



News Release

TRA Bahrain leads the Region on Protecting the Users of the Internet

TRA announces Bahrain Campaign for Online Safety Conference

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain - Tuesday March 30, 2010

Under the patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Atiyatallah Al Khalifa, Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Minister responsible for the Telecommunications sector, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of the Kingdom of Bahrain in partnership with the Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI), will be holding the Gulf's first online safety conference from the 26th to the 28th of April, 2010 at the Ritz Carlton hotel, Kingdom of Bahrain.

The internet has become an essential part of 21 century life; we shop, talk and live our lives in a virtual world. Social Networking sites like "Facebook" and "Twitter" are bringing users together from across the globe, bringing the young closer to their friends and allowing users to share experiences with friends they might only if ever, meet once or twice in a life time.

There is no longer any difference between mobile phones, laptops, PDAs or PCs, it's the same internet and the same tools are accessible to everyone all the time.

Children take photos with phones and seamlessly share those photos with their networks of friends across the globe. The internet does not recognise borders, frontiers, gender or race. It offers a high speed super highway that permits communication across continents in seconds, allows us to buy products from places tens of thousands of kilometres away from us, it lets us manage our finances, and it looks after our children and keeps them quiet for hours. In fact, it enables us to do anything at anytime to or with anyone.

Just like real life the internet has a dark side, a very dark side where criminally bad people set traps to ensnare their pray, to capitalise on the vulnerable, to steal the innocence and to rob the unprepared. They create software which is designed to destroy our data, or steal our most private secrets. They pretend to be our friends and offer us unimaginable wealth to persuade us to give them everything we have or they befriend our children to exploit their naivety and take their innocence.

TRA has decided that this needs to change, so in April TRA in partnership with the FOSI will be hosting a two days conference to start creating a national consensus for online safety, to raise awareness of the issues and start helping those involved in the internet in the Kingdom of Bahrain aware of the risks and what needs to be done to protect the kingdom's citizens, both young and old.

Policy makers, law makers and enforcers, schools, government, service providers from across the GCC will be invited to hear first hand testimonies from their counterparts from across the world. To

learn from the sometimes painful lessons experienced and help Bahrain realise its ambition of becoming the ICT leader of the GCC community.

Dr. Mohammed Al Amer TRA's Chairman said "We are not looking to reinvent the wheel as these initiatives are active in Europe and the US; we just need to make sure that where relevant these systems and processes are implemented here to protect all internet users."

Dr. Al Amer went on to say "The objectives of the conference are to raise the awareness of the real and perceived dangers of online activities, to empower the Kingdom's ICT providers, regulator, leaders and legislators with the tools and information required to create a National Consensus for Online Safety, and to share the lessons and experiences of key decision makers in the same sectors globally with those in the Kingdom."

Nick Truman, TRA's Internet Safety Advisor said, "At the closing of the conference on the 28th April we will be asking the Kingdom's Internet Service Providers to sign Memorandum of Understanding that will facilitate the implementation of the conferences recommendations and foster a new secured era in the ICT in Bahrain."

More information about the conference can be found on TRA website at www.tra.org.bh/onlinesafety

About TRA

Since its establishment in 2002 the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Kingdom of Bahrain (TRA) has been working with government, consumers, operators and investors to develop the Kingdom of Bahrain into the region's most modern communications hub and to facilitate the growth of the market. As an exemplary Regulator for the region, TRA independently carries out its duties in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner. More information about TRA can be viewed at www.tra.org.bh

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