Anonymous Service.
Decisive Action.
International Reach.

hotline.ie

H is for Hotline Internet Reporting Service

The establishment of an Irish Internet Hotline within an Industry self-regulatory framework was one of the key recommendations of the Government's Working Group on the Illegal and Harmful Use of the Internet, in 1998.

O is for Overseen by the Department of Justice

The operations and procedures of the Hotline are overseen by the Office for Internet Safety within the Department of Justice and Equality.

T is for Taking Decisive Action

Provides fast response to illegal content distributed within Irish jurisdiction and collaborates internationally with 51 other Hotlines in 45 countries worldwide to ensure that appropriate action is taken against all identified illegal content.

L is for Law Enforcement

To tackle Online CSAM, the Hotline has been working in conjunction with An Garda Síochána for the past 15 years.

I is for Illegal Content

Internet Users can anonymously notify Online suspected illegal content, particularly Child Sexual Abuse Material or activities relating to the sexual exploitation of children, using the Hotline service.

N is for Notice & Takedown

The Hotline ensures that verified notice of reported illegal content is sent to Law Enforcement and ISPs to ensure takedown at source can be achieved.

E is for European Support

The Hotline is financed by ISPAI Members and is also in receipt of Grant support from the European Commission. In fact, Internet Hotlines in the other 27 EU Member States have been receiving EC funding.

I is for ISPAI Members

ISPAI Members support the Hotline because they are determined to act against illegal content distributed by users misusing their infrastructure.
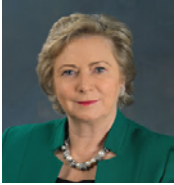
E is for Established in 1999

ISPAI Hotline.ie Service just marked 15 years of full operations, fighting against the distribution of Child Sexual Abuse Material, universally agreed to be one of the most serious crimes on the Internet.

Co-Funded by
the European Union

**How to make a report: Online Report Form @ www.hotline.ie | eMail: report@hotline.ie
Phone Message: 1890 610710**

>FOREWORD

Frances Fitzgerald
T.D., Minister for Justice and Equality

Paul Durrant
Chief Executive of ISPAI and Hotline.ie Manager

I welcome the publication of the Hotline.ie annual report for 2014. Once again I would like to congratulate the ISPAI, Mr. Paul Durrant and his team for their work in operating Hotline.ie and in producing this report of their years' work.

The Internet can be a force for good in the world as we use it to educate and to entertain. It is important to foster safe use of the Internet in particular by children and to combat its use for more sinister ends.

Hotline.ie has had a particularly busy year as it dealt with the largest number of reports received since it was founded. I note that this report also reflects the wider nature of Hotline's work as it has continued its international cooperation efforts by taking part in the EU funded BIK-NET IC-CAM Project.

Hotline.ie contributes to the empowerment of citizens by providing a means to report illegal material and in particular child sexual abuse content on the Internet and to have it dealt with appropriately in cooperation with the Gardaí.

I wish to thank the ISPAI for their continuing operation of the Hotline.ie and to wish them every success in their future work.

This year's report shows that Hotline.ie received the greatest number of reports in one year since its establishment. This was not marginal but an enormous jump of 97% above the average of the previous seven years. Had we not made a sizeable investment starting in mid-2013 to better automate the workflow of Hotline.ie systems, we would have been totally overwhelmed. It is testament to Hotline's technical expertise that two other INHOPE members are now evaluating our new system for their Hotlines.

During 2014, we were one of the Hotlines piloting IC-CAM, a system being developed by INHOPE in partnership with INTERPOL, which captures "hash values" of CSAM newly identified by Hotlines. These "hashes" can then be added to the Interpol Child Exploitation Database to assist global law enforcement investigations.

It is notable that with increased reporting, proportionately confirmed CSAM cases relative to incoming reports remains around 10%.

Statistically, this shows the importance of public reporting. It yields more new images to be taken down at source but, vitally, being brought to the attention of Law Enforcement.

When it comes to CSAM, we never know which image may provide that missing evidence that leads to a child being rescued from abuse. That image or video which you accidently encounter may be that one. So please, do not turn a blind eye, report suspected CSAM to Hotline.ie.

>MISSION & REMIT

- Provide an excellent and responsive national Hotline reporting service and work with stakeholders and Member ISPs to ensure potentially illegal content hosted, posted or distributed, within the Irish jurisdiction, is taken down expeditiously.

- Ensure that Online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) is swiftly removed from ISPAI Members' facilities by providing Member ISPs with qualified notice for takedown allowing them to preserve evidence for police investigation.

- Enhance and maximize national efforts by actively collaborating with INHOPE Hotlines, to ensure that appropriate and swift action is taken to address identified illegal content hosted, posted or distributed outside the Irish jurisdiction.

- Collaborate with Law Enforcement Agencies, where the source country does not have an INHOPE Hotline, to notify identified illegal content through police channels.

- Work in cooperation with Awareness - Helpline Partners and the ISP Industry within the country to disseminate Safer Internet Practices to citizens, particularly with the intention of achieving better Internet facilities and promoting digital responsibility (responsible Online behaviour).

- Encourage Internet users to practice zero tolerance to CSAM.

- Work with relevant national and international stakeholders in order to innovate for the future and identify solutions that could be applied to address emerging threats and trends.

Remit

- 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.

