



Image courtesy of [Wifi-in-Schools-Australia.org](http://www.wifi-in-schools-australia.org)
See animation: <http://www.wifi-in-schools-australia.org/p/videos.html>

Anonymous bogus document surfaces

Harvard medic issues statement backing Irish Doctors' stand on Wi-Fi in classroom

The battle between sound medical practice and commercial interests over the safety of microwave-based communications systems has emerged from the shadows following a safety alert from the Irish Doctors Environmental Association (IDEA) to all school principals in Ireland.

While generally supporting technology in education, the IDEA alert urged the use of “wired technologies for your your own safety and that of your pupils and staff.”

Within days of circulating the IDEA alert, an un-signed circular delivered a counterpunch, claiming non-ionizing radiation in the classroom is completely safe.

The IDEA alert was subsequently supported by Harvard pediatric neurologist and neuroscientist, Dr. Martha Herbert, PhD, MD in a letter specifically directed at a Los Angeles, California school district regarding wireless vs. wired communications in the classroom. In a comment which patently supports IDEA, Dr. Herbert said, “Powerful industrial entities have a vested interest in leading the public to believe that EMF / EMR which we cannot see, taste or touch, is harmless, but this is not true.”

Nearly eight years ago IDEA published a position paper on electromagnetic radiation

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recognizing that electrohypersensitivity (EHS) was increasing and called for establishing the strictest possible safety regulations for the installation of masts and transmitters and for adoption of acceptable levels for potential exposure of individuals to electromagnetic radiation. IDEA's stand on increasing illnesses received lukewarm support from the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland which predicted dramatic increases in cancer in Ireland without explaining the cause the increase. Predictably, the RCPI sought sought government money for the protection of patients under treatment while the Royal College of Surgeons and the Irish Medical Organization have stood mute.

In the interim, IDEA has hosted free-to-the-public lectures by experts in the field such as Prof. Olle Johansson, of the Karolinska Institute, former World Health Organization member Dr. Annie Sasco, of the Victor Segalen II University of Bordeaux, and Dr. Gerd Oberfeld of the Salzberg Department of Health who unanimously support the Precautionary Principle. All three - from different disciplines and countries - agree on the vulnerability of children to wireless technology.

Signed by Dr. Philip Michael, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.C.H., MCIG, of Bandon, Co. Cork, and Dr. Elizabeth Cullen, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., M.Sc., Ph.D, of Co. Kildare, the IDEA alert states:

“The Irish Doctors Environment Association has very serious concerns in relation to the ubiquitous use of Wi-Fi in Irish schools, and alerts you to the warnings of many leading international scientists and medical doctors who believe Wi-Fi is harmful to health, especially children’s health.”

The letter lists an internet website in the U.K., “wifischools.org”, which carries a document called Safe Schools 2012. The document includes reports from six medical organizations, including IDEA - all calling for avoidance of Wi-Fi in the classroom: The Austrian Medical Association, the American Academy of Environmental Medicine, the International Society of Doctors for the Environment, the Interdisciplinary Society for Environmental Medicine and the Swiss Doctors for Environmental Protection.

“Wi-Fi”, claims the IDEA letter, “is an unregulated technology and there is absolutely no evidence that it is safe” and goes on to note that the Precautionary Principal has been adopted by some governments and other agencies internationally as listed by the Cell Phone Task Force based in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

“While we fully support the promotion of technology in education we urge you to use wired technologies for your own safety and that of your pupils and staff.” The doctors end their warning citing the problem which can arise simply by acting with due caution. “The tragedy of avoidable illness,” they claim, “is only superseded by the knowledge that it could have been avoided.”

Bogus document surfaces - more confusion

In sharp contrast to the IDEA warning about microwave safety, refutation of IDEA's warning was circulated three days after the doctors issued their open letter. In a move clearly calculated to confuse school principals nationwide, an unsigned circular was

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distributed identifying a government-supported incubation center and using logos of two Irish Department of Education administrative sections.

In a clear response to the IDEA letter, the bogus circular begins with: “ It has come to our attention that correspondence has (been) issued to all schools with regard to the use of Wi-Fi in schools. In relation to this matter the Department of Education would like to inform you of the up to date position from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), www.environ.ie, who have a specific responsibility in this matter.”

Titled “Technology in Education - Wi-Fi in Schools”, the bogus circular erroneously asserts that there is “no reason” Wi-Fi should not be installed in schools. “THE DECLG sees no reason at this time, based on existing scientific research, why Wi-Fi should not continue to be used in schools. This view is widely shared by, among others, including the UK Health Protection Agency (HPA) <http://www.hpa.org.uk>, and Health Canada, <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>.”

