

Key points on Nigeria's position (Telecom regulator) as regards Child Online Protection.

Introduction:

In a bid to adopt the ITU guidelines on Child Online Protection; The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC):-

- Organized a Stakeholders' Consultative Forum in 2010 which aimed at bringing stakeholders together to proffer ways of developing a National framework on Child Online Protection with particular emphasis on the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) industry.
- Based on the recommendations from the forum, the NCC set up a Technical Working Group (TWG) that included selected representatives of core stakeholders group from the Public and Private sectors to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations reached during the Stakeholders forum on Child Online Protection which are strategically imperative to the actualization of coordinated efforts aimed at achieving protection of Nigerian Children Online.
- The TWG came up with recommendations that were reviewed by NCC and adopted in developing the 'Nigerian Child Online Protection Policy' (NCOPP) document in 2014.
- In 2014, NCC conducted a research on mobile parental control in line with best practices with the view of developing a policy framework. The Parental controls within the mobile telecommunications network is the application of software and service tools that are designed to help parents and guardians monitor Children's access to inappropriate websites and contents while using mobile phones and other smart devices. The categories of the parental control measures are:
 - ✓ Content filters, which limit access to age inappropriate content;
 - ✓ Usage controls, which constrain the usage of these devices such as placing time-limits on usage or forbidding certain types of usage;
 - ✓ Monitoring, which can track location and activity when using the devices;

Activities (Done/Ongoing):

- Based on the outcome of the 2014 research, the Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) were mandated to;
 - ✓ Implement Mobile Parental Control Measures on their network.

- ✓ Creates adequate awareness on the available mobile parental control measures/apps on their networks.
- ✓ Educate parents and guardians on the procedure to activate the apps.
- ✓ Encouraged to offer the mobile parental control app service for free or at very minimal cost in order to foster the uptake.
- ✓ NCC should feature Parental Control Measures in Telecoms during Consumer Parliament and Outreaches for the next three quarters.

Reports received revealed that the Service Providers have implemented the above recommendations and the Commission will monitor from time to time to ensure compliance.

- The 2014 NCOPP is being reviewed by an Internal Working Committee to take into consideration the evolving global emerging technology and practices, and on completion will be revised into a National Child Online Protection document that will comprise of the Policy, Strategy and Outlined Action Plan.
- Some mobile network operators in the Country have introduced certain tariff structures with the aim of providing protection to children from exposure to inappropriate online (internet) contents.
- The Commission is finalizing an Internet Code of Practice (ICOP) which will help to define the rights and obligations of Internet Access Service Providers in the handling of offensive and potentially harmful contents, with one of the sections dedicated to “minors and vulnerable dependents online”. This looks at;
 - ✓ Incorporation of Child Online Protection Policies into Terms and Conditions of Service.
 - ✓ Reporting Mechanism for Child Sex Abuse Content.
 - ✓ Blocking of Access to Child Sexual Abuse Content.
 - ✓ Parental Control Measures.
 - ✓ Education of Parents, Guardians, and Minors.
- As part of the Commission’s mandate to protect, inform and educate the telecom consumer;
 - ✓ The Commission holds monthly Consumer Outreach Programmes, thereby educating parents/guardians on safety tips on how to protect their children online.
 - ✓ Also have Fact Sheets specifically on Child Online education to further create awareness on how parents can protect their children online.
 - ✓ Child Online Protection lecture to primary and secondary schools during school visits at the Commission.

- As part of the Commissions National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) 2019, one of the themes will be looking at '*Security Tips for Parents, Administrators and Children*'. The Cyber security enlightenment campaign kicked off on 1st, October, 2019 with;
 - ✓ Publicity of awareness contents in text, video and animated formats on Online safety, Cyber bullying, etc. via TV, Radio, Social Media Platform, and NCC website.

Proposed Plan:

The Commission is coming up with an awareness project aimed at sensitizing the Nigerian Child on the safe use of the internet. The campaign seeks to amongst other things:

- ✓ Provide an online safe haven where the Nigerian Child can competitively engage one another in productive and guided interactions.
- ✓ Enable the provision of a safe and secured cyber space for Nigerian digital citizens, along with promoting positive use and experience from the internet for children and young people.
- ✓ Provide regional advocacy and awareness on Nigerian Child Online Protection Policy and recommend safety measures.
- ✓ Provide regional awareness incorporating local languages and cultural norms.
- ✓ Share knowledge and experience while facilitating international strategic partnerships to define and implement concrete initiatives.
- ✓ Increase the understanding of child online safety among government, industry, educators and civil society organizations.