



Press Release

Dublin, 27th June 2016

Source: Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland

70% Child Sexual Abuse Imagery, assessed by Hotline.ie in 2015, depicted boys

On 28th June 2016, **Minister of State for Justice David Stanton launched the ISPAI Hotline.ie Annual Report** covering January to December 2015 - during a press event hosted in Dublin, at the Irish Architectural Archive.

The report highlights the vital contribution of ISPAI Hotline.ie, not only nationally but also internationally, to the fight against Online Child Sexual Abuse Imagery (CSAI). Aside from an analysis of the online illegal content reported for the period, it covers: trends and evolution of Online CSAI distribution over the past 15 years; evidence of the ripple effect produced by 1 report to Hotline.ie; and amongst other things Hotline.ie's international contribution to the fight against Online CSAI.

In 2015, Hotline.ie has dealt with the second largest number of reports received in a year (3,153) since its establishment (1999). **Despite a 35% decrease in overall reporting when compared to 2014, the proportion of confirmed CSAI to suspected CSAI reported, was 4% higher in 2015.**

Of the 327 reports determined as CSAI, in 2015, 70% of the content assessed depicted boys. As a side note, 1 report usually constitutes of multiple items (images and/or videos). 94.5% of the boys depicted being sexually abused and raped had estimated ages in the range 4-13 y.o.

It is commonly believed that girls are more likely to be in danger of sexual abuse, but the cruel reality of Child Sexual Abuse, particularly as witnessed by the Irish Hotline, is that gender is no exemption, and boys are vulnerable to sexual abuse also.

Hotline.ie has seen a constant increase in Child Sexual Abuse Imagery depicting boys over the past 3 years - 44% [2013], 42% [2014] and 70% [2015]. However, this is an obvious discrepancy between Hotline.ie and the experience of other Hotlines in the INHOPE network. While international figures for 2015 have not been published as yet, historically the content depicting boys has been around 15%. At this stage, there is no explanation for this other than the sheer volume of a given genre of sites being constantly reported and captured statistically.

“Let's never forget that behind Child Sexual Abuse Imagery is a real child who has been sexually abused and exploited; whilst images of the abuse are in circulation on the Internet the abuse is perpetuated and the victim is re-victimised ad infinitum. That is why Hotline.ie and ISPAI Members advocate removal at source as the



single most effective way of breaking the cycle.” - commented Paul Durrant Chief Executive of ISPAI and Hotline.ie Manager.

On a positive note, **Ireland continues to remain virtually free of CSAI hosting with only 1 CSAI report in 2015** and 28 in total since inception (1999). However, **there is no room for complacency**, as it is important we continue to implement and evolve measures, through cooperation of Government, Gardaí and Industry, which will deter people from misusing the Irish Internet facilities for illegal purposes.

In 2015, ISPAI Hotline.ie forwarded 146 CSAI reports to 8 Hotline counterparts around the world and 3 more to the Republic of China and Singapore through Law Enforcement channels. All cases reported to Hotline.ie were fully processed and assessed in Ireland before being forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction for action. Regrettably, Analyst were not able to pinpoint the location for 177 reports***, mainly due to TOR (often referred to as the DarkNet) but the assessment and relevant technical information was forwarded to Law Enforcement.

In the last 10 years ISPAI Hotline.ie has traced CSAI to 57 countries across the globe, which proves once again that Online Child Sexual Abuse is a global problem which requires a global coordinated response between Governments, Law Enforcement Agencies, Industry and civil society. Quite often the 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. ISPAI Members support Hotline.ie as they don't want their Internet facilities misused in this manner and encourage their customers to report suspicion of any such material encountered so that swift and decisive action can be taken.

[End]

Editorial Notes:

- ✓ **CSAI** – Child Sexual Abuse Imagery legally known as Child Pornography. ISPAI Hotline.ie uses the term Child Sexual Abuse Imagery or Child Sexual Abuse Material instead of the legal term to accurately reflect the gravity of the images and videos; as these are documented evidence of a crime being committed – a child being sexually abused and often actually raped.
- ✓ ***In 2014, ISPAI Hotline.ie volunteered, alongside 11 other Hotlines, to be part of the EC funded BIK-NET ICCAM Pilot Project, coordinated by INHOPE in partnership with INTERPOL. Although still in BETA testing throughout 2015, ICCAM is a game changer as each image assessed by a Hotline Analyst as CSAI is classified and hashed within the ICCAM solution and then made available directly to INTERPOL. Subsequently to INTERPOL's validation the data is added to INTERPOL's Child Sexual Exploitation Database (ICSE) to assist Law Enforcement investigations and victim identification. This development is particularly important with the increased use of TOR making content tracing almost impossible, as it will ensure that the images are being captured and available to Law Enforcement Agencies. These images may contain the missing clue which in turn could be the key to breaking-down or even solving a case.
- ✓ **ISPAI** – Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee of its Members. Since November 1999, ISPAI runs the Hotline.ie Service under agreement with the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána and oversight from the Office for Internet Safety as one of the instrument in the



implementation of the ISP self-regulatory system and for compliance with the 2000-31-EC e-Commerce Directive. Further information available on www.ispai.ie

- ✓ **ISPAI Members** supporting Hotline.ie and the fight against Online Child Sexual Abuse Imagery <http://www.ispai.ie/membership/>
- ✓ **ISPAI Hotline.ie** is the National Reporting Service for the Internet, where the public may anonymously report suspected illegal content, particularly Child Sexual Abuse Imagery. Hotline.ie only deals with reports referring to content on the Internet, while urgent situations where persons may be in immediate danger should be reported directly to An Garda Síochána. For further details visit www.hotline.ie
- ✓ **INHOPE** - The International Network of Internet Hotlines - to ensure international reach and fast response to CSAI hosted outside Irish jurisdiction, ISPAI is one of the founding Members of INHOPE which has grown, over the years, to a network of 52 Internet Hotlines in 47 countries worldwide. INHOPE was established to support Internet Hotlines around the world in dealing with Online CSAI and to provide the means for Hotlines to pass/exchange the relevant information, without delay, to a trusted counterpart Hotline in the “source” country (where the CSAI is actually hosted) so that swift action could be taken to remove the content from public access while preserving evidence for police investigation. INHOPE is the organisation that is responsible for building and expanding this network of trust so instrumental in the global fight against CSAI.

Note: The digital version of ISPAI Hotline.ie Annual Report covering January to December 2015 will be made available Online @ www.hotline.ie/june2016/

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