

Media release

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Partnership with Google offers every grade 6 student a Digital Licence to hone their online skills

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation today launched the eSmart Digital Licence, a new initiative to help protect children from online risks such as cyberbullying and accessing inappropriate content.

The Digital Licence will be made available to every grade 6 student in Australia in 2015, thanks to a grant of over \$1.2 million from Google.

The online challenge uses quizzes, videos and games to prepare Australian children (aged 10 and over) to be smart, safe and responsible digital citizens.

Children will complete eight learning modules which evaluate their comprehension of key technology and cybersafety topics, and equip them with the knowledge and skills they require to learn, play and socialise online. Each module takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Dr Judith Slocombe, CEO of The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, said the Digital Licence will not only teach core digital skills, but will promote conversations about online safety between young people and their parents, carers and teachers.

"It is so important for adults to have regular conversations about what's going on in their child's online world," she said.

"We know that almost nine in every ten 10-11 year olds say parents are their first port of call when they have an online safety issue. However, many parents feel ill-equipped to advise their children and say they need support."

"By taking the quiz together, parents are prompted to begin conversations with children about what they are doing online, which is one of the most effective ways to keep children safe. At the same time, parents will have peace of mind through knowing their children are learning the core skills to manage risks and keep themselves safe online."

Maile Carnegie, Managing Director, Google Australia and New Zealand, said Google had committed to make the Digital Licence available to every grade 6 student in Australia, as it is such an important transitional stage in the way that children engage online.

"The web is a great place for kids to learn, be creative and stay connected. It's important that we invest in giving young Australians the skills they need to stay safe and smart online. The eSmart Digital Licence is an innovative way of bringing critical online safety skills to families and young people."

Paul Fletcher MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications, congratulated The Alannah and Madeline Foundation and Google for the initiative.

"With one in five young Australians found to be victims of cyberbullying each year, we must do more to keep children safe online," Mr Fletcher said.

"The Abbott Government has introduced the Enhancing Online Safety for Children Bill into Parliament, and has committed \$10 million in the Budget towards tackling cyberbullying. Non-Government Organisations and technology companies play a very important role in this area, and I commend The Alannah and Foundation and Google for their work on the Digital Licence – an initiative which will help keep kids safe online."

With Google's financial support, the eSmart Digital Licence is available free to the almost 300,000 grade 6 students in Australia in 2015, via their classroom teacher. Teachers can sign up to access the free Digital Licences for their students at www.digitalllicence.com.au.

The Alannah and Madeline Foundation aims to provide scholarships to as many disadvantaged and vulnerable children as possible throughout 2015. Information on how you can make a donation to support a child to undertake the Digital Licence is available at www.digitalllicence.com.

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For further information, please contact:

Sarah Conly 0421 242 506 or sarah.conly@amf.org.au
Sam Patterson 0402 266 709 or sam.patterson@amf.org.au

About The Alannah and Madeline Foundation: The Alannah and Madeline Foundation is a national charity protecting children from violence and its devastating impact. The Foundation was established in memory of Alannah and Madeline Mikac, aged 6 and 3, who were tragically killed with their mother and 32 others at Port Arthur, Tasmania on 28 April 1996. The Foundation cares for children who have experienced or witnessed violence, and runs cultural change programs that help to prevent violence in the lives of children. For more information visit: www.amf.org.au or call 1300 720 747.

Background information

1. What is the eSmart Digital Licence?

The eSmart Digital Licence is an online challenge which uses quizzes, videos and games to prepare Australian children (aged ten and over) to be smart, safe and responsible digital citizens. It consists of eight learning modules which evaluate comprehension of key technology and cybersafety topics and equip children with the important knowledge and skills they require to learn, play and socialise online. Each module takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. In order to pass and be awarded a Digital Licence, your child must complete all eight modules, which can be re-taken like a game, for fun and for learning.

2. Why did you create the eSmart Digital Licence?

Over the past two decades, our lives have been transformed by a digital revolution, opening up a world of possibilities. Children are the greatest beneficiaries of the digital era and are learning to navigate the online world at a younger and younger age. However, navigating this world is not without risk. When interacting in an online environment, children need to be educated on what to do if they are exposed to age-inappropriate content or encounter cyberbullying, or the threat of privacy breaches. The Digital Licence was developed by a team of educators, psychologists, designers and web developers, who consulted with children and parents to ensure it will promote the cybersafety and digital literacy skills of all young Australians.

3. What are the topics covered by the quizzes in the Digital Licence?

- Digital Devices
- Protecting Privacy
- Searching and Researching
- Creating and Sharing
- Social Networking and Gaming
- Communicating Safely Online
- Friends and Strangers
- Managing Money and Online Credits

4. Is the Licence only relevant to students in Grade 6?

The Digital Licence has been developed with children aged 10 years and over in mind. However, the issues are applicable to anyone who interacts in a digital world and during the testing phase we had very positive feedback from parents, teachers and other adults who learned a lot about cybersafety from completing the Licence. We are developing other products for older and younger age groups. Register online at www.digitalllicence.com to be kept up to date when new content is available.

5. How much will the Digital Licence cost?

The eSmart Digital Licence will retail for \$30. Parents and teachers can sign up for a Digital Licence by visiting www.digitalllicence.com. The Alannah and Madeline Foundation aims to provide scholarships to as many disadvantaged and vulnerable children as possible.

The Digital Licence will be made available to every grade 6 child in Australia in 2015 for free (via their classroom teacher), thanks to a grant of over \$1.2 million from Google. Teachers can sign up to access the free Digital Licences for their students at www.digitalllicence.com.