

POLICY REVIEW

Policy aims at protecting youth online

Document stresses need to educate minors on proper internet use, curb cyberbullying

By YANG ZEKUN

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China has recently issued a new guideline focusing on improving the internet civilization and enhancing the protection of young people in cyberspace.

The Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, China's Cabinet, jointly issued the document in September, asking authorities to strengthen ideological guidance, cultural fostering, moral construction, codes of conduct, ecological governance and the development of cyberspace society.

It called for enhancing the behavioral code in cyberspace, fostering internet ethics and rules of conduct in line with socialist core values.

The guideline encouraged all regions and departments to create and publicize internet civilization standards in accordance with their characteristics, regulate language in cyberspace and incorporate the requirements of internet civilization construction into the norms of internet industry management.

The protection of minors was highlighted in the guideline, which stated that the government, schools, families and society will work together to educate youth so that they can use the internet properly and be well-prepared for risks online. Authorities will also step up their crackdown on cyberbullying and better protect minors' rights and interests, according to the guideline.

In addition, efforts were urged to boost young people's internet literacy by improving an education mechanism that combines efforts from the government, school, family and society.

Relevant authorities should also carefully create cultural content that will attract young people and improve the working mechanism that helps prevent young people from becoming addicted to the internet, it said.

He Junke, first secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China, said the lives of today's youth are deeply intertwined with the internet, and that as youth are the direct beneficiaries of cyberspace civilization, they should be active participants in its development.

"Young people's internet awareness is at a critical period, so we need to shoulder more responsibilities and help guide them to use the internet properly," he said at the first China Internet Civilization Conference that was held last month in Beijing.

"Most of the internet problems that affect young people are caused by practical issues, and the governance of cyberspace is characterized by diversity. Therefore, we need to better care for the youth by helping them tackle practical difficulties, and authorities should cooperate closely to form a joint governance system for the internet civilization," he said.

According to a research report on internet use by minors in China last year, which was issued by the China Internet Network Information Center and the Central Committee of the CYLC in July, the number of



underage internet users in China reached 183 million, and the internet penetration rate among minors was about 95 percent. Furthermore, roughly 83 percent of underage users owned devices that they could use to access the internet.

Among minors online, about 90 percent of them used the internet to study, and nearly 63 percent used it to play games online, according to the report. Also, 27 percent of them believed they had experienced a security breach of some kind in the past six months, including ID or password theft, online fraud and the disclosure of personal information.

Zhang Hui, deputy secretary-general of the China Federation of Internet Societies, said that the

internet has been deeply integrated into various socioeconomic fields and has become an important platform for the people, especially youth, to obtain information, learn knowledge, exchange ideas or enjoy entertainment.

"In recent years, relevant departments have taken effective measures to strengthen the protection of young people in cyberspace and improve laws and regulations, and they have achieved positive results in promoting safe internet access for young people," Zhang said.

"Meanwhile, we should also acknowledge that the dissemination of unhealthy information through the internet still exists, and the phenomenon of personal information leaks,

violent content and cyberbullying also occur from time to time, which infringe on the rights and interests of young people and have a negative impact on their health," he said.

Zhang added that social organizations are responsible for protecting minors online as efforts to do so are becoming increasingly complex. Besides policy guidance and government supervision, the online sector also needs to play a role in such efforts, he said.

Endeavors to protect minors in cyberspace will never end, he said. Prevention is always more important than treatment after problems emerge, and the fostering of young people's internet civilization literacy requires cooperation between the

government, schools, enterprises and society.

Ji Weimin, a professor at the School of Media at the University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said it is important that young people participate in the development of the internet civilization, and therefore, society should improve the construction of network infrastructure so that the youth can better benefit.

"Authorities should strike a balance between development, protection and governance to create a clean, healthy cyber environment," Ji said. "We should also actively use the internet and intelligent platforms to spread socialist core values and encourage minors to play a vital role in building a digital civilization."

Policy Digest

Areas picked for pilot senior medical program

The National Health Commission has selected 15 provinces and municipalities, including Beijing, Tianjin and Shanxi and Jilin provinces to carry out a pilot program to improve medical and nursing services for seniors.

In a notice issued last month, the commission asked these areas to conduct the program for a year to accumulate experiences and practices that other parts of the country can draw on.

By 2023, these experiences and practices should be promoted all across the country to form a sound and diversified medical and nursing service system for older adults, according to the commission.

One of the tasks of the program is to increase the number of medical institutions that provide such services, as well as the number of beds.

