PRESS RELEASE - **For Immediate Release**
Source: Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland – Hotline.ie Service

Dublin, 24th June 2014

Adult Pornography no longer no. 1 concern of Irish parents regarding children's use of the Internet

A recent Nationwide Survey commissioned by ISPAI Hotline.ie has found that Irish parents ranked "exposure to dangerous people" as their number one concern regarding children's use of the Internet. 32% of parents gave it their top concern vote.

Similar research conducted 13 years ago, in 2001, for the Government's Internet Advisory Board, showed access to adult pornography as the top concern. Not only has adult pornography dropped to 2nd place but the percentage of parents giving it their 1st concern vote has dropped by over half - from 44% of parents in 2001 to just 20% in 2014.

The 3rd main concern of parents in 2014 is Antisocial Behaviour/ (Cyber)Bullying, with 16% of number 1 votes; 13 years ago this barely got 6%. According to Paul Durrant, CEO of ISPAI and General Manager of Hotline.ie "*It is interesting to note the rise of Antisocial Behaviour/ (Cyber) Bullying from one of the lowest [in 2001] to becoming the 3rd highest concern [in 2014]. I am really surprised by this finding as I would have thought Cyber-bullying would come out way on top due to media coverage of high profile incidents on the likes of Twitter, Facebook, etc., and with so many children being victim to texting and social media bullying in every community.*"

The other issues regarding children's use of the Internet ranked by respondents to the 2014 Survey in order of lessening concern were: access to violent material; neglecting offline activities; sharing inappropriate content among themselves; spending too much time on social networks; using location based services; spending too much time playing online games and lastly, exposure to advertising.

When asked during the Survey if "the positive aspects of Internet use outweigh the negatives" 64% of parents and 75% of all respondents agreed with the statement. The same question was asked 13 years ago, when 61% of parents interviewed agreed with the statement.

 "*It is notable that these percentages 13 years apart are so close. In terms of technological innovation and online resources, 2001 is equivalent to the Prehistoric Era of the Internet. Social Networks as such didn't exist. One would assume that general usage is very different now – especially amongst children. Yet approximately the same proportion of people view what the Internet offers in a positive light. Rather than a reflection of the Internet, maybe this reflects the rough proportion of people (about 36%) in society who always see the glass half empty rather than half full no matter what the subject.*"- commented Durrant.

Even though, the no. 1 concern of parents in 2014 is "children's exposure to dangerous people", the Survey results highlighted a number of interesting aspects of their children's usage within their control that parents apparently fail to recognise could actually lead to Online vulnerability and exposure:

- On a scale of concerns from 1 to 10 (1 being the highest) parents ranked the activity of children sharing inappropriate content among themselves at 6th place and using location based services like geolocators that can pinpoint one's exact location on the 8th place
- Over 40% of all parents do not use any parental control software whatsoever

- An even greater number, 62% of parents, do not use parental control software for Smartphones. This is a worrying statistic as according to "Net Children Go Mobile – Initial findings from Ireland Report", Smartphones stand out as the most used device by Irish children for Internet access on a daily basis, and let's not forget to that in Ireland are over 2,800 Wi-Fi hotspots*…
- 3 in 10 parents do not monitor their children's Online activities at all

74% of all respondents to the iReach Survey for ISPAI Hotline.ie, selected "parents" as the group with primary responsibility for protecting children online.

"One should also bear in mind that potentially every Internet User is author, producer and global publisher. Most of the "downside issues" of the Internet are generated by the user…On its own the Internet can't be either good or bad. Parents could do much more than just be concerned, they need to engage with their children and teach good behaviour on the Internet just as they would teach them for the real world", added Durrant.

In 2014, there is a wealth of resources and information to achieve a comfortable level of Internet Safety for children. As it is better to prevent by education than to deal with matters when they have gone wrong, ISPAI recommends that all parents should take the time to read the safety tips on www.hotline.ie and our partner's www.webwise.ie websites and which many of our members provide directly on their portals.

On the rare occasions when you might encounter illegal content that "dangerous people" may be distributing, don't ignore it, make a report to the ISPAI Hotline.ie Service – it's **anonymous**, secure and confidential – where content is found to be illegal action will be taken swiftly to have it removed from the Internet and notice passed to law enforcement. It is only through public vigilance that activities of paedophiles Online can be defeated!

Editorial Notes

✓ **ISPAI** – Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee of its members. Since November 1999, ISPAI runs the Hotline.ie Service under agreement with the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána and oversight from the Office for Internet Safety. *Further information available on* www.ispai.ie

✓ **Hotline.ie Service** (www.hotline.ie) provides a confidential online platform whereby the Irish public may **anonymously report suspected illegal material**, especially child pornography, encountered on the Internet. If Hotline.ie assesses the material to be probably illegal under Irish law, the location of the illegal material is then traced. If found to be hosted or distributed from Ireland, An Garda Síochána and the relevant ISPAI member are notified, so the material can be removed from public Internet access and law enforcement investigation may be initiated. If it is found to be from a source outside Ireland, details of the illegal content are forwarded to the INHOPE Hotline in the appropriate country so similar action can be taken. Where the source country does not have an INHOPE member Hotline the report is sent to An Garda Síochána for transmission through police channels. Hotline.ie is the INHOPE member Hotline in Ireland. The **Hotline.ie Service** is part-funded by ISPAI and currently under receipt of grant support from the European Commission, through the Safer Internet Programme (2009-2013). *Further information available on* http://www.hotline.ie/ and http://www.inhope.org/.

✓ **Nationwide Survey conducted by iReach Market Research on behalf of ISPAI Hotline.ie** – the Study conducted in Spring 2014 was part of iReach Consumer Omnibus Survey. Sample Size=1,000 respondents. Demographics: Gender - 53% female & 47% male, Age: 18+

✓ * http://www.comreg.ie/_fileupload/publications/ComReg1419.pdf Commission for Communications Regulation – Irish Communication Market – Quarterly Key Data Report

✓ Net children go mobile initial findings from Ireland (Feb 2014), Brian O'Neill & Thuy Dinh, Dublin Institute of Technology – EU Safer Internet Programme SI-2012-KEP-411201 http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/NCGM_Ireland_initialfindingsreport_complete_new-1.pdf

For media inquiries: 012945280

Paul Durrant CEO of ISPAI and General Manager of Hotline.ie is available for interview upon request

ISPAI www.hotline.ie Service - Unit 25 Sandyford Office Park - Dublin 18