SCOTTISH POLICE IN CHILD KIDNAP BREAKTHROUGH
http://uk.missingkids.com

Every year 9,000 children go missing in Scotland.
For the UK as a whole, over 77,000 children go missing every year.

Speed is critical in locating missing and abducted children. Modern technology offers a unique way in which the public, Police, NGOs and the private sector can work together better to protect our children. **On 4 June, 2004, the Scottish Police will celebrate the official launch of their accession to the UK Missing Kids Website, at 11.00 am, Scottish Criminal Record Office, 1 Pacific Quay, Glasgow, Scotland.**

The Missing Kids Website was originally created in the US. It displays photographs and descriptions of missing children. By viewing the Website, the public can help the Police bring these children home safely. The US Website receives 2.8 millions "hits" a day. To date one in every six children featured on this site is recovered as a result of someone recognising that child's photograph and calling authorities with information that has directly led to recovery.

The Missing Kids Website has already been introduced to 14 countries with the help of Computer Associates (CA), who provided the software and technology support. As one of the most effective tools for recovery, these national sites are linked to a global network with easy worldwide access. Over 3,000 children's cases are posted. The technology includes a language translator and age progression techniques that have been successful in identifying and retrieving children years after their disappearance.

It was introduced to England, Wales and Northern Ireland a few years ago, where it is managed by the Police National Missing Persons Bureau, and by a number of hub Police forces. The charity PACT promotes the project for the Police.

Now, for the first time, Scotland's Police will benefit from this state-of-the-art technology, enabling them instantly to transmit photographs of a missing child, not only to other forces around the UK, but also abroad.

"The trauma which families suffer when children go missing is something which no parent wishes to experience. The police are acutely aware of the effects this type of incident can have and therefore the search for and investigation of missing children is given the highest priority. The scale of the problem is perhaps greater than is widely appreciated with up to 9,000 missing children in Scotland each year. While the majority of these children return safely and of their own accord, the enquiries at the early stages involve spreading the information as widely and as quickly as possible. Extending the Missing Kids Website to Scotland will greatly assist the police service in locating some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities and returning them home safely". Richard Gray, Assistant Chief Constable, Strathclyde Police and ACPOS Lead on Missing Persons.

"This work is important in creating an effective safety net for our children. The problem of missing children does not recognise borders - in fact borders can make the problem of finding and recovering missing children more difficult. This project helps the police work across those borders more effectively. PACT is congratulated for extending this initiative into Scotland." Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Richard Bryan, ACPO lead on Missing Persons.

"We would like to congratulate the Scottish police on this launch, as the more police forces that sign up to the 'Missing Kids project, the more effective it will become. We have employed complex technology such as a language translator and age progression techniques that have been successful in identifying and locating children, sometimes years after their disappearance." David Murrell, Manager (Acting), UK & Ireland Public Relations, Computer Associates.

The Website also allows the downloading of posters of missing and abducted children. Thanks to Tesco Plc's generous help, posters are displayed in their stores throughout the country. Each poster features two children and a Police free phone number.

"Tesco are proud to be able to support such an important initiative. It is a tragedy that so many children go missing every year and our staff and customers have really got behind the Missing Kids Posters scheme that is featured in our stores". Catherine Stewart, CSR Communities Manager for Tesco.

Notes to editors:

* Media enquiries to: support@pact-online.org   PACT
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* The UK Missing Kids Website is the only site of this kind which is approved by the Home Office, ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) and ACPO(S) (Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland)

* This state-of-the-art, searchable database can be viewed throughout the world 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

* Each participating country enters its own missing children's cases, track leads, and report progress in a centralised location for law enforcement, families, media, and government agencies to carefully monitor. Only the Police can input information on the UK site

* An additional two countries are developing the Missing Kids Website

* Computer Associates (CA) provides the technical infrastructure, including security, and support for the participating countries. In the UK, CA works to the instructions of PACT and the police forces on ensuring the IT components of the solution are always available

* PACT is a non-profit organisation registered in the UK and the US. Its mission is to fight parental child abduction across borders and help the Police locate and retrieve missing children

* PACT was founded by Lady (Catherine) Meyer, the wife of Sir Christopher Meyer, the British Ambassador to the United States from 1997 to 2003 and now Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission