Norway to block pornography sites
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NORWEGIAN police and a state-controlled telecommunications group has announced a joint project to block access to child pornography websites on the internet. Starting next month, the Telenor ASA group will filter hundreds of sites that the national crime police, Kripos, deem to contain child pornography.

Anyone in Norway attempting to access such illegal sites will instead see a page informing them about the filter, and a web link to Kripos.

"This is crime prevention at its best," said Kripos head Arne Huuse. "The filter will stop a considerable number of potential users, users that we must assume to exist in Telenor's customer base, which consists of nearly 1 million internet customers."

Esben Tuman Johnsen, a Telenor spokesman said it believes it is the first company to apply such a filter for its users.

In some countries, including the United States, such filters have met legal obstacles because of criticism that they censor non-pornographic sites.

Mr Johnsen said the issue of censorship was not a problem, because if any user objects, the filter will be removed at their request, giving them access to the website.

Such projects also have the blessing of Norwegian Justice Minister Odd Einar Doerum, who last year urged law enforcement and internet providers to work together in campaigns against child pornography.

Possession of child pornography carries a prison term of up to two years under Norwegian law.

"Child pornography on the internet is a serious problem, and we want to make a contribution to the fight against it," said Berit Kjoell, director of consumer markets for Telenor.

Telenor said it is not interested in making a profit from the filter, which will be free. It also said it hopes to share the technology with other internet providers at no cost.

Mr Huuse, of the police, said his agency would help spread the word in other countries about the offer.

"If police authorities and internet suppliers in other countries follow our example, we could succeed in destroying part of the client base of a cynical, international industry which exposes children to violence and sexual assault with the aim of making money," he said.

Telenor stressed that it would not log nor keep other records of those who attempt to access blocked sites, and that it would only block sites listed by the police.

Agence France-Presse

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