

Press Release

Microsoft's *Play Smart, Play Safe Index* Reveals European Parents in Control of Children's Gaming Habits

Parents welcome Family Timer feature to manage children's interactive gaming experience

Brussels, Belgium—December 4, 2007 --- Parents throughout Europe overwhelmingly view themselves as the most influential source to decide whether a video game is suitable or not for their children according to the *Play Smart, Play Safe Index*, a new survey sponsored by Microsoft.

The independent survey of 4,000 parents in the UK, France, Germany and Italy, gauged attitudes on a host of issues about video gaming. The poll is part of Microsoft's *Play Smart, Play Safe* parent education programme to empower and inform parents and other stakeholders on how to best deliver a fun, safe and balanced gaming experience for children of all ages.

The poll reveals that the majority of parents (66%) look to themselves when deciding on which games are most suitable for their children. They also consider their children (21%) influential in deciding the types of games they play, putting them on par with video game manufacturers (21%) and the government (18%).

“As a leader in interactive entertainment, we have a responsibility to provide both the information and the technology parents need to best deliver a safe gaming experience for their families,” said Chris Lewis, Vice President, Microsoft EMEA. “In line with the research results, Microsoft is making available today a new Family Timer feature – already built into Windows Vista -- that will enable parents for the first time to set the appropriate amount of gaming and entertainment time on the Xbox 360 – on a daily or weekly basis.”

Parents stated that the content of games and the amount of time playing games are important issues. In fact, seven out of ten parents (71%) expressed concern over the content of video games, with the highest level of concern being in Italy (83%) and the UK (76%).

A majority of parents (60%) agree however that they are sufficiently informed about the built-in functions on game consoles or operating systems to control their child's access,

But when it comes to the video gaming time of their children, only half feel in control of such time. Parents had strong opinions about the amount of time their children spent playing games suggesting one hour of video games per day as the most common prescription. To assist in monitoring the gaming time of their children, the poll revealed three-quarters of parents would welcome a built-in console or software function to monitor the time their children spent playing video games.

In terms of access to games the research revealed “most video games are played in a controllable environment with the majority of children playing by themselves (64%). Video games also provide a great social platform for many children with nearly a third playing with friends (32%) and family (32%).

“It’s a fantastic time to be a kid in the digital age, but it’s also time for all of us to come together as responsible parents and business leaders to ensure our children are safe as well as challenged and entertained,” continued Lewis.. “Microsoft is committed to educating parents about the tools and resources available to help them manage their children’s interactive entertainment experiences on both Xbox 360 and Windows Vista. While the research tells us there is strong awareness of the parental controls and video game age ratings, we need to make it easier for parents to adopt and use these tools and to build further awareness through partnerships with key governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as with the gaming and retail industries. This is the primary goal of our Play Smart, Play Safe initiative in Europe.”

Microsoft’s Commitment to Families Is Ongoing

Xbox was the first video game and entertainment system with built-in parental controls for both online and offline use. Known as Family Settings, these controls allow parents and caregivers to set guidelines for which games work for them, make informed

choices about content, and decide with whom their children can play online. Earlier this year, Windows Vista launched with a similar set of parental controls that allows parents to guide children's game playing, Web browsing and overall computer use. These controls help parents determine which games their children can play, which programs they can use, which Web sites they can visit — and when.

With more than 13 million Xbox 360 consoles sold, the company's drive to empower parents is a core Microsoft responsibility.

About Xbox 360

Xbox 360 is a superior video game and entertainment system delivering great games, unique entertainment features and a unified online gaming network that revolve around gamers. Xbox 360 will have a portfolio of more than 300 games and will be available in nearly 40 countries by the end of 2007. More information can be found online at <http://www.xbox.com/xbox360>.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

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