



Ministerial Statement  
To the House of Assembly

By

**Dr. The Hon. Grant Gibbons JP, MP**  
Minister of Education and Economic Development

**Cyber Safety**  
**March 21, 2014**

---

**Mr. Speaker,** today I am pleased to announce that we are launching our revised website dedicated to cyber safety, called Cybertips.bm. This website is part of a broader online safety initiative known as the Cybertips programme. While the website has been undergoing reconstruction we have continued to offer other cyber safety activities. This programme provides useful information to Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools, as well as Private Schools, Parent Teacher Associations and Youth Organizations across the Island, and includes materials for schools and advertisements. We will now offer information to Seniors and on topics such as fraud.

**Mr. Speaker,** Honourable Members of the House will recall that in May of 2008, criminal code amendments were passed that promoted online safety and included anti-child pornography and internet luring provisions. In relationship to this legislative change, the Department of E-Commerce, in partnership with the telecommunications carriers and the Bermuda Police Service, launched an

extensive campaign to provide information and resources about internet safety to parents, children and the public.

Recently, this legislation has been successful in prosecuting a predator who was preying on girls online. The mandate of the Cybertips initiative is to arm the local community with the tools and resources necessary in the fight for cybersafety.

**Mr. Speaker,** Information, communications and technology continue to be in high demand, at levels never before experienced and for all age groups. We know that technology does provide beneficial outcomes to users of all ages, whether it be related to education, work, socializing or exposure to new ideas and concepts. However, with increased access to information and knowledge, we also need to make a conscious effort to keep information access channels safe for our citizens, and in particular, our children.

**Mr. Speaker,** Internet predators, bullying and stalking are threats to our children and their safety. We are keenly aware that Bermuda is not immune. Many of the Department of E-Commerce talks given to students, teachers and PTA meetings are requested due to incidences of cyber-bullying in our schools. Cyber-bullying involves using the internet, a mobile number, or other technology like a camera to hurt or embarrass someone. Unlike bullying in real life, cyber-bullying can make the person being bullied feel that they cannot escape since it can happen anywhere and at any time. To help combat cyber-bullying, the new Cybertips website has a lot of information for both parents and kids. Cyber-bullying is already an offence in Bermuda, as it is captured under the Electronic Communications Act, section 68.

It is an offense to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety through a public electronic communications service. The Cybertips initiative also provides students, their teachers and parents information on the consequences of cyber-bullying and advice on what to do in such situations.

**Mr. Speaker,** the Department of E-Commerce and the Bermuda Police Service representatives visit schools, to raise awareness of issues in our schools and community and share strategies to help them deal with or avoid such situations. Additionally, these conversations result in real information on what our children, teachers and parents are facing on a daily basis. This allows us to source tools and information that they can use to practice safe use of technology and the Internet. Relationships such as the one developed with Microsoft Corporation are important to give us access to the most up to date materials and tools.

**Mr. Speaker,** The Cybertips initiative, while geared primarily towards the safety of children online, is also an important resource for our community at large. The re-launched website can be found at [www.cybertips.bm](http://www.cybertips.bm) and it has been re-designed to be a catalyst for open discussion between parents and children, deliver tips to our seniors as they increase their use of various technologies, provide access to classroom resources for teachers, and provide the community information on issues such as fraud and hot topics such as cyber-bullying.

**Mr. Speaker,** Our Cybertips.bm website pulls content from a variety of leading sources in order to ensure that the content is the most current and up to date. To achieve this we work with partners. We recently re-signed an agreement with Microsoft Corporation, a relationship that began as changes were made to the legislation, and we've renewed that agreement every two years. In 2010, the

Cybertips.bm website, featuring Cyber Cyd, our website mascot, provided a link for children to Hector's World .... a digital citizenship resource for children 2 to 9 years of age. Hector's World originates out of New Zealand and has a wealth of resources for young children and their teachers and parents, with a particular focus on online safety. Since then we have also gained permission to use resources and link to sites such as Netsmartz and Common Sense Media.

**Mr. Speaker,** the resources mentioned are used for the Cybertips website, presentations and in the development of articles that we develop for local publications. We also leverage information provided by the Bermuda Police Service and other local partners in order to localize the messages. The new Cybertips website has sections for kids, tweens, teens, parents, teachers and seniors. It also allows you to search by issues and topics such as fraud and even gangs. Sexual predators, gangs and other criminally-minded individuals are using social networking for a variety of purposes. Cybertips.bm provides information for parents and youth. The website also includes a reporting link to report abuse.

**Mr. Speaker,** the Cybertips website is an educational tool that helps build the skills and values children will need for life online and can begin whenever a child first starts using technology. The benefits also extend to their teachers and their parents. It was also important to broaden this education to include seniors and the wider community, who can also be affected by issues such as fraud. The Department of E-Commerce has been doing a great job promoting education to minimize the risks and maximize the benefits online technologies have to offer the people of Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,** the Cybertips initiative must continue to be proactive in raising awareness, and encouraging Internet users to be safe and smart in the online environment. If our citizens know the dangers, they can work to avoid them.

Additionally, if they know that particular behaviors can get them in severe trouble, they can make the decision not to participate in such behaviors. In promoting cyber-safety, Cybertips must continue to make people aware that they must act in ways that will ultimately protect them against the risks that come with Internet use.

**Mr. Speaker,** I would like to now recognize one of the main local partners of the Cybertips initiative and that is the Bermuda Police Service, and in particular, the Vulnerable Persons Unit, the Financial Crime Unit and the Community Action Team. The BPS not only works in the schools providing cyber-safety information, but also assists the Cybertips teams with their presentations. They have also contributed the local content on sexual exploitation of our young people, gangs, fraud, etc. We would like to thank them for their significant dedication and collaboration to help us achieve our goal of promoting good cyber-safety practices in Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,** I would also like to thank our other local partners: the Department of Education, the Department of Child and Family Services, Consumer Affairs, Crime Stoppers, SCARS, the Family Centre, Bermuda Parent Magazine, the Coalition for the Protection of Children, the Centre Against Abuse and Logic Communications for providing hosting for Cybertips.bm.

**Mr. Speaker,** this Government is committed to promoting safety and security in the use of technology in our lives. In a time when all of Bermuda and indeed, the

world, is accessible to a child and adults from their phones, homes, work and through many devices, Cybertips is more important than ever.

Thank you.