

**ISPAI Hotline.ie Service**  
**ANNUAL  
REPORT**



COVERING JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2013



**hotline.ie**

# CONTENTS

---

**OUR AIM  
FOREWORD**

---

**ILLEGAL CONTENT  
2013 REPORTS RECEIVED**

---

**VOLUME OF REPORTS  
THE ASSESSMENTS PROCESS**

---

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA  
REPORTS BREAK DOWN**

---

**DISTRIBUTION OF CSAM  
REPORTS ANALYSIS**

---

**VICTIMS' PROFILE  
TRENDS & OBSERVATIONS**

---

**2013 SUCCESS STORY**

---



**hotline.ie**

# OUR AIM

**THE MISSION OF HOTLINE.IE IS TO ENSURE SWIFT ACTION IS TAKEN IN RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF SUSPECTED ILLEGAL CONTENT ON THE INTERNET WITHIN THE IRISH JURISDICTION SO IT MAY BE EXPEDITIOUSLY REMOVED FROM PUBLIC ACCESS.**

Under the procedures agreed with Government, Hotline.ie is not allowed to proactively search for illegal content on the Internet.

Therefore, if the Irish public encounter illegal content, especially child pornography (CSAM), on the Internet and do not report it, neither the Industry nor Law Enforcement would know about it and would not be in a position to act against it.

Hotline.ie added value is that trained analysts assess all public reports and identify content that is very probably illegal under national legislation, thus acting as a filter and saving Garda resources by passing on

only information requiring law enforcement attention.

Tackling the issues of illegal content online requires collaboration between Hotline.ie, ISPAL members, Garda Síochána and the Government. Nevertheless the rate of success depends primarily on the vigilance of the public and their readiness to report suspected illegal content.

As Ireland's Internet facilities are just part of a larger global network, it is essential to have continuous cooperation with European and International counterparts. To do so Hotline.ie relies on its relationship with International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE).



# FOREWORD

"I welcome the publication of the Hotline.ie annual report for 2013 and congratulate Mr. Paul Durrant and his team at ISPAL on a job well done for another year.

The many positive elements of the internet must not be allowed to be overshadowed by illegal use. We must protect the vulnerable and promote safe and secure use of this valuable resource.

The work of Hotline.ie contributes to the empowerment of citizens by providing a means to report illegal material and in particular child sexual abuse content on the internet and to have it dealt with appropriately. This report also reflects the international nature of the important work in this whole area.

I would like to thank the ISPAL who operate the Hotline and to wish them well in their ongoing work."



*Frances Fitzgerald T.D.,  
Minister for Justice  
and Equality*

"Regrettably, as with just about everything that has ever been invented, there are a tiny minority who use the Internet for criminal purposes, in this case distributing illegal content. Realistically there is very little that can be done to prevent the activities of those with such intent without seriously impinging on the privacy and rights of the majority to a quality Internet service. As responsible corporate citizens ISPAL members want to do their part to respond promptly and effectively when illegal content, particularly CSAM, is discovered. Hotline.ie is the shared service through which ISPAL members take such action.

Many will be surprised that Hotline.ie is now in its 14th year of operation, probably because it has worked so well, few have had the unfortunate online experience to have had to avail of its services."



*Paul Durrant,  
CEO of ISPAL and  
Hotline.ie Manager*

"As a founding member of the INHOPE network, ISPAL has long been at the forefront of combating CSAM on the Internet. Today, 14 years later, INHOPE has 49 member hotlines in 43 countries around the world. With our industry and law enforcement partners, INHOPE is rethinking child protection in a digital world.

I wish to emphasise the success between Hotline.ie and Web547 Taiwan described in this report. It demonstrates how national efforts combine through INHOPE to have rapid international impact.

The pace of change is accelerating and INHOPE is responding with leading edge technology through an Interpol-hosted database pilot project for video and image fingerprinting to speed up victim identification and the takedown process. Once again Hotline.ie is involved laying the groundwork for a better digital tomorrow."



