

End Violence Fund 8th Knowledge Exchange Global Webinar

CSAM specialized services: Understanding the global ecosystem to detect, refer and remove CSAM

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RECAP

Background

The Knowledge Exchange Global Webinars are a community space to share and learn from other grantees' experiences, strategies, challenges and best practices to tackle online violence against children. After hosting seven webinars to showcase best practices and lessons learned from different countries and grantees, the webinars will now address technical issues and capacity needs of the grantee community. Topics are chosen based on the key gaps and priorities, and feedback from the grantees. The '2020 webinar series' will include: (i) CSAM specialized services; (ii) safeguarding; (iii) measuring and communicating results; (iv) technology solutions; and, (v) best practices to ensure child-centred investigations, rehabilitation and recovery.

Grantees will continue to be invited to contribute to the webinars; however, technical experts will also be invited. For this eighth webinar, Victoria Baines, INHOPE and two grantees (INTERPOL and IWF) shared their knowledge and expertise on the global ecosystem to detect refer and remove Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). Their contributions are summarised below.

Typology of crimes generating CSAM and used by sex offenders

Victoria Baines provided a brief introduction on the typology of crimes generating CSAM and on the functions needed to tackle it. She started via highlighting the fact that online CSEA is a very complex issue as it involves a lot of moving parts and multiple stakeholders across countries and sectors; this is also why it is very important to discuss how collaborations can be initiated or strengthened. Moreover, to add to the complexity, the language and terminologies used change overtime and sometimes professionals mean different things when they talk about types of crimes against children.

The focus on child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is justified by the fact that the online distribution of CSAM implies revictimization, however, the range of offences are often interlinked. For instance, 'contact abuse' is primarily an offline criminal activity, but it is also often reproduced online. Another example is the link between travelling sex offending and live streaming of CSEA. There is also a very dynamic relationship between commercial and non-commercial offending. For instance, in the past, people would pay for CSEA photos with their credit cards; some of the largest investigations conducted 10 years ago mainly involved tracing people via the credit cards they used to purchase the images. With the rise of peer-to-peer technologies, ordinary people can share CSAM with each other. This contributed to a decrease of commercial offending (also partially due to the law enforcement response) and an upward trend in the non-commercial production and distribution of CSAM particularly in the dark web where more sophisticated offenders produce new CSAM as a currency itself. Moreover, one of the latest developments shows a new trend where new CSAM is available on the dark web in exchange of virtual currencies like Bitcoin. Finally, the rapid increase of self-generated sexual content is another recent evolution with young people producing images and videos about all aspects of their lives. These young people are sometimes solicited or coerced into producing and sharing sexual content, and in the most extreme cases, they are blackmailed into producing more exploitative and abusive content.

The WeProtect Global Alliance [Model of National Response](#) (MNR) outlines all the functions needed to tackle online CSEA effectively, such as a criminal justice system, law enforcement agencies, deterrent and prevention programs, organizations like INHOPE and IWF that remove CSAM, etc. For each of these functions, there is no one stakeholder that can address it in isolation. This aspect clearly distinguishes online CSEA from other forms of serious crimes. Law enforcement can't tackle it alone because it requires extensive collaboration





between different stakeholders across sectors but also across countries. Online CSEA is, by default, an international crime; there may be national investigations, but by and large online CSEA investigations and the remedial response require international collaboration.

To conclude, Victoria mentioned her work as senior adviser for the Disrupting Harm project, a large-scale research project commissioned by the End Violence Fund and implemented collaboratively by ECPAT International, INTERPOL and UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti. The project is an illustrative example of the importance of international collaboration and it addresses one of the key gaps in this space. The lack of information and data has been a problem for a long time mainly due to the volume of offending, the pace of technological change, the extent to which the crime has evolved rapidly, the different capacity at country level, etc. Disrupting Harm will produce 14 country reports and two regional reports outlining the threats, the country contexts and children's experiences via an extended version of the [Global Kids Online](#) (GKO) survey. This is the first time we have the opportunity to paint such a rich picture of the issue across multiple countries.

