Towards a Safer Internet for All...

www.safeline.gr
The Internet is a fascinating medium that is being widely used for communication, information retrieval, and entertainment. Unfortunately, there are individuals that seek to exploit these services for the distribution of illegal material and the promotion of illegal activities. Internet safety is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed in a professional manner. Among all illegal activities the circulation of child pornographic material should be given top priority.

Child pornography is the sexual abuse of children in photographs, films, or video. If a photograph depicts a child who is engaged in sexual intercourse or some other form of sexual activity, then it is illegal in Greece. Currently, children need to be under the age of 18 if the material is to be labelled child pornography.
Other types of illegal material or activities are fairly widespread over the Internet such as: violence, racial hatred, extremist and terrorist activities, drug and illegal substance trafficking, economic crime, fraud, terrorism, electronic gambling, etc.

Although the Internet use is not very high in the general population in Greece (around 35%), it is on the rise, especially among school children. According to the Greek Center for Educational Research, in 161 schools and 4,317 students, it was found that 51.2% of them regularly surf the Internet. Furthermore, 9 out of 10 users of the Internet, ages between 7 and 17 years, have visited a pornographic site.

From all these studies, it is evident that there is a rise in the circulation of illegal material especially among youngsters. On the other hand, it is a fact, that the majority of the Greek parents are not sufficiently educated in matters related to Internet use, and thus they are not able to direct their youngsters to use sites that contain educational and entertainment material appropriate for their age. Furthermore, they are not aware of the hidden Internet dangers or of the tools they could employ to avoid illegal sites, and in general how to direct their children to a modest use of the Internet. SafeLine is the Greek Internet Hotline where individuals can report illegal Internet content and activities. SafeLine operates since April 14th 2003. Over the last year SafeLine achieved to: (i) increase by a factor of five the number of reports accepted, (ii) be accepted as a full Inhope member, (iii) launch its new website.
The role of SafeLine

SafeLine is a hotline accepting reports concerning websites or newsgroups you found in the Internet and contain:

- images of child abuse, anywhere in the world
- racist and xenophobic content that, in your opinion, violates Greek law
- other content, illegal, from your point of view

SafeLine’s primary concern is the elimination of child pornographic material posted on the Internet.

The SafeLine hotline offers a direct and responsible point of contact for users demanding the criminal prosecution and the removal of illegal Internet content. SafeLine can be used to report material you come across on the Internet and appears to be illegal or objectionable. The SafeLine members will process your report the most effective way and will take the appropriate actions by forwarding the reports to the legal authorities for further processing. Users making reports can be informed of their outcome, as soon as possible. Such users can remain anonymous if they so wish. Users’ personal data are strictly confidential.

SafeLine aims to become a point of reference for concerned users seeking to protect themselves and their family from illegal and objectionable Internet content.
How to make a report

You can select one of the following ways to submit your report:


- **Telephone**: Call +30 211 9558450 workdays, from 9:00 am to 16:00 pm:

- **Regular mail**: Send a letter to the following address:
  
  SafeNet, Stournari 63  
  10432 Athens  
  Greece

- **Email**: Send an email to the following email address:
  
  report@safeline.gr

*Any person who submits the reports can choose to remain anonymous.* **Confidentiality** is another important issue in handling of the reports.

Although all reports are forwarded to the police and no report details are disclosed to anybody else.
Processing of reports

The steps SafeLine follows, in order to process the reports it receives, are the following:

- **Verification**: First, SafeLine performs a typical verification of the reported content. If, for example, the report complains about a website, SafeLine verifies that the address (URL) given exists and that its content is possibly illegal.

- **Tracing the source**: Then, an attempt is made, using technical means, to trace the country where the reported content originates from.

- **Greek Police notification**: SafeLine forwards all reports, regardless of the originating country of the reported content, to the Greek Police.

- **Foreign hotline notification**: If the reported content originates from abroad, the report is also forwarded to a hotline in the country of origin (if one exists).

- **Feedback**: If the user that made the report has provided any personal details, then SafeLine informs him of the actions taken based on his report.

The Greek Police or the authorities of the country to which the report is forwarded are responsible for the further processing of the report based on their internal procedures.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

A report can be anonymous or eponymous. The person who submits the reports can choose to remain anonymous. In this case we are not able to provide him with feedback concerning the outcome of his report. Furthermore, the IP address of the machine used to submit an online report is not stored by the system.

