3rd ANNUAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REDUCTION RESEARCH NETWORK CONFERENCE

Faculty of Law, University of Valencia
Salón de Grados "Ascensión Chirivella"

Valencia, Spain

4-5 December 2025



SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

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Proyecto *CIGE/2023/14*

WELCOME – December 3rd 2025

19:00 **Informal welcoming of CSARRN attendees to Valencia @Casapueblo Brewhouse**

DAY 1 – December 4th 2025

8:45 **Registration**

9:15 **Welcome CSARRN 2025**

Clara Viana Ballester (Dean of the Faculty of Law), Vicenta Cervelló Donderis (Director of the University Research Institute of Criminology and Criminal Science), Virginia Soldino (CSARRN Organizing Committee)

09:30 **PLENARY SESSION – The National Office Against Sexual Violence (ONVIOS). Where silence ends, protection begins**

Eva Anatolia Silva Nozal (Spanish Secretariat of State for Security) Abstract

10:15 **Coffee break**

10:45 – 12:15 **SESSION I – INVESTIGATING ONLINE GROOMING**

CHAIR: Sergio Maruenda Bataller (UV)

10:45 – 11:15 ***Analysis of Simultaneous Chats in Cases of Online Child Sexual Grooming***

Virginia Soldino (University of Valencia, Spain), Kathryn Seigfried-Spellar (Purdue University, USA), Isabel R. Moreno (University of Valencia, Spain), Marian Pérez-Tapia (University of Valencia, Spain), Brycen J. Baldwin (Purdue University, USA) Abstract

11:15 – 11:45 ***StopOnSexGroom Algorithm: A Tool for the Detection of Language-Specific Grooming Patterns***

Vicent Ahuir Esteve, Carmen Pérez-Sabater, Nuria Lorenzo-Dus, Andra García-Montes (Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain) Abstract

11:45 – 12:15 ***A Graph Theoretical Approach to Cyber Groomer Detection***

Patrick Bours, Anna Fridtun Aarekol (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway) Abstract

Proyecto *CIGE/2023/14*

12:15 **Break**

12:30 – 14:00 **SESSION II – ONLINE NETWORKS OF OFFENDERS**

CHAIR: Kathryn Seigfried-Spellar (MSU)

12:30 – 13:00 ***Exploring the Social Organization of CSEM Networks Online***
Thomas J. Holt, Karen M. Holt, Daniella Ferrante (Michigan State University, USA) Abstract

13:00 – 13:30 ***Tracking User Behaviours Across Darknet Child Sexual Abuse Material Forums***
Rebecca Reichel, Frederic M. Gnielka, Arjan Blokland, Robert J. B. Lehmann (Medical School Berlin, Germany) Abstract

13:30 – 14:00 ***Peer influence on Darknet Child Sexual Abuse Material Forums***
Arjan Blokland (NSCR and Leiden University, The Netherlands) Abstract

14:00 **Lunch**

15:30 – 17:00 **SESSION III – SEXUAL FANTASTIES AND FEMALE OFFENDERS**

CHAIR: Arjan Blokland (LEI)

15:30 – 16:00 ***The Sexual Fantasies of Men who have Committed Online and Offline Sexual Offences Against Children***
Ross M. Bartels (University of Lincoln, UK), Bronwyn Komen (Maastricht University, The Netherlands), Hannah L. Merdian (University of Lincoln, UK), Virginia Soldino (University of Valencia, Spain) Abstract

16:00 – 16:30 ***Exploring the Nature and Prevalence of CSA Fantasies within Incel Forums***
Elza Veldhuizen Ochodnicanova, Melissa de Roos (Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands) Abstract

16:30 – 17:00 ***Women as CSAM Users: Self-Reports from Anonymous Users Searching for CSAM***
Hanna Lahtinen, Julia Laukkanen, Nelli Porttila, Kirsi Honkalampi, Tegan Insoll, Juha Nurmi, Anna Ovaska, Nina Vaaranen-Valkonen (University of Eastern Finland, Finland) Abstract

17:00 **Coffee break & Poster session**

Cyberbullying among children: a definitional landscape analysis in EU Member States' legislation
Irene Kamara (Tilburg Law School, The Netherlands), Rosanna Di Gioia (Joint Research Centre, European Commission)

Fast detection of evidence of cyber grooming conversations.
Patrick Bours (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway)

Why are adolescents victims of online grooming?
Lara Nápoles (Universidade de Porto, Portugal)

17:30 – 18:30 **SESSION IV – IMPROVING POLICE PRACTICES**

CHAIR: Marian Pérez Tapia (UV)

17:30 – 18:00 ***Measuring the Physiological and Psychological Impact of a Specialist Officer Role Focusing on CSAE Online and Implications for Enhanced Wellbeing Support***
Samantha Lundrigan, Lee Smith, Tess Dieseth (International Policing and Public Protection Research Institute, Anglia Ruskin University, UK) Abstract

18:00 – 18:30 ***Improving Investigative Interviewing in Child Abuse Cases***
Ray Bull (University of Leicester, UK) Abstract

20:00 Conference dinner (pre-registration required)

DAY 2 – December 5th 2025

09:30 – 11:00 SESSION V – TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS

CHAIR: Sergio Maruenda Bataller (UV)