*Russell Chadwick, Executive  
Director, INHOPE International  
Association of Internet Hotlines*

# ILLEGAL CONTENT

## TYPES OF ILLEGAL CONTENT TO BE REPORTED TO HOTLINE.IE



## WHERE COULD ONE ENCOUNTER ILLEGAL CONTENT THAT SHOULD BE REPORTED TO HOTLINE.IE?



## HOW TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO HOTLINE.IE

Via the Online Report Form available on:  
[www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie)

Via Email:  
[report@ hotline.ie](mailto:report@ hotline.ie)

Via Phone Message:  
1890 610 710

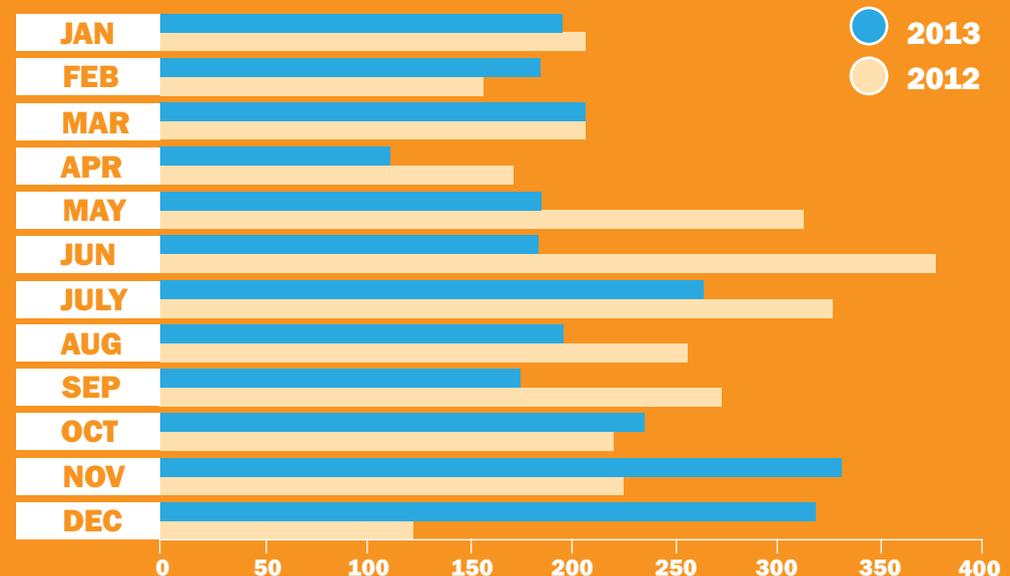
# REPORTS RECEIVED IN 2013

Reports can be submitted completely anonymously but even if the person reporting has provided contact details, these are not disclosed to other parties. Only the details of the suspected content and the technical findings of the Hotline are transmitted.

2382 via Hotline.ie Online Form	56 via Telephone Answering Machine	54 Derived Reports	41 via INHOPE IHRMS
32 via Email	2 via Telephone	1 via INHOPE Mobile App	<b>*Please note:</b> It is more efficient for Hotline.ie to process reports received via the Online Form!

In 2013 Hotline.ie dealt, on average, with 214 reports per month. The bar chart shows the monthly distribution of reports received and processed by Hotline.ie throughout 2013 and 2012. Even though the difference between the total number

of reports received in 2013 and 2012 is relatively low, one can easily notice that the monthly volume distribution is highly different. It is almost impossible to determine or predict a pattern in terms of monthly reporting volumes.



# VOLUME OF REPORTS PER YEAR



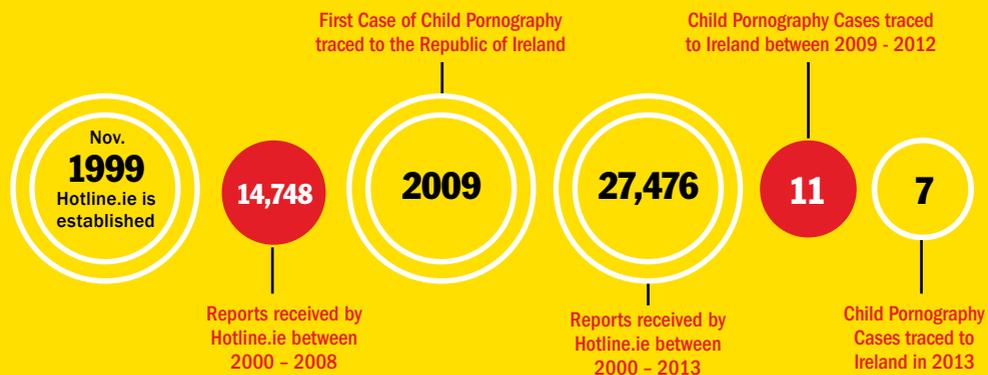
Since the establishment of Hotline.ie in 1999 reports grew gradually with the evolution and spread of the Internet use. As Hotline.ie deals only with content found on the Internet we could say that its activity is highly influenced by the evolution of Internet use and users' behaviour both in terms of content creation and reporting.

