SAFE USE OF THE INTERNET   Awareness Programme

PROMOTING SAFE USE OF THE INTERNE

How to communicate messages about safe use of the Internet to parents, teachers and children across Europe.

FINAL REPORT

Childnet
International

FLEISHMAN
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
HILLARD

CONTENTS OF REPORT

SECTION 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   This report outlines the findings of a year long research study commissioned by the European Commission (DGXIII), in preparation for the *Safe Use of the Internet Action Plan* (See http://www.echo.lu/iap for full details). The work was carried out by the non-profit organisation Childnet International (see www.childnet-int.org) and Public Relations company Fleishman Hillard (See www.fleishman.com), henceforth called the programme team.

1.2   The objective of the work was to assess the key messages which would help children stay safe online, and how best to then communicate these safety messages effectively to parents, teachers and children across Europe.

1.3   The research involved: assessing existing Internet safety awareness programmes across Europe (and elsewhere), identifying the key messages and styles of communication, developing pilot deliverables and testing these in six European countries through focus groups and an online website questionnaire, and then producing recommendations (this report) which will support wider awareness actions in the full *Safe Use of the Internet Action Plan* for 2000 onwards.

1.4   Due to the limited scope of the project, it must be stressed that this was not a pilot programme for a full scale Internet safety awareness campaign, but rather a preparatory test of particular styles of messages, images and deliverables to see which approaches work best. Furthermore, the programme team was concerned to assess whether a full European-wide awareness campaign would work, and whether there were specific issues/concerns in individual countries and national variances to take into consideration.

1.5   The testing of the messages and deliverables had two key components: asking experts, teachers and children through the www.netaware.org website (self-selecting); and getting impressionistic feedback from 12 focus groups in the six European countries. In addition the programme team were in constant touch with other organisations and initiatives concerned about safety and self-regulation of the Internet. These included: The Bertelsmann Experts Group, the Association of Hotlines in Europe (INHOPE), the European Schoolnet, Disney's European Safe Surfing Week, Getnetwise in the USA, the Vienna Conference on Combating Child Pornography on the Internet, European Research into Consumer Affairs (ERICA) as well as individual government's involved in designing awareness initiatives. Consultation with these bodies has been crucial and many of the findings have been endorsed by these other organisations.

1.6   The programme team believe that the 12 key findings from this report and the main recommendations (see below), will help shape the future *Safe Use of the Internet Action Plan* as well as other emerging Internet safety awareness campaigns. Because of the expanding use of the Internet and the demand for good advice from parents and schools in keeping children safe, it is crucial that a wider pan-European Internet safety awareness programme is established quickly. Key to ensuring the success of this wider campaign is securing cross sector support from partners in different countries and ensuring that a high profile branded campaign has real investment, and "ownership" from industry. With the promise of 50% match funding from the European Commission, there is a unique opportunity to deliver a fuller awareness programme which will have a real impact on ensuring that children are kept safe using the Internet.

1.2 Summary of Findings and Recommendations

1.2   The following is a summary of the findings and main recommendations of this report on promoting safe use of the Internet. *This summary and a pdf version of the full report is available at* www.netaware.org

1	The research highlighted that parents have real concerns about the dangers to children using the Internet. These can broadly be grouped under 3 headings:
There are very real dangers for children using the Internet	**CONTENT** - accessing inappropriate content including pornography, child pornography, racist/hate and violent sites. **CONTACT** - being contacted through chat rooms and e-mail by those who would seek to harm or lure them. **COMMERCIAL** - the blur between much content and advertising, direct marketing to children, collection of information violating privacy.
Recommendation ⇨	*Any Internet awareness initiative needs to address these dangers and, as well as explaining the nature of the Internet, provide clear advice and safety tips which will ensure that children remember how to keep safe online. Initiatives need also to respond to emerging dangers that arise as the Internet develops.*

2	The research confirmed that Internet users (and parents in particular) are looking for authoritative, reliable and credible advice that will help them ensure that children's/pupil's experience on the Internet is positive and safe. Many of those interviewed asked "When is this awareness programme going to start?"
There is enormous demand for advice	
Recommendation ⇨	*There is a real urgency to develop safety awareness initiatives whilst the use of the Internet is growing so rapidly. Such a campaign could prevent possible tragedies and there is a clear "window of opportunity" to develop appropriate responses and for Industry to show responsibility and leadership in this area.*

3	The feedback from parents confirmed that whilst filtering software has its place, it is no fail safe guarantee that children are not accessing inappropriate material and no substitute for direct parental involvement. Furthermore parents were confused as to the effectiveness of filtering software. Parents need to recognise their part in keeping children safe online. Other strategies such as always keeping the computer in a family room, or "taking the trip together" need to be implemented in conjunction with software usage.
Clear advice about blocking software is needed	
Recommendation ⇨	*Any Internet Awareness initiative needs to include advice as to filtering software and the merits and drawbacks of particular sorts (see for an example* www.getnetwise.org*). Advice as to how best to use software as part of protecting children online is key.*

4	The research identified the anxiety of many parents that their children knew more about the Internet (and the dangers) than they did. Many stressed that they needed an "idiot-proof" guide to the dangers and steps to help their children avoid them. Parents are a diverse group and any advice needs to be suitable for beginners as well as those with more experience of the Net.
Parents feel less net literate than their children	
Recommendation ⇨	*Awareness Initiatives aimed at parents must not assume a certain level of knowledge. Resources (such as websites) should give options for parents to pick up the basics. An "advanced" and "beginners" distinction may be helpful.*

5 **There are few statutory -funded initiatives**	The research identified that whilst there are some excellent general Internet awareness programmes and some small scale Internet safety initiatives for pupils in schools, there appear to be few government-funded programmes in member states which specifically make the general public aware of the dangers to children in using the Internet. This contrasts with the involvement that the Federal Government has taken in the USA to kick-start safety awareness programmes.
Recommendation ⇨	*Governments must recognise that they share a responsibility to communicate Internet safety to citizens. While the focus of their activity may be on awareness in schools, they need to examine other ways of communicating with parents e.g. websites, libraries, health centres, crime awareness campaigns etc.*

6 **Industry has a leading role to play in safety awareness**	The research confirmed the fact that Industry involvement in safety awareness is crucial as Internet companies have good communication channels to their customers and can profile the issue. Those companies which the programme team consulted with were supportive of the concept of wider Internet safety initiatives. There are already some excellent examples of how individual companies have supported safe surfing. In joint industry-wide campaigns, companies must be careful not to let their own self interest (e.g. their brand positioning) override the aims of a campaign as a whole.
Recommendation ⇨	*We urge Industry to contribute, and in some cases lead Internet awareness initiatives. Individual companies should consider how they might join together with competitors to support wider Industry awareness campaigns.(eg links to central site, funding, mirror advice on their sites, etc.). Furthermore all individual companies providing Internet services should include a safety component in all that they do. The results of this research can help individual companies promote safe surfing - see recommendations on positive tips, deliverables etc.*

7 **Partnerships are crucial to success**	From researching existing safety awareness programmes it was clear that the most successful were ones which involved partners from all sectors, e.g. government, education, industry, child welfare, parents groups etc. Child -welfare groups, whilst they may not be able to bring funding to a partnership, have valuable advice and experience to offer in communicating to children and parents. Where child welfare groups work together with government and industry, it is crucial that all participants are seen as equal partners.
Recommendation ⇨	*Whilst forming effective partnerships is difficult, we urge the development of cross-sectoral campaigns as they potentially have the greatest impact and reinforce messages communicated by individual campaigns/groups.*

8 **Awareness campaigns need quality, complementary media**	The research showed that for an Internet safety awareness campaign to be effective, online and off-line elements need to be integrated and complementary. Furthermore, awareness campaigns need to be imaginative and capture the user's attention and differentiate themselves from the saturation of media messages. Although a website is crucial, its production must not be seen as the sole solution. In addition there has to be significant promotion, linking and updating of the site, and other deliverables such as public service announcements, posters, leaflets, mousemats, adverts etc. must be included and targeted at different audiences.
Recommendation ⇨	*We urge those undertaking awareness campaigns to use different deliverables to reach different audiences. These must also be of the same high quality as general marketing messages. Initiatives need to be planned to be sustained in the medium term to ensure maximum impact.*