09:30 – 10:00 ***Circles Reboot: Evaluation of an Innovative Strengths-Based Approach to Mitigating the Harms of Online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) Offending***
Derek Perkins (Royal Holloway University of London, UK), Hannah L. Merdian (University of Lincoln, UK) Abstract

10:00 – 10:30 ***The Role of Low-Threshold Perpetration-Prevention Programs in Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Positioning ReDirection within a Broader Public Health Response***
Tegan Insoll, Anna K. Ovaska, Nina Vaaranen-Valkonen (Protect Children, Finland) Abstract

10:30 – 11:00 ***Sexual Interest in Children and Child Sexual Offending: Evidence from a Population-based Study in Argentina***
Antonella Bobbio, Jorge Bruera, Valentina Piumetto, Karin Arbach, Santiago Redondo (National University of Córdoba, Argentina) Abstract

11:00 **Coffee break**

11:30 – 13:00 SESSION VI – IDENTIFICATION OF OFFENDERS AND EMERGING THREATS

CHAIR: Kathryn Seigfried-Spellar (MSU)

11:30 – 12:00 ***Project Locale: Geographic Mapping of CSAM Offending Activities***
Joel Scanlan (University of Tasmania, Australia), Jonah Rimer (University of Queensland, Australia), Warren Bulmer (ICMEC Australia, Australia) Abstract

12:00 – 12:30 ***Patterns and Disclosure of Sexual Extortion Among Australian Adolescents: Results from a National Survey***
Sarah Napier, Heather Wolbers, Timothy Cubitt, Michael Cahill, Mariesa Nicholas, Melanie Burton (Australian Institute of Criminology, Australia) Abstract

12:30 – 13:00 ***Latent Profiles and Risk Factors of Online and Offline Child Sexual Abuse Behaviours: Results from a Nation-Wide Self-Report Survey***
Anneke Koning (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Arjan Blokland (NSCR and Leiden University, The Netherlands) Abstract

13:00 **Lunch**

15:00 – 16:30 **SESSION VII – PREVENTING VICTIMISATION AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES**
CHAIR: Marian Pérez Tapia (UV)

15:00 – 15:30 ***Adolescent Attitudes on Nudification Application and Sexualized Generative Artificial Intelligence Usage***
Chad M. Steel (George Mason University, USA) Abstract

15:30 – 16:00 ***Assessing Public Transit Rider Awareness of Sex Trafficking of Minors***
John F. Betak, Ankit Sharma, Christie L. Nelson (Collaborative Solutions LLC, USA) Abstract

16:00 – 16:30 ***Enhancing Prevention and Disruption of Child Sexual Abuse Material Ecosystems through Integrated Strategies: Lessons from JRC, Europol, and Cyber Offender Prevention***
Rosanna Di Gioia (Joint Research Centre, European Commission), Sónia Martins (Europol), Irene Kamara (Tilburg Law School) Abstract

16:30 **Coffee break**

16:45 – 17:45 **SESSION VIII – POLICY AND THE THREAT OF NON-TRADITIONAL CSAM**
CHAIR: Nerea Jusue Moñino (UV)

16:45 – 17:15 ***Why Does Criminal Law Across the UK Treat Pseudo-Child Sexual Abuse Material and Childlike Sex Dolls Differently? The Limits of the Harm Principle and How to Apply Reconstructivism in Child Protection Criminal Legislation to Address This Regulatory Paradox***
Konstantinos Kosmas Gaitis (Childlight - Global Child Safety Institute, The University of Edinburgh, UK) Abstract

17:15 – 17:45 ***Text-Based Child Sexual Abuse Material – What is it and How Does it Relate to Image- and Video-Based Child Sexual Abuse Material and Adult Sex Stories?***
Frederic Gnielka, Laura Quinten, Robert J. B. Lehmann (Medical School Berlin, Germany) Abstract

17:45 – 18:00 **Closing remarks by CSARRN**

Proyecto *CIGE/2023/14*

Presentation Abstracts

The National Office Against Sexual Violence (ONVIOS). Where silence ends, protection begins – Eva Anatolia Silva Nozal (Spanish Secretariat of State for Security)

The National Office Against Sexual Violence (ONVIOS), integrated within the Gender Violence, Studies and Training Area of the General Directorate for Coordination and Studies of the Secretary of State for Security, is responsible for driving the actions necessary for the implementation and development of the measures set out in the Ministry of the Interior's 1st Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Violence 2023–2027. ONVIOS is responsible for developing, coordinating and promoting comprehensive and specific measures within the framework of action plans that are tailored to the specific needs of victims who suffer different forms of sexual violence and have reported the incidents, such as initial prevention actions and analysis of the causes that prevent or hinder reporting and that are still linked to certain myths and prejudices.

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Analysis of Simultaneous Chats in Cases of Online Child Sexual Grooming – Virginia Soldino, University of Valencia, Spain

Background: The widespread use of digital technologies has greatly facilitated online child sexual abuse (OCSEA), allowing offenders to interact simultaneously with multiple minors online. These individuals exploit digital platforms to identify, groom, and manipulate vulnerable children, often with the intent of committing sexual abuse, obtaining child sexual abuse material (CSAM), or engaging in cybersex. Law enforcement agencies face a growing volume of OCSEA cases, each involving extensive data, making case triage and prioritization critical, especially in cases involving multiple victims.

