

Annual
Report

2017

Working towards eliminating
Child Sexual Abuse Online

If you see it, report it.



hotline.ie



HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

 Online Report Form www.hotline.ie

 eMail report@headline.ie



Co-financed by the European Union
Connecting Europe Facility

The Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland [ISPAA] is a non-for-profit organisation, co-financed by Internet companies [ISPAA members] and the legal entity delivering the Hotline.ie Service – national reporting mechanism through which Internet users may notify suspected illegal content Online, such as Child Sexual Abuse images/videos, in a secure, anonymous and confidential way.

Curbing the availability and proliferation of Child Sexual Abuse Online, disrupting the cycle of Child Sexual Exploitation and preventing the re-victimisation of children is at the heart of ISPAA's work.

"ISPAA's vision of eliminating Online Child Sexual Abuse Imagery is ambitious and nevertheless challenging but this doesn't stop the Hotline.ie team doing everything they can, every day! Knowing that behind every image/video there is a real child being sexually abused, who may have not been identified and rescued from their abuser, makes the Content Analyst job one of the hardest imaginable jobs in the world. I would also like to thank the public for their vigilance and readiness to report suspect images/videos of children. Please know your report makes a world of difference!"

Ana Niculescu, ISPAA Hotline.ie Manager

FOREWORD MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND EQUALITY



I welcome the publication of the Hotline.ie Annual Report for 2017. I know that Hotline.ie liaises closely with An Garda Síochána in carrying out its very important work. This ongoing contribution to the fight against the scourge of child sexual abuse imagery online is very important and much appreciated.

I note from the statistics in this report that there was an increase in overall number of reports received by Hotline.ie in 2017 as compared with 2016, which was itself a record year. While it is disturbing to see evidence of such crimes, I welcome the fact that such images have been rendered inaccessible and are being dealt with by appropriate law enforcement.

The Government's enhanced legislative provisions to better protect children in the online environment are acknowledged in the report. Hotline.ie continues to have an important role under the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety which the Taoiseach launched in July 2018. The Action Plan sets out specific actions

under five goals and my Department leads on the oversight of Hotline.ie as well as on legislative changes to criminal law, liaison with An Garda Síochána on implementation and enforcement issues and finally on the disbursement of EU funding. I am absolutely committed to ensuring my Department plays its part in tackling these horrific crimes.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland for Hotline.ie. I would also like to thank the team in Hotline.ie for their vital work and to wish them well in their important and valuable work.

**Charlie Flanagan, T.D.,
Minister for Justice and Equality**

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WELCOME FROM ISPAI INTERIM CHAIRPERSON



On behalf of the ISPAI Board and membership I'm pleased to present the 2017 Hotline.ie Annual Report. It is well established that child sexual abuse online is a global problem which warrants national and international cooperation.

I'm proud of the role the Irish internet industry plays in helping to combat the scourge of child sexual abuse online, and deeply grateful to the Hotline.ie staff for the unenviable work they tirelessly do to curb the availability of child sexual abuse imagery [CSAI] and prevent repeat victimisation of children who have suffered from sexual abuse.

In 2017 ISPAI Hotline.ie has reached new records in the sheer volume of public reports investigated - 7,591 - of which 5,789 were child sexual abuse leads. Also, Hotline.ie analysts identified 44% more CSAI than in 2016; encouragingly, for the first time in eight years none of the Hotline.ie confirmed CSAI was traced to the Republic of Ireland. This demonstrates that a robust self-regulation model centred on uninterrupted Hotline service and multi-stakeholder cooperation continues to be an effective solution in combating CSAI online. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all Irish-based service and content providers to join forces in supporting the Hotline.ie service and the CSAI notice and takedown mechanism which ensure CSAI removal at source.

The partnership between Hotline.ie, the internet industry and law enforcement agencies, both nationally and internationally, is of utmost importance in ensuring that child victims can be identified and rescued from abuse, evidence trails preserved for police investigation, as well as combatting CSAI production and distribution. Equally important is the role of the public: should you encounter or suspect CSAI online, please report it to www.hotline.ie - it is secure, anonymous and confidential.

Online safety is an issue which requires all of society to play its part. I welcome the Government's National Action Plan for Online Safety launched by the Taoiseach in July 2018, an important step forward in demonstrating a concerted effort from all Government departments to work together cohesively and in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to ensure maximum impact for online child protection. ISPAI Hotline.ie looks forward to contributing its expertise to the soon to be established National Advisory Council for Online Safety to serve that purpose.

I trust you will find the ISPAI Hotline.ie Annual Report a useful and informative resource, and we look forward to reporting further progress next year.

Paul Cunnane
ISPAI Interim Chairperson

ABOUT & REMIT

ISPAI HOTLINE.IE

The ISPAI Hotline.ie Service provides a national Hotline reporting mechanism where Internet users may report suspected illegal content, especially Child Sexual Abuse images/videos and activities relating to the Sexual Exploitation of Children in a secure, anonymous and confidential way.

We work to have every reported occurrence of Child Sexual Abuse Imagery removed from the Internet irrespective of where in the world it may be hosted.

Child Sexual Abuse images and videos are documented evidence of a crime being committed – a child being sexually exploited and often actually raped. The collaborative work of ISPAI Hotline.ie and particularly An Garda Síochána and international Law Enforcement Agencies such as INTERPOL focuses on child victim identification so they may be rescued from the abuse and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice.

Knowing their abuse has been captured and shared Online can haunt a victim for life. We help victims by eliminating Child Sexual Abuse images/videos from the Internet and thus preventing the perpetuation of the abuse and re-victimisation.

Internet companies are being asked to demonstrate their commitment and leadership by creating a Safer Online environment. ISPAI members practice zero tolerance to Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation, and by working hand in hand with us, they make sure their networks and systems are safe, reduce the availability of this content on the Internet and make it harder for criminals to share, host, and sell images of children being sexually abused.

We are committed as ever to continuously innovating our techniques, developing our technology, implementing and evolving measures through cooperation of Government, An Gardaí and Internet companies [ISPAI members] to deter individuals from misusing the Irish Internet services for illegal purposes and remain at the forefront of the fight against Child Sexual Abuse Online.

ISPAI Hotline.ie was awarded the 2018 INHOPE Quality Assurance Certification for excellent service and standards of operation having been assessed by an independent international expert. ISPAI Hotline.ie was one of the first Hotlines to ever be awarded the INHOPE Quality Assurance Certification in April 2015.

Remit

- ✓ The ISPAI Hotline.ie operations and procedures are agreed and approved by the Department of Justice and Equality and An Garda Síochána.
- ✓ Hotline.ie only deals with reports referring to suspected illegal content encountered on the Internet; while urgent situations where persons may be in immediate danger should always be reported directly to An Garda Síochána.
- ✓ Hotline.ie will take action only when the reported content is assessed by our expert Content Analysts as probably illegal under Irish law - Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 [as amended by the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017] or Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989.
- ✓ Every verified Child Sexual Abuse image/video or activities relating to Child Sexual Exploitation, inclusive of Hotline.ie determination, all technical details and intelligence gathered during the assessment process is notified directly to the Paedophile Investigation Unit of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau. The decision to initiate a criminal investigation is a matter for Law Enforcement alone.
- ✓ When content is hosted in Ireland, Hotline.ie issues qualified Notice for Takedown to the appropriate ISP/hosting provider, which is subsequently responsible for the removal of the specified content from their systems while preserving the forensic evidence for Law Enforcement investigation.
- ✓ Hotline.ie also takes reports on: child grooming activities, child sex tourism, incitement to hatred, racism and xenophobia, and financial scams which purport to be Irish financial services, or appear to have originated in Ireland or have Irish contact details.

