

safeLine

προς ένα ασφαλέστερο διαδίκτυο για όλους



Safeline

The Internet is a global system which has quickly become everybody's favorite instrument. More and more people nowadays turn to the Internet in order to obtain information, to communicate with people and to use it as an entertainment medium. As the variety of topics and activities one can find on-line is so vast, it attracts users from different ages and interests. Within the framework of this diversity offered by the Internet, certain individuals misuse it and commit criminal offences by taking advantage of its possibilities. Users come face-to-face quite often with inappropriate material, which sometimes is regarded illegal under the Greek Law. Surfing the Internet safely is a right for both adult and teenage users and should be safeguarded in every possible way by the international community. **Since the beginning of its operation on the 14th of April 2003, SafeLine contributes dynamically to this effort.**

SafeLine is the Greek Hotline that accepts users reports for web-sites and newsgroups that contains: i) photographic material picturing ill-treatment of children anywhere in the world, ii) racist and xenophobic oriented content that violates the Greek Law, and iii) other material that can be considered illegal.



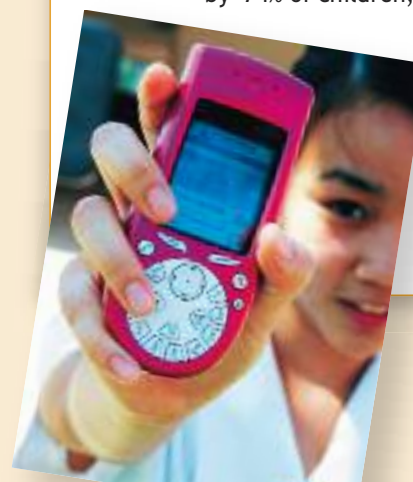
Protecting teenage Internet users

SafeLine's primary goal is to safeguard children's basic rights and at the same time to promote their safety while surfing on-line. SafeLine's first priority is to eliminate photographic and audiovisual material that portrays ill-treatment of minors as well as their harassment via the Internet or a mobile phone. These actions offend children's dignity and inevitably affect their mental and psychological stability and growth.

Children and new technologies in Greece

The Internet has become one with our everyday life and this is evident due to the constant increase of its users. Like every exciting commodity, it appears to be especially appealing to school children and teenagers. According to a recent research conducted by the **Observatory for the Greek Information Society**, 73% of children aging between 10 and 15 use a computer in comparison to 30% of the general public. From the percentage of the children that use the Internet 36% out of them actually use it almost daily. It seems that the teenage users spend their time playing on-line games, communicating with friends, and visiting social networking sites (such as facebook, youtube, my space, hi5, etc.), downloading songs or movies, while spending far less time researching and collecting information for their school work. Moreover, they appear to be aware of potential Internet dangers; however this knowledge is precarious as the number of children that become intimidated by or come across inappropriate material is significant. Youngsters tend to hide these facts from their parents in fear of limitation of the amount of time they spend on-line.

The number of teenage individuals that own a mobile phone is already high and is increasing annually. The Observatory for the Greek Information Society reports that a mobile telephone is used by 74% of children, a percentage that reaches 87% when the sample is narrowed down to 12-15 year old youngsters. This percentage increases considerably when children start High School, as they tend to use the mobile phones in order to send and receive messages, make calls and exchange pictures with their friends.



Internet addiction

One of the most important issues that currently puzzles parents is not so much the use of the Internet but its abuse by their children. When a child uses the Internet extensively every day it is at risk of addiction. According to a research conducted by the Adolescent Health Unit of the Second Department of Paediatrics of the University of Athens, based on 897 teenagers (430 boys and 467 girls) 53,4% of them used the Internet for a period of more than a year while 8% used it for more than 20 hours per week. About 12,8% of those children showed symptoms indicating abuse of the Internet (a step before addiction). Being on-line for more than 10 hours weekly is considered to lead to a probable dependency on the Internet.

The excessive usage of the Internet can affect a child's daily activities significantly. Like every reaction to an action, spending too much time on the Internet has of course its consequences. For instance, children tend not to care about other activities and/or to start having dropped school grades. In extreme cases they show disturbances in their sleeping pattern or neglecting their personal hygiene. Another fact that is remarkable is that while youngsters seem to have a rather active on-line social life, their relationship with their friends in the physical world can be effected in a negative way.



Computer games - PEGI System

One of the most popular activities for youngsters nowadays is playing computer games. All around the world, and consequently in Greece, teenagers spend much of their free time weekly playing computer games. This activity has proven to drive youngsters to addiction. In 2008, **Safe-Line** accepted a considerable amount of queries from parents related to computer games. The parents' worry does not only lie on the amount of time spent by their children but also on the appropriateness of these games, as they quite often portray scenes of war and violence. As a consequence, the **PEGI** and **PEGI-online** systems were created.

