are considered bullying, it will also provide parents with some invaluable insights", said Freedman.

"The behaviours we want our children to understand sit both online and offline. We need to secure our children's online space the same way as we do their real world. It is important for every parent to develop an online relationship with their children," added Freedman.

Digital Parenting Checklist [19] 15 Actions Parents Must Take

1. Think about how you guide your family in the real world and do the same for the digital world
2. Have a go with some of the technologies your child enjoys- if you haven't already, download some music, set up Facebook® profile or play a game on their Nintendo® Wii
3. Don't be afraid to set boundaries and rules- especially for younger children- their online reputation will follow them forever so its never too young to start

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[16] ibid
[17] ibid
[18] Kidspot, http://www.kidspot.com.au/School-Bullying-Facts-and-figures-about-bullying+3095+258+article.htm
[19] Vodafone Digital Parenting Guide, www.vodafone.com/parents

4. Make digital issues part of everyday conversation- don't shy away from talking to teenagers about difficult subjects like cyberbullying, sexting and copyright infringement

5. Talk to your friends and family (and the parents of your child's friends) about how they help their children manage their digital world- you might get some useful tips

6. Remind your son or daughter that the internet is a public place- anyone could see what they post and it might be there forever.

7. Encourage them to make the most of built-in privacy tools- they can set their social networking page or blog to private

8. Explain to them that anytime they post online can stay there for years- there is no such thing as being anonymous in the digital world

9. Sit down regularly with your child and type their name into a search engine so they can see what comes up about them- they might be surprised

10. Encourage them to ask permission before publishing or tagging photos of their friends and family on the Web (and to ask their friends to do the same)- not everyone wants to be famous

11. Explain why it's important that they're honest about their age when registering for websites- minimum age limits are there to help protect them

12. Discuss how they could be breaking the law if they make comments about someone online (what they say could be slanderous)

13. Talk to them about the consequences of sharing intimmate or nude images online or via their mobile (known as sexting)

14. Remind older siblings that certain websites and devices might not be appropriate for their younger brother or sister and ask them to look out for them

15. Keep communicating- show your child that you understand how important technology is to them and reassure them that they can come to you about anything that is worrying them in their digital world.

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About Vodafone Hutchison Australia

Vodafone Hutchison Australia (VHA) is Australia's fastest growing mobile provider, operating the Vodafone, 3, and Crazy Johns brands. Formed in June 2009 following a merger between Vodafone Australia and Hutchison 3G Australia, VHA provides mobile services to over 7.4 million customers in Australia.

www.three.com.au

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