WORDS MATTER, A TERMINOLOGY NOTE

Content in violation of Irish law is referred to as **illegal content**; it is clearly and objectively defined in legislation. **Controversial or offensive content** is for the most part defined subjectively, and while it is not illegal under Irish law, it is deemed to be controversial or offensive according to individual, community, or cultural standards. This is commonly referred to as **harmful content** and may include: legal adult pornographic content; violence; age inappropriate advertising aimed at minors; and other content that may be objectionable on social, religious, cultural, or other grounds.

Illegal content like Child Sexual Abuse **should not be confused** with legal content which may be controversial, offensive or used in an illicit way [e.g. sale of counterfeited goods, Copyright infringement, etc.].

In Ireland, the sexual abuse, sexual coercion and sexual exploitation of children are offences under the *Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 [as amended by the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017]*.

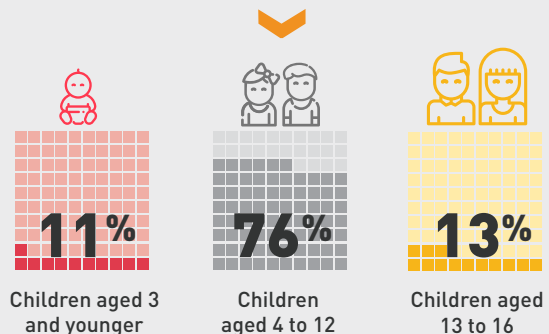
The Act defines “child” as “a person under the age of 18 years”. **Engaging a child below the age of 18 years in sexual activities is prohibited under all circumstances and any presumed “consent” from a child to sexual exploitative or abusive acts is null and void.**

The 2017 legislative amendments were designed to further enhance the protection of children and are in alignment with a number of international legal instruments such as the EU Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography.

For example the range of offences associated with Child Pornography is widened to ensure that anyone who participates in any way in the creation, distribution, viewing or sharing of such abhorrent material cannot escape the law. Additionally *“inviting, inducing, counselling, inciting or coercing a child to observe, engage or participate in any sexual, indecent or obscene act”* also constitutes an offence.

While the legal term in Ireland is **“Child Pornography”**, to accurately reflect the gravity and very nature of the content as well as challenge any notion that such acts might be carried out pursuant to the consent of the child, we will use hereinafter the term **Child Sexual Abuse Imagery [CSAI]**.

52% CSAI ASSESSED IN 2017 SHOWED SEXUAL ACTIVITY BETWEEN ADULTS AND CHILDREN INCLUDING RAPE AND SEXUAL TORTURE



Online Child Sexual Abuse may be a borderless crime, due to the very nature of the digital world, but it is not a faceless crime and there is nothing virtual about the child's suffering.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMBATING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE



➤ INDUSTRY SELF-REGULATORY MODEL FOR COMBATTING ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

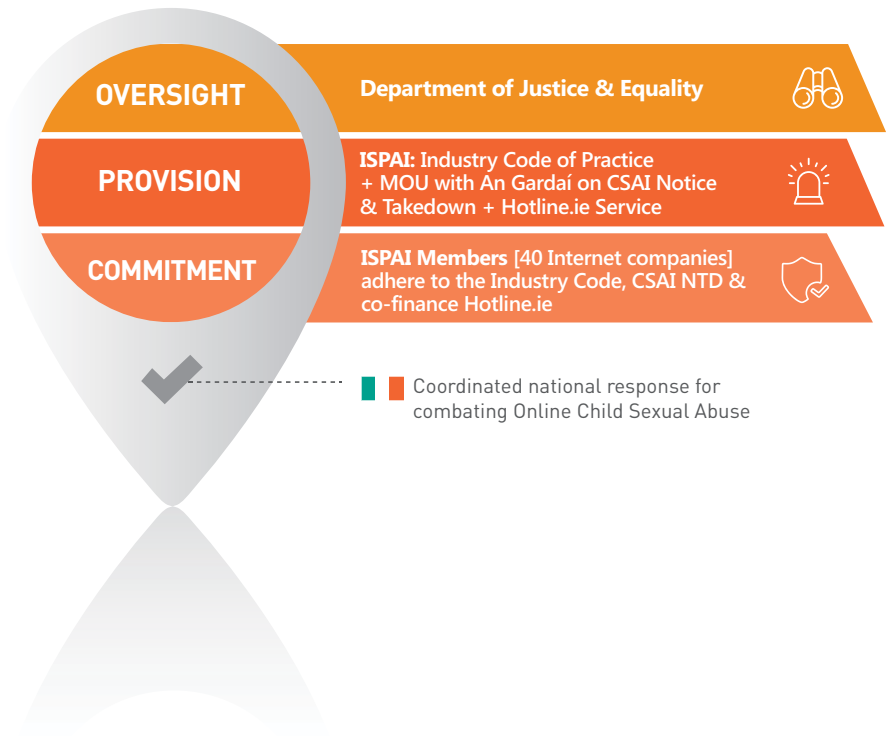
In Ireland, the Internet Service Providers [ISPs] have been operating within a Industry self-regulatory framework in respect to the illegal use of the Internet, agreed and overseen by Government since 1998.

Key to Government's agreement in allowing the Industry self-regulatory framework to be adopted was ISPs [represented by ISPAI] commitment to [1] the development of an Industry Code of Practice and Ethics; and [2] the establishment of an Internet Hotline Service where the public could report suspected illegal content Online, such as Child Sexual Abuse Imagery [CSAI] or activities relating to the Sexual Exploitation of Children.

The Department of Justice and Equality, Office for Internet Safety has primary responsibility to monitor and ensure appropriate operation of the Industry Code, Hotline.ie Service and wider self-regulatory system.

Since inception, ISPAI has been managing the Industry Code of Practice and Ethics [centred on the Hotline.ie Service for reporting and dealing with illegal content Online], recognised as a role model in Europe.

ISPAI members' allegiance to the Industry Code means consumers can view the ISPAI and Hotline.ie logos on the member's websites - a mark of commitment to responsible Internet business practice and Online Child Protection. The Code applies uniformly to all ISPAI members.



What does the Industry Code actually do?

- › Provisions for the Notice and Takedown mechanism – the process through which Child Sexual Abuse images/videos are removed from the Internet, while preserving the forensic evidence for Law Enforcement investigation.
- › Mandates member Internet companies to maintain efficient and effective standards of co-operation with Hotline.ie Service and comply with takedown notice by Hotline.ie / An Gardaí.
- › Mandates participating Internet companies to ensure that their services and promotional materials will not contain material that is illegal, misleading, likely to incite violence or cruelty, racial hatred, prejudice, discrimination, etc.
- › Mandates the development of acceptable use policies (AUPs) for participating Internet companies to clearly set out guidelines for customers/users; for example on the misuse of service to create, host, transmit material which is unlawful, libellous, abusive, offensive, vulgar, obscene etc.
- › Supports end-user empowerment policies.
- › Mandates member companies to use their best endeavours to adopt Industry best practice in respect of Online Safety & Security; and provide their users and customers with information, guidance, or by making available technical solutions to protect themselves and their devices Online.

Simultaneously we need to acknowledge there is no technological silver bullet solution to the illegal and harmful use of the Internet, and that greater Government regulatory intervention won't make these problems disappear.

