

## THE INTERNET – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SCOUTING

### Introduction

The European Scout Conference in Prague in 2001 called for guidance to be published, outlining the potential dangers that can arise in the use of electronic mail, websites and other internet applications. The Internal Communications Working Group of the European Scout Committee has prepared this edition of *Euro.Scout.Doc* to meet that request. The publication is in three parts:

- Guidance on how to develop a Scout website
- Recommendations for child safety on the Internet (as endorsed by the European Scout Committee)
- Safer surfing – ideas for young people on safe use of the Internet. We have included some useful web page addresses here.

Information, comments and ideas from National Scout Organisations are always welcome and we would be happy to help Associations share experiences and good ideas. ●



### Developing a Scout Website

Any organisation as geographically widespread as Scouting with more than 28 million members of the World Scout Family in over 216 countries and territories, has been quick to grasp how electronic communication (and the Internet in particular) makes it possible to transmit, receive and share information.

The purpose of this document is to give advice and guidance on creating and developing Scout websites. What it does not do is give an in-depth technical tutorial.

There are many good tutorials available, and today it is quite easy to create web pages with packages such as Microsoft Word.

*Euro.Scout.Doc* is published by the European Scout Office (ESO). Its aim is to provide members of national Scout associations with an update on key developments in the five areas of the European Scout Plan 1999-2007, as well as results of seminars and events:

- *Developing and promoting our Movement (Youth Policies)* - purple;
- *Better Scouting for more young people (Youth Programme)* - orange;
- *The adults we need (Adult Resources)* - red;
- *Regional communication network (Communication)* - blue;
- *Support to the development of national Scout associations (Support and Finance)* - green.

Each issue will focus on one of these areas, as indicated in its sub-title, using input from the European Scout Committee, European working groups and national associations. It will be distributed via EuroPak and made available on the regional web site: [www.scout.org/europe](http://www.scout.org/europe). We hope that you will find *Euro.Scout.Doc* interesting, informative and attractive, and that it will inspire you not only to contribute your own ideas and experiences, but also to try out some of the new ideas you will find here.

Please address all comments and suggestions to: [eurobureau@euro.scout.org](mailto:eurobureau@euro.scout.org)

## Purpose - Why Create the Website ?

Perhaps this is the most important question to ask, as the answer will guide the content you will create.

Perhaps the purpose of a Scout Group website will be to publicise its activities to other Scout Groups over the world and use it to make contacts. A District website may be used as an information resource to allow publishing and distributing information as a replacement or supplement for paper. It also gives easy access for people who wish to contact the District.

## Where to put the Website ?

The website has to be “hosted” on an Internet Service Provider's (ISP's) machine. What this means is you are renting space on a web server which is permanently connected to the Internet. Almost all dialup accounts (what home users use to connect to the Internet) provide web space “free” and the amount given is usually more than enough to host a website comfortably. Commercial packages are available so you can



have a unique address - like <http://www.localscouts.org.de/>

These usually involve a start-up cost to register the address and yearly fees, as well as the monthly cost for the Website.

## Child Protection

It is essential that anyone creating a website follows a few simple guidelines designed to ensure the personal safety of young people.

We do not want our sites to be used as a method for people with evil intentions to develop contacts with children.

- Young people should NOT be identified. Their email addresses should NOT be available from the site. As a general rule it is best to try and avoid naming any individuals. If they are Leaders the job title will probably suffice.



- Pictures of named individuals should not be used or pictures clearly showing where the young people come from (easily read Group name tags on uniforms etc.). The content of pictures should be considered for good taste.
- Meeting Places and Times. This information should not be published on the site. You can always provide an email link so that the information can be requested.
- Events and Camps. Whilst you may want to publicise dates and locations of future events, do not go into too much detail if you feel that young people might be put at risk because constant supervision might be difficult.

## Content

As previously discussed, the answer to the question of “what is the purpose of this website” will govern the content of your website. However there are certain details which would be useful on most pages – and **dos** and **don'ts**.