- The Hotline cannot engage in pro-active search for illegal content under the procedures agreed with Government and relies 100% on reports from Internet Users or reports submitted by other INHOPE Hotlines.

- The Hotline will take action only if the reported Online content is assessed by Hotline Analysts as illegal under Irish legislation.

- Hotline.ie deals particularly with Online Child Sexual Abuse Material or activities relating to the Sexual Exploitation of Children.

>TYPES OF ILLEGAL CONTENT

Types of Illegal Content within Hotline.ie's Remit	Child Trafficking	Racism & Xenophobia	Incitement To Hatred
Child Grooming Activities	Child Sex Tourism	Financial Scams	Child Sexual Abuse Material

These Types of Illegal Content could be Encountered when using any of the Following Services:

Peer to Peer
(File Sharing Networks)

Unsolicited Email
(e.g SPAM Advertising Illegal Content)

Chat Room or Instant Messaging

Social Networking

Websites & Sites for Mobile

Blogs

Bulletin Boards

Forums

❝*We recommend the public to use the web forms provided on www.hotline.ie to report suspected illegal content encountered on the Internet be it anonymously or non-anonymously, as preferred by the reporter. The web forms are accessible by clicking the large button "Make a Report" prominently positioned on the right side of the menu.*

Hotline.ie prefers to receive reports through Online forms as these are designed to request relevant technical details based on suspicion, type of service where the content was encountered, URL (link) to the content, etc., that are crucial for Hotline Analysts in the assessment process.

Furthermore, the forms have integrated help boxes that will guide the reporter through each step. The structured nature of the Online forms also allows for semi-automated transfer of report details into the Hotline database making the processing of the reports far quicker and effective. However, reports are also received by e-mail, telephone and automated answering machine.❞

Paul Durrant, Chief Executive and Manager of Hotline.ie

>WORKING WITH INDUSTRY

ISPAI Members provide infrastructure and services to allow their customers benefit from the amazing facility that is the Internet.

Regrettably sometimes these services are misused. ISPAI Members are determined to act against illegal content hosted, posted or distributed from their facilities.

The 2000-31-EC "e-Commerce Directive provides ISPs with the "mere conduit" exemption from liability for illegal content on their systems, providing that on gaining knowledge of its existence they act expeditiously to remove it. Hotline.ie plays a central role in this process, the "Notice and Takedown" (NTD) system, by providing a shared service to ISPs to fulfil the key requirements of NTD.

Hotline.ie (1) provides an easily accessible place where the public may submit reports of suspected content. (2) Has trained Analysts to verify if the content is probably illegal and trace the source ISP. (3) Issues qualified notice to the ISP and Law Enforcement.

This is especially important to allow ISPs deal swiftly with Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), legally known as Child Pornography. Hotline.ie is covered by special agreement with Government and Garda to provide this essential service to the ISP Industry.

If an ISP receives notification for "takedown" from Hotline.ie, it will swiftly take appropriate measures, while preserving evidence for police investigations.

As at December 2014 ISPAI had 55 Members, comprising of: Access, Hosting, Search and eMail Communication Providers.

"Hotline.ie is acknowledged by ISPs as having the expertise to be authoritative in determining that content is illegal under Irish law. This report highlights the vital contribution that Hotline.ie makes to a better and safer Internet. Online CSAM is an ongoing challenge that changes at the same pace as technology. Removal at source is one of the most efficient actions in the fight against its distribution and that's why the work of ISPAI and Hotline.ie is so important. Three Ireland is committed to continuing to work closely with ISPAI and support Hotline.ie to tackle illegal content on the Internet."

**Jill Johnston Chairperson of ISPAI
& Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Three Ireland**

"Representing the smaller providers of Broadband to the more regional areas of the country, I wish to convey our determination to act against child sexual abuse material being distributed over our networks as effectively as large national providers. Due to the scale of our organisations, it is not feasible for smaller ISPs to have expert staff trained and available to analyse data and respond to relatively rare complaints of suspected illegal content. However ISPAI Hotline.ie provides us with this capability as a shared resource which is extremely valuable to us. We implicitly trust their expertise in this area, which allows our technical staff to react without hesitation on any notice we receive to remove such material from public access."

John McDonnell – Chairperson of ISPAI WISP Group and Managing Director of Ripple.com

"As founding member of the ISPAI, eircom is proud to have supported Hotline.ie for the past 15 years to stop the misuse of Irish Internet services for the distribution of CSAM. We are as determined as ever to contribute to the global fight against the proliferation of illegal content on the Internet. Due to the global nature of the Internet, eircom believes in the efficiency of the Notice and Take-down mechanism to ensure that illegal content is taken down at source where there can be full cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies. Furthermore, eircom is committed to follow protocols and assist An Garda Síochána so that those responsible could be brought to justice and hopefully child-victims identified and rescued from abuse."

Elaine Robinson - Director of Next Generation Voice & Data, eircom

"Blacknight has zero tolerance to Online CSAM and is strongly committed to continuing its work with Hotline.ie in the fight against the distribution of illegal content on the Internet. We are cognisant that unfortunately there is a flip side to everything so if anyone misuses our services to host or distribute CSAM we want to know about it and be in the position to act against it and assist An Garda Siochana to ensure that those responsible for abusing our systems can be brought to justice."