Due to the global nature of the Internet and underlying packet-based communication mechanism, any attempt to regulate the flow of content on the Internet at a national level would be immensely expensive, detrimental to the performance of the network, easily circumvented [one can simply obtain Internet access in a jurisdiction that is not regulated] and even potentially contravene the democratic rights and freedoms, rendering such regulation impractical if not technologically unfeasible.

The Internet's capacity to facilitate the storage and transfer of billions of files, to host communities of like-minded Internet users, and to allow both on an international scale; additionally, technological change continuing apace, make Online Safety a matter of public interest and policy where cybercrime, legislation, corporate social responsibility and child protection intersect.

Therefore, an effective and efficient response must continue to be underpinned by a collaborative effort where Government, Law Enforcement, Industry, NGOs and everyone in society have a role to play. This has been further acknowledged and reinforced through the Government's first National Action Plan for Online Safety launched by the Taoiseach in July 2018.

“For a Wireless Internet Services Provider like Aptus, ISPAI offer great services like maintaining the Industry Code of Practice, but by far the most valuable one is the Hotline.ie Service in tackling the distribution of Child Sexual Abuse Imagery (CSAI). Aptus believe having a dedicated, skilled, well trained shared resource supported by the Industry to do this difficult job is an effective way of tackling CSAI Online.”

Fergal Kearney, Managing Director, Aptus Broadband

➤ THE IRISH SAFER INTERNET CENTRE [SIC]

The Irish SIC is coordinated by the Department of Justice and Equality, Office for Internet Safety. It is a partnership of four organisations:

1. Professional Development Service for Teachers, Department of Education and Skills – providing Webwise, the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Hub;
2. Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children [ISPCC] – providing Childline, 24 hours free confidential Helpline service for all children up to 18 years;
3. National Parents Council Primary [NPC] - providing Helpline service for parents and guardians; and
4. Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland [ISPAI] – providing the Hotline.ie Service.

The shared mission is to make the Internet a safer and more positive environment for children and young people.

Since 2008 the partnership has been appointed by the European Commission as the Safer Internet Centre for Ireland and is one of 30 SICs in Europe.

“The most effective way we can address Online Safety is through a coordinated approach. Our aim at Webwise is to empower young people to become safe and responsible users of the Internet. We do this through the creation of educational resources and awareness-raising. Of equal importance is the work of our SIC partners, who provide a diverse mix of services to support young people directly, assist parents, while also providing secure reporting mechanisms to combat criminal activity Online. This coordinated approach is recognised as an effective way of tackling sensitive and emerging Online issues at both National and European level. The new Be in Ctrl educational resource is testament to national collaborative effort to Online Safety.”

Jane McGarrigle, Project Officer Webwise
- PDST Technology in Education



Be in Ctrl is an educational resource addressing the topic of Online Sexual Coercion and Extortion of children by adults, behaviour which can also exist in a peers’ environment. It focuses on educating young people on appropriate Online behaviour and developing a culture of reporting concerns while fostering empathy, respect and resilience. It was created by our SIC partner Webwise in partnership with An Garda Síochána and launched on Safer Internet Day 2018. Be in Ctrl is available in digital format at <https://www.webwise.ie/beinctrl/>

➤ WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT & THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF 1 REPORT TO HOTLINE.IE

24/7 ubiquitous connection has brought immeasurable benefits and the many positive aspects of technology and the Internet must not be overshadowed by nefarious activities of a minority of [mis]users. As with just about everything that has ever been invented, there will always be ones to misuse technology and the Internet for criminal purposes, in this case for the production, sharing, distribution and even commercialisation of Child Sexual Abuse.

Child Sexual Abuse is a transnational crime taking place both Offline and Online. It is worth noting that Online Child Sexual Abuse is not a new and distinct form of sexual abuse, but rather “new” manifestation facilitated by the availability and fast paced technological change – for example acts of Child Sexual Abuse being photographed or video recorded, uploaded and made available on the Internet.

In addition worrying trends such as self-produced sexual images of children and young people create a new challenge as these can and will be misappropriated by paedophiles or a prerequisite for i.e. “sextortion” [the act of sexual extortion by blackmailing someone with publicising existing images unless additional images are produced and shared] or peer-to-peer abuse.

It has become apparent to Internet Hotlines worldwide that over the years certain websites solely dedicated to sharing CSAI operate collectively, moving together across hosting providers in different countries and advertising their content across various platforms. More so the child victim may be sexually abused in one country,

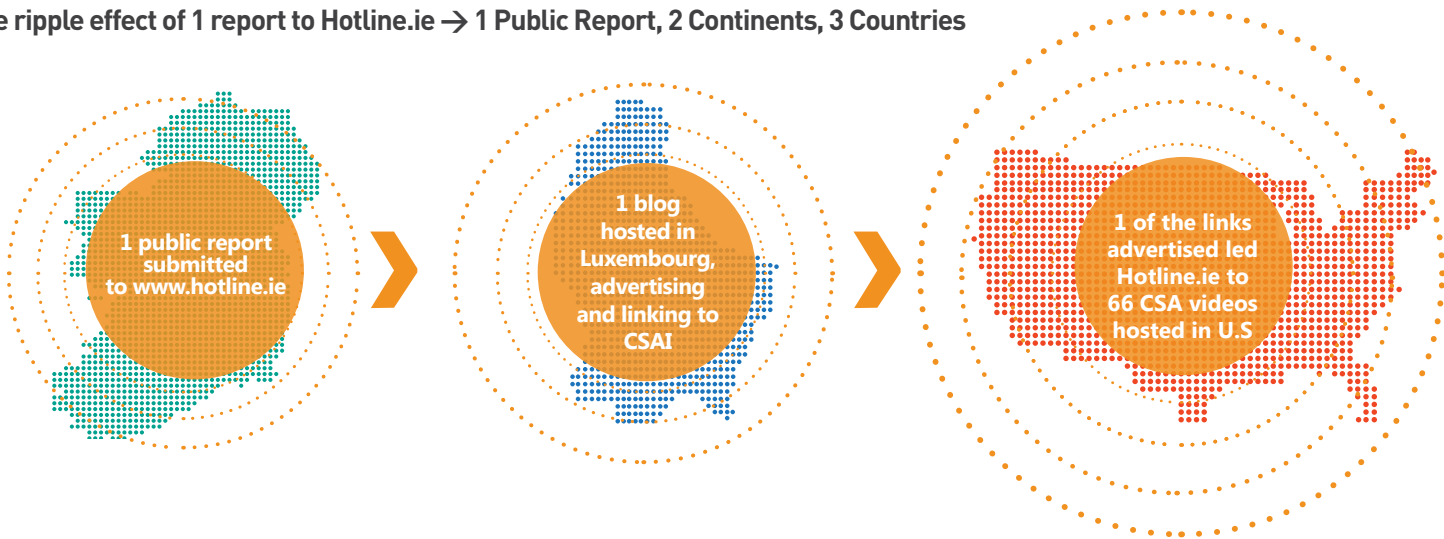
the images of the abuse uploaded to the Internet in a different one, hosted on servers in yet another and the content accessible anywhere in the world.

Due to rapid CSAI movement patterns content reported in one jurisdiction almost always ends up being traced to another jurisdiction, which has been captured statistically by Ireland, UK, Austria and most of the European based Hotlines. Thus, uninterrupted Hotline service, international reach and cooperation, and vigilance of Internet users together with their readiness to report suspected CSAI is key in combating the availability and proliferation of CSAI on the Internet.

“The importance of cross-border cooperation to tackle the production and distribution of CSAI cannot be emphasized enough. Sexual exploitation of children is not just a Law Enforcement issue, it’s a societal problem. To effectively combat these crimes to the most vulnerable, all parts of society need to take responsibility and as an INTERPOL representative I’m very happy to see that ISPAI do whatever they can to make the world a better place for children and to prevent the availability of CSAI.”

