

NEWS ALERT: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## EDUCATION IS KEY IN COMBATING THE DANGERS OF THE INTERNET

### New state comparisons into children's internet usage, exposure and safety and parents' monitoring released

A widespread study commissioned by gizmo, Australia's leading home computer support service, has revealed interesting trends relating to the internet usage by children in various states around Australia, and their parents' concerns and monitoring habits.

This study, conducted by Lonergan Research, surveyed more than 1000 Australian parents and their children, with surveys distributed throughout Australia including both capital city and non-capital city areas, demonstrates that while most kids don't understand the dangers, almost all parents do, yet many have not implemented effective safety controls.

gizmo takes this issue so seriously that they have developed a unique tailored service providing specialised in-home service to assist parents in safety-proofing their home computer, while teaching them the mechanisms for monitoring, engaging and educating their child on safe internet practices. Considering almost all parents admit to being concerned about the dangers presented by the internet, gizmo's Kid Safe Online teaches them how to take control of the situation by learning the processes to create a safe environment.

**Victorian children are most likely to engage in illegal activities** on the internet (55% cf. national average 49%). They are also the **most likely in Australia to have tried hiding their internet activities from their parents** (43% cf. national average 38%). Victorian parents therefore have good reason to be the most concerned in Australia – and they are.

**Parents in Victoria are the most likely to have concerns** about their child downloading and sharing files illegally (72% cf. national average 66%), while they are also the most likely to have concerns about compromising the security of data stored on the computer (86% cf. national average 81%).

**Parents in Western Australia are the least likely to have discussed internet safety** with their child (93% cf. national average 97%). Interestingly, they are **also the least likely to believe that the internet is safe** for their child (38% cf. national average 43%).

Western Australian children aged 8-15 are the most likely in Australia to have played MA15+ games (36% cf. national average 29%).

**Children in South Australia are the least likely to think that the internet is safe for them** (76% cf. national average 81%). They are also **the least likely to know how to engage in illegal activities** on the internet (44% cf. national average 49%), and the **least likely to have come into contact with images of naked people** (24% cf. national average 32%) and violent acts (25% cf. national average 29%).

In contrast, children in South Australia are the **most likely to share photos of themselves online** (46% cf. national average 40%).

**South Australian parents are the least likely in Australia to be concerned** about their child downloading and sharing files illegally (60% cf. national average 66%).

**Parents in Queensland are the least likely to have concerns about their child sharing too much information** for potential identity theft (78% cf. national average 82%). Similarly, Queensland parents are also the **least likely to have concerns about compromising the security of data** stored on the computer in relation to their child's internet use (75% cf. national average 81%).

Nationally, the study demonstrated that:

*Almost every parent has strong concerns regarding their child's safety online.  
And rightly so, as 2 in 3 children aged 8-15 years have encountered inappropriate content.  
Yet almost half of parents rarely or never monitor their child online.*

**Ben Ashton, CEO for gizmo says:**

“gizmo conducted this research to show how important it is to educate parents on safe internet use for their kids, including establishing an open dialogue with them and putting safety control features in place. There are a variety of these provided for Microsoft and Apple computers and parents should ensure these are properly installed and considered a standard safety measure. Educating parents on their kids' safe internet usage and installing parental controls should be as commonplace as putting them in the appropriate child restraint in the car or teaching them about stranger danger or looking both ways when crossing the road.”

**Peter Coroneos, Chief Executive for the Internet Industry Association (IIA), Australia's national industry body for internet business in Australia, says:**

“The IIA is a firm advocate of parents being empowered to take personal responsibility for providing a safe environment for children in the home. This new research presented by gizmo, the most comprehensive study to have been undertaken in Australia on this topic in many years, confirms that a good percentage of children are more technologically savvy than their parents and demonstrates how widely children use the internet. It reinforces how important it is to educate parents about internet usage and safety so that they feel confident in speaking to their kids and putting the necessary measures in place to protect them.”

For more information on gizmo's Kid Safe Online service go to [www.gizmo.com.au](http://www.gizmo.com.au) or call 1300 275 449.

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