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The Department of Internal Affairs
Te Tari Taiwhenua
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Dear

Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System

I am writing to advise you of the availability of the Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System (DCEFS).

The DCEFS is a website filtering initiative that has been developed by the Department of Internal Affairs and is being offered to all Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Connection to the system is voluntary and ISPs may disconnect at any time.

A great deal of traffic goes to websites containing images of child sexual abuse. The DCEFS is designed to assist in combating the trade in child sexual abuse material by making it more difficult for persons with a sexual interest in children to access that material. By reducing the market for such images, the DCEFS will help ensure that fewer children are abused in support of that market.

Context for the DCEFS

In New Zealand, the DCEFS will complement other enforcement activity undertaken by the Department. This activity includes the provision of information to assist in preventing and deterring censorship offences, online investigations into the possession and trading of child sexual abuse material on peer-to-peer networks and the prosecution of offenders.

The purpose of the DCEFS, as part of the Department's approach, is to assist in preventing access to child sexual abuse material. It does not have an enforcement focus. The DCEFS will therefore contribute to the international effort to combat the trade in child sexual abuse images and raise the public's awareness of this type of offending and the harm caused to victims.



Ensuring Confidence in the DCEFS

The Department recognises that, to ensure public confidence in the DCEFS, the scope of the system must remain on child sexual abuse material and its operation must be open to scrutiny. Accordingly, the Department's contract for the use of the software that supports the DCEFS constrains its use to filtering to child sexual abuse material and a Code of Practice has been put in place to govern the operation of the system. Additionally, an Independent Reference Group (IRG) will ensure the system is operated in compliance with the Code. Information on the Code of Practice and the IRG can be found on the Department's website at www.dia.govt.nz.

Basic details of the DCEFS

The DCEFS was designed by Netclean Technologies Sweden AB and filters users' requests via a secure connection between an ISP and the Department, using a master list of known objectionable sites that will be maintained by the Department. ISPs will not be provided with the list of website URLs on the filtering list.

Once a requester seeks an IP address that is on the filtering list they will be directed to the Department's system where the particular URL requested is checked against the filtering list. If there is not a match, the request allowed on its way to the world-wide web. If there is a match between the requested URL and the filtering list the requester is redirected to a landing page that:

- informs the requester that he/she has been prevented from accessing the requested website,
- informs the requester of the reason for the redirect, and
- provides the requester with a method to appeal the action.

The method of filtering and the location of the filter on the network have been chosen so that there is no degradation to the performance of the Internet. Significant steps have been taken to ensure the technical integrity of the filter. The Department is able to discuss and demonstrate all the technical features of the system with ISPs as part of their consideration of the use of the DCEFS.

If you wish to discuss the possibility of connecting to the DCEFS, please contact me on [REDACTED] or if you wish to discuss technical matters call Peter Pilley on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Steve O'Brien
National Manager
Censorship Compliance Unit