Health authorities in the provinces and municipalities should either guide some primary and secondary hospitals to become nursing homes or encourage private enterprises to run large-scale nursing homes or nursing center chains, the commission said, adding that the authorities should also increase the number of professional nurses and carry out training courses for them.

Furthermore, authorities should support medical institutions in providing home-based medical and nursing services for seniors, the commission said.

Tertiary hospitals should focus on handling emergencies for older people, while secondary and primary hospitals should focus on providing regular medical treatment for them, the commission also said.

Energy supply critical to producing fertilizer

The National Development and Reform Commission issued a notice to local authorities as well as State-owned companies — including railway, petroleum, natural gas, electricity and coal enterprises — to guarantee the supply of coal, electricity and natural gas for chemical fertilizer production.

It's important to keep the supply and price of chemical fertilizers stable to promote the development of the country's agriculture and ensure its food security, said the notice released this month.

Coal and natural gas are key raw materials in the production of fertilizer, while electricity is also important, said the notice, adding that local authorities should take effective measures to make sure the demand for coal, electricity and natural gas is met.

They should also guide coal and fertilizer companies to sign medium-to-long-term contracts to ensure supply and strengthen supervision of the implementation of existing contracts, according to the notice.

Coal companies should also increase their supply for fertilizer companies and adhere to the supply contracts they have signed, the notice said.

Authorities should support the signings of such contracts between fertilizer and electricity companies, the notice said, adding that they must not cut electricity supply for fertilizer companies except for circumstances caused by a force majeure.

Authorities should also encourage fertilizer companies to sign supply contracts with natural gas companies, according to the notice. During the heating season, natural gas companies should fulfill their contracts and work on increasing supplies for fertilizer companies under the premise of ensuring adequate supply for the public, the notice said.

If natural gas companies need to reduce their supply for fertilizer companies during peak seasons, they should try their best to scale down the reduction and put more efforts into guaranteeing supplies for key fertilizer companies, it said.

WANG QINGYUN

Courts have stepped up to foster safe environment in cyberspace

By YANG ZEKUN

China has continued to strengthen legal protections for netizens to create a better internet environment and ensure their information is secure.

Information technology, as represented by the internet, has created a large space for people's lives, expanded the scope of national governance and elevated the development of China's rule of law in cyberspace to a new stage, said Yang Linping, vice-president of the Supreme People's Court.

The emergence of new technologies, applications and models also pose greater demands on — and challenges for — those charged with maintaining order in cyberspace and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of all parties, she said.

The Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, China's Cabinet, jointly issued a guideline calling for strengthening the development of internet civilization in September this year, saying that one of the aims is to improve the effectiveness of cyberspace governance, improve cyberspace environment, further promote the rule of law in cyberspace and continuously improve the capability of combating and preventing cybercrimes.

The document asked relevant departments to govern cyberspace in accordance with the law, allowing laws and regulations to play a guaranteed role in maintaining order online and fostering civilized behavior.

It also urged authorities to enhance the enforcement of existing laws,

accelerate the formulation, revision and implementation of related laws and regulations, and enhance the public's legal awareness and rule of law literacy by publicizing activities such as courses.

"The people's courts have cooperated with all relevant departments to form overall plans and make continuous reforms while exploring avenues to strengthen cyberspace protection and promote law-based governance of the internet," Yang said.

To meet the increasing judicial demands, three internet courts were established in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, in 2017 and in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and Beijing in 2018.

The internet courts have taken the lead in online trial operations, promoting the innovative applica-

tion of new technology in the judicial field and opening up a new path for internet judicial development, she said.

The construction of smart courts has also been accelerated. Furthermore, the modernization of the judicial system has been promoted through the use of information technology, and the dispute resolution and litigation service model with Chinese characteristics has been consolidated and expanded, effectively meeting judicial needs, especially amid the COVID-19 epidemic, Yang said.

With the advent of networking, digitalization and the intelligent era, strengthening personal information protection has become part of the social conscience, said Sun Qian, deputy chief prosecutor of the

Supreme People's Procuratorate.

"Yet, we can see that the phenomenon of excessive collection of personal information, compulsory authorization on websites and the embellished product claims are still prominent. Activities such as illegally collecting and using other people's biometric information and crimes targeting personal data security occur at a high frequency, posing serious threats to personal information security," Sun said.

In addition, personal information protection has gone beyond the scope of private rights protection and is more related to national security and public interests. The battle against the collection and processing of personal data in the international community is becoming more complex and fierce, he said.