Hotline Development Guide issue

The issue

The internet and digital technology have transformed our world and the way we interact. We have ever cheaper, faster, more diverse, more accessible, more secure forms of information access, information sharing and communication.

The benefits of this are immense and overwhelmingly positive. However, among the challenges presented by our online world are the online sexual exploitation and abuse of children, and the online circulation of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).

Sadly, some of the key benefits of the online world, including privacy, security and freedom of access to information, also present challenges for the online protection of children, including prevention and response strategies.

While the challenge is real, there is also hope. Indeed, we see more and more actors committing themselves to a collective response, and we have ever more tools at our disposal to respond to this phenomenon. Increasingly, partnerships and collaboration across sectors are helping to build efficient, effective and fair response mechanisms that assist the work of police and industry in eradicating and combating online child sexual exploitation and abuse. This online resource embodies this form of international cooperation.

Defining the issue, defining the terms

Child Sexual Abuse Material

Child sexual abuse material is the permanent recording of the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child and depicts actual crime scenes. Real children are being abused on camera and film and there is nothing virtual about their suffering.

Article 2C of the Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc-sale.pdf) describes child pornography as "any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or representation of the sexual parts of a child, the dominant characteristics of which is depiction for a sexual purpose".

While the term child pornography is still widely used, especially in the context of legislation, INHOPE and its partners refer to Child Sexual Abuse Material, often abbreviated as CSAM, to describe the phenomenon.

The latter term is believed to more accurately reflect the seriousness and the nature of the content as well as challenge any notion that such acts might be carried out pursuant to the consent of the child.

For further information, see:

- INTERPOL – Guidance on Appropriate Terminology (http://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Crimes-against-children/Appropriate-terminology)
- INHOPE (2016)- A terminology note (http://hotlinedevelopmentguide.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/A_terminology_note-2.pdf)
- INHOPE – Overview of illegal content (http://inhope.org/gns/internet-concerns/overview-of-the-problem/illegal-content.aspx)
- Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children (2016) – Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (http://luxembourgguidelines.org/) (Luxembourg Guidelines)

Other forms of online child sexual exploitation and abuse

The INHOPE network of hotlines cooperate on a daily basis to facilitate the rapid removal of CSAM from public access. This is a process commonly referred to as Notice and Takedown.

CSAM is one category of a wider panorama of online child sexual exploitation and abuse. Existing and new or emerging challenges in this area include:

- Online grooming of children
- Sexting
- Sexual extortion
- Live streaming of child sexual abuse

Each type of problematic requires a specific response protocol, as well as a customised prevention and awareness-raising strategy.

For the video, please visit http://hotlinedevelopmentguide.org/guide/the-issue/