

# media monitoring project

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## MOBILES AND MINORS

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**Jeremy:** This morning looking at mobile phone content and children, if you have a child with a cell phone, then we suggest you should be listening for the next 60 minutes.

Many children have cell phones that have become a window not only on the world but on a social networking tool as well. I know of one teenage child that spends up to 6 hours a day communicating with other teens on an sms program called MXIT. These days children can download images and sound in a largely unregulated environment. "Do you know what kind of information your child is receiving or disseminating through his/her cell phone?" How worried should parents be, how do we protect our children in this open media environment? In association with the "Media Monitoring Project" and also the "Open Society Foundation" welcome to a special hour long radio conference that we have called "Mobiles and Minors".

Let me introduce you to our large panel of commentators this morning, William Bird is the director of the Media Monitoring Project here in Johannesburg a regular contributor to the program along with communications researcher Nadia Bulbulia who has also been on the program before. In our Cape Town Studio Leon Perlman who is the chairman of WASPA (Wireless Application Service Provider's Association), along with Gavin Marshall who is the Product Manager for MXIT, Zeona Motshiabi who's the Chief Corporate Officer of Cell C will be joining us a little later on this morning along with Graham De Vries who is in charge of legal and regulatory affairs at MTN. Lots to talk about and lots of expertise around the table.

**Good morning William Bird, perhaps set the scene for us, why are we having this debate in the first place, is this technology open to abuse among the under 18's and under 16's?**

**William:** Good morning, Yes there are a number of things, one of the key issues is that raised the interest of the Media Monitoring Project is the idea of how to understand how content actually gets onto peoples cell phones, we need to look at the environment in which we are operating mobile content is now radically different to the way traditional media content in terms of broadcast gets onto cells phones.

There are a range of issues around that, how do we regulate it, whose responsible for which errors, you see that we have already got WASPA, SACTA, there are the "mobile providers" there are the service providers, then of course there of the people themselves who are able to produce their own content. So we talking about a very different environment and looking forward to how we start to regulate these is the best interest of the child. I think we need to be looking at questions like "are we doing enough to protect the child"? We want to make sure we look at the negative side, so the issues around protection, potential harm that children may be exposed to in terms of pornography and abuse. At the same time looking at the positive, the opportunities that are provided by this new technology. While there are various things we need to look at in terms of regulation, the roles of the various providers, we also need to be making sure we are looking at the really wonderful opportunities that this presents.

**Jeremy: Nadia Bulbulia are you worried about this and how much regulation do you believe that we need?**

Nadia: I think we're all worried about it, anything that relates to and is about children and their access to new media forms that are out there would be a concern to us a general issue of public interest and protection. I also think it's a fine balance of our right to be able to communicate to depart, to disseminate, to receive ect, also our responsibility to ensure that our children are in a so called safe environment. We know that in media there's a code of conduct that exists, we know that advertising is regulated by the advertising standards authority. We also know that at the end of the day the responsibility must lie with us as guardians and parents and as people who need to be responsible adults in the space where our children are operating and using this technology.

**Jeremy: I'm going to suggest to the panel that technology is moving at such a rate that it's almost impossible to regulate it. Perhaps Leon Perلمان the Chairman of WASPA, can help us with that but before we do that the wireless application service providers assoc would perhaps tell us what you do and how you operate.**

Leon: Good morning, WASPA is an industry association formed with the assistance of 3 mobile operators in 2004, we make up the majority of what we call "the wasps" these are the people who provide the technical platform for delivering content to cell phones. Primarily licensed and user generated content. We currently have about 85 members which represent the majority of the most active wasps in the country. To be a WASPA you need to have a license with the mobile network operators, they are very strict and cautious about who they give licenses to because it is an open platform to communicating with 32 000 000 cell phones users in the country.

**Jeremy: It is important to note that it is a self regulatory body, so in other words I can still form a company dedicated to disseminating content, I don't have to be part of your organization and effectively I can still put out what I want?**

Leon: No, the way it works is the mobile operators have made adherence to our code of conduct, of extensive documenting and advertising rules compulsory. MTN and Cell C have made membership of WASPA compulsory, so there is a direct line of accountability from the mobile operators and they have included the WASPA code of conduct and membership is their contract with those "WASPS".

