

**Study Group on Countermeasures against Illegal/Harmful Information
on the Internet—5th Meeting
Summary of Minutes
(Proposal)**

1. Date and Time

Wednesday, April 2, 2008; 14:00–16:00

2. Location

Special Conference Room 3, 9th floor, MIC

3. Attendees (honorifics omitted)

(1) Sub-Council Members

Yoshio Igarashi, Hisamichi Okamura, Shuji Kato, Takamasa Kishihara, Tamayo Kimura, Hiroyuki Kuwako, Fumiaki Koizumi, Akio Kokubu, Yoko Kobayashi, Makoto Saito, Shinichiro Sakata, Satoshi Seki, Nobuyuki Takahashi, Masao Takahashi, Tsuyoshi Takenouchi, Toshiaki Tateishi, Hiroshi Tano, Miki Nagata, Keigo Inoue (proxy for Nakayama), Yasuo Hasebe, Makoto Haruta, Hiroki Hirasawa, Naoya Bessho, Masao Horibe, Takashi Matsuyama, Toru Maruhashi, Suguru Yamaguchi, Seiji Yoshikawa

(2) Observers

Counselor (IT Office), Cabinet Secretariat; Director for Policy of Youth Affairs, Cabinet Office; Director, Cybercrime Division, National Police Agency; Director, Information Economy Division, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; Director, Youth Division, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

(3) MIC Representatives

Terasaki (Director-General, Telecommunications Bureau), Takeuchi (Director-General, Telecommunications Business Department), Ando (Director, General Affairs Division, Telecommunications Bureau), Taniwaki (Director, Telecommunications Policy Division), Kurose (Director, Computer Communications Division), Ninomiya (Director, Telecommunications Consumer Policy Division), Yoshida (Senior Planning Officer, Telecommunications Consumer Policy Division), Okamura (Assistant Director, Telecommunications Consumer Policy Division), Naito (Assistant Director,

Telecommunications Consumer Policy Division), Ishii (Assistant Director, Telecommunications Consumer Policy Division)

4. Agenda

(1) Opening address

(2) Subjects

(i) Opinions of senior high school students and their parents on the Internet

Masao Takahashi, President, National Federation of Senior High School Parents and Teachers Associations

(ii) Developing Technology for Detecting Illegal and Harmful Information

Yutaka Kidawara, Group Leader, Knowledge Clustered Group, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT)

(iii) Rating Internet content

Yusuke Koizumi, Researcher, Information-oriented Society Research Team, Survey Group, IAJapan/NEC Planning Research, Ltd.

(iv) Abstract of the interim report (proposal) (secretariat)

(3) Closing

5. Meeting Summary

(1) Opening address

(2) Subjects

(i) Opinions of senior high school students and their parents on the Internet

President Takahashi of the National Federation of High School Parents and Teachers Associations gave a presentation based on Reference 2. The following questions and answers were subsequently asked and given.

Q: It seems that no questionnaire survey has been conducted on teachers. From my experience of providing training to teachers, I have found many of them do not have adequate IT literacy. Do you have any plan to survey teachers for their current state of affairs?

A: We basically thought that teachers had more knowledge concerning the Internet than parents. Anyway, it is possible to conduct a similar questionnaire survey of teachers.

Q: I have also had chances to hold seminars for teachers. My impression is that there is a great gap in the knowledge levels among teachers. I think raising the literacy of teachers is

just as important as raising that of students.

(ii) Developing Technology for Detecting Illegal and Harmful Information

Group Leader Kidawara from the Knowledge Clustered Group, National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT), gave a presentation based on Reference 3. The following questions and answers were subsequently asked and given.

Q: When will the technology be put into practice?

A: We are planning to provide the technology piece-by-piece as each one is completed. As mentioned on page 8 of Reference 3, we hope to yield certain results in three years.

Q: In addition to assisting technological development, it would be necessary to separately consider how to apply the technology in the real world.

A: We think we have insufficient resources to spread the technology we developed to the public. Our detection technology might result in the generalization of the proprietary technology of each carrier who is trying to differentiate itself with that technology. We would appreciate it if you would discuss how our technology should be introduced by each carrier and how to make it contribute to society.

(iii) Rating Internet content

Information-oriented Society Research Team Researcher Koizumi, from the Survey Group of IAJapan/NEC Planning Research, Ltd., gave a presentation based on Reference 2. The following questions and answers were subsequently asked and given.

Q: Prompt action is required for defining criteria in some areas such as SafetyOnline 3. What do you think the rating procedures and size of the organization will be? Is there a standing committee for future review?

A: As described on page 18, the "Rating and Filtering Conference Study Group" and the Work Group under it discussed the subject for a year and laid out criteria. There is no standing committee, but we are considering revisions in response to changes in the Internet environment.

Q: Do the efforts in Korea that are illustrated on page 10 target the Internet access through any routes or only through mobile phones? In addition, in the example in the United Kingdom on page 9, what is the specific procedure for age verification?

A: The Korean efforts deal with Internet access in its entirety. In the British case, for example, Vodafone limits access to adult content by default. To deactivate the access restriction, the users have to register credit card information or visit a sales office to prove themselves to be at least 18 years old.

