

Technical Specification Group Services and System Aspects  
Meeting #24, Seoul, June 2004

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Source: ETSI ([John M Meredith](#) pp Director General)

Title: Mobile phones and child protection

Document for: Discussion and Action

Agenda Item: 6.2

The e-mail reproduced below has been received by Mr Karl Heinz Rosenbrock, Director General of ETSI, who undertook to bring it to the attention of appropriate Technical Bodies, amongst which 3GPP. TSG SA is asked to formulate an appropriate response.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** John Carr [mailto:john.carr49@btinternet.com]

**Sent:** 17 May 2004 22:30

**To:** Karl Heinz Rosenbrock

**Subject:** mobile phones and child protection

Dear Karl Heinz Rosenbrock,

Mike Short gave me your contact details.

I am the technical adviser to a coalition of major children's welfare organizations in the UK. The principal focus of our activity hitherto has been child safety on the internet but, of course, with the emergence of GPRS and now 3G the internet and mobile phones are becoming completely intertwined.

You will know that within the UK the six network operators are committed to doing two things:

1. establish an age verification system for all mobile phone handset users
2. establish a system for classifying all content and services which can be accessed "on net" i.e. from the operators' own networks where they themselves are the publisher or provider of the content or service or they have a business relationship of some kind with the publisher or provider

In relation to 1., the idea is that every handset user will have to demonstrate that they are 18 or over otherwise a range of network provided adult content and services will not be accessible to them. This will apply to both the contract and pre-paid market. It is a major undertaking.

By default it appears as if every handset will be assumed to be owned by someone aged under 18.

In relation to 2, a new rating or classification body will be established.

Every publisher or service provider wishing to provide materials over the operators' networks will have to rate their own material using a simple binary system i.e. material will be classified as being suitable either for universal access or only for access by people aged 18 or over. There is no suggestion that the ICRA system, or anything as complex as that, will be used at this stage.

The new classification body will publish the criteria which the publishers and providers must use but thereafter they will only get involved if necessary to adjudicate on disputes. In other words there is no expectation that the new body will examine or rate every single item or service before it goes online.

One question which is not yet clear is how the different networks will handle internet access. As I understand matters at the moment some will provide internet access by default on all phones, whereas other networks will only turn on internet access following a specific request. Some may treat internet access as an "adult service". Others may not. The latter would represent a change in policy for some networks because, at the moment, with GPRS, any GPRS/WAP capable handset can access internet content.

All of the networks have also said that they will run internet filtering and blocking software at the network server level. Again the precise details of how this will work are still unclear but there is a concern that the newer handsets will be able to facilitate internet access via other types of connections which will bypass any and all of the protections built in at the level of the network server.

Bluetooth, WiFi and GPS are the most obvious ones. I would not include Assisted GPS because, as I understand matters, Assisted GPS must utilise the operators' networks to some degree or other and therefore, one assumes, potentially could be the subject of some form of control by the network.

I understand in the USA another form of peer to peer communication is developing, which is similar to walkie-talkies but works through otherwise conventional mobile phone handsets. I have no further knowledge of this. If it is limited to voice communications then I guess our concerns would be lessened, but if it represented yet another way of bypassing the network which could facilitate the exchange of data, then we would be keen to know more about it.

Bluetooth, WiFi and GPS, of course, offer many potentially wonderful and useful applications, but we feel it ought to be possible to subject them to the same kind of controls that are being sought at the network level. This implies developing applications on the handset which can either turn on or turn off the relevant hardware or turn on or turn off the software needed to use it, or which can make any data transactions which take place using them subject to the same or similar types of controls available at the network level.

In the PC environment the kind of controls I am suggesting can be achieved with applications such as Cyber Patrol, a subsidiary of Surf Control. Indeed I understand that Cyber Patrol have been doing a great deal of development work in this area for use in the mobile environment. I appreciate that the memory and processing capabilities of mobile

handsets cannot yet match those of the PC but the specifications of handsets are moving ever upwards and anyway perhaps, in the short run, much could be done with specially adapted or cut down versions.

Finally, while I have your attention, I might also mention the issue of camera phones. Within the UK there have been several bad stories in the media about them being used in inappropriate circumstances e.g. in toilets and in changing rooms. If it were at all possible people would greatly welcome a way of remotely turning off the camera functionality of all mobile phones within certain narrowly defined areas. Perhaps Bluetooth or WiFi could provide a way?

Is ETSI considering or working on anything which might impact on any of the above issues? Or are you working on any other issues which might have an impact in terms of child safety? I would very much like to know.

Kinds regards,

John Carr