**Jeremy: What about Vodacom?**

Leon: Vodacom have made adherence to the code of conduct compulsory. What WASPA has been adopted in other evolving and emerging mobile markets around the world, so what we've put in place is a code of conduct and we have had a lot of expertise place on it we did our studying on it before hand and looked at other markets where code of conducts were implemented and quite frankly we had to evolve it ourselves because our circumstances are so unique.

**Jeremy: So what makes our circumstances so unique compared to other markets?**

Leon: Well primarily because 84% of our users are on "Prepaid" so they don't have access to an account at the end of the month that specifies what they have done during the month. Some of the providers do offer web billing so you can check up activities. But really to protect those who might not know exactly what they are doing with their prepaid purse as we call it, if you buy a ring tone it will cost a lot more (R20-R30) as apposed to a (R1) standard sms. We have a comprehensive structure, we have a secretariat that takes complaints in terms of the code and we have 8 ICT lawyers who oversee the code as adjudicators. They dish out very heavy sanctions for people who have been found to have infringed the code. It's an ongoing process and although the technology is evolving our code is broad enough to encompass all the evolvments that take place. There are very clever people who come up with new business models and exercises technology that's available but because the self regulatory body is made up of members who are able to "spot the trends" and change the code's on the flyer which is a lot more flexible

**Jeremy: I want to give as many people an opportunity to participate in this discussion as possible, I think you have given us a very broad overview and to an extent you have addressed that question about the movement of technology. William Bird to come back to you from the Media Monitoring Project, essentially we are talking about games, videos and pictures as far as mobile content is concerned. Of those what is the big concern here, is all of this just simply a code to demonstrate our concern of pornography and violence?**

William: I think it's a range of things, it about how people get access to all of that information, it's about making sure children, parents and all adults understand how to access the information and that they use it in a responsible way. I think it's also about how we educate children and adults about mobile content.

**Jeremy: Nadia would you pick this up and tell us what you think, I would suggest as parents we're largely ignorant of all of this?**

Nadia: Absolutely Jeremy, it's quite scary. The level at which the children are able to use the technology and able to make sense of it. I think what William raises about advocacy and communications is critical, there's a code that I don't think the majority of our people know about or how to deal with it. We have issues of making sure this code is available in all official languages, I think that mobile operators need to be very proactive and get together and pay for public service announcements that goes out across every kind of media platform that begins to create and generate an interest in them being good corporate citizens as well. I think they need to play that role and we as well need to become more proactive in the steps that we take.

**Jeremy: That's also dangerous as well, because parents are often ignorant and afraid of this kind of technology, they will rather "let it go" and put their trust in their children.**

Nadia: Absolutely, and I think the one thing that has been raised now is the issue that in South Africa we are largely a prepaid market. It's got to do with cost and access, who is paying for this and what control mechanisms and guidelines are there, and because as adults we seem to be in a way "illiterate" of sorts to this kind of mobile technology, we as adults are not sure what's happening and it's happening at such a radical pace.

People may be looking for cheaper options (ie: MXIT) and of course those options may have a negative effect.

**Jeremy: Leon Perlman what are the big issues that WASPA are dealing with, where have the complaints by large been coming from?**

Leon: Reflecting the worldwide issues "spam" is probably our biggest issue

**Jeremy: Define that for us? Is it just the advertising "junk" that comes through on your cell phone?**

Leon: Well, yes it is as you put it, it's the marketing messages that people really don't want or don't expect. Then there's a new "animal" in town and it's called "subscription services" that is the way of billing users for content. The market started out really world wide in a way where you buy some content i.e.: a love poem and you get billed once and in the billing sense you never hear from the "wasp" again. Now we have subscription services which bill the consumer on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, we are sorting this out quite rapidly. A lot of consumers don't know that they are subscribed or they are trying to unsubscribe themselves from something that's been billing them. So those are really the 2 main issues.

**Jeremy: It's a real concern, what sort of costs may be incurred in that front then? You have an average teenager who does this because they want a specific type of ring tone; they haven't read the small print they don't know what they're in for could they be running bills of thousands of rands a month?**

Leon: Yes and no, it's more the chat services that actually generate the huge bills, subscription services are in the region of R5 per day/week.

**Jeremy: It can still mount up...what do you mean by the chat services?**

Leon: The chat services, other than MXIT, there are other peer to peer, person to person messages that are done through a "wasp" where the charge may be a few rand per message; they might be adult services for example.

