

Thank you, Stephen, for that kind introduction. Congratulations to you and the Board of FOSI on another great conference.

I am honored to be here today. We are proud to work with FOSI and proud to have the opportunity to work together with all of you on the vitally important issues of online safety and digital literacy.

These issues have been a top priority for my industry for quite some time . . . and with good reason. The companies we represent at NCTA provide broadband Internet service to more than 40 million homes and businesses in the U.S. Cable systems today offer access to broadband to 92 percent of American households. And all of the companies that comprise NCTA – from system operators, to cable programming services, to the vendor and manufacturer community – provide web-based content.

So cable’s involvement in efforts to bolster family online safety is driven in part by our commitment to help consumers and our customers *better understand* how to make use of our products and services in a safe and secure manner. We very much support the proposition that improving digital literacy is an important step toward helping all Americans become full-fledged “digital citizens.”

As you already know, both our cable operators and our cable programmers have been committed to providing parents and caregivers with parental controls and resources to help guide their children. Our companies, our industry’s education foundation – Cable in the Classroom – and NCTA itself, have been working with some of the best partners in the field, including iKeepSafe, Common Sense Media, and of course, FOSI, to develop the most appropriate tools with the widest reach possible.

In 2007, we acknowledged the importance of this work through our launch of an industry-wide effort, the original *PointSmart.ClickSafe.* initiative.

That project represented a commitment by all NCTA member companies to provide appropriate tools and information for customers about how to help keep their families safe online. We built a resource-rich website, [PointSmartClickSafe.org](http://PointSmartClickSafe.org). And we launched a public service campaign to promote awareness of online safety. We’ll show you some highlights of that public service advertising in just a few minutes.

To be sure, providing tools and resources to parents is necessary and important. It’s what parents want, and it is a critical component of our commitment. But we recognized that we could do more.

So, last year we hosted – in partnership with iKeepSafe, Common Sense Media, and Cable in the Classroom – a summit meeting of stakeholders, where the topic of *best practices* for online safety and digital literacy was discussed from a variety of perspectives.

We invited and heard from representatives from those in the Internet industry, parents groups, child advocates, health researchers, and educators, among many others. We found that each group had a unique and important perspective on online safety. And from this was formed the *PointSmart.ClickSafe*. Blue Ribbon Task Force.

Unlike other groups and task forces that previously had been formed, the *PointSmart.ClickSafe*. group worked to keep its discussions narrowly focused on best practice recommendations for companies in the Internet industry.

After a year of discussion, and even some heated debate, the task force found common ground on a number of truly useful best practices for keeping kids safe online. That common ground and those best practice recommendations are contained in the task force report, which was released on Capitol Hill this past July.

The *PointSmart* blue ribbon group chose – wisely, I think – to look at interaction with the Internet from a child’s perspective.

First, the report offers recommendations for best practices that address the time even before a child goes online. Specifically, what education about the Internet would be useful to children and parents? What specific information about Internet practices should be readily available to users? And, what mechanisms should be in place to govern Internet activities such as user registration and the creation of user profiles?

Next, the report offers best practice recommendations for the period of time when a child actually is online.

And finally, the report looks at what best practices should be in place to address those instances in which something goes wrong when a child is online, or when a child encounters adversity in cyberspace.

The blue ribbon group also agreed that there’s no silver bullet for online safety – no one technology or single piece of information that’s a cure-all. So the task force recommends a layered approach, encompassing technology, information and education of parents and children. Each on its own isn’t sufficient, and all are necessary.

Finally, the report recognizes that when it comes to online safety, approaches to date often have been fragmented, with pressure applied to the local community or local schools, where limited resources exist. So the *PointSmart* report makes recommendations to policymakers as well, such as:

- Designating a lead federal agency to deal with the issue;

- Considering development of a set of national goals for online safety; and

Supporting digital literacy and online safety through increased federal funding for curriculum development, professional development for teachers, and public awareness campaigns.

Today, I want to emphasize this last point. We need to make this a national priority. The problem we have is that every issue in Washington, D.C. is promoted as the most important national priority. And in most cases, whether it is warranted or not, the way you “prove” something is important is to promote more federal spending.

But I believe the case can be made that more good could be achieved in this instance than many other proposals out there.

Some in Congress already have recognized that objective. For instance, we’ve commended Senator Menendez and Representative Wasserman Schultz for legislation they’ve introduced to create competitive grants in support of training programs for teachers and education programs for children, in the areas of online safety and digital literacy.

Early this year, as federal agencies were poised to create rules for spending stimulus dollars under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we joined with others to call for a robust and specific goal of promoting digital media literacy.

In order to achieve that goal, we encouraged Congress to direct that \$500 million of the more than \$7 billion in broadband stimulus funding be spent over two years to create and execute a national Digital Media Literacy Program. We proposed a competitive grants initiative and asserted it could create new jobs, help schools teach kids to be safe and smart in the digital world, and would help bridge the digital divide between schools that are able to offer digital literacy training and those that are not.

While no action yet has been taken to create a Digital Media Literacy program like the one we proposed, it is clear there are some Members of Congress and policy makers among the federal agencies who are open to the idea. With a substantial portion of stimulus funding yet to be allocated...and with the broadband adoption rate continuing to increase from coast to coast...*we must vigorously renew this call to acknowledge as a national priority digital literacy for children and families.*

So, today, I would renew our proposal. Congress should direct that the agencies managing distribution of broadband stimulus funding allocate \$500 million during the next two years for the development of digital media education tools. These tools should be based primarily on the Internet. They should be designed for use by teachers, students and parents from pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. This funding should also address technology staffing and provide support particularly for underserved school districts, as well as professional development for teachers to improve their proficiency in media technology and basic tenets of digital learning.

It is also important that all of our schools have access to robust Internet services. Our industry is strongly supportive of efforts to further increase broadband adoption rates, not just among households, but among schools, businesses, and other institutions. The FCC recently decided to take a look at the issue of “broadband needs in education,” to see how we might improve broadband adoption among schools. We believe this, too, is an important priority, and I’d encourage you to look at that FCC proceeding to see if you might contribute any comments or suggestions to it.

Before we hear from the next panel, which will be moderated by our good friend and partner Alan Simpson of Common Sense Media, I want to leave you with two more thoughts.

First, the work of the *PointSmart* task force recognizes that it really does take all of us, with our different perspectives but working in concert, to effect significant change.

And second, as the report and the subject of this conference underscore, it’s not only about child online safety anymore. It’s really about helping our children and families become digitally literate. It’s about creating an environment with appropriate tools and resources so that all Internet users can have a truly productive online experience.

Clearly this conference was designed to help achieve those objectives. That’s why the cable industry is so proud to join you in this endeavor.

Thanks for having me here this morning, and best wishes for success with the remainder of the conference.