

## Submission No. 2



*Parliament of Australia  
Joint Select Committee on cyber-safety*

### **About Yahoo!7**

Yahoo!7 offers a range of content, navigation and information services to internet users in Australia. Yahoo!7 is a joint venture between Yahoo! Inc and the Seven Media Group. Yahoo! Inc provides online products and services, offering a variety of services essential to users' life with 'social networking' features. These comprise Flickr (photo sharing), Yahoo!7 Video (commercial and user generated video sharing) and Yahoo!7 Answers (knowledge sharing). Yahoo!7 is focused on powering its communities of users, advertisers, publishers and developers by creating indispensable experiences based on trust.

### **Committee Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference for the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety are as follows.

1. That a Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety be appointed to inquire into and report on:
  - a. the online environment in which Australian children currently engage, including key physical points of access (schools, libraries, internet cafes, homes, mobiles) and stakeholders controlling or able to influence that engagement (governments, parents, teachers, traders, internet service providers, content service providers);
  - b. the nature, prevalence, implications of and level of risk associated with cyber-safety threats, such as:
    - i. abuse of children online (cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking and sexual grooming);
    - ii. exposure to illegal and inappropriate content;
    - iii. inappropriate social and health behaviours in an online environment (e.g. technology addiction, online promotion of anorexia, drug usage, underage drinking and smoking);
    - iv. identity theft; and
    - v. breaches of privacy.
  - c. Australian and international responses to current cyber-safety threats (education, filtering, regulation, enforcement) their effectiveness and costs to stakeholders, including business;
  - d. opportunities for cooperation across Australian stakeholders and with international stakeholders in dealing with cyber-safety issues;
  - e. examining the need to ensure that the opportunities presented by, and economic benefits of, new technologies are maximised;

- f. ways to support schools to change their culture to reduce the incidence and harmful effects of cyber-bullying including by:
  - i. increasing awareness of cyber-safety good practice;
  - ii. encouraging schools to work with the broader school community, especially parents, to develop consistent, whole school approaches; and
  - iii. analysing best practice approaches to training and professional development programs and resources that are available to enable school staff to effectively respond to cyber-bullying;
- g. analysing information on achieving and continuing world's best practice safeguards; and
- h. such other matters relating to cyber-safety referred by the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy or either House.

## **Submission**

Yahoo!7 welcomes the establishment of the Joint Select Committee and is delighted to provide feedback on the Committee's terms of reference as well as highlight some of the safety measures that Yahoo!7 has undertaken in relation to the provision of Yahoo!7 branded online services.

There is a distinct lack of research and evidence into how Australian children are engaging with the Internet and how they, and their parents / carers perceive the safety risks associated with their children's use of the Internet. It would be extremely valuable for government and industry to gain a better understanding of the level of awareness amongst parents and carers of the range of existing safety tools available to assist in keeping their children safe online by way of example.

Similarly, research into the prevalence and scale of online safety risks would greatly inform and shape the debate around which safety measures would be more effective in managing these risks. Yahoo!7 is very supportive of both of these areas of focus for the Committee.

There is a wealth of learning and best practice to draw on from peer countries around the world where industry, government, children's charities and the law enforcement community have worked together to develop a comprehensive suite of safety measures. Yahoo! has been very active in the United Kingdom for example in working with government and other stakeholders on safety related issues, including the development of best practice documents, the formation of the Internet Council and the deployment of the Internet Watch Foundation list of URLs containing child sex abuse images. We would be very happy to share our experiences with the Committee. Furthermore, the Internet Industry Association (IIA) is in an excellent position to advise the Committee on the costs incurred by the ISP community elsewhere in the world by adopting some of the safety measures identified in the terms of reference. We would encourage the Committee to consult further with industry and the IIA to supplement its knowledge of international responses to cyber- safety threats.

Yahoo!7 would very much welcome the opportunity to cooperate with the Committee on many of the issues included within the terms of reference and underscores the importance of celebrating the many benefits that a free and open Internet bring to our society. We agree that schools play an integral role when considering cyber-bullying specifically and cyber-safety more broadly and consider that there are several examples of excellent work being done in this arena (e.g. ACMA's Cybersmart training, the Alannah and Madeline Foundation's schools training program).

Lastly, and by way of demonstrating Yahoo!7 and Yahoo! Inc's commitment to improving safety online, I'd like to highlight some of the work currently being carried out by our companies with this goal in mind:

a. Education

- i. Yahoo!7 will soon be launching a dedicated Safety website with specific sections for kids, teens and adults. This will replace existing product specific safety messaging within Yahoo! Mail, Answers and Flickr.
- ii. Yahoo! hosts an annual CyberCitizenship Summit in the US bringing together teachers and administrators with Internet safety experts to facilitate dialogue, collaboration and share best-practices around online safety issues, with a focus on cyberbullying.
- iii. Yahoo!7 was an active participant in the 2010 Safer Internet Day promoting the ACMA Cybersmart website within the Yahoo!7 Mail and Messenger products.
- iv. Through our Yahoo! product "Help" sections and tutorials we provide safety and responsible usage tips for our users.

b. Policing

- i. Yahoo!7 works closely with Australian law enforcement agencies to provide assistance when Yahoo!'s services are being abused including the establishment of a 24 x 7 compliance function that can immediately respond to law enforcement if we are contacted about a situation that indicates that child may be in danger.
- ii. Yahoo!7 provides training to the law enforcement community to increase awareness of how Yahoo! products and services work and how to obtain information from us.
- iii. Yahoo!7 has created an Australian Law Enforcement Process Guide designed to ensure that law enforcement personnel are familiar with Yahoo!7's policies, procedures, and systems, and clearly understand how to obtain the appropriate investigatory information in child exploitation cases.

c. Safer Social Networking

- i. Yahoo!7 provides tools to assist in reporting inappropriate or harmful behaviour such as our "Report Abuse" buttons.
- ii. Yahoo!7 builds safety and privacy features into our products, including privacy preferences and blocking capabilities.

d. Research

- i. Yahoo! supports and partners with non-profit organisations all over the world who, amongst other things, undertake research on safety issues including:
  1. ikeepsafe.org
  2. Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI)
  3. National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)
  4. StopCyberbullying.org.

e. Technology

- i. Yahoo! has implemented technology and policies to help identify apparent child pornography violations on our network. These include using a combination of filters, algorithms, and human review, as well as user reports of abuse.
- ii. Yahoo! has partnered with the US based National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children and U.K. based Internet Watch Foundation in an effort to reduce the proliferation of child pornography by removing known apparent child pornography URLs from Yahoo! search index results and responding to any apparent child pornography violations on our network.
- iii. Yahoo! has enabled a "SafeSearch" feature within Yahoo! Search to prevent display of adult content in search queries made by that user's Yahoo! account (turned on by default). Parents can lock SafeSearch on to prevent children from turning it off. On Yahoo!'s mobile service "onesearch", all users default to SafeSearch mode and children registered as under 17 cannot turn the function off.

## **Contact**

Please address any questions regarding this submission to:

Samantha Yorke  
Legal Director  
Yahoo! Australia and New Zealand  
Levels 2 & 3  
Pier 8/9  
23 Hickson Road  
Millers Point NSW 2000