



## **Internet Safety Task Force Request for Information**

### **1. What safety issues do you attempt to address on your site? How do you measure the risk that youth face on your site?**

With the multitude of global products and services within the Yahoo! network we, take a multi-faceted approach to child safety. Not only do we address network-wide issues such as the need for general child safety education, but we focus on the challenges specific to certain products. These challenges include distribution of child pornography, cyberbullying or other inappropriate or abusive conduct, and limiting minors' access to adult content. Yahoo! also works to provide tools that empower users to customize their experiences and help create a safer experience for their families. These customization tools also address safety challenges by allowing users to take action to prevent unwanted contact or exposure to unwanted content. Similarly, we tailor our education materials, safety guidance, and abuse reporting based on the service(s) and tools offered on each product.

While Yahoo! is not in the best position to track trends and collect data related to online safety issues, we work in partnership with educators, industry peers, law enforcement, and other child safety experts to guide our efforts, to collaborate with us on how best to address child safety issues on our network, and to benefit from their expertise in implementing safety features and programs. Specifically, we work closely with NCMEC's NetSmartz, iSafe, iKeepSafe, Wired Safety, Connect Safety, and Commonsense Media. We consult these groups and individual safety experts regularly on an individual basis and also collectively through informal conversations, sharing of program ideas, and formal training events for Yahoo! employees.

We also engage in outreach in our communities. For example, we recently held our second annual CyberCitizenship Summit at our Sunnyvale Campus. The Summit brought together Educational leaders from across California and safety experts from across the United States to discuss the challenges students and schools are facing online. Events such as the Summit provide valuable input for Yahoo! on how best to use our resources to address the most pressing safety concerns for kids and teens. In addition, through our regular training and interactions with law enforcement, we are able to learn about the trends law enforcement sees and their areas of concern. We have consulted with child exploitation experts in the law enforcement community to identify specific safety challenges to better enable Yahoo! to develop a response.

**2. What technical (and non-technical) efforts have you undertaken to make your site safer for youth? Please list all features, policies, collaborations, etc. Indicate which safety issues these efforts attempt to address and which age groups are targeted in this approach. Please note if these are in-house efforts or if they are outsourced or a part of a collaboration and, if so, who your partners are. For each effort, please indicate your metrics for success.**

Yahoo has been an industry leader in making our services safer for youth, through technical and non-technical means. The technical measures Yahoo! has developed in-house include:

- **Report Abuse Links:** Yahoo! provides tools to assist in reporting inappropriate or harmful behavior such as our “Report Abuse” links. Our report abuse feature is meant to help us address several issues, including distribution of offensive or illegal content, online harassment or cyberbullying, and misuse of email or instant messaging services. Report abuse functionality is included on various sites across the Yahoo! network, including Yahoo! Messenger, Flickr (photo-sharing site), Profiles, Yahoo! Answers, and Yahoo! Personals. Report Abuse buttons are focused on empowering all Yahoo! users, regardless of age.
- **SafeSearch:** Yahoo! provides the option of a “SafeSearch” feature to prevent display of adult content in search queries. The feature is designed to help shield users under age 18 from unwanted exposure to adult content. Parents can lock SafeSearch on to prevent children from turning it off. On Yahoo!’s mobile search service “oneSearch,” all users default to SafeSearch mode and children registered as under 18 cannot turn the function off.
- **Kid Search:** Yahoo! Kids features search results that have been human-reviewed by trained editors for age appropriateness and safety for children. In addition, Kid Search aims to prevent the display of adult content in search results responsive to search queries made on the Yahoo! Kids site.
- **Privacy features:** We build safety and privacy features into our products, including privacy preferences and blocking capabilities. These features give users the ability to control who can contact them using services such as Yahoo! Messenger, Answers, and Profiles. Users can block other users for any reason, but the functionality is chiefly designed to address the problems of online harassment, cyberbullying, spam, delivery of objectionable content, and grooming of children by predators.
- **Detection of inappropriate and illegal material:** Yahoo! has implemented technology and policies to help us identify apparent child pornography violations on our network. These include filters, algorithms, and human review, as well as user reports of abuse. These processes work in the background and are designed to protect users of all ages from potentially viewing illegal content.
- **Family Accounts:** Yahoo! provides a parent or legal guardian the option of opening a Yahoo! sub-account for their child under the age of 13 by charging a one time 50-cent fee to their credit card to ensure that a parent or legal guardian is involved in the account creation. Yahoo! donates a portion of the fee to help NCMEC’s efforts to protect children.