Michele Neylon – CEO, Blacknight Domains & Hosting

We are part of the Irish Safer Internet Centre (SIC)

The Irish SIC is a consortium of Industry, Education, Child Welfare and Government partners that provide awareness, hotline and helpline functions and activities in Ireland. The SIC is coordinated by the Department of Justice & Equality - Office for Internet Safety. The consortium has well recognised expertise in the area of Internet Safety which has been built over the years with the support of project co-funding from the European Union.

>WORKING WITH PARTNERS

An Garda Síochána

- Since its establishment (1999), Hotline.ie has been run by ISPAI, overseen by the Department of Justice and Equality and has been working in conjunction with Law Enforcement.

- An Garda Síochána has a specialised unit, the Paedophile Investigation Unit within the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit, for dealing with child abuse and offenders. There is also a Cyber-crime Unit and computer forensic expertise within the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation.

  But An Garda Síochána do not have a specific police hotline for reporting illegal content on the Internet, thus the Gardaí support that members of the public should report suspected Online content to Hotline.ie

- In a fast paced environment where everything is shifting to the Online environment, Hotline.ie acts like a liaison between Internet Users (members of the public) – Industry – Law Enforcement and by its affiliation to the INHOPE networks adds an international dimension, which is crucial given the global nature of the Internet.

Working with INTERPOL

In 2014, ISPAI took the next step in the attempt to further improve, enhance and maximise the work of Hotline.ie by volunteering to be part of the EC funded BIK-NET IC-CAM Project. Coordinated by INHOPE in partnership with Interpol, the IC-CAM Project is revolutionary in terms of adding value to the image / video analysis work already undertaken by Internet Hotlines.

"Law enforcement cannot tackle abuse of the Internet alone. Industry, civil society and Governments all have their part to play. The results which can be achieved through these collaborations can be seen through the work of Internet Hotlines which bring together Law Enforcement and Industry around the world to reduce the availability of Child (Sexual) Abuse Material.

Hotline.ie has been very active in this movement for many years and their relationship with An Garda Síochána is an example of how two organisations can complement each other in working towards a common goal.

Recognition of the value of cross-agency cooperation has been further demonstrated with the creation of the INHOPE / INTERPOL BIK-NET IC-CAM project. Although still in the pilot phase, the initial results are very promising with clear gains in victim identification work combined with the reduction of duplication of effort and enhanced communications supported by joint training." **Michael Moran - Assistant Director, Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation, INTERPOL**

The International Network of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE)

To ensure international reach and fast response to CSAM hosted outside Irish jurisdiction, ISPAI is a founding member of INHOPE which has grown, over the years, to a network of **51 Internet Hotlines in 45 countries worldwide.**
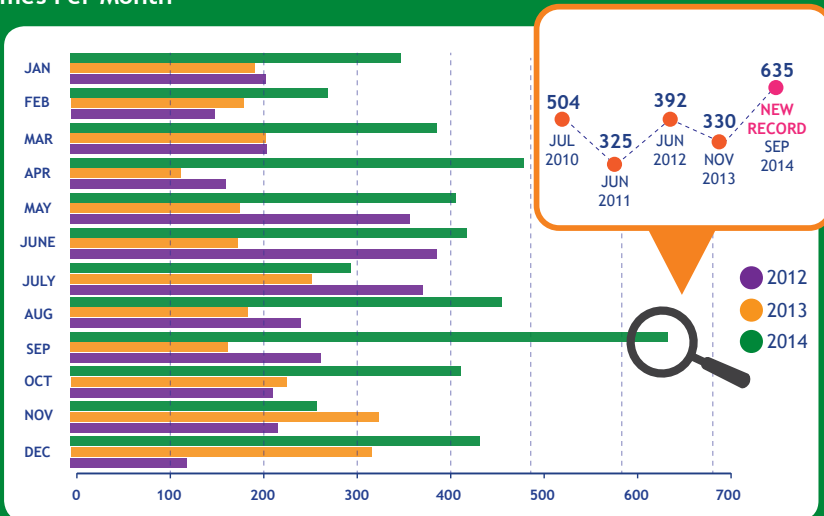
>MONTHLY COMPARISON

In 2014 Hotline.ie processed 4,863 reports. This is the greatest number of any year since its establishment. Below is a breakdown of Source of Reports for 2014

4,280	420	46	1
Online Form Via www.hotline.ie	Email	Telephone Answering Machine	Telephone
2	**44**	**70**	**4,863**
Post	INHOPE Network Via IHRMS	Derived Reports	**TOTAL**

Volumes Per Month

635
NEW RECORD
SEP 2014

504
JUL 2010

392
JUN 2012

330
NOV 2013

325
JUN 2011

● 2012
● 2013
● 2014

In 2014, Hotline.ie dealt with on average 405 reports per month which is 89% more than the monthly average (214) in 2013.

In September 2014, 635 reports were received and processed by Hotline.ie. This was the highest volume recorded in a single month by Hotline.ie in 15 years of full operations. In this month alone 37% more reports were processed than in the whole year 2001 (465).

It appears that the distribution of reports throughout the year is largely random. This is probably to be expected given the chance of Internet Users with ordinary Online habits (eMailing, browsing for news, products or entertainment, engaging on social media, playing Online games, etc.) actually stumbling across CSAM is extremely low. The graphic above shows the reporting pattern for the last 3 years which clearly demonstrates that it is almost impossible to determine or predict monthly reporting volumes.