Objective: This study analysed the modus operandi of offenders who target multiple victims, focusing on both offender strategies and victim responses.

Participants: The sample comprised 18 offenders and 212 victims from police investigations in Spain and the United States.

Methods: We conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of 212 chat logs, mapping each conversation using a six-stage grooming model (Friendship, Relationship, Risk Assessment, Exclusivity, Sexual, and Meet). We also coded for high-risk victim behaviours and self-disclosure patterns.

Results: Preliminary results showed a majority of female victims and recurring opening lines used by the same offenders across different chats. High-risk behaviours from victims were rare, and aggressive language by offenders was uncommon. Significant correlations emerged between various grooming stages and between offender and victim self-disclosures, suggesting patterns of reciprocal disclosure. Evidence also indicated offender learning from previous failed attempts.

Conclusion: These findings offer valuable insights for improving prevention strategies, early detection tools, and law enforcement prioritization protocols.

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StopOnSexGroom Algorithm: A Tool for the Detection of Language -Specific Grooming Patterns – Vicente Ahuir Esteve , Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain

VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA Institut de Criminologia i Ciències Penals
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Proyecto *CIGE/2023/14*
GENERALITAT VALENCIANA Conselleria de Educación, Universidades y Empleo
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Online grooming poses a significant threat to child safety, necessitating advanced detection methods. This study introduces a novel approach for identifying critical stages within online grooming interactions, grounded in the Online Grooming Discourse Model (OGDM, Lorenzo-Dus, 2023). By leveraging Transformer-based contextual embeddings, the method captures nuanced linguistic patterns at the utterance level, enabling precise representation of dialogue dynamics. A Mamba architecture classifier is then employed to predict five grooming tactics within the OGDM. The research highlights its adaptability through a novel dataset that consists of online grooming chatlogs shared by law enforcement in Spain, demonstrating effectiveness in handling linguistic diversity within this context. Preliminary results reveal the model's capacity to detect language-specific grooming patterns, offering a scalable tool for child protection systems. This work advances multilingual applications in combating online exploitation while emphasizing future directions toward enhancing model flexibility and expanding applicability across diverse linguistic datasets.

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A Graph Theoretical Approach to Cyber Groomer Detection – Patrick Bours, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

Detection of cyber grooming based on text in online chats is the most used method these days. One of the downsides to this is that mostly only the English language is considered. Models trained on English language cannot be applied to other languages directly. Another big downside is that messages in a chat contain a lot of slang, typos, abbreviations, emojis, and obfuscations, which make textual analysis harder.

In our research we investigated how behavioural analysis of chat patterns in a game can be used to detect users that behave in an anomalous manner. Our dataset consists of various month of chat activity, showing only the number of messages exchanged between users and not the actual messages. Based on this behavioural information we modelled the users as nodes in a graph with the labelled directed edges indicating the number of messages send from one user to another. We used clustering algorithms to determine small clusters of users showing anomalous behaviour, based on various graph-based features. These graph-based features are based on the analysis of anomalous behaviour of potential cyber groomers. We have, in the second stage, manually evaluated users in small clusters, based now on the actual text of the conversations they were involved in and detected a number of users that displayed cyber grooming behaviour.

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Exploring the Social Organization of CSEM Networks Online – Thomas J. Holt, Michigan State University, USA

Research on the networked nature of economic forms of cybercrime has grown dramatically over the last decade. Studies illustrate the ways in which individuals develop co-offending networks, utilize unique divisions of labour to offend, and operate within hierarchical and linear relational networks in both on and offline settings. Less research has considered the ways in which CSAM networks are structured to facilitate offending, and differences in organizational practices that may be observed in Open and Dark Web spaces. This study will address this gap in the literature through the application of the Best and Luckenbill (1980) framework of social organization of deviance, which has been used to explore economically motivated forms of cybercrime, and other organized crime networks. The analysis focuses on a qualitative exploration of open-source data collected based on actors identified in 20 major CSAM forum arrests by domestic and/or international law enforcement over the last 30 years. The results will focus on the roles of individuals in both managing the forums as well as CSAM offending behaviours, noting any special conditions involved in community participation, engagement, and offense specialization. The implications of this research for our understanding of CSAM offenses over time and across online spaces will be examined, along with law enforcement and treatment practice.

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Tracking User Behaviours Across Darknet Child Sexual Abuse Material Forums – Rebecca Reichel, Medical School Berlin, Germany

Both researchers and law enforcement have an interest in matching user profiles across different darknet forums dedicated to child sexual abuse material (CSAM) to facilitate investigative efforts and offer insights into user behaviours over time and between different forums. One intuitive way to match user profiles is via their usernames, assuming that the same username belongs to the same person – especially in the context of the darknet, where reputation and trustworthiness play an important role. Previous research on social media platforms and online drug markets has shown that this strategy can indeed yield accuracy levels as high as 77%. This is the first study to match user profiles across different CSAM forums to answer the following questions: How many users are active on multiple forums and what are their activity periods or patterns within as well as between forums. We use data from ten darknet CSAM forums that were seized by law enforcement, which includes the usernames and the posting behaviour of registered users and sometimes meta-data such as passwords or email addresses. The usernames of profiles who contributed at least once to the forum they were registered on are compared across all forums. Minhashing, locality-sensitive hashing, a normalised Levenshtein distance and community/component detection are used to find identical and highly similar usernames. The activities among matched user profiles are then compared to not only test the plausibility of the obtained matches but also to track the development of users' behaviours and movements across forums.