9 **Awareness campaigns need to address different audiences and need to be timely**	Safety messages have to be communicated clearly and targeted at different audiences at the right time. There are different 'labels' which can be used to attract different age groups and it is vital that there is not simply a distinction between adult and child. Where does the novice teenager go? Timeliness (i.e. the right time to promote safe use of the Internet is key) e.g. at the time of first hardware purchase, signing up to go online, induction into the Internet at school, start of school term, public announcements, etc.
Recommendation ⇨	*We would urge those undertaking awareness initiatives to think carefully about their audience and the timeliness of their campaign. ISPs should also provide more safety information at the point of customers signing up. Ensuring that there are effective distribution channels and partners willing to promote the campaign to audiences at key openings is crucial.*

10 **There are few national variances**	Surprisingly the research showed that across Europe most adults have similar concerns about safety and the Internet. Although the team were looking for local manifestations of "danger" and were sensitive to the country-specific cultural, linguistic and socio/economic factors which impact on the Internet, attitudes did not seem to vary greatly. There appears to be a surprising level of commonality with regards to the appropriate messages and style for communicating safety on the Internet.
Recommendation ⇨	*Because of this finding there is real value in sharing experience across Europe in awareness and there is scope for developing a wider pan-European awareness campaign with a multi-lingual website and deliverables etc. However, there is a need for local delivery and a wider campaign needs to complement smaller national initiatives.*

11 **Messages need to be positive and need to empower**	The overall response from the focus groups and website research (which involved a small sample of children), showed a preference for images and styles of safety tips that emphasised the positive and helped empower children to take responsibility themselves. This reflects widespread change across Europe in cultural norms and values, with an increasing emphasis on the rights of the child and equality. There needs to be a balanced approach of not only protecting children from harmful use of the Internet, but also fostering positive use. Part of an awareness strategy needs to include directing children towards interesting and exciting sites (that are also safe) rather than simply away from harmful ones.
Recommendation ⇨	*Awareness campaigns need to examine carefully the style of their messages and focus on building responsibility in children so that they can take care of themselves. Parents need to be helped to understand how they can be involved appropriately with their children's use of the Internet and how this involvement will vary with the age of the child. Further research on children's views on the messages would be beneficial in determining children's desires and expectations of parental involvement.*

12 **Awareness about Safety complements wider Net literacy**	The ability for children to use the Internet will be an increasingly essential skill. It is crucial therefore that Internet safety is integrated with the fuller net literacy training of young people so that as well as learning how to use the Internet, evaluate the reliability of information, knowing how to publish and exploit the medium, children also know how to keep safe. The corollary of this is safety campaigns will be more effective as children learn these broader skills. A long term effect of good net literacy is likely to include children passing on their knowledge to their peers, including safety tips.
Recommendation ⇨	*More research needs to be done to connect Internet safety with Internet literacy programmes. Furthermore Internet awareness campaigns should include children in their design and delivery - eg. competitions to design logos, posters, tips etc. and campaigns that mix safety with what kids want. This will aid net literacy.*

SECTION 2 - INTRODUCTION

2.1   The Internet has become the fastest growing communications medium ever[1] and the benefits to children in terms of educational, social and leisure opportunities are enormous. However, children and young people are generally more confident and knowledgeable than adults in using the Internet and therefore there are real concerns about the dangers to children from *contact* and *content* in what is a largely unregulated medium. Because of the blur between much content and advertising on the Internet there are also real concerns about the *commercial* pressures on children. Whilst some of these concerns have arisen because of sensation caused by the media, the dangers are based on the experiences of many families and actual cases of children being exploited.

2.2   Whilst there is no adequate universal definition of "harmful to minors", parents, teachers and other "gate keepers" are seeking authoritative, clear and trustworthy advice about how to protect children from undesirable *content* and *contact* which they encounter on the world wide web and Internet. The European Commission has responded to this concern at a strategic level and in 1999 commissioned preparatory research into a range of issues[2] including assessing what are the most effective ways of communicating safety messages about the Internet to the different audiences.

2.3   The challenge in developing effective Internet awareness programmes is that there is a tension. Should the primary aim be to encourage the positive, creative use of the Internet or to avoid or prevent harmful use ? Both these issues are important. However, parents tend to focus on the latter, harmful uses, while children may respond better to the former. A full Internet Safety programme therefore needs to have three essential elements :

   1) Protecting children from harmful sites
   2) Directing children towards the positive
   3) Developing "net literacy" among children so that they are aware of the dangers

The EC's Safe Use of the Internet Action Plan programme is addressing a range of concerns under point 1) through the work of hotlines, ratings and assessment of filtering systems. The purpose of this study therefore was to focus on assessing the best ways to communicate safety messages about the Internet to parents, teachers and children so that they were aware of the dangers and kept safe on line.

CONTEXT FOR THE WORK

2. 4   Whilst the advantages of the Internet are well known and broadly appreciated, there is real concern among parents and teachers across Europe about their children using the Internet unsupervised. For example a recent poll commissioned by Disney and carried out by NOP as part of the company's Safe Surfing Week stated that:

"In general European parents and children are warming to the Internet's educational and entertainment potential, however there are real concerns about online safety. 52% of British parents were reluctant to allow their children to surf alone and parents in France and Germany were even more cautious with 55% of French parents and 61% of Germans not letting their children surf solo."

---

[1] It is estimated that the amount of traffic on the Internet is doubling every 100 days.

[2] See http://www.echo.lu/iap for full details.

7

The report found that *"48% of UK children had had an upsetting experience on the Internet or have been frightened by something or someone they came across while surfing, as have 65% of German children and 30% of French children."*
Source: Disney online Press Release 20th September 99.

2.5   Other surveys including WHICH Online's Annual Internet Survey, Family PC on the web, and a number of American market research surveys have all highlighted the concerns that parents and teachers have. For example the Which Online Annual Internet UK Survey (June 1998) revealed that 45% of users said they would not let their children use the net unsupervised and a further 72% of users felt that the Net should be regulated.[4] Further research from the Annenberg Public Policy Centre in America revealed that 61% of parents are "online worriers" when it comes to the impact of the web on kids.[5]

2.6   The Eurobarometer survey of June 1999 commissioned by DG X included questions about violence against children. One conclusion relevant to this work was that across the member states, 84% of those interviewed felt that awareness campaigns were useful strategies (figures ranged from over 90% in Greece and Spain to just over 70% in Germany and Austria).

PROGRAMME OF WORK

2. 7   The programme of work carried out in this project fell into six separate sections, each with milestones and proposed outcomes. *In summary this work involved*:

    ① Consulting with those currently undertaking national or pan-national Awareness Action programmes and evaluating 5 of the major initiatives, assessing the merits and drawbacks. In addition the team completed an audit to identify any statutory-funded specific Internet safety awareness initiatives that individual European member states were completing.

    ② Identifying "best practice" and the key messages for the European context and identifying the specific styles used to communicate these messages e.g. authoritative, "cool", child- centred etc.

    ③ Compiling this existing knowledge and best practice and producing a tailored EU Awareness website (www.netaware.org) to allow on-line contributions, assessment of individual national concerns/experience and wider feedback.

    ④ Designing a number of other small–scale pilot deliverables for different audiences to see what works best in helping children and adults to stay safe on line, eg. logo, mousemats, stickers, leaflet, website, etc.

    ⑤ Piloting and testing these deliverables and message styles through the website and consultations in six different member states through small 'focus groups'.

The diagram overleaf shows the components of this work programme in more detail.

---

[4] see http://www.which.net/whatsnew/pr/nov98/general/survey.html
[5] see http://www.appcpenn.org/pubs.htm The Internet and the Family

2.8 The Programme Team undertook the following work programme over the last 12 months.

① Evaluation of existing work

Project 1 NCH EC Daphne funded projects in Finland, Italy & UK	Project 2 Net Benefit? Awareness Seminar programme	Project 3 EU Best Use website and small-scale European programmes Eg. Meldpunt's Safe Surf initiative	Project 4 EC Single Currency Awareness Campaign. (Non- Internet programme see later)	Project 5 American awareness initiatives including America Links Up and Safekids.com

Auditing of statutory funded Internet Safety Awareness programmes

② Identifying Key Messages for wider European Context

③ Awareness Beta WEB SITE

Multi-lingual and sensitive to the EU context	Contains best Safety Tips + background advice and information	Down-loadable deliverables: slides, stickers, screen saver etc	Case studies of positive examples and "best practice"	Links to other sites (hotlines, good safe sites, directories)	FAQ Section, Questionnaire and feedback form	Specific section for kids, teachers, parents

④ Production of Deliverables

Deliverables	**Mousemat, stickers, & screen saver**	**General information flyer**	**Seminar content & presentation**	**Industry safety certification programme**
Audience →	Kids/teachers	Parents Child-welfare grps	Teachers/ parents policy makers	All new users of internet

⑤ Piloting and Testing

UK	Ireland	Italy	France	Germany	Finland

Testing methodology involved using 4 main conduits.
1. Small non-expert focus groups assessing the website and deliverables (messages) for their country /context. This will involve two different focus groups meeting in each country with eight people in each.
2. Small scale testing with children's groups in one school in each country.
3. Ongoing testing and evaluation from beta website feedback through feedback form, questionnaire from experts and those active in education, child-welfare, industry.
4. Consultation with industry assessing their likely support for larger awareness actions.

