

# **Voluntary Code for Self-regulation of Mobile Content In Singapore**

**13<sup>th</sup> April 2010**



Jointly developed by

M1 Limited, Singapore Telecom Mobile Pte Ltd and StarHub Mobile Pte Ltd

## **Introduction**

This voluntary code is jointly developed by M1, SingTel Mobile and StarHub Mobile (referred to collectively in this Code as ‘the mobile operators’), identifies content that are not appropriate to offer to mobile subscribers in Singapore. These guidelines form a voluntary code of practice for mobile content in Singapore.

The proposal of having a voluntary code was first raised at the Industry Sub-Committee of the National Internet Advisory Committee (NIAC). Specifically, it seeks to address the growing concerns that with the introduction of 3G services, which offer high bandwidth mobile data transfer capability, minors who use 3G services may be easily exposed to undesirable content from the Internet.

Responding to these concerns, the mobile operators jointly developed this voluntary code to assure the public of their commitment and support for protecting minors from accessing undesirable content from the Internet via mobile phones.

This Code should be viewed within the context of applicable Singapore laws that govern the use of media content. The mobile operators believe that self-regulation can be effective in Singapore primarily due to the existence of applicable laws, which effectively restrict undesirable content in general.

This Code establishes a common framework for the mobile operators in their development and marketing of mobile content. The mobile operators shall be free to adopt their own commercial and branding positions for their portfolio of content and content-related services, within the framework of the Code.

However, the Code does not cover subscriber-to-subscriber communications. Similarly, it does not cover any other content that mobile subscribers may independently obtain on their mobile phones through contracts with other parties. Lastly, mobile operators do not have control over the content available from the World Wide Web and as such, this Code will not apply to such content.

## **The Code**

### **1 Prohibited Content**

1.1 Prohibited content are content which are objectionable on the grounds of public interest, public morality, public order, public security, national harmony, or are otherwise prohibited by applicable Singapore laws.

1.2 In particular, the following types of content are prohibited (“prohibited content”):

- Content that depicts nudity or genitalia in a manner calculated to titillate;
- Content that promotes sexual violence or sexual activity involving coercion or non-consent of any kind;
- Content that depicts a person or persons clearly engaged in explicit sexual activity;
- Content that depicts a person who is, or appears to be, under 16 years of age in sexual activity, in a sexually provocative manner or in any other offensive manner;
- Content that advocates homosexuality or lesbianism, or depicts or promotes incest, paedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia;
- Content that depicts detailed or relished acts of extreme violence or cruelty;
- Content that glorifies incites or endorses ethnic, racial or religious hatred, strife or intolerance.

### **2 Images**

2.1 The list of prohibited content above applies.

2.2 As a general guide, mobile operators should only offer images which are consistent with what is available to the general public on an unrestricted/general release basis through other mainstream media, such as print publications, television and cinema, which are also subject to government licensing.

### **3 Games**

3.1 For mobile games, mobile operators must adhere to MDA's censorship guidelines for video games / interactive software, which stipulate that these should not contain scenes of excessive violence, sex, nudity, drug abuse, or denigrate any race, religion or affect Singapore's national interest and should not be obscene or lewd.

3.2 Games that contain the following are considered objectionable and are not permitted:

- a) Games containing the theme of or scenes depicting torture; sexual violence; excessive sexual innuendo without amounting to sexual acts (e.g. stripping); sexual activity or innuendo involving children; drug taking; self-mutilation; defiling of religious objects; and abusive acts towards specific groups (e.g. abuse of children, mugging of elderly, deliberate running over of pedestrians, abuse of animals etc).
- b) Games that glorify or condone racial or religious hatred, terrorism, violent crimes and other criminal activities.
- c) Games containing obscene/vulgar language.
- d) Games containing excessive violence themes or scenes.

3.3 Specifically, the following is not permitted:

#### **I Sex and Nudity**

Sex and nudity refers to depictions of sexual acts and naked human bodies.

Sexual acts include:

- a) Passionate kissing
- b) Sexual foreplay
- c) Sexually ecstatic facial expressions

#### **II Theme**

In addition to the above, the overall theme of the video game should not be objectionable on moral, social or religious grounds.

## **4 Chat Services**

- 4.1 Mobile operators who contract with their mobile subscribers to offer chat services on their mobile service(s) should take the necessary effort to provide, wherever reasonable and possible, appropriate warning message(s) to the mobile subscribers in order to highlight the nature of the content that could be transmitted. An example is “*The following chat service may be unsuitable for young persons and children*”.

## **5 Third Party Content and Subscriber-to-Subscriber Communication**

- 5.1 This Code applies to content that mobile subscribers contract with mobile providers for and content provided by third party content operators that have a contractual arrangement with the mobile operators.
- 5.2 The mobile operators have in place a “notify and take-down” process to handle any instance of breach by these content operators.
- 5.3 This Code will not apply to subscriber-to-subscriber communication or any other content that mobile subscribers may independently obtain on their mobile phones through contracts with parties other than their mobile providers.

## **6 Internet Content**

- 6.1 The mobile operators do not have control over the content available from the World Wide Web. It is also not economically feasible to provide a system-based filtering option for individual users.
- 6.2 To address the concerns of parents of minor mobile users, the mobile operators offer the option of disabling GPRS access for the minor’s account.

As such, the minor will not be able to access the Internet via the mobile phone, thus eliminating the possibility of undesirable content reaching them.

## **7 Information and Advice**

- 7.1 Information on the Code will be publicly available on the respective websites of the mobile operators.

## **8 Implementation and Administration**

- 8.1 The mobile operators will assume responsibility for the implementation and administration of the Code. The Code will be reviewed annually and changes made whenever it is deemed necessary and appropriate for the Code to remain relevant to the fundamental objective.
- 8.2 Each mobile operator will, ensure that the terms of this Code are incorporated in their agreements with their respective content partners.

## **9 Enforcement Mechanism**

- 9.1 The mobile operators will form a mobile content Compliance Review Committee (“CRC”) to promote a united effort against prohibited content in the mobile industry. The CRC will meet quarterly to exchange information on non-compliant, errant content providers. The CRC will also ensure that the framework for industry cooperation continues to be effective and relevant.
- 9.2 All first level complaints or feedback provided by any member of the public shall be channeled to the respective mobile operators via the following e-mail addresses (published on the respective operators’ website) for resolution:

M1 <http://csfeedback.m1.com.sg/>  
SingTelMobile [http://home.singtel.com/customer\\_service/cust\\_serv\\_emailus.asp#feedback](http://home.singtel.com/customer_service/cust_serv_emailus.asp#feedback)  
StarHub Mobile [customerservice@starhub.com](mailto:customerservice@starhub.com)