

**Remarks of Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate**  
**Family Online Safety Institute**  
**“Where we are from a Policy Perspective”**  
**December 11, 2008**

Good Morning. Thank you to Mr. Stephen Balkam, not only for including me in this important day, but for your continued commitment to our children’s safety. And thank you, Mr. Hemanshu Nigam, for those thought-provoking words. As a former federal prosecutor you know perhaps better than anyone here the type of perilous threats that our children face every time they log on. Thank you for committing to make MySpace part of the community of innovative, forward-thinking problem-solvers assembled here today.

Most of you know that I have dedicated my career to improving the lives of children and families. I have championed issues from childhood obesity to family-friendly programming, and of course increasingly regarding internet safety. Thank you to the corporate representatives, associations, stakeholders, software developers, ISPs, academics, and all the stakeholders gathered here today. I applaud your commitment and encourage even more self-regulatory and voluntary online child safety efforts, rather than heavy-handed government regulation.

**I. Progress in U.S.**

We have made a great deal of progress in the U.S. over the past few years. In New York, Attorney General Cuomo has launched an historic agreement with ISPs such as AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, AOL, and Time Warner to block access to websites

and Newsgroups containing images of child pornography. This is a partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), which will provide a list of web addresses where child porn is found. Every major ISP in the country has signed this agreement. In California, Attorney General Jerry Brown and Governor Schwarzenegger have called for similar action by that state's ISPs. Other states are also making great strides. Last week, I received a call from a state senator in Missouri who was in D.C. participating in the American Legislative Exchange Program. That group is getting involved at the state level. I encourage cooperation at all levels of government.

## **II. Partners**

FOSI continues to be a leader in the online safety arena, taking yet another step this week with the release of their report "Making Wise Choices Online." I strongly support the four initiatives recommended in this report, especially the idea of an annual White House summit— and why just one? Why not a series all across the country? I also support the creation of a permanent U.S. Council for Internet Safety. I stand ready to partner with you in these efforts and lend my support today and in the future.

Ikeepsafe is another leading partner in the effort to protect children online. Ikeepsafe has developed "Faux Paw the Techno Cat," a series of educational materials designed for elementary school children that offer entertaining and informational messages about the importance of internet safety. The curriculum is being used

internationally and has been translated into Spanish, French, Mandarin, Cambodian, and Vietnamese.

Corporate partners are also emerging, with AT&T, Verizon, MySpace, Sprint, Microsoft, Comcast, Charter, Cox, and today's sponsors and exhibitors—many of whom are offering parental tools and educational materials to help parents keep their children safe online.

### **III. Government**

Many Members of Congress have made internet safety a priority as well. Just last month, the Child Safe Viewing Act, sponsored by Senator Pryor, was signed into law. That bill will require the FCC, within 270 days, to study and report on the various blocking technologies available on wired, wireless, and Internet platforms.

In October, the President signed another bill sponsored by Senators Schumer and Stevens that will direct the Attorney General to: (1) require sex offenders to provide to the National Sex Offender Registry all Internet identifiers, such as email addresses, and (2) specify requirements for keeping Internet identifier information current.

Another idea I have championed during my three years at the Commission is tying e-rate funds to internet safety education. I believe that schools that receive e-rate funds should be required to dedicate a portion of their online curriculum to teaching students about cybersecurity. Thus, I was thrilled to see the President sign the Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act. That bill, originally introduced by Senator

Stevens, requires schools receiving e-rate funds to offer education regarding online behavior, including social networking, chatrooms and cyberbullying awareness and response; directs CTIA to create an interagency working group to identify and encourage technologies and initiatives to help parents protect their children from unwanted content; and requires a national public awareness campaign to be conducted by the Federal Trade Commission.

#### **IV. International**

While remaining mindful that we are often a benchmark in the information and technology space for the rest of the world, we should also remember that all the answers are not in Washington, and we should consider innovative and successful steps other nations are taking to protect children online. In the UK, Prime Minister Brown as one of his early initiatives, commissioned a study, by Dr. Tanya Byron, regarding the risks to children from exposure to harmful or inappropriate content online. I truly enjoyed being interviewed by Dr. Byron, and one of the key findings from Dr. Byron's study is what I have termed the "new digital divide." That is the generational, rather than economic, digital divide that results as parents feel increasingly ill-equipped to keep up with technology and therefore ill-equipped to truly protect their children cyberspace. While many of us in developed countries may be ill-equipped or even over-whelmed, think about those parents in nations that do not blog or shop or research

online. In fact, many parents have never utilized a computer- or a cell phone for that matter- or even more problematic, those parents that are functionally illiterate.

In Japan, DOCOMO, the largest wireless provider, has developed a curriculum and actually sends instructors into schools to train children on the importance of internet safety. The curriculum is broken down into three parts: 1. basic rules and manners, 2. how to deal with SPAM (filtering service, etc.), and 3. abuse and slander on the internet bulletin boards, blogs, and profiles. As of July 2008, DOCOMO had attended 6120 classes and interacted with 1 million students.

Many developing nations are on the cusp of an explosion in broadband deployment—and the children in those nations will need the same type of cybersecurity training—although many times woefully inadequate-- our children receive or have access to. I have been pleased to literally spread the word regarding child internet safety all around the world. Last month, I was honored to participate in the launch of the Child Online Protection Initiative (COPI) at the High-Level Segment of ITU in Geneva, Switzerland, led by Secretary General Hamadoun Touré. I hope that all of you, and your companies and associations, will support this initiative and make your organizations' tools and resources available for use by providing them to COPI. This is not just an issue for America's children, but now extends to the world's children.

## **V. Other Initiatives**

Let me mention and applaud the work by our sister organization, the FTC and recognize my colleague Commissioner Pamela Jones Harbour for their website “OnGuard Online” – which provides practical tips regarding internet safety and security. They also provide “You Are Here,” an interactive online game for youth that teaches everything from false advertising to target marketing; again as our worlds collide, we must protect our children in the online world just as we do everyday in the offline one.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The Internet and broadband have literally brought the world to our children, and as technologies converge, the opportunities are endless. They must be part of this ongoing dialogue as well. We need not only teen-to-teen outreach, but also their help in reaching even younger generations of new internet users. However, as we have seen, these dazzling innovations and life-changing services also pose risks— to all of us, however, most importantly, to our children. In order to ensure that the next generation reaches their greatest potential, we must ensure that they have access to a wealth of educational information in an environment that protects their personal information, physical safety, and healthy mental development.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this event. I know you all share my goal of first and foremost continuing toward our national objective of broadband deployment for all our citizens, no matter where they choose to live. Using all of our

joint resources and synergies will enable the vast benefits of information and communication technologies to be available in the safest environment for children here and around the globe. I look forward to working with you in the future, whether as Commissioner Tate or Citizen Tate. Thank you.