Bjorn Sellstrom, Coordinator Crimes Against Children INTERPOL

The ripple effect of 1 report to Hotline.ie → 1 Public Report, 2 Continents, 3 Countries



The videos showed children [boys and girls] appearing to be as young as 2 years of age and as old as 12 engaged in sexual activity with an adult. Hotline.ie forwarded the report to the BEE SECURE Stipline in Luxembourg and CyberTipline-NCMEC in

US. The Hotlines worked with the Internet companies in their jurisdiction and had the blog removed from the Internet, address suspended [no longer available for new blogs] as well as all 66 Child Sexual Abuse videos.

The cases are open investigations. Hotline.ie has been asked by INTERPOL to assist with additional information, particularly on one of the videos - unidentified child victim, who is believed to be located in the U.S.

In tackling what is universally agreed to be one of the most serious crimes Offline and Online the partnership with An Garda Síochána and international Law Enforcement Agencies such as INTERPOL is of utmost importance in ensuring child victims can be identified and rescued from abuse, while perpetrators pursued and brought to justice.

Hotline.ie Content Analysts sift through thousands of public reports leading to hundreds of thousands of images and videos to identify quality leads. Only content verified as most probably illegal is submitted along with the audit trail directly to the Paedophile Investigation Unit of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau.

Hotline.ie's triage function should not be confused with criminal investigation which together with evidence gathering to support criminal proceedings is a matter for Law Enforcement alone.

That being said, one of the greatest risks in tackling Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation would be for Internet companies, NGOs and Law Enforcement to work in silos without sharing intelligence, knowledge, and expertise.

If, for example, Internet companies would simply remove Child Sexual Abuse images/videos without disclosing the occurrence to Law Enforcement Online criminal activity would go undetected and flourish, while the victims would become faceless and voiceless.

The removal of the CSAI from the Internet is only the 1st step. The national partnership model of public – Hotline – Law Enforcement – Internet companies underpinned by international cooperation creates a safer world by helping Law Enforcement to:

- › Identify and rescue child victims from abuse
- › Identify and bring offenders to justice
- › Establish the evidence trail for the courts
- › Child Sexual Abuse images/videos could be documented evidence linking to other crimes being committed such as: child sex tourism [act of travelling in order to commit sexual offences against children], child trafficking, etc.
- › Combat CSAI production, distribution and even commercialisation
- › Prevent re-victimisation

"The Garda National Protective Services Bureau have a long and fruitful partnership with the ISPAI to ensure the prevention of Online Child Exploitation and the hosting of Child Sexual Abuse material. The partnership approach between Law Enforcement services and Internet Services Providers is a vital element in securing and ensuring the

safety of children Online. Hotline.ie and our blocking initiatives are some of the successful proactive measures undertaken to combat Online Sexual Exploitation of Children."

Declan Daly, Detective Chief Superintendent
Garda National Protective Services Bureau

➤ WORKING WITH ISPAI MEMBERS & REMOVAL OF CSAI FROM THE INTERNET

The Notice and Takedown mechanism [NTD] is the process through which Child Sexual Abuse images/videos are removed from the Internet.

In curbing the availability and proliferation of Child Sexual Abuse on the Internet, disrupting the cycle of Child Sexual Exploitation and preventing re-victimisation, the Industry self-regulation model with embedded Code of Practice and Ethics, Hotline Service and Notice and Takedown mechanism pioneered by Ireland, United Kingdom, Austria, Germany and France almost two decades ago, has stood the test of time and is now recognised worldwide as a vital and efficient solution in tackling this heinous crime against children.

ISPAI can deliver the Hotline.ie Service, prerequisite to CSAI NTD, on behalf of its member Internet companies [access, hosting, search, eCommunication providers] through special agreement with Government and An Garda Síochána. Operating outside of the agreement would be in violation of Irish law which states it is illegal for anyone to “knowingly obtain access to child pornography by means of information and communication technology”.

ISPAI has internationally trained and certified Content Analysts [INHOPE/INTERPOL] processing and assessing every single report submitted by the public via to Hotline.ie. Only content verified as most probably illegal CSAI is referred to An Garda Síochána, thus saving time and allowing them to focus their limited resources on quality leads.

ISPAI members adherence and compliance with the Industry Code of Practice and Ethics ensures: [1] efficient and effective standards of co-operation with Hotline.ie Service/ An Gardaí; [2] dedicated point

of contact for CSAI NTD; [3] acknowledgement of Hotline.ie having the expertise to be authoritative in determining whether or not content is illegal under Irish law; and [4] agreed takedown and preservation of evidence for Law Enforcement investigation procedures.

This means ISPAI members can rely on verified CSAI NTD, allowing one’s technicians to effect takedown of specified content, in confidence, without having to access and view the material. By co-funding the Hotline.ie Service and complying with NTD, ISPAI members make sure their networks and services are safe and that they are in a position to act against CSAI if it does somehow get placed on/through their systems.



Transnational crime such as Online Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation require coordinated international multi-stakeholder response, for which we work with 44 other Hotlines in 39 countries worldwide and INTERPOL.



**62% OF CSAI HAS BEEN
REMOVED WORLDWIDE**

When CSAI is traced by Hotline.ie Analysts outside the Irish jurisdiction and should a Hotline counterpart exist in the source country, all technical details [inclusive of Hotline.ie determination] are forwarded through a secure International CSAI Report Management System [ICCAM] to the Hotline so that the relevant law may be applied and appropriate authorities involved for swift action and removal of the content from the Internet.

If content is located in a country without Hotline presence the content would be notified [inclusive of all technical details] to the source country through international Law Enforcement channels so that action may be taken by appropriate local authorities.

2017 international figures released by INHOPE, show **62% of CSAI has been removed worldwide within 72 hours** from a report being received by one of the 45 Hotlines [such as Hotline.ie], processed, location on the Internet pinpointed, and forwarded to the appropriate Law Enforcement and ISP/hosting provider in the source country. Through the collaborative work of ISPAI Hotline.ie, An Gardaí, ISPAI members, 44 other Hotlines in 39 countries worldwide and their domestic partnering authorities, and last but not least INTERPOL, we ensure that Child Sexual Abuse Imagery is actioned irrespective of where it may be hosted.

“Connecting over one million students across the research and education sector, HEAnet are determined to support the ISPAI and Hotline.ie in their efforts to tackle illegal content. Having the expertise of Hotline.ie as a reliable safety net provides great reassurance as we strive for a safer Internet.” Kerrie Power, CEO HEAnet

➤ WORKING WITH HOTLINES WORLDWIDE & INHOPE

INHOPE [the International Association of Internet Hotlines] is the umbrella organisation uniting 45 Internet Hotlines [such as Hotline.ie] in 40 countries worldwide engaged in eliminating and combating Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Sexual Abuse Imagery [CSAI].

INHOPE's mission is to support and enhance the work of Hotlines by managing a secure International CSAI Report Management system [ICCAM] which enables Hotlines to exchange relevant CSAI intelligence between different jurisdictions, so that action can be taken and CSAI removed at source.

Through the use of ICCAM each image/video assessed by our Analysts as CSAI is "fingerprinted", made available to INTERPOL and subsequently added to INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation Database [ICSE]. At the beginning of 2018 ICSE included data on over 14,200 identified victims from around the world as well as data related to numerous unidentified victims whose cases remain open investigations.

