A report on the discussions held at the Safer Internet Day Dinner and Roundtable in Newcastle upon Tyne on Tuesday, 7 February 2012

An *ActiveAge* Report

Introduction

Safer Internet Day, held in February each year, is a worldwide initiative organised by *Insafe*, the European network of Awareness Centres promoting safe, responsible use of the Internet and mobile devices.

As part of its *'Online Safety is Ageless'* corporate campaign, and to contribute to the Insafe programme, *Microsoft* decided to stage a dinner and roundtable in Newcastle upon Tyne. The event was organised and

facilitated by *ActiveAge*, the collaborative research programme looking at the impact of an ageing demographic on society and the role of technology therein.

This event took place on 7th February to coincide with Safer Internet Day.

Specially invited guests, whose expertise related to the task in hand, gathered at the Vermont Hotel in Newcastle upon Tyne, for presentations, debate and discussion over dinner around the 2012 Safer Internet Day theme *'Connecting generations and educating each other… discovering the digital world together safely'*.

The aim of the evening was to discuss how people of all ages might achieve greater safety and security in the online environment.

Attendees

In all, there were 21 participants, who came from a range of backgrounds such as academia, business, community, education, police, politics, and representatives of both the youth and older people's organisations in the North East. A list of those who attended is shown below:

Iain Arthurs, *Gateshead College*

Detective Sergeant Alan Batey, *Northumbria Police*

Professor Pam Briggs, *Northumbria University*

Phil Butler, *The Safer Internet Company*

Ross Cooney, *Supermondays and Rozmic Wireless Limited*

Gareth Davies, *JISC RSC Northern*

Carl Faulkner, *Normanby Primary School*

Luke Martin Fuller, *Newcastle Youth Councillor*

Claire Horton, *Newcastle City Council*

Gerard Hunwick, *Newcastle Youth Council*

Alex Kavanagh, *Supermondays & Usable HQ Ltd*

Professor Aad Van Moorsel, *Newcastle University*

Dr Gary Moulton, *Microsoft Corporation*

Mary Nichols, *The Elders Council*

Mel Philipson, *Northern Grid*

Gregor Rae, *BusinessLab & ActiveAge*

Joanna Rae, *BusinessLab & ActiveAge*

Councillor Ann Schofield, *Newcastle City Council*

Roy Stephenson, *AgeUK North Tyneside*

Mick Young, *Northern Grid*

To help inform and focus the roundtable discussion, the attendees were given a short programme of briefing presentations from three experts:

- **Dr Gary Moulton**
  Product Manager, Trustworthy Computing Group
  Microsoft Corporation

- **Professor Aad Van Moorsel**
  Centre for Cybercrime and Computer Security
  Newcastle University

- **David Wright** (via Skype)
  Lead
  The UK Safer Internet Centre

Expert Briefings

Dr Gary Moulton stressed the importance of online safety and security to Microsoft in general and the work of Safer Internet Day in particular. He described how Microsoft was promoting Internet safety, education and online behaviour in 2012 under the SID theme, *"Connecting Generations"* with their own banner, *"Online Safety is Ageless"*.

As part of this initiative, Microsoft and AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) conducted research into awareness and perceptions of safety relating to the use of online communication technologies and devices. The survey group spanned the generations, including American teens, parents, and older adults.

Dr Moulton also described Microsoft's recently developed tool, The Microsoft Computing Safety Index (MCSI). This is a scoring system of more than 20 steps that individuals can take to protect themselves online. In 2011, using this system, the average online safety score across five countries was 34% - so indicating that a lot more can be done to improve safety.

As part of Microsoft's contribution to Safer Internet Day, Dr Moulton explained that all Microsoft Store locations across the US were providing fifteen-minute workshops every hour during the 7th February. These sessions covered 6 areas that relate to Internet Safety.

Some of the key safety tips within Gary's presentation included:

- Strengthening your computers defences

- Protecting sensitive personal data

- Create strong passwords and keep them a secret

- Take charge of your online reputation

- Use social networks more safely

- Take extra steps to help keep kids safer online

Professor Aad Van Moorsel described Newcastle University's Centre for Cybercrime and Computer Security, which carries out research to demonstrate online safety and security vulnerabilities and how to protect against them. And it provides education and training to make the Internet safer for families, businesses and organisations.

