



Combatting Child Sexual Exploitation : State of Play and Perspectives

*Presentations of the Conclusions of the
Paris Seminar*



Overview of the Seminar

More than
200
participants

Committed to the fight
against child sexual
exploitation

40 countries
and 5 continents
represented

46 speakers
From 12 countries

- A three day international seminar designed and organised by the French Central Office for the Fight against Serious and Violent Crimes (OCRVP).
- A **diversity of actors** : law enforcement agents, representatives of the justice system, NGOs, associations, internet and finance companies, psychologists, criminologists,...
- A seminar opened by the **Director General of the French National Police who expressed four expectations** : better care and support for victims, better monitoring and detection of financial flows, closer collaboration between actors, stronger international police cooperation.



The Seminar Program

A **first seminar in Singapore in 2019** that had led to discussions related to the phenomena of livestreaming and travelling child sexual offenses (TCSO). We made this the starting point for the seminar on Day 1.

Day 1

Livestreaming and TCSO : a state of play following the discussions initiated in 2019.

Day 2

Perspectives on the efficient detection, reporting and removal of online child sexual abuse content.

Day 3

Latest news on tracking child sexual offenders on the internet.



Live Distant Child Abuse (LDCA)

Definition : situation in which a customer orders online sexual assaults or rapes on minors, in order to view them live.

This **phenomenon has increased due to the pandemic**, as the closing of borders has led pedocriminals to develop new ways of action. In France, between 200 and 300 targets are still awaiting treatment.

Concern of the international community : with the reopening of the borders, livestreamers could travel abroad on a massive scale to commit child sexual offenses.

LDCA is done **through accessible platform** : e.g. *Whatsapp, Skype*, websites for adults available on the clear net.

This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in Southeast Asian countries, notably the Philippines, but **Western countries are also deeply concerned** :

- Children are exploited by livestreaming in European countries
- The vast majority of clients are Westerners



Live Distant Child Abuse (LDCA)

A crucial cooperation

→ **International police cooperation** with partners among and outside the EU :

- ◆ **Operation 'December Rescue'** : led by the Romanian Police, several other European police services involved, the FBI provided critical information that led to the investigation.
- ◆ Recurrent contact with the U.S. Homeland Security Investigations Service, which provides numerous reports.
- ◆ Work with the Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Center (PICACC).

→ **Cooperation with NGOs** : a study conducted by the NGO Ecpat France on several European countries.

→ **Cooperation with internet companies** : phenomenon that is difficult to detect because it takes place live, hence the need for collaboration with internet companies.



Travelling Child Sexual Offense (TCSO)

Double victimisation : TCSO is a phenomenon that concerns both girls and boys. Nevertheless, a taboo persists in several countries on the abuse of boys, who therefore remain silent so as not to be chased from their homes.

The **need for proper care for victims**, involving multidisciplinary cooperation (police, justice, social actors, doctors, psychologists,...).

Interpol – the Soteria project

The Soteria Project aims to follow and detect upstream the pedocriminals who try to integrate NGOs and humanitarian associations in order to abuse minors.



The importance of a good cooperation with internet companies

A French case study

- Referral sent by Facebook to NCMEC : a chat between an adult suscriber and a child suscriber. The NCMEC report was then sent to the Central Unit for Minors Protection, allowing investigators to open a case.
- The investigation was made possible **thanks to clues in the chat**. It allowed, only based on the discussions, to identify a case of child sexual abuse.

It underlines the necessity of a good cooperation with internet companies and the importance of the use of key words to detect cases of online grooming.

A Brazilian case study

- **15 reports were made on NCMEC** and were sent to the Brazilian law enforcement services.
- The suspect stored images and videos of child sexual abuses on Google Drive and Google Photos. There was indications that they had been produced by the supect.
- **The detection of the crime would probably not have been possible** without the automatic control of the internet companies, despite the seriousness of the facts.



The importance of a good cooperation with internet companies

Serious consequences

- The case of a French Internet company that did not put in place adequate measures to prevent the sharing and downloading of pedocriminal material on its storage website.
- This company **had become the world's leading host of CSAM content**. Its cooperation with the French national police has allowed to modify the conditions of access to this service and to remove the CSAM.
- Hence the need for operators to **evaluate the risk** and then **take into account the measures to be implemented** to counter the dissemination of CSAM.

Companies take action

- Some internet companies like Meta **support the implementation of mandatory measures** to counter pedocriminal content.
- Specialised teams for the safety of minors have been set up.
- The company META is working to **prevent the posting of harmful content on its platforms and the virality of such content**.



Reporting, detection, removal : the limits of self-regulation

Self-regulation has its limits

NCMEC receives 83,000 reports per day, which amounts to **30,295,000 per year.**

- However, **98 % of the reports come from Internet companies**, which have a key role to play. Cooperation with law enforcement services is essential, but more needs to be done.
- Internet companies too often are waiting for authorities to compel them to act, even though measures could have been implemented in the first place. **Companies are responsible to society for providing a safe space for all users**, especially minors.
- The European Commission proposal of regulation is tackling the issue.



The proposal of regulation on sexual abuse on minors

The proposal of regulation of the European Commission on sexual abuse on minors was presented during the seminar by the representatives of DG Home. It allowed **a better understanding of the objectives** of this future legislation by all participants, especially **law enforcement and hotlines**.

Law Enforcement

Thanks to better quality reports, the number of unworkable reports and false positives will be considerably reduced. This will improve cross-border cooperation, but also cooperation at the national level, through the coordinating authority.

Hotlines

Their role is explicitly recognised in the proposal, as they are essential source of expertise for Coordinating Authorities.

New patterns in pedocriminal operating mods

The Darkweb

- The sexual exploitation of minors on the darkweb has **never been so important.**
- It has never been easier for an individual to hide his or her identity online, sexually exploit children and connect with other pedocriminals.
- Hundreds of thousands of pedocriminal users accounts are being logged, and communities of criminals are forming and developing security measures to evade law enforcement services.
- These communities encourage pedocriminals and lead to **an increase in dangerousness.**

Online video games and social media

- Pedocriminals use online video game chats and social media messaging system to solicit minors, this is called grooming.
- This phenomenon was amplified with the pandemic.
- 478 % increase in cases of grooming (2020-2021)

Emergence of cryptocurrencies

- The use of cryptocurrencies in crimes against complicates the detection of content and investigations. This implies amplifying the means of surveillance and detection of financial flows.



New developments in combatting CSE

New software

developed by law enforcement services, NGOs and private companies to improve the fight against sexual exploitation of minors, particularly by increasing the capacity to filter reports.

Grace Project

European project to address CSEM referrals, to deploy a federated learning infrastructure, to automate the analysis of CSEM content and to track trends in online CSEM.

Investing in video game devices

- The undercover avatar device developed by the NGO l'Enfant bleu, Havas Play and the OCRVP, made it possible to contact 1200 children in just a week.
- Video games as a new place to track down pedocriminals.

OIF-Francopol Practical Guide

- To equip justice and police professionals in order to adapt their behaviour towards victims and offenders and to fight more effectively against child sexual exploitation.