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Centre for
Child Protection

Safeguarding online in times of lockdown

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Zentrum für Kinderschutz
Centro de protección de menores
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Hans Zollner SJ
UISG, 18 June 2020

Goals

- Know about risks online
- Be aware of risks online abuse in times of lockdown
- Understand what you can do to safeguard
- Prepare your *project*
- Be committed to safeguarding and safeguarding online

Please be aware of possible reactions in you – mind yourself!



The Internet...

- ... has brought about change worldwide.
- ... is a positive catalyst for innovation, education, and economic growth.

← versus →

- ... brings about serious questions for humanity:
 - Physical
 - Sexual
 - Psychological
 - Educational
 - Relational
 - Spiritual



Risks online



The Internet enables those who would harm children and vulnerable adults by making it easier for them to produce, access and share sexual abuse materials; to find like-minded offenders; and reduce their risk of detection.

cf. ECPAT

Potentially re-victimizing a child millions of times – every time an image is watched, sent, uploaded.

- **Online child sexual exploitation (OCSE):** Accessing, possessing, producing and/or distributing videos, photos of CSA.
- Computer/ **digitally generated** child sexual abuse/exploitation material.

Risks online

- Online **grooming** for sexual purposes
= Developing a relationship with a child to enable their sexual abuse and/or exploitation, either online or offline.
- **Sextortion, revenge porn**
= coercing and blackmailing children for sexual purposes; producing and/or utilizing sexual images and/or videos for the purposes of sexual, financial or other personal gains.

Risks online



- **Sexting**

= sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images.

- **Live sexual abuse** via webcam through live stream.

- Cyber **bullying** and intimidation.

- Political, violent **radicalization**.

VICTIMS FIRST

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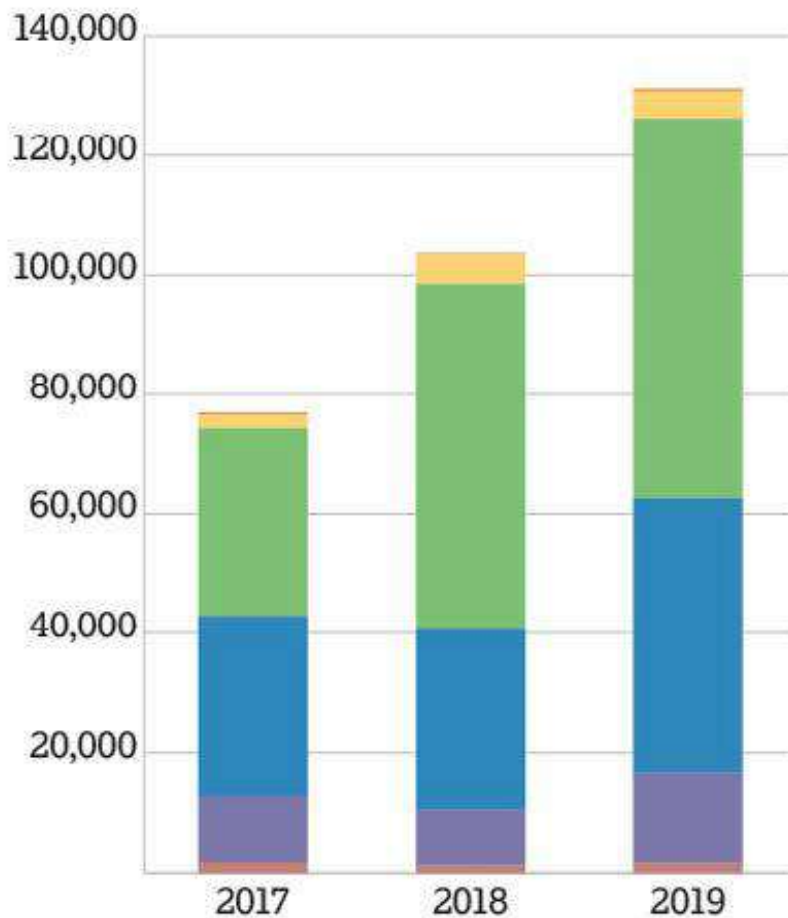


