

**Testimony before the Child Online Protection Act Commission
Mr. John Litten, Director of Youth and Learning
Microsoft Corporation**

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San Jose, California**

Good morning, my name is John Litten and I am honored to appear before this important commission. I am here today, as the Director of Microsoft's Youth and Learning efforts, to discuss several ways in which Microsoft plays a role in protecting children online.

At Microsoft, we are working across all of our platforms, services and initiatives to educate and empower parents and caregivers so they can better protect their children from online harm. Unfortunately, online predators and hate purveyors are a prevalent threat. That's why we all must work constantly and cooperatively to create a diversity of options and opportunities to protect our kids.

There are a few important and perhaps clear steps we all should take: First, educate parents, children and others about the risks kids may face online. Second, empower people with tools that provide safer and more secure online experiences. Third, work cooperatively with domestic and international policy-makers, industry partners, law enforcers, non-profits, content providers and others to build the self-regulatory techniques that protect children while allowing the Internet to grow. And perhaps most importantly, let technology and innovation flourish. The Internet remains a young enterprise just barely entering its next generation of services, and I fear that regulating it today will place artificial barriers to the growth of tremendous new technologies and tools that will empower consumers as they access the Internet anytime, anyplace and on any computing device.

Looking to the future, at Microsoft we believe our children will continue to adopt what we call a Web Lifestyle, in which the Internet and its resources are a fundamental part of life. We feel it is our job to help provide parents and caregivers with the tools that aid their decisions about how to ensure a child's safe travel through the online world. Yet first I want to review generally some of our efforts then discuss where we might go from here.

PAST & PRESENT

Content Advisor – Incorporation into Internet Explorer, Non-profit cooperation

You previously heard Sheridan Scott testify about the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS), the Internet Content Rating Association, and ICRA's development of a revised rating and filtering system.

After serving as part of the team that developed PICS, Microsoft then integrated the technology into our Internet Explorer browser. In doing so, we chose the non-profit RSACi system because it was the most functional and user-friendly rating and filtering tool. Called "Content Advisor," it remains part of Internet Explorer today, and like many others, Microsoft self-rated our sites within the Microsoft and MSN networks. Yet as we all know, self-rating has yet to reach full bloom, and thus the content rating model faces a significant test as ICRA develops a more robust rating and filtering system with support

from the European Union and its member companies. We strongly support ICRA and, in fact, held meetings this week with ICRA to discuss the opportunities this effort will create for an updated, robust content rating system that works across our new .NET platforms.

WebTV – *Building tools into new technology*

Microsoft's Internet-on-TV product, WebTV, is another technology product that incorporates parent empower tools that safeguard children who access the Internet through WebTV. It is similar to other ISP models in that a subscriber can have several user names per account, such as one per child. The primary user may then set passwords, enable or disable communication applications, and set parental control levels through WebTV's Surfwatch and Kid-Friendly tools.

The Surfwatch setting acts as a filter, disallowing access to Web sites that are deemed inappropriate according to the filters provided to WebTV by Surfwatch, the third-party software provider. And the "Kid-Friendly" zone prohibits Mail or Chat access without parental action, and it limits access to a large number of child-appropriate web sites. In addition, UltimateTV, the TV side of WebTV, includes technologies that control content access by empowering parents to deselect the channels and block shows or films with adult ratings.

Kids Passport – *Preventing the dissemination of a child's personal information*

A different tool we provide, Kids Passport, prevents the dissemination of a child's personal information. Because we do not always know whom we can trust on the Internet, many parents want to control a child's ability to share that data. Thus we developed the Kids Passport, a tool available for parents to control the sites on which their children are allowed to divulge personal information.

Stay Safe Online – *Direct education by a corporate citizen*

Beyond our own tools and products, we work very hard on one of the most necessary pieces in child online protection – education. That is why we have worked closely with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America to educate and train children in online safety. We work with the Boys & Girls Club staff to teach kids about online safety and to supervise their time on the Internet. And we also teamed with them to create the "Stay Safe Online" program. This holistic approach to online safety was developed by Microsoft in conjunction with the Program Services team at the Boys & Girls Clubs, educators, youth leaders, parents, and even from Shaquille O'Neal – who leads the free interactive CD-Rom that children use to develop online safety habits.

GetNetWise – *Tangible industry cooperation*

In 1999, several leading technology companies, including AOL, AT&T, and Microsoft joined forces to establish GetNetWise, an online resource for parents and caregivers. You heard GetNetWise Executive Director Jim Browne testify about the great success and traffic this has had in the past year. To take this to the next level, we are working with Jim and the other GetNetWise partners to expand that site by creating a Spanish language version, build modules for privacy and most importantly, drive web traffic to the site so that more people can access its wonderful menu of tools, safety guides, technology options, and educational links. It is truly a fantastic resource, and as the Internet moves into new converging platforms, we are committed to helping GetNetWise keep pace and remain a source for parents and caregivers who seek child protection technology.

Work with Outside Innovators – *Fostering the child protection market*

Our own products certainly help move the ball, but we also recognize that specialists in child protection software fill an absolutely vital role. Innovators like Net Nanny and many other firms are only just beginning to develop technologies that will be applied on several tools and devices in the .NET era. In fact, these smaller dynamic firms are the ones who could suffer the most from mandatory standards or services that have the potential to lock in a technology. At Microsoft, we work with these companies to ensure that our technologies are compatible and that their tools evolve at Internet speed on our standard platforms.

Law Enforcement

There is no question that effective law enforcement plays an essential role. Thus, we coordinate and train law enforcers at every level and work closely with them to stop and catch those who exploit kids online. Microsoft also works directly with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and we have a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week hotline that law enforcement can use if they need immediate assistance in pursuing online criminals, including child pornographers and pedophiles. To accommodate the many requests we receive from law enforcement, we also employ a large staff of experts who help law enforcement determine how, when and where criminal activity may be occurring on or via Microsoft's online services, and what legal actions Microsoft can or must do to help catch these criminals.

THE FUTURE

Research and Technology Solutions

No technology or tool can be created in a vacuum, nor can we afford to stop improving the tools that we already offer. That is why Microsoft continues to spend significant

sums on developing technology for better protection tools, including content filtering technologies. For our research teams, creating innovative new technology is a way of life. Even though many of the technologies may never be offered in the form of boxed product, Microsoft considers this form of research to be a critical part of its contribution to the advancement of beneficial technologies and its responsibility as a good corporate citizen.

.NET

Microsoft is committed to the .NET era of ubiquitous web services and technologies. As we move into that era, we remain devoted to incorporating the innovative technologies we and others develop that will protect children. Within this world, the .NET technologies will give Internet users more control over personal information and preferences, and they will have the ability to harness multiple devices and services toward a common goal. We also anticipate that the .NET developer tools will create broad new markets for client and server side companies to create child protection tools.

As we move forward, we will work internally and with these outside developers to enhance child protection tools and to create new technologies that are rich and customizable to a family's preferences. We will also build on efforts like Kids Passport, which puts control over a child's personal information in the hands of a parent. As many in our industry have done much to place parental controls in easy-to-find locations, we will expand & enhance our interactivity in this area.

In closing I thank you once again for the opportunity to contribute to your work and to give you an update on our efforts to protect kids online. We all share the goal of creating an environment in which children can learn, explore, and have fun without exposure to the many things that can harm them, and Microsoft remains committed to providing the services and innovations that facilitate this process.