Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
CY 2023 Report to the Committees on Appropriations
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Transparency

NCMEC.org/CyberTiplineData

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provides this report on National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Transparency, consonant with the joint explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103), which clarified House Report 117-97. The joint explanatory statement states that:

> The agreement clarifies that the report requested in House language under the heading "National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Transparency" shall include the following information: (1) the number of reports submitted to the CyberTipline by Electronic Service Providers containing suspected CSAM disaggregated by how many images and videos are deemed to be unique using hash-matching technology; (2) the number of reports submitted to the CyberTipline by Electronic Service Providers containing suspected CSAM with unique images and videos after deconfliction or deduplication of visually similar imagery; (3) the number of unique image and video files reviewed by the Child Victim Identification Program (CVIP); (4) the total number of unique image and video files reviewed by the CVIP disaggregated by whether there was a known or suspected relationship between the suspected offender and the victim, including disaggregation by the type of relationship; and (5) the number of CSAM series containing unidentified minor victims added to the NCMEC's CVIP database of victims for the first time.

The information, opinions, and conclusions expressed below were provided by NCMEC in response to the above referenced request.

I.   **Introduction**

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is a private, non-profit organization created as a grassroots response to an unthinkable tragedy. In 1981, 6-year-old Adam Walsh was with his mother in a Florida shopping mall when he vanished without a trace. The search for Adam revealed many inadequacies that plagued missing child investigations at the time. There was no coordinated response to search for Adam, no AMBER Alert system to quickly deliver critical information to the public, no national sex offender registry to search for nearby offenders, and no place for families to go for guidance or emotional support.

Revé and John Walsh endured 10 excruciating days searching for Adam before he was found murdered 100 miles away. The Walsh's channeled their grief and came together with other child advocates to create NCMEC in 1984. Over the past 39 years, NCMEC has grown into the leading nonprofit organization and the nation's clearinghouse and resource center on missing and exploited children issues. Today NCMEC's more than 400 employees manage numerous public-private partnerships and utilize NCMEC's unique resources to help find missing children, combat child sexual exploitation, and prevent child victimization through five main programs of work relating to: (1) missing

children; (2) exploited children; (3) community outreach; (4) educational and professional resources; and (5) family support.

NCMEC manages two core programs to combat child sexual exploitation: (1) the CyberTipline; and (2) the Child Victim Identification Program (CVIP).

II.   Background on the CyberTipline

In March 1998, NCMEC created the CyberTipline to serve as an online mechanism for members of the public and electronic communication service providers[1] (ESPs) to report incidents of suspected child sexual exploitation including: child sex trafficking, online enticement of children for sexual acts; child sexual molestation; child sexual abuse material (CSAM) (referred to in U.S. law as child pornography); child sex tourism; unsolicited obscene materials sent to children; misleading domain names; and misleading words or digital images. U.S.-based ESPs are legally required to report apparent child pornography they become aware of to the CyberTipline (see 18 U.S.C. § 2258A).

The volume of reports and the quantity of reported CSAM content submitted to the CyberTipline have increased exponentially over the past 25 years. When the CyberTipline became operational in CY 1998, NCMEC received 2,772 reports relating to child sexual exploitation. In CY 2021, NCMEC received over 29.3 million reports to the CyberTipline; in CY 2022, it received 32 million; and in CY 2023, it received 36.2 million.[2] Appendix A contains a chart showing the total number of CyberTipline reports received from CY 1998 to CY 2023.

While the number of reports submitted to the CyberTipline has consistently increased over time, the adoption of end-to-end encryption on social media platforms, either as a user option or by default on user accounts, will dramatically curtail ESPs' ability to detect and report child sexual exploitation on their platforms. Based on recent disclosures from ESPs, NCMEC anticipates that widespread adoption of end-to-end encryption by reporting ESPs will begin at some point in CY 2024 and could result in a loss of up to 80% of NCMEC's CyberTipline reports. Each report that is lost because an ESP cannot detect and report child sexual exploitation occurring on its platform represents a child who is less likely to be recovered and safeguarded and whose active abuse or repeated revictimization will continue unabated.