Reports

3 monthly evaluation reports website feedback, include pilot deliverables.		Full report giving results of country focus group findings, full website feedback, assessment of impact and recommendations.

considerable experience in undertaking research, promotion and awareness work. Most recently FH's Washington office co-ordinated *America Links Up* the largest Internet awareness programme anywhere to date. This experience, combined with the company's marketing and research experience made F-H's involvement invaluable to the success of assessing and developing awareness actions in Europe. Throughout this programme F-H involved its Europe-wide network of offices in overseeing the different country evaluations and ensuring that the views and experiences of the different European contexts was sought evaluating the various messages. It was also responsible for commissioning the ICM Market research group to undertake the 12 Focus Groups in six European Countries.[7]

2.12   In addition to the wide consultation noted elsewhere in this report, the programme team commissioned two experts to help analyse the results of this research; Larry Magid, founder of Safekids.com and a journalist with the LA Times helped review our initial evaluation of existing projects. Professor Sonia Livingstone from the London School of Economics helped review the findings from the Focus Groups and initial website questionnaire results.

---

[6] See www.childnet-int.org for further details.
[7] See http://www.fleishman.com/ for further details

SECTION 3 - EVALUATION OF EXISTING PROJECTS

3.1　The programme of work outlined in the submitted tender proposal stated that the programme team would begin the preparatory action by evaluating and consulting with current national or pan-national Internet awareness programmes. Assessing the merits and drawbacks of each of these existing initiatives was crucial in identifying "best practice", as well as understanding the different cultural, linguistic and socio-economic factors which will effect a future awareness programme.

3.2　The programme team undertook assessments of the five main projects or sets of projects identified in section two (and shown below). The team conducted interviews with key experts on the telephone and in person and initial interviews were conducted in The Netherlands, Germany, Finland, UK, France and USA. On-going support from these individuals and organisations was agreed and further consultation took place throughout the year. Indeed the Programme Team were able to help connect individuals in these existing initiatives with each other and introduce those involved in new initiatives with other practitioners. For example, when the America Links Up programme was superseded by the Getnetwise initiative, the programme team interviewed the new team leaders in Washington to learn from their experience and discuss the opportunities in Europe.

3.3　As part of its ongoing work Childnet has also consulted with key individuals who are developing awareness programmes in countries further afield in Portugal, Ireland, Sweden, Singapore, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. While details of these projects are not included in this report, the programme team have discussed their work and the experience gained from these wider initiatives have helped reinforce the findings of this report.

Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Project 4	Project 5
NCH EC Daphne funded Internet awareness project in Finland, Italy & UK	Net Benefit? Internet awareness seminar programme	EU Best Use website and small-scale Internet awareness programmes	Single Currency awareness campaign. (Non-Internet programme)	American Internet awareness initiatives including America Links Up and Safekids.com

3.4　The inclusion of a non-Internet awareness programme (project 4 above) was felt to be important to assess key success criteria for awareness campaigns generally and to learn from another major trans-national awareness project. The format for this assessment varied from the other evaluations.

3.5　The initial assessment of these projects was completed using a standard questionnaire (see Appendix I). The assessment covered the following:

1.　　BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT
2.　　PROCESS - HOW THE PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED
3.　　MAIN MESSAGES (see also matrix appendix 3)
4.　　MAIN DELIVERABLES
5.　　RESULTS
6.　　LESSONS LEARNT

Full findings from these assessments follows.

3.6. In summary the lessons learnt from this evaluation of existing projects were:

1   There is enormous demand for advice and help.
The strong desire for information, especially among parents and teachers, about safe use of the Internet is evident and growing. Internet users are looking for an authoritative source giving them reliable and credible advice.

2   The definition of danger is locally defined.
All awareness programmes have to address the local manifestation of the global problem and the cultural, linguistic and socio/economic factors which impact on the Internet. However, there is great value in having a centralised source of information and support and to ensure that quality standards and "best practice" is implemented.

3   The definition of the target audience is crucial.
It is vital that target audiences are identified carefully (e.g. by age, role etc.) and that messages are adapted to the particular audience. Targeted messages for children have to be "cool".

4   Partnerships are crucial.
Cross-sector (e.g. industry, child welfare, education etc.) or cross-national initiatives can be very effective but need careful planning and support. It is vital that there is clear ownership and effective leadership and decision making processes.

5   The message has to be clear.
It is crucial that there is a strong brand logo and that the message contained is instantly recognisable. The objectives and deliverables need to be realistic and any programme has to have a strong follow-through and exit strategy, and be properly funded.

6   Different media are essential.
The clear message needs to be repeated through different media, however, all media used must complement and reinforce the main message. i.e. a website alone is insufficient to reach all the target audiences.

7   There is an urgent need to act quickly in launching a co-ordinated programme.
A number of new Internet awareness programmes are developing and there is an urgent need to ensure that there is a co-ordinated, "best practice" approach. The programme team have already been asked to consult on the development of a number of new awareness initiatives and there is a clear demand for leadership on the issue.

Statutory funded Internet Safety Awareness initiatives.

3.7   After evaluating the 5 key Internet safety initiatives DGXIII requested that the Programme Team undertake a fuller audit of government- funded initiatives across Europe. As a result, the programme team started to research exactly what individual Governments were doing in the way of funding (or running) specific Internet awareness programmes.

3.8   The programme team made contact with a variety of organisations across Europe to seek advice as to these initiatives. Those contacted included: Hotline organisations, *Netd@ys* 99 national co-ordinators, Government officials, Police and University personnel and those involved in general Internet promotion work. The programme team also used search engines, resources such as Quick Links and extensive media searches but these revealed little information from Europe. However, a large number of initiatives were identified in the USA, some of which have Government involvement.

3.9   International bodies based in Europe like the EC (Best Use Site) and UNESCO (paedophilia conference and website) have undertaken Internet Initiatives with an awareness component, but there is little evidence of general public use or knowledge of these resources.

3.10   At a two-day conference in 1998 of children's ombudsmen in Copenhagen, defenders of children's rights from 10 European countries urged governments to do more against abuses through the Internet, especially raising awareness of Internet exploitation possibilities.

3.11   The programme team would not claim that this is a comprehensive list and we understand that some new initiatives are being prepared however the main conclusion of the research is that whilst there are some excellent general Internet promotion programmes (e.g. *Netd@ys* Europe and specific ICT in-school programmes etc), there appear to be few government-funded programmes which specifically make children and adults aware of the dangers of the Internet.

3.12   A full breakdown of these initiatives is included in Appendix 2

SECTION 4 - IDENTIFYING THE MAIN MESSAGES

4.1. Overview

The part of the programme focused on message identification centred on evaluation of messaging being used in existing Internet safety initiatives in Europe and the U.S. (see section 3.1) and consultation with industry (manufacturers, Internet service providers, retailers and consumer groups) on the need for Internet safety information. This exercise was a vital part of the *Safe Use of the Internet Programme* as it formed the basis for development of associated branding.

As part of the consultation process, the programme team approached and talked with a number of key representatives from the IT industry, including; AOL, Sun Microsystems, Dixon's Freeserve, and TIME, a PC retailer. They were taken through the selection feedback process that exists on our beta site, and completed a physical questionnaire of their observations and choices.

In addition to these industry representatives, the programme team consulted with other organisations involved in children's use of the Internet including: The Bertelsmann Experts Group, the Association of Hotlines in Europe (INHOPE), the European Schoolnet, Disney's European Safe Surfing Week, Getnetwise in the USA, the Vienna Conference on Combating Child Pornography on the Internet, The European Research into Consumer Affairs (ERICA) as well as individual Governments involved in designing awareness initiatives. All bodies confirmed that there was a strong need for reliable Internet safety programmes among consumers and all groups would support a wider campaign.