In terms of volumes of reports, the first peak was recorded in 2006 when an increase of 12% in reports over the previous year was registered. The second peak so far was recorded in 2012, with an increase of 10.2% over the 2006 peak. Despite the high volume of reports over the years, the first case of CSAM reported to Hotline.ie, verified and

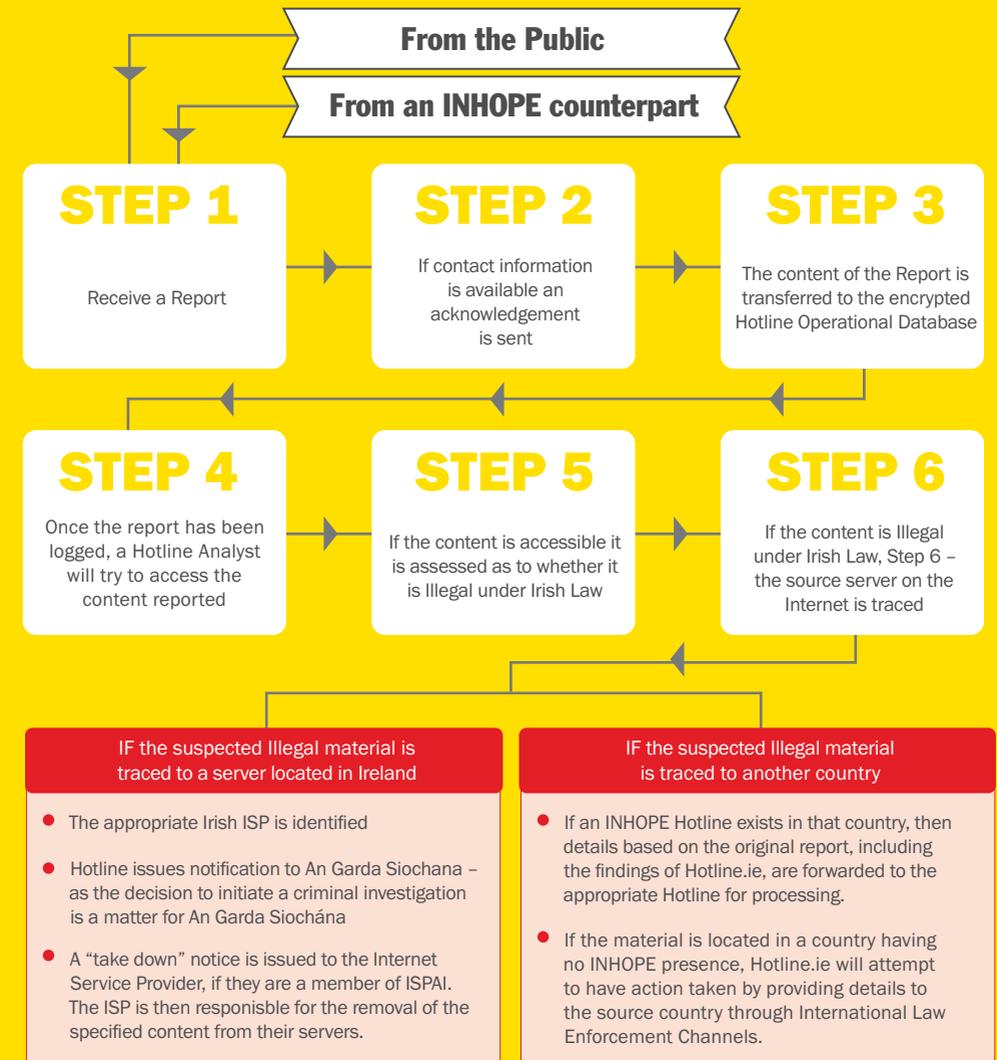
traced to the Republic of Ireland was in 2009. Since then a total of 18 cases of CSAM were traced to the Republic of Ireland, 7 of which occurred in 2013.

