

Children's ban can help curb fears over internet addiction



A child plays a mobile game in Dezhou, Shandong Province. [Photo provided to China Daily]

Gaming addiction has become a serious concern for young players and has forced Tencent Holdings Ltd to act.

Children under the age of 12 will only be allowed to play its mega-hit, Honor of Kings, for just one hour each day. They will also be banned from logging on after 9 p.m.

Juveniles between the ages of 12 to 18 will only have access for two hours in a trial program rolled out by Tencent to combat online dependence.

Underage players who exceed their time allowance will automatically be logged off.

“Addiction to anything will bring in problems. We have to do something to prevent teenagers indulging themselves in the game. To protect children is to protect the game,” said Li Min, developer of Honor of Kings.

To enforce the ban, the company will tighten up its realname registration system to prevent young players faking identities.

Back in February, Tencent rolled out a “protection platform” to help parents supervise their children’s game accounts.

Since then, the company has updated the program and connected it to 700,000 accounts, covering 200 games, including Honor of Kings.

Still, Tencent's decision to bring in tighter controls came after the People's Daily criticized the game's negative impact on underage players earlier this week. The newspaper also called on the company to make greater efforts to solve this problem.

The market responded instantly. Tencent's share price dropped 4.13 percent on Tuesday on the Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong.

It was the online company's largest one-day loss this year, paring HK\$109.9 billion (\$14 billion) off its market value.

But Zhang Shule, a senior independent game industry analyst, felt there was no reason for investors to panic.

Claims that these games can be addictive were leveled at Legend in 2004 and World of Warcraft in 2009, he claimed. History, he pointed out, just repeats itself.

"Condemnation is not a solution," Zhang said. "The teenagers who were obsessed with World of Warcraft 10 years ago have not turned out to be a beaten generation.

"Management supervision is indispensable, but it's unnecessary to focus too much on one simple case," he added. "Instead, we should come out with some healthy products that can attract children's attention."

Up to 70 percent of the players on Honor of Kings are office workers, with another 25 percent university students, statistics released by mobile data-service platform TalkingData in Beijing showed.

Juvenile players make up only 3 percent of total users.

Yet Pony Ma, founder of Tencent, has made it clear that the company has a duty to prevent children from getting addicted to the internet.

"Children who are overly obsessed with the internet usually struggle to communicate with their parents," Ma said.

"This ends up leading them to the virtual world ... and turning away from society," he added.

[Cyberspace court points to digital](#)

future

A new cyberspace court, set up to handle the soaring number of online piracy and e-commerce disputes, could act as a high-tech model for China's entire justice system, according to legal experts.

The Supreme People's Court established the court in April to handle five types of cases, mainly related to online shopping and intellectual property rights. It was formally approved by the central government last week.

Located in an existing court building in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, the cyberspace court has accepted about 1,500 cases so far.

"Setting up this type of court was inevitable," said Wu Fei, an attorney at Beijing Zhong Wen Law Firm who specializes in online cases. "The rapid development of the internet has brought lots of legal problems, including copyright infringements and e-commerce disputes."

The move comes after a successful pilot at four Hangzhou courts beginning in 2015. The courts were upgraded with technology that allow plaintiffs to file cases and upload evidence online and even to appear at hearings via video link if they did not live locally.

"This tryout paved the way for the cyberspace court, and it could end up helping create a justice system that harnesses the power of the internet to improve legal efficiency and provide better services," said Wu, who observed a number of trials during the test period.

"I saw judges handle cases entirely online," Wu said. "They received materials from litigants and defendants via the internet and then delivered their verdicts. It makes the process so much easier and saves time."

For many experts, Hangzhou is the ideal setting for the cyberspace court, as it is home to many technology enterprises, including Alibaba, the company behind the Alipay mobile payment system and Taobao online marketplace.

Alibaba alone receives more than 4 million complaints from customers a year, and those that go unresolved often end up in court, according to the Zhejiang High People's Court. Hangzhou courts handled about 10,000 cases related to e-commerce last year, up from only about 600 in 2013.

Attorneys see wider applications for the model being created by the cyberspace court, as does law professor Wang Sixin at Communication University of China.

"It is not just a court for online disputes but a center to study new methods and legal solutions for the digital age," Wang said.

Attorney Wu was enthusiastic. "Maybe one day we will be able to file lawsuits and contact judges on our smartphones, and case hearings can be heard anywhere, anytime," he said.

Others have urged caution, including Zhu Wei, associate professor of law at China University of Political Science and Law, who warned that personal data protection could become an issue.

“Cybersecurity will be a key challenge for the court. When disputes are solved online, we must ensure that the information remains secure,” Zhu said, adding that talent development is also important.

Federica Mogherini, Haute Représentante/Vice-présidente de l’UE,

Federica Mogherini, Haute représentante de l’Union européenne pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité et Vice-présidente de la Commission européenne, a rencontré cet après-midi Léonard She Okitundu, Vice-premier ministre et Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République Démocratique du Congo, afin de discuter de la situation dans le pays et des relations avec l’UE.

Au cours de la discussion, la Haute Représentante/Vice-présidente a tenu à exprimer l’importance attachée au partenariat entre l’UE et la RDC. Elle a insisté sur le fait que la tenue d’élections transparentes et démocratiques dans les plus brefs délais représente le moyen de sortir d’une impasse politique aux graves retombées sécuritaires, économiques et humanitaires. Mme Mogherini a rappelé également l’ouverture de l’UE à discuter des options pour appuyer le processus électoral, à partir de la définition du calendrier électoral.

Mme Mogherini a souligné la nécessité pour la RDC de coopérer pleinement avec les experts des Nations Unies pour enquêter sur les violations graves des droits de l’homme dans le Kasai.

Elle a enfin confirmé que l’UE continuera à apporter un soutien concret aux besoins des populations.

Accountability for the victims of MH17

Australia joins with other members of the MH17 Joint Investigation Team (JIT) – Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine – in announcing its full support for a Dutch national prosecution to pursue those responsible for the downing of Malaysian Airlines MH17 on 17 July 2014 over Eastern Ukraine.

The Australian Government has full confidence in the quality, impartiality and integrity of the Dutch legal system.

We applaud the Netherlands for showing leadership through the JIT process and committing to conduct the prosecutions on behalf of the wider international community.

The JIT's decision to support a Dutch national prosecution will ensure that results from the investigation are taken into account and that justice for the victims and their families, including the 38 people who called Australia home, is delivered.

We remind the international community of UNSC Resolution 2166, which demands that those responsible for downing MH17 are held to account, and that all States cooperate fully with efforts to achieve accountability.

Ahead of the third anniversary, we urge other States to join us in pursuing justice for the 298 passengers and crew who lost their lives in the downing of MH17.

While we cannot take away the grief of those who lost their loved ones because of this atrocious act, we are committed to holding the perpetrators to account and achieving justice for all the victims.

Summary of Conclusions SMSG meeting 27 April 2017

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