PEGI (Pan-European Game Information) has been designed to offer society information on the appropriateness of computer games. It categorizes games according to their suitability based on children's age. The categories defined by PEGI are the following: 3+, 7+, 12+, 16+ and 18+. Moreover, through the PEGI system, computer games are ranked in respect to their content, i.e. if they project violence, drugs, vulgar language, sex, discrimination and gambling. The category in which each game falls into is shown on the front and back of the package. This way, a parent is guided to select the most suitable game depending on the age of the child. **PEGI-on line**, on the other hand, is a new addition. It is intended to protect teenagers from inappropriate on-line games. Parents

should be aware of its existence in order to turn to it for further information and advice.

Unfortunately, a similar ranking system does not seem to exist for web pages yet. Websites are not categorised depending on their content and the users' age. As a consequence there is a lack of control over their access. Creating awareness and enhancing a youngster's sense of self-protection is rather essential.



SafeLine - www.safeline.gr

If you come across websites whose content makes you feel uncomfortable or in your opinion is illegal, then you can get in touch with us and make a report.

Below you can find ways on how to submit a report:

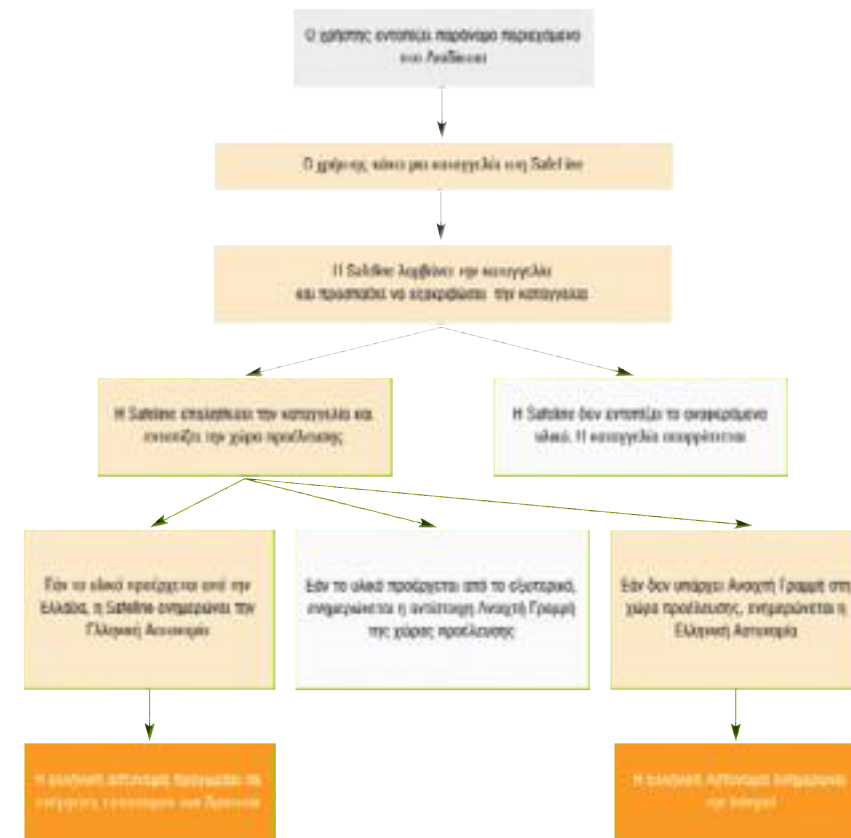
- **On-line:** You may fill-in the electronic form available at: <http://www.safeline.gr/report/>.
- **By e-mail:** Send an e-mail to the electronic address: report@safeline.gr
- **By post:** Send a letter to the following address: SafeNet, 63 Stournari, 10432 Athens.
- **By phone:** You may call us during weekdays from 9:00 until 16:00 on 2811391615.
- In case you simply have a query, then you may send an electronic mail to contact@safeline.gr

All the above ways of reporting are quite straightforward. What, however, needs to be pointed out regarding the submission of reports is the fact that **anonymity** is preserved. Users that do not wish to reveal their identity may leave the personal details fields blank. The IP address of the computer used for the report is not recorded by SafeLine's system. On the other hand, for users that decide to submit their personal details, these are kept private and confidential and are exclusively used to provide feedback on the progression of the report. By keeping the identity of the user confidential any hesitation of making a report is eliminated.

Processing a report

SafeLine follows a standard procedure for every report it receives.

