UAE’s Efforts towards
Child Online Protection

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Introduction

Children and youth, heavily rely on the internet for schoolwork, online gaming, and social networking.

Although technology is supposed to be a helpful tool, there are also many dangers which threaten the safety and well-being of children.

According to UNICEF, One in Three internet user is under 18 years of age

| Facts about the UAE |

According to recent statistics the UAE has world’s second highest internet penetration at 92% with over 8.8 million residents now online.

The country also tops the region in smartphone user penetration at 64.6%

(source: Emirates Safer Internet Society).
**Facebook**
- 3.6 million active users in the UAE
- 2.3 million from Dubai
- 878 thousand from Abu Dhabi
- 305 thousand from Sharjah
- 99 thousand from other Emirates
- 43% of UAE population uses Facebook
- 61% of internet users use Facebook
- 69% of Facebook users are male, 31% are female
- 44% of Facebook users are aged 22–30
- Data as of May 31, 2013

**Twitter**
- 363 thousand active users in the UAE
- 2.5 million tweets per day in the UAE
- 52% of Tweets are in Arabic, 35.91% in English
- 6.2 million internet users use Twitter
- 73 thousand from Abu Dhabi
- 23 thousand from Sharjah
- 8 thousand from other Emirates
- Data as of July 10, 2013
The UAE is exerting a lot of efforts in protecting children by providing a positive environment and appropriate legislative and programmatic frameworks to meet the health, psychological, educational, social and legal needs for children’s proper growth.
Protecting children from online risks is no exception. In fact, the UAE has adopted a series of preventive measures and solutions designed to protect children from online risks at various levels:

- International Community
- International law
- National legislative framework
- National initiatives
International Level

- The UAE represented by the Ministry of Interior has been chairing the **Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT)** since 2015

- The VGT is an international alliance of dedicated law enforcement agencies and industry partners working together to keep children safe online

- The VGT has contributed to the rescue of hundreds of children around the world from online child exploitation and to the prosecution of hundreds of offenders since 2003
Country Members

- Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) Command
- Ministry of Interior for the United Arab Emirates (MOI UAE)
- Dutch National Police (Rijkspolitie)
- INTERPOL
- Swiss Federal Police
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Korean National Police (KMP)
- New Zealand Police (NZP)
- Colombian National Police
- Europol
- Australian Federal Police (AFP)
- Philippine National Police

International Level

Making the internet a safe place for children

Virtual Global Taskforce

www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com
International Level

- UAE has been providing support to the VGT in achieving its goals in child protection and cooperation in combating crimes that target children globally.

- It has also hosted the VGT conference in 2012 and sponsored the VGT website which provides information to the public on safety and a channel to report abuse.
The UAE was awarded a permanent seat on the #WePROTECT Global Alliance International Advisory Board (IAB), in recognition of its security and police work in the field of child protection.
The UAE hosted the 2nd #WeProtect Global Summit in 2015 in Abu Dhabi which resulted in:

- Governments and organisations agreed to establish a coordinated national response to online child sexual exploitation
- Statements of action to globally fight online child sexual exploitation
In June 2017, the UAE was elected to lead the international committee for Child Online Protection (COP) during the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Conference in Geneva.
The UAE was the first Arab country to accede to the Convention on Child Protection against Cybercrime of 2001.

Article 17
Shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine not less than two hundred and fifty thousand dirhams and not in excess of five hundred thousand dirhams or either of these two penalties whoever establishes, manages or runs a website or transmits, sends, publishes or re-publishes through the computer network pornographic materials or gambling activities and whatever that may afflict the public morals.

Shall be punished by the same penalty whoever produces, draws up, prepares, sends or saves for exploitation, distribution, or display to others through the computer network, pornographic materials or gambling activities and whatever that may afflict the public morals.

If the subject of the pornographic content involves a juvenile under eighteen years of age, or if such content is designed to seduce juveniles, the principal shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of at least one year and a fine not less than fifty thousand dirhams and not in excess of one hundred and fifty thousand dirhams.

Article 18
Shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of at least six months and a fine not less than one hundred fifty thousand dirhams and not in excess of one million dirhams whoever has deliberately acquired pornographic materials involving juveniles by using an electronic information system or computer network or electronic website or any information technology means.

Article 19
Shall be punished by imprisonment and a fine not less than two hundred fifty thousand dirhams and not in excess of one million dirhams or either of these two penalties whoever entices, aids or abets another person, by using a computer network or any information technology means, to engage in prostitution or lewdness.

