What we do?

Our job is to reduce the amount of illegal, and mainly, child abuse material on the Internet and in general to help protect minors while online. Specifically, we assist

• eliminate audiovisual material that portrays ill-treatment of minors,
• safeguard children’s right of safe online surfing and
• reduce racist, xenophobic, violent and other illegal content.

How we do this?

1. We receive anonymous reports from the public, about child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and other content suspected to be illegal.
2. We take further action with such reports, as following:
   a. Verify the existence of the reported content.
   b. Determine the hosting country of the ‘illegal’ content.
   c. Forward the reports to the Hellenic Police, if hosted in Greece.
   d. Update INHOPE’s database of unique CSAM content.
   e. Via (d), forward CSAM reports to another INHOPE hotline, if content is hosted abroad.
   f. Update our statistical tables, accordingly.
   g. Consider following Notice & Takedown procedures, with content hosts.
   h. Give feedback to the report originator, if feasible.
3. We helped introduce Notice & Takedown procedures in Greece.
4. We participate in the global network of hotlines, INHOPE, were we exchange best practices and we receive training.
5. We cooperate with the e-Crime & Digital Forensics units of the Hellenic Police on various other matters.
6. We are one of the three pillars of the Greek Safer Internet Centre.

More information?

This Annual Report can only cover the most important issues, in brief. Please visit our website, in http://www.SafeLine.gr/en for more details. See also our last page, for other Useful Information.
Safety tips for parents

Set rules: Agree with your children about how long they stay online, where they go, what is appropriate, etc.

Be engaged: Talk to your children about what they do online.

Learn: Try to understand the technologies your children use.

Set the example: Obey the rules you ask your child to respect.

Teach your children about strong passwords, what information to protect, fake news, digital footprint, etc.

Social media: The minimum sign up age is 13, but if your children are under this age, it is safer that you know, rather than they do it behind your back.

Be there, when something goes wrong; make your children feel they can discuss with you what makes them uncomfortable.

For more information visit http://saferinternet4kids.gr/ https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu

Safety tips for young people

Remember that your computer keeps traces of your activity.

Be careful when something is offered for "free"; usually there is a hidden cost.

Delete, without opening, any emails from people you do not know. Spam is dangerous.

If you want to meet people you got to know online, always use a public place and go there with an adult you trust.

If you receive an offensive message, report it to the social network, or to SafeLine.

Don’t be rude, if you disagree with someone else’s views; dialogue makes us better.

If you receive an offensive message, report it to the social network, or to SafeLine.

When you accept a friend request, this ‘friend’ gains access to all the personal information in your profile.

Do not share your passwords with anyone; they are strictly personal.

Do not share your personal details (tel. no, home address, etc.) with people you only know online.

Do not share your passwords with anyone; they are strictly personal.

Think carefully before you post YOUR pictures/videos; once online, you can’t take them back.

After you create your profile change the default settings that manage your data.

For more information visit http://www.SafeLine.gr/en/information/safety-tips
believes that current generations are fortunate enough to have Internet, as it greatly enhances human rights, democracy, commerce, culture & innovation and it does so outside the control of any single authority. It is then in the interests of its members, the ordinary Internet users, to help combat Internet’s dark side. At the same time, Internet as a global medium, can only be protected by global efforts.

**INHOPE Membership**

- INHOPE was launched in 1999.
- Safeline is a full member since 2005.
- **INHOPE Mission**: “...to support and enhance the work of member hotlines to strengthen the international efforts to combat child sexual abuse using a multi stakeholder approach”.
- **INHOPE Objectives**:
  1. Establish policies and best practice standards for hotlines.
  2. Encourage exchange of expertise among members.
  3. Ensure rapid & effective response to illegal content reports around the world by developing consistent, effective and secure mechanisms.
  4. Expand the network of INHOPE Hotlines around the world by ... providing consultation and training to meet best practice standards.
  5. Promote a better understanding of the work of hotlines to policymakers at an international level ... with the aim of achieving better co-operation.
  6. Raise awareness of INHOPE and member hotlines with key stakeholders as well as with the general public.
- **INHOPE Values**:
  - Freedom of the Internet
  - A commitment to the positive uses of the Internet
  - A shared responsibility for the protection of young people by government, educators, parents and the Internet industry.