>ANNUAL COMPARISON
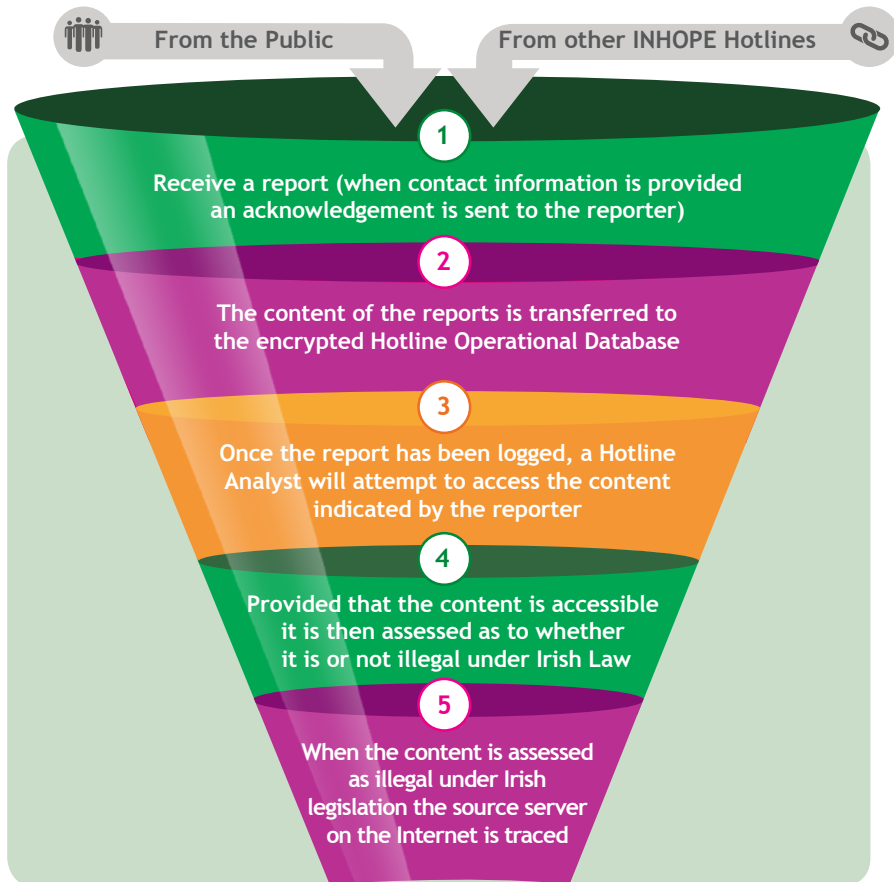
Evolution of Volume of Reports per Year
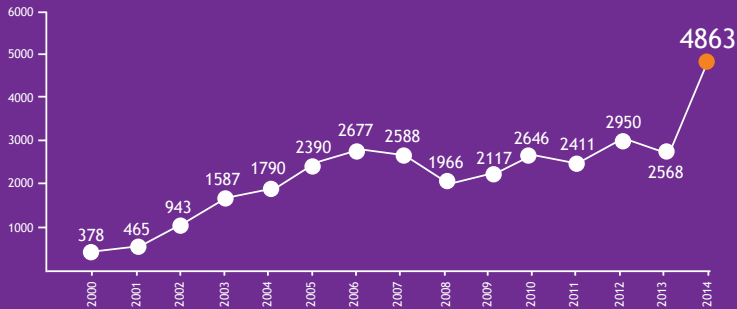
In terms of volume of reports per year, the first peak ever recorded in the history of the Hotline was in 2006. Ever since and up to 2013, the total number of reports per annum has fluctuated around an average of 2,464 (the previous highest peak - 2012 - included).

In the 12 month period from 1st January to 31st December 2014, Hotline.ie received and processed an unprecedented high volume of reports (4,863) with an increase of 65% over the previous highest peak recorded in 2012. In a nutshell ISPAI believes that greater awareness, achieved through a series of awareness campaigns run throughout 2014, led to more reports which subsequently led to more content being identified and taken-down.

Assessment Criteria

- Trained and internationally certified Hotline Analysts assess reported content, using the best practice and guidelines established in conjunction with the Department of Justice and Equality, the Industry, Law Enforcement and INHOPE.

- When assessing whether or not content reported to Hotline.ie (within its remit) is likely illegal under Irish Legislation, the Analysts rely on the *Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998* and *Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989*.

- Only a Court of Law can make a judgement as to whether something is definitively illegal under the law.

- However, under the transposition of the EU Directive on Electronic Commerce, ISPs must take action within a reasonable time where identified illegal content is brought to their attention. When Hotline.ie assesses content to be probably illegal, it is simultaneously notified to An Garda Síochána, who may then choose to initiate a criminal investigation and to the appropriate ISPAI Member for removal from public access.

- If the content "in itself" is not contrary to law, it is assessed as not illegal and Hotline.ie will not take any further action.

> THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

From the Public

From other INHOPE Hotlines

1 Receive a report (when contact information is provided an acknowledgement is sent to the reporter)

2 The content of the reports is transferred to the encrypted Hotline Operational Database

3 Once the report has been logged, a Hotline Analyst will attempt to access the content indicated by the reporter

4 Provided that the content is accessible it is then assessed as to whether it is or not illegal under Irish Law

5 When the content is assessed as illegal under Irish legislation the source server on the Internet is traced

If The Suspected Illegal Content Is Traced To A Server Located In Ireland

- The appropriate Irish ISP is identified.
- Hotline.ie issues a notification to An Garda Siochana as the decision to initiate a criminal investigation is a matter for Law Enforcement alone.
- A takedown notice is issued to the appropriate ISP. The ISP is then responsible for the removal of the specified content from their systems while preserving the forensic evidence for the police investigation.

