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Press Release
For Immediate Release
13/3/12

SURF SAFER

'Parents in Ireland fail to take basic online security precautions to protect their children'

- **67% of parents in Ireland are worried about what their children may come across online**
- **37% of parents in Ireland have installed software that blocks access to inappropriate websites**
- **82% of parents wish that there was a simple system to report unpleasant and illegal content and have it removed from the internet**

Exclusive new Irish research by Hotline.ie, the Irish internet watchdog where the public can report illegal online material has revealed that 67%* of parents in Ireland said that they are worried about what their children may come across online yet only 37% of these parents have installed basic security measures such as software that blocks access to inappropriate websites.

*1000 people surveyed in Ireland, conducted by Behaviour and Attitudes on behalf of Hotline.ie

Commenting on this, Paul Durrant, Hotline.ie Manager said:

> *"I'm shocked that so many concerned parents have not taken such basic precautions to protect their children from illegal online activity. The internet is a fantastic resource for children when used with care. Simple measures such as filtering software that restricts access to inappropriate sites can make the internet a safer place for children. Importantly, parents need to be warned that anti-virus software is not the same as filtering software."*

Durrant continued:

> As well as taking full advantage of software safety precautions, *parents also need to educate their children on safe internet behaviour. I would recommend these 10 ways to surf safer:*

1. Teach your children to "Think before you click" - don't upload photographs or videos that compromise others (or yourself) as soon as you post a picture to the internet you lose control of it and can never get it back.
2. Take an interest in what your children are doing online and talk to them about it – this helps you to find out what type of sites your child visits and what activities they do there.
3. Ensure your computer's anti-virus software is up-to-date (the licence will need to be renewed annually).

4. Invest in parental control filtering software – this prevents your children accessing unsuitable sites

5. Teach your children not to give away personal information (or your personal information) as this can be used by criminals for identity theft.

6. Encourage your children to tell you if anything happens online that "makes them feel uncomfortable"

7. Talk to your children about unacceptable behaviour online i.e. Cyberbullying

8. Contact your mobile operator about restricted services and dual access to your child's mobile phone so that you can monitor their use.

9. If you find people on social networks or chat asking your children to do things of an inappropriate sexual nature, keep calm and take all the details that you can (this can include taking a screen shot) and report it.

10. Report online material that you suspect to be illegal to www.hotline.ie

Illegal online activity includes child pornography, material causing incitement to hatred and phishing sites that try to illegally obtain a user's bank details. In their 2011 Annual Report, Hotline.ie stated while internet usage and reporting of suspect content to the Hotline had increased, there was a very steep decline in cases where child pornography was actually confirmed as present. There were 274 such cases in 2009 with a drop to 183 cases in 2010.

The recent Hotline.ie survey also reported that 82% of parents wish that there was a simple system to report unpleasant and illegal content and have it removed from the internet. Hotline.ie provides an anonymous facility for the public to report suspected illegal content encountered on the Internet, in a secure and confidential way. The Hotline (www.hotline.ie), run by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI) is supervised by the Department of Justice, Office for Internet Safety (OIS), in cooperation with An Garda Síochána and is a member of INHOPE, the International Network of Hotlines.

///Background

The Hotline, run by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (www.ispai.ie) since November 1999, is part financed by the European Commission's Safer Internet Plus Programme. It is supervised by the Department of Justice, Office for Internet Safety (OIS), in cooperation with An Garda Síochána and is a member of INHOPE, the International Network of Hotlines (www.inhope.org). Hotline.ie provides an anonymous facility for the public to report suspected illegal content encountered on the Internet, in a secure and confidential way. The primary focus of the Hotline is to combat Child Pornography by having it removed expeditiously from the Internet and alerting police so they may investigate. Other forms of illegal content and activities exist on the Internet and may be reported using this service.

*1000 people surveyed in Ireland, 375 of which were parents, conducted by Behaviour and Attitudes on behalf of Hotline.ie in February 2012.

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PHOTO CAPTION: 'Surf Safer', With Only 37% of parents in Ireland installing filtering software to block offensive material from their children, Hotline.ie give tips on how to keep children safe online