The INHOPE hotline network achieved a consistent ($R^2=98\%$) growth, over the period 1999-2011, of about 2.9 new hotlines every year. Thereafter, average annual growth was much slower (~1 new hotline per 3 years).
Greek Safer Internet Centre (a risk-reduction approach)

As mentioned earlier, SafeLine focuses on reducing the amount of illegal, and mainly, child abuse material on the Internet.

This activity helps make the Internet a safer place for minors, because it reduces the risks to which they may be exposed. SafeLine, and the hotline network in general, does so by help removing many of the sources of hazard of the online world. This activity reduces the chances that a minor will be threatened, when surfing.

Risk is also reduced by attacking the consequences. So, it is imperative that minors are well prepared to face hazards.

The Awareness centre, aims at raising awareness, by advising children, young people, parents & teachers about the safe use of the Internet, and in particular of the social media.

The above two activities (hotline & awareness building) have a proactive nature, in that they try to reduce risk. Given that risk can not be eliminated, although it can be reduced through the above two activities (hotline & awareness building), what is needed is the reactive dimension, i.e. how do we treat harm, if and when happens?

The Helpline (available at +30 210 600 7686), offers support in cases of harmful content and conduct, such as excessive internet use, bullying or exposure to inappropriate online content.

Hence, a risk-based, proactive and reactive, action against online hazards should be based on the following three activities:

1. Awareness raising.
2. Reporting illegal content.
3. Helpline, in case of need.

The Greek Safer Internet Centre (SIC) comprises exactly the above three activities and has the ultimate goal of promoting

- safer,
- responsible, and
- better use

of the Internet and mobile technologies among children & young people.

Processing of a report

There is no automatic system, yet, which can identify with confidence, illegal & harmful content on the Internet. The only alternative then is the report from the human user of the Internet who comes across such content accidentally. And even then, only a trained expert can judge what is potentially illegal and report the matter to the authorities.

The effort then to make Internet safer starts from the user and his/her willingness to share responsibility for the well-being of this unique medium.

A hotline is an entity which offers to the public, a method to anonymously report Internet material, that they think is illegal. SafeLine is the Greek hotline.

To process the received reports, SafeLine follows the procedure in the next page. The procedure has been approved by INHOPE.

SafeLine has been audited by INHOPE, regarding compliance with standards and procedures, as set out in the INHOPE Quality Assurance programme.

[INHOPE Certificate of Quality]
Internet users come across content that they think is illegal. They go to www.safeline.gr to report the finding. Reporting may be anonymous.

SafeLine receives the report and tries to locate the content. If the content can’t be located, the report is deleted.

If the content is located, SafeLine determines the type of the content & the hosting country and updates the statistical counters.

If the content is CSAM, the URL is uploaded to INHOPE’s ICCAM database, through which Interpol and other hotlines are notified.

If SafeLine thinks that the content may be illegal, it considers following Notice & Takedown procedures.

If the content is hosted in Greece, the report is forwarded to the Hellenic Police.

If, and when, feasible, feedback is forwarded to the report originator.

NOTES on Report Processing

1. Why the reported content may not be located?
   Because, between reporting and processing, the content is often withdrawn, by the content owner / provider / authorities / etc. In such a case, the report cannot be processed.

2. What is the type of the content?
   SafeLine categorizes the reports in a number of ways, including the content type: Child pornography, Racism & xenophobia, Terrorism, Drugs, ..., Other content / Not illegal, Queries & Outside Hotline remit.

3. What is the hosting country and why do we need to know it?
   Responsibility for the content is assumed by the authorities of the country physically hosting the content. The report must be forwarded to them.

