



Child safety online – Our approach

Vodafone helps parents protect their children from inappropriate content and contact on the internet to make their children's online world safer. Our industry-leading initiatives offer advice for parents and guardians to help them understand new technologies and to help young people use those technologies safely.

Some of the content and services accessible via the internet are inappropriate for younger users, such as age-rated games, gambling, sexual material and some social networking sites. Children and younger teenagers also need to understand the potential risks of chatting to strangers or giving out their personal information when using social networking and location-enabled services, and what to do if they think they are being bullied online.

Many parents find it challenging to protect children from these risks. Typically, parents have a lower level of understanding of new technologies than their children and welcome support to make informed decisions about how to help their children stay safe online.

Digital Parenting

Our Digital Parenting website provides up-to-date guidance on protecting children from inappropriate content and the risks associated with social media sites. The accompanying magazine, also available as an app, offers views from experts as well as practical information, such as step-by-step guides on how to set up parental controls on handsets.

We published a special edition of the magazine in July 2013, which includes advice for grandparents on how to help young people stay safe online and views from experts on digital privacy and sexual grooming. Following its success, we plan to publish a third issue in 2014. The magazine is available online and we printed 400,000 copies for distribution in schools across the UK.

In 2013/14, we also launched Web Super Skills – free internet safety cards designed with the creators of Moshi Monsters – to help parents teach young children good habits to ensure they stay safe online (see feature). For more examples of initiatives across Vodafone, visit www.vodafone.com/parents



In focus: Web Super Skills Cards

Web Super Skills cards are helping parents teach children between the ages of four and 10 safe online habits as soon as they start using the internet. The cards are available from Vodafone stores in Ireland, New Zealand, Spain and the UK. Developed with the Vodafone Foundation and Mind Candy, the creators of the safe online game Moshi Monsters, they are easy for children to understand. The cards set out a simple set of rules on how children should behave online – including being polite and talking to parents about friends they meet. Download the free cards [here](#).

For more guidance, visit our Digital Parenting website at www.vodafone.com/parents

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Promoting a common industry approach

Network operators such as Vodafone provide consumers with a means of connecting to the internet to view content in a web browser, or to access content and services via apps on their devices. While we can control the content made available within the small number of apps we have created ourselves, the vast majority of the content and services accessible via our network is not created, hosted or controlled by Vodafone in any way.

Smartphones and tablets can access online content and services via a variety of different types of provider, including the 3G and 4G networks operated by Vodafone and our competitors, public WiFi networks and ADSL or cable networks via private WiFi networks.

Additionally, some device manufacturers maintain their own controls and filters. For example, Blackberry maintains its own servers to provide customers with access to the internet, Apple offers on-device child protection measures which allow parents to limit their child's access to certain kinds of content, and third-party app stores operated by Blackberry, Apple, Google and Microsoft limit access to apps on an age-rating basis. However, these measures are also beyond Vodafone's direct control.

Keeping children safe online therefore requires an integrated approach across the broader technology industry.

Vodafone has been a leading force in online child protection since 2002, working closely with other organisations in the industry and beyond, to drive common approaches to safe browsing and app use. In 2004, Vodafone UK was the first company anywhere in the world to deliver an online child protection filter across its own 3G mobile network, which included integration of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) Child Sexual Abuse Content Block list. In 2007, similar 3G network-level filters were rolled out across our networks in our local markets, where permitted by law and accepted as necessary and desirable according to the prevailing culture of the country. In some countries, network-level filtering by operators is viewed as an unacceptable restriction of a citizen's freedom to communicate, even when such measures are intended to protect children from harmful content.

Vodafone is one of 22 companies that have signed up to the guiding principles of the ICT Coalition for a Safer Internet for Children and Young People, which we helped to develop. The principles set out a common code of conduct for the development of products and services that promote child safety online. We submitted a self-declaration report of our status in September 2013, and an independent assessment of all the companies' declarations was published in May 2014.

Vodafone is also a signatory to the European Commission's CEO Coalition on Child Safety Online, which commits us to making it easier for users to report harmful content, ensure that privacy settings are age-appropriate and offer parental controls. In January 2014, we delivered our status report to the EU outlining our progress against our commitments to online safety.

In 2013/14, we joined the Board of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety, a policy advisory group chaired by government ministers and representing organisations from government, industry, law, academia and charity sectors that work in partnership to help keep children safe online. Vodafone also became a member of the Family Online Safety Institute.

Blocking illegal content

The internet contains large amounts of material that is not suitable for under 18s. A much smaller proportion of the material accessible on the internet is also illegal in many countries, particularly content related to the sexual abuse of children.

Vodafone is committed to doing all it can to remove such content from the internet. We have 'Notice and Takedown' procedures in place to ensure this illegal content is removed or dealt with appropriately, should it be found on our servers, and to coordinate with law enforcement agencies on any subsequent investigation.

Additionally, as a member of the Internet Watch Foundation, we maintain filters on our own networks that block access to web pages known to host child sexual abuse content using a blacklist provided by the IWF. We do this in the majority of our markets in the EU, with the exception of the Netherlands and Germany, where it is not legal to use such a block list.

Much of this illegal content is hosted in countries where Vodafone and other major operators do not have an operating business. We are a founding member of the Mobile Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Content, established by the global industry body the GSM Association (GSMA) and supported by more than 67 operators.

The Alliance provides best-practice advice and support to mobile operators worldwide in order to obstruct the use of mobile networks and services by individuals or organisations wishing to consume or profit from child sexual abuse content, and also provides support for law enforcement agencies seeking to investigate such activities. The Alliance is active in more than 51 countries and seeks to protect more than 757 million mobile phone users from exposure to illegal content accessed via the member operators' own networks.