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S57zNkBX_kw&list=PLUCE2-bFBI1s2TpJ3qRUbuyMfri7RbqPb&index=8

Abuse Facilitated by Technological Development



- 2020_1q.: *Facebook* had 2.6 billion monthly active users.
- From 300M online in *India* in 2016 to est. 600M in 2021.
- At any one time, as many as 750.000 child predators are online over the Internet seeking children to abuse online (FBI).
- Some typical headlines:
 - Two-thirds of the world's countries have no specific laws to combat online grooming of children for sex exploitation. (1)
 - Facebook exposes British children to violence and bullying, major NSPCC study finds. (2)
 - US Task Forces Arrest 2,300 Online Child Sex Suspects. (3)
 - Tonga: Law officers meet to combat online child abuse. (4)

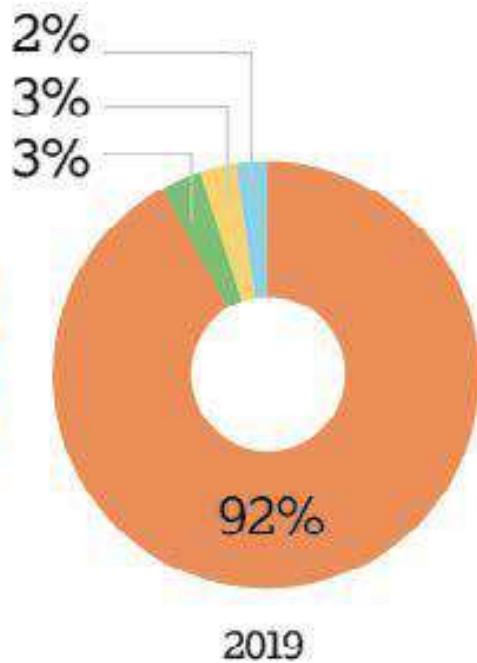
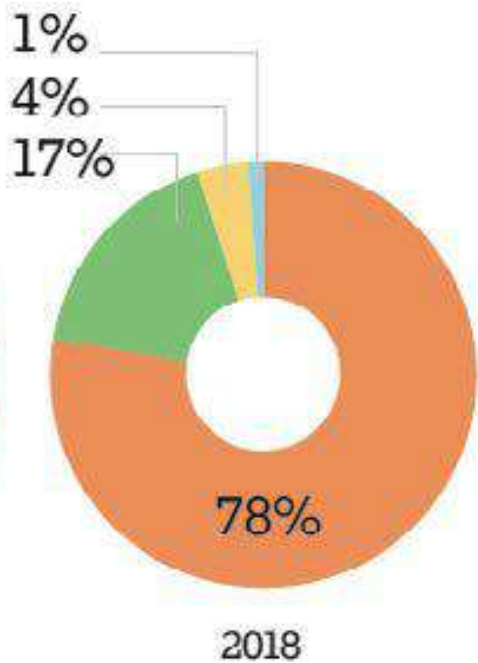
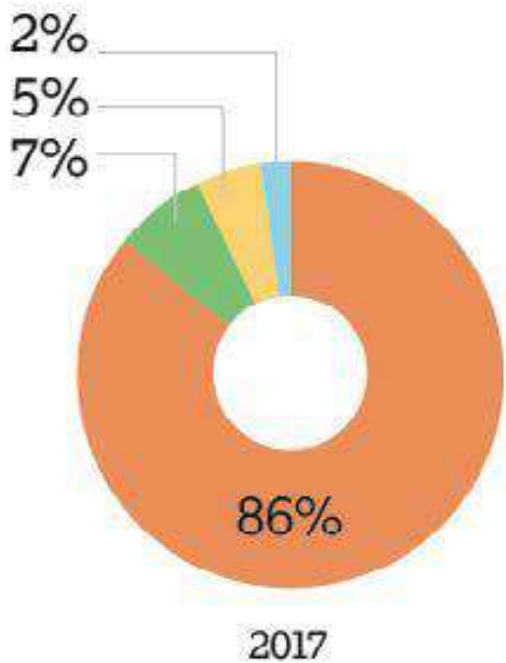