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[1] A provider is defined as: (A) an electronic communication service provider, which is a provider of any service that provides to users thereof the ability to send or receive wire or electronic communication (18 U.S.C. § 2258E(2); 18 U.S.C. § 2510(15)); or (B) a remote computing service, which means the provision to the public of computer storage or processing services by means of an electronic communications system. (18 U.S.C. § 2258E(2); 18 U.S.C. § 2711(2)).

[2] References to CY 2021 refer to the timeframe from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021; references to CY 2022 refer to the timeframe from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022; and references to CY 2023 refer to the timeframe from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

A. Public vs. ESP Reporting and Geographic Location and Categories of Exploitation of CyberTipline Reports

While ESPs have a statutory requirement to report apparent child pornography they become aware of to NCMEC's CyberTipline and are legally permitted to submit reported content to the CyberTipline, members of the public also may submit information relating to apparent child sexual exploitation online via NCMEC's 24/7 call center (1-800-THE-LOST) or the public reporting form available on NCMEC's website (https://report.cybertip.org/). The chart below shows the number of CyberTipline reports NCMEC received from members of the public in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023.

CyberTipline Reports Submitted by Members of the Public and ESPs	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Total CyberTipline Reports	29,397,681	32,059,029	36,210,368
Public CyberTipline Reports	240,598	256,504	265,542
ESP CyberTipline Reports	29,157,083	31,802,525	35,944,826

As more people around the world have gained access to the internet, smartphones with cameras, and inexpensive computer storage, U.S.-based ESPs more frequently report international users who are sexually exploiting children on U.S.-based platforms to the CyberTipline. Additionally, some ESPs based outside the United States report suspected CSAM to NCMEC's CyberTipline even though they have no legal obligation to do so. Currently, NCMEC receives more reports relating to international users than reports relating to U.S.-based users. The chart below shows the number of CyberTipline reports NCMEC received in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 that related to U.S. users and international users.

CyberTipline Reports Relating to U.S. and International Users	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
U.S.	724,503 2.5%	1,920,963 6%	1,621,937 4.5%
International	27,479,912 93.5%	28,825,411 89.9%	33,220,027 91.7%
Unknown Location[3]	1,193,266 4%	1,312,655 4.1%	1,368,404 3.8%
Total	29,397,681	32,059,029	36,210,368

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[3] It may not be possible for NCMEC to determine a specific location when a reporting party fails to provide complete or sufficient information in their report or the reported information resolves to proxy or VPN services. Reports with an unknown location are made available to U.S. Federal law enforcement for their review.

All reports submitted to the CyberTipline are categorized by the type of child sexual exploitation that is being reported. The chart below shows the categorizations provided by reporting members of the public or reporting ESPs for CyberTipline reports submitted to NCMEC in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023.

Categorization of CyberTipline Reports	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Child Pornography (possession, manufacture, distribution)	29,309,106	31,901,234	35,925,098
Misleading Words or Digital Images on the Internet	5,825	7,517	8,446
Online Enticement of Children for Sexual Acts	44,155	80,524	186,819
Child Sex Trafficking	16,032	18,336	17,353
Unsolicited Obscene Material Sent to a Child	5,177	35,624	45,746
Misleading Domain Name	3,304	1,948	6,883
Child Sexual Molestation	12,458	12,906	18,021
Child Sex Tourism	1,624	940	2,002

B. Details of CSAM-Related Content Reported to the CyberTipline

i. Images, Videos, and Other Content Reported to the CyberTipline

ESPs are permitted under U.S. law to upload files relating to the incident they are reporting to the CyberTipline.[4] Uploaded files may consist of one or more image, video, and/or related content concerning child sexual exploitation. The chart below shows the total number of uploaded files reported to NCMEC's CyberTipline in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023, broken down by images, videos, and other content.

