

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **Lax security allowed criminals plant child pornography on Irish website**

How lax security can allow criminals infiltrate websites where they can plant child pornography is highlighted in the annual report of the Hotline.ie service which details the activities of the Hotline during the period 1st January through 31st December 2009. The same period also saw a dramatic fall in the number of reports with material deemed to be illegal under Irish law. Hotline.ie is a service run by Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI).

An incident in October showed how lax Internet security, in this cases a weak log-on/password, enabled criminals outside Ireland to plant child pornography on an Irish website. It was the first time in the Hotline's ten year history an absolutely confirmed assessment and location of illegal CP content hosted in Ireland was made by Hotline.ie analysts. However thanks to the effectiveness of the Hotline procedures, the efficiency of the INHOPE (International Association of Internet Hotlines) network and the rapid response by the Gardai, the illegal content was removed within four hours of the report being received by the Hotline.

In 2009 the reports which our analysts deemed to be illegal under Irish law totalled 285 in comparison with the 2008 figure of 536, a very significant drop of 251. This reflects both the fact that the public are not encountering illegal content with the same frequency as in previous years and the successful measures being taken by ISPAI members to deter illegal activity on ISPAI Internet facilities.

While the downward trend of child abuse images being reported to the Hotline is very encouraging the Hotline's General Manager Paul Durrant cautions that there is no room for complacency. The October incident very emphatically underlines the need for tight Internet security. The methods used by criminals to market, exchange or collect child abuse images are becoming more sophisticated. Public vigilance is essential, he warns, and the Hotline service enables the public play a vital role in helping make the Internet a safer place for all, including children.

The Hotline.ie Annual Report 2010 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.