Children, mobile phones and online safety

As the use of mobile phones by children and young people continues to grow, mobile operators need to adopt a consistently responsible approach in order to protect and support younger users. The GSMA leads and participates in many initiatives which are designed to address issues related to child protection and the safer use of mobile phones by children and young people.

1. Action against online child sexual abuse content (child pornography)

In 2008 the GSMA launched the Mobile Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Content, an international industry initiative to obstruct the use of the mobile environment by individuals or organisations wishing to consume or profit from child sexual abuse content.

Through the Mobile Alliance initiative, mobile operators have commited to creating significant barriers to the misuse of mobile networks and services for hosting, accessing, or profiting from child sexual abuse content. The Alliance encourages all mobile operators, regardless of access technology, and the wider mobile community to participate in the Alliance.

www.gsmworld.com/mobilealliance

2. Promoting a responsible approach to children's use of mobile phones

The GSMA undertakes a number of programmes and initiatives designed to safeguard the use of mobile phones by children and to enable operators to address new issues in an efficient and timely manner.

Support and informational resources for mobile operators

- The GSMA encourages its member operators to adopt responsible approaches to children's use of mobile phones and in particular their access to age sensitive content (i.e. content that in other types of media may be subject to age-related restrictions).
- The GSMA provides support, education and informational resources to its members and shares best practice and produces toolkits for member operators which include information and case studies on initiatives undertaken around the world.

Self-regulatory frameworks and initiatives

The GSMA promotes self-regulatory approaches to children's use of mobile phones which are more effective in adapting to fast moving technologies and allow for differences in cultural and societal standards.

European Framework for Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children

- A self-regulatory initiative by the mobile industry, which makes recommendations to ensure that younger teenagers and children can safely access content on their mobile phones.

- These recommendations cover access control mechanisms for mobile operators' own and third party commercial content, the classification of this content according to existing standards in other media, education and awareness-raising on the safer use of mobile devices by children, and fighting illegal content on mobile community products and the Internet. Endorsed by Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, the Framework has led to the development of codes of conduct on safer mobile use in 23 EU Member States to the benefit of 96% of European mobile customers.

www.gsmworld.com/safermobileuse

Research and Educational Resources

To gain a better understanding of and share information about the ways in which children use mobile phones around the world, the GSMA regularly undertakes research projects in partnership with other industry players and academic research organisations. The report "Children's Use of Mobile Phones – An International Comparison" is published annually by the GSMA in conjunction with NTT DOCOMO's Mobile Society Research Institute (MSRI), and compares the social impact of mobile phone use by children at different stages in their development in geographically diverse countries.

www.gsmworld.com/childrenresearch

TeachToday – Public-private partnership to deliver educational resources

The GSMA has joined other leading internet, mobile network and social networking providers and European Schoolnet, a network of 31 Ministries of Education, to deliver TeachToday – an educational website which provides information and advice for teachers and the school community on the positive, responsible and safe use of new communications technologies. The website is being localised in multiple languages and countries across Europe.

www.teachtoday.eu

teachtoday
living with technology

3. Working in partnership and with key stakeholders

Engagement between the GSMA and other industry organisations and external stakeholders is critical to the success of initiatives in the area of child online safety.

- **Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI)**
  The GSMA is a member of FOSI, which works to make the online world safer for children and their families by identifying and promoting best practice, tools and methods in the field of online safety, that also respect free expression. FOSI does this through the development of public policy, technology, education and special events. Natasha Jackson, Head of Content Policy at the GSMA, is the current Chair of FOSI.

- **ITU Child Online Protection (COP)**
  The GSMA is a member of the ITU's COP initiative and has worked to share its knowledge and experience of mobile phone safety into the industry guidelines produced by the ITU.

- **Financial Coalition against Child Pornography**
  The GSMA is a formal collaborator with The Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography, a coalition of credit card issuers and Internet services companies which seeks to eliminate the profitability of commercial child pornography by following the flow of funds and shutting down the payments accounts that are being used by these illegal entreprises.

- **Hotlines and other stakeholders**
  In its work with the Mobile Alliance, the GSMA also works closely with INHOPE (the International Association of Internet Hotlines) as well as other external stakeholders that are actively engaged in combating online child sexual abuse content.
  - The GSMA is a member of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), the UK internet 'Hotline' for the public to report their exposure to online child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world and criminally obscene and incitement to racial hatred content hosted in the UK.

www.gsmworld.com/childprotection