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Peer Influence on Darknet Child Sexual Abuse Material Forums – Arjan Blokland, NSCR and Leiden University, The Netherlands

Background: Darknet CSAM forums do not only function as criminal marketplaces were contraband is being exchanged between market participants, but, through members' online interactions, also act as associational structures where like-minded peers can be met, moral barriers broken, and offending skills acquired or perfected (Van der Bruggen and Blokland, 2021). Whereas prior research already firmly linked associating with offline criminal peers to individual's own criminal behaviour (Gallupe, McLevey, and Brown, 2019; Hoeben et al, 2016), more recent research suggests that this influence extends to virtual peers as well (e.g. Miller and Morris, 2016). Specifically for CSAM use, Lawless Space Theory predicts that continued interaction with a forum environment conducive to CSAM may impact the frequency, nature, and duration of individuals' own participation on the forum, such that it leads to increasingly problematic online behaviour (Steel et al, 2022). Yet, despite the abundance of prior studies on the extent of (online) peer influence, far fewer studies have addressed the theoretical mechanisms through which criminal peers are hypothesized to exert their influence (McGloin and Thomas, 2019). Understanding exactly how online peers influence individuals' behaviour is key, both to achieving theoretical progress and to tailoring interventions aimed to counteract peer influence and prevent individuals' criminal behaviour from escalating.

Aim: The contribution of the current study is twofold. First, using longitudinal data on individuals' forum communications, it will examine the presence and extent of peer influence on darknet CSAM forums, thereby extending the literature on peer influence to virtual peers in a darknet forum environment. Second, testing key predictions from Lawless Space Theory and based on multiple features of forum members' online communications (e.g. frequency, nature, severity), it will explore different theoretical explanations on the mechanisms of online peer influence on darknet CSAM forums. Doing so, the present study differentiates between transient and structural features of the forum environment in a multi-level framework.

Data: We use scraped communication data from 36 darknet CSAM forums that were active between March 2012 and April 2025, which marked the end of the data collection. These data pertain to more than 5.000.000 forum posts, submitted to the public part of these forums by well over 300.000 unique users.

Method: To examine peer influence on darknet CSAM forums, we estimate a three-level negative binomial regression model in which forum members (individual level), are nested within dynamic forum environments

(transient level), which are in turn nested in the structural forum environment (structural level). On the individual level we include variables describing different dimensions of the individual's posting behaviour in the first four weeks that that particular individual was active on a forum to predict individual's subsequent posting behaviour. Individual level measures reflect the timing, frequency, and nature of posts made by the individual. The transient level is meant to reflect the dynamic forum environment in which an individual member is actively participating during the first four weeks of that individual's forum activity. Relevant features of the dynamic forum environment include the number of active fellow forum members, and the frequency and nature of their posts. Structural features pertain to both forum structure (e.g. number of subforums) and forum nature (e.g. boy only, girl only, mixed).

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The Sexual Fantasies of Men who have Committed Online and Offline Sexual Offences Against Children – Ross M. Bartels, University of Lincoln, UK

Previous literature has emphasized the importance of sexual fantasies in the commission of contact and online sexual offences against children (Bartels & Gannon, 2011; Merdian et al., 2018). Using a mixed-methods approach, this paper explored the content and factors associated with the sexual fantasies of men who have committed a contact (n = 14) or online (n = 13) child sexual offence. A Thematic Analysis of written sexual fantasies, using a critical realist approach, generated three overarching themes labelled (1) Not Just about Target Category, (2) Internal Affects the Internal, and External Facilitates the Internal, each of which contained several subthemes. Results indicate that a number of factors are important within sexual fantasy content and that sexual fantasizing involves numerous processes, including memory retrieval, the use of imagination (facilitated by external material), the inclusion of other sensory modalities, and internal dialogues. These insights are likely to extend our understanding of sexual fantasizing both generally and in relation CSEM and contact sexual offending. Implications and limitations are discussed.

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Exploring the Nature and Prevalence of CSA Fantasies within Incel Forums – Elza Veldhuizen Ochodnicanova, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Background: Incel communities consist predominantly of men who define themselves by their perceived inability to form romantic or sexual relationships with women. Alarmingly, this frustration has been observed to foster and promote instances where CSA is discussed or fantasised about as a response to their perceived sexual deprivation. Given that research firmly establishes a link between deviant sexual interests, sexual fantasies, and the potential for offending behaviour, understanding the characteristics of CSA fantasies within online communities is crucial for developing targeted prevention strategies. A key distinction in existing literature is between fleeting sexual thoughts and more elaborated, goal-directed fantasies, often termed "offence scripts"- considered a significant risk factor for perpetration. Investigating these nuanced forms of fantasy is therefore paramount in addressing the continuum from deviant thought to potential action.

Objective: This study aims to systematically identify and characterise CSA fantasies articulated by users within incel forum comments to understand their prevalence, thematic content, and, critically, their reported duration (fleeting vs. prolonged) and potential for elaboration, guided by the dual-process model of sexual fantasy.