Professor Van Moorsel's briefing focused on *'Challenges in Privacy, Security, Trust in the Digital Age'*, which described some of the key issues relating to Internet safety and rapidly developing technology such as online social networks.

He instanced online safety issues such as alcohol companies using adverts on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to target children and he pointed to the need to protect individuals from identity theft. He highlighted the ease with which criminals can acquire personal information to steal one's identity.

Although it is generally assumed that identity theft is a problem older people face, Professor Van Moorsel emphasised that only 6% of victims are in the 65 plus age bracket and this percentage has not been increasing. He also made the important point that online security isn't that different from health or physical safety and it requires a societal solution.

David Wright joined the roundtable via Skype from London where he had been broadcasting on the hour

throughout the day. He described the UK Safer Internet Centre, which is co-funded by the EC. Its services - an awareness centre, a helpline and a hotline - are delivered through a partnership of three leading organisations, Childnet International, the South West Grid for Learning and the Internet Watch Foundation.

The Centre is responsible for coordinating all UK activities on Safer Internet Day and David discussed some of the main events, which had been taking place in the UK, Europe, the USA and Australia.

David described some of the wider activities of Safer Internet Day 2012. He himself had been broadcasting a 12 hour Internet radio programme and he gave examples of the content such as a group of 15 primary and secondary children, grandparents and parents who had met with UK government ministers that afternoon.

David's broadcast also covered activities throughout Europe and he gave examples of countries such as Ireland and Norway – and Cyprus where puppet shows were highlighting safety to young children. In Denmark a youth parliament had encouraged and enabled children and young people to express their opinions on Internet safety.

Recommendations for Action over the next 12 months

The task given to the roundtable was to identify a number of actions that could be taken over the next 12 months to help improve online safety. In the process of exploring this, the roundtable focused on a number of key themes that we have attempted to merge with other *ActiveAge/Microsoft* research strands and to translate these into recommendations for improving the state of Internet safety for adults and younger people alike.

One of the key areas of work could be in the way we think about, talk about and describe how and why we use the Internet and the technologies that facilitate our connection to it.

This stemmed from one of the early discussion points during the evening, i.e. <u>our perception of safety</u> online. What does safe and unsafe look like? We know what safety looks like in a car or an airplane and we follow the rules governing travel using these modes. However, we don't tend to follow any such rules when it comes to the Internet. The point was that people behave in the virtual world in a way they would never behave in the real world. They will give away information, which they wouldn't normally do because they forget where they are and have a false impression of how safe they are.

It was agreed that the sensible approach is '…not to do things online that you would not do face-to-face.'

It was felt that understanding more about what is happening when you are online is important. Although your computer might be called a 'desktop' your information certainly does not stay there as you are connecting, often via wireless technology, to worldwide destinations via a global network. Whilst you may be at your desk physically your information (and your data) could be travelling through Russia or the USA on its way to Australia.

Comfortable metaphors such as *desktop, laptop* and *tablet,* whilst they say something friendly and familiar about the nature of the hardware you are using, are not necessarily helpful in the context of safety. It was suggested that it might help if people became more aware of the information environments they are navigating through.

At the roundtable it was argued that it might be helpful to develop a more appropriate language and metaphors. Rather than, for example, the apparently benign 'going online', or 'surfing', more challenging metaphors could be developed, relating to specific activities of Internet users and suggesting possible associated security/safety issues.

The need to help people to understand where they are virtually when performing certain activities, perhaps through new means of navigation, was a theme that emerged from the roundtable.

Another issue raised by delegates was about where your data goes when you are online, who owns the data and what they do with it. One delegate made the point that the Internet 'never forgets' a powerful statement that underscores the fact that once data is placed on the web, it is difficult, if not impossible to remove it.