Files Uploaded with CyberTipline Reports Submitted by ESPs (Images, Videos, Other Content)	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Images	39,939,298	49,404,779	54,842,374
Videos	44,856,209	37,775,034	49,528,198
Other Content	196,228	1,197,394	1,282,590
Total	84,991,735	88,377,207	105,653,162

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[4] 18 U.S.C. § 2258A(b)(4).

ii. **CyberTipline Reports Submitted by ESPs Containing Suspected CSAM Disaggregated by Number of Unique and Visually Similar Images and Videos**

CSAM that is circulated online may consist of new or existing content. New content often depicts current sexual abuse of a child or content that an offender is distributing online for the first time. Unfortunately, once content is shared online, it continues to be re-shared and re-circulated among offenders. A majority of uploaded files reported to the CyberTipline consists of existing, or previously seen, content that has circulated for years and continues to be traded and shared online among offenders. This re-circulation of CSAM not only violates federal law, and normalizes child sexual abuse among offenders, but also perpetuates long-lasting damage on survivors and can leave survivors struggling in their recovery process. NCMEC is aware of many survivors whose CSAM continues to be distributed thousands and tens of thousands of times a year, even many years after their recovery from the hands-on abuse.

NCMEC utilizes multiple image and video identification technologies to determine the number of CyberTipline reports that are reporting new CSAM content and the number of reports that are reporting previously seen content. Two algorithms widely used in investigations and forensic examination are MD5 and SHA1 algorithms. Images that share the same MD5 hash are identical – as are images that share the same SHA1 hash.[5] Visually similar images or videos appear identical when viewed by the human eye but contain minor differences, such as those that may be caused by cropping, resizing, or implementing slight color alterations to images and videos. Images or videos that share the same PhotoDNA signature or Videntifier fingerprint value are visually similar, though not identical.[6]

The chart below summarizes the number of reports submitted to the CyberTipline by ESPs in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 that contained unique images and videos based on MD5 hashing and visually similar images and videos based on PhotoDNA and Videntifier technology.

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[5] A hash value can be thought of as a digital fingerprint of a file that can be used to uniquely identify it. The contents of a file are processed using a cryptographic algorithm producing a unique numerical value, which is referred to as the hash value. If the contents are modified in any way, the value of the hash will also change significantly.
[6] PhotoDNA hashing and Videntifier technology creates matches among groups of images or videos that are visually similar but contain slight variations.

CyberTipline Reports Submitted by ESPs Containing Unique and Visually Similar Images/Videos Based on MD5 and Hash-Matching Technologies	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Total CyberTipline reports	29,397,681	32,059,029	36,210,368
CyberTipline reports disaggregated by reports containing unique images based on MD5 hash values	21,814,959	23,404,207	27,281,685
CyberTipline reports disaggregated by reports containing visually similar images/videos determined by PhotoDNA and Videntifier technology	16,589,193	19,307,139	22,330,009

The CyberTipline report totals shown above as containing unique and visually similar reported images and videos can be broken down further into the total of unique reported images and videos and the total of visually similar images and videos.

The chart below shows the total numbers of unique images and videos and visually similar images and videos submitted to the CyberTipline by ESPs in CY 2021, CY 2022, and 2023.

Unique and Visually Similar Images/Videos Contained in CyberTipline Reports Submitted by ESPs as Determined by Hash-Matching Technology						
	CY 2021–Unique Images and Videos Determined by MD5 Hashing	CY 2021–Unique Images and Videos Determined by PhotoDNA and Videntifier Technology	CY 2022–Unique Images and Videos Determined by MD5 Hashing	CY 2022–Unique Images and Videos Determined by PhotoDNA and Videntifier Technology	CY 2023–Unique Images and Videos Determined by MD5 Hashing	CY 2023–Unique Images and Videos Determined by PhotoDNA and Videntifier Technology
Images	23,660,093	16,901,958	26,421,535	18,821,051	32,325,824	22,426,546
Videos	12,965,188	5,103,431	16,978,366	8,315,811	17,653,496	11,213,622
Total	36,625,281	22,005,389	43,399,901	27,136,862	49,979,320	33,640,168

C. ESPs Registered to Report to the CyberTipline

In CY 2021, 149 new ESPs were registered to report to the CyberTipline; in CY 2022, 68 ESPs were registered; and in CY 2023, this number increased to 192 ESPs. NCMEC requires ESPs to register with the CyberTipline in order to access the secure reporting mechanism that permits ESPs to submit content (images and videos) with their reports. ESPs that are not registered can still submit reports to the CyberTipline through NCMEC's public reporting form available at https://report.cybertip.org/ or

by calling NCMEC's 1-800-THE-LOST hotline, however ESPs cannot submit content through either of these reporting mechanisms.