4.2 The Selection Process

This process of research and consultation showed that there are a wide range of styles and approaches to communicating Internet safety messages, each with their own pros and cons. A full message matrix was produced listing these safety messages. After assessing the many message styles in use, the programme team consolidated the findings and identified three main styles:

> **Informal** - Instructive informal "chatty" guidance style, rather than rules or commands, This style was favoured by the Dutch Hotline Meldpunt in its Surf-Safe card.
>
> **'My Rules'** – A style which reflects children "owning" personal rules for Internet usage. Favoured by initiatives such as America Links Up and Safekids.com.
>
> **Do's and Don'ts** – More of a directive style for using the Internet, where the response to the dangers are reinforced with a "NEVER" message. The approach was used in the NCH Action for Children campaign that was replicated in Finland and Italy.

After identifying the three distinct styles, the programme team developed a set of Tips in each of the three styles that could be tested amongst a variety of audiences See overleaf:

Informal Style	My Rules Style	Do's and Don'ts Style
Always keep your personal details (name, address) private. It's like giving out the keys to your house !	I won't give out personal information about myself or send photos without first getting permission.	Do have fun on the Internet, be yourself and do not pretend to be anyone or anything you are not.
Your personal password is your own special identity, so keep it secret and don't share it - even with your best friend or someone who sounds official.	I won't give out my password to anyone, not even to my best friend.

I won't get together with anyone I meet online without getting my parents' permission first. | Do tell your parent or carer if you see bad language or distasteful pictures while you are online.

Don't tell anyone you meet on the Internet your name, address, telephone number or school's name, unless your parent or carer specifically gives you permission. |
| Making new e-pals whilst on line is cool, but tell your parents about who you have met and introduce them to your new friends. | | |
| If you want to meet someone you have met in cyberspace, ask your parents/carer's permission, and then only when they can be present. | If I receive something online that makes me feel uncomfortable, I won't respond; I'll leave that area right away and tell my parents or teacher.

I won't open or accept e-mails, files, links, URLs, or other things from people I don't really know or trust. | Don't arrange to meet anyone in person without first agreeing it with your parent or carer, and get them to come along to the first meeting, which should always be in a public place. |
| There's great stuff on the Net, but some bad stuff too! So always tell a parent or teacher if you come across anything which makes you feel uncomfortable. | | |
| Chat can be fun, but don't hang around in a chat room if someone makes you feel uncomfortable or worried. Remember you're in charge out there! | I won't fill out e-mail forms on websites without first checking with my parents/teachers.

I will not believe everything I read on the Internet, I will always check the source of the information and confirm it with my parent or teacher. | Don't hang around in a chat room if some one says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, and always report it to your parent or carer.

Don't respond to nasty, suggestive or rude e-mails or postings in Usenet Groups or accept files, web addresses or e-mail from strangers. |

4.3 DELIVERABLES

As well as identifying and finalising the Tips, it was important to look at how they would be communicated to the target audiences; children and parents. Therefore, in conjunction with the message development, the programme team briefed a design agency to develop other deliverables which could be tested alongside the Tips. All of these deliverables were tested in their own right (i.e we were not trying to necessarily link images up to specific styles of tips). And were designed to be prompts for discussion on the Netaware site and in the pan-European Focus Groups, rather than positioned as the agreed branding. The deliverables (other than the slogans and the Tips) had dummy text so as to keep the discussion on design and impact alone. All those deliverables which had to be assessed on content were translated for the website and for all focus groups.

4.3.1 Design of Logos

The three logos, which were produced are shown below:
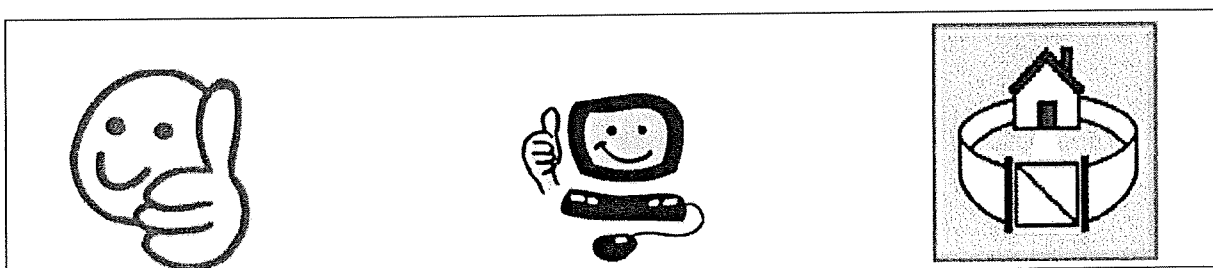
4.3.2 Design of Straplines

A series of straplines were also drafted that could be used alongside the logos and again, were used to prompt discussion and get participants to suggest their own. In the end the most favoured strapline was a combination of these prompts (see Section 5).

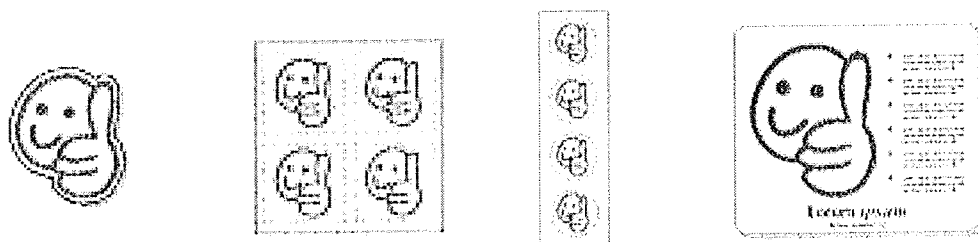Straplines finalised for testing on the website and in Focus Groups are shown below:

