

Report shows new challenges in online child pornography prevention

Minister for Justice Alan Shatter T.D. to launch Annual Report of Hotline.ie Wed 29th June

The ever-increasing challenge which evolving technologies pose to the fight against child pornography is highlighted in the Annual Report of the Hotline.ie service, which details the activities of the service during the period 1st January through 31st December 2010.

Encouragingly, the period saw a significant decline in the number of reports received that were deemed to be illegal under Irish law. This illustrates the fact that the Internet has become a safer place for ordinary web browsing.

In 2010, the reports which our analysts deemed to be illegal child sexual abuse content under Irish law totalled 183, a very significant decline compared to the peak figure of 718 in 2007. This underlines both the consistently declining number of instances in which the public encounter illegal content online and the successful measures taken by industry and law enforcement agencies to deter illegal activity on Internet facilities.

A report was received in December relating to a website hosted in Ireland on a cloud service containing several child abuse images. The case was reported to Gardaí immediately by the Hotline analysts, and was taken down within 24 hours. In this case the content may not have been intentionally hosted from Ireland due to the way cloud services can mirror information across data centres. This confirms a trend which has been observed over the last few years that criminals are moving to more sophisticated techniques to place their illegal content online.

In total, there were two cases of mirroring in Ireland in 2010 reported through the Hotline though none appear to have been deliberately targeted at servers based here. This encouraging trend leaves no room for complacency however. The mirroring incidents detailed above illustrate the increasingly complex technologies that are now open to misuse by criminals to market, exchange and collect illegal child sexual abuse material. Hotline's General Manager Paul Durrant emphasises that while figures show ordinary web browsing has become safer, public cooperation remains vital. Users of alternative technologies such as peer-to-peer networks must not refrain from reporting suspicious content, he warns. The Hotline possesses the capability to process and resolve reports of this nature, but this is not possible without the necessary initial action of reporting by the public, and this cannot be stressed enough.

The Hotline.ie Annual Report is a comprehensive insight into a relentless campaign to stem criminal misuse of the Internet and, in particular, the horrendous re-victimisation of children

perpetrated through the online exchange of images and videos of child sexual abuse.
Hotline.ie is a service run by Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland.

The full report will be published online at:

www.hotline.ie/rep2011.pdf

After it has been announced by the Minister shortly after 13:15 hrs. on Wednesday 29th June

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REPORT LAUNCH:

WHERE: Buswells Hotel, (Georgian Suite), Molesworth Street, Dublin 2

WHEN: 1:00 p.m., Wednesday 29th June 2011

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