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Commerce to Host July 14 Forum on Child-Friendly Web Sites

Forum Will Showcase Development of New .kids.us Web Sites

The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will host a half-day forum from 9:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. on Wednesday, July 14, 2004 to discuss the development of the .kids.us Internet domain, which is home to a number of child-friendly Web sites. The forum will detail the current uses and applications of the domain and the development of attractive future content for the space.

"Kids.us holds great promise as a place where parents and children can turn for content that is free from inappropriate material," said Acting Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information Michael D. Gallagher. "This forum will bring together a number of those involved in the development of child-friendly content to showcase the potential of those Web sites for parents and educators and what is being done to develop content that appeals to kids."

"The .kids.us Internet site is a place where kids can play and learn online in a safe environment and where parents won't have to worry about the material their children are viewing," said Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), chief sponsor of the Dot Kids Implementation and Efficiency Act. "I look forward to participating in this forum along with my colleagues and encourage those organizations that have developed interesting children's content on their Web sites to consider registering a .kids.us name and posting child friendly content to the sites."

"The .kids.us domain provides a cybersafe playground for kids, one where parents across the country can feel comfortable sending their kids to play and learn online," said Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. "The overarching goals for this important initiative can be furthered by showcasing the exciting content already available in .kids.us for children while encouraging additional businesses and others to put similar educational, child-friendly content in the .kids.us area themselves. I believe this forum will help further this key objective."

"There are now some terrific sites, and I commend the pioneers of .kids.us for their commitment to the education, safety, and well-being of our nation's youth," said Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet. "Some said that it could not be done, but we have proven the naysayers wrong. The forum in July will further the advancement and development of a safe haven on the Internet, a place where parents can send

their kids and have the peace of mind that they will be safe from inappropriate material and online predators.”

Members of Congress, online child-safety organizations, Congressional staff, community groups, Internet filtering and blocking technology providers, and hardware and software developers have been invited to participate in the forum and its two panel discussions. Panelists also will include representatives from current and prospective providers of content within the .kids.us domain.

The first panel will address the current state of .kids.us by discussing a number of issues such as the current uses of the Web site by parents and educators; future sites; and how filtering and blocking technology can be used in conjunction with .kids.us. The second panel will address the process of developing a site in the .kids.us domain, as well as lessons learned from current content providers, challenges for future content providers, and what resources exist to assist would-be content providers. More information is available on the NTIA Web site at www.ntia.doc.gov.

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