### Useful Content

- Information about your Group/District etc. for visitors and outsiders
- Contact details for people wishing to get in touch with you
- Email directory - link to the relevant national web directories

### DOs

- **Do** keep pictures to a sensible size - more on this subject later.
- **Do** keep the information up-to-date - there is no use using the WWW if it is not up-to-date. If somebody views your website, and it tells them "our summer camp is in two weeks

time", yet it is now the middle of winter it gives a bad impression of your group.

- **Do** publicise the website. Make sure everyone knows about it, and print the
- address where you print your phone and address details. Not everyone has web access now, but the numbers who have is increasing dramatically.

### DON'TS

- **Don't** publicise contact details for young people - addresses and phone numbers etc, should not be made available.
- **Don't** duplicate information. For example, don't type out material that is on your national website. The information may well change quickly, and it could be confusing and perhaps even dangerous if Leaders viewed out-of-date information on your website.
- **Don't** use copyrighted information - information on the WWW is copyrighted in the same way as paper medium, so bear this in mind.
- **Don't** get carried away with the latest crazes - with the Internet and World Wide Web developments seem to happen at breakneck speed, almost daily. It can be tempting to use the flashiest tools and techniques just because you can. Don't. Carefully consider what you need to make your website useful and use them. Remember the Internet is a global medium, and other people may not be able to see your page if you use the latest techniques. This is especially true if they are accessing the Internet using older computers with different software.
- **Don't** publish information without thinking about what you are doing. Making meeting times and location explicitly available on the web is an

open invitation for thieves to break into Leaders' houses, as they will be out! Information on web pages can and has been used in libel cases and other legal proceedings.

### Graphics

It is almost certain you will wish to brighten up your page with graphics and logos. Doing so effectively can make a page visually attractive and capture the readers' attention. However, careless design can make your pages very un-viewable.



*Where do I get the graphics ?*

If your artistic skills are not up to it, there are many sources of free graphics. There are many clip-art sites on the Internet, ideal for supplying you with images. Digital cameras are abundant these days, and make it easy to add your own photos.

The same rules apply here as to general web page design; do not add graphics for the sake of it - images which show a little letter being folded up and put in a envelope look great at first, but when you have seen it a thousand times on a thousand websites, it tends to look tacky! Navigation is very important - remember that you will know the site intimately before it goes "live", but other people will

not ! Make sure it is easy to find the pages that you want.

### General Design Tips

- Avoid using frames unless you have to - not only does it make the page unusable by older browsers, it makes it impossible to bookmark a certain page
- Avoid using fashionable gimmicks, for example scrolling messages along the bottom of the screen, which will quickly look dated
- If the background colour is dark and the text is light, it is impossible to read when printed out
- Keep the page address simple
- Some people think that web page counters are of no use and a cliché. This may be true, as they do not give a true representation of who visits your site (because of repeat visits and caches). However, many people still like them as a useful idea to gauge the popularity of their page.
- Don't change the link colours - people are used to blue for a link, and will get confused should you change this. Avoid blue text for the same reason.

### Disclaimer

For legal reasons it is important to add a disclaimer to the web site. Something along these lines should be used: "The views expressed within this website are not necessarily those of (name of the Association)."

### Publicising your web page

When you have completed your web-page, you will want to tell the world about it. In fact you will probably want to do this as

soon as you upload your first page. Don't! Internet users find pages that say "*under construction*" or with broken links incredibly frustrating and are unlikely to visit your page again. You may wish to submit your web-site to Internet search engines. Most search engines will pick up your page eventually but submitting your details will mean it will get added faster.

