

# **3rd ANNUAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REDUCTION RESEARCH NETWORK CONFERENCE**

**Faculty of Law, University of Valencia**

**Valencia, Spain**

**4-5 December 2025**



## **SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM (DRAFT)**

## DAY 1 – December 4<sup>th</sup> 2025

8:45 **Registration**

9:15 **Welcome CSARRN 2025**

09:30 **Plenary session**  
Keynote speaker TBD

10:15 **Coffee break**

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

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), Marián 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***

Carmen Pérez-Sabater, Vicent Ahuir Esteve, 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](#)

12:15 **Break**

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

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](#)

11:30 – 12:00 ***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](#)

12:00 – 12:30 ***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 FANTASIES AND FEMALE OFFENDERS**

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 **Break**

17:15 – 18:45 **SESSION IV – TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS**

17:15 – 17:45 ***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](#)

17:45 – 18:15 ***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](#)

18:15 – 18:45 ***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](#)

20:00 **Conference dinner** (pre-registration required)

## DAY 2 – December 5<sup>th</sup> 2025

### 09:30 – 11:00 **SESSION V – IMPROVING POLICE PRACTICES**

09:30 – 10:00 ***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](#)

10:00 – 10:30 ***Improving Investigative Interviewing in Child Abuse Cases***  
Ray Bull (University of Leicester, UK) [Abstract](#)

10:30 – 11:00 ***Fast detection of evidence of cyber grooming conversations***  
Patrick Bours, Miroja Sivachandran (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway) [Abstract](#)

11:00 **Coffee break**

### 11:30 – 13:00 **SESSION VI – POLICY AND THE THREAT OF NON-TRADITIONAL CSAM**

11:30 – 12:00 ***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](#)

12:00 – 12:30 ***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, Laura Quinten, Robert J. B. Lehmann (Medical School Berlin, Germany) [Abstract](#)

12:30 – 13:00 ***Artificial Intelligence and Child Sexual Trafficking: Regulation, Risk, and the Politics of Protection***  
Emmanuel Maganaris, Indira Boutier (Glasgow Caledonian University, UK) [Abstract](#)

13:00 **Lunch**

15:00 – 16:30 **SESSION VII – PREVENTING VICTIMISATION AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES**

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 ***Parent and Community Support for Preventing Online Child Sexual Abuse***

Gulsum Adas, Lauren Elston (eSafety Commissioner Australia, Australia) [Abstract](#)

16:30 **Break**

16:45 – 18:15 **SESSION VIII – IDENTIFICATION OF OFFENDERS AND EMERGING THREATS**

16:45 – 17:15 ***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](#)

17:15 – 17:45 ***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](#)

17:45 – 18:15 ***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](#)

18:15 – 18:30 **Closing remarks by CSARRN**

# Presentation Abstracts

## ***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 – Carmen Pérez-Sabater, Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain***

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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Background: Darknet CSAM forums do not only function as criminal marketplaces where 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; Hoebe 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. Alarming, 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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***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***

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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***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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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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***Fast detection of evidence of cyber grooming conversations – Patrick Bours, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway***

Children spend more and more time online these days. They use the time online to find information, listen to music, watch videos, or be in contact with their friends, for example to play games together. Online presence of children will unfortunately also attract persons with bad intentions. Groomers have, through the use of the internet, access to many more potential victims than they would otherwise have.

In case cyber grooming is detected and a suspect is apprehended, then a forensic team needs to find activity of grooming in chats, but the problem is that there might be millions of chat lines they need to investigate. Currently this is done through reading through these chats, combined with keyword searches. This is a slow and cumbersome process that takes a lot of time. The expert needs to mark all parts of chats that are grooming, or other illegal activity. The downside of such a slow process is that while such a search is ongoing, before there is sufficient evidence of grooming or other illegal activities, other evidence might get lost or become unavailable.

In this research we investigate how we can use a tool that is developed for early detection of cyber grooming (as a warning tool), can also be used in this forensic setting. The tool is applied in such a way that it points to the parts in the evidence that will most likely be relevant in a potential criminal investigation. This tool can process millions of lines of chat in a short period of time, and the investigator will be presented with the parts that are most likely relevant for the criminal investigation.

