



Office of Hon Nathan Guy

Minister of Internal Affairs
Associate Minister of Justice

Associate Minister of Transport
Minister Responsible for Archives New Zealand
Minister Responsible for the National Library

11 AUG 2009

Thomas Beagle
Thomas@thomasbeagle.net

Dear Thomas

Thank you for your email of 13 July 2009 regarding the Department of Internal Affairs' plan to offer a website filtering system to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in New Zealand.

I support the Digital Child Exploitation Filtering System that has been developed by the Department of Internal Affairs to help prevent access to child sexual abuse images. The filtering system will focus solely on known websites offering clearly objectionable images of child sexual abuse.

While I appreciate your view that the filtering list should be made public, the public release of the list would provide persons with an interest in child sexual abuse images with a directory for finding that material. My department recognises that, to ensure public confidence in the filtering system, the operation of the system must be as open to scrutiny as possible. The Department is, therefore, developing a Code of Practice to govern the operation of the completed system, and will be making the Code available on the Department's website for public comment. An Independent Reference Group will be formed to ensure the Department operates the website filtering system in compliance with the Code.

The New Zealand public and ISPs also have a role in ensuring that the website filtering system keeps to its stated objectives. Unlike systems that operate in other jurisdictions, a user will be informed each time access to a webpage is blocked and why. I expect that should a website that does not contain child sexual abuse images be blocked by the system, blogsites, such as your own, would highlight it very quickly. As there is no legal requirement for ISPs to join the filtering system, it is expected that any departure from the stated aims of the system will result in ISPs withdrawing from the system.

If you wish to discuss the implementation of my Department's website filtering system further, please contact Keith Manch, Deputy Secretary, Regulation and Compliance Branch at telephone 04 495 9329.

I trust you will find this letter helpful.

Hon Nathan Guy
Minister of Internal Affairs