## Conclusion

Writing a web-page can be an extremely rewarding practice, especially so if the young members of Scouting are involved. There are many pitfalls and traps, so we hope that this document will help and enthuse you to create your own pages. The suggestions here are by no means hard and fast. They have been compiled from the experience gained in creating Scout-Base UK and we are grateful to The Scout Association (United Kingdom) and the ScoutBase Team for their agreement to the use of this material. ●



In February 2002, the European Scout Committee endorsed the proposals made by European Research into Consumer Affairs (see below) on the basis that states which are not members of

the European Union should also be urged to adopt the proposals. We strongly urge Associations to take action in their own countries to encourage the adoption of the proposals.

## Recommendations for child protection on the Internet

**1** The EU and its Member States should support and actively encourage filtering and rating systems and the improvement of existing systems. Many current filtering systems inadvertently block material which is not objectionable or allow objectionable material to slip through. And at present only a small percentage of sites are actually rated. The US, EU and Member States should encourage all Internet content providers to rate their material and penalise those that do not. ISPs should also require content providers to rate their sites.

**2** The EU should work towards the establishment of a fully representative international rating and standards body dealing with content issues in all the electronic media, as proposed by the EU Economic and Social Committee.

**3** Unless a more immediate and effective operation of filtering and rating can be put into effect, the EU should introduce legislation, in particular to tackle harmful con-

tent, tobacco, alcohol and gambling sites, as well as data collection from children (see below).

**4** All Internet ready computers going into homes, schools or public libraries or anywhere that children regularly gather to use computers, should be sold with filtering systems ready installed and operating, rather than hidden away in the system. They should be accompanied by easy to understand, point of sale material explaining the basics of on-line safety, such as the "Safer Surfing" guidelines annexed to this Resolution, and also information on filtering and rating.

**5** The US Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Neighbourhood Internet Protection Act (NCIPA) go a long way in this direction, by imposing requirements on certain libraries and schools relating to Internet safety policies and use of blocking and filtering technology. The EU and its Member States should follow the US example and require similar policies in all schools and libraries.

**6** The EU should encourage those in a position to do so, notably the Internet industry, content providers, etc, to give more priority to protecting children and alerting them to potential dangers, eg ISPs on their home pages should advise children not to arrange to meet someone or give personal details, computer companies should include guidelines for children at point of sale and, for example, on their mouse mats.

**7** Hotlines, where parents and guardians can report complaints, should be widely available and well advertised.

**8** There needs to be greater priority on creating protected quality areas for younger children (walled gardens), where they can surf safely and confidently. ISPs that allow children onto their networks and give access to Internet chat rooms should also provide, and promote the availability of, moderated chat aimed specifically at children. Chat safety messages should be prominently displayed close to, or in, chat areas, and mechanisms should exist which would allow suspicious behaviour towards children to be noted, reported and dealt with very rapidly.

**9** The EU should aim to continue its tradition of public service broadcasting in the new media by ensuring the provision of positive non-commercial space for kids.

**10** There should be some mechanism whereby subscribers can be switched off if they breach good practice guidelines, or if complaints are received.

**11** Authentication systems for credit cards are urgently needed, including a mechanism for establishing the age of the user, in order to

address the problem of children using their parents credit card unauthorised for purchasing on-line

**12** Violent games and material, and downloads charged to premium lines, should only be made available on a proven order from an adult.

**13** The EU 1995 Data Protection Directive should be amended to make special provision for children, as the US Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) does. COPPA requires parental consent before personal information can be gathered from children, as well as requiring web sites to post a detailed and easy-to-find privacy policy on their home pages. Parents must be notified about data collection practices and have the opportunity to curtail any future use of it.