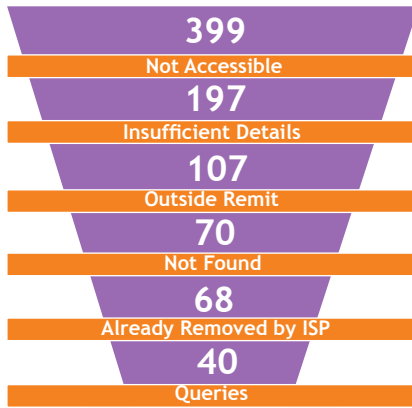## If The Suspected Illegal Content Is Traced Outside Irish Jurisdiction

- If an INHOPE Hotline exists in the country of origin, then all technical details, including the determination of Hotline.ie, are forwarded to the appropriate Hotline for processing.
- If the content is located in a country not having an INHOPE presence, Hotline.ie will send the content description and tracing details to the source country through international Law Enforcement channels.
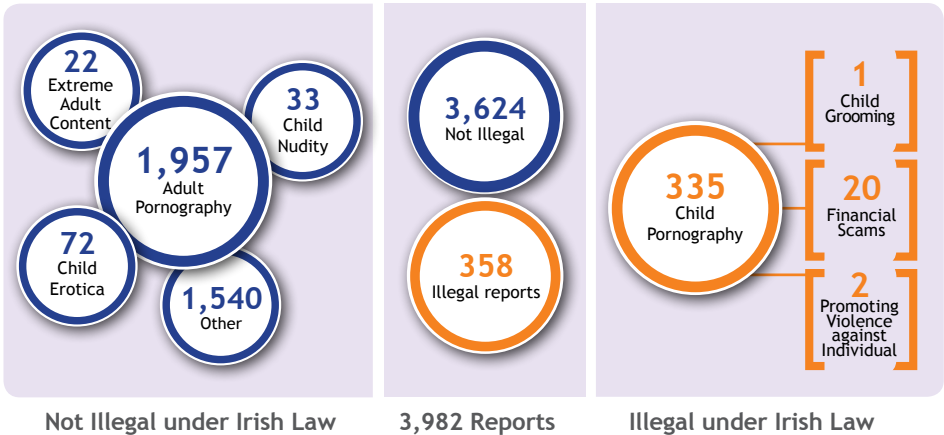
> TARGETED SERVICES

4,693	52	47	5	1	65
Website *	Chat or Instant Messaging	eMail	Peer to Peer	Newsgroup	Other

Top 5 types of websites: 2,295 video streaming, 798 image hosting, 478 social networking sites, 359 forums, 243 cyberlockers

Of 4,863 Reports logged In 2014: 881 were not fully assessed

399
Not Accessible
197
Insufficient Details
107
Outside Remit
70
Not Found
68
Already Removed by ISP
40
Queries

Breakdown of all fully assessed reports (3,982):

Not Illegal under Irish Law

- 22 Extreme Adult Content
- 33 Child Nudity
- 1,957 Adult Pornography
- 72 Child Erotica
- 1,540 Other

3,982 Reports

- 3,624 Not Illegal
- 358 Illegal reports

Illegal under Irish Law

- 335 Child Pornography
- 1 Child Grooming
- 20 Financial Scams
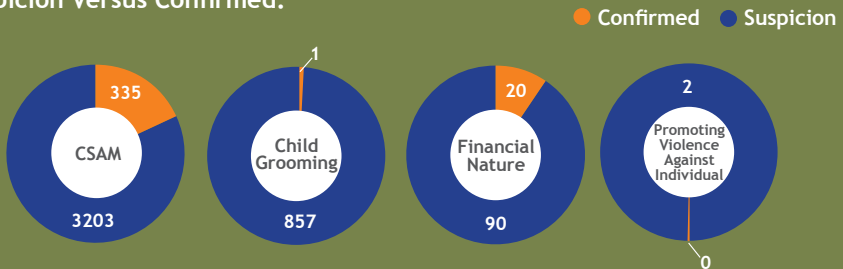- 2 Promoting Violence against Individual

>ILLEGAL REPORT ANALYSIS

Why Cases of Child Erotica and Child Nudity are being classified as NOT Illegal:

By Child Erotica Hotline.ie refers to: images of children posed in an explicitly sexual manner but are not illegal as they do not meet the criteria set in law. If they were found to be hosted in Ireland on an ISPAI member's facilities, though to-date this has never happened, Hotline.ie would notify the ISP to consider removing the content under the ISPAI Code of Practice and Ethics.

