

## **SUSPECTED ILLEGAL MATERIAL REPORTED BY IRISH INTERNET USERS MORE THAN DOUBLED IN 30 MONTHS - HOTLINE.IE REPORT**

**Monday 27th February 2006**

The third report of the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) service which was launched today by Minister for Children, Mr. Brian Lenihan, TD, has found that suspected illegal online material reported by Irish internet users had more than doubled in 30 months. The report which covered a 30 month period, ending 31st December 2005, showed an increase from 1792 reports in the last report covering the previous 24 month period, to 5102 in this period. This is more than double even when adjusted.

Of the 5102 reports received by the Hotline, 671 were confirmed as unique incidences of illegal child pornography. Though this was mainly reported by people using the Internet in Ireland, in all cases the Hotline found the content was located or sent from outside the country.

The report also found that the severity of child pornographic material, reported to the Hotline as openly accessible on the Internet, had significantly increased since the last report in July 2003.

54% resulted from spam email advertising suspected child pornography sites. 41% of reports were of material, suspected as illegal, encountered by people when surfing the web.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Lenihan, said, "The Hotline is on the front line of the fight to combat the proliferation of child pornography on the Internet. The Internet brings such massive benefits to everyone, especially in its educational value to children. It is vital that all users support the Industry and law enforcement to counter illegal use of the Internet and make it a safer place for all."

Paul Durrant, ISPAA Hotline General Manager said, "Just because nothing illegal was traced to an Irish source is no reason for complacency. These reports represent thousands of Irish citizens being presented with some truly horrific material as they used the Internet and because the Internet is a trans-national world wide web, we must play our part to ensure our own doorstep is kept clean, if everyone did that, we would have a pretty clean Internet street".

"Internet usage mushroomed in the period due to the enormous benefits it brings to consumers, business, education and entertainment but there is a tiny minority who have learnt to exploit it to support paedophile and other criminal activities," he continued. "It is vital for their future that children are taught the life skills of using the Internet and computer applications. Therefore it's imperative that Governments, Industry and Law Enforcement work together to make the Internet a safe environment for our children. The ISPAA industry run Hotline is a major initiative towards achieving that goal, allowing the public to report suspected illegal content encountered when using the Internet so swift action can be taken to remove it."

The ISPAA has received support from Microsoft to develop the [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) service. Microsoft Ireland has donated software licenses for Hotline Analysts' computers. Tom Murphy, Microsoft Ireland noted, 'We were delighted to assist [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) on this initiative. Microsoft is committed to providing a safer, more secure online experience for all Internet users. By following a series of best practice guidelines, internet use is a rewarding and educational experience. Parents can help keep their children safe when using the internet by keeping the computer where they can see it, learning about how their children use the internet and encouraging them to share with them any material that they discover which makes them feel uncomfortable.'

The Hotline, run by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland, was set up in 1999 to combat illegal child pornography online. The ISPAA has 21 members. It funds and operates the Hotline which currently receives 50% co-funding from the European Commission's Safer Internet Action Plan.

The full report can be accessed at [www.hotline.ie/thirdreport](http://www.hotline.ie/thirdreport)