Participants: 9 million comments scraped from an online incel forum.

Methods: A mixed-methods approach will be employed. Natural Language Processing techniques, including keyword extraction and thematic modelling, will initially be used to identify comments indicative of CSA fantasies. Subsequently, qualitative content analysis will be applied to a subset of these identified comments to deeply explore the thematic nuances, reported duration, and the extent to which these fantasies are presented as "elaborate sexual scripts" versus "brief lustful thoughts."

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Women as CSAM Users: Self-Reports from Anonymous Users Searching for CSAM – Hanna Lahtinen, University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Background: The global issue of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is escalating. However, knowledge about undetected female CSAM users is limited.

Objective: As a part of the EU-funded 2KNOW project we examined the characteristics, behaviour, and motivations of female CSAM users and analysed factors associated with contacting children among the female sample.

Participants: The sample includes 257 anonymous women seeking CSAM or help for CSAM use on the dark web. Most (83%) were under 45, with the largest age group (49%) being 18-24. A significant proportion of them reported having prior charges for sexual offenses (38%) and/or other violent offenses (34%).

Methods: Data was collected via a survey with 37 questions on help-seeking behaviour, motivations for CSAM use, sexual interest in children, CSAM victim demographics, pornography consumption, offline and online child sexual abuse, CSAM perpetration, recent sexually abusive behaviour toward children, and adverse childhood experiences. Responses were analysed using crosstabs and logistic regression.

Results: Most respondents searched for material depicting girls (60%), aged 11-14 (45%), with sexual interest in children being the primary motivation. A significant proportion (36%) reported contacting children for pleasure. Preliminary analyses indicate that recent CSAM viewing, charges for sexual or violent offenses, and childhood experiences of physical neglect are strong predictors of contacting children.

Conclusion: Preliminary results suggest that the characteristics, behaviour, and motivations of female CSAM users align with earlier research on men. This indicates that women's role as child sexual offenders should be taken seriously, and preventive measures should also target women.

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Measuring the Physiological and Psychological Impact of a Specialist Officer Role Focusing on CSAE Online and Implications for Enhanced Wellbeing Support – Samantha Lundrigan, International Policing and Public Protection Research Institute, Anglia Ruskin University, UK

Online spaces such as social media platforms, chat rooms, forums, encrypted messaging services and streaming platforms are frequently used by perpetrators of CSA for grooming, dissemination of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and other predatory behaviours. A growing number of specialist officer roles are deployed to detect and prevent these types of offences. These officers often engage in prolonged, immersive exposure to distressing material and high-risk offender interactions. While their work is critical to public protection, the psychological and physiological toll remains largely unexplored. This study investigates the impact of specialist officer role focusing on CSAE online on wellbeing and identifies needs for tailored support. Over a 13-day period, eight specialist officers wore a wearable device to continuously track their heart rate variability (HRV), stress, sleep and recovery. Further data collection included a baseline wellbeing questionnaire, daily activity log, reflective journal and an exit interview. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This mixed-method approach allows researchers to integrate biometric data with subjective experiences to assess stress patterns, coping strategies and wellbeing risks. The study addresses a pressing knowledge gap at the intersection of digital policing, wellbeing and child protection. Its findings aim to inform future policies, training and wellbeing interventions, supporting specialist officers in their vital yet emotionally challenging roles and contribute to broader international efforts to who work on protecting children online.

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Improving Investigative Interviewing in Child Abuse Cases – Ray Bull, University of Leicester, UK

The development of forensic tools aimed at improving investigatory practices is crucial regarding child sexual abuse. This presentation will provide an overview of best practice developments in various countries since 1992.

In England in 1992, the government brought in very innovative legislation allowing for the first time video-recorded interviews with children to be used as their evidence-in-chief during court proceedings. To substantially increase the likelihood that the interviewing (e.g., by police officers or social workers) would be of a good standard, the government invited myself (and a Law professor) to draft official guidance that was entitled 'The Memorandum of Good Practice on Video Recorded Interviews with Child Witnesses for Criminal Proceedings' (1992).

Soon after this, in the USA, Professor Michael Lamb (and his colleagues) began to draft the NICHD guidance, which has regularly been updated. Also regularly updated has been the government in England document 'Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses and on using special measures', which was drafted in 2002 by 'teams' led by me and Professor Graham Davies (the latest version was published in 2022).

In 2016, the United Nations Special Rapporteur (Professor Juan Mendez) recommended that "a universal protocol' be written on investigative interviewing, and from 2017 to 2020 a small committee (of which I was a member) drafted this document, which was published in 2021.

In 2024, the European Association of Psychology and Law launched its white paper with science-based recommendations for how to conduct investigative interviews with children in legal settings. Its authors consisted of 34 experts (including me) from throughout Europe, led by Professor Julia Korkman.
The key recommendations within all of these crucial documents are very similar, and this presentation will present an overview of these.

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Circles Reboot: Evaluation of an Innovative Strengths -Based Approach to Mitigating the Harms of Online Child Sexual Abuse Material Offending – Derek Perkins, Royal Holloway University of London, UK

The Charity "Circles UK" provides support for individuals with a conviction for sexual offending to safely reintegrate with the community, by providing them with a group of Volunteers supporting their aspiration for an offence-free lifestyle whilst also holding the individuals accountable for their risk management.