INHOPE establishes policies and best practice standards for Hotline operations [i.e. technical safeguards] and ensures they are uniformly applied by existing and new member Hotlines. INHOPE is also responsible for expanding the network of trust by supporting the establishment of new Hotlines particularly in countries where there would appear to be a need for Hotline service.

ISPAI is one of the founding members of INHOPE, committed as ever to continue the collaborative work, knowledge sharing, broadening strategic partnerships across a wide array of sectors and Industries, recognising that coordinated cross border multi-stakeholder approach is the only efficient way to tackle the ever-growing Online Child Sexual Exploitation problem.

"ISPAI has been laying the groundwork for a better digital tomorrow, since 1999, leading the way in the development and implementation of best practices to tackle Child Sexual Abuse Online, which have been adopted by the whole INHOPE network. ISPAI's cooperation with partners and stakeholders both domestically and internationally ensures real impact is made in combating what is universally agreed to be one of the most serious crimes Online. It is through the collaborative efforts of every single hotline, like ISPAI Hotline.ie, making up the INHOPE network that more Child Sexual Abuse Imagery than ever before is being removed from the Internet."

Denton Howard, Executive Director,
INHOPE - International Association of Internet Hotlines

HOTLINE.IE

REPORT JOURNEY

Public report refers to a single communication about suspect content on the Internet. In its simplest form an Internet user notifies [anonymously or non-anonymously, as preferred] Hotline.ie of the existence of a website they might have accidentally come across Online and believe it to contain illegal content, such as Child Sexual Abuse Imagery [CSAI]. In most cases 1 report leads to tens to hundreds of images and/or videos.

ISPAI uses a secure and sophisticated National CSAI Report Management System which allows Hotline.ie Content Analysts to process, investigate and record every step of the content assessment for audit trail purpose. While over 98% of public reports are submitted anonymously; when contact details do happen to be provided by the reporter these are anonymised as soon as the report is closed by the Analyst.

Following automated transfer of reports into the encrypted National CSAI Report Management System, ISPAI Hotline.ie internationally trained and certified Analysts assess each report in accordance with Irish law [i.e. *Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998* [as amended by the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017*] applying best practice and procedures agreed with the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána, INTERPOL and INHOPE.

When content [i.e. image] "in itself" is not contrary to Irish law, it is classified as not illegal. Hotline.ie Analysts note for audit trail purpose the determination together with the rationale and subsequently the report is closed with no further action required.

However, when content is classified as illegal Child Sexual Abuse Imagery the following steps are completed:

1. An Garda Síochána are notified;
2. if CSAI located in Ireland, the appropriate hosting provider is notified to have it removed from the Internet; and
3. when CSAI located outside the Irish jurisdiction it is notified to the Hotline in the source country so that the relevant law may be applied and appropriate authorities involved for action and removal of the content from the Internet.

The secure exchange of CSAI reports and related intelligence between Hotlines in different jurisdictions is enabled through the International CSAI Report Management System [ICCAM] managed by INHOPE in partnership with INTERPOL and developed with funding from the European Union.

To help you visualise the journey of a CSAI report please refer to the adjoined infographic which is an overview of Hotline.ie process starting with the receipt of a public report to CSAI removal [in Ireland] OR forward to another Hotline for action and international removal when content is located outside the Irish jurisdiction.



SNIPPET 2017 HOTLINE.IE FACTS & FIGURES



Total Reports

7,591

Reports received & processed

1,802

+

5,789

Financial Scam, Racism & Xenophobia and "undeclared suspicion" leads investigated

Child Sexual Abuse & Child Sexual Exploitation leads investigated

524

=

Child Sexual Abuse Reports

➤ OF 5,789 CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE & CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION LEADS INVESTIGATED, HOTLINE.IE ANALYSTS DETERMINED 524 AS CONSTITUTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE UNDER IRISH LAW.



1 in 5 a disguised website solely dedicated to Child Sexual Abuse Imagery distribution and, in most cases, contained hundreds of images and videos

30 countries worldwide found to host Child Sexual Abuse Imagery



1st time in **8** years **none** of the reported Child Sexual Abuse Imagery was traced to the **Republic of Ireland**



52% of the Child Sexual Abuse Imagery assessed showed sexual activity between adults and children including rape and sexual torture ➤

52%

79%

↙ 79% of the Child Sexual Abuse Imagery assessed showed children appearing to be aged 0 to 12 [6% 0 to 3 yr]



Online Child Sexual Abuse may be a borderless crime, due to the very nature of the digital world, but it is not a faceless crime and there is nothing virtual about the child's suffering.

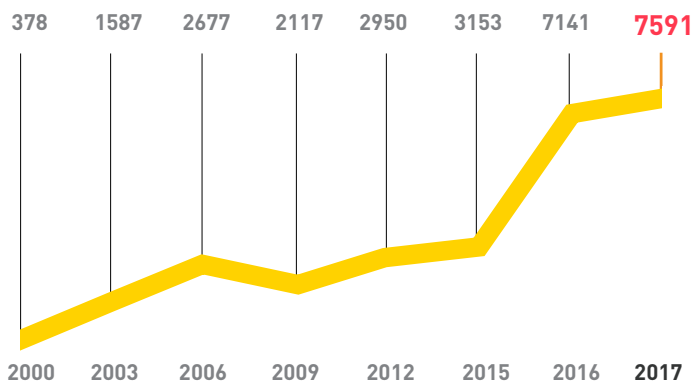
Your report could make a world of difference and even lead to the identification and rescue of a child from sexual abuse.

If you see it, report it to www.hotline.ie and action will be taken!

ANNUAL VOLUME OF REPORTS & EVOLUTION 2000-2017

By **public reports** we refer to notices of suspected illegal content Online received by Hotline.ie primarily from members of the public [Internet Users]. Hotline.ie relies 100% on the public reporting as it's not mandated by Government to engage in proactive search of CSAI.

In the 12 month period [January to December 2017] ISPAI Hotline.ie has broken new records in the sheer volume of reports received, processed and investigated, with a marked increase of 6% from the previous highest year on record [2016]. Moreover, Hotline.ie Analysts have identified 44% more Child Sexual Abuse reports than in 2016.



1 report = from 10(s) to 100(s) of images

Occasionally when assessing content referred to in a public report, Content Analysts may uncover the reported resource [i.e. website] promotes links or other obvious references suggesting further illegal CSAI at different locations. In such cases, Analysts will follow the links or instructions in question and examine the content presented. When Child Sexual Abuse as provisioned by the *Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 [as amended by the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017]* is found, the Analyst will create a new report for each separate unique location and will apply the same procedures as for public reports. We refer to these instances as **derived reports**. Hotline.ie figures for 2017 reveal that 80% of public reports classified as CSAI contained references advertising or linking to further CSAI at a different location.

Deriving CSAI reports discovered in the course of processing a public report is in line with Hotline.ie mandate approved by Department of Justice and Equality and An Garda Síochána. This should not be conflated with **proactive CSAI searching** which means to actively seek out CSAI on the Internet.

“Online CSAI is an ongoing challenge and removal at source is one of the most efficient actions in the fight against its distribution. That’s why the work of ISPAI and Hotline.ie is so important. This annual report highlights the vital contribution Hotline.ie makes to a better and safer Internet. As a platinum member of ISPAI, Three Ireland is fully committed to supporting Hotline.ie and ISPAI in tackling illegal content on the Internet.”

Jill Johnston, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Three Ireland

BREAKDOWN OF REPORTS RECEIVED & PROCESSED IN 2017

By Reporting Channel

By Hotline.ie Determination Following Assessment



When Hotline.ie Analysts classify a report as **Insufficient Details** it means the reporter did not provide sufficient information for the Content Analyst to work out: 1. the Internet location at which the suspected illegal content might be accessed; or 2. what is being reported as suspected illegal content.