The punishment shall be imprisonment for a period of at least five years and a fine not in excess of one million dirhams if the victim is a juvenile under the age of eighteen years of age.
| National Legislative Level |

- **Child Rights Law (Wadeema Law) No. 3 of 2016**
  which guarantees the protection of children from all forms of exploitation and abuse.

- Articles 29 and 37 prohibit the exploitation, production, filming, possession and circulation of child pornographic materials and calls for the immediate removal of child sexual abuse material from the internet and child online abuse.
National Initiatives

A QDAR’S E-SAFE SCHOOL ONLINE SAFETY

A joint initiative between Aqdar Khalifa Empowerment Program for Students- a government program for students’ empowerment and awareness and Emirates Safer Internet Society (E-safe) a foundation for a safer online experience in the UAE with a key focus on children.

Status: Ongoing from 03/10/2016 to 30/06/2021
National Initiatives

AQDAR’S E-SAFE SCHOOL ONLINE SAFETY

The initiative aims to challenge, support and recognise schools to review their e-safety provision and to develop an action plan to protect their children online.

It provides public and private schools with a toolset to support them in developing online safeguarding strategies.

It has trained so far more than 200,000 students, teachers and parents.
National Initiatives

AQDAR’S E-SAFE SCHOOL ONLINE SAFETY

Since 2017, schools are being evaluated for their cyber security standards.

10 schools were selected for the evaluation and the ones that meet the criteria will be certified by Aqdar and the National Electronic Security Authority (NESA).

The target is to reach 100 schools by 2019.
| National Initiatives |

AQDAR’S E-SAFE SCHOOL ONLINE SAFETY

The initiative was awarded first place in the category: The role of government and all stakeholders in the promotion of ICTs for development at the WSIS for 2017.
National Initiatives

#SafeUpWhatsApp

A youth online safety awareness campaign by Aqdar and E-Safe Society.

E-SAFE has identified a significant security vulnerability in WhatsApp which allows hackers to easily gain complete access to people’s account in a matter of seconds.

The issue reached Facebook and they changed WhatsApp security setting.
National Initiatives

Safer Internet Day initiatives on a national level that included activities such as:
• workshops that served around 10,000 students,
• a massive campaign with banners everywhere in the country,
• a multi-platform social media campaign,
• flyers distributed to students,
• competitions on students’ knowledge about internet safety etc.

The Safer Internet Day 2017 reached out to 40% of the students in UAE.
National Initiatives

• The **Safe Surfers** is a pilot program by the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood and the General Women’s Union.

• The program is in line with the state’s vision of achieving sustainable development and building a knowledge-based economy that supports innovation.
National Initiatives

The Safe Surfers includes:

• awareness campaigns,
• summer programs,
• lectures,
• training workshops

Objectives:

• To train students and equip them with technical skills.
• To raise their awareness about the dangers of the Internet, cybercrime, privacy protection and the importance of technology in future industry.
Statistics and figures

141,099 beneficiaries

List of registered children

- 72 registered
  - Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah
- 78 registered
  - Emirate of Umm Al Quwain
- 81 registered
  - Emirate of Ajman
- 425 registered
  - Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- 94 registered
  - Emirate of Dubai
- 84 registered
  - Emirate of Sharjah

%58 females enrolled
%42 males enrolled

ELECTRONIC AWARENESS PUBLICATIONS

- 52% 59 publications
  - Technical advice for optimal internet usage
- 35% 39 publications
  - Electronic education Percentage of transfer of institution’s services to apps
- 13% 14 publications
  - Legal awareness Cybercrimes

112 Awareness Publications

Parents’ Ages

Ages Of Registered Children

- above 50
- 50 - 49
- 40 - 30
- 30 - 20
- below 20
- unknown

- 17-15
- 14-12
- 11-6
- 5-4
National Initiatives

• The Regulatory Authority (TRA) has established a **Computer Emergency Response Team** which aims to support a safe cyber environment for the residents of the UAE.

• The Team introduced **SALIM** an Emirati character acting as a cyber-security adviser.
National Initiatives

SALIM provides IT and Internet users in the UAE with tips on how to protect themselves against cyber threats and guide them towards a safe cyber culture.
The UAE recently started providing Circle with Disney service. It allows parents to filter content, limit screen time and set a bedtime for every device in the house.
Thank You