



Press Release

Media Release:

Contact:

Dr Sangeet Bhullar
Executive Director
WISE KIDS
40 Wood Crescent,
Newport, NP10 0AL, Wales, UK.
Tel. +44 (0)1633 673339; Mobile +44 (0)7900 911940
sangeet@wisekids.org.uk; <http://www.wisekids.org.uk>

Monday 20th of October 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Young People, Mobile and Internet Technologies 2008 - Maximising Opportunities, Addressing Challenges

WISE KIDS and the Wales Internet Safety Partnership (WISP) are hosting a one day national conference in Swansea on the 20th of October "**Young People, Mobile and Internet Technologies 2008 - Maximising Opportunities, Addressing Challenges**". WISE KIDS is a Wales based organisation promoting innovative, positive and safe Internet use. WISP is a partnership of comprising WISE KIDS, BT, the Welsh Assembly Government, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, UCAC, Ofcom, NSPCC, office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales and others.

The key conference strands will be around innovative use of technology in education, children's experiences in virtual worlds, digital literacy, eSafety, legal and good practice guidelines. The conference will also explore issues educators, youth professionals and policy makers need to address to ensure that young people have the necessary skills and knowledge to use these media confidently, and safely.

Expert speakers have been invited to speak, and they include:

Keith Towler, Children's Commissioner for Wales
John Davitt, Wordroutes Ltd
Victoria Read, Bebo
Josh Dhaliwal, mobileYouth
Ruth Hammond, BECTA

Young people will be involved in presentations and a panel session. The key sponsors for the event are BT, Ofcom, Fujitsu and the Welsh Assembly Government. Other conference partners include UCAC, IT Wales, NGfL Cymru, Promo Cymru, RSC Wales, LL4Schools, CEOP, Securus Software, Canllaw-Online, EPICT UK.

Jane Hutt, Education Minister said, "*The Internet is a tremendous resource for teaching and learning but we need to ensure that children and young people know how to stay safe and have a positive, enjoyable experience online. The Welsh Assembly Government is delighted to be working with WISE KIDS and the Wales Internet Safety Partnership on this vitally important issue.*"

"We are excited to be able to contribute to the day, and are looking forward to hearing what all the speakers have to say", said a WISE KIDS Youth Panel member, 14, from Newport, one of the young people participating on the day.

Sangeet Bhullar, Executive Director of WISE KIDS highlights that *"this cross sector event is a wonderful opportunity for delegates to gain a better understanding of young people's use of Internet and mobile technologies. We hope the conference will stimulate discussion, ideas and concrete action points that can help the sector move forward as a whole, in a way that truly supports young people, and those who work with them."*

Keith Towler, Children's Commissioner for Wales said, *"It's fantastic to see some of the most influential organisations getting together in Wales to discuss such an important topic. We all know that children and young people are heavy users of the Internet so I would like to see us all working together to empower children, young people as well as parents and carers to be able to use these technologies safely."*

Rhodri Williams, Director Wales, Ofcom said, *"Ofcom is delighted to support the conference. In this ever changing communications landscape we all need to be empowered to manage our relationship with content and services, however they are delivered. As the traditional models of content regulation become less effective in minimising potential harm and offence, we must turn to the education sector, parents, carers and individuals to take more responsibility for what young people have access to. Ofcom recognises that raising such awareness requires a multi-agency approach and always welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership to promote media literacy for all members of society."*

The conference will also see the launch of Welsh Assembly Government resources for teachers and pupils as well as the launch of the WISP eNetwork, which will link and enable educators, youth professionals and others with an interest in the digital literacy of young people across Wales to share ideas, resources and good practice.

Sangeet Bhullar said, *"We are very pleased to have had a tremendous response to this event, and wish to thank all our main sponsors and conference partners."*

The event will be live webcast by RichardJolly.TV, and presentations will also be available on the Web afterwards. Links will be available from the WISE KIDS website <http://www.wisekids.org.uk>

Those attending include young people, educators, youth professionals, librarians, academics, policy makers, public and private sector companies, children's and young peoples' organisations and charities across Wales, Local Safeguarding Children's Board members, ICT Co-ordinators and Welsh Assembly Government officials.

xxx

WISE KIDS is a non-profit organisation set up in October 2002, whose aim is to work with:-

- youth professionals, young people, parents and communities groups
- libraries, local education authorities, schools and colleges
- businesses throughout Wales and elsewhere,

to promote Innovative, Positive and Safe Internet use.

This is implemented through:-

- consultation,
- delivery of customised training programmes on New Media, Internet and Mobile technologies, Internet proficiency, literacy and safety for the communities listed above, and
- the WISE KIDS website.