- Aged 16-17
- Aged 14-15
- Aged 11-13
- Aged 7-10
- Aged 3-6
- Aged 0-2

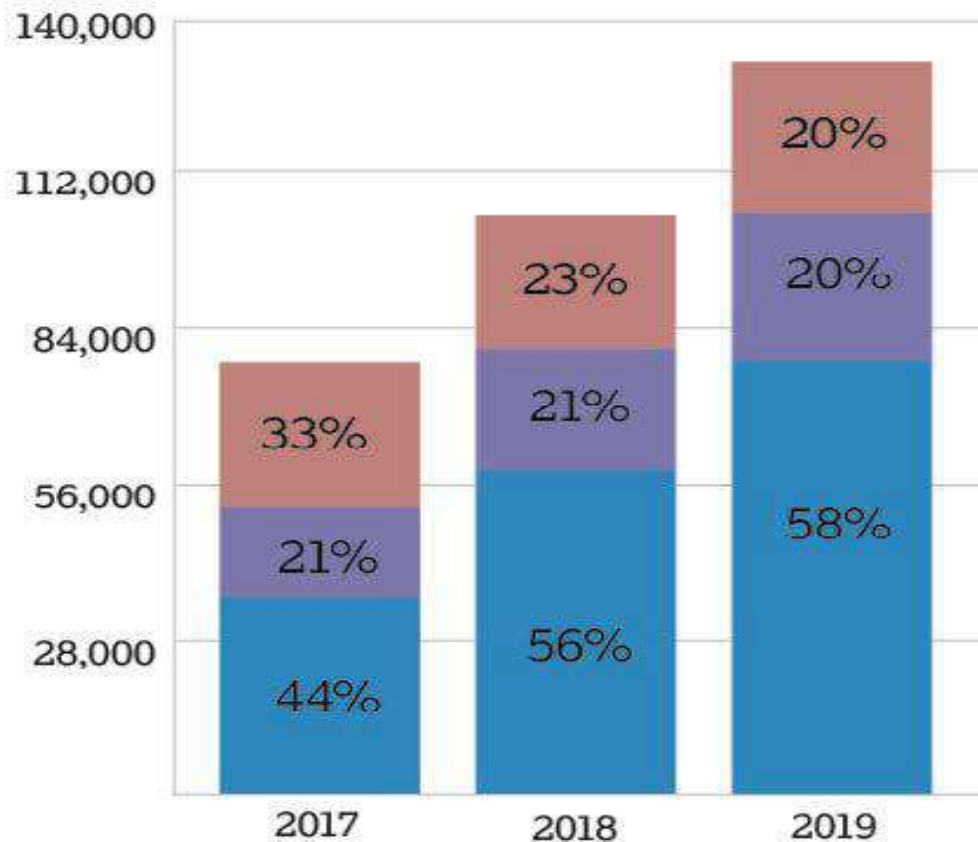


Age of Victims

Age	2017	2018	2019
0-2	1,760 (2%)	1,347 (1%)	1,609 (1%)
3-6	10,912 (14%)	9,080 (9%)	15,119 (11%)
7-10	30,217 (38%)	30,156 (29%)	45,744 (34%)
11-13	31,517 (40%)	58,007 (56%)	63,533 (48%)
14-15	2,249 (3%)	4,732 (5%)	4,450 (3%)
16-17	284 (0.4%)	207 (0.2%)	460 (0.3%)



