

Presentation document

ACTION INNOCENCE



Internet and children

Internet is everywhere, offering new-found freedom and a wealth of new resources.

Young people in particular enjoy using this type of media. According to a survey carried out by the Federal Statistical Office, the 14-19 age group has represented the largest proportion of users since 2005¹.

Internet is a fantastic tool which enables young people to access a huge global network quickly and easily. They are able to surf, chat, send messages, blog, download ... But even though the net is a playground, it is also able to convey a completely different, dark side. Young internet surfers must be conscious of the fact that dangers exist on the Internet in the same way as in the real world. They must learn how to avoid these threats, which include the invasion of their privacy, meeting the wrong kind of person, viewing shocking images and sites which incite hatred, violence or even anorexia.

The anonymity provided by the Internet encourages young people to confide in others and reveal their personal secrets. This is then used by paedophiles to make contact with children. They enter into a relationship with young people through the intermediary of chat rooms and instant messaging. They also use discussion forums where young Internet surfers speak to one another - a perfect starting point to pick out potential victims.

Predators are patient and ready to devote a great deal of time to winning children's trust. They know how to listen and ask apparently innocent questions which have nevertheless been carefully chosen. They are able to discover their centres of interest, pastimes and passions. Little by little they gather clues on where the children live, which school they attend, their family, friends ... They then use all the information provided by the victim to blackmail them and force them to meet in person.

Young people think that they are aware of the risks of predators on the Internet, but more often than not prove to be very naïve. Although they do not reveal their true identity or personal details to begin with, they soon fall into the trap once they think it is in confidence!

¹ Worldstats Internet site

Action Innocence

Organisation

Set up in November 1999, Action Innocence is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation (NGO) which was acknowledged as being in the public interest by Order of the Council of State of the Canton of Geneva.

Its resources come from the subscriptions paid by its members, donations and fundraising events.

Action Innocence received the ZEW0 Foundation (www.zewo.ch) seal of approval in December 2004. This foundation is the Swiss monitoring agency for charitable fundraising organisations.

Task

Action Innocence contributes to preserving the dignity and integrity of children on the Internet.

Objectives

1. Inform and increase the awareness of the public, parents and children on the dangers of the Internet
2. Promote safe surfing on the Internet
3. Combat paedopornography on the Internet

Actions

- Study of the behaviour of young Internet surfers
- Analysis of the risks which children and adolescents may encounter on the Internet
- Development and distribution of prevention programmes
- Creation and distribution of prevention material
- Information campaigns
- Development of new innovative and effective solutions which are able to combat the traffic of paedopornographic images better, in close collaboration with the Federal Police Office (SCOCI) and Police services in Europe

Information and Prevention Department

Prevention programmes

One of the objectives of Action Innocence is to inform and raise awareness among the public, parents and children on the dangers of the Internet.

Psychologists have been participating in the prevention programme "*Surfer avec prudence sur Internet*" (Surf with care on the Internet) in public and private schools in the cantons of French-speaking Switzerland since 2002.

The programme has several modules which are adapted to the targeted public:

1. **"Ze Monstres du Net" (The Monsters on the Net):** children aged between 9 and 12
2. **"Atelier Ados" (Adolescents Workshop):** adolescents aged between 13 and 15
3. **Parents and Teachers conference**
4. **Professional education and health workshops**

The **prevention material**, which is the media used by the psychologists, is developed by Action Innocence and updated each year.

Action Innocence has signed an agreement with the Youth Health Service (SSJ) in Geneva, under the aegis of the Department of Education (DIP), authorising it to visit public schools in Geneva. Since the beginning of the 2003-2004 academic year, the prevention programme has been made available each year to all primary 5th-year teachers in public schools in Geneva.

In the other French-speaking cantons, psychologists intervene directly at the request of headmasters and teachers.

All the Association's preventive work, whether intended for children or adults, highlights both the positive elements and dangers of the Internet. The objective here is not to demonize the tool!

Research

The Prevention and Information Department has been conducting research since 2006. This has provided on the one hand a greater knowledge of paedocriminality and on the other has enabled the prevention programmes to be fleshed out.

You may request further information on the research, "The modus operandi of the cyberpedophile" carried out by Martine Courvoisier, a psychologist-criminologist at Action Innocence, from the Association's secretarial offices.

Information

In parallel to its work in schools and parents' associations, and in order to strengthen the impact of the work undertaken, the Association aims to inform and raise the awareness of the general public. In this respect, its main actions include:

- Creation and distribution of information material (leaflets, presentation document, annual report etc.)
- Information and awareness campaigns
- Press relations (interviews, preparation of articles and distribution of press releases)
- Participation in televised and radio debates
- Conferences
- Presence at fairs and exhibitions



IT and Prevention Technologies Department

AntiPedoFiles Programme

Action Innocence began the **AntiPedoFiles** programme in 2003. The Association develops IT solutions for law enforcement agencies to enable them to combat the traffic of paedopornographic files on the Internet more efficiently.

Paedocriminality on the Internet by and large represents the distribution and exchange of files which show or involve children performing sexual acts and which may or may not include violence. The traffic of such files not only occurs through Websites but also in particular on other services such as newsgroups, free and anonymous electronic mails, virtual communities and file-sharing networks, called peer-to-peer.

The AntiPedoFiles programme can be broken down into several modules:

AntiPedoFiles – Database

Development of a database including the footprints of files containing paedopornographic material in order to develop detection tools.

AntiPedoFiles - P2P

Development of software able to detect files containing paedophile material on the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) networks.

AntiPedoFiles – Webscan

Development of software which monitors the national web.

These modules will be given free of charge by Action Innocence to those law enforcement agencies interested.

Internet Platform

Action Innocence manages several specialised Internet sites:

www.actioninnocence.org: site presenting the Association

www.filtr.info replies to a strong demand from Internet surfers, mainly parents who are concerned about their children's safe surfing. The purpose of this site is to provide clear and detailed information on the various filters available on the market.

www.netcity.org: interactive game which enables children to learn how to protect themselves against the dangers of the Internet while playing.