



Automatic detection of child sexual exploitation and abuse materials

Convention for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

Workshop 3, Octopus Conference, 13 December 2023

14:30-16:00

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Chair Person Lanzarote Committee



What is the Lanzarote Convention?

- The most holistic international instrument for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse:
 - Prevention
 - Protection,
 - Prosecution
 - Promoting international co-operation
- 2007: opened for signature
- 2010: entry into force
- 2023: Currently 48 State parties
- Simultaneous monitoring of the implementation of the Convention in all State parties in thematic monitoring rounds by the Committee of the Parties (Lanzarote Committee)





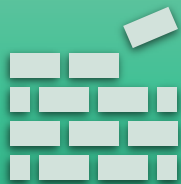
What is **Lanzarote Committee**?

48 State Party representatives + Observer States, International Organisations and Civil Society



Monitoring the implementation of the Convention

- [Report](#): second monitoring round: Protecting Children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by Information and communication technologies



Capacity building

- Events and awareness raising activities in 2024 will focus on emerging technologies: threats and opportunities to protect children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse



Interpreting the Convention

- [Opinion](#) on Article 23: Online solicitation of children for sexual purposes (Grooming)
- [Interpretative Opinion](#) on the applicability of the Convention to sexual offences against children facilitated by information and communication technologies



1. What is Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM)?



Lanzarote and Cybercrime Conventions

- **Child Pornography:** any material that visually depicts a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct or any depiction of a child's sexual organs for primarily sexual purposes
- **Terminology Guidelines:** term **Child Sexual Abuse Material** endorsed by Lanzarote Committee

Includes:

- Images and videos
- Any sexual activity (including but not limited to penetrative sexual acts, masturbation, sadistic or masochistic abuse in sexual context, lascivious exhibition of genitals or pubic area (para 143 Explanatory memorandum
- Child may be alone, with other children or with adults

Key message:

- It is sexual abuse (never “just” images or videos)
- There is a real child victim that needs to be identified and protected
- The child should always be treated as a victim, not criminalised



2. What are the issues ?



Worrying trends

- Images and videos initially **generated by children themselves** being used to **blackmail and exploit** the child depicted
- Use of CSAM to **'groom' children and 'normalise'** the sexual abuse
- **International aspect** of crime makes investigation and prosecution more complex
- Legislation doesn't address **written 'manuals'** used by offenders to share information on how to avoid detection

Automated detection:

- Useful to identify and signal CSAM for removal from the web
- Framework needed to ensure lawfully deployed:
 - Set down by law
 - Necessary in a democratic society
 - Proportionate to the legitimate aim pursued

Key message:

- **CSAM is harmful: simple possession should be criminalised**
- **CSAM is also evidence of the crimes of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of the child featured**



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