In response to the increasing numbers of individuals accessing online child sexual abuse material, Circles UK developed Circles ReBoot, a programme designed to support individuals with a history of child sexual abuse material offending. In comparison to the traditional Circles approach, Circles ReBoot is a more structured and shorter intervention (about 6 months), focused on a strength-based approach. Participants are referred from various agencies, including police and probation services.

This presentation will, first, set out the findings from an initial feasibility study of Circles ReBoot, using the RE-AIM evaluation framework, which assesses Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation and Maintenance of the programme. The study highlighted positive outcomes across all domains, with the strongest evidence for Reach (the ability of Reboot to reach the targeted population) and Adoption (successful engagement with and achievement of positive outcomes from the programme).

The second part of the presentation describes a currently running pilot evaluation of Circles Reboot, supporting its wider roll-out across the UK. This is based on testable logic model, outlining how the intervention "works". The presentation will enable discussion on the design and testing of intervention approaches.

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The Role of Low -Threshold Perpetration -Prevention Programs in Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Positioning ReDirection within a Broader Public Health Response – Tegan Insoll, Protect Children, Finland

Introduction: Child sexual abuse (CSA) represents a growing global public health crisis with severe negative impact on victims, survivors, and society as a whole. There is an urgent need to scale up proactive perpetration-prevention strategies, particularly for individuals who are open to change.

Objectives: We explore the role of online self-help programs in preventing CSA perpetration and discuss how these tools can complement more intensive interventions as part of a stepped-care model. We will position the ReDirection program within this broader prevention ecosystem.

Methods: ReDirection is a CBT-based online self-help program developed by Protect Children for individuals at low to moderate risk of committing CSA. The program has been available since 2020 and has undergone a randomised controlled trial as part of the EU-funded Project Bridge. We will present preliminary results from the evaluation and findings from anonymous dark web surveys.

Results: Preliminary data indicate that ReDirection can reach individuals who would not otherwise seek support and can significantly change behaviour. Over half of surveyed CSAM users report wanting to change but identify many barriers to seeking help. ReDirection offers an accessible and scalable entry point to help-seeking and aligns with evidence that lower-intensity interventions can be effective for individuals at lower risk.

Conclusion: Anonymous low-threshold programs play an important role in the prevention of CSA when embedded within a larger system of public health and criminal justice responses. ReDirection exemplifies how such tools can engage at-risk individuals early and offer a foundation for behavioural change.

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Sexual Interest in Children and Child Sexual Offending: Evidence from a Population -based Study in Argentina – Antonella Bobbio, National University of Córdoba, Argentina

Background: Paedophilia is a clinical condition involving a sexual preference for children. While about 5% of the general population may meet diagnostic criteria, prevalence could be higher when considering subclinical indicators. Estimates suggest that 30–40% of individuals with paedophilic interests engage in child sexual offending (CSO). Early intervention is critical and evidence-based research plays a key role in reducing stigma and social isolation—factors that can discourage help-seeking behaviour and increase the CSO risk.

Objective: This study examined the relationship between different types of sexual preference in children and various forms of CSO.

Participants and methods: A sample of 317 adult males from the general population in Argentina anonymously completed online questionnaires. Sexual interests in children were measured with five hypothetical incidences of CSO designed to identify coercive interests (low-force scenarios) and aggressive interests (high-force scenarios).

Results: Participants with aggressive sexual interests in children reported higher rates of contact CSO and more consumption of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) than those with coercive or no interest. Furthermore, males with coercive sexual interests reported more contact behaviours than the no-interest group, but no difference was found in CSAM use. Although a link exists, most participants with sexual interest in children did not report CSO.

Conclusion: Findings support anonymous online self-report tools as a valuable approach for studying sexual offending and preferences. Although effective intervention programs for individuals with a sexual preference for children are available in other countries, such services are almost non-existent in Argentina.

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Project Locale: Geographic Mapping of CSAM Offending Activities – Joel Scanlan, University of Tasmania, Australia

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is widely available online, with access and distribution occurring across multiple platforms, including the dark web, the open web, messaging services, and peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. This study investigates the geographic location of individuals accessing and sharing CSAM specifically on P2P networks by answering two key research questions: (1) How does the prevalence of CSAM offending in Australia via P2P networks compare on an international scale? (2) What are the primary geographic concentrations of suspected CSAM offending within Australia?

Leveraging computational and statistical analyses of a substantial dataset of over 2.9 million unique IP addresses, this research first provides a concise location-focused international overview of P2P-based offending across 20 prominent countries. It then transitions to an in-depth examination of offending within Australia, utilising a comprehensive dataset of over 30,000 unique Australian IP addresses. The dataset, originally compiled by the Child Rescue Coalition, is enriched with metadata including estimated geolocation, Internet Service Provider (ISP), date of first activity, and indicators of VPN usage. The results also include three geolocation estimates per IP address to facilitate granular location analysis at the state, city, and postcode levels across Australia. In addition to addressing these core areas, the presentation will provide supplementary findings derived from the analysis, shedding light on observable behavioural patterns.