**Jeremy: We have also solicited some response to this debate as well, we'd like to play you a very quick recording from an interview with a young man who received unsolicited spam, he receiving adverts for Paris Hilton sex tapes once a week. There are also problems about deleting the messages- invasion of privacy, where does spam come from?**

INTERVIEW WITH A GRADE 8 STUDENT AT REDHAM HOUSE:

Interviewer: how long have you had a cell phone for?

Student: Since I was 12

Interviewer: What do you use your cell phone for?

Student: To download music, to phone my family and friends, download pictures.

Interviewer: What types of pictures do you download?

Student: Funny, scary, and all sorts of pictures.

Interviewer: Scary pictures as in how?

Student: Well, maybe a skeleton on fire.

Interviewer: Have you ever come across anything on your cell phone that you would believe to be inappropriate?

Student: Yes, I get messages during school advertising Paris Hilton sex tapes.

Interviewer: Where do you get them from?

Student: I don't know they just pop up, there are other websites that I don't know of as well.

Interviewer: How often do you get these messages?

Student: Once a week, sometimes it may be twice a week.

Interviewer: Has it been from the same source?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: What have you done about them?

Student: I delete them.

Interviewer: So you have not spoken to your teachers about this?

Student: No, it will be during class and some of our teachers also get them.

Interviewer: Your teachers get them as well, how do you know this?

Student: We were playing games at school on one of our teacher's cell phones and the same message popped up, we showed him and he just deleted it.

Interviewer: How do the messages that you get make you feel?

Student: They make me feel weird, they just pop up, I'm not interested in that and it's a waste of my time and battery.

Interviewer: Do you know if any of your friends get the same messages?

Student: No, we don't talk about it. We only talk about downloading music.

Interviewer: Would you perhaps know who's sending you these messages?

Student: I think the websites do this, trying to get us to download it, so they randomly send them.

Interviewer: So it doesn't mean that you have been to the website beforehand and given them access to your number?

Student: No.

**Jeremy: William Bird from Media Monitoring Project, that's quite an indictment against the industry, this young man has almost been cyber assaulted, has he not?**

William: Yes that is true, it is clear that he is receiving unsolicited SPAM. What's also quite telling is that in spite of us talking actively about communication, he is not communicating with anyone about these things, he just deletes them. That's a very substantial danger particularly if we are looking at pornographic images for example, where they are more likely just to delete them and not speak to anyone about it. What we need to start addressing is some means that is easily assessable and that gives this young man a way of doing something about it.

**Jeremy: Leon Perlman what recourse does this young man have?**

Leon: Well, he can certainly contact us; we recently instituted a stop command, whereby you can simply reply stop to any unsolicited sms's. Addressing the type of sms and not so much the frequency, anybody that reports to be making any illegal Paris Hilton sex tapes available quite frankly probably doesn't have it. The Film and Publications Board and WASPA have outlawed this. There are certain kinds of content you can send but anything that is clearly illegal will have been stopped.

**Jeremy: However you heard it yourself from the young man, quite clearly he is still receiving it.**

Leon: He is receiving messages stating that it's available but whether it is accessible I doubt.

**Jeremy: You can give us a guarantee that they cannot access those websites, and that what you say it true?**

Leon: Well, anybody that's advertising Paris Hilton sex tapes is doing so illegally, anybody providing it is certainly doing it illegally and we take action against them. It's illegal in terms of our code, and against the film publication guidelines, WASPA and the Film and Publications Board take very strong action against it.

**Jeremy: William I like what I'm hearing from Leon, but how difficult is the complaints mechanism, is it easy to follow through with do you think?**

William: Well, no many people are aware of WASPA, it's not something immediately advertised about to the public to solve unsolicited SPAM problems. Also if a consumer is looking to submit a complaint it requires that they have access to the website/internet in order to get the details of WASPA, and then they have to go through the process of actually submitting the complaint.

**Jeremy: It's a bit complicated isn't it?**

William: Yes it is, if you are at school and you are sitting in a lesson and receive it you are then expected to go exert extra energy and go home, get access to a computer and place the complaint. I think that we need to make sure we have number or something, an easy mechanism that people can instantly submit these kinds of issues to WASPA. One must also be able to do it anonymously as well.

**Jeremy: Leon, Do you agree?**

Leon: Absolutely, we have an initiative on the table called the utilities company. We want to create a free self help facility that can be available to everybody, this being easily accessible, on your phone using the "\*" and "#" type's of commands that the consumers are used to. So when one brings up the utilities menu it will allow one to unsubscribe from SPAM or subscription services. We are at the beginning stages of this system, but because cell phones are so ubiquitous which is ideal for this process.

