



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Deputy Minister Pinky Kekana

FPB Keynote: Safer Internet Day SID

09 February 2021 | 10am

Good morning

- Programme Director
- Film and Publication Board Acting CEO, Ms. Abongile Mashele
- Ms. Yolanda Mlonzi, Google South Africa
- Ms. Anna Collard, KnowBe4
- Parents, educators, students, and children
- And to everyone who uses the internet

Today is the 18th edition of International Safer Internet Day, observed annually on the 2nd Tuesday of February. What started out as an initiative of the EU Safe-Borders project in 2004, has today grown beyond its traditional geographic zone and is now celebrated in approximately 170 countries worldwide, including many across the African continent.

In South Africa, the Film & Publications Board, as a member of INHOPE, is the South African Safer Internet Day (SID) Committee member that leads SID activities in our country. The activities are hosted in partnership with stakeholders in the child protection and cyber safety space.

Through FPB, South Africa is part of the global conversation and reviews on policy, as well as being able to discuss major areas of impact, as it relates to internet safety, in South Africa.

From cyberbullying, to social networking, to digital identity - each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns. With 2020's global pandemic making us more reliant on the internet, the theme of "Together for a better internet", is more meaningful than ever, as we have seen such a massive increase in cyberbullying, online violence, trolling and more.

Observing this day, calls for all stakeholders to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, especially for children and young people. The theme encourages everyone to join the movement, to participate, and to make the most of the internet's potential to bring people together, which was its original purpose. With a global, community-led approach, Safer Internet Day encourages everyone to come together and play their part.

To observe Safer Internet Day, this year, the FPB asked themselves the question, "What are we doing to support the SID 2021 slogan of "Together for a better internet"?"

The FPB has a mandated responsibility to protect South Africa's children from exposure to harmful content, thus the organisation needs to play a leading role in creating awareness around the dangers of the internet, as much as it is incumbent on the organisation to use the digital space as an empowerment tool.

For this year's virtual event, the FPB wanted to give it an edutainment edge, with the intention of mimicking an "Expo" format, but all online. By collaborating with various stakeholders in child protection and cyber safety space, they have a full day planned where all stakeholders are allocated an information stand for learners to interact with representatives from various organisations, on the work they do to protect citizens online.

Being a NETIZEN or citizen of the net, comes with many responsibilities and compliance that most people don't pay much attention to. We take lessons and get a license to drive a car, yet we navigate the internet every single day, and probably don't know half of how it works, and what the many risks are. I urge you to give yourselves lessons on digital literacy and digital ethics, as well as what laws apply to the use of the internet and how those laws are applied.

Not only should you know the basics, but you should be educating your children as well – there are many courses that the FPB offers, as well as other entities of government.

As parents, it is one thing to put up walls and gates, live in gated estates and boomed areas to keep our families safe, and it's another to hand a device that has zero security on it, and we wonder how people hacked our emails, social media, bank accounts, and even worse, stalking, harassing and bullying.

Educate yourself. Today is definitely a day to do just that, as it's all about safety on the internet.

To Abongile Mashele and the whole FPB team, I want to thank you for all the great work you are doing to keep South Africa's children, as safe as possible, and for doing all you can to educate children, parents, and teachers.

On that note I want to wish you all the best with the rest of the activities today - make it meaningful and impactful, and let's always put the online safety of South Africans, first.