Gender of Victims

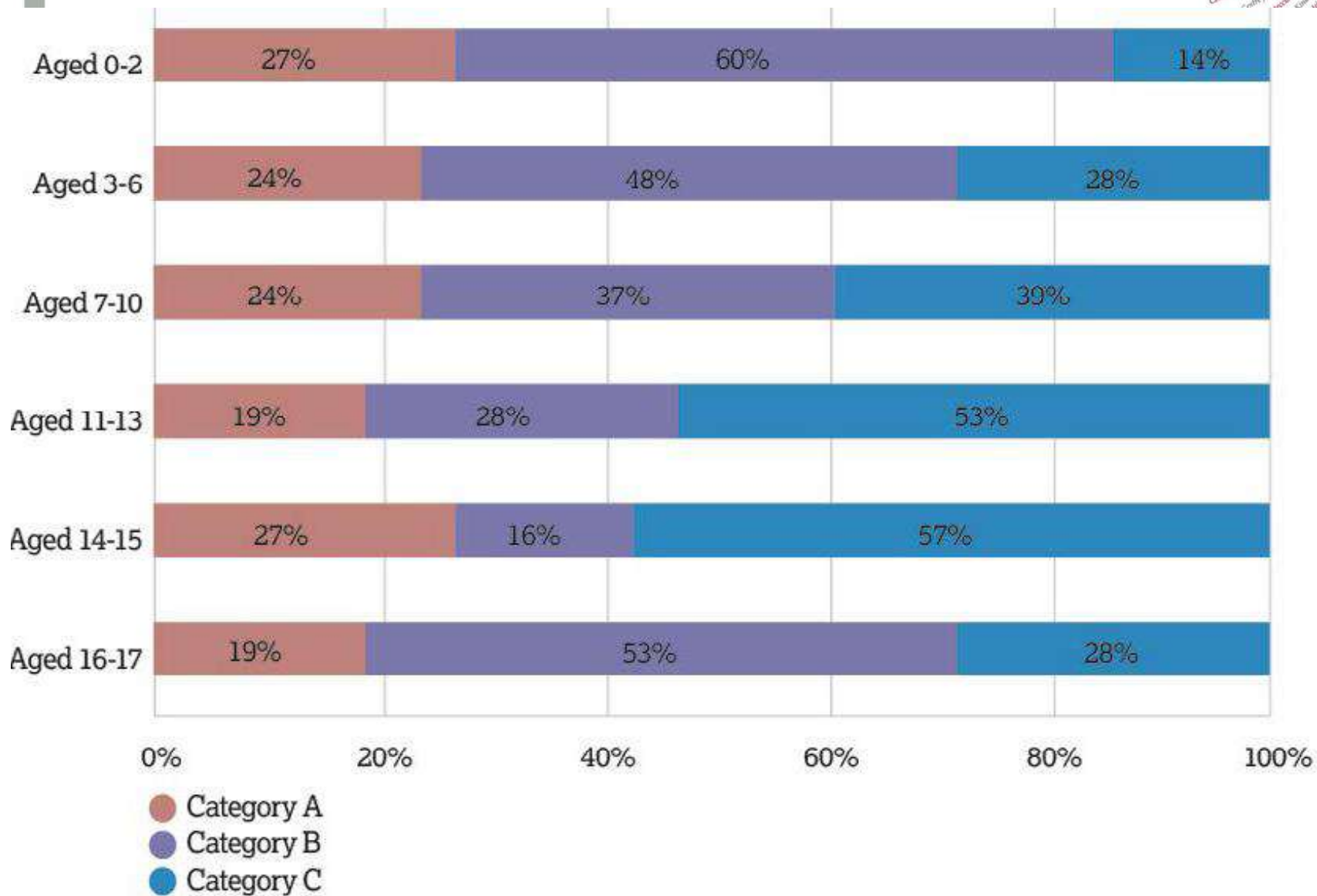


Severity of child sexual abuse

Category A: % showing sexual activity between adults and children including rape or sexual torture including self-penetration.

Category B: % of images involving non-penetrative sexual activity.

Category C: % of indecent images of children not falling within category A or B.



Age and severity of abuse

Online abuse in times of lockdown



Police forces across the world are warning that perpetrators are **using** the lockdown to target children:

- In the **UK** there were nearly nine million attempts in April to access child sexual abuse websites.
- In **Denmark** the number of attempts to access child abuse websites has trebled.
- In **Spain** reports of online child sex videos increased by 20% since March 2020.
- Downloading of abuse imagery has shot up in **Australia** by 86% in the three weeks after 21 March 2020.
- NCMEC (**USA**) has registered a 106% increase in reports of suspected CSA - rising from 983,734 reports in March 2019 to 2,027,520 in the very same month in 2020.

Online abuse in times of lockdown

Cathal Delaney (*Europol*) : "Children are more vulnerable, they're isolated, they're not being as well supervised online and they're spending more time online during this period than they would have previously."