An activity around this theme could be to create or describe 'data journeys' which highlight where your data travels to when you perform certain activities - sending emails, posting pictures on Facebook, entering personal information when making online purchases or in fact anything you do online – and where the 'risky' or 'dangerous' landscapes lie. This concept could be realised through the use of innovative visual mapping techniques.

Another issue raised during the evening was the lack of public information campaigns for both younger and older people. In the same way public health campaigns have been created around the seasonal 'flu' campaign to encourage take-up of the vaccine by certain 'at risk' groups, and road safety campaigns such as the Green Cross Code, which was created by the UK National Road Safety Committee to raise awareness of pedestrian road safety, the feeling was that we need something similar for Internet safety.

This campaign theme links to the need for the right channels to get information to younger and older people about being safer online. One channel mentioned by

Microsoft was the use of their stores to provide information and run short workshops on Internet safety. There is no reason why this sort of activity could not be broadened out to include mobile phone retailers on the high street and other IT retailers.

With particular regard to 'getting through' to young people effectively it was clearly asserted at the roundtable "…if you want to get a response form young people these days, you've got to text them."

It was also suggested that <u>intergenerational information sharing</u> could be beneficial in the drive to improve Internet safety. Examples were given of previous initiatives that had worked very well in which younger people in shopping malls, had engaged successfully with older people, in order to provide advice on Internet safety.

<u>Online identity</u> was also raised as an issue during discussions. It was felt that this was a concern for many people due to the multiple online identities a person can have. Whilst you are online do you know who you are? Who do other people think you are and what do they say about you?

This has specific relevance to social networking sites, where many examples were given about problems caused because of individual Facebook personas - failing to get a job because of a Facebook persona that has been seen by the employer - and the manipulation of those personas by friends who have been given passwords.

Certain online behaviours can affect your offline identity and we need to be more aware of what our online identities say about us.

This links to the need for developing a public awareness campaign and also to the creation of a new set of metaphors and visualisations of the online environment as a place, a tool and a communication channel.

Throughout the roundtable session there were regular references to some of the more alarming aspects of the Internet relating to the manipulation and exploitation of young people. The general view of the group on this topic was that a concerted effort must be made to stop this sort of activity at all costs. Yet it was accepted that grooming is not unique to the Internet, nor indeed was it developed there. As in any other community, there will be crime, there will be unscrupulous people, and there will be evil.

So, in closing, if there were a mantra to emerge from the Safer Internet Day session in Newcastle it would be a blend of virtual and physical common sense:

"DON'T DO ANYTHING ONLINE THAT YOU WOULD NOT DO FACE-TO-FACE. AND ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE LOCK BUTTONS."

Conclusions and suggestions

The task set for the Newcastle Safer Internet Day roundtable was to try to identify what could/should be done over the next 12 months to help improve the online safety of Internet users of all ages.

The discussions and key points raised during the Microsoft sponsored Safer Internet Day Roundtable seem to suggest that the main solutions required to improve Internet safety and security lie at a societal level. Central to this is the need for high impact public information – an area in which the UK has historically excelled.

<u>A Public Information Campaign</u>

The need for Internet safety and security campaigns was likened to the need for public health and safety campaigns. Witness the success of other public health campaigns – the relatively recent flu campaign, which has increased the uptake of the flu jab for vulnerable groups, and the anti smoking campaign. A public information campaign around Internet safety could have similar results by raising awareness and reducing the number of people putting themselves at risk.

<u>New Metaphors</u>

A new group could be formed to steer the development of new metaphors for young and old to describe what people are doing online – to move the focus away from the desktop, laptop, tablet and mobile and more on to the environments which exist beyond these devices.

Stories and Information about Information

Another group could also develop data journeys to highlight where your information ends up in the online world. These could form part of the Internet safety campaign.

Intergenerational workshops

The roundtable highlighted the fact that older people are often too scared to do anything on a computer including helpful things like updating software. We also heard that engagement programmes in which young people approach older people have been very successful. This points to the possibility of replicating the Microsoft model of providing safety workshops in their stores and engaging other high street stores to run intergenerational Internet safety workshops – possibly sponsored by a group of IT corporates – using the same template as the Microsoft stores.