



MEDIA RELEASE

DIGITAL TASMANIA SPEAKS OUT AGAINST INTERNET FILTERING

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Hobart, TAS, 12 December 2008 – John Dalton of Digital Tasmania will be speaking at a rally against the Rudd Government's proposed mandatory internet filtering scheme to be held on Saturday the 13th of December from 11:00am to 1:30pm on the lawns of Parliament House.

Mr Dalton, a systems administrator and former ISP employee, said that the group had concerns related primarily to technical aspects of the proposed filter's implementation and the negative effects on consumers.

"Our key concerns relate to the ineffectiveness of the filtering technology being proposed and the way it will negatively affect broadband speeds nationwide. The cost to ISPs of this scheme is going to be passed onto the consumer, directly leading to an increased cost in broadband access."

Mr Dalton said that it was likely that methods to circumvent mandatory filtering would circulate on the internet within hours of the "Great Australian Firewall" becoming a reality.

"This government is entering into a technological arms race that it can never win, and the casualties of this war will be everyday Australians who will be hit in the hip pocket for a scheme they don't need and didn't ask for."

"The same encryption technology that allows us to securely use Internet banking and credit cards online can also be used to set up a Virtual Private Network into which the filters cannot see. Unless the Federal government is considering undermining the entire Internet economy in Australia, they cannot stop determined people from avoiding the filter."

Mr Dalton said the alternative to broad based mandatory Internet filtering was simple.

"Internet filtering needs to start and end in the home. What is being proposed by the Federal government is a technological solution to a social problem, but technology cannot and should not replace the role of parents in protecting their children online."

Mr Dalton indicated that the Federal government through their Net Alert scheme has for several years made available home based filtering software free of charge for Australian families and that scheme should continue.

"Parents can already get free filters. If there were a real demand for ISPs to provide a 'clean feed' then surely one of the major ISPs in this country would offer a product to meet this need? The fact that nobody offers such a service is very telling."

"We call on Senator Conroy to reconsider wasting taxpayer money on this type of filtering scheme when tests conducted here in Tasmania have shown that it is simply not effective and in fact is detrimental to the consumer's broadband connection."

"We don't deny that illegal material exists on the Internet - who could? While turning a collective blind eye may allow us all to sleep well at night thinking our children are safe, it doesn't solve these crimes that have already been committed. Let's instead put this money into the Federal Police efforts to identify and prosecute those who produce and distribute illegal material, both in Australia and overseas."

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For the full text of John Dalton's speech, please visit <http://www.digitaltasmania.org/news-media/speeches> after the rally.

About Digital Tasmania:

Digital Tasmania is a consumer action group, created to give a voice to the views and needs of Tasmanian consumers in the digital age. More information can be found on the group's website, <http://www.digitaltasmania.org/>

For further comment or to schedule an interview, contact Digital Tasmania on 0432 870 881, or email media@digitaltasmania.org