

Press release from Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. 2nd April 2008

Director of Office for Internet Safety launches redeveloped ISPAI Hotline Website

The new Executive Director of the Office for Internet Safety, Mr. John Laffan, today launched the Internet Service Providers' Association of Ireland (ISPAI) Hotline's redeveloped Website - www.hotline.ie - as part of a self regulatory regime supervised by the newly established Office for Internet Safety. The Hotline works closely with An Garda Síochána and 29 other international Hotlines to tackle child pornography on the internet.

The Hotline was established in 1999 and accepts and processes reports from the public in relation to illegal and harmful material on the internet, particularly in relation to child pornography. Speaking at the launch, Mr. Laffan said: **"Since its establishment, there has of course been an enormous increase in internet usage in Ireland. The amount of serious child abuse images being reported has also grown significantly. While the Hotline accepts reports of other types of illegal content, child pornography remains the top reason for report submissions."**

The Office for Internet Safety was set up as an executive office of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The OIS, with Mr. John Laffan as its Executive Director, opened its office at the beginning of March and will have responsibility for internet safety, particularly in relation to child pornography.

Mr. Laffan continued: **"The establishment of the OIS is an important step in the process of building the best possible protection for the community at large and in particular for children from the downside of the internet. In addition, to placing cybercrime issues squarely within the crime policy framework of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the OIS will be in a position to encourage greater cohesion across state agencies. It will also be able to develop closer relationships with the Gardaí on the practicalities for the possible application of blocking technologies particularly with regard to child pornography."**

In conclusion, Mr. Laffan said: **"All of us who are concerned with protecting our society, and particularly our children and young people from illegal and harmful use of the Internet, from teachers, to legislators, and above all parents, must be ever vigilant and ready to take necessary action. I am confident that the Hotline, the Office for Internet Safety, the Garda Síochána and other agencies are fully committed to this vital task. I also look forward to ongoing cooperation between the Office for Internet Safety and the Internet Service Provider industry in working to ensure that the Internet is a safer place for our children and young people."**

2 April 2008