ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN:
Challenges and legal response

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«Just as the computer has begun to revolutionise social life, it will revolutionise crime and deviancy; especially the parameters of deviant sexual behavior...in fact, it is doing so already»

(Durkin and Bryant, 1995)

2015-2016 facts

- 3.4 billion web users
- In 2016 IWF identified 68,092 webpages of child sexual abuse imagery, an increase of 417% over two years.
- 69% of children in the CSA imagines are 10 years old or younger
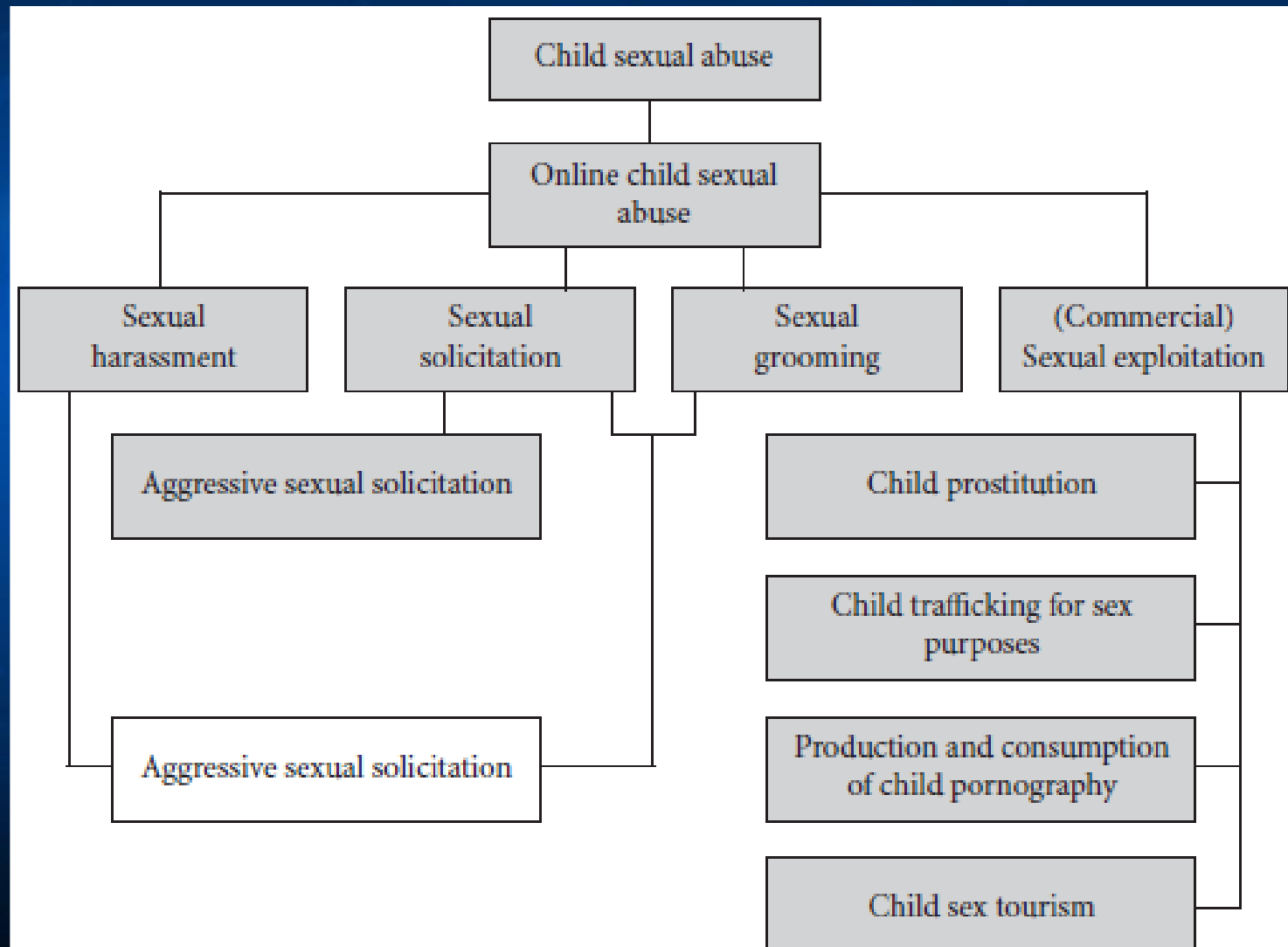- 83% of the victims are girls