- **Initially**, it is determined that the content of the website is in fact illegal.
- **Then**, the place of the website's origin is traced.
 - If the website originates from Greece, then the Greek Police is contacted and informed.
 - If the website originates from a country outside the Greek borders, then the report is forwarded to the relevant Internet Hotline. In case such a Hotline does not exist the report is forwarded to Interpol through the Greek Police.



Collaborating with the Greek Police

SafeLine is in direct collaboration with the Greek Police in order to achieve its main objective: the uncovering of the individuals that traffic illegal material on the Internet. It forwards reports whose content has been confirmed as illegal. The investigation of Internet crimes falls into the responsibility of a specialised team of the Greek Police: the Electronic Crime Unit. Two Units of this kind exist in Greece at the moment. One is located in Athens (which was established in 2004) and one in Salonika (founded in 2006).



Reports were increased by 75% in 2008

SafeLine has slowly but steadily become known to the Greek public. This is also shown by the increased figure of reports it accepts. Since 2003 (the year it was founded) until 2008, SafeLine has presented a considerable and satisfying increase in the number of reports it receives. This is happening because the Greek public has become more sensitive as far as the Internet is concerned. It needs to be pointed out that the number of reports in 2008 was over 700 whereas in 2007 only 406 were recorded. A number of these reports were forwarded to the Greek Police; others were passed on to relevant Hotlines and some others to responsible authorities.

Another important point is that in 2008 SafeLine received an increased number of reports concerning violation of personal data and financial fraud for on-line purchases. More specifically, over 100 reports of personal data violation and financial fraud were recorded. It also received some reports regarding offensive comments and swearing claims, actions that insult the honour and dignity of any individual.

The largest number of reports was submitted via the electronic form while many emails were received reporting personal data violation and financial fraud for on-line purchases.

Apart from the recorded reports, SafeLine received queries from parents concerning social networks, such as facebook, youtube, myspace, hi5 etc. Teenage users register with and spend endless hours in social networking sites. The parents are increasingly concerned about their children's cross-network "friends" and the dangers that are hiding behind the use of such networks. The biggest risk for youngsters in these cases is the publication of their pictures to a large audience in a way that their personal data is not secured. In addition, youngsters often are not aware that any piece of information or photograph that is uploaded on the Internet ceases to be under their control and is not easily removed from it. There have been cases where pictures published on the Internet have been used by third parties in an offensive and illegal manner.



Informing the public

SafeLine's smooth and effective operation is primarily based on the ability of the public to report websites of illegal content. SafeLine continues to approach citizens and specifically the most sensitive groups of the population such as parents and teachers of the primary and secondary education. SafeLine does so by sending material to all schools of the secondary education schools as well as the corresponding Associations of Parents and Guardians. In addition, by using an electronic mailing list, it keeps in touch with schools as well as with their Associations of Parents and Guardians. SafeLine collaborates with them and answers possible questions addressed by both adults and pupils. The continuously increasing interest of the public for a safe usage of the Internet and the protection from illegal actions has prompted SafeLine to extend its activities by initiating a series of seminars with the Associations of Parents and Guardians. SafeLine extended these awareness activities by taking part in educational one-day events, television and radio programs and visits to summer camps. Finally, SafeLine is continuing its mission by sending articles to be published in the Press in order to raise awareness and boost the interest of each Greek citizen individually.

As of the 1st of January 2009, SafeLine will continue its mission by joining forces with Saferinternet (Greek Awareness Node). The aim of this merge is to inform the Greek public about being safe while on-line and to protect itself from on-line illegal activities in a more effective and systematic manner.

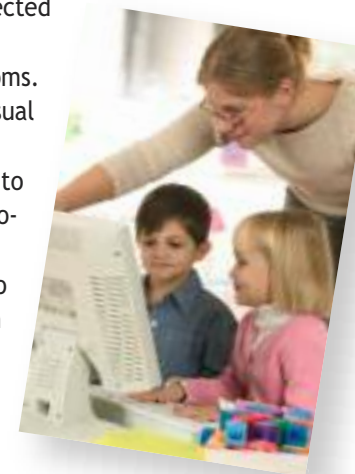
International collaboration

Surfing the Internet in a safe manner without the fear of falling upon illegal material is a matter of global interest. There are 33 Hotlines in 29 different countries all around the world that work together in order to achieve more effective results and a smoother unified effort. This collaboration becomes even more fruitful under the coordination of INHOPE (www.inhope.org), the International Association for Internet Hotlines. INHOPE is supported by the European Commission's Safer Internet Plus Programme. SafeLine is an official member of INHOPE since the 18th of October 2005. SafeLine takes part in all workshops organised by the INHOPE Association and has contributed substantially in the field of worldwide report analysis by creating and publishing the "2007 Global Internet Trend Report".



