

Mobile service to protect children

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BRISBANE: Children will be better protected from cyber bullies and strangers following the Australian launch of a new service that enables parents to monitor their child's mobile phone usage.

Introduced in the United States in 2007, My Mobile Watchdog gives parents the ability to monitor their children's mobile phone usage and alerts them to instances of unsafe or unwanted mobile phone activity. This unique service allows parents' access to call logs and complete text and picture messages as well as the content of all videos sent and received via their child's mobile phone.

Geoff Sondergeld, director of My Mobile Watchdog distributor Device Connections, said despite children being the fastest growing market for mobile phones in Australia, until now parents had no way to monitor their children's mobile phone usage.

"More than 22 per cent of girls and 15 per cent of boys aged between 8 and 11 in Australia own a mobile phone and that figure looks set to increase as children are becoming increasingly reliant upon them as a social tool," Mr. Sondergeld said. "Mobile phones are no longer used for just text message and phone calls, but most also have internet capabilities so many children currently have unmonitored internet access which is a major concern."

"Additionally, cyber bullying has become a major problem in Australia, with harassment via mobile phones, the internet, SMS, chat rooms and social media websites like MySpace and Facebook on the rise."

Recent media reports have drawn a link between cyber bullying and youth violence, with half of all girls aged 12 to 15 said to have been victims of cyber bullies.

Mr Sondergeld said the My Mobile Watchdog service sends regular alerts to the user that their parents are monitoring their phone. "My Mobile Watchdog is innovative software and is about increasing children's safety and fostering better communication between parents and their children in a society where mobile phones are becoming an essential social tool for our children."

"In much the same way that desktop monitoring software protects children, My Mobile Watchdog enables parents to monitor their children's mobile phone usage, including internet activities, therefore allowing parents to better safeguard their children."

Parents in the US have utilised My Mobile Watchdog to monitor their children's mobile phone usage, with feedback revealing it has improved relationships between parents and their children.

"I would encourage parents to become better aware of their child's mobile phone usage as mobile phones are here to stay as are a new generation of safety concerns," he said.

For more information about My Mobile Watchdog or to purchase this important monitoring technology please visit <http://www.mymobilewatchdog.com.au>.