4. What are the statistical counters?
   SafeLine & INHOPE publish statistics every year. The counters count content types & location, action taken, etc. for the reported period. Statistics are useful because if you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.

5. CSAM:
   Although legislation uses the term child pornography, a more appropriate one is Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). The problem with the term pornography is that it may give the impression that the sexual acts had the consent of the children.

6. INHOPE database, ICCAM:
   INHOPE maintains a database (ICCAM) with unique CSAM URLs: “ICCAM provides vital intelligence to law enforcement, including INTERPOL, in identifying previously unseen CSAM and supports the process of victim identification”. This speeds up action to save the children involved.

7. Doesn’t SafeLine, or the reporter of the content, know if the content is illegal?
   What is illegal is determined by the Law. The Law is interpreted by the Courts of Justice, or other appointed authorities. SafeLine suspects that the content may be illegal it forwards the report to the authorities.

8. Notice & Takedown: Please see p. 20.
Working with the Police

As mentioned under “Procedure for Report processing”, if SafeLine thinks that the content may be illegal and if the content is hosted in Greece, then the Report is forwarded to the Hellenic Police, and in particular to its Cyber Crime Division.

Although the cooperation between SafeLine and the Police dates back to 2004, the Cyber Crime Division, in its current form, is based on a 2014 decree and operates out of Athens, with a sub-division operating out of Thessaloniki.

The Law

Hellenic penal laws apply to all acts committed in Greece, even by foreigners, as well as to any act described as a felony or misdemeanor, committed abroad by a Greek national, if this act is punishable according to the laws of the country where it was committed.

For crimes committed on the Internet, the place where the crime took place is either the place where the webpage can be read, or where it is hosted.

Working with the Industry

SafeLine cooperates with the Internet industry, like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Google & others, as well as with the Greek ISPs.

One dimension of this cooperation concerns the “Notice & Takedown” process (see p. 25), while other areas of cooperation include participation in common meetings and activities.

Frequently Asked Questions

A. What kind of Internet content is considered illegal?
   Every country defines what is illegal in her own way. Usually, what is illegal offline, is illegal online. In general, all countries outlaw, CSAM and racism or xenophobia.

B. What kind of Internet content is considered harmful?
   It is any material, otherwise non-illegal, which is subject to distribution restrictions (adults only, for example).

C. What type of Internet content should I report to SafeLine?
   You should report webpages with content you believe is illegal. For harmful content use filters, appropriate browser/ISP/router-setting, and/or parental control tools.

D. Can I report illegal content anonymously?
   Of course! When you visit the “Make a Report” page, in the “Personal Information” box, anonymous is the default value.

E. Why is content I reported still online?
   If reported content is still online it may be that what you reported is not illegal in the hosting country, or it may be because an international cooperation of the police is necessary, which might lead to delays in some cases.

F. Are there any risks to children & young people when playing online games?
   Gaming sites can be fantastic fun for young people. However as with any online technology, there are risks:
   - Addiction: Gamers may become so involved that they lose touch with the offline world and stay late at night playing, neglecting also their obligations.
   - Abuse: Some young people can become abusive to other gamers, in their effort to progress with the game.
   - Risky behavior: Some young people may fall victim to adults who are prepared to ask them for sexual favors in exchange of information and knowledge useful to progress with the game.

G. What is phishing?
   It is the attempt to obtain sensitive information (passwords, etc.) by disguising as a trustworthy entity (for example your Bank).

H. For more FAQs, visit:
4.327 Reports received in 2017

Actionable Reports 29%

Other Content 43%

Various 4%

Removed 4%

Adult content 10%

Insufficient

This corresponds to 2,5 reports every working hour, or one report every 24 minutes.

On average, one actionable report, every 1.4 working hours.

Other Content: Content outside SafeLine’s remit.

Various: Cyberbullying, Queries, Not illegal, or Not accessible.

Insufficient detail: Report with insufficient data, to allow processing.

