

Press Release

ECPAT Child Alert
3 November 2010

Internet Safety Agency Praises Telecom for Action

Telecom has announced it will join the Department of Internal Affairs' Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System. The system filters the web content of participating Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block access to known websites that contain child sexual abuse material.

Telecom Retail CEO, Alan Gourdie says Telecom is committed to assisting the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) in this step towards addressing this serious issue.

"This is a very positive move by Telecom" says Alan Bell, Director of the sexual abuse prevention agency ECPAT Child Alert. "We applaud this move and trust that other ISP's with a similar sense of corporate social responsibility will do likewise."

During a trial two year period when this system was being tested the DIA identified over one million clicks by New Zealanders accessing illegal child sex abuse images on the Internet. Most of these sites included images of children under the age of five years being abused. Mr Bell says this has got to stop. *"There is no easy answer to reducing the demand for child sex images but every effort must be made to disrupt this industry where the images of children being abused are traded as commodities. The DIA filter is one such measure and we fully support telecom's decision to voluntarily take a stand and join those prepared to do something positive to protect our children."*

The Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System was made available to ISPs in March 2010 following a two-year trial, and is overseen by an Independent Reference Group, of which Telecom is a member.

ECPAT Child Alert is a registered charitable trust operating in New Zealand since 1994 to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

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