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Berkman Center Internet Safety Technical Task Force
Organizational Meeting
Washington, D.C.
March 12, 2008

Minutes

Introduction

The meeting opened at 1 pm with an introduction by each Task Force member present, including those present by telephone.

Scope

The members discussed expectations for the Task Force and what it ultimately would produce, including whether the final report to the Attorneys General would require consensus.

Discussion turned next to framing the problems the Task Force will address. Possible areas suggested include predation (adult-child contact), access to inappropriate content, access to illegal content such as child pornography, enforcing age limits, and issues of cyberharassment, cyberbullying and identity theft. Members discussed the fact that many of the perpetrators of these risks themselves are under 18, and that undesirable conduct by those under 18 may require different solutions than undesirable conduct by adults. A suggested framework for defining the problems the Task Force should address is "content, contact, conduct and cost." There was some debate as to whether cost should be included, but it was agreed that feasibility of implementation should be a criteria considered. Some members raised concerns that the Task Force was beginning at square one where a lot of previous research exists, especially with respect to issues related to the filtering of content.

Additional questions were raised about what types of technologies the Task Force will be considering and who will be using these technologies (i.e. the end users or the networks). Members were also concerned about a focus on technology rather than a more interdisciplinary approach placing technology in the context of other solutions (i.e. education).

Structure

The discussion next turned to the overall structure of the Task Force and methods of participation for those not on the Task Force. It was proposed that the Task Force will meet four times (primarily in Washington, DC), and will hold one fully public meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Additionally, it was decided that the Task Force will create two advisory boards, one for research and one to assess technology. The Boards will be comprised of academics and

other financially disinterested third parties. The Berkman Center's danah boyd will chair the Research Advisory Board.

With regard to the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), participants were concerned about whether the Task Force would be, in essence, contracting out its obligations with regard to analysis of specific technologies. The concern was that the TAB would be looking at the technology and reporting back to the Task Force. Participants seemed positive about the idea that the Board would be used to filter in good information from outsiders with no economic interests in the technology. It was decided that the TAB will serve in an advisory capacity so if members receive technology from someone they can send it to the TAB.

Participants also suggested either looking into satellite proceedings held internationally or in some way incorporating the work of international bodies into the Task Force. These comments focused specifically on similar commissions in the United Kingdom (such as the Byron Commission) and European Union. The issue was also raised that the companies implementing these solutions are international in scope, and the solutions the Task Force comes up with must be applicable outside the United States.

Scope Part II

The discussion then returned to the issue of scope and defining the Task Force's inquiry. It was stressed that participation in the Task Force does not bind participants in anyway, and that the Task Force's final report will not be legally binding.

In determining scope, it was suggested that the Task Force look to the taxonomy of the age groups to be looked at and how that will matrix over the issues being considered. Questions were raised whether and to what extent particular age groups, rather than under-18 users as a whole, should be looked at. Possible divisions included: under-13 and 13 – 18; or under-13, young teen, and mature teen. Two principles enunciated during this discussion were that: (1) one size solutions do not fit all age groups; and (2) as the Task Force gets clearer about the problems it wants to solve, it will also need to determine who is in that universe of risk.

One suggestion in determining scope was that the Research Advisory Board determine: (1) what are the risks facing youths today; and (2) which of those risks could be addressed by technology. Emphasis was placed by some participants on focusing on the usability and likelihood of adoption as a factor in analyzing the technology. Concerns were raised about narrowly focusing on either just technology or particular technologies out of fear that by looking at technologies in a vacuum the Task Force findings run the risk of becoming irrelevant.

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<u>Mode</u>

The Task Force next discussed how members would communicate with one another, via email and on Listservs created by the Berkman Center for the purpose of internal

communications. It also discussed how the Task Force would communicate with the press and others regarding Task Force business.

It was proposed that future Task Force meetings would be divided into two sessions, one for Task Force members only and the other open to the public. It was decided that topics discussed at the closed meetings still would be considered on the record (for the public), but no attribution of particular remarks can be made to individuals without express advance permission.

For press inquiries, preference was expressed that they be directed to the Berkman Center. A suggestion was made that press remarks by Task Force members be prefaced by disclaimer that all remarks are made in individual capacity and not as a member of the Task Force.

Concerns were raised about who would be signing off on the reports (both quarterly and the final report) and whether the final report would be a consensus report. It was decided that the Berkman Center would draft and accept comment on the reports, but that they will not be consensus reports. Instead, individual Task Force members will be able to write addendums to the final report. A request was made for a bibliography of the resources being relied on for the reports, particularly on the technical resource side.

<u>Brainstorming on Specific Questions</u>

Discussion next turned to the development of specific questions for the Task Force to address. It was suggested the questions be developed within the framework of the three C's: contact, content, and conduct. The five questions discussed before the end of the meeting were:
- How do you stop unwanted contact between adults and children? (contact)
- How do you stop children from accessing inappropriate content on websites? (content)
- How do you stop access to and the availability of illegal content? (content)
- How do you prevent children from getting onto social networking sites without parental consent? (conduct)
- How do you prevent young people from engaging in bullying, harassment, and unwanted solicitation? (conduct)

Separate issues were raised for peer-to-peer conduct and contact (i.e. interactions where both participants are under 18). These issues included distinguishing conduct that is

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unwanted versus wanted, and who needs to want that conduct (the communicator or the communicator's parents?).

It was suggested that, in order to develop a list of problems/challenges/risks for the Task Force to address, the relevant question is: Sally is sitting at her computer, what are all the things that can happen to her? Also, in the peer-to-peer context, what might Sally do online? It was suggested that a recent report issued by a similar commission in Australia might offer a helpful taxonomy and matrix for these subject, and that this report, as well

as the COPA Commission report, might provide a useful template for the Task Force going forward.

Next Steps
The meeting ended with a discussion of the next steps to be taken. The next Task Force meeting will be held April 30th in Washington, D.C. Between now and then, the Berkman Center will redraft the Task Force Work Plan that takes into account the comments and concerns raised at the meeting, will draft the first quarterly report for the Attorneys General, and will set up systems for communication.   It was suggested that those Task Force members with technology they would like to share might make presentations to the group at the next meeting.