By Child Nudity Hotline.ie refers to: images where children may be naked but the photo or video was not produced for pornographic purposes. Examples include pictures of naked children in famine or war zone situations, naturist sites where pictures are taken in family contexts, or images taken for diagnostic reasons which are presented in a medical context.
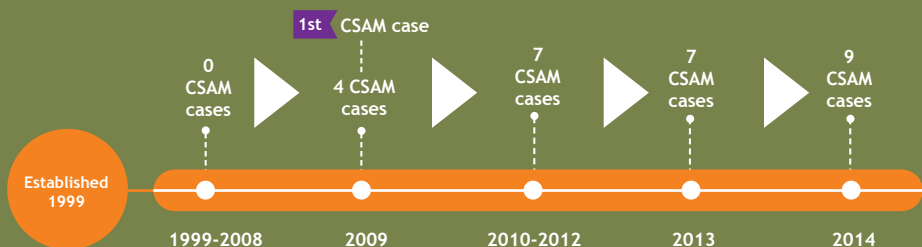
Suspicion Versus Confirmed:

● Confirmed   ● Suspicion

335	1	20	2
CSAM	**Child Grooming**	**Financial Nature**	**Promoting Violence Against Individual**
3203	857	90	0

66% of all reports received in 2014 alleged Child Sexual Abuse Material of which only 10.5% were actually assessed as such. Even so this represents an increase of 148% on 2013.

The second highest suspicion recorded in 2014 was Child Grooming Activities representing 18%, of which only 1 report was determined as such. This should not be a surprise as this type of crime is quite difficult to assess. The grooming process takes time and has several stages: targeting the victim, gaining the victim's trust, filling a need, isolating the victim, sexualizing the relationship and maintaining control. In order to undoubtedly assess a case as Child Grooming the Analyst has to see clear proof of intent.

Evolution of Identified CSAM in Ireland

	Established 1999	0 CSAM cases	**1st** CSAM case — 4 CSAM cases	7 CSAM cases	7 CSAM cases	9 CSAM cases
		1999-2008	**2009**	**2010-2012**	**2013**	**2014**

of CSAM as traced by Hotline.ie in 2014

○ INHOPE Countries   ○ Non-INHOPE Countries   *83 Location not determined

Canada — **3**

Netherlands — **14**
Sweden — **9**

United Kingdom — **8**
Germany — **9**
Czech Republic — **7**

Ireland — **9**
Europe — **1**
Switzerland — **3**
France — **6**

Russia — **33**

Japan — **4**

China — **10**

USA — **128**

British Virgin Isles — **3**

Singapore — **3**
Indonesia — **1**

Australia — **1**

Top 3 INHOPE countries where Hotline.ie traced CSAM in 2014 are USA 38%, Russia 10% and the Netherlands 4%. Outside the INHOPE network the highest number of CSAM reports 10, counting for 3%, was traced to the People's Republic of China and notified through Law Enforcement channels.

Hotline.ie's Contribution in 2014 to the fight against CSAM
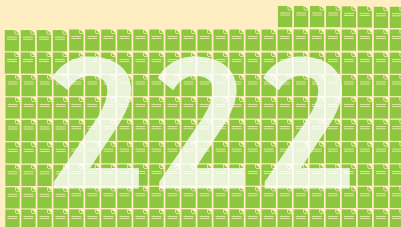
222
222 CSAM Cases Notified to INHOPE Countries

21 21 CSAM cases Notified to Non-INHOPE Countries

9 9 CSAM Cases in Ireland

83 Case Location not Determined

= 1 case

>FOCUS - ILLEGAL REPORTS

REPORTS ASSESSED AS ILLEGAL BY HOTLINE IN 2014

358 reports were determined by Hotline Analysts as illegal under Irish Law, representing 7.4% of all reports processed and assessed by Hotline.ie in 2014.

Even though, in 2014, Hotline.ie recorded an unprecedented number of reports quoting as suspicion Child Grooming Activities (857), marking an increase of 310% over 2013, Hotline Analysts determined only **1 report as Child Grooming.**

The misused service was a very well-known video streaming resource. In fact 60% of content reported under this suspicion was pointing to this video streaming resource.

As stated previously in the report, this should not be a surprise as this type of crime is quite difficult to assess. In order to undoubtedly assess a case as Child Grooming the Analyst has to see clear proof of intent.

The number of reports referring to Financial Scam as suspicion remains low despite the level of phishing and other e-mail scams that prevail on the Internet. In 2014, **20 cases of financial nature** were reported to Hotline.ie. Of which 45% were variations of the police "Ransom-Ware" Trojan which freezes the computer and (in Ireland) displays a message purporting to be from An Garda Síochána, ordering that the "fine" be paid for viewing illicit content, on receipt of which the computer will be unlocked.

This scam was first reported to the Hotline in 2012, reached its peak in 2013 (64% of all reports determined as Financial Scam) and by 2014 Hotline Analysts detected a considerable decrease to just 19% of the previous year. We would like to warn the public to be wary and not to pay over any money – it will not unlock your computer!

335
Child Sexual Abuse Material

1
Child Grooming

20
Cases Of Financial Nature

2
Cases As Promoting Violence Against Individual

=

358
All reports determined as illegal

>FOCUS - ILLEGAL REPORTS

REPORTS ASSESSED AS ILLEGAL BY HOTLINE IN 2014

The remaining of 55% identified as cases of financial nature were related to Online transactions and phishing activities (such as the Revenue Tax Refund Fraud), but the cases were too scattered to come to any kind of a conclusion with regards to emerging trends or threats.

Based on the *Offences Against The Person Act, 1861* Hotline Analysts assessed **2 cases as Promoting Violence against Individual.** The content was encountered on a very popular social networking site, was then traced to the USA and forwarded to the INHOPE Hotline operating in the States – The National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) for appropriate action.

