



Tech experts offer alternative to net filter

Australia's peak technology experts group, SAGE-AU, has applauded the new Safer Internet Group as a more effective alternative to the Government's proposed internet filter. **Ernie Davitt** reports.

SAGE-AU, WHICH represents Australia's system administrators, is an inaugural partner in the Safer Internet Group (SIG) initiative.

SAGE-AU has been vocal in its condemnation of the Federal Government's planned internet filter as a costly, cumbersome and ultimately futile attempt to protect web users from unwanted content.

SAGE-AU President Donna Ashelford told ASM the Safer Internet Group (SIG) would recommend and promote methods to provide a safer online experience for Australians.

"The Safer Internet Group has a practical plan for making the internet safer through comprehensive policing of the internet, better education of internet users and by using tools and technology that work," she said.

"The SIG will play a central role in coordinating responses of our members to cyber safety concerns."

The Safer Internet Group unites a diverse group of stakeholders who share the goal of developing the internet as a platform for education, communication and economic activity.

With Australia's leading sponsors of research, outreach and online safety campaigns, its members include the Australian Council of State School Organisations Inc (ACSSO), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), Google, iiNet, Inspire Foundation, the Internet Industry Association (IIA), the Internet Society of Australia (ISOC-AU), Internode, the System Administrators Guild of Australia (SAGE-AU) and Yahoo.

The Safer Internet Group will directly support effective policing and education initiatives throughout Australia. It has also developed a five-point plan to make the Internet safer. The plan comprises:

1. More effective education.

2. Comprehensive policing of illegal material on the internet.
3. Industry tools that work.
4. Promotion and support of broader participation in ongoing solutions.
5. Targeted research of internet risks and opportunities for young people.

Ms. Ashelford commended the Safer Internet Group's strategy as comprehensive and practical.

"From experience, we know it works. Australia needs to take effective action to ensure safety online while preserving the benefits of open internet access. We are seeking a commitment from the Government to promote serious policy dialogue on cyber safety that brings together government, community and industry concerns."

To find out more about the Safer Internet Group, visit www.saferinternetgroup.org ■