

NetAlert National Libraries Project: internet safety



Australian Government
NetAlert Limited



Library and Information Week 2006

NetAlert is proud to be a major sponsor for Library and Information Week 2006, recognising the importance of keeping children safe when online in public libraries. Children are vulnerable to many online dangers: they need to be educated about them and protected from them. Children are potentially at risk when they access the internet, whether at home, at school or in public places such as libraries. Creating transferable strategies children can use no matter where they gain access is therefore of the highest importance.

Working closely with ALIA, NetAlert helps libraries with their own internet safety issues. Resources are available to help librarians understand the risks and create a safe online environment. Keeping children safe helps ensure that their online experiences are both rewarding and enjoyable. NetAlert recognises that the internet can be used for education, information and entertainment but stresses that safety should be remembered at all times.

Who is NetAlert?

NetAlert Limited (NetAlert) is Australia's internet safety advisory body, established in 1999 by the Australian government as part of its commitment to educate communities about managing access to online content. NetAlert's primary objective is to promote a safer internet experience, particularly for young people and their families. NetAlert is a not-for-profit community organisation providing free advice, information and resources on internet safety to Australian families.

A key focus for NetAlert is to provide users with helpful and reliable advice and information about potential problems, dangers and threats present on the internet and ways in which users can act to avoid these problems. NetAlert is about empowerment – in particular, empowering families to manage their access to the internet.

National Libraries Project

During 2004–2005 NetAlert and the ALIA worked together on the NetAlert National Libraries Project. The project objectives were to produce and distribute internet safety instructional materials to librarians and library patrons (namely children who access the internet at the library).

Two resources have been created as part of the National Libraries Project.

- Print resource – *A Librarian's Guide to Internet Safety*, a 'flash card' with internet safety tips and a computer 'wobbler', which prompts users to read their internet safety tips.
- Web resource – a web-based resource available from the NetAlert website at <http://www.netalert.net.au/library/>, which will contain information on library resources, legislation, advice, help, links and downloads.

Elements in the web resource include:

- ALIA and Library and Information Week information and links;
- library resources detailed with online ordering facility;

- legislation relevant to the library sector and the internet;
- links to library resources;
- internet safety help; and
- links to the internet safety advice centre.

In June 2005, NetAlert distributed a library kit to Australian public libraries nationwide. The kit contained:

- a covering letter detailing the aims of the project, promoting internet safety in libraries and encouraging librarians to order more resources for their library and to utilise the resources and make them available to library users;
- a copy of *A Librarian's Guide to Internet Safety*;
- an internet safety tip stand;
- a computer 'wobbler';
- a copy of the NetAlert corporate brochure; and
- a copy of the NetAlert Netty brochure.

Internet safety materials for librarians (including *A Librarian's Guide to Internet Safety*) are available at from <http://www.netalert.net.au/02135-Library.asp> or can be ordered direct from NetAlert.

How can NetAlert help?

One of the key areas where children and parents access the internet is at the library. NetAlert has a range of services which libraries can access free of charge including the internet safety help line. This is a national help line that advises the community on internet safety-related issues.

Internet safety helpline, free call: 1800 880 176, e-mail: enquiries@netalert.net.au

If you don't know where to start with internet safety – or you have a problem and don't know who to call, ring NetAlert and we can offer advice. Our website is filled with advice on resources on internet safety. Read advice online or download information sheets or reports on internet safety. The website also contains an internet safety directory, cataloging many internet safety pages from the internet. Information materials – educational materials are available on request. These include posters, information sheets and brochures on internet safety.

NetAlert on the web: <http://www.netalert.net.au/>

Library portal: <http://www.netalert.net.au/library/>

Children's site: <http://www.nettysworld.com.au/>

Our children's website is an online resource offering a safe and fun environment in which young children can use to learn how to surf the internet safely. It includes an internet safety story book with our online safety character, Netty, fun and games, and membership of the Netty Club.

Our internet safety e-newsletter is free. This monthly e-newsletter deals with a broad range of internet safety issues and is distributed widely in the community. Sign up for the newsletter at <http://www.netalert.net.au/00380-Newsletter.asp>.

Lara MacDonell, Operations manager, NetAlert

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