



**INTERNET WATCH FOUNDATION  
BOARD MEETING  
2.45 pm - Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008  
Hosted by teleconference**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Amanda Jordan (Chair), Emma Ascroft (industry Vice-chair), Naomi Cohen, Stephen Locke, Hamish MacLeod, Ian Walden (non-industry Vice-chair)

**IWF Staff:** Peter Robbins (CEO), Keren Mallinson, Sarah Robertson, Brian Wegg

**Apologies:** Rodney Brooke, Mark Gracey, Tink Palmer, Suzy Walton

**Apologies and welcome**

Chair opened the teleconference and noted the apologies. She asked the meeting to note that the Board meeting was quorate and our constitutional documents allowed meetings to take place by teleconference.

**A variation to the CAIC policy**

Chair outlined the background to the issues and explained that following an informal Board briefing by teleconference that morning it was agreed it may be necessary to suspend the CAIC blocking policy with regard to a specific image hosted on Wikipedia. Chair said that the informal teleconference in the morning had agreed that this was an important policy variation which Board should consider and vote formally on. The situation was outlined:

- An image hosted by Wikipedia had been reported to the hotline in the usual way and had been assessed to be a potentially illegal image at level 1 and the hosting URL, in accordance with CAIC policy, had been added to the IWF's URL blocking list;
- The image and some accompanying text was therefore blocked to UK consumers – unfortunately because of the access structure for Wikipedia editing the online encyclopedia could not be updated as a result of IWF's block on this one URL;
- In accordance with procedure Wikipedia as the hosters had appealed against the IWF's decision to include the image in the blocking list and the executive had followed the procedure in finding that the image was assessed correctly and this view was confirmed by law enforcement partners;
- Chair asked Board to note that the CAIC Appeals procedure was designed to deal with errors where either an incorrect assessment had been made or an incorrect URL added to the block list – it was not intended to be used for the policy to be varied or suspended where content had been confirmed as potentially illegal; and
- The Wikipedia hosted image had therefore remained on the CAIC URL block list with the accompanying access problems for Wikipedia.

Board considered some contextual factors with regard to the image and its publication and these included that:

- The image was first published 32 years ago in 1976 as an album cover and the album was widely available and advertised online;
- No attempt to prosecute had taken place with regard to the image in over 30 years of publication; and
- Public misunderstandings over the URL block list, and the impact of blocking on Wikipedia editing had resulted in a public response where there has been a massive online proliferation of the image.



Key principles of the CAIC URL list are to lessen the availability of child sexual abuse content and help to prevent UK consumers being exposed to such content. The inadvertent side-effect of including this image from Wikipedia on the URL list had been to significantly increase its availability and the likelihood that UK consumers would be exposed to the image.

On the basis that on this occasion the inclusion of the image on the URL list had resulted in the reverse of the intended policy impact, Board **unanimously agreed** to a policy variation which enabled the image to be removed from the URL list.

Following further discussion Board **agreed** to release a press statement explaining why this decision had been taken.

Chief Executive asked Board to note that the executive had followed all its procedures correctly and that the image remained a potentially illegal image. He explained that staff had discussed the matter with Wikipedia and would be reviewing procedures taking into account the technical issues that had arisen and the impact of contextual factors with regard to online content which is assessed to be potentially illegal.

Chair thanked Board for their participation and closed the meeting at 3.42 pm.