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Patterns and Disclosure of Sexual Extortion Among Australian Adolescents: Results from a National Survey – Sarah Napier, Australian Institute of Criminology, Australia

Sexual extortion is a form of blackmail in which a perpetrator threatens to release intimate material of a victim unless they comply with certain demands. We examine the prevalence and nature of sexual extortion among a sample of 1,953 adolescents residing in Australia.

More than one in 10 adolescents had experienced sexual extortion in their lifetime (11.3%), one in three of whom experienced more than one instance. More than half experienced sexual extortion before the age of 16, and two in five were extorted using digitally manipulated material. Two-thirds of those who experienced sexual extortion had only ever met the perpetrator online, and there were important differences in experiences between genders. Just under half had told anyone about their victimization, and only a small minority reported to an authority. The main reasons for not disclosing included being ashamed/embarrassed, believing they were to blame for the situation, and worried about getting into trouble. Preventing children from being sexually extorted should be a priority for social media and messaging platforms and should be a collaborative effort across multiple sectors.

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Latent Profiles and Risk Factors of Online and Offline Child Sexual Abuse Behaviours: Results from a Nation -Wide Self -Report Survey – Anneke Koning, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Child sexual abuse manifests in different forms, including the viewing of online child sexual abuse material, participating in live streams, and engaging in offline child sexual abuse, both at home and abroad. These manifestations are often treated as distinct phenomena: participating in live streams differs from online CSAM

offending due to its interactive and real-time nature, and transnational child sex offenses can be distinguished from those targeting child victims in their home country. At present, little is known about the intersections of these different behaviours and the extent to which individuals engaging in (combinations of) these behaviours constitute distinct offender groups. Although prior research has, for instance, compared online and offline child sex offenders, it rarely separately considered those participating in live streams. Similarly, only a handful of studies have differentiated between those who sexually abuse children in their home country and those who do so abroad. As such, the extent to which child sexual abusive behaviour is specialized or rather versatile is still very much unclear. Additionally, much prior research is hampered by the use of official data (e.g. arrests, convictions) which, as a result of differences in the dark figure of these various offenses (e.g. due to differences in visibility and investigative efforts), may paint a distorted picture. To address this, the present study seeks to assess the prevalence and overlap of different types of child sexual abuse behaviours and examine their association with different individual risk profiles. The study makes use of a self-report survey among a representative sample of over 9,000 adult Dutch men to conduct a latent class analysis with distal outcomes. The implications of our findings for both theory and practice will be discussed.

Adolescent Attitudes on Nudification Application and Sexualized Generative Artificial Intelligence Usage – Chad M. Steel, George Mason University, USA

Objectives: This exploratory study examined the attitudes of English-speaking adolescents (aged 13 - 17) in the United States towards the usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) applications in the creation and dissemination of sexualized images.

Method: Using an anonymous, online survey hosted by Qualtrics, participants (n=507) were asked demographic questions as well as a series of questions related to their perceptions of the acceptability of various usage scenarios for GenAI sexualized images. The survey evaluated both consensual and non-consensual activities, including the viewing, distribution, and production of GenAI sexualized images by both the participants' peers and adults. The questions related to both nudification applications as well as to GenAI tools used to modify or create new content from existing images.

Results: The study found that a substantial percentage of adolescents believed the use of GenAI tools to create and distribute sexualized images was acceptable for both adults and their peers across genders. Adults consensually viewing (41.4%) and sharing (41.4%) of sexualized GenAI images, as well as peer viewing (39.8%) and sharing (39.1%) had the highest rates of acceptance. Consensual sharing had overall higher acceptability than non-consensual sharing for both genders, with male participants showing stronger endorsement of multiple non-consensual activities than female participants.

Conclusions: The attitudes identified in this research help explain the high usage rates of GenAI in sexualized ways in this population, and are important in developing educational interventions, clinically differentiating normal from abnormal usage, and crafting legislative solutions.

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Assessing Public Transit Rider Awareness of Sex Trafficking of Minors – John F. Betak, Collaborative Solutions LLC, USA

This research project identifies and tests survivor-informed campaign effectiveness to raise awareness of U.S. transit riders and the community members of child human trafficking. Pre-assessments were conducted of transit riders' and community's levels of awareness of sex trafficking prior to campaign implementation. Post-assessments tested the effectiveness of survivor-informed campaigns.

Six transit agencies in various parts of the U.S. participated. Each agency had different operating characteristics and demographic profiles. At least 400 completed surveys were collected per agency for pre- and post-assessments to ensure 95% confidence level +/- 5% margin of error at the regional level. Respondents were

randomly selected for each assessment round with no repeat responders. The compiled data resulted in 200+ crosstabs of data per agency, per pre- and post-assessments.

Many analytical tools were explored, e.g., least squares linear regression, stepwise AIC regression, principal component regression (PCR), Random Forest, XGBoost, among others. Sample sizes varied significantly. Fisher's Exact Test for comparisons was used where cell counts were below 15. For larger sample sizes we used a Two-Proportion Z-Test (Parametric) for comparing two independent proportions (e.g., 60% vs. 63%).

The assessments determined if significant differences exist in awareness before and after the campaigns for age, gender, etc. The analyses also address changes in understanding of behavioural signs of human trafficking, etc. 16 pairs of analyses for pre- and post- data sets were completed per agency. Differences across agencies for all analyses requires careful tailoring for awareness campaigns to be impactful enough to change awareness and action levels.