Anonymity is very crucial, especially in Greece, since reporting is not in the mentality of the Greek people. Confidentiality is another important issue in handling of the reports. Although all reports are forwarded to the police and no report details are disclosed to anybody else.
User comes across illegal internet content

User sends a report to SafeLine about the illegal content

SafeLine receives a report

SafeLine tries to verify the existence of the reported illegal material

SafeLine successfully verifies the reported material

All reports are forwarded to the Greek Police, regardless of the origin of the reported material

Report is forwarded to the Greek Police

SafeLine was unable to verify the reported material: Report rejected

SafeLine locates the apparent origin of the reported illegal material

Report is forwarded to an INHOPE hotline operating in the originating country (if such a hotline exists)
Over the last year the number of reports received by SafeLine increased by a factor of five. This indicates that the hotline achieved to reach the Greek population and to become known.

More specifically, in 2005, SafeLine received a total of 294 reports. About three quarters of these reports (153) concerned child exploitation material while 42 reports contained adult pornography and thus were not illegal.

A total of 47 reports were forwarded to the Greek police, 113 reports were forwarded to hotlines of the content apparent origin, and 8 reports were reported to ISPs. The apparent origin of 57% of the reported illegal content was in the US while 26% was hosted in EC countries.

Although the majority of the illegal material was child pornography, there were several reports about economic fraud, computer viruses, racism, and violence. Most of the reports concerned websites, and only a few of them were about newsgroups or personal email. The majority of the reports was anonymous and was received via the hotline’s online reporting form.
The following figure shows the visits of the SafeLine’s website the last 12 months (March 2005 - February 2006).

SafeLine’s website is frequently visited by people located in Greece but also from abroad. For example, the usage by country for November 2005 was:

- Unresolved/Unknown 30%
- Greece 22%
- Network 12%
- Japan 10%
- US Commercial 9%
- Netherlands 3%
- Germany 2%
- Italy 1%
- United Kingdom 1%
- Brazil 1%
- Other 9%
The advisory board

SafeLine’s advisory board includes the following organizations:

- ISPs - Forthnet, OTEnet, Hellas-On-Line
- Consumers unions - EKPOIZO
- Government representatives - EDET, the Greek research network
- Hellenic Police - Head of the e-crime unit
- Child protection organizations - Hamogelo toy Paidiou (Children’s smile)
- Press - General Manager of the NAFTEMPORIKI national newspaper

Contributing partners and support

SafeLine is co-funded by the EC Safer Internet Action Plan (http://www.europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm), as well as the following organizations within the framework of the NetWatch and SafeLine projects:

- FORTH-ICS (Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas, Institute of Computer Science), www.ics.forth.gr
The Greek Police

The Greek police being aware of the Internet safety problem established in 2004 a special police unit, the Cyber Crime Unit (CCU). The head of this department, Mr. Sfakianakis and its associate Mr. Vassilakis, are members of SafeLine’s advisory board and endorsed officially their support towards SafeLine. During the last two years several cases of Internet crime were uncovered by the Greek police.

- The 30th of November 2005, a 57 year old individual was arrested in Athens for maintaining two webpages stored in a US located server that portrayed girls ages from 9 to 16 years old in provocative photos and sexual activities. The arrested said that this was a very profitable business with an income of 30,000 Euros per month.

- On the 18th of October 2005, a ring that circulated child pornographic material was uncovered in northern Greece. Five people were arrested while another 20 people were brought to justice. The ring was active since the beginning of 2004, and involved respected members of the local society, including a lawyer, a maths professor, an architect, a businessman and 3 high school students that were recruited through chat-rooms.

- On the 26th of June 2005, the first case of illegal assembly of firearms that were promoted and sold though the Internet was uncovered by CCU in the Peloponnesian city of Sparta. A farmer, a businessman, a literature professor and his 16 year old nephew were involved.

What is remarkable in the above-mentioned cases is the involvement of very young individuals in illegal Internet activities who use their technological skills, conceiving it mostly as a “virtual on-line game” rather than a criminal act.

Only recently, the first case of production of child pornographic material on Greek territory was recorded. The server on which the illegal child pornographic content was stored was located in the small Greek city of Veria, in central Greece. The Cyber Crime Unit (CCU) of the Greek Police says that since 2001, 50 cases of illegal Internet content have been uncovered, 119 people were charged, and 93 arrests were made.
International Efforts

Hotlines in other countries

Currently, Internet hotlines operate in several European countries such as: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, UK, while hotlines in several other European countries are in the establishment process. The establishment of Internet hotlines in Europe was facilitated with the European Commission Safer Internet Action Plan initiative. Internet hotlines exist in some countries outside the EC, such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, South Korea, Taiwan, and the USA.

