ALIA AND ACMA – WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS SAFE, ENJOYABLE AND RESPONSIBLE INTERNET USE

Libraries play an important role in providing internet access and advice to children, their parents, and other library users. To help library staff in this role, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA), as part of the Australian Government's commitment to cybersafety, offers Cybersmart – a national cybersafety education program. Cybersmart has a range of resources about how to manage risks so that library users have safe and positive experiences online.

The *Cybersmart Guide for Library Staff* provides information and resources about safe, responsible and enjoyable internet use in Australian libraries, including public libraries and school libraries. The guide is intended to both inform and support library staff in promoting safe internet use in the library environment—particularly to

research on young people's online participation identifies a shift from using the internet primarily for individual activities, such as playing games, for children aged 8 to 11 years, to social pursuits like chatting to friends for young people aged 16 to 17 years.

For many children and young people, online interaction is as much a part of their environment as face-to-face communication with their friends. But how risky is it? According to the ACMA's *Click and Connect* study, children demonstrate a good general knowledge about online behaviours that might be considered 'risky'. Yet in spite of this, some young people still engage in risky behaviour, and some perceive these behaviours are common across their peer groups.

It is important to educate young people about the risks by giving them the skills and tools to manage online behaviour and minimise risks to themselves and others. This is particularly true in the use of social media sites, which have grown enormously popular in recent years, leading to increased exposure to risky situations. Children and young people are better able to manage difficult situations if they are fully aware of the consequences of their online actions, and understand why they should think before posting images and content online, keep personal information private and respect others online. The Cybersmart resources and programs show young children, older children and teens what they should do if they encounter issues online and how they should manage situations.

Cybersmart aims to give libraries, children and their parents sound advice on how best to manage risks, so their online experiences are safe and positive. Online cybersafety videos are now on the Cybersmart website featuring information about current topics such as cyberbullying, inappropriate material and protecting personal information. The videos act as a guide to provide a snapshot of each issue including scenarios which demonstrate how the issue may occur. These can be viewed both on screen and be downloaded for later use.

Super-connected: young Australians online

- **Among 16 to 17 year olds, 97 per cent of those surveyed reported that they had used at least one social networking service. For children aged between 8 to 11 years, 51 per cent had used a social networking service.**

- **Using the internet for social interaction is the primary reason 81 per cent of 12 to 17 year olds go online.**

- **Fifty four per cent of 12 to 17 year olds note that 'chatting with friends from school' is their main reason for using social networking services.**

- **Potentially risky online behaviour increases with age. About 78 per cent of 16 to 17 year olds claim to have personal information, such as photographs, posted on their social networking pages, compared with 48 per cent of 8 to 9 year olds.**

Click and Connect: Young Australians' Use of Online Social Media
www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_311797

children. For library staff, the ACMA's cybersafety program includes web-based and printed materials on internet safety. All materials for library staff are available online at www.cybersmart.gov.au. The ACMA worked closely with the Australian Library and Information Association and Australian libraries to ensure that all materials are both accurate and appropriate.

The Australian Library and Information Association has also developed policy guidelines for use in libraries. This includes guidelines for library internet use policies and children's use of the internet. These guidelines can be found at www.alia.org.au. *The Cybersmart Guide for Library Staff* is intended to support and complement these existing internet-use policies in libraries and to provide advice on cybersafety.

Studies into children and young people's online behaviour indicate that they undertake a wide range of activities—from using the internet for research to a large number of social, gaming and learning activities. The ACMA's

What action can libraries take?

Library staff can:

- offer internet safety sessions for library users
- provide library users with information on socialising on the internet
- provide library users with information on how to report abusive, inappropriate, suspicious or illegal material and behaviour
- make a list of safe websites available for young library users to visit, and provide links to websites for children and young people that contain material especially for them
- provide library users with links to cyberbullying advice and information
- provide library users with information on how to evaluate websites for accuracy and authenticity

Smart choices

Helping children have positive online experiences requires sound support and education—not only by parents but also by teachers, carers and library staff. With this, children will be better able to make good decisions when they see or experience confronting material online.

As the internet continues to develop, there will be many more, and varied, opportunities and risks for users, but there are a range of measures on offer to assist in keeping young people safe online.

The Cybersafety Help Button is a new Australian Government initiative designed to keep children and families safe online. The Cybersafety Help Button is an online resource hub that gives children and teenagers instant access to help and information on cybersafety issues 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The button is a free application available from the website of the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. Once downloaded, it sits on the computer desktop or within the taskbar. When the button is clicked, users are taken directly to a web page where they can talk, report or learn about cybersafety issues. The Cybersafety Help Button was developed in consultation with the Government's Youth Advisory Group and the Consultative Working Group on Cybersafety. It provides help and advice on a range of online risks including cyberbullying, unwanted contact, scams and fraud, and offensive or inappropriate material.

Gretchen Croome,
Senior Communications Adviser, Cybersmart,
Australian Communications and Media Authority

cybersafety@acma.gov.au

ACMA is the proud sponsor of
Australian Library and Information Week

FOR MORE HELP, INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Cybersafety Help Button
Download www.dbcde.gov.au/ online_safety_and_security/ cybersafetyhelpbutton_download

Visit: www.cybersmart.gov.au

Telephone: Cybersafety Contact Centre , 1800 880 176

Email: cybersafety@acma.gov.au

Kids Helpline Website
www.kidshelp.com.au
or phone
1800 55 1800

Are you a cybersmart library?

Library staff play an important role in helping children have safe and positive online experiences.

Libraries are a popular location for school-aged children to access the internet. While there are many benefits in using the internet, there are also some risks.

To assist library staff, the ACMA offers a range of complementary resources, information and presentations about cybersafety.

For more information and to book a free Internet Safety Awareness Presentation:

Visit: www.cybersmart.gov.au
Tel: Cybersafety Contact Centre 1800 880 176