Internet = **opportunity**

Prepare to *take off...*

Secure + *explore*

Safe *journey*
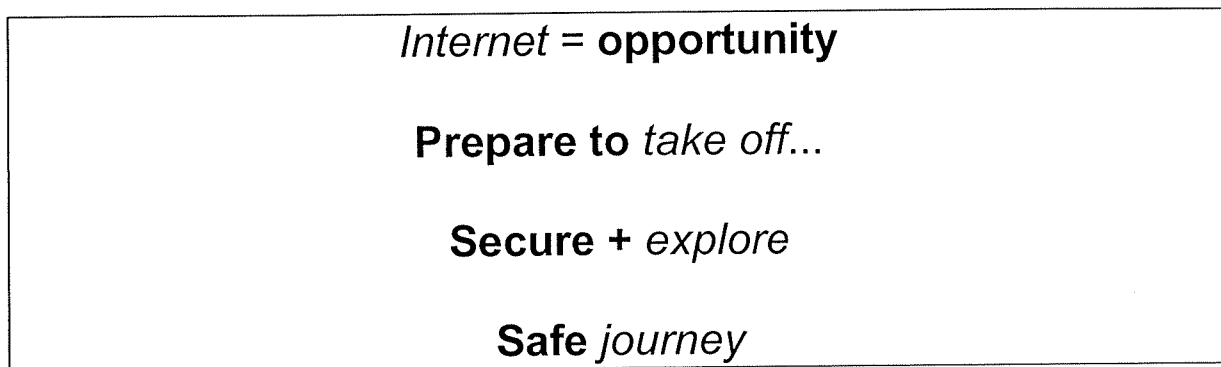
4.3.3 Design of Leaflets

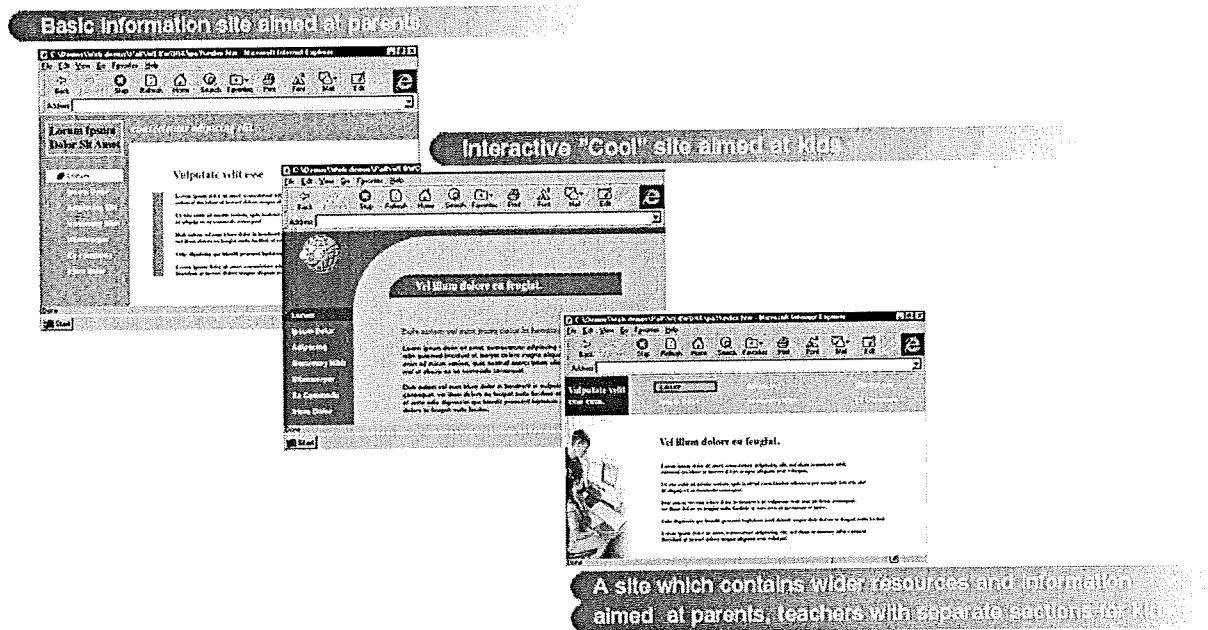Three leaflets were produced that varied in style and graphic content.
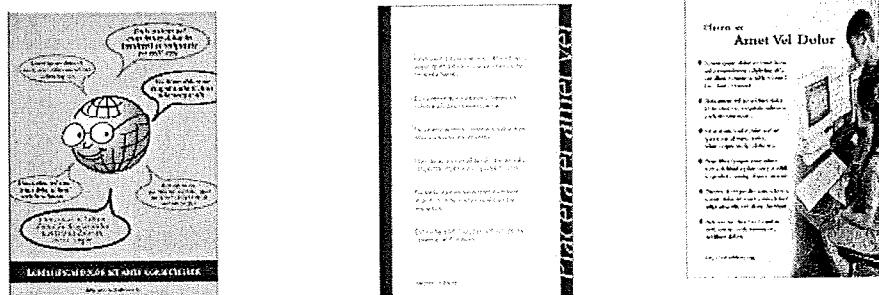
4.3.4 Design of give-aways eg. stickers, mousemats, fridge magnet, transfers, screen savers.

4.3.5 Design of Websites (treatments).

Those completing the Netaware website questionnaire were asked to state what sort of website would work.

Full copies of these deliverables can be seen at
www.netaware.org

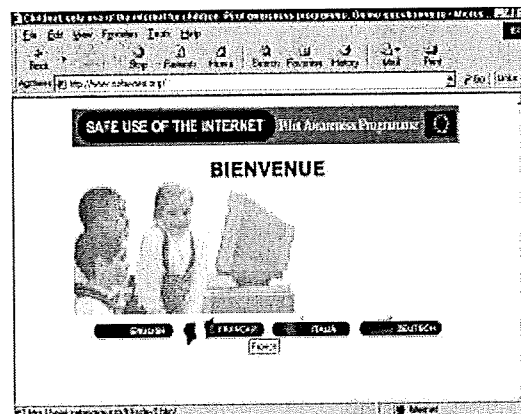# SECTION 5 -TESTING OF MESSAGES & DELIVERABLES

Methodology for testing

5.1 The programme team used two principal methods for testing the messages and deliverables: 12 Focus Groups in six European countries and an online multi-lingual website questionnaire. The table below shows in summary the specific features of each testing method.
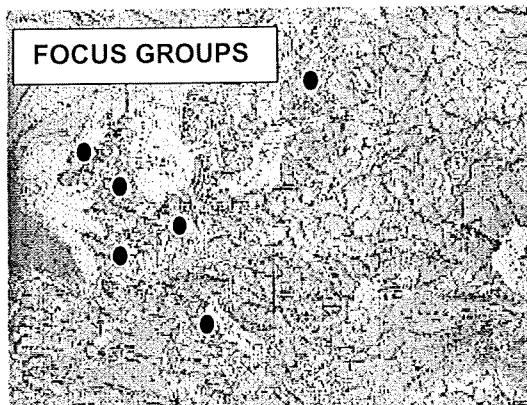
FOCUS GROUPS

12 Focus Groups held in 6 countries.

SAFE USE OF THE INTERNET

BIENVENUE

Multi-lingual Website questionnaire.

Key features of Focus Group

1. Groups were conducted in:
2. UK, Ireland, Italy, France, Germany and Finland
3. Two groups were held in each country
4. 8-10 people attended each group
5. Those asked had to have children aged 8-15, have access to the Internet at home, which the children use and Internet users themselves
6. 50% men, 50% women
7. All groups conducted during week commencing 6th September, 1999 by nationals in each country
8. All deliverables (logos, slogans, website, leaflets etc) were of a simple design so as to indicate a preference without being likened to a particular 'style' and to aid discussion on the issues

Key features of Website

1. Multi-lingual in French, German, Italian and English
2. Background to project and sections on current awareness projects and evaluations
3. Separate introduction for teachers working with children
4. Sections on 'What is happening across Europe'
5. Online questionnaire (16 screens) asking for reaction to message "Tips", logos and straplines, deliverables etc, plus further comments
6. Over 5 months there were 160 responses of which 40 were under 18

5.2 The same deliverables were used in both the focus groups and website and those deliverables which needed to be judged on text (i.e. the Tips and straplines) were fully translated and checked. The other mock-ups included "dummy" writing.

5.3 The countries used for the testing were selected to take into account:

Different levels of Internet use.(ranging from Finland's 35% throu   (source
Europe on line report).

Geographical spread throughout different parts of Europe.

Different language and range of cultures.

5.4 **FOCUS GROUPS – Analysis** (see also Appendix 5)

1 Desire for information is strong among parents.

All those interviewed in the Focus Groups agreed that a campaign making children and adults aware of the dangers on the Internet would be a good thing; indeed a number of participants left the sessions asking, 'When is this campaign starting?'.

2 Parents have real concerns about the dangers on the net.

The key concerns that parents had about the dangers of the Internet for their children were pornography, paedophilia, uncensored chat and violent pictures. In addition, many parents felt that the excessive use of the Internet (phone bills) misuse of credit cards, downloading viruses and subtle advertising and commercialism, were further dangers. As this is a different concept of 'harm' and less likely to be recognised by children, it may necessitate a different approach. Many parents left the groups appreciating for the first time the other subtle dangers of contact and undesirable content, even in groups where the knowledge and use of the Internet was highest (Finland).

3 Parents are anxious that their children are more net-literate than they are.

Most parents in the Focus Group stressed their anxiety at the fact that their children knew more about the Internet (and therefore probably the dangers) than they did. Many in the groups stressed those parents needed an "idiot proof" guide to the dangers and steps to help their children avoid these dangers.

4 The emphasis on the positive and a balanced approach.

All those questioned in the Focus Groups were generally very positive about the Internet and their children's use of it. Many stressed the need to be positive and not 'locking children up'. They wanted to ensure children are led towards interesting and exciting sites, which are safe rather than harmful. There was real enthusiasm from parents and a sense that this was the medium of the future. This was also borne out by the preference of stimulus material (logos, tips and deliverables).

5 Parents and children use the net for different activities.

Whilst the Internet is used a great deal as a leisure activity, the focus groups identified that adults tended to use the Internet to retrieve information, whilst children liked using the Internet to "go somewhere" and get involved in various activities e.g. games and favourite sites - music, sports, etc.

6 Different advice is needed for different age groups.

This was borne out by the focus groups who identified three main age groups which needed tailored advice and different approaches in introducing them to the dangers. These age groups were identified as: 8-10, 11-13, and 14 + year olds. A *Beginners* and *Advanced* approach may be more appropriate, because age is only one parameter by which to gauge responses.