In 2013 Hotline.ie received **2568** reports. While this reporting volume is almost 13% down on 2012 (which was the highest on record), it is above the average of **2479** per year observed from 2006 through 2012. We hope this reflects that people remain as willing to report suspected illegal content as they have in the past.

**Top 3 Services** where suspected illegal content was encountered by reporters in 2013: **2470** Websites, **21** eMail and **10** Cloud.



# THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



In order for a report to be processed the reporter must have given reasonable indication as to where, or how, the Analyst may find the content in question. If the Analyst has problems locating the content and if the reporter has provided contact details, the Analyst will attempt to contact the reporter and try to get further details that could assist in locating the content in question.

Usually the reports are made anonymously so no follow-up is possible and in many cases where the reporter is contacted they don't have the necessary details. Regrettably the report must be closed as "Insufficient detail".

For this and other reasons some reports don't make the Full Assessment Process (as above).

## OUT OF 2568 REPORTS LOGGED IN 2013, 412 DID NOT MAKE THE FULL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### WHY?



Break down on the volume of received Reports in 2013



## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- TRAINED AND INTERNATIONALLY CERTIFIED HOTLINE ANALYSTS ASSESS REPORTED CONTENT, USING THE BEST PRACTICE AND GUIDELINES
- ESTABLISHED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY - OFFICE FOR INTERNET SAFETY, THE INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, AN GARDÁ SÍOCHÁNA AND THE INHOPE ASSOCIATION.

When assessing whether or not content reported to Hotline.ie (within its remit) is likely illegal under Irish Legislation, the Analysts rely on the Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998 and Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, 1989.

Only a Court of Law can make a judgement as to whether something is definitively illegal under the law.

However, under the transposition of the EU Directive on Electronic Commerce,

ISPs must take action within a reasonable time where “illegal” material is brought to their attention. When Hotline.ie assesses content to be “probably illegal” content is notified to An Garda Síochána, who may then choose to initiate a criminal investigation, and it is simultaneously notified to ISPAI members so it is removed from public access.

If the content “in itself” is not contrary to law it is assessed as not illegal and Hotline.ie will not take any action.

## BREAK DOWN OF ALL THE REPORTS THAT WERE FULLY ASSESSED IN 2013:

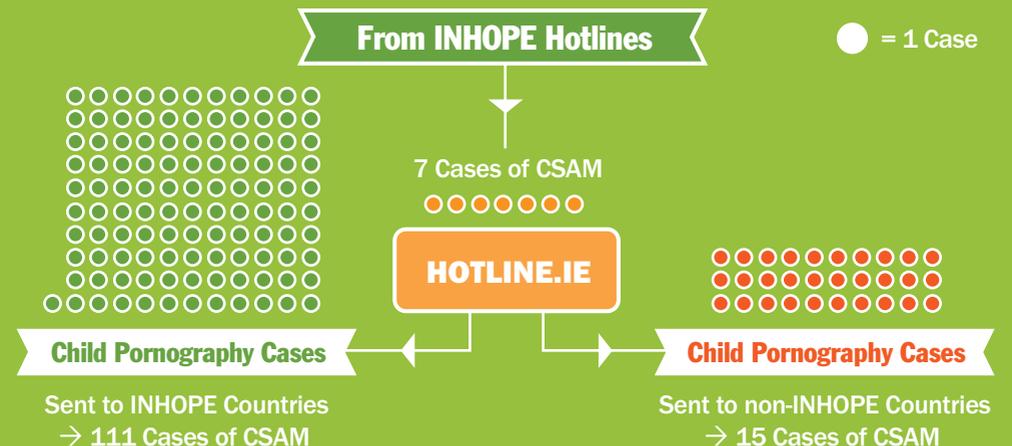


## WHY CASES OF CHILD EROTICA AND CHILD NUDITY ARE CLASSIFIED AS NOT ILLEGAL:

**By Child Erotica Hotline.ie refers to:** images of children posed in an explicitly sexual manner but are not illegal as they do not meet the criteria set in law. If they were found to be hosted in Ireland on an ISPAI member’s facilities, though to-date this has never happened, Hotline.ie would notify the ISP to consider removing the content under the ISPAI Code of Practice.

