

**PILOT JULY 2002**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Kidsmart pilot programme was run by Childnet in July 2001 with limited sponsorship and support from commercial partners. This short report gives the key findings which came out of this pilot project. See [www.kidsmart.org.uk](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk)

Childnet firmly believe that the pilot, whilst prepared in a very short timescale of 3 months has demonstrated a number of very important findings from which we have produced the following recommendations:

<p><b>1</b> <b>A STRONG DEMAND EXISTS IN SCHOOLS</b></p>	<p>There is a strong, immediate and universal demand for this type of material in schools - for both teachers and children. This has been created, in part, by schools themselves going online and encouraging children to use the Internet in school and at home as a resource. At present, we know of no comparable schools-based project on Internet Safety.</p>
<p><i>Recommendations</i> ⇒</p>	<p>The materials need to reach all schools as Internet usage develops rapidly. The materials and programmes to deliver them need to address both children's and teacher's needs.</p>
<p><b>2</b> <b>THERE IS A STRONG NEED AMONGST PARENTS</b></p>	<p>There is a very strong need for parents to have access to this information so that safe school use can be matched with safe home use. Two specific concerns were highlighted with regard to parents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a clear difference between parents' perceptions of children's Internet use and the reality. Experienced Internet users amongst parents (70% had 'some' to 'a great deal' of knowledge) have rated the pilot content very highly (48% good; 49% excellent) suggesting the material is new and relevant to them.</li> <li>2. Teachers are concerned that Internet safety is managed well at school but children then return home potentially to get unrestricted Internet access. As such, there is a very strong need for parents to have access to this information so that safe school use can be matched with safe home use.</li> </ol> <p>Parents attending the pilot frequently commented that all parents should have access to the seminar and safety materials.</p>
<p><i>Recommendations</i> ⇒</p>	<p>Parents need to be made aware of the different types of activity online their children can be involved in. They need to be given the SMART Internet safety rules and helpful resource references so that they can take action in the home.</p> <p>Schools can be a route to parents – more so at primary level where parental involvement seems to be higher.</p>
<p><b>3</b> <b>COMMUNICATING SAFETY MESSAGES EFFECTIVELY</b></p>	<p>All audiences prefer information to be delivered using multiple media formats. Most feedback indicated that the material needs to be delivered with some human interface for maximum effectiveness.</p> <p>Drama appears to be still one of the most effective way of communicating these kinds of messages to children in the target age range. Children engage with the emotions of the characters and can explore the important safety messages with those characters.</p>

<b>REQUIRES USING MULTI- MEDIA</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b> ⇒	Any programme that is aimed at conveying key safety messages to these target audiences should include 'off-line' presentation mechanisms as much as 'online' ones.
<b>4 SAFETY MESSAGES CAN BE TARGETED TO A WIDER AGE GROUP</b>	The age range could be lowered to 8-12 as Year 4s had no problem taking on board the safety issues raised in the drama. Indeed, some had already used Chat. Also, some Year 8s and 9s seemed to have already formed bad Internet safety habits. This doesn't mean the older children do not need the training, but that it may need to be approached in a different manner.
<b>Recommendations</b> ⇒	Many, including parents, underestimate the uses to which children put the Internet. Children need the safety rules in the formative stage of their Internet use. For older children, an awareness programme needs to account for their more advanced uses and hence more established habits when online.
<b>5 PARENTS ARE HARD TO REACH BUT VALUE THE CONTENT HIGHLY</b>	Feedback from parents attending was exceptionally positive, valuing the face-to-face contact, but they are not easy to reach.  Parents can be reached through schools but the support schools get from parents seems very mixed with, for example, religious-based primary schools seeing better support than mixed background secondary schools.
<b>Recommendations</b> ⇒	An awareness programme for parents through schools relies on giving the school the mechanisms to promote the activity and for making it on-going – possibly combining it with existing programmes e.g. ICT awareness.  Easy to digest, professional-standard materials need preparing that schools can pass on to parents who don't attend seminars.
<b>6 TEACHERS WANT TO BE MORE INVOLVED</b>	Teachers were committed to the pilot programme and wanted to be involved. They also wanted to see the material linked to the curriculum. One head teacher said " <i>the school would have given a whole week to run the programme</i> ".  Existing teacher training does not provide the depth of coverage that this programme achieves with regard to Internet safety for children
<b>Recommendations</b> ⇒	A full education resource pack needs to be produced around the activities so teachers understand fully how it fits to the curriculum and what they are expected to do in running the event.  The DFES and LEAs need to look at how best to train new and existing teachers on Internet safety issues and how to address the needs of children and their parents.
<b>7 LEAs HAVE A KEY ROLE TO PLAY</b>	LEAs are crucial to the development, administration and completion of the training throughout the schools in their respective area. LEAs believed that they could involve up to 85% of their schools in a programme running for a specific time period.
<b>Recommendations</b> ⇒	Continue to work with the pilot LEAs to refine the content of the programme for a full roll out of any future programme.  Pass the report findings onto a representative set of LEAs to recruit an initial set of supporters for a first full programme of NetBenefit?