7 It is essential to empower children with knowledge of Internet safety.

The adults felt strongly that children must not be patronised, and must be addressed as responsible Internet users. Particularly we found a strong preference for the way that simple Safety Tips are communicated to children. Most parents asked in the Focus Groups preferred a positive informal and explanatory style *e.g. Always keep your personal details (name, address) private. It's like giving out the keys to your house!* rather than a more directive and authoritative Do's and Don't style.

8 Attitudes towards Internet safety messages do not vary greatly between countries.

Generally there is a great deal of commonality as to which style of message, and style of deliverables, would work best across the countries tested. This bodes well for a pan-European campaign as it appears that parents everywhere have similar concerns. However, there was noticeably less concern from the Finnish parents (where Internet use age is much greater) as they perceived their country to be safer. This also may suggest that concern lessens as the Internet becomes more familiar. The Finnish parents were, however, just as sensitive to the risks when pointed out, possibly showing that Finnish culture does not routinely make the risks explicit. This possible explanation is confirmed by the 1999 Euro barometer survey where Finland had the lowest % of any European Country of respondents agreeing that violence against children was common in their country. From the point of view of the other countries, addressing parental concerns *now*, before the Internet becomes familiarised, is crucial. There appears to be a lot of commonality as to a basic "common sense" message.

19

5.5 WEBSITE - Analysis (see also appendix 6)

The programme team were concerned to involve a wide number of experts to give their feedback as to the best way to communicate messages about safe use of the Internet to parents, teachers and children. The team therefore developed a multi-lingual beta website www.netaware.org which was used to collate standardised responses. Although a full-blown Safety Awareness site could have been produced, the programme team felt it best to design a site that encouraged viewers to think about possible individual styles of messages as well as different deliverables, and think what would work best in their context. These images and text were kept as simple as possible and were designed to reflect generic styles rather than completed designs.

The main part of the website was a 16 screen questionnaire which viewers completed having filled in an initial registration form. Each of the different language sites included details on the background to the project, the existing projects evaluated and lessons learnt from this evaluation, as well as information on Government-funded initiatives (see "What's Happening Across Europe ?"). In this way the site included useful information on safety as well as giving viewers the chance to assess the pilot messages. In addition to this there was a specific section for teachers to help them use the questionnaire with pupils and use the resources in their induction to safety on the Net.

5.6 Breakdown of responses from website

In total 166 people took part in completing the questionnaire from 18 countries. The top level results are as follows and included in Appendix 5.

1 Countries taking part

As with the Focus Groups, six countries were targeted for responses: UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Italy and Finland. Despite extensive promotion of the site through specific networks it was difficult to get responses to the questionnaire from Finland, Italy and Germany in particular. A third of responses were from the UK and high levels of response were received from Ireland and France. There were also contributions from outside of the target countries, including Greece and Denmark.

2 Age Breakdown

The programme team were keen to ask adults and children the same questions to see if there were significant variances in responses. Of the 166 people who took part, one quarter were under 18. There were also some individual sessions with children in schools in Ireland, Germany, UK, and Denmark. The response from teachers generally was disappointing and more work amongst children needs to be carried out.

3 Sector

From the 166 responses:

      42% of respondents were from the education sector
      12% came from those working in an international context
      9% came from government sector
      20% came from Industry
      2% were from child welfare sector
      and 14% did not indicate where they were from

4 Parents

Of the 121 adults who completed the questionnaire, 32 were parents, however given the high % of those from the education sector, we feel that there was adequate participation of those who had understanding of children. Furthermore the Focus Groups specifically targeted parents thus compensating for the lower response from the questionnaire.

5.7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND WEBSITE

5.7.1 *Preference for styles of communicating Safety Tips.*

Informal Style	My Rules Style	Do's and Don'ts style
Always keep your personal details (name, address) private. It's like giving out the keys to your house !	I won't give out personal information about myself or send photos without first getting permission.	Do have fun on the Internet, be yourself and do not pretend to be anyone or anything you are not.

The overwhelming choice of those in the Focus Groups and those completing the website questionnaire was for the *Informal Style*. This style reflects the Internet's positive and fun side, and respects children's knowledge and ability to take responsibility. The tips are positive, colloquial, empowering and, whilst giving valuable safety advice, encourage children to make their own choices.

The *'Do's and Don'ts' style* produced a mixed reaction from parents, with some praise for encouraging children onto the Internet, but criticism for being too 'severe' and 'official'. Some of those in the Focus Groups felt the tips lacked detailed explanations; informing children what they shouldn't do but not explaining why.

'My Rules' style was widely rejected by the Focus Groups as being patronising, authoritarian and threatening, therefore liable to cause children to be on the defensive.

Children's reaction
From the children's responses to the website questionnaire, the *Informal Style* was also the favourite, though some children liked the *My Rules Style*. Further testing among children should be carried out to see why this is and to ascertain whether there is a particular narrow age group which would respond to this "ownership" style.

Observations
People like analogies or "anchors" to familiar media in order to orientate themselves to the new, so "house keys" are familiar objects whose safety rules children know. Other familiar objects could be incorporated into the Safety tips. More creative work could be undertaken to link wider familiar safety advice into Internet awareness, e.g. the principles of stranger danger off-line with on-line.

Parents involvement in their children's use of the Internet will vary with the age of the child and the *Do's and Don'ts style* may work best for very young children under 10 who need more directive advice.
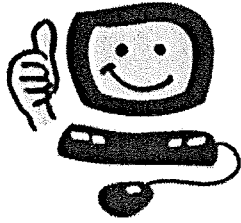
Industry would, we believe, prefer a more positive Tips style as they are obviously keen to stress the benefits of the internet over the dangers.

The *My Rules style* approach is used a great deal in the USA (Safekids.com) and may reflect a particular cultural norm.

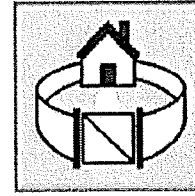## 5.7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND WEBSITE (continued)

5.7.2 *Preference for Logo*

| Computer | Thumbs up | House |

Overall, both the Focus Groups and Website questionnaire responses suggested a symbol that is friendly and stimulating and which communicates the message of safety. None of the symbols tested were fully satisfactory but feedback showed that they could be easily modified.

The overall favourite on the website was the computer, (70%) however in the focus groups the majority of parents in all the groups thought that their children would prefer the blue face thumbs up logo. Both the Focus Groups and website rejected the House logo.

Clearly both preferred thumbs-up logos which reflects the preference for positive messages about the Internet. Both these symbols have the potential to be reversed to express constraint (thumbs down) and could of course be further modified. The computer logo clearly characterises a PC as a 'pal' or 'friend'. However, in Germany this colour is associated with the Post Office and in France with France Telecom, so further checking would need to be carried out.

This house logo received a negative reaction across all focus groups and website. The Designer had based this logo on the Internet Explorer home page icon but no one found the connection with the Internet or Internet safety. It was also not seen as child friendly, being seen as a possible 'restriction on freedom' and was generally viewed as 'dull' and lacking in colour.

Children's reaction
The response from the children's sample showed an overwhelming favour for the computer logo (65% of children's group). It will be important to do some further research with children to ascertain whether this image is "cool" enough and whether it immediately reminds them to stay safe online (without scaring them).

Observations
It is interesting to see the preference for the computer thumbs-up logo on the website questionnaire, as opposed to the general thumbs up which the Focus Groups preferred. As any logo reminding children and adults about safe use of the Internet needs to be used on websites as well as off-line, the computer logo would seem to be most appropriate.

One important issue from the Focus Groups was that although the thumbs-up images are positive, likeable and friendly, some parents felt that they might be too generic or childish, and not appeal to older age groups. They could also create an impression of 'no restrictions' implying no safety gate.

The rejection of the walled house (less than 8%) is interesting and would point to adults seeing their role as guiding children into the world rather than protecting them from it. The stress should be on equipping children appropriately rather than locking them up.

22

5.7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND WEBSITE (continued)

5.7.3 *Preference for Strapline (Slogan)*

Internet = opportunity

Prepare to *take off...*

Secure + *explore*

Safe *journey*

Although none of the tested slogans received agreement from all the Focus Groups, 'Secure + *explore*' was the most favoured. From the Website questionnaire the feedback showed the preference for 'Safe Journey'. The programme team were keen not to include the word "safe" in all of the slogans, preferring instead to use more imaginative, neutral slogans. However, the research has showed that most people preferred the slogan to include some reference to "safe" in the title.

