

Safer Internet Day coming to NZ in its 20th year

Auckland, 7th February 2023

Ram raids have been the focus of the media and public over the last twelve months, but during this same period there has been a 90% increase in online harm reports.

Over 28,000 reports were filed in 2022 which Netsafe CEO Brent Carey says is the largest number they have seen since the organisation was established 24 years ago.

“With all the crime that has been happening recently, digital crime has dropped off people’s radar, which can make it more dangerous. When we let our guard down is often when we fall victim to online crime.”

“Scams, hate speech, online bullying, mis and disinformation and every other type of harmful content is being exposed to New Zealanders at an unprecedented level.”

Netsafe is hosting [Safer Internet Day](#) to raise awareness that people’s online safety is as important as their physical safety. The theme for the day – Every Space a Safe Space – is about reminding us that every space people enter, digital or physical, should be safe.

Safer Internet Day started in Europe in 2004 and has grown into the world’s biggest annual online safety campaign. New Zealand joins over 180 countries taking part in the landmark day which each year aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns.

Carey says the organisation is committed this year to ramping up its support of schools around the country.

“Our data shows that young people are increasingly becoming targets for harmful content with crimes such as sextortion (blackmail using intimate images/videos) rising sharply.”

“Young people need our support more than ever. They have been raised in a technological world, which means they feel confident and safe online. But scams are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and harmful content more prevalent.”

“It’s our responsibility to help and we can all work together to make a difference. Small businesses can share our helpline with their staff who may experience technology-facilitated domestic violence, for example.”

“Schools can integrate our materials into their digital citizenship and positive behaviours teaching. Community organisations can partner with us to reach vulnerable communities or those with additional accessibility needs. Whānau can have the conversations at home using our parent toolkits and everyone doing positive work in this area can bring attention to it using the hashtag #SID2023.”

Along with being the official New Zealand host, Netsafe is involved with several new initiatives and workshops including launching a start of year kete for Primary and Secondary schools.

It features example school guidelines, student user agreements and guides for teachers to respond to an online harm incident that happens at school. The resources are available free on the website: <https://netsafe.org.nz/advice/education/>

Netsafe's education team are also running more free workshops for all Intermediate and High Schools in Terms 1 and 2. Each workshop is presented face to face by one of its Education Advisors and is tailored to fit each school's needs.

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About Netsafe

Netsafe is an independent non-profit organisation supporting people in Aotearoa to have safe and positive online experiences. We keep people of all ages safe online by providing free support, advice, and education. Visit netsafe.org.nz for free resources or to report incidents of online harm.