Clarity on the issue of responsibility for the impact of microwaves on the environment has been dramatically shifted to the Irish parliament’s Joint Committee on Health and Children. Last year following a world-wide call for submissions to the Joint Oireachtas (parliament) Committee on the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, under the Chairmanship of Ciaran Lynch, a member of the Labour Party representing Cork South Central, decided in camera that the dangers of electromagnetic radiation belonged more appropriately the the Committee on Health, ignoring submissions from scientific experts and delaying public scrutiny of the issue. Following a re-structuring of his committee in June of 2012, Lynch was reassigned Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform.

The significance of Lynch’s failure to address the issue of microwave radiation rests with his fellow Labour politicians. The Minister for Education and Skills is architect and town planner, Ruairi Quinn, a proponent of microwave technology who was quoted by Breakingnews.ie, saying, "All of our (European Union) classrooms, right across the 27, soon to be 28 member states, have to embrace that technology because the rest of the world is doing so and we have to do so as well. It won't change education per se, but it will change the way in which we do education."

The following day, 16 Feb. 2013, the County Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC) which falls under Quinn’s ministerial remit issued a request for tenders for Wireless Networking Solutions. The VEC is responsible for 26 schools and community colleges including three Colleges of Further Education and four Gaeilcholaistí (which deliver post-primary education through the Irish language), eight Youthreach Centres and four Senior Traveller Training Centres and five Adult Education Services.

The provenance of the suspect circular remains unknown. Three individuals are named at the bottom of the document. When contacted, one of the individuals, a school principal, was astounded to be associated with the document. “I really don’t know where this came from,” said the principal. “It is all cut and paste and worrying that my school notepaper has been used.”

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IDEA holds firm with another voice from Harvard

Dr. Philip Michael, responding to the points raised in the questionable circular, noted that “It is easy to cause confusion by talking about ‘power densities’, ‘SARs’ etc., but a central issue that appears to be ignored is that WiFi signals are at a higher frequency and are therefore considered to be potentially more dangerous.

“Looking at the overall picture,” Michael said, “It is essential to remember that the electromagnetic radiation levels to which we are all exposed is many thousands of times higher than the natural background radiation in which we evolved over millennia, our bodily functions are controlled by electromagnetic signaling particularly the neurological system, many billions of adults and children, born and *in utero*, are exposed to this radiation and if there is even the slightest hint of a problem people should look at it and espouse the Precautionary Principle.”

The week prior to Minister Quinn’s resolve to install Wi-Fi in Irish schools, another doctor, pediatric neurologist and neuroscientist Dr. Martha Herbert from Harvard, raised identical issues to those listed by Dr. Michael.

In a letter to the Los Angeles Unified School District in California, Dr. Herbert repeated the now-recognized fact that children are more vulnerable to the effects of microwave radiation. “There are thousands of papers that have accumulated over decades - and are now accumulating at an accelerating pace, as our ability to measure impacts become more sensitive - that document adverse health and neurological impacts of EMF/RFR. Children are more vulnerable than adults and children with chronic illnesses and/or neurodevelopmental disabilities are even more vulnerable. Elderly or chronically ill adults are more vulnerable than healthy adults.”

Dr. Herbert explained that safety standards for technologies using electromagnetic frequencies were established on thermal effects which are often the first health effect noted by people when living tissue absorbs enough EMF radiation to cause heating. Herbert adds her testimony to a growing chorus of scientists and researchers that there are other biological impacts and that simple concern about thermal / heating effects are “now definitely outdated scientifically”.

With specific regard to children in an educational setting, Herbert said that the new way politicians plan to “do education” is both counterproductive and dangerous. “EMF/RFR from Wi-Fi and cell towers can exert a disorganizing effect on the ability to learn and remember and can also be destabilizing to immune and metabolic function,” she said. “This will make it harder for some children to learn, particularly those who are already having problems in the first place.”

In a plea to protect children which parallels the IDEA letter, Herbert said, “Powerful industrial entities have a vested interest in leading the public to believe that EMR/RFR, which we cannot see, taste or touch, is harmless, but this is not true. Please do the right and precautionary thing for our children.”

Independent from Herbert’s submission, Prof. Johansson writing from Stockholm told the Los Angeles school district, “Many wireless systems are close to beds, kitchens, playrooms, and similar locations, as well as are now introduced into schools and pre-schools. These wireless systems are never off and the exposure is not voluntary. These

wireless systems are being forced on citizens everywhere. Based on this, the inauguration of such wireless systems with grudging and involuntary exposure of millions to billions of human beings to pulsed microwave radiation should immediately be prohibited until 'the red flag' can be hauled down once and for all."

- John Weigel

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