Many parents suggested slogans of their own and argued that 'surfing' be incorporated into the slogan - e.g. "Safe-surfing" or "secure and surf" as it was judged to be a 'cool' term that would appeal to both the younger and older children.

Children's reaction.
Those children who stated a preference for a slogan also chose the "Safe Journey" slogan. However if the slogan was adapted to "Safe Surfing" further market research would need to be undertaken as it is doubtful whether children themselves would feel that this term was 'cool' and appropriate to their use of the Net. It appears that for many children the Internet is now less about surfing, (which implies you don't know where you are going and just aimlessly browsing) and more about communication and playing games.

Observations
An Internet safety awareness campaign needs a strong memorable strapline. The slogan/strapline for the biggest Internet awareness campaign anywhere to date - America Links was "Take the Trip Together". This worked better than the America Links up title as it reflected the positive journey to be had online, but stressed the responsibility of parents to take the trip with their children. It should be noted that a strapline needs to reinforce the general title of the campaign, or indeed be the title for the campaign !
Whatever slogan is used it needs to be imaginative and capture user's attention. If a strapline is to be used in a European awareness campaign, then further testing needs to be carried out to ensure that a generic title translates well in all countries.

5.7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND WEBSITE (continued)

5.7.4 *Preference for Leaflets*
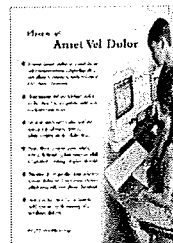
In both the Focus Groups and the Website Questionnaire, the choice for leaflet was the bright, colourful, positive, cartoon style. Parents felt that it would appeal best to children, teenagers and adults and was most appropriate to the Internet. They also felt it was the most original design of the three.

The second option (above middle) was disliked across the board as it had no connection to the Internet and 'could be picked up anywhere'.

Although the third option (above right) using the photograph suggested an educational context and related to children using the Internet, it was criticised for unoriginality and for its serious feel.

Children's reaction

Those children who stated a preference for a leaflet overwhelmingly preferred the colour cartoon approach.

Observations

A leaflet will be a very important part of the campaign as it can direct audiences towards the website and would reinforce information to those not online. In its research the programme team came across some excellent examples from existing Internet awareness programmes. For example, the Dutch Hotline, Meldpunt, has produced an excellent "cool" postcard aimed at children which doubles up as a mask. The programme team has advised other hotlines in producing awareness material and the new Irish hotline (launched in November 1999) included excellent safety tips in its promotional leaflet.

It will be important to ensure that the image and leaflet appeals to both boys and girls and that its distribution is carefully thought through.

All online and offline elements need to be integrated and complementary.

5.7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND WEBSITE (continued)

5.7.5 *Preference for Deliverables*

| Mousemat | Stickers | Transfers | Fridge Magnet | Screen Saver |
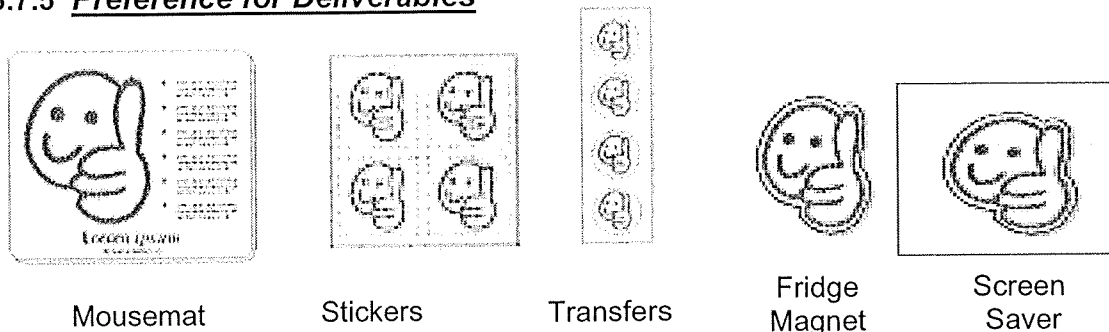
All the parents in the Focus Groups broadly welcomed 'giveaways', which would encourage safety on the Internet as long as the message was appealing. However, there was some concern about whether the deliverables shown were "cool" for teenagers.

From the website questionnaire, 70% of respondees said that a mousemat would be a good way of reinforcing safety messages. There was also a strong preferences for a screen saver (65%) but rather less for the stickers and fridge magnet and only 13% agreeing that transfers would be useful.

Children's reaction

Just under half of the children using the online questionnaire said that the screen savers would be helpful and only 30% said they would use a mousemat. The children did not like the idea of Internet safety stickers, transfers or fridge magnet.

Observations

Those undertaking awareness campaigns need to use different deliverables to reach different audiences. These must also be of the same high quality as general marketing messages. Other deliverables such as posters, adverts, and bookmarks could also be included in a wider campaign.

In the Focus Groups other deliverables were suggested, but it is crucial to consider the 'competition'. For example, would teenagers prefer a pencil case with a pop star, or an internet safe logo? Also, although appealing, there was also some doubt amongst parents as to whether children would actually use these deliverables.

As web streaming technology develops it might be possible to include online video messages in a further Internet safety awareness initiatives. The *America Links Up* website included web streaming of a number of the Public Service Announcements which were very effective at driving home the main safety messages. Other Internet awareness sites include tutorials (Power Point slides) and these too could be included in a fuller campaign, especially if the aim is to train trainers who will in turn run Internet awareness seminars or tutorials.

5.7 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND WEBSITE (continued)

5.7.6 *Preference for Website styles*
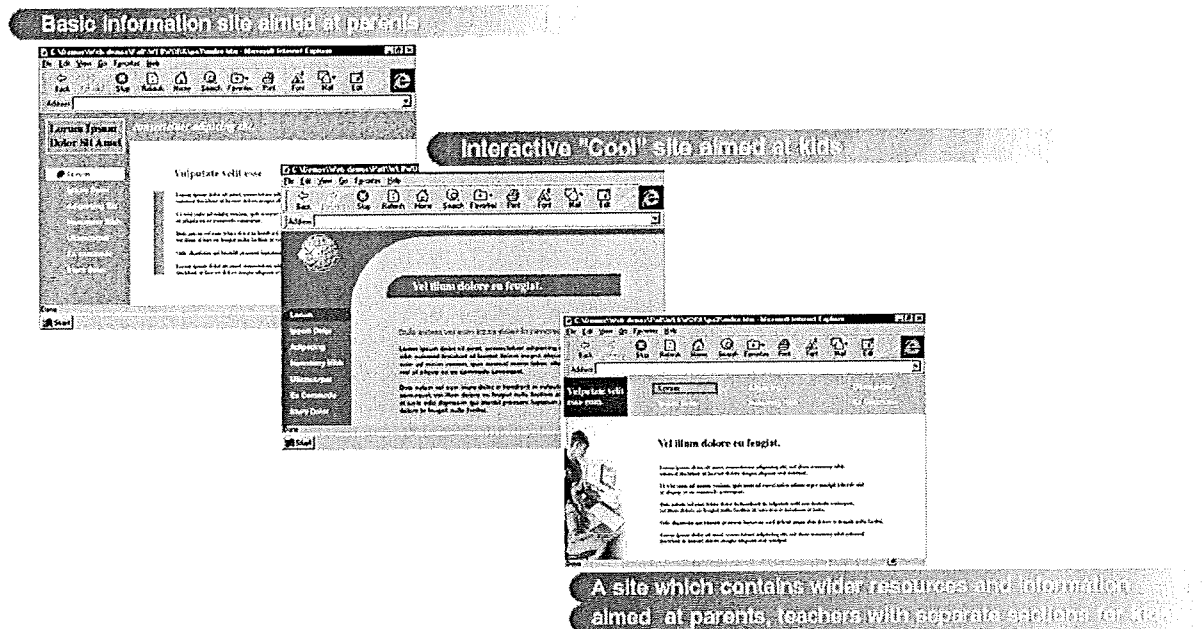
The Website questionnaire feedback revealed that there was equal agreement that both a "cool" site aimed specifically at children and a site aimed at parents and children would be useful. However in the Focus Groups, there was considerably more feedback and the following suggestions were made:

Suggestions from focus groups on a site for children:
Would need to be interesting so that they would visit on their own initiative.
Suggestions included using humour and a comic character.
The site would need to take children seriously as self-responsible users.
Could have its own chat room (moderated) where children could discuss safety issues.
Have lots of links to other interesting sites.

Suggestions from focus groups on a site for parents.
The website would need to provide an "idiots guide" to making the Internet safe.
Contain a list of approved sites they could direct their children to where there would be no risks to children.
Provide advice as to different parental "locks" (software) which must be sensitive to all

Children's Responses
The majority of children responding to the question of which site they would prefer answered that they would prefer a site aimed at children (rather unsurprisingly!) However a quarter of the children felt that a combined parents and children's site would be good.

26

5.7.6. *Preference for Website styles* *continued...*

Observations

Although a website is crucial, its production must not be seen as the sole solution and as highlighted elsewhere, there needs to be excellent off-line material as well as good online promotion of the website with links, and regular updating of the site.

There is a key issue of who is the primary audience for the website. One solution may be not calling it a website for children, teenagers or parents, but rather a *beginner's guide* website, plus another for *advanced users* (flatter them). Obviously these could be different sections on the same site. These are labels people are happy with, and they won't mind self-identifying as a beginner if that's what they are. Also, this would get around the confounding of age and experience.

Keeping a balance between the positive and the negative is important on a website. Many in the Focus Groups felt that the site should be more than just a safety oriented site. It should include links to new "cool" sites (i.e the positive, creative, fun) *with* hot tips on how to get the most from the internet (thus promoting net literacy), good homework sites, plus safety tips so that children pick them up as they go.

Sonia Livingstone who commented on the results of the Focus Groups writes,

"Currently many children (and adults) find the Internet not only a great opportunity but also a very frustrating medium. So, they may be drawn by a website which mixes safety information with information they recognise as addressing a felt need - to help find things effectively (eg how to do good searches on the internet, how to download software, what add-ons they might need to listen to music or play video etc). They also are very keen to communicate with others around the world. Hence, tips on how to communicate with strangers can be tied into support in actually finding pen-pals or joining chat groups with shared interests, i.e. link the safety to the activity for which children have a positive desire, rather than dissociating them and treating safety as a separate issue."

The idea of "mixing" the safety info into information that parents and children want could be highly effective and the new Getnetwise initiative goes a long way in providing information that parents would want e.g. advice on software, good kids websites etc.

A website could also include personal narratives. Teenagers particularly like stories from peers and a safety site could include stories of kids who got caught out, found themselves running up huge phone bills, buying stuff they didn't want, getting stalked etc. Linking good advice from these actual stories could be very effective. Other safety campaigns use this device, for instance in teenage magazines or advice columns.

Parents in the Focus Groups wanted more information on filters and a website should therefore contain this further advice with consumer- type *reports* on them (some of them written by children). A new type of consumer association rating on the filters could be offered plus advice on where to obtain the software and links. The website could also provide a comprehensive review of different homework sites, specialist sites, new software etc. Encouraging parents to bookmark the website would be important.

5.7.6. *Preference for Website styles* continued...

A website is obviously only one of the online methods of encouraging safety. A further effective strategy would be to identify the safety tips to be implemented by other organisations. For example, if a popular children's website organisation incorporates advice to help with homework, they could be persuaded to include a standardised EU safety tip and link to a further advice site or hotline site (e.g. click here if you find a site which makes you uncomfortable). The key task of wider awareness campaigns is not only to provide a good "one stop shop" website, but also to ensure that the top 100 children's sites in Europe have a link to the site and contain appropriate safety information. The safety message needs to be reinforced, and one standardised logo, set of tips and strapline, used online and off line by all could be enormously effective if promoted by a wide range of partners and leading children's website publishers/organisations.

There is an important role for hotlines to play in awareness work and one possible way to attract page "hits" to the existing hotlines is for them to provide more awareness advice on their sites. This may help them to generate more traffic to their sites and a *problem-focused campaign* could be incorporated into a wider awareness programme, i.e. What to do if you come across material which upsets you, or what to do if you think you may have given your name and address to someone you shouldn't have, what to do if you are worried that your friends are getting into trouble on the internet, etc. If properly co-ordinated, an awareness website could not just be preventative, but also help to put things right again by linking to hotlines. Some of the existing hotline sites are not particularly child-friendly regarding reporting harmful materials, and a synergy between a new awareness campaign which involved hotlines may help in promoting their vital work.

Combining a parent and child site is a good idea so that families learn to use the internet together. However, a *shared* parent/child website will need some shared activities, and these may not be obvious. One creative avenue may be to use the fact that children are more knowledgeable about the Internet and design pages that help them to teach the adults about some aspects of the Internet and in a sensitive manner for them to discuss the safety issues accordingly.

Whether there is a separate children's or combined children's and adult site, a separate area on the site just for parents is crucial. Parents may welcome a reassuring website which helps them advise their child. They might well welcome an appeal which begins: Is your child using the Internet? Do you want to understand what they have access to? Hot links to common sites used by children, to a typical chat room, etc. Some literacy pointers - how to interpret a site, where is the advertising or sponsorship to be seen, when might a child be asked for a credit card number, what inbuilt consumer protection is there, how can a child be tracked in their use of the internet? Etc. Sonia Livingstone writes:

"The more children pull ahead of them (their parents), the more disempowered parents will be. The same for teachers - many teachers actually cannot use or don't understand the internet, so they can't readily translate their fears into practical guidance for children. Parents and teachers can't monitor or advise where they don't understand. Even experienced adult users (e.g. those who use it for work) may have no idea where to find the safety software, or the good stuff for their kids."

Already parents have far more views about children and television than they do for music i.e. they monitor and intervene for material they understand.

SECTION 6 NEXT STEPS

6.1 Despite many attempts to get young people to complete the online survey, only a small sample gave detailed feedback (just over 40). The programme team would therefore recommend that further market research (focus groups, face-to-face interviews etc) is carried out with young people to ensure that the findings of this small sample are reflected across the board.

6.2 The programme team believes the 12 Summary Findings and Recommendations laid out at the beginning of this report will help to shape the future direction of the European Commission's *Safe Use of the Internet Action Plan.* In addition there are 4 other reasons why a fuller awareness programme should be implemented:

Crucial right timing for this venture

There is a unique "window of opportunity" to influence the development of the Internet so that it benefits children and families at a crucial time when parents are becoming new users. (The *Europe Online Report* estimates that 13% of the general European population will be Internet users in 2001). Building on this EU preparatory actions programme, and learning from the national *America Links Up* and *Getnetwise* US initiatives, a wider pan-European safety awareness campaign could play a major role in providing authoritative, reliable advice to parents and teachers so that they work with their children in staying safe online. So far there has not been an Internet-"fuelled" tragedy as has been the case in the USA (the Colorado High School shootings), it is therefore imperative that Europe is pro-active in providing advice which could help reduce the likelihood of a similar tragedy occurring.

The funding and "buy-in" for the programme from the Commission.

The European Commission's DGXIII is committed to funding 50% of the costs of this European programme. They will also help disseminate information and be prepared to support key events. Because safety is such an important issue, the Commission's endorsement in any partnership would ensure that the campaign was taken seriously and that its message was reliable and authoritative.

A chance for the industry to show real leadership.

There is a clear opportunity for the Industry to demonstrate to governments, the media, educators and its customers, that it is willing to devote its collective resources and influence in promoting this initiative. There are also strong sponsorship opportunities for the right commercial companies to be associated with the positive safe use of the Internet e.g some placement of logo on deliverables and promotion, and all associated collateral, media blitz, roll out, etc.

Cross European.

Because the research shows that across Europe there were few national variances and most adults have similar concerns about safety on the Internet, there is a real opportunity to roll-out a European-wide awareness campaign. Such a campaign would need to have effective partners in each country who would be responsible for local implementation and ongoing actions.

29

SECTION 8   APPENDICES (attached)

1. Standard questionnaire used in all evaluations
2. Summary of government-funded initiatives by country
3. Copy of message matrix showing messages used to date
4. Copies of Focus Group report (summary slides)
6. Summary of website questionnaire – Results

Report submitted to European Commission - January 2000

Report Authors:

Childnet International
  Nigel Williams
  Stephen Carrick-Davies

Fleishman Hillard
  Shelley Facius

Independent additional advice
  Sonia Livingstone (London School of Economics)
  Larry Magid (Safekids.com)

Full pdf version at
www.childnet-int.org/publications and www.netaware.org

Childnet
International

FLEISHMAN™
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
HILLARD