335 reports were determined by Hotline Analysts as **Online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)**. Only 9 cases were actually traced to Ireland during the reporting period. Despite this, Ireland has an excellent record in comparison to most other developed countries. The 1st CSAM case traced to Ireland following a report received by Hotline.ie was in 2009. Only 27 cases have ever been traced to Ireland, including the 9 CSAM cases identified in 2014.

2 of the reports traced to Ireland came from the public and 7 were notified by other Internet Hotlines, which means that these CSAM instances were initially detected and reported by Internet Users in other countries (Serbia, Denmark, Latvia, Taiwan, Germany and Lithuania).

This clearly shows the global nature of the Internet and the crucial role the public plays in reporting suspected illegal content. All the identified content was removed from the Internet and evidence was collected as per procedures in place for police investigation.

Being part of a worldwide network of recognised Internet Hotlines, each National Hotline (such as Hotline.ie) is enhanced through its ability to exchange report information allowing swift action against verified cases of CSAM across borders.

Throughout 2014, Hotline.ie forwarded 222 CSAM cases to 11 INHOPE Member Hotlines around the world and traced 21 CSAM cases to non-INHOPE countries which were dealt with via Law Enforcement channels.
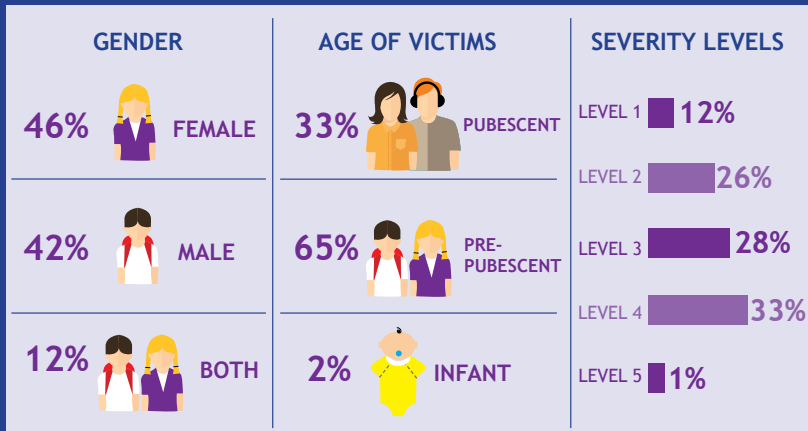
There were 83 CSAM cases where the location of the content could not be determined, of which 69% were .onion resources and so untraceable.

Surprisingly the gender distribution is almost identical with the one profiled in 2013, indicating 2 successive years with a unprecedented high percentage of male victims.

INHOPE consolidate statistics gathered from Member Hotlines worldwide show that, in 2014, 81% of the content identified by Hotlines worldwide pictured females, while only 13% pictured males and 6% both genders.

Victims' Profile

GENDER	AGE OF VICTIMS	SEVERITY LEVELS
46% FEMALE	33% PUBESCENT	LEVEL 1 12%
42% MALE	65% PRE-PUBESCENT	LEVEL 2 26%
12% BOTH	2% INFANT	LEVEL 3 28%
		LEVEL 4 33%
		LEVEL 5 1%

There is an obvious discrepancy between INHOPE's stats, on this topic, and those of Hotline.ie. We have no explanation for this other than we believe that the sheer volumes of a given genre of site being constantly reported has a statistical significance.

Many people find it difficult to believe the abuse that pornographic images of children convey, it's even worse when one realises that each image is evidence that a child was sexually abused in real life in order to create that image. Hotline records show that boys as well as girls are the victims of abuse. Removal at source is one of the most efficient ways to avoid re-victimisation and to hinder the perpetuation of such content through the Internet.

There is one noticeable characteristic where national data corresponds to INHOPE's and that is the age factor. According to INHOPE, in 2014, 72% of the victims were pre-pubescent, 21% pubescent and 7% infants. Hotline.ie's figures are broadly similar at 65%, 33%, 2% respectively. This shows that age plays a very important role for this type of offenders.

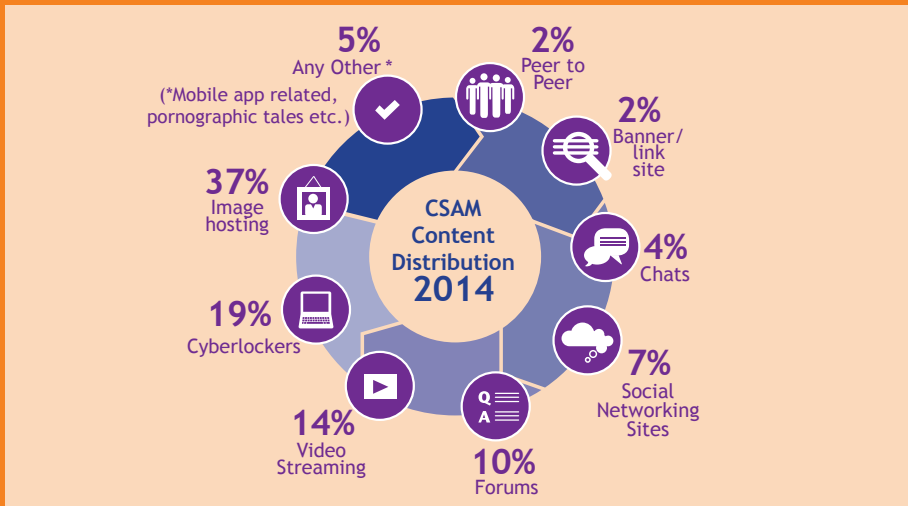**The severity levels** are based on the UK Court of Appeal sentencing guidelines which are used by many Law Enforcement and Social Services Agencies around the world to assist in case prioritisation. Briefly summarised: (1) stands for instances of erotic posing of a child or children showing genital area, (2) explicit sexual activity of child or children but no adult depicted, (3) non-penetrative children and adult/s, (4) penetrative sexual activity between child/children and adult/s and (5) sadistic sexual subjugation or bestiality involving a child/children.

