

ISPs and Tipline Step Up Battle Against Internet Child Exploitation

WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 23, 2006: Canada's largest Internet service providers (ISPs) have joined forces with Cybertip.ca, Canada's child sexual exploitation tipline, to launch a new voluntary initiative to help in the battle against online child sexual abuse.

The new initiative, named "Project Cleanfeed Canada," is the latest contribution from the multi-stakeholder Canadian Coalition Against Internet Child Exploitation (C-CAICE). It is intended to make the Internet safer for Canadians and their families by reducing their chances of accidentally coming across images of child sexual exploitation on the Internet.

The participating ISPs, which so far include Bell Aliant, Bell Canada, MTS Allstream, Rogers, SaskTel, Shaw Communications Inc., TELUS and Videotron Ltd will install sophisticated new filters designed to protect their customers from inadvertently visiting foreign web sites that contain images of children being sexually abused and that are beyond the jurisdiction of Canadian legal authorities. Based on its widely recognized expertise in this area, Cybertip.ca will establish a list of the sites to be filtered which will be incorporated automatically into the ISPs' filters. The ISPs will have no involvement in compiling the Cybertip.ca list.

Cybertip.ca and the ISPs will continue to work directly with Canadian law enforcement which will investigate and take appropriate action in cases where a Canadian web site contains child sexual exploitation images.

"Those of us active in fighting online child sexual exploitation understand that we need to fight this battle on many fronts and at many levels," said Lianna McDonald, Executive Director of Cybertip.ca and Chair of the C-CAICE Steering Committee. "Project Cleanfeed Canada will make an important contribution to child protection by reducing accidental access by Canadians to child abuse images online."

"I'm very pleased to see the cooperation between the Canadian Internet Service Providers, Cybertip.ca and law enforcement in the ongoing battle to eradicate the online sexual exploitation of children," said Hon. Vic Toews, Canada's Minister of Justice. "Canada's New Government welcomes this latest contribution to protecting children and making the Internet safer for all Canadians."

"Law enforcement agencies welcome this initiative to stop access to illegal material which during its production victimizes children," said Superintendent Earla-Kim McColl, Officer in Charge of the Ottawa-based National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre, which is also a C-CAICE member.

The Criminal Code makes it a crime to access child sexual exploitation images through the Internet.

Formed in the fall of 2004, C-CAICE's membership includes representatives from Canada's leading Internet companies, the federal and provincial governments, law enforcement, and Cybertip.ca.

Project Cleanfeed Canada is named after a similar initiative called "Project Cleanfeed" implemented very successfully by British Telecom in the UK and subsequently adopted by a number of other European ISPs.

CONTACT:

Erin Madden
204-945-5735