

## **Panel Summary: Digital Rights of the Child**

*Moderator: Emily Mulder, Family Online Safety Institute*

*Panelists: Stephen Satterfield, Facebook; Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics; Larry Magid, ConnectSafely; Amanda Third, University of Western Sydney*

Overview: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its application to the digital space.

Stephen Satterfield opened the panel by outlining about Facebook's commitment to safety and privacy by design, the fact that social networks provided children with the rights of expression and assembly in the digital landscape was also discussed.

Sonia Livingstone provided background on her work on children's rights in the digital age. She talked about the protections that are offered to children through the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and the fact that there is no corresponding, or indeed overriding, charter for 'parents rights.' Citing filtering as an example, she said that it demonstrated a clash of 2 corresponding rights of children, the right to access to information vs. the right to be protected. Balancing those rights online is vital.

Larry Magid outlined the ConnectSafely position, specifically that rights and safety are part of the same side of the coin; it is impossible to have one without the other. In order to have a 'safe' Internet, and online experience, you need to have an Internet where all parties, including children are empowered.

Finally Amanda Third discussed how the debate around children on the Internet has often become stuck on issues of safety, whereas legislation that is designed to ensure their safety often curbs their freedoms.

The conversation the ensued covered a wide range of issues and how they relate to the concept of 'digital rights.' The fact that the United States has not ratified the UN CRC was discussed, along with whether or not the First Amendment and COPPA provided adequate assurances in its place. Panelists highlighted the importance of local interpretation of the CRC.

The requirement to 'consult' children was outlined and the best ways to achieve that in Government processes was discussed. Additionally, the need to provide diverse, appropriate content to children and the ways to do that formed a large part of the panel.

In closing, Amanda Third stated that for all countries the CRC is an aspirational document towards which they should aim when ensuring children's rights. Ultimately, she said that global online safety discussions had focused so much on 'safety' that children often could not list the benefits and opportunities that being online provides, and that needs to be rebalanced.