Regrettably, there's also a commercial aspect to CSAM – meaning websites hosting or giving access to CSAM which require a payment for access to the full content. According to INHOPE's 2014 statistics, 9% meaning 8,078 CSAM cases of 89,758 identified worldwide were referring to commercial hosting. It is in these instances financial institutions could play a vital role in the investigation process.

As per INHOPE's findings the top 3 countries hosting commercial CSAM in 2014 were USA (72%), Japan (11%) and the Netherlands and the Russian Federation (6% each).

> <u>TRENDS, OBSERVATIONS & CONCLUSIONS</u>

To better understand the phenomenon and remain a step ahead Hotline.ie introduced, in 2014, a new feature to its already robust database that allows Hotline Analysts to categorise the type of resource that is being misused by paedophiles for the distribution of CSAM. The idea behind this new feature was to maximise and enhance the amount of information that can be harnessed through the assessment process in order to be able to define patters and thus use the data to anticipate and prepare for the challenges ahead.

CSAM Content Distribution 2014

- 2% Peer to Peer
- 2% Banner/link site
- 4% Chats
- 7% Social Networking Sites
- 10% Forums
- 14% Video Streaming
- 19% Cyberlockers
- 37% Image hosting
- 5% Any Other * (*Mobile app related, pornographic tales etc.)

Thanks to continuous vigilance and determination of the public to report suspected illegal content to Hotlines and the actions of Law Enforcement, the likelihood of Internet Users stumbling across CSAM on the open Internet has considerably reduced since the peak experienced in 2007. However, the collective efforts and these effective actions/responses against the distribution of Online CSAM are also forcing paedophiles to constantly find new ways to avoid detection.

One of the findings that confirms and supports this observation is the **unprecedented number of .onion reports.** 42% of all .onion assessed reports proved to be CSAM.

With this new feature introduced in 2014 Hotline Analysts were able to distinguish a **"journey" pattern.** The data shows that the "journey" starts either in a chatroom, forum or a link site. These services are misused as gateways to .onion resources or cyberlockers containing CSAM (videos and /or images).

The **anonymity conferred by Tor** shields users from detection and makes content tracing almost impossible which creates a challenge in the fight against the distribution of Online CSAM. However, as part of our efforts to lay the groundwork for a better digital tomorrow, Hotline.ie along with other 11 Internet Hotlines volunteered to be part of an EU funded project **BIK-NET IC-CAM.**

As an outcome of this Project, it is now possible to document CSAM distributed via .onion resources.

For example, the **83 CSAM reports where the location proved to be untraceable were captured and inserted into IC-CAM for hashing and subsequent input into INTERPOL's database to assist investigation and victim identification**. In 2013, this would have not been possible and the content would have been lost.

The Hotline is also concerned that **Peer-to-Peer** services are increasingly being abused and we appeal to those using these services in a legitimate way to report using the anonymous Hotline.ie Service if they encounter filenames suggesting or referring to images/videos of CSAM.

Hotline Analyst also noticed a **marked increase of age-inappropriate self-generated content,** such as sexually provocative self-generated images of children and teenagers. As this type of content is (mostly) not in itself illegal, Hotline.ie and Law Enforcement are largely unable to act. Therefore, Hotline.ie would like to use this opportunity to raise alarm signals to the public, parents in particular, that

not only can their children's images end up on inappropriate locations such as adult sites, but to be aware of the duplication and persistence of content posted on the Internet.

Just before the end of 2015, Hotline.ie received a report that led our Analysts to a web location with hundreds of CSAM images. These were recognised as those of a 4 year old girl whose images had been widely reported around the time Hotline.ie was established. Here they were again, 15 years later, still being shared Online by paedophiles.

In this case the victim's images had been shared over the Internet by her abuser in 1999. Not long after he was tracked down by police in the UK and successfully prosecuted. Known instances of the images were removed from the Internet at the time. Despite the offender being jailed and the victim rescued from the abuse in early 2000, someone had uploaded her images to be encountered at the end of 2014.

It is reassuring that a civic-minded person took the right decision and made an anonymous report to Hotline.ie. Though found to be hosted in the USA, the images were notified by Hotline.ie via INHOPE to the US authorities and were removed within 24 hours.

This case alone, clearly demonstrate that once an image is put on the Internet, the user completely loses control over who saves it, shares it, and misuses it. What is more, notwithstanding the determined efforts to remove them, they can reappear, any place, any time, even many years later. Hence, this is one of the reasons why Internet Hotlines are still as relevant and needed as they were 15 years ago.

ISPAI Members finance Hotline.ie