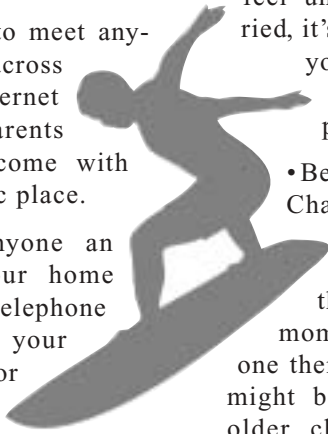
**14** The Transatlantic Consumers' Dialogue in its resolutions on Electronic Commerce and Children, expressed concern that marketing to children on the Internet is advancing at a very fast pace with new and more sophisticated practices emerging almost daily. ERICA reiterates its demands for the US and the EU to develop quickly appropriate and effective policies to govern online marketing and sales transactions targeted at children. As an initial step the European Commission should draft a code of practice on television and Internet advertising to children. ●



## Safer surfing

We propose the following guidance for children and young people as they use the Internet. It can be published in magazines and on web sites. Further information can be obtained on the web pages listed at the end of this *Euro.Scout.Doc*.

- Never arrange to meet anyone you came across first on the Internet unless your parents are happy to come with you - in a public place.
- Don't send anyone an email with your home address, your telephone number or your school name - or your picture - and never give them out in Chat Rooms. (Emails can get lost or be read by people who might get hold of them - an email is a bit like a postcard. Chat Rooms too are like public places, so you won't always know for sure who's looking in or listening.)



- Remember that people you contact online are not always who they seem, even people who become pen friends or "key pals". People don't always tell the truth online - no one can see them.
- If someone says or writes something in a Chat Room or in an email which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, it's not your fault so tell your Internet Service Provider and your parents.
- Be especially careful in Chat Rooms. (Even if a Chat Room says it is only for children, there's no way at the moment to tell if everyone there really is a child. It might be a grown-up or an older child trying to trick you.)
- See if your Internet Service Provider has any "moderated" Chat Rooms especially for kids your age: then only use those Chat Rooms if you do want to chat. (That means a responsible adult is there

online all the time keeping away anything nasty. But don't worry! The adult won't interfere and you probably won't even know they're there unless someone starts behaving badly.)

- Never respond to nasty or suggestive messages. Always tell your parent or carer if you get such messages or if you see rude pictures while online and report them to your Internet Service Provider. (There are organisations, such as the Internet Watch Foundation ([www.iwf.org.uk/](http://www.iwf.org.uk/)) which can get this kind of thing stopped. Get one of your parents to tell the IWF if anything like that happens.)
- It's not a good idea to send anyone your credit card or bank details, (without first checking with your parent or carer. Someone could use these to steal from you.)
- Better not give anyone your password to your Internet account (or they could pretend to be you or read your emails.)
- Remember if someone makes you an offer which seems too good to be true, it's probably a trick!
- Steer clear of "over 18" sites. (The warnings are there to protect you. Adult sites can sometimes cost a lot more on your phone bill too.)
- Don't click on web links in emails or open email attachments from people you don't already know and trust. And the same with downloading files from Internet sites. (Don't open them except from people you know and trust. You might be picking up a virus or some other file that could damage or destroy your computer.) ●

## Some Useful Web Sites

[www.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts.shtml](http://www.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts.shtml)

Information on helping families to agree on a code of conduct on the use of the Internet by young people.

[www.icc-911.com/](http://www.icc-911.com/)

The International Child Center in the United States.

[www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/kidzprivacy](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/kidzprivacy)

Kidz Privacy, another United States site.

[www.wiseuptothenet.co.uk](http://www.wiseuptothenet.co.uk)

Keeping your child safe on the Internet.

[www.nch.org.uk/itok/](http://www.nch.org.uk/itok/)

NCH Action for Children

[/www.webwisekids.com/index2.html](http://www.webwisekids.com/index2.html)

[www.actioninnocence.org](http://www.actioninnocence.org)

Site Suisse pour les parents, éducateurs et enfants sur tous les thèmes "Surfez prudent !".

[www.reseau-medias.org](http://www.reseau-medias.org)

Réseau Education-Médias est une association offrant un site internet sur l'Education aux médias et leur influence dans le quotidien des enfants et des adolescents

[www.educaunet.org/index3.asp](http://www.educaunet.org/index3.asp)