



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6.45AM 1 FEBRUARY 2018**

## **Unwanted contact online seriously affecting 1 in 10 Kiwi adults**

**Netsafe reveals 1 in 10 or around 270,000 New Zealand adults going online report being unable to fully take part in daily activities due to harmful online contact in the past 12 months.**

A new report released by online safety organisation Netsafe has highlighted the serious impact caused by harmful communications online. The research reveals that 9% of New Zealanders were unable to fully take part in their usual daily activities, such as being able to eat or sleep properly, or participate online as a result of a negative communication they received online.

Netsafe's CEO Martin Cocker said the findings highlight the very real impact harmful online communications are having on New Zealanders' daily lives. "There can be a perception that online communication doesn't harm adults or that it is an issue for a small minority. This research highlights the very real impact that online abuse can have upon a person's quality of life. For far too many New Zealanders, what is being said to or about them online is having a very real negative impact on their daily lives."

The report shows that online communications that encouraged people to hurt themselves or shared nude or intimate images or recordings without permission had the greatest negative impact on adult New Zealanders.

Despite the high number of people being affected by harmful communication online, the report shows that most New Zealanders have not contacted a support agency for help or support.

"For New Zealanders on the receiving end of abuse and harassment the message is simple - you don't have to accept it," says Cocker. "For people perpetrating the abuse and harassment, the message is equally simple - don't. It harms people and it might be an offence under the Harmful Digital Communications Act."

Netsafe was chosen to receive, assess and investigate complaints of harm caused by digital communications under the Harmful Digital Communications Act. The free service is available to all New Zealand internet users experiencing online harassment or abuse by offering help and advice.

People in New Zealand who need help with online bullying, abuse and harassment can contact Netsafe for information and advice seven days a week. Contact Netsafe by calling toll free on 0508 NETSAFE or by visiting [netsafe.org.nz](https://www.netsafe.org.nz).

The Harmful Digital Communications Act was passed in 2015 to provide a quick, efficient and affordable legal avenue to get help for those receiving serious or repeated harmful digital communications.

### **Key findings:**

- Nearly 1 in 10 of New Zealanders have received an unwanted online communication that affected their daily activities, such as reducing online participation or being unable to eat and sleep.
- Online communications that encouraged people to hurt themselves or shared nude or intimate images or recordings without permission had the greatest negative impact on New Zealanders.

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### **Media Contacts**

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### **About Netsafe**

Netsafe is New Zealand's independent, non-profit online safety organisation. Netsafe provides online safety education, advice and support for people in New Zealand. Taking a technology-positive approach to the opportunities and challenges digital tech presents, Netsafe works to help people in New Zealand make the most of technology by providing practical tools, support and advice for managing online challenges.

Netsafe's helpline is open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-5pm weekends and public holidays.

Netsafe was appointed as the approved agency to receive, assess and investigate complaints of harm caused by digital communications under the Harmful Digital Communications Act in 2015. The free service is available to all New Zealand internet users experiencing online harassment, offering help and advice to resolve complaints.

**[Netsafe.org.nz](https://www.netsafe.org.nz) - 0508 NETSAFE (0508 638 723) - [help@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:help@netsafe.org.nz)**