**By Child Nudity Hotline.ie refers to:** images where children may be naked but the photo or video was not produced for pornographic purposes. Examples include pictures of naked children in famine or war zone situations, naturist sites where pictures are taken in family contexts, or images taken for diagnostic reasons which are presented in a medical context.

## REPORTS ASSESSED AS CSAM IN 2013



# DISTRIBUTION OF CSAM AS TRACED BY HOTLINE.IE IN 2013



Graphic distribution of CSAM per country.

= INHOPE Countries = Non-INHOPE Countries

The highest number of CSAM Cases (48) forwarded by Hotline.ie through INHOPE's IHRMS was to the USA, while the lowest number forwarded is 1 in each of the following countries: Latvia, France, Hungary and Australia.

The second highest number of CSAM Cases (18) was traced to the Netherlands. Outside the INHOPE network the highest number of

reports (11) forwarded by Hotline.ie through Law Enforcement channels was to Sweden.

According to INHOPE, in 2013, 97% of all reported CSAM (54,969 Cases) was reported to Law Enforcement in one day. 93% of all reported CSAM was removed from the Internet within a week which is a welcomed improvement over 2012 (88%).

# ZOOM-IN ON REPORTS ASSESSED AS ILLEGAL BY HOTLINE.IE IN 2013



Out of the 185 reports assessed as illegal only **7 were actually traced to Ireland.**

7 illegal reports in one year is a high number for Ireland, in fact, the highest so far. Even so, Ireland has an excellent record in comparison to most other developed countries. (The second highest number of Illegal Reports in a year was recorded in 2012 when 4 reports were traced to Ireland.)

2 out of the 7 Illegal Reports were website related and 5 Cloud related. The cloud operator is not a member thus the reports were forwarded to the Gardaí for action. As it happens, the cloud service is operated from the USA. Following international police notification, the US operators took down the material within a short period of being notified. The reality is that the situation is becoming more complex with the advent of cloud services and the fact that these straddle jurisdictions, not just adjacent countries, but around the globe.

All 7 Illegal Reports traced to Ireland were received via INHOPE's IHRMS. This means all cases were

initially detected and reported by Internet users in other countries. Five of these reports came from the Netherlands, one from Germany and one from the USA. All the material was removed from the Internet and evidence collected as per the procedures in place.

Due to the international network of verified Hotlines built by INHOPE the work performed by each National Hotline (such as Hotline.ie) is enhanced through the exchange of report information allowing rapid action against Child Sexual Abuse Material on the Internet, not just in the country but worldwide.

Throughout 2013 Hotline.ie forwarded 111 cases of CSAM to 12 of INHOPE's member Hotlines around the world. 15 cases of CSAM were traced to non-INHOPE Countries (Sweden, Ukraine and Switzerland) and were forwarded through Law Enforcement channels as were the two cases where a definite location could not be determined. All cases were reported to Hotline.ie, processed and assessed in Ireland before being forwarded to the appropriate jurisdiction.