Using the Internet in a safe way-Tips for parents

- Do not forbid your child to access the Internet. It is wiser to make it aware of the dangers it may face as well as ways with which it can be protected from them.
- Do not place the computer in isolated areas of the house such as bedrooms. You cannot monitor the websites your child visits if you do not have visual contact.
- Advise your child not to trust strangers it chats with on-line and not to share personal details with them (name, address, phone number, photographs etc)
- Keep an eye when your child uses chat rooms. Never allow your child to meet an individual it became acquainted with while on-line without an adult chaperone.
- Suggest your child visits websites that contain educational and entertaining material appropriate for its age.
- Install a software filter in your computer that will not allow access to inappropriate websites.



Using a mobile phone in a safe way - Tips for children

- Be particularly careful when you give someone your mobile phone number. You are at risk of receiving calls and messages you do not wish to.
- Avoid lending your mobile phone to others. Do so only if it is absolutely necessary and only when you are present. Always have your mobile phone under your supervision.
- Avoid meeting a stranger you have only been in touch with through messaging. If you wish however to do so then ask one of your parents or a trusted adult to accompany you.
- Use your phone only if you want to get in touch with someone in an emergency. Do not use it to bully someone by sending messages. How would it make you feel if you received annoying messages?
- When you receive text and picture messages from a stranger, delete them immediately without replying.
- In order to take pictures of someone you need to ask for their permission first. Keep in mind that when you upload pictures on the Internet they will permanently stay there and that they can be used by third parties in a different way than the one you initially had in mind.



On the website you can also find...

- Tips for safer use of the Internet both for children and parents. Parents can also find advice on how to protect their children.
- News related to safer use of the Internet and the uncovering of Internet related crimes.
- Answers to frequently asked questions related to the activities of SafeLine and replies to users' queries.
- Information on the legal framework that is effective in our country regarding the distribution of illegal material on the Internet.
- Useful links to other websites that deal with Internet safety.

Filtering

Accessing websites of illegal or hurtful content can be reduced to a satisfying degree when using a filtering tool. A filter is essentially a software package that can block websites of illegal or harmful content while allowing access to appropriate websites. The effectiveness of such a tool depends on the sophistication of the software and to the extent of which the database of the inappropriate material is kept updated. Different packages of filters exist depending on the content we want to block. In <http://www.sip-bench.eu> you can find a list of websites with filtering tools that have been evaluated by the European programme SIP-BENCH.



Other useful links

Ins@fe, (www.saferinternet.org): European network of e-safety awareness nodes.

Ins@fe, (www.saferinternet.gr): Greek awareness node.

EU Kinds Online, (www.eukidsonline.net): European research on cultural, contextual and risk issues in children's safe use of the Internet and new media.

Net consumers, (www.net-consumers.org): European research into consumer affairs.

SafeBorders, (www.safer-internet.net): It is dedicated to providing information to help parents protect their children from the dangers lurking on the Internet.

SAFT, (www.saftonline.org): An awareness project that works to teach children and their parents safer use of the Internet.

SIFKal, (www.sifkal.org): Safer Internet for knowing and living.

Youth Protection Roundtable, (www.yprt.eu): A project that aims to establish an intercommunicable socio-technical approach to youth protection. Advice on how to deal with harmful and unwanted content on the Internet.

SUSI, (www.besafeonline.org): Advice and information about Internet safety for parents and teachers.

OFSI, (www.ofsi.org): Observatory for the safer use of the Internet: a common virtual place where parents, educators, librarians, authorities, but also any one of you, can find useful and interesting information for the safe use of the Internet.

Chat Danger, (www.chatdanger.com): a site about the potential dangers on interactive services: online like chat, IM, online games, email and mobiles.

Think U Know, (www.thinkuknow.co.uk): Information on how to stay safe while having fun online.

Advisory Committee of SafeLine

- Internet providers - Forthnet, OTE, Hellas-On-Line
- Consumers Union - EKPIZO
- Governmental Organization - GRNET (Greek Research Network)
- Electronic Crime Units of the Greek Police
- Organization for the protection of children - Child's Smile
- Mass Media- Naftemboriki Newspaper
- Greek awareness node - Ins@fe

SafeLine's Partners

SafeLine is supported by the **Safer Internet Plus Programme** of the European Union within the framework of the NetWatch, SafeLine and SafeLine 2 projects. Its operation has been assigned to the following institutions:

- **SAFENET** - Hellenic self regulatory body for Internet content, www.safenet.gr
- **FORTHnet** - Greek Telecommunications and Telematic Applications S.A., www.forthnet.gr
- **FORTH-ICS** - Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas, Institute of Computer Science, www.ics.forth.gr
- **FHW** - Foundation of the Hellenic World, www.ime.gr



FORTH-ICS



FHW





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