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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 across the UK, this paper focuses on a regulatory paradox in child protection criminal legislation across Britain: the criminalisation of pseudo-child sexual abuse material (CSAM), including that created via AI, while simultaneously only the partial criminalisation of childlike sex dolls, with possession of these items being left unregulated. Examining relevant literature, it is widely accepted that both the creation of pseudo-CSAM including purely fictitious children and the use of childlike sex dolls are, in a strict sense, victimless acts, lacking direct harm against children. There is some association between pseudo-CSAM consumption and engaging with CSEA against real children, but a weaker link between using childlike sex dolls and CSEA, creating a discrepancy in risk of indirect harm against children. This may explain the different criminal law treatment of these two matters, however showcases the limitations of the normative principle of harm as the dominant basis for the adoption of new criminal laws and fosters the question: Do we really want to live in a society that is permissive towards tools simulating the sexual abuse of children based on risk of harm? Reworking legal moralism through Kleinfeld's concept of reconstructivism, this paper attempts to address this paradoxical gap in child protection criminal legislation, viewing the possession and use of childlike sex dolls as victimless and largely harmless, yet highly offensive acts against children's dignity as a fundamental element of our embodied ethical life, therefore calling for robust protective legislative measures and 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 that 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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The growing deployment of artificial intelligence in efforts to combat the sexual trafficking of children reveals a foundational tension. While certain tools have enabled the identification of victims, the mapping of trafficking networks, and the flagging of criminal activity to judicial authorities, others - often deployed illicitly - actively contribute to the expansion and acceleration of the phenomenon. Technologies such as Spotlight, Traffic Jam, and conversational avatars like Sweetie have allowed law enforcement agencies to intervene more swiftly in digital environments. Yet in a context marked by the exponential proliferation of artificial intelligence-generated images simulating child sexual abuse, these tools appear at once indispensable and profoundly ambivalent.

This paper offers a critical analysis of such technologies through the lens of international human rights law. It interrogates the capacity of existing legal frameworks to regulate practices that blur the boundaries between fiction and evidence, prevention and surveillance. Three dimensions are examined in particular: the emergence of a market in algorithmic violence, illustrated by the circulation of synthetic CSAM (child sexual abuse material); the risks inherent in data-driven governance, especially in terms of bias and discriminatory impact; and the structural inadequacy of democratic accountability mechanisms. Drawing on a situated perspective informed by survivors' experiences and epistemologies, the paper argues for a human rights based approach to artificial intelligence regulation, one that is responsive to new technological threats while grounded in principles of dignity, equality, and justice.

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***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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## ***Parent and Community Support for Preventing Online Child Sexual Abuse – Gulsum Adas, eSafety Commissioner Australia, Australia***

The eSafety Commissioner's Family Capacity Building project aims to empower diverse Australian families with the knowledge and tools to protect children from online harm, including child sexual abuse. This initiative is grounded in a comprehensive review of the evidence base to identify families at heightened risk, with a particular focus on culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, including migrant and refugee families.

A targeted literature review revealed a significant gap in research addressing CALD families' awareness and understanding of online CSA and its prevention. Findings indicated limited engagement with protective behaviours and a lack of culturally relevant resources. To address this, the project integrated research with CALD parents and carers, uncovering key barriers to open dialogue about CSA and identifying culturally sensitive strategies to foster engagement.

Further research expanded the evidence base by exploring theoretical frameworks and communication strategies for engaging parents and carers in CSA prevention. This work informed the development of tailored resources for CALD families, First Nations families, families of children with disability, and LGBTQIA+ families.

A central output of the project is a developmental guidance framework presented as a continuum from birth to 18 years. This resource uniquely integrates online safety with sexual literacy and respectful relationships, offering practical tools for community organizations to support families—particularly those at increased risk of harm. <https://www.esafety.gov.au/communities/child-safe-communities/developmental-guidance>  
We are also developing a children's book to educate families on CSA prevention.

This presentation will share key findings, methodological insights, and implications for international efforts to prevent online CSA through culturally responsive, community-based interventions. It contributes to the conference's goals by highlighting interdisciplinary collaboration, evidence-informed resource development, and strategies for reaching underserved populations.

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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.