Research suggests that adult perceptions of online risk-taking behaviour such as providing personal information to strangers or agreeing to meet with strangers or 'virtual friends' are perceived by young people as acceptable Social Networking Site behaviour (Davidson et al., 2009).

Forms of online child sexual abuse
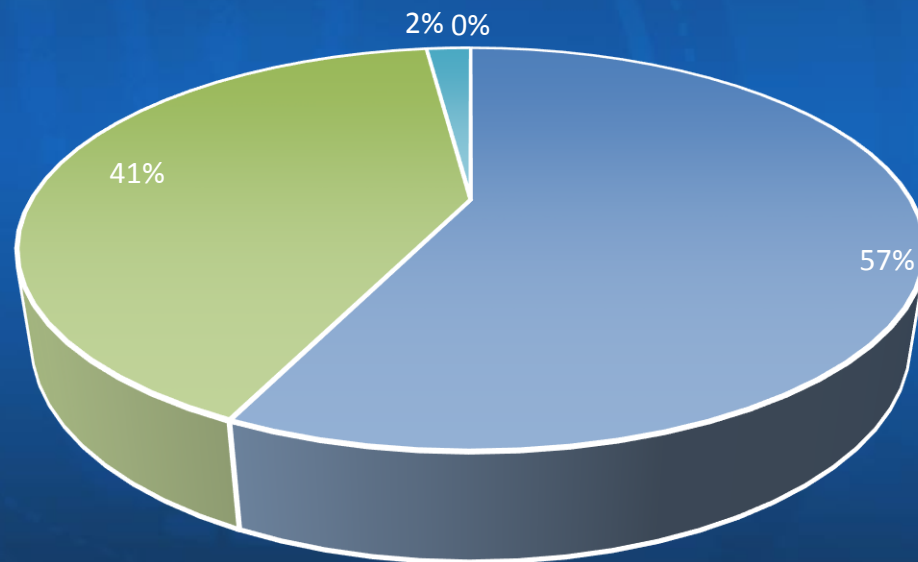
Illustration of the problem

2007 UK case: images of sexual abuse of South East Asian girls, perpetrator discovered with the forensic technique of matching skin patterns by the Center of Anatomy and Human Identification at Univ. Of Dundee (Scotland)

- Illustrates the connection btw online distribution of images an real-life sexual abuse of children
- The need for sophisticated techniques for tracing such activities
- Borderless, international scale of the problem
- Need for cooperation among different institutions
- Cybercriminals seek to avoid countries with strong cybercrime legislation
- **November 2015**-Vtech (Kid Connect servers) data breach compromised 6.4 million children's accounts