Actionable: Reports SafeLine plans to take action on, because they are likely to be illegal under Greek Law.

Adult Content: Adult Pornography, or Extreme Adult Content

Removed: Reports about content which was subsequently withdrawn.

Of the above, 68% of the reports were actioned.

1.268 Actionable reports

Personal data: 11%

CSAM: 22%

Threat: 7%

Other: 6%

Communications privacy breach

Online financial fraud

Personal data violation

Other: Other smaller categories of actionable reports (Copyright breach, Defamation, Other child-related content, Terrorism, Drugs, Promotion of suicide & Sexual harassment).

On average, one actioned report, every 2 working hours.

Actioned: Reports for which SafeLine took action.

Of the above, 68% of the reports were actioned.

On average, one actioned report, every 2 working hours.

Actioned reports

Reports received in 2017

Of the above, 68% of the reports were actioned.

On average, one actioned report, every 2 working hours.

Actioned: Reports for which SafeLine took action.

Of the above, 68% of the reports were actioned.

Online financial fraud

Communications privacy breach

Personal data violation
Reports were actioned in 2017

Number of reports uploaded to the INHOPE ICCAM database: 34%

Number of reports forwarded to the Hellenic Police: 56%

...to ISPs/hosting providers: 10%

...to Content Owners, 0.23%

Over the period 2011-17:

- The number of reports received by SafeLine has been increasing, on average, by 162 per year, but the forecast value of this rate is low, as $R^2=40\%$.
- The number of reports actioned by SafeLine has been increasing, on average, by 87 per year. The forecast value of this rate is good, as $R^2=59\%$.
- Over the last 7 years, 43% of the actionable reports were actually actioned. The ratio of actioned/actionable reports has been increasing at a reliable ($R^2=81\%$) trend of +8%/year.
- The number of reports characterized by SafeLine as actionable has been decreasing by 55 per year, on average. The forecast value of this rate is low, as $R^2=26\%$. It is expected that this trend will switch to increasing, following the rising trend of actioned reports, which constitute about 43% of the actionable reports.
Over the period 2011-17 the following reliable trends were observed:

- **Personal data violation**, as a % of actionable reports, **decreased** at an average annual rate of **3.5% per year**.
- **Online financial fraud**, as a % of actionable reports, **increased** at an average annual rate of **5.7% per year**.
- **CSAM (Child Sexual-Abuse Material)**, as a % of actionable reports, **increased** at an average annual rate of **2.6% per year**.

**NOTE A**: When we observe time-series, like in the diagrams above, we can attempt to add a trendline (dotted line), of an appropriate shape. The most common shape is a straight line. Each shape has a different fit and the quality of fit is measured by R².

The value of a linear trend line is that it also gives us the average rate of change, say +2.6%/year for CSAM. This rate of change is an undeniable fact, whatever the value of R², and describes what has happened over the observed period (here, 2011-17).

If R² is good (say, >70%), we can use the trendline to forecast the next 2-3 years. The closer R² is to 100%, the more reliable the forecast.

**NOTE B**: A note of caution is necessary, when we discuss statistical trends, as a common reflex is to try and draw dangerous conclusions. For example, in p. 20, we examine the rising number of CSAM reports received per year, by SafeLine. This fact, does in no way imply that CSAM material is on the rise. What we have observed is that CSAM reports are on the rise, but we do not know the reasons, until we conduct a separate study.

A very challenging, and most likely unsolvable problem, is the separation of the cause factor from the observation factor. For example, an increase in the number of CSAM reports/year may be due to an increase in CSAM content, or an increase in SafeLine visibility, or an increase of public awareness, or an increase in the use of Internet, etc., or on a combination of the above and other factors.

Over the period 2011-17, as a % of the actionable reports,

- **Hellenic Police**, received an average of 54%.
- **INHOPE ICCAM database**, received the 28-49%.
- **ISPs and Content owners**, received a percentage which varied between zero and 21%.
1. **Digitized information**: Information (video, picture, music, text, etc.), represented by bits (0s & 1s), so that it can be processed, stored & transmitted, by computers. Technologies processing digitized information are called digital technologies.