The INHOPE association

INHOPE is the Association of Internet Hotline Providers in Europe and coordinates the activities of all European hotlines. Furthermore, the INHOPE association holds close ties with the hotlines hosted outside the EC borders. Including SafeLine, INHOPE now has 19 members covering 17 countries focused on the wide range of illegal use and content on the Internet. The INHOPE association is supported by the European Commission’s Safer Internet Action Plan. Further information on the association is available at www.inhope.org.

SafeLine: a full member of INHOPE

During the INHOPE meeting held in Athens, Greece, on October 18th - 21th, 2005, the INHOPE hotlines accepted SafeLine as a full member. On the sideline of the October 2005 INHOPE meeting in Athens, in 18-10-2005, ICMEC (www.icmec.org) and INHOPE co-organized a Focus Group on “Child Pornography on the Internet” with emphasis on the South-East European countries. During the 7 hour conference several presentations from ICMEC, INHOPE, Safenet, Save the Children Romania, and participants from Bulgaria and Turkey took place. In the discussion that followed common grounds and differences among the societies of the South-East European countries were identified. The Greek participation was very important thanks to the SafeLine activity.
Safety Tips

- Get informed on the use of Internet, its benefits and its traps. Discover websites with informational, educational, and entertainment material and activities that interest your child.

- Do not prohibit your children from using your computer for surfing the Internet. They can have access from the computers of friends, Internet cafes, or even the school.

- Keep your computer in a common room of your home and do not "hide" it in an office or a bedroom.

- Pay special attention when your children use chatrooms. You should pass them the message that personal information should not be given to someone we do not know and we should not accept to meet anyone we "meet" in a chatroom.

- Do not email or provide your credit card number to websites of questionable credibility. Economic crime is widespread in Internet.

- Do not provide your personal details, such as your name, mailing address, telephone number or pictures of yourself to strangers you "meet" on the.

- Install a filtering tool in your computer which bans the access to websites with illegal or harmful content.

- Find out whom you should contact in case you come across illegal and harmful content in the Internet.
Filtering Tools

A filtering tool is a software package that attempts to block Internet sites that contain illegal or harmful content. The effectiveness of each package depends on the sophistication of the software as well as the degree to which the blockings lists are up-to-date.

Different filtering tools could be more effective in blocking different type of harmful sites.

For example, some filtering tools could be more effective in blocking sites containing sexually explicit and child pornographic material while others could be more effective in blocking sites containing violence or racism.

Here is a list of known filtering tools (in alphabetic order):

- **Crayon Crawler**, www.crayoncrawler.com/community.asp
- **CyberPatrol**, www.cyberpatrol.com/
- **CyberSnoop**, www.cyber-snoop.com/
- **ICRA**, www.icra.org/
- **NetNanny**, www.netnanny.com/
- **surfCONTROL**, www.surfcontrol.com/
Useful Links

ins@fe www.saferinternet.org, Insafe is a network of national nodes that coordinate Internet safety awareness in Europe

ins@fe.gr www.saferinternet.gr, The Greek national node for Internet safety awareness

CISA

www.net-consumers.org, Consumer Internet Safety Awareness

Educaunet www.educaunet.org, Education program for a critical approach on the risks linked to the use of the Internet

SafeBorders www.safer-internet.net, Establish a cohesive European network to promote and support awareness aimed at the protection of children and teenagers using the Internet

SAFT www.saftonline.org, Raise awareness of the potential of the Internet and also its dangers to youths and kids

SIFKaL www.sifkal.org, Safer Internet for knowing and living

SUSI www.besafeonline.org, Safer use of services on the Internet

OFSI www.ofsi.org, Observatory for the Safer Use of the Internet: a common virtual place where parents, educator, librarians, authorities, but also any one of you, can find useful and interesting information for the safe use of the Internet

Chat Danger www.chatdanger.com, Tips on how to keep safe in chatrooms (in English)

Think U Know www.thinkuknow.co.uk, Info on how to stay safe while having fun online (in English)

For Kids By Kids Online www.fkbko.co.uk, Internet safety advice for children about chat rooms, e-mail, the web and mobile phones (in English)