Nadia: I think the other things is, self help is one thing, but making sure its user friendly and easy to operate and to go through is quite another. I'm glad they are also looking at this being freely available. At this point this student has to spend money send a "stop" command or a website at home etc. All of this has some cost implication as well as time, but more than anything I think we are looking at for the public to be able to quickly generally engage.

Leon: In so far as "easy" the first port of call should be your network operator, so there's a free call to the network operator and if there's an issue involving a "wasp" they will most certainly relay it back to us, we have obviously got a very close relationship with the operators.

**Jeremy: Is it a general call to the cell phone operator, because often you will get caught in a call centre "hell"?**

Leon: They usually escalate it to WASPA and have been trained to do so. They have a form on the WASPA system for operators and we follow up on every single issue that's brought to our attention.

**Jeremy: Gavin Marshall, as a broad definition - what is MXIT?**

Gavin: It is an instant messenger on your cell phone, which means that you can chat to people that you add as contacts. The person to person messaging is free- we don't charge anything for it. The consumers will pay GPRS charges for it which works out to 0.001cents a message as a rough estimate. They also have the ability to chat to a number of people at the same time in chat rooms from about 1-6 people and that message sent to those 6 people will cost 2 cents. There are also other factors within MXIT like one can send cards to people and skin MXIT.

**Jeremy: Gavin there are no barriers to entry. Could I pose as a child and enter that MXIT chat room world so to speak?**

Gavin: With person to person messaging you only chat to people that you add as contacts. However it would be possible to do that, yes.

**Jeremy: That's a definite worry is it not?**

Gavin: Of course, it's a worry to us and I'm sure to the parents as well.

**Jeremy: So how do you guard against that- is it impossible?**

Gavin: Well, it's difficult, there are a number of things we have put in place and are still busy putting in place.

**Jeremy: What things are you putting in place?**

Gavin: Moderating chat rooms to have a presence and make sure illegal interaction don't happen.

**Jeremy: In moderating the chat rooms, surely you are just precluding from this by the sheer volume of information that's going through. This would render moderating useless wouldn't it?**

Gavin: There are hundred's of chat room and therefore it would, as you say be considerably difficult.

**Jeremy: So with all due respect strike one against you, what else can you do?**

Gavin: We started to get the community to moderate itself, so we built in commands that people can actually report abuse, the person doing the abuse would then be

suspended from the chat room for a certain amount of time, and possibly denied access to the chat room.

**Jeremy: Is that happening?**

Gavin: Yes, however we found it to be ineffective as people began to use the abuse commands to gang up on other users or use the commands to get unwanted users out of the chat room. What we are busy doing is ability to report any abuse that will come straight to us; we will then put processes and resources in place to follow it up.

**Jeremy: What processes and resources?**

Gavin: We are obtaining legal advice on this at the moment, because its useless someone reporting abuse and there is no context for it. We would then need to get a context for the abuse and that would mean the list of the messages around that in order to follow up and access that it's not a holks. From then on one would contact the person that's being reported on and give them a warning. If it happens to continue then we will ban them altogether from the chat rooms.

**Jeremy: Nadia let me draw you into this conversation. I say this with the greatest of respect to Gavin Marshall at MXIT and have no doubt that all their intentions are honorable but listening to this it would seem to me that this is an unregulated haven for Pedophiles.**

Nadia: That's exactly to concern and as we said earlier on Jeremy, people are being cyber assaulted. If we look at the rate in which cell phone penetration is going into the schools is quite phenomenal. Where the advocacy and the awareness is programs, where the teaching to our children is.

**Jeremy: Do schools have a responsibility?**

Nadia: Yes, definitely schools have a responsibility. What is it that we are doing as an entire society; we all have to deal with these issues spread across so many different areas. What are the steps that we are going to take individually?

**Jeremy: William, we can close the chat rooms down I suppose - what do you think?**

William: You could do that yes, another system and programme will then open up. The key lessons we need to learn about this is within 5(or even less) years the large majority of children will have access to the internet, its not something that one can simply regulate, its pretty much unregulateble. What I think one can do though is to make sure that the key stakeholders that are involved, the mobile operators, the service providers, the parents, the educators and the children as well, all play whatever role they can in regulating the areas that are in their reach.