Occurrences that would lend an Analyst to classify and close a report as **Insufficient Details**:

- a. no URL [link] provided, only description of the content or concern;
- b. the reported content is password protected or premium account is required to gain access, while the reporter has not included the details;
- c. a whole website [i.e. www.hotline.ie] or forum [hundreds of threads – where each may have tens to hundreds of postings – with more links to third party resources, etc.] being reported without indication of the content or how/where to locate it within the reported source;
- d. search results on adult pornographic sites displaying tens to hundreds of videos, categories, links, etc.

For the latter two, as Hotline.ie is not mandated by Government and An Gardaí to actively seek out CSAI on the Internet, the Content Analyst will only assess the content displayed at the location being reported.

Needless to say, our success rate in accessing and identifying suspected illegal content depends on the accuracy of the information submitted to us by reporters. More so, the majority of reports are submitted

anonymously which makes it impossible to contact the reporter in quest of further information.

Content Already Removed determination is recorded by Analysts only when there is a clear message displayed at the reported location, stating the content had been removed. There are multiple reasons for which content would be removed i.e.

- i. the provider [owner] no longer wishes to make it available;
- ii. CSAI previously reported to one of the other 44 Internet Hotlines and actioned; or
- iii. Terms & Conditions breach. Hence, in most cases, Hotline.ie has no way of knowing beyond reasonable doubt whether the removed content would have been contrary to Irish Law or not.

Reports on issues of content ownership, copyright infringement, sale of drugs, spyware allegations, sale of documents or personal data, trade of endangered species, money-laundering allegations, etc. are **Outside Hotline.ie Remit** and will be classified as such. When the report is submitted non-anonymously the Analysts will provide an explanatory response as to why the report is outside Hotline.ie remit and where possible suggest the appropriate body to deal with the reporter's concern. However, it should be noted that Hotline.ie cannot and does not offer legal advice.

Additionally, members of the public who wish to submit a query within Hotline.ie's remit or require response on a report should ensure an email address is provided.

SNIPPET OF CSAI HOSTING IN 2017

Although significant technological progress is being made, to date there is still no way to accurately determine the full scale of CSAI availability, distribution and hosting.

The Internet is intricate, extremely fluid and borderless. The broad range of Internet enabled devices, increasingly fast technological developments and high speed Internet access leads to unforeseeable amounts of content being created, shared and distributed on the Internet every single minute. In addition, criminals constantly find new and more sophisticated ways to produce, share and exchange CSAI.

However, it is well established by now that hosting is only one link in the CSAI production, consumption and distribution chain.

Therefore, CSAI hosting figures only indicate where the content resides and is provided from, at a certain moment in time, and by no means should it be conflated with the production and consumption of CSAI. As showcased earlier in this report [the ripple effect of 1 report infographic] a child victim may be sexually abused in one country, the images of the abuse uploaded to the Internet in a different jurisdiction, hosted on servers in yet another and the content accessible anywhere in the world.

In 2017 Hotline.ie Analysts found 30 countries worldwide to host CSAI; further testimony that Online Child Sexual Exploitation is a pervasive global problem to which no country is immune.

It must also be acknowledged and understood that the absence of hosting data in a particular region or country does not mean that Child Sexual Abuse is not taking place, being produced and made available. Low or lack of CSAI hosting figures could be due to: [a]

inadequate or deficient legislation, no Hotline presence to provide a reporting mechanism, lack of preparedness and coordinated support from authorities in the country; [b] simply no Hotline presence and coordinated national response to CSAI or [c] continuous coordinated national effort, such as in Ireland, between Government, An Garda Síochána, ISPAAI, Internet companies, NGOs and civil society through public reporting which has made the Irish jurisdiction known to be hostile to those who may seek to host or distribute Child Sexual Abuse Imagery.

ISPAAI Hotline.ie was in a position to identify, action, and forward the Child Sexual Abuse Imagery cases to the respective source country [30] represented in the graphic thanks to the anonymous reports received from the public through the Irish reporting mechanism www.hotline.ie.

USA and the Netherlands remain the top hosting countries of CSAI in 2017, however the sheer volume of data centres located in the two countries should also be taken into consideration.

On a positive note, it's the first time in eight years where no Child Sexual Abuse Imagery is traced by either Hotline.ie or one of our 44 Hotline counterparts [39 countries] as hosted in the Republic of Ireland.

That's not to say there is room for complacency. ISPAAI is as committed as ever to continue to implement and develop measures through cooperation with Government, An Garda Síochána and Internet companies in continuing to deter individuals from misusing Irish Internet services/infrastructure for Child Sexual Exploitation activities.

Furthermore, as technological change has brought with it cultural change among offenders, in the sense of consuming, producing, storing, distributing, and even commercialising CSAI, ISPAI envisions that the partnership with Internet companies and Law Enforcement will play an increasing role in the deterrence and removal of such content from the Internet.

Its hard to overstate that the vigilance of Internet users and their readiness to report suspected Child Sexual Abuse images and videos is key.

Additionally, this battle cannot be won in isolation, we will continue to work in conjunction with our European and international Hotline counterparts, INHOPE and INTERPOL to ensure swift action is taken against identified CSAI.

➤ **HOTLINE.IE TRACED CSAI TO 30 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE**

➤ **21 COUNTRIES HAVE A HOTLINE COUNTERPART**

➤ **9 COUNTRIES WITHOUT HOTLINE PRESENCE**



INHOPE member Hotline (green pin) Non-INHOPE (blue pin)

*in most cases 1 report = from 10(s) to 100(s) of images

FURTHER 2017 TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

In 2017 Hotline.ie received, processed and investigated 7,591 reports. When submitting a report through www.hotline.ie the reporter has to select from the drop down menu on the reporting form the type of suspected content about to notify. The suspicion is therefore taken purely from the words used by the reporter and is recorded in advance of any attempt by Content Analysts to access and analyse the content. Thus, to distinguish between before and after content analysis we use the terms suspicion and confirmed OR determined. One of the latter two would be in reference to reports after the assessment process is completed by Hotline.ie Analysts.

5,789 suspected Child Sexual Abuse leads were investigated by Hotline.ie Analysts, who subsequently confirmed 524 as constituting Child Sexual Abuse as provisioned by the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 [as amended by the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017]. These should not be read as 524 images but rather sources which in most cases led to hundreds and thousands of Child Sexual Abuse images and/or videos.

1 in 5 confirmed Hotline.ie Child Sexual Abuse reports [sources] was a disguised website solely dedicated to the propagation of Child Sexual Abuse Imagery [CSAI]. A disguised website reveals CSAI only to someone who has followed a pre-defined digital pathway otherwise it displays legal content. In some cases the pathway could start on legal adult pornography websites being misused by tech savvy offenders going to new lengths to evade detection. In more convoluted cases forums, banner/link sites, bulletin boards, URL shortener or website URL redirect would be misused either individually or as a chained digital pathway that would eventually lead to CSAI.

Each disguised CSAI website identified in 2017 displayed hundreds of images and videos. Additionally, although the images were displayed through the website they were pulled from a different hosting location.

This technique could be described as a fail-safe to enable CSAI availability Online in the event that the website is taken down. As such, each of these reports requires diligence to ensure CSAI is removed at source, which in turn might mean removal from any other website that would be using the same particular CSAI hosting source even if those websites are unknown to Hotline.ie.