Initiatives to report and remove CSAM via national and international channels

There are 47 INHOPE hotlines and 32 IWF reporting portals across the world, and more are expected to be established. For instance, IWF portals are planned to be launched in Haiti, Madagascar, Mongolia, Pakistan and Senegal in 2020. Samantha Woolfe ([INHOPE](#)) and Jenny Thornton ([Internet Watch Foundation](#) - IWF) shared information about how hotlines and portals operate, what types of stakeholders need to be involved, what resources and networks are needed, as well as differences and similarities and areas where hotlines and portals complement each other. The main differences can be summarised as follows:

- Portals are easy, inexpensive and quick to set-up. They do not require an in-country physical building and they use IWF secure server system, data storage and highly-trained analysts. The portal software and hardware are maintained by IWF and the images are assessed within 24 hours in line with the United Kingdom's legislative system.
- Hotlines require longer planning to become operational (months or several years) and a physical location in an authorized local organization. They use a local secure server system and data protection, and a complementary national legal environment is required for the hotline to assess CSAM. Local staff are vetted, trained and receive ongoing support to assess reports - e.g. via INTERPOL experienced analysts, regular training and best practices from INHOPE members. Once operational, hotlines provide a mechanism that may also process reports of other forms of violence against children and they serve as a focal point for information, support and collaboration between national, international stakeholders and the public. The stakeholder support required for a hotline raises the bar on CSAM at national level - e.g. national legislation, public awareness and national ISPs/industry involvement.

Some of the factors to consider when investing in a hotline or a portal are as follows: (i) size of the population; (ii) existing laws and infrastructure to respond to CSAM and online CSEA; and, (iii) national requirements for the reporting mechanism (e.g. subject of reports). It is worth noting that hotlines and portals are complementary solutions for different countries; and it is feasible to transition from one to another - e.g. portals can be a building-block towards establishing a hotline facility at a later date.

INTERPOL international tools and network to address CSAM

Bjørn-Erik Ludvigsen ([INTERPOL](#)) presented on the international tools INTERPOL uses to facilitate the detection, referral and removal of the worst forms of CSAM to prevent further distribution and child revictimization. He also noted that with internet penetration rapidly increasing there will be more and more CSAM online and technology can be both a challenge and a solution. Stakeholders need to make this a priority and improve ways to work together to tackle the issue. Key gaps need to be addressed. For instance, only a few countries have services to support adults with sexual interest in children to prevent them from offending.

The **INTERPOL Worst of List Domains** (IWOL) is the access & blocking system operated by INTERPOL Headquarters in Lyon (France). INTERPOL maintains and provides this list of domains that disseminate the most severe CSAM worldwide. The images and videos are verified by at least two or three different specialists and countries, and they need to fit the following criteria to enter in the IWOL: (i) the children are "real"; (ii) ages of the children depicted are (or appear to be) younger than 13 years; and, (iii) the abuse is considered





severe. There are currently 1,934 domains on the IWOL. The list of domains is available for free and is shared with all National Central Bureaus (NCBs), Internet Services Providers INTERPOL has an agreement with and other industry partners (e.g. registries, registrars, hosting companies, image hosting services, etc.) so they can take them down and prevent the images and videos from being further distributed. When someone tries to access these domains, they would see the INTERPOL access blocking page, or an empty domain with no content, or the photos would be not visible. This is not always possible as not all ISPs have an agreement with INTERPOL and there are companies that do not have adequate internal regulations. The **Baseline** is somehow similar to the IWOL, but it deals with confirmed CSAM files which are assessed based on the same criteria and are collated in a 'hash list'. Companies can refer to this list to look for and remove the material or to not allow for such material to be uploaded via their services.

The **International Child Sexual Abuse Database** (ICSE) is the intelligence and investigative tool used by INTERPOL to securely share CSAM via its network of 194 member countries. The evidence enters the ICSE database via the National Specialised Units and the ICCAM system used by the INHOPE Hotlines. The National Specialised Units receive the evidence from NGOs, local police, regional police, customs, postal police, etc. All photos and videos in the ICSE are considered 'evidence' of a crime scene and are examined by trained analysts to identify the victims and abusers. In 2019, there was a total of 21,458 CSAM in the ICSE database and most of them come from north America and Europe; however, INTERPOL thinks the same amount of victimization is everywhere so there is a lot of work to be done to ensure the material is also detected in other regions.

Update from the End Violence Global Partnership and Fund

The latest End Violence funding round focusing on leveraging technologies to tackle online CSEA is progressing; selected applicants will now be invited to submit full proposals and the new grantees will be announced in Q2 2020. The Fund also opened an open call as part of the [Safe to Learn](#) initiative with an initial focus on Nepal, Uganda and South Sudan. The End Violence Partnership recently welcomed two new Pathfinding countries, France and Zimbabwe, and brought the number to a total of 29 [Pathfinding countries](#).

The End Violence communication team has been sharing key messages and statistics, information about our partners and recent openings within our team on our [website](#) and social media channels. End Violence is planning multiple events in 2020; please [join our newsletter](#) to receive regular updates.

The next webinar will address best practice examples of how to safeguard children in the digital world and will be held in April. More details will be shared in due course.

