



Online Games Providers / Internet Service Providers

WORKSHOP ON EVALUATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS GUIDELINES

6 May 2009, Council of Europe, Agora Building, Room G01, Strasbourg

Main conclusions and next steps

1. Following the release of the human rights guidelines in October 2008, EuroISPA and ISFE secured prompt dissemination to their members. Eight months on, the guidelines are by and large considered to be a source of reference or inspiration whenever needed in the process of content creation or distribution and a unique tool for awareness raising.
2. These guidelines are deemed to be more effective than rules and regulations at providing a flexible and dynamic means upon which to establish co-operation and dialogue between different stakeholder groups including the private sector and governments.
3. ISFE and EuroISPA concurred that two key considerations lead their approach to protection against unsuitable content and to compliance respectively:
 - a. Protection should be based on mere recommendations:
 - i. adult users should, other than in the case of illegal content, be free to see the content of their own liking
 - ii. Rating systems provide parents with information intended to help them adjust the content their children are exposed to according to how mature is the child concerned.
 - b. Compliance should be left to adult users to decide. For instance, user-friendly software available on all game consoles and in most PCs allows parents to peg access to content to the needs and abilities of every member of the household.
4. Taking stock of the impact of the guidelines so far, ISFE and EuroISPA supported the suggestion made by the Council of Europe to consider taking further steps to build on this early success. These steps should aim at enhancing the practical significance and implications for online games providers and ISPs: the more familiar and comfortable you are with a suggested framework, the more helpful the framework to your operations. With this in mind, the guidelines should be made even more useful by way of interpreting and developing them further according to the industries' needs and with the assistance, where necessary, of the Council of Europe. Such steps could usefully include, but not be limited to, preparing practical responses, based on the guidelines, to a range of daily situations

that EuroISPA and ISFE members face, as well as developing best practices and the training (capacity building) of trainers.

5. Educating (capacity building for) the industries concerned so that they are able to make the most of the guidelines was only part of the improvements suggested. As users are increasingly creating content themselves, they should be subject to the same education and training. In order to reach out to them effectively, governments and NGOs may want to strengthen current campaigns usually carried out under the media literacy banner. Consumers deserve to be enlightened before they get empowered. This ambitious task is incumbent on governments and civil society as much as it is on industry.