**135**  
CSAM

**47**  
FINANCIAL SCAMS

**2**  
RACISM & XENOPHOBIA

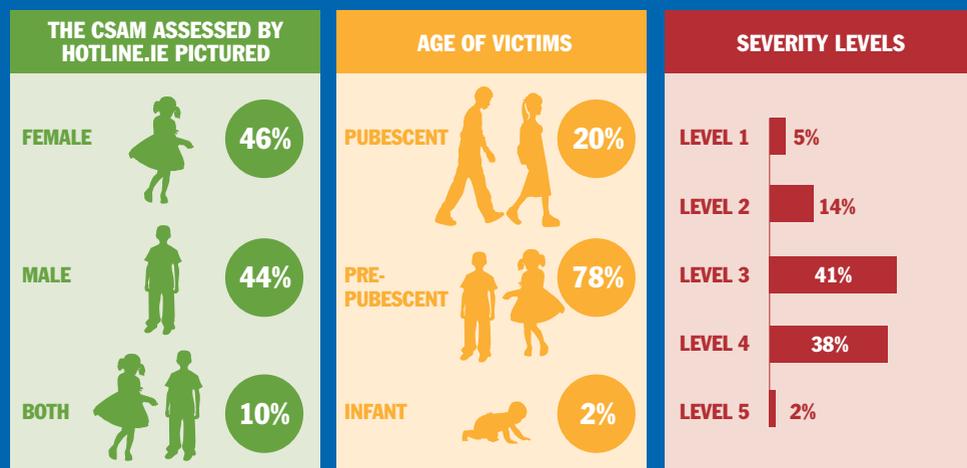
**1**  
CHILD GROOMING

=

**185**  
ILLEGAL REPORTS

# VICTIMS' PROFILE

BASED ON THE 135 CASES OF CSAM ASSESSED BY HOTLINE.IE IN 2013



It's commonly believed that females are more likely to be in danger of sexual abuse. The cruel reality of CSAM shown from our figures is that gender is no exemption; males are as likely to be sexually abused and photographed as females. Many people find it difficult to believe the abuse that pornographic images of children convey, it's even worse when one realises that each image is evidence that a child was sexually abused in real life in order to create that image. The removal of such material is the only way that this horrific abuse of children can stop being perpetuated ad infinitum through the Internet.

Regrettably, there's also a commercial aspect to CSAM – meaning websites hosting or giving access to CSAM which require payment for further access. According to INHOPE's 2013 Facts & Figures, 13% out of the 54,969 cases assessed as CSAM worldwide referred to commercial hosting.

The severity levels are based on the UK Court of Appeal sentencing guidelines which are used by many Law Enforcement and Social Services Agencies around the world to assist

in case prioritisation. Briefly summarised this comprises of (1) erotic posing of a child or children showing genital area, (2) explicit sexual activity of child or children but no adult depicted, (3) non-penetrative explicit sexual activity between child/children and adult/s, (4) penetrative sexual activity between child/children and adult/s and (5) Sadistic sexual subjugation or bestiality involving a child/children.

## OTHER TYPES OF ILLEGAL CONTENT

In 2013 there was **one case of Child Grooming**. The term "grooming" refers to the process carried out by offenders to befriend a child with a view to sexually abusing that child. These Cases are rarely reported to Hotline.ie and are usually very difficult in terms of assessment. In this case the reporter was from Ireland but the assumed offender was using a connection traced to the US. Given that in these sensitive cases the evidence should be only handled by law enforcement, the reporter was advised to keep all physical evidence (print screen and

any other records) and report to the Gardaí.

**47 Cases of financial nature** were reported to Hotline.ie in 2013. Out of the 47 cases, 30 were variations of the police "Ransom-Ware" Trojan which freezes the computer and (in Ireland) displays a message purporting to be from An Garda Síochána, ordering that a "fine" be paid for viewing illicit content and when received the computer will be unlocked. Gardaí advised those who have fallen prey to this scam and paid the "fine" to report this to them as soon as possible.

3 cases related to fake Online Shopping

sites and 14 were various types of financial scams purporting to originate from Service Providers and State Institutions such as: Revenue (Tax Refund Online), eircom, Microsoft, Vodafone were also reported to Hotline.ie. When receiving unexpected eMails or phone calls from Service Providers requesting to perform any activity involving personal data always verify the identity of the sender/caller before following the instructions.

**Both cases of Racism** were directed against Muslim people and were traced to the United States.

## TRENDS, OBSERVATIONS & CONCLUSIONS FOR 2013

According to INHOPE's 2013 Facts and Figures out of 1,210,893 reports processed by Member Hotlines worldwide 4.54% were assessed as CSAM. By comparison, in this same period, 5.26% of all reports to Hotline.ie were recorded as CSAM. In 2012 INHOPE recorded 3.53% out of 1,059,758 reports processed worldwide as CSAM while in Ireland the proportion was slightly lower at 3.29%.

While Child Sexual Abuse remains a reality in society, the figures show that due to the continuous efforts of people reporting to hotlines and the actions of law enforcement, the likelihood of users stumbling across CSAM on the open Internet has been considerably reduced since the peak experienced around 2007. Paedophiles are constantly trying to find new ways to avoid detection, thus we are concerned that peer-to-peer services are increasingly being abused and we would like to use this opportunity to appeal to those using these services in a legitimate way to report using the anonymous Hotline.ie Service if they encounter filenames suggesting or

referring to images / videos of CSAM.