In addition to these in-house technical measures, Yahoo! also works with its partners to provide Parental Controls. Yahoo! makes available a Parental Controls product to Yahoo! users who have broadband Internet access through Verizon or AT&T. Our parental controls empower parents to limit the sites to which their kids can visit, thereby limiting children’s exposure to what the parent deems inappropriate content.

Yahoo also has undertaken several non-technical efforts to protect our users online. Our Yahoo! Kids site was an industry leader when it launched in 1996, and it continues to be a unique ‘green

space' in the industry today. Meanwhile, our Yahoo! Safely site provides kids, teen, and parents with a wide variety of safety content, including blogs, tutorials, videos and games.

In addition to our product-specific "Help" sections, tutorials, and safety and responsible usage tips for our users, we have partnered with domestic and international children's safety organizations, law enforcement, and others in the industry to address online safety concerns.

For example, Yahoo! has partnered with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the U.K.-based Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) in an effort to reduce the proliferation of child pornography by removing URLs hosting known images of apparent child pornography from Yahoo! search index results and responding to detection of these URLs or other images of apparent child pornography on our network.

Yahoo also partners with public safety officials to improve the safety of our sites and services. Yahoo! has created a 24 x 7 dedicated compliance team that can immediately respond to law enforcement if we are contacted about a situation that indicates that a child may be in danger. In addition, Yahoo! dedicates employees to provide law enforcement training for the members of the Internet Crimes Against Children task force, state Attorneys General, the National Association of Attorneys General and others. We have held law enforcement training seminars in conjunction with the Attorneys General of Colorado, New Jersey, Illinois, Texas, Missouri, New York and Nebraska.

As part of this training and outreach effort, we have created a Law Enforcement Compliance Manual to educate law enforcement personnel about Yahoo!'s policies, procedures, and systems, and to help law enforcement better understand how to obtain the appropriate investigatory information in child exploitation cases.

Another aspect of our comprehensive approach to online safety includes collaboration with our industry partners. Yahoo! participates in the Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography, which brings together financial institutions such as banks, payment companies, credit card issuers, internet service providers, and NCMEC in an effort to eliminate commercial child pornography by taking action on the payment systems used fund such illegal operations. Yahoo! also has joined with NCMEC and internet service providers, including AOL, Google, Microsoft, Earthlink, and United Online, to create the industry Coalition for Child Protection Technology. The Coalition is dedicated to developing shared technologies aimed at fighting child pornography. Furthermore, through our work with NCMEC, we allow users to receive state or local Amber Alerts through their email, instant messaging and mobile services.

In addition, Yahoo! participates in a number of industry working groups organized by our non-profit partners Internet Keep Safe Coalition, FOSI.org, and the Ad Council.

Finally, Yahoo! donates millions of dollars worth of Public Service Announcements on child safety issues through banner ads across our network and sponsored links to sites our non-profit partner sites such as NCMEC's Netsmartz.org for elementary school age kids and their parents.

**3. What results can you share about the actual impact of your various efforts in #2 to date? Please be as specific and data-driven as possible. What lessons have you learned from your efforts to execute in #2? If any of your approaches have not been as successful as you hoped or have had unexpected consequences, please provide a detailed case study.**

Our product efforts are based on the guidance and input we receive from our various partners, as noted above, based on their research and expertise in this area.

It is extremely difficult to measure the impact of our efforts through specific data and statistics. For example, a decrease in the number of complaints we receive regarding the instances of offensive materials accessed by children could be due to an increased use of parental controls or

safe search or greater parental involvement (*i.e.*, education). At a hypothetical level, how would it be possible to quantify the number of unwanted adult-child contacts that never happened and then attribute those non-events to a particular technology?

There have been recent studies suggesting that online safety education efforts are bearing fruit, however. A recent study from the University of New Hampshire found that minors are receiving fewer unwanted online sexual solicitations online – only 1 in 7 in 2005 compared to 1 in 5 in 1999-2000. The study's authors attribute this success to education and media efforts which discourage children from visiting chat rooms or interacting with people they don't know.