The landscape of the ESP industry changes every year as ESPs are created, merge or split into different companies. As a result, NCMEC continuously engages in outreach with new companies to assist them with registering to report to the CyberTipline. The chart below shows the number of new ESPs NCMEC helped to register to report to the CyberTipline in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023.

ESPs Registered to Report to the CyberTipline	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
New ESPs Registered by NCMEC	149	68	192

D. CyberTipline Reports Made Available to Law Enforcement

When NCMEC receives a CyberTipline report, its primary focus is to determine which jurisdiction the report relates to so it can be made available to the appropriate law enforcement agency for its independent review and potential investigation. NCMEC is required by law to make available every CyberTipline report it receives to law enforcement. See 18 U.S.C. § 2258A(c). NCMEC makes reports available to U.S. law enforcement agencies, including the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Units, federal and local law enforcement agencies, as well as international law enforcement agencies.

The chart below shows CyberTipline reports made available to law enforcement agencies in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023. It is important to note that CyberTipline reports are sometimes made available to more than one law enforcement agency. This may occur because a report contains multiple geographic locations for a reported offender and a reported child victim, or for a sender and recipient of CSAM. In these cases, NCMEC will make the CyberTipline report available to all relevant law enforcement agencies. The totals below reflect the agencies NCMEC made reports available to based on reports received by NCMEC during CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023.

Law Enforcement Recipients of CyberTipline Reports	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Internet Crimes Against Children (ICACs) Units	Actionable: 395,173 Informational: 11,900 Total: 407,073	Actionable: 491,655 Informational: 400,715 Total: 892,370	Actionable: 670,491 Informational: 238,271 Total: 908,762
Local Law Enforcement	Actionable: 1,731 Informational: 3 Total: 1,734	Actionable: 1,462 Informational: 3 Total: 1,465	Actionable: 1,962 Informational: 16 Total: 1,978
Federal Law Enforcement	Actionable: 916,064 International: 590,383 Total: 1,506,447	Actionable: 1,356,988 Informational: 997,475 Total: 2,354,463	Actionable: 1,543,016 Informational: 563,284 Total: 2,106,300
International Law Enforcement	Actionable: 17,129,598 Informational: 10,400,331 Total: 27,529,929	Actionable: 13,995,567 Informational: 15,010,413 Total: 29,005,980	Actionable: 16,142,869 Informational: 17,361,989 Total: 33,504,858

As noted in the above chart, CY 2022 and CY 2023 report numbers are differentiated between "actionable" and "informational" reports. NCMEC staff and automated systems provide report analysis to support law enforcement's prioritization and review of CyberTipline reports made available to the ICACs and to Federal and Local law enforcement. This analysis includes differentiating between CyberTipline reports that are deemed "actionable" and reports that are deemed "informational" based on the information that an ESP or reporting party voluntarily has chosen to include in a report. There are no legal requirements directing what information an ESP must include in a CyberTipline report, and as a result many ESPs do not consistently provide actionable information when submitting reports to NCMEC's CyberTipline. An actionable report contains information indicative of a suspected prior, ongoing, or planned child sexual exploitation incident. An informational report contains severely limited information in which there is no apparent child sexual exploitation nexus; or so little information was provided by the reporting party that it is impossible to identify a location to refer the report to; or contains frequently seen child sexual exploitation or abuse material that has been shared in a non-malicious context, such as for inappropriate comedic effect or moral outrage or concern for the child depicted. NCMEC's designation of a report as actionable or informational enables law enforcement to focus on reports that are most likely to lead to the recovery of a child and the arrest of an offender.

E. Law Enforcement Feedback Relating to CyberTipline Reports

NCMEC utilizes several methods to encourage law enforcement to provide feedback regarding CyberTipline reports, including creating and providing law enforcement

with a feedback system. The system contains numerous structured fields and free text fields for law enforcement to provide feedback on reports they have received. The following are examples of structured feedback fields provided through the feedback system. Parenthetical responses are provided as options from a drop-down menu:

Case Status (Conviction; Arrest; Ongoing Investigation; Referred; Closed)

> <u>If ARREST</u>: Did you identify a child victim (Yes; No)

> <u>If ARREST</u>: Did you identify any additional victims? (Yes; No). How many?