**Jeremy: Leon, is that as good as it's going to get?**

Leon: Not necessarily, at the moment Vodacom have got a service which you can access using the "\* 111 #" command, which is a blocking service for certain services. It is active right now and it is commendable.

**Jeremy: What services might it block?**

Leon: It blocks access to some WAP sites which is like a mobile internet.

**Jeremy: Can one block access to MXIT chat rooms?**

Leon: For the time being No, but if it had to get out of control then yes we MXIT will be able to be blocked as well.

**Jeremy: So how do you define "out of Control"? It would seem to me that surely the potential is there already; surely it would be good to act ahead of it.**

Leon: This is not a blocking system that imposes, it self empowers the parent to be able to block programs on their child's phone. The other operators might or might not implement that but certainly on a WASPA utilities port its something we are looking at. It's going to be in our design, but at this point we give it up to MXIT to do their self regulation.

**Jeremy: How much abuse has actually been reported where the MXIT program is concerned?**

Gavin: A lot of the complaints we get is from concerned parents and they don't know who their children are talking to on the program. We follow it up, but however from a legal point of view we can't give conversations out, but we do advise the parent on what process should be followed. At the moment we are building private chat rooms, where young people can invite and chat to their friends- they will therefore not be allowed in if they are not invited. We also aim to implement age restrictions, but in a clever way, there is obviously no guarantee of the correct age but we would provide age incentives to draw them and then impose the restrictions.

**Jeremy: How exactly would you do that?**

Gavin: Well if a user has registered as being 18 and under they would be allowed in the teen chat room but not in others that we think maybe are not suitable for children. At the same time the adults won't be allowed into the teen rooms. So we have created a trade off.

**Jeremy: Gavin, in reality you are being a bit of an idealist here, that's not likely to work, there are no barriers for a 25 year old creep not to be able to get into those chat rooms?**

Gavin: Sure you will be able to, but then there is the reporting mechanism in place as well, I think the bottom line is there are a number of other chat rooms that young people can go to.

**Jeremy: But you are the big established brand here...**

Gavin: Yes, young people need to be taught how to handle themselves in chat rooms, if you remain anonymous and you keep your information to yourself there is a degree of safety. There are a number of guidelines that people can follow, for instance parents tell their children not to talk to strangers, and so going on MXIT is the same as going to a mall where we have educated our children to be aware. As parents we are almost scared of technology and people shy away from that and leave their children to do their own thing.

**Jeremy: Ok Gavin, what is MXIT doing in terms of education?**

Gavin: There are a number of websites to actually download and view what it is exactly. We intend to spend some time in schools with young people, and are in the process of doing it.

**Jeremy: Nadia are you happy with that?**

Nadia: I think the interesting thing is that you have got to go to the website, again its about making information freely available, accessible, easy to understand to all our young people, our adults- all of us.

**Jeremy: Give MXIT some credit, they at least have the intention of going into schools and starting the process.**

Nadia: That's really commendable, I think we also need to acknowledge Jeremy if I were going to pay R0.001 to be part of MXIT, I'm going to do it. It's about affordability, its cheap and interactive by inviting people to the network. I think the kind of general issues are around how do you deal with strangers and the problem here is that one does not see that stranger. I can teach my 4 year old to not talk to strangers but that refers to a physical person standing in front of her.

Leon: As far as the networks go, I have seen a pretty extensive and very helpful booklet that Vodacom have published, that I suspect is available in most of the Vodacom stores. This is on basically aimed at parents and its one children's access to MXIT, ring tones etc.

**Jeremy: The question with that is how extensively is the booklet being used?**

Gavin: There is a man by the name of Ramon Thomas who is actually doing workshops in schools, teaching parents net safety. He has written a book on safety within MXIT and he does presentations in schools on that. Within each of our chat rooms have warnings saying that one must not give out personal information, when you enter the chat room.

**Jeremy: Gavin we know how gullible and naive teenagers are and your always going to be fighting that.**

INTERVIEW ON MXIT BY A GRADE 11 STUDENT:

Interviewer: What do you use a cell phone for?

Student: Games, music, MXIT and emergencies.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about MXIT?

Student: Well it a chat room where youngsters now a days spend time chatting, what I heard is that pedophiles are on there and lots of young people our ages are chatting on there. You can chat with about 6 people, when you get an invite you can choose to accept it or reject it. I chat only to people that I know.

Interviewer: Who sends the invite?

Student: You don't know who sends it at first because you only see their "nick name", sometimes your number gets passed to people you don't know and then in that case you can just reject them.

