

# Procurement Policy Note – Blocking access to web pages depicting child sexual abuse.



## Action Note 05/10 05 March 2010

### Issue

1. This Procurement Policy Note (PPN) addresses the requirement for Departments (including their agencies, offices and NDPBs) to ensure that when specifying for internet related services they include a requirement to block access to web pages depicting child sexual abuse.

### Dissemination

2. Please circulate this PPN within your organisation, agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and any other bodies for which you are responsible, drawing particular attention to those with a purchasing role.

### Contact

3. Enquiries about this paper should be addressed to the OGC Service Desk: 0845 000 4999 or [servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

### Background

4. The internet industry has set up, and funds, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), a self-regulatory body and national Hotline for reporting and removing child sexual abuse content on the internet. The IWF produces a dynamic list of web pages with child sexual abuse content which it makes available to internet service providers, mobile operators, search providers and filtering companies so they can prevent inadvertent access to such content.
5. The Government has promoted the policy of blocking access to this content, by encouraging internet service providers who provide internet access to consumers, to block access to child sexual abuse web pages using the IWF list.
6. In line with this policy, the Government should lead by example and require its suppliers of internet services to deploy the IWF list across services they provide to Government.

## Detail

7. All procurement specifications regarding the provision of internet related services must include a requirement that the service provider must block access to those Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) specified on the IWF's list.
8. This requirement does not supersede or negate the need to specify facilities that may be required to monitor and enforce a Department's policies regarding acceptable usage of the internet by its staff.
9. In selecting suppliers to be invited to tender for an internet related procurement, the existing use of the IWF list should not be considered as a selection criterion as this would be in conflict with the EU procurement rules, and the need to obtain value for money.

## Annex A - Guidance

### Internet Watch Foundation

1. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) was established in 1996 by the UK internet industry to provide the UK internet Hotline for the public and IT professionals to report potentially illegal online content and to be the 'notice and take-down' body for this content. IWF works in partnership with the online industry, law enforcement, Government, the education sector, charities, international partners and the public to minimise the availability of this content, specifically, child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world and criminally obscene and incitement to racial hatred content hosted in the UK.
2. IWF is an independent self-regulatory body, funded by the EU and the wider online industry, including internet service providers, mobile operators and manufacturers, content service providers, filtering companies, search providers, trade associations and the financial sector.

### IWF Blocking Initiative

3. Whilst child sexual abuse images hosted on web pages abroad remain available, the UK internet industry has voluntarily agreed to block access to them using a list provided by the IWF. Since 2004 many companies have chosen to make use of this list to protect their customers, namely, internet service providers, mobile operators, search providers, and filtering companies.
4. Every URL on the list depicts indecent images of children, advertisements for or links to such content. The list typically contains 500 to 800 URLs at any one time and is updated twice a day, at 12 noon and 6pm (UK time), to ensure all entries are live.

### Accessing the IWF List

5. Access to the IWF URL list is available to ISPs, mobile operators, search providers and filtering companies only. All companies that require access must sign a licence which sets out how the data can be used.
6. The IWF list will be available to suppliers outside the UK, providing that the company signs the appropriate licence and pays the appropriate fees.
7. One authorised individual will be provided with unique logon credentials to enable secure access to the up to date list of URLs, at least once a day, to add to their filter. There are options to download a full list or an incremental list.

### Fees

8. Charges to the supplier depend on whether a company becomes an IWF member. Fees depend on the customer base / market share of the company. Companies that do not wish to apply for membership may apply to become a licensee only. For companies that are seeking only a licence a standard fee is charged. Content filtering companies also pay an additional fee for using the IWF list in their product / service.
9. Suppliers should consult the IWF for the current scale of charges.

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