

MEDIA STATEMENT

Safer Internet Day 2024



Honourable Timothy Masiu, MP
Minister for Information and
Communication Technology

TODAY we again celebrate Safer Internet Day.

This advocacy aims to create both a safer and a better internet, where everyone is empowered to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively.

The campaign aims to reach out to children and young people, parents, teachers, educators and social workers, as well as industry, decision makers

and politicians, to encourage everyone to play their part in creating a better internet.

By celebrating the positive power of the internet, the Safer Internet Day slogan of "Together for a better internet" encourages everyone to join the movement, to participate, and to make the most of the internet's potential to bring people together.

The events of the recent past where we saw looting and destruction in Port Moresby and some parts of the country is directly related to the misuse and abuse of the positive use of the internet.

The Department of Information and Communication Technology social media monitoring desk has data that shows the increased use of the internet through the social media platforms of Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram, Tiktok and others inciting people to mobilize and loot and that spread across the country from the situation in Port Moresby.

I issued a warning that I would use my powers under law to restrict the use of some platforms of the internet if this trend continue whereby there is abuse of the internet.

With a global, community-led approach, Safer Internet Day encourages everyone to come together and play their part. There are many ways to do this:

- Children and young people can help to create a better internet by being kind and respectful to others online, by protecting their online reputations (and those of others), and by seeking out positive opportunities to create, engage and share online.
- Parents and carers play a crucial role in empowering and supporting children to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively, whether it is by ensuring an open dialogue with their children, educating them to use technology safely and positively, or by acting as digital role models.

- Teachers, educators and social workers can help to create a better internet by equipping their pupils and students with digital literacy skills and by developing their critical thinking skills, which will allow them to better navigate the online world. They can empower them to create their own content, make considered choices online, and can set a personal example of positive online behavior.
- Industry can help to create a better internet by creating and promoting positive content and safe services online, and by empowering users to respond to any issues by providing clear safety advice, a range of easy-to-use safety tools, and quick access to support if things go wrong.
- Decision makers and politicians need to provide a culture in which all of the above can function and thrive – for example, by ensuring that there are opportunities in the curriculum for children and young people to learn about online safety, ensuring that parents and carers have access to appropriate information and sources of support, and that industry is encouraged to self-regulate its content and services.

They must also take the lead in governance and legislation, and ultimately ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through effective child protection strategies for the digital world.

- Everyone has a responsibility to make a difference online. We can all promote the positive by being kind and respectful to others and by seeking out constructive opportunities to create and connect. We can all respond to the negative by reporting, inappropriate or illegal content and behaviour online. In commemoration of Safer Internet Day 2024 today, it gives me great pleasure to also announce on behalf of the PNG Safer Internet Committee (PNGSIC), the release of the new look "Parents Guide to being Cybersmart" publication. The said Guide is intended to provide advice to parents of children of all ages as part of engaging families on the importance of online safety.

Further, I commend and encourage the collaborative efforts of both local and international key stakeholders, facilitated by NICTA through the PNG Safer Internet Committee (PNGSIC), in localising and carrying on the all too important work of promoting a more responsible use of and safer internet for the benefit of our communities.

Happy Safer Internet Day and God bless Papua New Guinea!



Hon. TIMOTHY MASIU MP
Minister for Information and Communications Technology