



Press Release

Dublin, 4th October 2018

Source: Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland

79% Child Sexual Abuse Imagery found to feature children aged 0 to 12

Hotline.ie works in partnership with law enforcement, Government, Internet Industry and 44 other Hotlines across the globe [INHOPE] to ensure that every reported and confirmed Child Sexual Abuse image/video is removed from the Internet irrespective of where in the world it may be hosted.

In 2017 Hotline.ie received and processed more reports than ever before and identified 44% more Child Sexual Abuse content than in 2016, with the images and videos found having increased in their severity.

*“We know it is difficult for most people to conceptualise that adults may have sexual interest in children, that child sexual abuse may be happening in the family context, or the very nature and gravity of self-generated Child Sexual Abuse Imagery which, unfortunately, is no longer a trend but an established reality. **Hotline.ie’s findings and statistics, published in the Annual Report, make for uncomfortable reading, however raising awareness and informing the public on how to report this horrific content is of utmost importance. The cost of not knowing is immense.**”* – said Ana Niculescu, ISPAI Hotline.ie Manager

Key 2017 findings:

- **5,789 suspected Child Sexual Abuse leads were investigated** by Hotline.ie internationally trained and certified Analysts, who **subsequently confirmed 524** constituted Child Sexual Abuse as provisioned by the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 [amended by the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017]. These should not be read as 524 images but rather **sources which in most cases consisted of hundreds and thousands of Child Sexual Abuse images and/or videos.**
- **52%** of the Hotline.ie confirmed Child Sexual Abuse Imagery [CSAI] **showed sexual activity between adults and children including rape and sexual torture.**
- **79%** of the Hotline.ie confirmed CSAI featured **children appearing to be aged 0 to 12 [6% 0 to 3 years of age].**
- **Unprecedented increase in disguised websites solely dedicated to Child Sexual Abuse Imagery distribution – 1 in 5 confirmed CSAI reports.** These are websites where CSAI is only revealed to someone who has followed a pre-set digital pathway, while to anyone else, they will only show legal content. This finding reveals that offenders are becoming more sophisticated and tech savvy, going to extreme lengths to avoid detection. Further details available in Trends and Observations section of the Hotline.ie 2017 Annual Report.



- **Image Hosting sites continue to be the most abused service at 44% of content.**
- **Hotline.ie found 30 countries worldwide to host CSAI in 2017**, with USA and the Netherlands remaining the top 2. On a positive note, for the **first time in eight years no CSAI was traced by Hotline.ie or any of our 44 Hotline counterparts [in 39 countries] as hosted in the Republic of Ireland.**
- **1 public report to Hotline.ie** led the Analysts to 1 blog [hosted in Luxembourg] advertising and linking to Child Sexual Abuse. Following 1 of the advertised links uncovered 66 Child Sexual Abuse videos showing boys and girls, appearing to be as young as 2 and as old as 12 engaged in sexual activity with an adult [content hosted in U.S]. **1 public report, 2 continents, 3 countries** - hard to overstate the importance of cross-border cooperation, uninterrupted Hotline service and vigilance of Internet users together with their readiness to report, in combating the production and distribution of CSAI. **Removing CSAI from the Internet is only the first step**, while in ensuring **child victims can be identified and rescued from abuse and perpetrators pursued and brought to justice the partnership with An Garda Síochána and international Law Enforcement Agencies such as INTERPOL is paramount.**

Online Child Sexual Abuse may be a borderless crime, due to the very nature of the digital world, but it's not a faceless crime and there is nothing virtual about the child's suffering. **National coordinated multi-stakeholder approach underpinned by international cooperation remains the most effective way to tackle this global issue.** ISPAI Hotline.ie looks forward to contributing its expertise to the **newly established National Advisory Council for Online Safety**, which held its first meeting earlier today to serve that purpose.

[End]

NOTE: the digital version of the Hotline.ie 2017 Annual Report will be **made available, at 12 o'clock, Thursday 4th October 2018 @ <https://www.hotline.ie/publications/>**

Editorial Notes

- ✓ ISPAI – the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland is a non-for-profit organisation, and the legal entity sanctioned by Government and An Garda Síochána to deliver 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.
- ✓ The Hotline.ie Service is co-financed by Internet companies <http://www.ispai.ie/membership/> and is also in receipt of grant aid from the European Union through the Connecting Europe Facility programme.
- ✓ INHOPE is the International Association of Internet Hotlines uniting 45 Internet Hotlines in 40 countries worldwide engaged in combating the Child Sexual Abuse Online.
- ✓ CSAI – while the legal term in Ireland is “Child Pornography” to accurately reflect the gravity of the content as well as challenge any notion that such acts might be carried out pursuant to the consent of the child we use the term Child Sexual Abuse Imagery.