



7 FEBRUARY 2020

## Record numbers embrace Safer Internet Day in NZ

**Celebrities, politicians, corporates and schools back significant global awareness campaign**

Netsafe is proud to lead New Zealand into Safer Internet Day 2020, an international event on February 11 aimed at encouraging and promoting a better online experience.

More than 50 nations, tens of thousands of companies and millions of people are joining *together for a better internet*.

In New Zealand – where online safety organisation Netsafe is again the official host – partners include Netflix, Facebook, Google, Twitter, Noel Leeming, Countdown, Youthline, Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice and Department of Internal Affairs.

Netsafe started coordinating Safer Internet Day back in 2014. This year, the largest number of partners since then have pledged to support the event. It is us in little old New Zealand that will be first to celebrate Safer Internet Day thanks to our geography.

Netsafe CEO Martin Cocker says he is overwhelmed with the level of support Safer Internet Day was receiving, and that was growing daily. He says online safety is often considered an issue specific to young people.

“Digital challenges, such as online bullying, scams, privacy breaches and harmful digital communications can affect anybody at any time,” Cocker says.

“Online safety is more important than ever,” he says. “The internet gives us opportunities we’ve never had before with more and more on offer by the day. But with these advances come challenges and when things go wrong, their impact is all too real.

“Netsafe is linking arms with an incredibly wide range of organisations to promote online behaviours that support safe, responsible and positive outcomes. The breadth and variety of support partners illustrates how many people care and appreciate this.”

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says her Government is proud to support Safer Internet Day.

“Everyone using the internet has a role to play as a good digital citizen, and Safer Internet Day is a great time to remind ourselves what this means. I hope we can all make a commitment to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. There are so many amazing possibilities online, and today reminds us of how we can take advantage of them in a way that is safer for all of us.”

While many of New Zealand’s largest corporates – and staff – are getting behind Safer Internet Day, there is also a long list of schools, charities and community groups partnering with Netsafe and spreading key messages to their communities and networks.

Miss New Zealand Lucy Brock is one prominent New Zealander right behind Safer Internet Day. She says there are so many things that aren’t talked about enough.

“Online distress is one of them,” Brock says. “Educating young students on their own personal rights is so important, and letting them know that they have confidential support and protection is critical. Unfortunately issues that arise online aren't often talked about until they get to a critical stage and that shouldn't be the case. Safer Internet Day is a great initiative to work towards changing this.”

Netsafe has distributed resources to partnering organisations ahead of Safer Internet Day and is encouraging any organisation or school still wanting to be involved to get in contact.

Cocker said there was still time and supporting Safer Internet Day is easy – it's free and Netsafe provides all relevant materials and resources.

“We want Safer Internet Day 2020 to be the biggest one yet, and with the support of every organisation that shares with Netsafe a belief that with education and support the internet can be a better place we can collectively make a difference,” Cocker says.

Organisations are free to decide to what extent they participate in Safer Internet Day. It may be that on February 11 they display resources throughout their organisation or send out information digitally. Others will hold events and have staff involved in robust and constructive discussions. No level of support is too little.

Safer Internet Day is an opportune time to remind New Zealand that Netsafe is available to help with any online issue that has caused upset or difficulty. The free helpline can be accessed by calling 0508 638 723 seven days a week for help with an online incident.

**-Ends-**

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### **About Netsafe**

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation with an unrelenting focus on online safety. We keep people safe online by providing free support, advice and education. Visit [netsafe.org.nz](https://netsafe.org.nz) for useful resources or call 0508 638 723 seven days a week for help with an online incident.

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