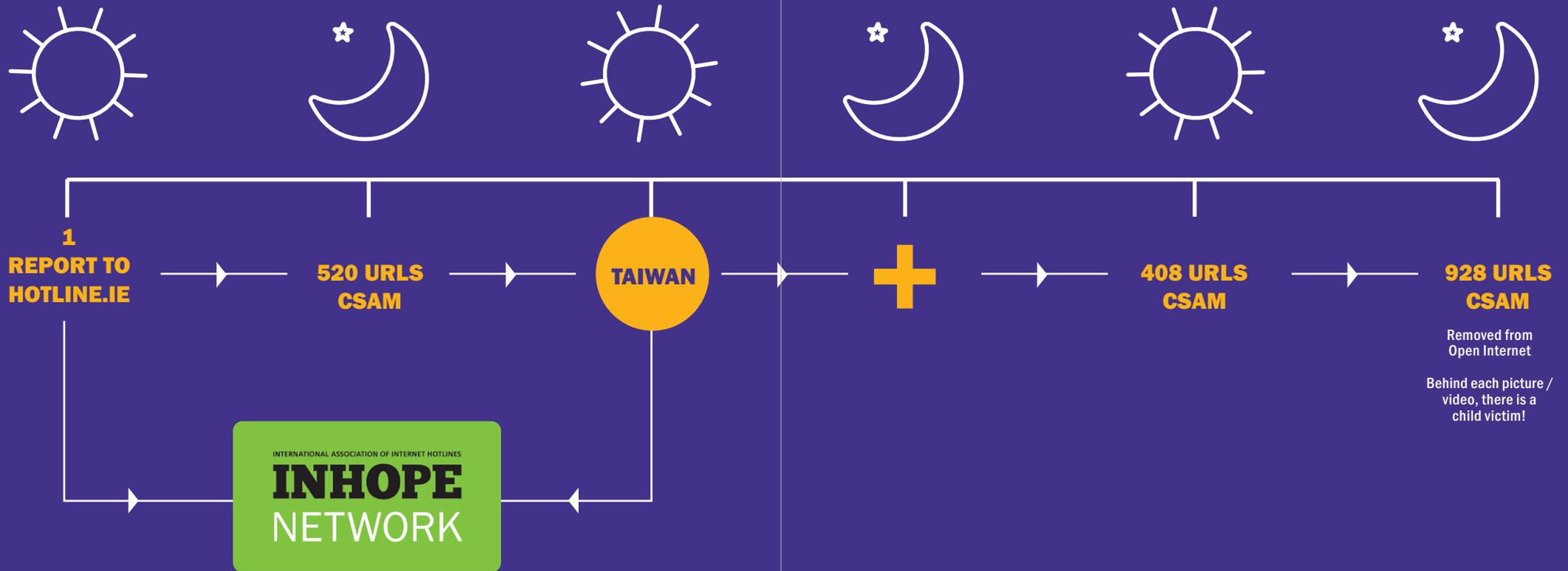
In 2013, 5 cases of CSAM traced to Ireland were Cloud related. These cases illustrate the trend which has been observed over the last few years, which indicates that criminals are moving to more sophisticated techniques to place illegal content on the Internet. It should be no surprise that Ireland started to get more hits for illegal reports as the country has developed as a base for tech companies. This means that an increasing number of large data centres and cloud services are being located here and this opens the jurisdiction to a greater probability of illegal content being hosted or mirrored here.

But, in terms of hosting CSAM, if we were to compare Ireland to other European countries, the numbers are still extremely low, so low that on INHOPE's barometer Ireland does even make the cut of 1%. However, this is no reason to be complacent. ISPAI members are determined that our Internet facilities in Ireland must continue to be viewed as unsafe by those who seek to host or distribute illegal content on the Internet.

# 2013 SUCCESS STORY

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN IRELAND AND TAIWAN LED TO

THE REMOVAL FROM THE INTERNET OF 928 URLs EACH CONTAINING CSAM



An extraordinarily successful case during the 2013, demonstrating the power of INHOPE cooperation to combat CSAM, was initiated by a single report to Hotline.ie. The report, submitted anonymously to Hotline.ie via the Online Report Form, contained a link to a Forum page. During the assessment of the content, the analyst uncovered **520 URLs** which were likely to be illegal. Following procedures the analysts traced the IP address to Taiwan. This development meant the case now exceeded Irish jurisdiction and therefore Hotline.ie got in contact with its counterpart in Taiwan – Web547.

