

Safeguards For Internet Needed

Internet access in schools and libraries should only be accessed through a provider who does not carry pornographic sites.

This was a statement made by Fine Gael Councillor Eoin Costello. The Dun Laoghaire Councillor has called on the Minister for State for Children to act immediately to ensure children to not have access to pornographic sites. Only a month ago the Minister demanded that Internet Service providers exercise more control over child pornography yet Councillor Costello claims that Government departments are distributing computers to schools and libraries without sufficient safeguards prevent-

ing children accessing pornography. Ultimately, the State are providing access to the pornography which they are trying to ban according to Councillor Costello. Government departments are rolling out an extensive programme of installing computers in schools and libraries through out the country but training and simple controls are not accompanying this new hardware. The lack of training given to teachers and library staff is adding greatly to this problem concluded Councillor Costello.

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Citywide May 23rd

Surfers caught in monopoly net

EIRCOM'S telephone monopoly is hindering the development of the Internet in Ireland according to local councillor Eoin Costello.

"High prices are causing Irish web users to spend less time on the net than their international peers," Cllr Costello said.

Costello's remarks come in the wake of findings from a new international study which found that the Irish spend the lowest time online per month compared with their US, UK, Singapore and Australian counterparts.

One of the conclusions drawn from the findings is that countries with a phone monopoly have lower levels of Internet usage as government controlled phone companies hinder Internet growth with extra costs foisted on consumers.

"Many within the Irish Internet industry have been campaigning for Eircom to reduce prices and improve services as their current practices are damaging competition," Cllr Costello said. "In countries that loosened their control of the telecommunications systems such as Australia and New Zealand, people are spending more time on the net as companies are allowed to compete for consumers which is driving down the costs of phone services."

Southside 10/5/00

Southside 12/4/00

E-mail a councillor

The Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council website needs to be revamped to include more reports and facilitate greater discussion and debate amongst constituents, according to Cllr Eoin Costello (FG).

He believes that the council should make greater use of the website by making documents and reports like the County Development Plan available to users on line.

"A recent report on inter-

net usage said the county has the highest rate of usage and access in the country. There is so much paper wastage in the council that could be easily eliminated by making more available on the website," Cllr Costello said.

Meanwhile, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County councillors are to receive new laptop computers as part of a new IT communications initiative.

The introduction of laptops will mean councillors will be able to communicate with council officials through the council's internal computer system.

Councillors will be able to send and receive emails

to/from constituents but the system will not allow councillors to surf the net.

Cllr Costello (FG) said that the lack of Internet facilities on the laptops would be a distinct disadvantage.

The reason internet access is not permitted through the laptops is for security reasons, namely viruses attacking the council's systems via unsolicited email, according to a council spokesperson.

Councillor accuses Eircom

Eircom's telephone monopoly is hindering the development of the Internet in Ireland, according to Fine Gael Councillor, Eoin Costello.

"High prices are causing Irish Web users to spend less time on the Net than their international peers," commented Costello. He highlighted a new international study by Nielsen/NetRatings that found countries with a phone monopoly have lower levels of Internet usage, as government controlled phone companies tend to stifle Internet growth because of the extra costs incurred by Net users. While Eircom is no longer a de facto monopoly, it still controls well-over 90 per cent of the residential market in Ireland.

"In a country which wishes to be the e-commerce capital of Europe it is essential that local line unbundling (where competitors are allowed

access to all of Eircom's installed lines) takes place immediately. This will lead to a significant reduction in charges," said Costello.

In response Eircom stated: "We would reject Councillor Costello's claim that we are hindering the development of the Internet in Ireland. Eircom is no longer a monopoly and Ireland is now one of the top three most liberalised telecom markets in Europe. Following our price reductions over the last number of years Ireland has one of the lowest Internet access rates in Europe. It only costs people less than 50 pence per hour off peak to connect to the Internet. Compare that to what BT offers in the UK and you will find that we are cheaper."

A BT spokesperson told *dot.ie* that the BT Click Internet access service is a freephone number and said that Eircom's 50p a minute "could not be cheaper" than BT's offering.

Council goes Hitech!

Councillor Eoin Costello has welcomed moves to make Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council a paperless one!

"I recently received notification that councillors are to receive a laptop in the near future. Once all the councillors have the laptops, the issue of agendas, minutes and other official correspondence will be sent to councillors via email. Councillors will have to submit all business regarding council/committee meetings such as questions and motions, via email. "One point of concern is that the council reserves the right to scrutinise all emails and determine the suitability of the contents of emails. This is somewhat compromising the confidentiality of a councillors correspondence. Also councillors will not be able to access the internet to carry out research. The laptops will be restricted to accessing the councils intranet," said Costello. He concluded by saying "I feel that this move is very welcome. Every council meeting generates almost 6000 sheets of paper in agendas, reports, answers to questions, maps etc. Not only must every councillor receive a copy of the above items before the council meeting in the post, but they also receive another copy of all this information at the council meeting. There is no recycling of all this high quality paper. Its wastefulness that must stop."

27/6/00

Big Web Prizes For Schools

Calling all surfers, calling all surfers. A new competition *Southside 12/4/00*

organised to raise awareness and encourage greater use of the Internet is offering you the opportunity to win major prize money for yourself and your school. All you have to do is design a web site ... couldn't be easier now could it?

The competition which is open to Primary, Secondary and Third level students has been organised by Cllr Eoin Costello (FG).

"The site can be about anything ... the subject is completely wide open to what the students dream up. It can be a fansite for their favourite club or band; it can be about their school or even their coursework. There is no restriction on the subject of the site," Cllr Costello said.

In the Third level category, the first prize is £2,000 for student(s) and £2,000 for their institution. Second prize is £1,000 for the student and £1,000 for the institute.

For secondary schools, first prize is £1,000 for the student and £1,000 for the school (second prize is £500) and for primary schools the first prize is £500 to the student and £500 to the school.

Judging the event will be no easy task so Cllr Costello has recruited the expert advice of Denis O'Brien, chairman of Esat, Frank Cronin, chief executive of the Irish Internet Association and Mark Henry senior consultant with Amarach Consulting.

Full details and an entry form are available at www.eoincostello.com