2. **Digital transformation**: The transformation through which businesses and the society, in general, have to go through in order to fully exploit digital technologies. To the extend that society transfers more and more of its operations from physical to digital, to that extend, and perhaps faster, we should supplement physical with digital (or IT) safety & security, to protect people & property against IT threats.

3. **IT Safety & Security**: Both refer to the condition of being protected from IT threats. Safety refers to the control of the risks through safety measures, awareness & preparation. Security refers to solid measures taken to protect from IT threats, like antivirus, firewall, etc.

4. **Hash value**: It is a digital word (say, 20 characters), easily produced from a digital file (any size), in such a way that even if one bit of the file changes, hash also changes in many places. So, a hash value is like the fingerprint of the file. The probability that two different files have the same hash is negligible. The INHOPE network, once it categorizes suspected imagery as CSAM, it uses its hash value for further processing. This is necessary to satisfy the law and minimize the risk of accidental spill of CSAM.

5. **Digital signature**: If the hash value, of a file, is encrypted by the file sender and attached to the file, this may serve as the digital signature of the file sender. A hacker can change the file, but not its (encrypted) hash value, so any attack will be detected by the owners of the encryption password.

6. **Blockchain**: It is a digital record duplicated thousands of times across a network of computers, in such a way that all the copies of the digital record are regularly updated, say every ten minutes. As there is no single central location, where the blockchain is hosted, it cannot be successfully hacked. Blockchain is updated by adding new blocks. Each new block contains an encrypted hash of the previous block, a timestamp and the new content. Private blockchains have been proposed for business use. Digital currencies use public blockchains.
Removal of CSAM

Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) is the most horrific of the illegal content, hotlines come across on the Internet. Frequently, CSAM is being referred to, as child pornography; nevertheless, the term pornography may give the impression of consent of the actors, which cannot be the case for underage individuals. CSAM is then used as the most accurate term, which reinforces that behind images of child pornography there is sexual abuse of real children. Once CSAM is detected, and to minimize re-victimization, it is extremely important that this content is taken down immediately. Even more important is the assessment, by Law Enforcement, that the specific CSAM depicts past acts, known to the authorities and not ongoing abuse of children. If the latter is the case, then Police have to move in urgently to free the abused victims.

Hence, especially for CSAM, speed is of the essence.

To assist Police, CSA imagery found by the hotline network is stored in a specific INHOPE database, called ICCAM, which allows the identification of new imagery, flagging out the duplicates. This economizes on police time which may be used to save new victims.

The procedure used to remove CSAM from the Internet is called Notice & Takedown and is described on the page opposite.

In 2017, INHOPE member Hotlines traced online CSAM to over 70 countries. Its geographical distribution is depicted below:

Notice & Takedown

1. Notice & Action procedures are those followed by the Internet Intermediaries for the purpose of combating illegal content upon receipt of notification.

2. Takedown is the most common outcome of Notice & Action. Other possibilities are:
   • Blocking,
   • voluntary takedown,
   • proactive & preventive measures &
   • action against repeated infringements.

3. SafeLine notifies the Internet Intermediaries for content on their servers, suspected to be illegal.

4. SafeLine cooperates closely with many Internet Intermediaries:
   • Facebook
   • Instagram
   • YouTube
   • Twitter &
   • others.

5. On notification, by SafeLine, the Internet Intermediaries normally take down the reported content.

6. A measure of the effectiveness of the Notice & Takedown procedure is the time it takes to remove the “notified” piece.
To report illegal material:
Mail at report@SafeLine.gr

For more information:
Mail at contact@SafeLine.gr

To complain about the Hotline:
Mail at complaints@SafeLine.gr

Find safeline on:
www.SafeLine.gr
Facebook
Twitter

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