

I · C · S · T · I · S

THE INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE FOR THE SUPERVISION OF
STANDARDS OF TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICES

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FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Cllr E Goodman
Chair
Campaign Against Censorship
23 Budgen Drive
Redhill
Surrey RH1 2QB

10 July 1996

Dear Cllr Goodman

Re: "Watchdog's blitz on the Internet porn merchants" (*Daily Mail*, June 13 1996)

Thank you for your letter of 14 June 1996 regarding the above article.

A letter was sent to Paul Dacre, the editor of the *Daily Mail*, on June 14 1996 with regard to the inaccuracies contained in this article, together with a copy of the relevant press release on which the article was based. A copy of this press release is attached, as is a copy of our recently published 1995 Activity Report.

It was pointed out to Mr Dacre that the correspondent seemed to have confused two distinct areas of our work - namely international adult lines and bulletin board/Internet services accessed on premium rate dialling codes - to produce an article which misrepresented ICSTIS' role.

ICSTIS' powers apply only to premium rate telephone services, including those service providers who offer premium rate adult services. We do not, however, have any powers of regulation over other, non-premium rate providers of "porn". The *Daily Mail*'s correspondent was incorrect, therefore, in claiming that ICSTIS has "launched a major international drive to stamp out porn on the Internet".

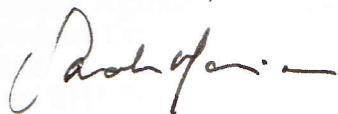
With regard to your point about access to sexually explicit material, ICSTIS' policies are not designed to prevent adults from accessing such material. (Indeed, the Committee wants to maintain the availability of premium rate adult lines for those consumers wishing to access such services.) However, certain measures have been introduced to improve levels of consumer protection, especially as regards people who might see and be affected by the promotions for such material, but who have no wish to actually access it.

The ICSTIS Code of Practice states that "promotions for services of a sexual nature must not appear in generally available publications (other than "top shelf publications") or in any

publication which is unsolicited". This measure has been successful in addressing public concern about the ease with which vulnerable user groups, such as children, could access adult services and has helped to remove from public view those advertisements widely regarded as offensive.

ICSTIS remains vigilant in applying its Code of Practice to services purchased via premium rate - whether delivered by telephone, personal computer or fax - and where the provider has a contract for a service which obliges them to comply with the terms of the ICSTIS Code of Practice.

Yours sincerely



SARAH HARRISON
Director