



Thursday, 08 April 2004

## **Proposal to restrict access to illegal Internet material.**

The purpose of this document is to engage discussion with the relevant parties and authorities that have an interest in stopping illegal material being distributed by means of web sites.

Acceptance and availability of the Internet have led to an explosion of subscribers in the consumer and business community. Unfortunately the benefits have also brought with them many issues that now need addressing. The issue of access to pornographic material by adults is not in question in this document, but should be looked at as a separate issue to prevent children from accidentally accessing these sites. The issue addressed is freely available access to material that is illegal under UK legislation.

The Internet is made up of a number of ISPs, in the UK alone there are approximately 5000. For these ISPs to provide content filtered services would seem both inappropriate and unmanageable, we do not want to encourage a level of corporate censorship on the Internet. Government messaging keeps reiterating that there is little if anything that they can do to stop people accessing material that is illegal under UK legislation, we believe that this is not true.

The approach that we would like openly discussed is based around the following ideas:

- The creating of an Internet Black List (IBL). There are many organisations that currently collect data on web sites that are believed to be both inappropriate and illegal, these organisation include the IWF, Police, the intelligence community, numerous children's charities and so on. Our proposal here is that there becomes a central database of the illegal websites, using both IP and Domain Names. The collecting organisation should be independent, but have the ability to call in outside resources such as the police to verify the legality of material on websites to be added to the database. Please note here that we are only talking about sites that are not allowed under UK law.

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- Regulation of the ISP community to use the IBL to block access to these web sites. It is proposed that this is done in one of two ways as follows:
  - o The ISPs configure transparent proxy servers and ALL Internet traffic is passed through these servers. Proxy servers have the ability to implement blacklist sites currently. The downside to this idea is that it would be costly for smaller ISPs to implement and therefore could force some companies out of the market.
  - o The second idea is that the ISPs and government lobby the router manufacturers to enable IP BlackLists to be externally hosted from the router. Routers on the ISP network have the ability currently to deny access to certain IP addresses, but the amount of addresses that can be entered is limited. If the router manufacturers built in the ability for the list to reside on a database server then this could utilise the suggested IBL data. Although this has the downside of only blocking by IP address it still means access is restricted and that the hosting site would have to continually move IP address for people to gain access to the site.

This would be a re-active method of blocking access to these sites and we are sure is not a perfect solution but is certainly a move in the right direction and technically very feasible.

- Once a site has been reported and it is confirmed to be illegal it will be added to the IBL list, the organisation maintaining this database should then work with the relevant credit card companies and financial organisation to remove the websites ability to accept credit card payments. This could be done in 2 ways, the first that the credit card company removes the ability for this establishment to accept a card, or by not allowing UK registered card holder to pay for anything on this site.
- Notification to the hosting ISP that material considered illegal in the UK is being hosted on their network and ensure the relevant local authorities have been informed. The majority of ISPs will immediately remove the hosting capability to that customer and make the site homeless. If the ISP refuses to remove such material then they should be publicly named so that other ISPs and customers will not do business with them.
- Notification to the local authority in the country of hosting. This speaks for itself.



The above ideas are a re-active method of enforcing a very simple concept of denying access to the illegal material available on the Internet. The critics of this will point out that it is re-active and will not stop access to all the illegal material, the purpose of this proposal is to get something started that has some effect, maybe stopping as much as 70%, rather than doing nothing.

To implement the above there would need to be regulation/legislation of the Internet Service Providers in the UK. It is suggested that an organisation is created to ensure that the above, once legislated, is correctly followed and implemented by the ISP community.

If you would like further information on this proposal or to discuss the IAAF in more detail then please contact us at [www.iaa-foundation.org.uk](http://www.iaa-foundation.org.uk).

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February 2004

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