

Minutes of Internet Watch Foundation Board Meeting
Tuesday, 22nd July 2003 at 10.00 am.

Room A698, Old Main Building, London School of Economics

Present: Roger Darlington (Chair), Emma Ascroft, Charlotte Aynsley, John Carr, Sonia Livingstone, Claire Milne, Jim Reynolds, Camille de Stempel, Mark Stephens, Nigel Williams.

IWF Staff: Peter Robbins (Chief Executive), Brian Wegg

Apologies: Howard Lamb, Roland Perry

Item 1- Apologies and introduction

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. He pointed out that Roland Perry was unable to join the meeting because of ill health and had resigned from the Board. Chair thanked Roland for all his hard work in support of the IWF.

Item 2 – “Code of Practice for new forms of content on mobiles” A presentation by Rob Borthwick and Vikram Raval.

A copy of the presentation material was circulated to all members and following a helpful presentation, Board considered some of the issues raised. The consultation period for the code runs until 8th September 2003 and Board concluded that IWF should make a formal response.

ACTION: Secretariat to assemble a response to the draft Code, including comments on matters specific to IWF and broader issues.

Board considered some of the issues raised with regard to membership subscription fees and the volume of reports which may be generated by specific proprietary brands in both mobile and fixed internet, for example community and interest groups. Concern was expressed about the potential scale of the problem and the need to review our position. The discussion concluded that:

- IWF is the relevant body referred to in the Code annexe;
- Providing all operators remain members, their subscription fees would cover services and require no additional charges;
- IWF reserve the right to review their whole charging policy should the volume of complaints associated with any product become disproportionate.

Item 3 - Minutes of last Meeting

Board approved the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 21st May 2003.

Item 4 - Matters Arising

Board members noted the “progress” notes on the agenda. The following matters also arose:

- It was noted that the IWF web site still included a layout and hyperlink to a software company which Board had agreed last meeting was inappropriate.

ACTION: Executive to carry out the agreed changes to the IWF web site.

- Chief Executive briefed Board members on the response of the Home Office with regard to our request for all staff and Board members to receive CRB checks at the Enhanced Disclosure level. The Director of the CRB had determined that only IWF staff directly involved with Hotline work would be eligible for CRB checks and these would be at the Standard Disclosure level. The Home Office Minister, Paul Goggins, concurred with the Director’s assertion but he undertook to include our comments and concerns within an independent review of the CRB which is underway.

ACTION: Secretariat to write to all Board members asking that, all those Board members who have not been previously vetted via a police check or CRB disclosure carry out a police check via their local force.

Item 5 – Chair’s report

Chair introduced his report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He highlighted the discussions he had concluded with fellow Board members and the resulting four vacancies for non-industry Board places. The recommendations in the paper, subject to minor amendments, were agreed as follows:

- the July meeting of the Board selects a industry member and a non-industry member to join with the Chair as members of a selection sub-committee who will agree upon a fourth independent member of the sub-committee
- in the course of the next few months, we have an open advertisement process for four new non-industry Board members
- subject to the nature of the applications received and short-listed, we give preference to two members with relevant experience of children's issues, one with relevant knowledge of the criminal law, and one with relevant knowledge of criminally racist material, ensuring that in all cases the candidates have an understanding of the Internet
- we seek to cover as much of the costs as possible through funding from the Department of Trade & Industry
- once the new Board members are selected, the executive prepares and implements a process of induction and training for these new members
- the new Board members take office on 1 January 2004.

Jim Reynolds was appointed to the role of non-industry representative on the selection committee.

ACTION: Camille de Stempel to liaise with Howard Lamb on the industry representation for the selection committee.

Board confirmed that the decisions of the selection committee in this matter will be final.

Item 6 – Chief Executive's report

The Chief Executive introduced his paper, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Board asked that a formal vote of thanks to the Chief Executive be recorded in recognition of the significantly improved financial position of the IWF and the Corporate Plan which clearly identified IWF workload and priorities.

Board considered the volume of reports which were being received about "pay per view" sites particularly the high proportion that are hosted in the USA. Chief Executive pointed out that he was discussing this concern with an Internet trade association in the United States.

ACTION: Board asked that the Chair and Chief Executive raise this matter through the Home Office and DTI.

Member Progress

Board members noted the additional subscribers and present discussions the Chief Executive was having with potential members. Board members considered the position with regard to ISPs who had declined to support the IWF and what approach should be taken in order to secure their support. Following further discussion Board agreed the following action:

ACTION:

- Chief Executive to continue his dialogue with ISPs who had declined to support the IWF;
- Chair to write an appropriate letter to major ISPs expressing the Board's concern about their failure to support IWF;
- Board to consider ISP responses at their next meeting in October and determine an appropriate course of action.

Corporate Plan

Board noted the revised document.

Spam summit

Board noted the IWF submission.

Item 7 – Report from the Newsgroup Panel

Executive gave some background to this work and referred to the paper including the summary of recommendations which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Chair proposed that the recommendations contained in the report be accepted by Board, this was seconded by Mark Stephens and carried unanimously. These recommendations were as follows:

- When any Newsgroup name in the alt.binaries (bainaries) sub-hierarchy includes

~an explicit sexual term (e.g. erotica, erotic)
~and a word, which conveys a child who is underage,
the presumption will be that the executive will add that group to the list of names which are potentially illegal.

- a) That the 7 “marginal” newsgroups, which were found to contain paedophilic material in all three reviews (of “content and context”), be added to the list of names because they appear to advertise or advocate paedophile content or activity
- b) That the 22 “marginal” groups of “serious concern” should be added as a separate “advisory list” to the confidential newsgroup web page which ISPs received from the IWF on a monthly basis.
- c) That the executive add a separate list of newsgroups that are under going “suspect” monitoring (for “regularity”) to the monthly web page for ISPs, in order to provide further helpful advice on newsgroups, which have not failed the regularity threshold but are causing concern.
- Board are asked to note that :
 - a) making acceptance of IWF’s recommendations on newsgroups a requirement of membership of IWF is not in breach of Article 10.
 - b) a URL can be a potentially illegal advertisement.
- That Newsgroup Panel be wound up and any future work connected with newsgroup policy be dealt with by the Executive Committee of the Board.

Chair thanked all those involved for their work in developing a credible newsgroup policy which other countries and agencies were taking an interest in.

Item 8 - IWF Code of Practice

Board noted that Funding Council had proposed the following amendment to the last section of the revised Code entitled, “Amendments to the Code”:

“The Code may be amended by the IWF through a Board resolution following appropriate consultation.”

Concern was expressed that an internal sub-committee may not be an appropriate body to hear appeals. Subject to the above amendment and legal advice on the appeals procedure, Board supported the revised Code. The planned implementation date is 1st January 2004

ACTION: Executive to seek legal advice on proposed Code appeals procedure.

Item 9 – Any other business

Emma Ascroft and Nigel Williams had both resigned from the Board because of new career opportunities. Chair thanked them for their hard work and tremendous contribution to IWF.

Item 10 – Date of next meeting – 2.30 pm on Tuesday 14th October 2003.

Meeting closed at 12-45 pm.