



Hui Māori Online Safety

Korerō about the issues and aiming for safer online experiences

» **He taonga te tangata, ahakoa ko wai.**
Everyone is precious no matter who they are.

Background

The hui has a broad focus, covering a variety of abusive behaviour online, specifically with respect to content abuse and harmful digital communications. Harmful communications on the internet include cyber bullying and harassment.

This hui is an opportunity to hear from Māori, to discuss online safety issues that matter to Māori, discuss the online safety industry's key challenges and potential solutions to progress in the short to medium term to make a difference for Māori online safety.

Working definition

Content abuse refers to online content on a website or platform that is inappropriate, offensive, objectionable, harmful or illegal. This can include child sexual abuse imagery, racist comments, indecent or obscene images.

The Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015 (HDCA) sets out 10 principles for digital communications that are aimed at preventing harm:

1. A digital communication should not disclose sensitive personal facts about an individual.
2. A digital communication should not be threatening, intimidating or menacing.
3. A digital communication should not be grossly offensive to a reasonable person in the position of the affected individual.
4. A digital communication should not be indecent or obscene.
5. A digital communication should not be used to harass an individual.
6. A digital communication should not make a false allegation.
7. A digital communication should not contain a matter that is published in breach of confidence.
8. A digital communication should not incite or encourage anyone to send a message to an individual for the purpose of causing harm to individual.
9. A digital communication should not incite or encourage an individual to commit suicide.
10. A digital communication should not denigrate an individual by reason of his or her colour, race, ethnic or national origins, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Issues to consider

There are many legal norms and frameworks that are relevant to issues of content abuse. These Euro-centric definitions include:

- “Objectionable” and restricted material as defined in the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993
- Defamatory material as described in the Defamation Act 1992
- Spam or unsolicited material as denied in the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Act
- Trademarked or copyrighted material dealt with under the Trademarks Act 2002 and the Copyright Act 1994
- Electronic or cybercrime criminal activity that involves the internet, a computer or other electronic devices.

Research from Netsafe in 2019 revealed that Māori were found to be less confident about their digital skills compared to other ethnic groups and are constantly being exposed to unsafe online behaviour.

Threatening someone with image-based sexual abuse online was more common among Māori compared with other ethnic groups, and research has also shown females, and more so disabled Māori females, are at more risk of online safety issues than any other ethnicity.

By the numbers more harmful digital communications criminal prosecutions have been brought in Christchurch, Hamilton, Dunedin, Nelson and Invercargill as compared to the rest of the country. See [justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/justice-statistics/data-tables](https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/research-data/justice-statistics/data-tables)

COVID-19 is accelerating the pace of digital transformation. In so doing, it is opening the opportunities for advancing social progress and fostering social inclusion, while simultaneously exacerbating the risk of increased inequalities and exclusion of those who are not digitally connected.

Leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline and when they do get themselves online we need to ensure awareness/relevance of online content.

Potential conversation questions

Cultural lens

- Are our current approaches fit for purpose?
- On what grounds, is there a desire to move away from the current system of dealing with content abuse?
- How can a Māori cultural lens be applied to digital and online safety conversations?
- What Māori cultural issues exist when talking about content abuse?
- What harmful communications are Māori communities experiencing?
- What should our holistic approaches be drawing on Māori partnerships?
- What might be some culturally safe ways to engage with online services regarding harmful online communications?
- An issue with our service design is a lack of appreciation for “whakamā” Māori being ashamed or too embarrassed to ask for help. What can/should we be doing here?

Information/resources

- How can materials/information be designed to better serve Māori communities needs?
- What are some of the factors that would need to be present to make Māori feel comfortable to make a complaint to Netsafe?
- How should Netsafe respond to requests from Māori to take down harmful content?
- How can Māori cosmology be used to explain Internet Safety?
- What Resources could be developed that offer traditional knowledge and tikanga Māori and how it applies to the digital area?

Future Thinking Discussion

- Where would we like to be in 6-12 months time? What are the results we’d like to see, and what can we do in the short to medium term to get there?
- How can agencies like Netsafe help? How can Netsafe build trust with Māori communities?