**4. What can you share about any efforts you are planning to launch in the future? Please describe in as much detail as possible. What problem are you trying to solve with the additional efforts and how will you measure success?**

Yahoo! continues to work to address safety challenges using a multi-faceted approach. To that end, we continue to refine our internal technology for detecting illegal child pornography images, to target relevant safety messaging to the proper audience, to highlight our report abuse functionality to our users, to educate law enforcement on investigations involving Yahoo!, and to partner with our industry peers. Further, soliciting input and feedback from safety experts and participating in groups such as this one help us explore the efficacy of third-party safety products. A couple of examples of our continuing efforts include:

- As noted above, Yahoo! participates in the industry Coalition for Child Protection Technology ("Technology Coalition"). The members of the Technology Coalition are working on technologies such as applying hash value recognition to speed the detection and take down of images of apparent child pornography. In using this automated system, the Coalition members aim to deter the use of their systems by those who would trade in child pornography images and to speed takedown of such images in order to minimize potential exposure to users. Yahoo! is working with this group and NCMEC to help enhance our current capabilities for detecting child pornography images.
- In accordance with Yahoo!'s belief that educating all users about safe online practices is the first step in helping youth deal with online risks such as predators and bullying, Yahoo! plans to continue expanding its education and outreach efforts. For example, Yahoo! recently launched an online safety education video created in partnership with NCMEC's NetSmartz.org and aimed at educating teen users on managing their online reputations. We soon will be unveiling a second video to help teens understand how they can deal with cyberbullying. We anticipate that these will be the first in a series of youth-oriented efforts to provide our teen users with tips for protecting themselves from online risks. In addition, Yahoo! is adding new – and refining existing – online safety instructional materials for parents (available at [safely.yahoo.com](http://safely.yahoo.com)) in order to provide them with tools for teaching their children how to use Yahoo! products safely.

**5. Based on what you've learned in trying to execute safety measures, what should the Technical Advisory Board know about dealing with actual implementation issues? What concerns do you have based on your own experiences? What are the strengths and weaknesses of implementing technical solutions?**

There are many factors which impact whether technical solutions can be implemented across the Yahoo! network. First, any technical solution must be appropriate for the wide range of services that Yahoo! offers, as any implementation likely will impact users of email; small business services such as domains or web hosting; content services such as News, Travel, and Finance; as well as the community services that Yahoo! offers. Second, any solution must be capable of being implemented globally. A significant percentage of Yahoo!'s users live outside the United States.

Third, solutions must be able to scale to the size of Yahoo!'s network of 500 million users around the globe and do so with a high level of accuracy. Fourth, solutions must be low-cost or cost neutral, as Yahoo! is committed to continuing to offer users free access to basic core services such as email communications and important informational services such as News and Finance.

Finally, technical solutions need to be narrowly tailored to the safety issue that is to be solved and not interfere with legitimate users' online experiences.

Yahoo! has concerns about many of the technical solutions being discussed by the Task Force members. Many of the existing solutions are challenging because of the significant gaps in coverage both within the U.S. and outside, the burden placed on users in terms of financial cost and/or cost to privacy, and the lack of narrow tailoring to identified safety risks.

We're always open to technical solutions that focus on results, but no single technical solution will be the "silver bullet" that solves child online safety challenges. Yahoo! has developed (and continues to develop) a number of technical solutions within our own network of services. When we do so, however, we are very careful to design the solutions to focus on clearly inappropriate behavior or content and to implement solutions in a way that produces a minimum of interference with the legitimate use of our products and services.

In many cases, to be successful, a tool must be tailored both to the product where it will be deployed and to the specific type of problem it is trying to address. Examples of where we have developed useful tools to promote safety include our spam filters, sign-on seal, detection of malware and phishing URLs, reporting images of apparent child pornography, and various types of content moderation tools, such as reputation-based content moderation tools in properties like Answers and language filters for Chat and Message Boards. Given the success we've seen with our internally developed solutions, we believe that companies continuing to innovate on their own networks may be the best way to promote safety rather than trying to find a "one size fits all" solution.

Lastly, technical solutions must continue to be paired with other types of efforts to promote safety such as education and awareness, as well as assistance for law enforcement investigations and prosecutions.