> <u>If CLOSED</u>: Please indicate the reason(s) for closing the report (Unable to locate subject; ESP legal response does not contain information; No crime committed; No prosecutorial merit; Alleged child is an adult; Age of child victim is unable to be determined; False Report; Unfounded; Person or User Reported is deceased; Other)

> <u>If CLOSED</u>: Does this case involve self-production (Yes; No). Have you identified the child victim? (Yes; No)

Was the information provided by NCMEC useful? (Yes; No)

> <u>If NO</u>: Please indicate the reason(s) the information was not helpful (Stale information; Limited Information; Other)

Feedback from law enforcement provides valuable insights for reporting ESPs and allows NCMEC analysts to consider improvements to the efficiency of the CyberTipline process that, ultimately, can lead to more successful efforts to recover children from exploitative situations. Law enforcement agencies are not generally required by law to provide feedback on CyberTipline reports, and NCMEC has no authority to require such feedback be submitted. Despite NCMEC's efforts to facilitate and obtain feedback, most agencies provide little or no feedback. The chart below shows the amount of feedback provided by law enforcement relating to CyberTipline reports submitted to NCMEC in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023.

Instances of Law Enforcement Feedback Relating to CyberTipline Reports	CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
Internet Crimes Against Children (ICACs) Units	226,879	204,517	312,343
Local Law Enforcement	91	51	27
Federal Law Enforcement	303	478	465
International Law Enforcement	36,948	56,689	76,683

F. **NCMEC's Voluntary Initiatives for ESPs that Choose Proactive Efforts to Combat CSAM**

In addition to handling tens of millions of CyberTipline reports each year, NCMEC engages in several voluntary initiatives to support the efforts of ESPs to detect, report, and remove CSAM-related content from their platforms. NCMEC's hash-sharing programs are the largest voluntary initiatives NCMEC manages to combat online child sexual exploitation. NCMEC supports four hash-sharing initiatives: (1) Non-Governmental Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative; (2) Exploitative Hash-Sharing Initiative; (3) Industry Hash-Sharing Initiative; and (4) Youth-Produced Imagery Hash-Sharing Initiative. ESPs may choose to voluntarily participate in one or all four of these hash-sharing initiatives.

The Non-Governmental Hash-Sharing Initiative enables ESPs who choose to participate to download and utilize lists of CSAM hashes compiled by NCMEC and other international non-governmental organizations. The hashes added by NCMEC to this Initiative are derived solely from images and videos reported to NCMEC's CyberTipline by ESPs. The chart below shows the number of MD5 hashes added by NCMEC in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 to the Non-Governmental Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative.

NCMEC MD5 Hashes Added to Non-Governmental Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative		
CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
1,487,992	1,141,667	1,391,033

As of December 31, 2023, NCMEC has added 7,705,865 hashes to the Non-Governmental Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative. Other non-governmental organizations have submitted an additional 9,802,435 hashes. As of December 31, 2023, 46 ESPs and 12other organizations have voluntarily chosen to access this hash-sharing initiative.

NCMEC utilizes a multi-step process to review, flag, and validate hashes of apparent child pornography that it adds to the Non-Governmental Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative. All new files reviewed for inclusion in the NCMEC Non-Governmental Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative are validated through the following three-part review process:

1. File is visually reviewed and tagged by a trained member of NCMEC's Exploited Children Division for proposed content tag of "Apparent Child Sexual Abuse Material" and designated to be added to the Hash Sharing List;
2. File is secondarily reviewed and tagged by a trained senior or management member of NCMEC's Exploited Children Division, who must concur with the

primary assessment to include the file as Apparent Child Sexual Abuse Material and add to the Hash Sharing List; and

3. File goes through a final third review process by a member of NCMEC's upper management for final review, concurrence, and approval for inclusion on the Hash Sharing List.

After the final review, approved file hashes are added by a member of NCMEC's upper management to the Non-Governmental Apparent Child Sexual Abuse Material Hash-Sharing Initiative through a tag application interface internal to NCMEC's CyberTipline database.

NCMEC's Exploitative Hash-Sharing Initiative enables ESPs that choose to participate to download and utilize lists of hashes compiled by NCMEC of images and videos that may not meet the U.S. legal definition of child pornography, but are sexually exploitative, and often are shared among offenders with images of CSAM. The hashes added by NCMEC to this Initiative are derived solely from images and videos reported to NCMEC's CyberTipline by ESPs. The chart below shows the number of MD5 hashes added by NCMEC in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 to the Exploitative Hash-Sharing Initiative.