Since 2014 Hotline.ie has witnessed a year-on-year rise in disguised CSAI websites and while extremely time consuming and challenging our experienced Analysts have become adept at spotting these websites and accessing the content to have it removed at source.

The top 3 services misused in 2017 for CSAI were Image Hosting 44% from 24% in 2016, Banner/Link Site 17% from 14% and Cyberlocker 16% from 12%.

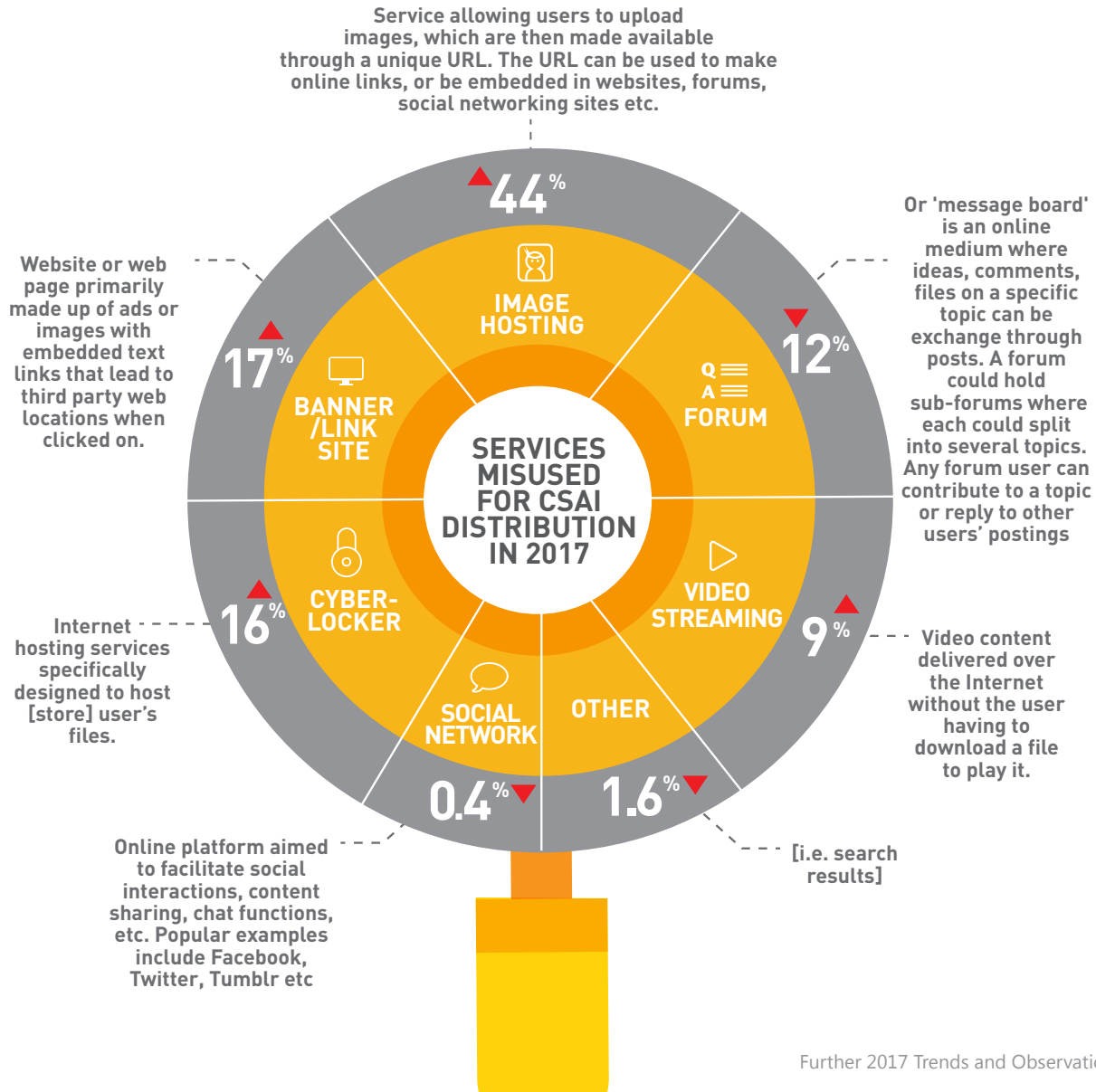
While no longer an emerging trend but not yet top 3, video streaming is likely to grow in importance in the coming 3 to 5 years. We would like to note that in the context of CSAI streaming and webcam merely describe technological means and have nothing to do with the intention of the perpetrator or the sexual abuse and exploitation of the child.

As the year before, almost half of the videos assessed appeared to be self-generated content. Additionally, our Contents Analysts suspect that some of the videos resulted from live streaming [real time production and transmission of video via webcam over the Internet] deliberately recorded and saved without the child's knowledge and then shared Online.

Video analysis remains an operational challenge for Hotline.ie as the review is a manual process which can be extremely time consuming taking size and method of distribution into consideration.

▲ = Increase from 2016

▼ = Decrease from 2016



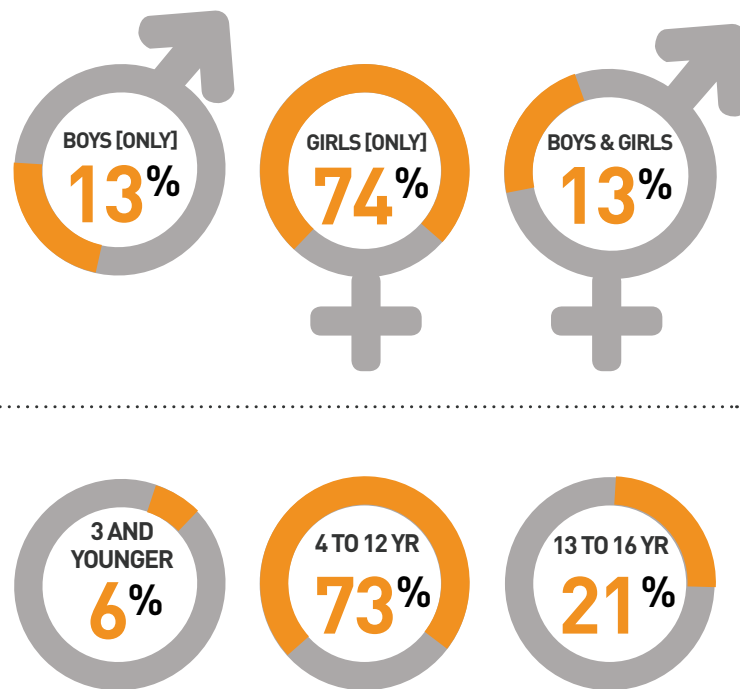
Hotline.ie Content Analysts also noted an increase in Content Delivery Network [CDN] service misuse for the purpose of CSAI distribution. A CDN, for example Cloudflare, is a system that delivers web pages and other web content to a user based on the geographic location of the user, the origin of a web page and the content delivery server. The main purpose of a CDN is to provide high speed service delivery, particularly for websites with global audiences that are under high demand. Central to this is the use of content caching and mirroring techniques, which is of particular concern to Hotlines as it can lead to the location of illegal content being obscured and thus more challenging to locate.

For example, when an Internet user [e.g. in Ireland] requests a web page that is part of a content delivery network, the CDN will redirect the request from the originating location [e.g. USA] to a server in the CDN that is closest to the user [e.g. Ireland or the UK] and deliver the cached content. The process of bouncing through CDNs can easily remain unnoticeable to the user; one way a user could know if a CDN has been accessed is if the delivered URL is different than the URL that has been requested [e.g. request for a '.com' resulting in a '.ie' ending website address].