Global statistics

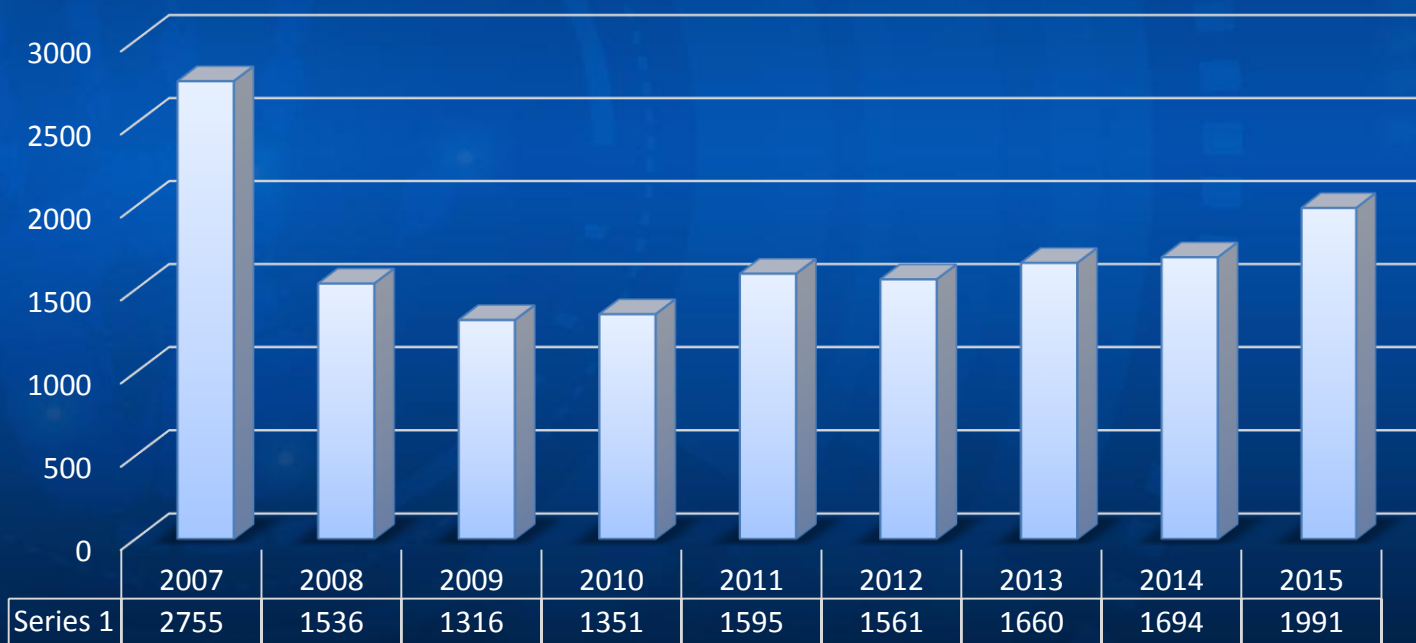## Where are child abuse images hosted

2% 0%

41%

57%

- North America
- Europe (incl. Russia and Turkey
- Asia
- Australia/South America/Africa/hidden services

Domains with child sexual abuse content

The number of domains hosting child sexual abuse content by year

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Series 1	2755	1536	1316	1351	1595	1561	1660	1694	1991

Research questions

- What are the most effective legal steps to tackle online sexual abuse of children?

- What is the scope and nature of international capabilities-legal, law enforcement and technological capabilities-needed to implement any approach towards the prevention of online sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children?

Covered issues

- **1. Identifying and describing the problem**
- **2. Legal environment against online CSAE**
- **3. Combating online CSAE**
  - Investigation   Mechanisms for international cooperation
  - Prosecution   Civil society engagement
  - Tech tools   Policy responses
- **4. Competing rights and ambiguities**
  - Privacy   Freedom of expression
  - Encryption   Censorship
- **5. Research analysis (interviews)**

4 Main Directions

➢ Causes
➢ Prevention
➢ Identification
➢ Response

Methodology

- Normative analyses of international standards
- Case-law analyses
- Qualitative interviews

Critical points

- No single uniform definition of «child» and age of consent for engaging in sexual activities
- No standard definition of «child sexual abuse»
- Technology develops faster than legal regulations
- **Borderless** crime: Jurisdiction problems
- **Low rate of crime reporting**
- Lack of special departments for investigating online child sexual abuse and exploitation=**lack of specialized investigators**
- High necessity for **a common universal age of consent** for engaging in sexual activities
- a **multistakeholder approach** towards the issue

Conclusions

- Usage of **new technologies in the investigation process** should be increased
- **Multistakeholder cooperation** in the prevention and investigation of online CSAE is crucial
- The posibility of **opting out** from provisions of international documents regarding CSAE is an **obstacle** to the unification of legal standards
- number and quality of human resources for the investigation of online CSAE are not sufficient
- Suggesting the need for an **international or regional Commissioner/Ombudsman** for the online child rights (ex. of Australia)

Many thanks for the attention!

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