NCMEC MD5 Hashes Added to Exploitative Hash-Sharing Initiative		
CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
237,404	70,870	-

As of December 31, 2023, NCMEC has contributed 296,222 hashes to the Exploitative Hash-Sharing Initiative, and 18 ESPs and 5 other organizations have voluntarily chosen to access this hash-sharing initiative. Of note, in CY 2023, NCMEC conducted a voluntary audit of hash values contributed to the NGO Hash Sharing Platform. During this process, NCMEC located approximately 75,000 hashes on the Exploitative Hash-Sharing Initiative that qualified for the Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative. Those hashes were moved to the Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative, therefore the total count has been adjusted for the end of CY 2023.

NCMEC's Industry Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative enables ESP participants to share hashes and PhotoDNA signatures of apparent CSAM with each other. Only ESPs may choose to participate in this initiative. Participating ESPs may share their lists of apparent CSAM hashes or download lists submitted by other ESPs, or both. The charts below show the number of MD5 hashes and PhotoDNA signatures added by ESPs in CY 2021, CY 2022 and CY 2023 to the Industry Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative.

MD5 Hashes Added by ESPs to Industry Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative		
CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
7,130	3,818	25,266

PhotoDNA Signatures Added by ESPs to Industry Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative		
CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
447,523	1,266,429	427,139

As of December 31, 2023, ESPs have added 145,749 MD5 hashes and 3,900,099 PhotoDNA signatures to the Industry Apparent Child Pornography Hash-Sharing Initiative, and 38 ESPs and 4 other organizations have voluntarily chosen to access this hash-sharing initiative.

III.   Background on the Child Victim Identification Program

In 2002, NCMEC created the Child Victim Identification Program (CVIP) after repeatedly seeing images of the same children in CyberTipline reviews and trying to track which children had been identified by law enforcement and which children were still unidentified and potentially in abusive situations. Today, CVIP operates with three core goals: (1) to help verify if CSAM seized from offenders depicts previously identified child victims; (2) to help identify and locate unidentified child victims depicted in sexually abusive images/videos; and (3) to provide recovery services and restitution support to child survivors, their families, and their private legal counsel. Through these goals, NCMEC fulfills its clearinghouse role to verify that children depicted in CSAM are real children and also initiates notification to a child's appointed representatives that CSAM depicting the child has been distributed, thereby providing the child with a factual basis to pursue restitution.

Even though U.S. law does not require law enforcement to submit CSAM seized from alleged offenders to CVIP, many law enforcement agencies choose to do so to further victim identification and notification. Each CSAM image and video file submitted to CVIP is entered into NCMEC's Child Recognition and Identification System (CRIS), a proprietary database created, supported, and maintained internally at NCMEC. CRIS conducts a computer analysis using hashing technologies to determine whether the files depict identified or unidentified children. After the CRIS review, a NCMEC analyst will review all images and videos that are not recognized through the automated analysis, to ensure none of the files contain known, identified child victims or new content that should be referred for victim identification. On a quarterly basis, NCMEC provides distribution information relating to known, identified child victims to the Child Pornography Victim Assistance program[7], which is part of the Federal Bureau of

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[7] In January 2024, the name of the FBI's program was changed from the Child Pornography Victim Assistance (CPVA) program to the Child Exploitation Notification Program (CENP).

Investigation, United States Department of Justice, which manages the process of notifying individual victims that their images and videos have been circulated and they may be entitled to pursue restitution against the offender. NCMEC also distributes a report to the law enforcement agency that submitted the content to CVIP, which provides information relating to each identified child victim depicted in the files. As of December 31, 2023, NCMEC has reviewed over 406 million images and videos submitted to CVIP and has processed information relating to more than 27,130 identified child victims.

A. <u>NCMEC Review of Images Submitted by Law Enforcement to CVIP</u>

NCMEC categorizes images and videos submitted to CVIP for review into the following series[8] categories: (1) images/videos that are part of an identified series; (2) images/videos that NCMEC is tracking, but where the child victim has not yet been identified by law enforcement; (3) images/videos in which the age/identity of a child victim or the specific exploitative act cannot yet be determined; and (4) images/videos for which a series has not yet been created (many of these are youth-produced images/videos). A single image or video may contain multiple children who are part of different series. The chart below shows the total number of files NCMEC's CVIP reviewed in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 for each of these 4 series categories and also the number of unique images/videos reviewed by CVIP for each of these 4 series categories.