<b>8</b> <b>JOINT INITIATIVE IS WELCOMED</b>	<p>There appears to be widespread support for such a valuable initiative being delivered by central and local government working with specialist non-profit organisations.</p> <p>The subject matter is seen as fairly specialist and outside expertise is welcomed to tackle an important and often complex issue.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b> 	<p>Secure the effective partnerships used in the pilot in order to build a scaleable programme to operate nationally.</p>

<b>9</b> <b>SPONSORSHIP IS LIMITED BUT CAN BE FOUND</b>	<p>Commercial sponsors are available but there is a split between those who would rather consider funding a national initiative as against those wanting to support their local regional.</p> <p>Also, in this particular economic cycle that has hit technology, sponsorship funds are more limited for ICT related initiatives.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b> 	<p>From any organisers viewpoint it would be easier to manage a small number of significant sponsors. Partnered by Government, Childnet can seek sponsors to cover the full development costs of creating a scaleable, nationwide programme.</p> <p>LEAs however, have the opportunity to find local sponsors to cover any operational costs associated with running the programme locally.</p>

<b>10</b> <b>LESSON WORK CAN BE DEVELOPED FURTHER</b>	<p>Children appeared to enjoy lesson activities prepared to follow the drama. They wanted to do more at the end of the day and indeed some schools have put more time aside after the pilot to follow through.</p> <p>Teachers commented that it is very effective to combine the presentation of safety messages using interactive means such as drama with lesson-based work. However, the material needs to be clearly differentiated for different age groups; it must be clearly linked to the curriculum and it must be made available to teachers beforehand for planning purposes.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b> 	<p>The lesson plans need to be developed further to take in all comments from the staff involved in the pilot and a professional resource pack must be developed to supply to LEAs and schools in advance of the programme running.</p> <p>LEAs can assist in the development of such a resource pack as they have the expertise and curriculum knowledge necessary.</p>

<b>11</b> <b>MEDIA CAN BE USED TO PROMOTE AVAILABILITY</b>	<p>The pilot was fortunate to have a great deal of media interest because of the Coronation Street Internet safety special plot running in parallel. Attracting coverage had a positive impact on teachers, parents and children interest in the subject matter. It also gained regional media interest as a combined news/education story and was a platform for further coverage of key online safety issues and initiatives.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b> 	<p>Any future programme must contain an element of media work so that the work 'on the ground' is reported and used to gain further awareness of issues and the need to be 'smart, safe and positive online'.</p>

<b>12</b> <b>MAINTAINING A BALANCED 'TONE' IS CRUCIAL</b>	<p>97% of evaluation forms said that this potentially complex subject had been communicated in a "very clear" manner. Feedback from the reviews said that the programme had a good non-sensational and rational approach and that safety issues are often best explained in the context of good use or, in this case, 'Net literacy.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b> 	<p>To maintain in any such programme a balance between the good and bad uses of the Internet.</p> <p>To continue to put forward simple, straight forward steps and rules that can be used by adults to help children understand how to stay safe online.</p>