Interviewer: How do you find MXIT?

Student: I find it fun; I chat most of the time with people that I know.

Interviewer: So you try to avoid people that you don't know?

Student: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you ever come across anything that you thought was inappropriate like violent images or pornographic pictures?

Student: No

Interviewer: Do you know of people who have? What do they do about it?

Student: Yes I do, my cousin is 13 and she was chatting on MXIT, a man has been sending her vulgar pictures, and she just laughs it off.

Interviewer: Has she reported to anyone?

Student: No, she just deletes it.

Interviewer: If she had to report it who would she report it to?

Student: She would go to MXIT and report to them.

Interviewer: Does MXIT have an administrator administrating the sight, how does it work?

Student: MXIT has an Information port where one can ask questions. We can actually tell this man about the messages and violent pictures that we are receiving. There are different chat rooms that allow for different things, like some of the chat rooms won't allow sex where as other will so it all depends which ones you go into.

Interviewer: So sexual conversations are barred?

Student: Yes, if that is the room that you decided to go into, they are called “flirt” chat rooms.

Interviewer: How does your cousin receive these vulgar messages?

Student: MMS

Interviewer: Have you ever received any of these inappropriate pictures?

Student: No

Interviewer: Are you aware of any dangers connected to cell phone use?

Student: Yes, with phone sex, nude pictures.

Interviewer: How do you think society should deal with these concerns regarding cell phones in terms of the types of content?

Student: I think all the MMS messages should be checked as well as parents getting involved and applying more discipline with regard to cell phones.

**Jeremy: Don't know about you- I'm a parent and that worries me. What role now do the network providers themselves have to play? Zeona Motshiabi is with Cell C and we have also with us Graham de Vries from MTN.**

**Good morning Zeona, are the network providers doing enough to educate young South Africans as far as this is concerned, and particularly as far as Cell C goes, you actively target young consumers?**

Zeona: Thank you for the opportunity Jeremy, I think I'd like to just clarify that we not particularly targeting young users, our company has a policy by which we say that we target people over the age of 18 and because we are the younger operator in the market and if you look at the development of the market and where there are still opportunity for penetration, we are looking at people over the age of 18.

**Jeremy: Zeona, Point taken, but question remains.**

Zeona: In terms of what we are doing, we are part of WASPA as an organization; we've also concluded and signed for the industry representative body code of conduct. However what I think was discussed earlier in terms of the technology Vodacom has available for self regulation, Cell C will also have this technology available from the fourth quarter of this year. Where the parent if they know the number of the “wasp” they will be able to state whether they want to stop receiving information. In terms of education, what we are looking at how we can provide information to all the channels that we control including parents and young adults on the dangers involved in what's being discussed today.

**Jeremy: So you are looking at the process but you have not done anything as of yet?**

Zeona: Yes, we are looking at it, but I do believe we have contributed in terms of what the guidelines that are just coming out in our own communication channels.

**Jeremy: Graham, Good morning, I understand that this is all very new as far as the network provider are concerned, but what concerns me is that you seem to be slightly behind the curve, I made the point a little earlier on in the discussion that technology is moving so quickly that the regulatory frame works and the educative networks simply have not been picked up by the network providers?**

Graham: Good morning Jeremy, as stated by Cell C, we are also part of the WASPA association and then we have also made it compulsory to adhere to the WASPA code of conduct, one thing that needs to be stated it that unfortunately for all of us no amount of technological intervention will ever solve the problem completely of access to adult or unsuitable content. That really places on us places on us as parents, and I'm a father myself, to do the necessary for looking after our children in terms of teaching the moral values, but you are quite right, the technology development is extraordinary. As a result of that we will probably lag a little bit behind because there are always evolutions and innovation on how to work around the system. As the internet is the ultimate open network it is very difficult to get involved and try and block and stop unauthorized activities.

**Jeremy: William, having listened to this this morning as a parent, I'm actually quite ashamed of my response to this and I hope other parents are as well, my sense is "the kids got the cell phone let them do it", the point has been raised by Zeona and Graham and all of our other panelists that parents have to play a greater role, in fact Graham saying that parents have got to "do the necessary" So lets discuss that- what is the necessary?"**

William: Well I think the necessary is that parents need to play an active role in understanding what their children are doing, but to do that they also need to understand the technology that their children are working with. Very often many adults don't have the slightest idea of what their children are working with. I think you are then dealing with a lot of parents where cell phones are new technology bearing in mind that the older generating have never had a cell phone before in their lives. That then imposes on the mobile operators a particular responsibility to make sure that they need to be educating adults and parents and care givers.

