



Chief Executive Officer's Press Statement Safer Internet Day 2023

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As the world observes Safer Internet Day today on Tuesday 7 February 2023, the National Information Communications Technology Authority (NICTA) calls for a safer online experience for everyone including children and young people. The aim of Safer Internet Day is to promote the use of technology in a responsible, respectful, critical, and creative way, resulting in a safer and improved internet experience for all.

The internet offers many positive opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. Some of which include access to information, connectivity, online services, economic opportunities, entertainment and remote work and learning.

Let us always be mindful of the inherent risks such as hacking, phishing scams, and identity theft, as well as the spread of misinformation and exposure to inappropriate or harmful content. The risks of using the internet for children include exposure to inappropriate or harmful content, such as violence and pornography. Children may also be at risk of online grooming and sexual exploitation by predators. They may also be at risk of cyberbullying and being bullied online. Additionally, children may be at risk of disclosing personal information or sharing inappropriate content online.

Parents and carers are encouraged to take a more proactive approach in teaching their children how to be more resilient and to exercise their critical reasoning skills whilst online. They may achieve this through educating children about the potential risks and dangers of the internet, teaching children how to use privacy settings on their social media accounts to control who can see their posts and personal information. Strong, unique passwords should be used for all online accounts to protect against hacking.

Children must also be taught the importance of how to be responsible digital citizens, such as not sharing personal information online, not engaging in cyberbullying, and being respectful to others in online communities. Online supervision and monitoring of children should be a priority for parents to ensure their safety when online. And lastly, encourage your children to come to you if they encounter anything online that makes them uncomfortable or if they need help handling a difficult situation.

Consistent with Governments Digital Safety policy and to ensure the safety of citizens including children while using the internet, various measures by the NICTA in collaboration with PNG Safer Internet Committee have been implemented, such as supporting public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about online risks and how to stay safe, providing resources and support for individuals and families to protect themselves from online harm and partnering with stakeholders to address online safety issues. It is essential that we increase our efforts to create a digital agenda that empowers and keeps safe our children.

It is the responsibility of all individuals to contribute to a positive online experience. This can be achieved by being considerate and respectful towards others, actively seeking out opportunities to create and connect in a positive way. Additionally, it is crucial to take action against negative online behavior by reporting any illegal or inappropriate content.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the idea that having access to digital and online platforms is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for everyone. Bridging the gap between those who have access to the internet and those who don't is a top priority for the NICTA. Bridging the gap for internet access is important because it can help to promote social and economic development, improve access to education and healthcare, and create opportunities for those who may otherwise be excluded from the digital economy.

In conclusion, let us all take a moment to reflect on the importance of online safety and our role in promoting a positive and safe internet for all. Today, on the occasion of Safer Internet Day 2023, let us commit to being kind and respectful towards others, actively seeking out positive opportunities to create and connect, and taking action against negative online behavior by reporting any illegal or inappropriate content. Together, let's create a safer and more positive online environment for everyone.

Happy Safer Internet Day and God bless Papua New Guinea!

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NICTA

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