- Exchange of **self-generated** material is likely to increase, as children are now experiencing most of their social lives only online.
- Increase in the numbers of emotionally vulnerable children poses greater risk for **increased grooming** by offenders.
- With parents balancing childcare and homeschooling with other responsibilities, children are likely to be exposed to more **unsupervised screen time** and therefore to more risks of sexual exploitation online.



Online abuse in times of lockdown

- Isolation due to lockdown is likely to increase the probability of **offenders** acting on their impulses.
- Economic hardship and the inability of offenders to travel due to lockdown is likely to increase the potential for livestreaming abuse in home environments.
- Restrictions are **disrupting reporting services** as well as “ordinary control agencies” (schools, social services etc.) and normal day-to-day contact outside home.
- The current focus within governments and law enforcements on COVID-19, and disruption caused by associated protective measures, are leading to lower prioritisation of online child sexual exploitation in many jurisdictions.

Online abuse in times of lockdown



- For anyone who is a **survivor of any form of sexual violence**, abuse or exploitation, news stories about domestic and sexual violence may catch one off guard and even though one has been coping well, that sudden intrusion into one's thoughts can take one's mind right back to the trauma.
- Other stresses that can trigger one's trauma responses such as flashbacks, panic attacks, sleep disruption or vivid nightmares, increased anxiety and intrusive thoughts:
 - being at home with children and unable to get out with them.
 - financial worries.
 - being trapped at home with one's abuser and being unable to leave.

<https://www.glasgowclyderapecrisis.org.uk/content/coping-during-lockdown/>

Safeguarding children from online abuse

What can *carers* do?

1. Use parental controls: software tools that allow you to monitor and limit what your child sees and does online; not foolproof!
2. Set time limits.
3. Device-free zones in the house.
4. Know the apps and games your kids are using, esp. messaging/chat and location sharing.
5. Turn on strictest privacy settings.
6. Co-view and co-play.



What can *schools* do?

Supporting *students*

1. Ensure students know that they can still contact teachers and other support people at your school.
2. Set clear expectations about respectful online behavior.
3. Ensure students have clear reporting pathways if something negative happens online.
4. Model healthy online practices including using positively framed and supportive language in group meetings.
5. Encourage students to check the reliability and credibility of sources.



What can *schools* do?

Supporting *staff*

1. Ensure staff have regular communication with their leaders and support agents/agencies.
2. Encourage staff to seek help that supports them to look after their digital wellbeing.
3. Share the tips for staff using social media and online collaboration platform.

esafety.au



What can *schools* do?

Supporting *families*

1. Keep families in the loop with clear, direct communication.
2. Use your usual communication channels with families to reinforce clear expectations about what is acceptable communication for all members of the school community, both online and offline.
3. Some families in your school community will have limited or no data to enable online learning – have contingencies to accommodate these students.
4. Let families know about parent helplines.



RESOURCES FOR FURTHER ACTION

- <https://www.end-violence.org/protecting-children-during-covid-19-outbreak>
- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/covid-19>
- <https://www.stopitnow.org.uk/> “Get Help” section offering prevention help to those who may be concerned about their own sexual behaviour or of their loved ones - help resources as well as advice for family members, parents, carers and professionals.



Prepare your project

What do you want to do?

Take 5 minutes to

- Become aware of your reactions (1')**
- Think about one or two points that you plan to put in action (2')**
- Write the points down and give yourself a timeline for implementation (2')**



Reflection questions

The public needs to be educated and informed about child exploitation online and how they can prevent it:

- What can you do to raise the level of awareness?
- Is your child safety programme / guidelines / policies evolving with current online risks?
- With whom can you work together in safeguarding?
- How can you foster the role of families – schools – other institutions, incl. Church(es), Religions, in safeguarding?
- What role can the Catholic church play, the biggest network worldwide from grassroots to leadership levels?





Declaration of Rome **6 Oct. 2017**

<https://www.childdignity.com/blog/declaration-of-rome>

“In this era of the internet the world faces unprecedented challenges if it is to preserve the rights and dignity of children and protect them from abuse and exploitation.

These challenges require new thinking and approaches, heightened global awareness and inspired leadership.”





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