Hotline.ie and other Hotlines around the globe have noted an increase in the misuse of CDN services in connection to CSAI websites. This is an operational challenge for Hotlines when attempting to trace/pinpoint the geographical origin of the CSAI website, as the mirroring source might be cloaking the website's actual source of origin. Thus making it more difficult for Hotline Analysts to ascertain which country hosts the content. On a positive note, this challenge can be overcome with advanced tracing training and the cooperation of CDNs.

In 2017 more images and videos showed children aged 0 to 12 year-olds than last year rising from 71% to 79% with imagery featuring 13 to 16 year-olds dropping from 29% to 21%. Children aged 3 and younger accounted for 6% of the CSAI.

52% confirmed Hotline.ie CSAI showed sexual activity between adults and children including rape and sexual torture. Additionally 19% showed explicit sexual activity of a child, while 29% non-penetrative sexual activity.



GLOSSARY

› An Garda Síochána or An Gardaí

Ireland's National Police Service

› Banner/Link Site

A website or web page primarily made up of ads or images with embedded text links that lead to third party websites when clicked on.

› Blog

A discussion or information site, often informal diary-style entries containing opinions, comments, links, videos, and photographs provided by the writer. Most are interactive and visitors can leave comments and message each other.

› CDN

Content Delivery Network service, that delivers web pages and other web content to a user based on the geographic location of the user, the origin of a web page and the content delivery server for the purpose of high speed performance of e.g. website with global reach and in high user demand.

› Cyberlocker

Internet hosting services specifically designed to host [store] user's files.

› Disguised Website

Website which accessed directly

through a browser show legal content, but when accessed through a pre-defined digital pathway [or referrer website] show illegal content such as Child Sexual Abuse Imagery.

› Forum

Or 'message board' is an online medium where ideas, comments, files on a specific topic can be exchange through posts. A forum can hold sub-forums where each could split into several topics. Any forum user can contribute to a topic or reply to other users' postings.

› ICCAM

International CSAI Report Management System enabling Hotlines to securely exchange relevant CSAI intelligence between different jurisdictions, so that action can be taken at source. The system is managed by INHOPE in partnership with INTERPOL and developed with funding from the European Union.

› ICSE

International Child Sexual Exploitation [ICSE] image and video database which is managed by INTERPOL and available through INTERPOL's secure global police communications system. ICSE uses sophisticated image and video comparison software to make connections between victims,

abusers and places, and allows specialised investigators to share data with colleagues across the world. Police forces in 54 countries and Europol are connected to ICSE and cooperate in the identification of Child Sexual Exploitation victims and their abusers. It is backed by the G8 and funded by the European Commission.

› Image Hosting

Internet service allowing users to upload images, which are then made available through a unique URL. The URL can be used to make online links, or be embedded in websites, forums, social networking sites etc.

› INHOPE

International Association of Internet Hotlines, uniting 45 Internet Hotlines in 40 countries worldwide dealing with the Online distribution of Child Sexual Abuse, curbing its availability and proliferation, disrupting the cycle of Child Sexual Exploitation and preventing re-victimisation. ISPAI is one of the founding members of INHOPE.

› Internet companies

A company providing Internet service such as: Internet access; Internet connectivity; hosting websites; domain name registration;

Internet data centre; Content Delivery Network services; Internet application services e.g. eMail, search engine, instant messaging and other new application services; etc.

› INTERPOL

The world's largest international police organization with 192 member countries, facilitating international police cooperation.

› ISPAI

Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland is a not-for-profit organisation established by Internet companies – ISPAI members – in 1997. Since inception ISPAI has been managing the Industry Code of Practice and Ethics; and delivering through special agreement with Government and An Garda Síochána [on behalf of ISPAI members] the Hotline.ie service for dealing with illegal content Online, such as Child Sexual Abuse. ISPAI is in receipt of Grant Aid support from the European Union through the Connecting Europe Facility Programme for the Hotline.ie operations.

› ISPAI Members

Internet companies adhering to the Industry Code of Practice and Ethics, subscribing to the CSAI Notice & Takedown mechanism and co-funding the Hotline.ie Service. ISPAI has 40 member companies committed as ever to practicing zero tolerance to Child Sexual Abuse and creating a safer Online environment [see back cover].

› National CSAI Report Management System

ISPAI secure and sophisticated CSAI Report Management database and system allowing Hotline.ie Content Analysts to process, investigate and record every step of the content assessment for audit trail purpose. While over 98% of public reports are submitted anonymously; where contact details are provided by the reporter these are anonymised as soon as the report is closed by the Analyst. There is interconnectivity between our secure National CSAI Report Management System and ICCAM for the purpose of securely submitting CSAI reports and related intelligence to Hotlines in different jurisdictions and INTERPOL.

› NTD

The Notice and Takedown mechanism is the process through which Child Sexual Abuse images/

videos are removed from the Internet. When the reported content is assessed by Hotline.ie Analysts as CSAI, the location on the Internet is then traced; if found to be located in Ireland simultaneous notice will be issued to An Garda Síochána and the appropriate hosting provider. To learn more about NTD please read Working with ISPAI members & removal of CSAI from the Internet - page 11-12

› Public Report

Each notice of suspected illegal content Online received by Hotline.ie from Internet Users via www.hotline.ie – secure and anonymous web reporting form.

› Redirector URL

Technique used to reroute a user to another pre-specified destination webpage. In other words, when a user attempts to open a webpage which has been redirected, a page with a different URL is opened.

› Re-victimisation

OR repeat victimisation is what happens to a victim when their abuse is recorded e.g. images/videos and made available/shared Online. Each repeat viewing and/or sharing of the content constitutes a perpetuated violation of the rights of the child. The experience they go through at such a young age is

unimaginably horrific, scaring, and life lasting. The prevention of re-victimisation of children who have suffered sexual abuse is at the heart of our work, and as such we strive to have every identified CSAI swiftly removed at source.

› Self-generated

Children and adolescents under 18 years may take compromising or sexually explicit pictures or videos of themselves. Awareness raising plays a crucial role in educating children and youth on the risks that any such content may be misappropriated and circulated Online or misused as a basis to extort favours. This could happen either as a form of peer-to-peer abuse or by offenders purporting to be someone they're not.

› Social Networking

Online platform aimed to facilitate social interactions, content sharing, chat functions, etc. Usually each user would have their own profile page/account. Popular examples include Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr etc.

› URL

Acronym for Uniform Resource Locator, commonly known as link. A URL indicates the specific location of a resource on the Internet.

› URL Shortener

Is a service that create a short URL [link/web page address] from a long one so that the short version, which is easier to remember and enter, can be used instead - e.g. if you need to frequently use a URL into e-mail messages or over the phone. The URL shortening service will maintain the association between the two and will redirect anyone who enters the short URL to the page of the long URL.

› Video Streaming

Video content delivered over the Internet without the user having to download a file to play/view it.

› Web page

Web pages are what make up the World Wide Web. These can be either static or dynamic. Static pages show the same content each time they are viewed, while dynamic ones have content that can change each time they are accessed. While a web page can stand alone it can contain many images, text, videos or hyperlinks.

› Website

Is a set of related web pages typically served from a single web domain. e.g. www.hotline.ie



WE LOOK FORWARD TO REPORTING
FURTHER PROGRESS NEXT YEAR

THANK YOU

ISPAI Members co-finance www.hotline.ie service, abide by the Industry Code of Practice & Ethics and Notice & Takedown mechanism for the removal of Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation from the Internet



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