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Enhancing Prevention and Disruption of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) Ecosystems through Integrated Strategies: Lessons from JRC, Europol, and Cyber Offender Prevention – Rosanna Di Giola, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

The proliferation of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) online poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of children worldwide. To combat this issue, it is essential to develop integrated strategies that combine prevention and disruption efforts.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission (EC) has observed a growing number of CSAM prevention programmes through its mapping and knowledge research efforts.

From the perspective of Europol's European Cybercrime Centre (EC3), the prevention of CSAM requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that involves different stakeholders. EC3 has highlighted the concept of Cyber Offender Prevention (COP), which combines enforcement and prevention efforts to target all levels of criminals in the ecosystem and raise the possibility of applying this strategy to CSAM operations.

Notably, we emphasize that law enforcement interventions typically occur after a crime has been committed, whereas online prevention strategies can be employed proactively, even during ongoing operations, to prevent further harm and disrupt CSAM ecosystems.

We raise the possibility of applying this strategy to CSAM operations, where it could be used to disrupt CSAM ecosystems and prevent reoffending. By combining enforcement and prevention efforts, Operation Amplification can help to identify and target high-risk individuals, provide support services to those who want to change their behavior, and ultimately reduce the demand for CSAM.

From a legal viewpoint, there have been developments at EU level to support a more proactive approach to disrupting harmful known, but also unknown CSAM, on online platform providers and providers of interpersonal communication services. The temporary regulation 1232/2021 and the Proposal for a CSAM Regulation, which is a lex specialist to the Digital Services Act, are such initiatives, placing obligations on an ecosystem that has the power to prevent and intervene, and in this way contribute to reducing the prevalence of CSAM.

Furthermore, we discuss the importance of providing support services to offenders who want to change their behavior, recognizing that punishment alone is not enough to prevent reoffending.

By incorporating support materials and resources into our interventions, such as those provided by the JRC, we can offer a more comprehensive and effective approach to preventing and mitigating CSAM.

This work has implications for policymakers, law enforcement, and support services seeking to prevent and disrupt CSAM ecosystems, contributing to the development of more effective strategies to protect children online.

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Why Does Criminal Law Across the UK Treat Pseudo -Child Sexual Abuse Material and Childlike Sex Dolls Differently? The Limits of the Harm Principle and How to Apply Reconstructivism in Child Protection Criminal Legislation to Address This Regulatory Paradox – Konstantinos Kosmas Gaitis, Childlight - Global Child Safety Institute, The University of Edinburgh, UK

Through a critical examination of legislation, this paper focuses on a regulatory paradox in child protection criminal legislation across Britain: the criminalization of pseudo-child sexual abuse material (CSAM), while simultaneously only the partial criminalization of childlike sex dolls (CSDs), with possession of these items being left unregulated. From a legal perspective, both engagement with pseudo-CSAM and CSDs depicting fictitious children are victimless acts, lacking direct harm against children. Literature has shown that there lacks agreement on an unquestionably robust link between engagement with such objects/material and (risk of) direct harm for children. This showcases the limitations of the normative principle of harm as the dominant basis for criminalization and fosters the question: Do we really want to live in a society that risks being permissive towards tools simulating the sexual abuse of children due to lack of direct harm? Reworking legal moralism through Kleinfeld's reconstructivism, this paper aims to address this paradoxical gap in child protection criminal legislation, viewing the use of any tools simulative of CSEA that depict fictitious children victimless and most likely harmless, yet highly offensive against children's dignity as a fundamental element of our embodied ethical life, therefore calling for robust protective legislative reforms.

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Text-Based Child Sexual Abuse Material – What is it and How Does it Relate to Image - and Video-Based Child Sexual Abuse Material and Adult Sex Stories? – Frederic Gnielk, Medical School Berlin, Germany

Research on child sexual abuse material (CSAM) has predominantly concentrated on image and video formats. However, substantial textual material—text-based CSAM—is circulated on both the clear and dark web.

We believe that text-based material might reveal special insights into the desires and beliefs of their producers and consumers, as engaging with these stories appears to have no direct victim and is not illegal in many countries. Therefore, inhibitions t society imposes on the producers and consumers of image- and video-based CSAM are largely reduced in the case of text-based CSAM (e.g., fear of persecution or feelings of guilt). Yet, this form of CSAM has not been empirically scrutinized so far.

This research systematically examines text-based CSAM scraped from the clear web and extracted from darkweb fora provided to us by European law enforcement agencies. First, the thematic content will be explored to identify recurring topics within these stories. Building upon preliminary qualitative and quantitative findings from a pilot study of 133 child sex stories, we will expand the investigation using a larger corpus collected online. Our mixed-methods approach expands on themes identified using thematic analysis with quantitative methods leveraging modern large language models, specifically the BERTopic and TopicGPT pipelines to systematically identify and classify themes. Second, comparisons with sex stories written for an adult audience will determine whether text-based CSAM fundamentally differs or largely reproduces adult narrative patterns. Finally, we will assess thematic overlap and severity comparisons between text-based and image- and video-based CSAM, using established questionnaires for image- and video-based CSAM.

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