The Taiwan team reacted promptly and extremely efficiently and a further assessment of the 520 URLs forwarded by Hotline.ie led to another **408 URLs**. By the end of the second assessment conducted by Taiwanese officials the total amount of URLs had risen to **928 each leading to a unique cyberlocker space, each containing Child Sexual Abuse Material (image sets or videos)** and all this was due to a single report of a single location originating from the Republic of Ireland. All the Material was removed from the Internet and the case is under investigation with the Taiwanese Criminal Investigation Bureau.

**Internet Hotlines around the world fight for those who can't but need it most!**

**If you encounter content on the Internet that you suspect to be Illegal, especially Child Sexual Abuse, don't hesitate click the Report Button on [www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) it's anonymous & confidential!**



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**CSAM – Child Sexual Abuse Material**, legally known as **Child Pornography**, refers to any visual representation where the dominant characteristic is the depiction, for sexual purposes, of genital or anal area of a child (under 17 years of age), or any visual representation or story describing a person who is or is depicted as being a child, who is engaged in explicit sexual activity alone or with others, or who is witnessing such activities.

In many countries Child Pornography is referred to as Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) to reinforce that behind images of Child Pornography there is a Child Victim that was actually Sexually Abused.

**Child Grooming Activities** - the term “**grooming**” is used to describe the process carried out by offenders befriending the child with a view to sexually abusing them. The perpetrator aims to create an environment which allows, justifies and neutralizes the abusive activities, and confuses the perception of normal and abnormal relationship between children and adults.

Grooming whether it takes place online or offline usually precedes Sexual Abuse. Summed-up stages of the grooming process: targeting the victim, gaining the victim's trust, filling a need of the victim, isolating the child, sexualizing the relationship and maintaining control.

**IHRMS** – stands for INHOPE Report Management System. It is a secured database accessible to INHOPE Members for the purpose of recording and forwarding reports of CSAM found on the Web. The system is also designed to provide statistics on the exchange of illegal reports between jurisdictions and to track how quickly reported content is removed from the Internet.

**NOTE: FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON ANY INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT VISIT: [WWW.HOTLINE.IE](http://WWW.HOTLINE.IE)**

“The business of ISPai members is about providing core Internet facilities to the public. Our intention is that the public may use and benefit from the myriad of commercial, educational and entertainment services that are now delivered via the Internet direct to the home, college and workplace alike.

We do not want CSAM anywhere near our facilities. If it does somehow get placed there, we want to know about it so we can get rid of it as quickly as possible and, we want to assist An Garda Síochána so those responsible for so abusing our systems can be brought to justice.

If, like us, you want to fight Online Child Sexual Abuse do not ignore suspected illegal content, especially CSAM, use our anonymous and confidential shared service, report to **WWW.HOTLINE.IE**. Better vigilant than afraid of being mistaken. We promise where CSAM is uncovered – action will be taken!”

## ISPai Members



meteor



irishdomains.com

imagin.e

bitbuzz  
LIFE WITHOUT WIRES



e mobile

eIRCOM

HOSTING IRELAND.ie



Google

APTUS  
BROADBAND

O<sub>2</sub>

MYHOST.IE  
Internet Services

HEAnet  
Health & National Education & Research Network



STRENCOM  
Connectivity - Cloud Computing



wirelessconnect



WHOLEWORLD  
RECORD · MIX · LIVE

## Role of OIS and EU Commission



The operations of Hotline.ie are overseen by the Office for Internet Safety (OIS) within the Department of Justice and Equality and procedures have also been agreed with An Garda Síochána. Hotline.ie is a consortium member of the Safer Internet Ireland (SII) project which is coordinated by the OIS.



Co-funded by the European Union

SII currently receives grant support from the EU Safer Internet Programme to a maximum of €840,000 for the period 1st Mar. 2012 to 30th June 2014; 30.5% of the EU funds are allocated to allowable operational costs of Hotline.ie. Further EU support for Safer Internet Centres in all EU countries for the period Jan 2015 through 2017 has been announced under the new “Connecting Europe Facility”.