**Jeremy: So there needs to be direct messagings from the Cell C's, MTN'S and Vodacom are to the parents?**

William: Yes, exactly.

**Jeremy: That's not happening, Zeona you come in here and tell us what you think?**

Zeona: I think its also an opportunity for us to collaborate with the education system, I think that if technology is developing so fast it is really incumbent on all of us as it was said earlier, but I think teachers are a huge influence in the education

system of children, and I think the work that Nadia, WASPA, ourselves we have got to find an opportunity to collaborate with the education system around educating as well.

**Jeremy: Can we get a commitment from Cell C that you are going to do that?**

Zeona: We can do that through our “gold child” project, we can do it immediately because we have a relationship with the department of education, but even as we embark on this we can start by putting out some messages already.

**Jeremy: Graham do you agree?**

Graham: I agree, I would also say that doing it on a co-operative basis with the Media Monitoring Project and Open Society Foundation is an opportunity that we should all embrace and look at so that we can see how we can find better methods to actually keep everybody happy in this particular scenario.

**Jeremy: Nadia, I'm feeling more and more encouraged by all these commitments from the service providers, what are you thinking at this stage?**

Nadia: The problem is as parents we are afraid of it, as adults we do tend to say “get on with it” and we are so impressed when they show us how to use applications. So I think it about becoming more active and I think people are pushing for a collaborative more open engagement and looking at steps to take it forward, because you have to do a self regulatory check, you have to do this by yourselves, no regulator is going to come in and say “this is how you do it”

The issues around the internet being so integral and part of the mobile world are something we need to acknowledge and accept. 5% of our children in this country have access to the internet, so the majority of our children don't have the ability to do all the “extra” things and I think we now need to set the ground work and prepare for when we are going to be having a ground swell of where parents really complain. I think we are just beginning to touch the reality of this technology.

**Jeremy: Leon, you have heard what MTN and Cell C have to say, it is surely incumbent that you yourselves need to take more of a leading role in terms of that education outreach programme.**

Leon: We are working on that and we are happy to work with the operators and we appreciate their support, they have supported us from day one.

**Jeremy: But they need to increase their effort.**

Leon: Everybody needs to increase their effort, but we are doing it as rapidly as possible and as I said our utilities portal and the advertising around that will certainly notify and educate the market on first of all there is an issue, and second how to solve the issue.

**Jeremy: Leon don't we need to see big adds in the Sunday papers from all 3 network providers warning parents about this, fundamentally that's what I'd like to see.**

Leon: We certainly take that up with them because we are all in the same environment and that's defiantly a suggestion we will take up.

**Jeremy: Gavin, where does this all leave MXIT, what are you going to do?**

Gavin: We really are doing everything we can, we constantly looking at ways to improve our systems. We have in fact redesigned our entire chat rooms to try and implement more safety and mechanisms of better reporting. I think that a technology company cannot be a parent as well and cannot be an educator; however we will do what we can to provide the information.

**Jeremy: You also have the market forces to contend with as well, that why you are in business.**

**William you started the discussion for us I'm going to give you the very final word as we draw to a close of what I think has been a very interesting and important debate. Do you take some encouragement from what has been said today, that the process has been identified that everyone acknowledges that there are problems and we now need to move forward, but I would suggest that time is of the essence, we need to see this happening – now!**

William: Yes , I think mobile operator are extraordinarily efficient at extracting money from people at a huge rate and I think that they can also catch up with technology at sufficiently speedy rate, I think for us there are 3 things, we need education in terms of adults and care givers and parents, how to use these things, understanding technology, we need education of children on how to use these things responsibly, teach them how to self regulate giving them those skills and equipping them with it. We need a complaints mechanism that's assessable for anyone and that they can do it fast and easily. Thirdly we need to make sure we include children in these processes, the protocols, MXIT, Vodacom and WASPA's guidelines are all very good, but by large they generally exclude children and if we are trying to protect them without including them its not going to work.

**Jeremy: Thank you to our panel, William Bird from the Media Monitoring project, Nadia Bulbulia a child rights activist, Leon Perlman the WASPA chairman, Gavin Marshal the MXIT Product Manager, Zeona Motshiabi the Cell C Chief Corporate Officer and Graham de Vries from MTN.**

