

State Legislation: Suggested Act 4

Act 4: The STATE “GeekWise”¹ Educational Program.

- a. **Educational Program.** The STATE Public Service Commission (Commission)² shall take reasonable steps to create an Educational Program.³
- b. **Coordination.** The Commission may cooperate with and coordinate the Educational Program with other state and federal educational programs and systems, such as the DARE program or the public schools systems. The Commission may also provide grants to private organizations or any other action to establish the Educational Program.
- c. **Curriculum for Educational Programs.**
 - i. **Committee on Curriculum.** An Educational Program shall consist of curriculum determined by a Curriculum Committee. The Commission has discretion to determine the members of the Curriculum Committee but should consider including individuals with a range of viewpoints, who represent:
 1. Local governments;
 2. The STATE Coalition Against Pornography;⁴
 3. Healthcare professionals;
 4. Academics;
 5. School boards, principals and teachers;
 6. Parents and PTA groups; and
 7. Local volunteer anti-pornography organizations.⁵
 - d. **Recommended Topics.** The Curriculum Committee shall have discretion in determining what material to cover in the curriculum created for the Educational Program. Among the topics that the Curriculum Committee should consider are:
 - i. The magnitude of the Internet pornography problem;
 - ii. Risks of early exposure to pornography;
 - iii. Tactics employed by pornographers to attract children to their sites;
 - iv. Basic technological know-how (including information designed to bridge the gap between parents’ and children’s technological abilities);
 - v. Protection products, such as

- (A) filters, including 1) information on purchasing, installing, and maintaining filters, and 2) the limitations on the effectiveness of filters; and
 - (B) wireless devices, including 1) the risks of unauthorized access to wireless networks, and 2) the methods for securing a wireless network.
 - vi. Safe Internet practices (including information directing parents and teachers to safe-Internet resources);
 - vii. The significance of “Community Conscious” designations and the STATE Community Conscious Internet Provider Seal;
 - viii. The terms of various STATE and federal statutes relevant to Internet pornography, including penalties for violating such statutes and ways to assist with enforcement; and
 - ix. Any other information that the Curriculum Committee determines should be taught as part of the Educational Program.
- e. The Education Program may include both traditional and digital class room instruction, media presentations, advertising, and other methods of information dissemination.

Purpose. Clearly, education must be part of any effective solution to a social problem. Small children and teens desperately need understanding of the risks of pornography exposure and skills for how to avoid it. Some of this is being taught in schools and many good resources are available through the federal government and on various organizations’ web pages. Thus, although the targeted groups could be from grade school through adults, in our view the most important audience is parents and teachers. The technology know-how gap is so enormous that many parents and teachers don’t yet realize there is a problem with the proliferation of Internet pornography and the levels of children’s access. Voters, policy makers, and service organizations won’t step in and demand change until they understand what is at stake. And, ultimately, no matter how many strong anti-pornography laws are enacted, citizens will still need to be vigilant.

The DARE program in Utah could serve as a model for how school-based programs could operate. Other media efforts in Utah, such as the recent “Don’t DIS-ability” and “Tear off the labels,” in addition to other state and federal measures, such as anti-smoking media campaigns, could serve as media models for state efforts to educate adults about the potentially harmful effects of internet pornography on minors, adults, and society.

Footnotes:

1. Hopefully, someone will come up with some better catchy titles.
2. Or other entity chosen by the state.
3. Of course, each state could name the Educational Program whatever it likes.
4. Or other public organization charged with addressing pornography issues.
5. Such as Utah’s Communities for Decency and CP80.