(iv) Abstract of the interim report (proposal) (secretariat)

Q: (5 (1) 2 on page 28) The main point is to protect young people from illegal and harmful information. As the President of the PTA said, the primary issues are how to follow up once an incident occurs and how to prevent such incidents. The lack of knowledge among parents and teachers is multiplying concerns, making the problem more complicated. I think the government should describe their activities so far on a web site in plain language. When considering a new law, it would be necessary to review whether the existing laws are effective and such legislative measures are actually required.

A: We would like to talk over what efforts we can make with the authorities concerned and describe the results in the interim report.

Q: The conventional discussions concentrated on the inflexibility and lack of user choice in filtering, but hardly touched the subject of when the filtering will be applied to the existing subscribers. The table on page 6 summarizes the activities that can be started the earliest in response to the request from the Minister last year. For specific operation schemes, the carriers verify that the clients accept filtering, and if they do not respond, they must apply again. In general, the whitelist targets elementary school children, and the blacklist, junior and senior high school students. They were planned to start this summer, but due to a delay in the schedule, some confusion might occur. We would like to apply the schemes when every preparation is ready in response to the report. I would like to hear from you concerning the timetable.

Q: Some of the general application schedule schemes are listed on page 26. One of them reflects the list certified by the third-party organization. It would be better to adjust the scheme for user choice. If these schemes run in the period, the efforts for improving the current filtering would appeal to the public. If it is difficult to readjust the periods, we would like you to start the schedule when you are ready to announce the timetable to the users.

Q: I have four things to point out. First (on about page 8), if everything is to be implemented, a great increase will occur in the social cost, which must be considered from the viewpoint of industrial policy as well as protecting our youth. Second, measures for settling disputes including the ADR outside the government should be mentioned in the interim report. Third, although content flows from overseas, there is no mention of how to deal with this, which should be reviewed for the mid to long term. Finally, that the rating is not censorship by a governmental power should be stated clearly at the "beginning" to prevent misunderstandings with other nations.

A: Those are important points, but I think it would be better to mention them in the final report. For the interim report, we would like to focus on the filtering for mobile phones.

Q: (On page 26) I think it is necessary to consider how to share the cost for providing a customizing function among carriers, content providers, phone manufacturers, and consumers.

Q: First, the plans for solving the problems pointed out by members are indicated and the overall tone is improving, but we cannot evaluate each measure because no timetable has been given. I would like you to clarify the schedule. Second (on pages 7 to 8), the description on the improvement in broadness is insufficient and no effective solution is given. Even if whitelisting-based is replaced by blacklisting-based, the "broadness" problem of blacklisting remains. My proposal is to remove communication web sites from the blocking targets. Instead of this, supporting parents in bearing the user's responsibility, such as providing a service that enables parents to check their children's access history, may reduce the social cost. Third, for the characterization of the third-party organization, the report directly connects the organization with filtering. However, considering various issues, including the cost and time required for certification, the current state in which many unharmed web sites are blocked would not be improved. It would be better for the organization to recommend certified sites as its best practice. Instead of working on harmful sites so that they are removed from the filtering list, the organization should conduct educational campaigns for supporting the principle of user self-responsibility. Fourth (on pages 19 and 22), the parents should be well informed about filtering so that their intentions are verified. Fifth (on page 17), for the blacklisting system, the report should clearly state that access to a broad range of web communication sites is limited.

Q: We should face up to the current situation that caused the Minister to make a request. Protection of the young should be central. It is not a trade-off against content development. There is a description (on page 23) of the responsibility of content providers, but we are concerned about the effectiveness. A system without penalties cannot be dependable. For education in schools, we would like the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) to consider the burden on the curriculum, the use of Saturdays, and training teachers.

Q: For the web sites that can be accessed only through the gateways of the mobile phone carriers, it is difficult to detect harmful sites. It would be necessary to consider a breakthrough mechanism for those gateways, which will also contribute to improving the

accuracy of filtering. For higher performance, in addition to URL-based filtering, filtering based on word analysis is important. Since the customizing function is costly, it would be better to invest in raising the performance of the filters themselves. We hope the next report will present various options. Do these charts on pages 20 and 21 indicate that the third-party organization targets all web sites instead of only communication sites? Is it correct to say that all filtering list companies have to do is to implement the content of the list provided by the third-party organization?

A: We will add the description on the gateways. The relationship between the third-party organization and filtering list companies depends on how much the third-party organization undertakes. If the organization indicates the criteria themselves, the description on openness may not be required.

Q: Will multiple third-party organizations be established? Do you intend to allow mobile phone carriers to establish similar organizations in-house as parts of a self-regulatory division?

A: They describe the subject in generalities. Currently, there are two types of activities towards establishing third-party organizations: One for mobile phone content and the other for an entire IT world. We are trying to coordinate both efforts. If we are given the chance, we will talk about it in the future.

Q: (On page 13) The third-party organization should be completely independent from the government, and they should be clearly separated. (On page 14) In principle, non-commercial cases should be included. We would like you to change the order of descriptions.

A: If you have other opinions, please submit them to the secretariat within one week. We will compile the interim report based on various opinions.

(3) Closing