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[8] A series consists of multiple sexually exploitative images and/or videos of a child. NCMEC compiles sexually exploitative images and videos of a child victim into series and provides a name for the series in order to better facilitate notification relating to distribution of a child's series and recirculation of series images.

Images and Videos Reviewed by CVIP	CY 2021		CY 2022[9]		CY 2023	
Series Categories	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)
Images/videos in identified series	4,357,304	1,655,382	3,152,534	1,573,110	4,166,072	1,590,435
Images/videos that NCMEC is tracking, but where child victim is not yet identified by law enforcement	1,317,105	533,245	1,030,269	597,529	1,410,939	601,279
Images/videos where age/identity of child victim or exploitative act cannot yet be determined	758,901	263,355	423,076	211,138	764,597	341,089
Images/videos for which a series has not yet been created	21,409,283	12,999,437	15,753,785	11,931,236	27,998,695	16,427,435
Total (as detailed above, images/videos can contain multiple children from multiple series)	27,817,218	15,436,187	20,337,545	14,299,303	34,325,711	18,951,794

B. NCMEC Identification of Relationship Between Offender and Child Victim in CSAM Series

NCMEC relies on law enforcement to provide information relating to the relationship between a suspected offender and a child victim depicted in an exploitative image or video, even though law enforcement does not provide relationship information

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[9] From March 2020 through March 2022, NCMEC's ability to review child sexual abuse material submitted by law enforcement to CVIP was limited by COVID-19 pandemic work-from-home requirements. With the return to the office in 2022, NCMEC has resumed the ability to review a greater volume of material at a faster pace. The increased numbers reflected in this section relating to CVIP review are reflective of the return to work environment after the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

regarding every series. For images and videos that are part of identified series and where law enforcement provides NCMEC with relationship information, NCMEC can disaggregate by whether there was a known or suspected relationship between the suspected offender and the child victim and also by the type of relationship. The chart below shows the number of images/videos reviewed by CVIP in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 where law enforcement had provided relationship information for the series and where law enforcement had not provided relationship information.

Images and Videos Reviewed by CVIP	CY 2021		CY 2022		CY 2023	
Series Type	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)
Images/videos in series where law enforcement has provided relationship information to NCMEC	3,048,315	1,348,840	2,215,595	1,241,723	2,753,800	1,259,188
Images/videos where law enforcement has not provided relationship information to NCMEC	24,768,903	14,087,347	18,121,950	13,057,580	31,571,911	17,692,606

The chart below shows the total number of unique images and videos reviewed by CVIP disaggregated by whether there was a known or suspected relationship between a suspected offender and a child victim and the type of relationship. It is important to note that images and videos can reflect more than one relationship when multiple offenders and/or children are depicted in the exploitation.

Unique Images and Videos Reviewed by CVIP Disaggregated by Relationship Between Suspected Offender and Child Victim						
Relationship Type	CY 2021		CY 2022		CY 2023	
	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash)	Total Images/ Videos	Unique Images/ Videos (based on MD5 hash
Aunt	3,851	2,068	3,193	1,905	3,122	2,081
Babysitter, Mentor, Coach, Teacher	234,392	127,942	119,752	69,638	115,354	58,674
Boyfriend	14,141	8,488	10,385	8,124	8,021	6,764
Brother	23,532	9,611	22,710	9,543	14,575	8,859
Brother-in-Law	4,432	2,299	4,011	2,819	2,082	1,133
Cousin	10,733	5,266	12,346	6,612	7,312	4,002
Father	934,759	399,480	692,628	376,633	845,561	362,244
Foster Sibling	546	241	826	468	804	436
Girlfriend	335	335	8	7	11	11
Grandfather	17,250	8,881	16,906	9,289	12,631	7,776
Grandmother	34	24	36	26	139	94
Guardian's Partner	273,499	116,525	148,983	77,413	390,621	164,637
Half Sibling	2,495	1,160	2,539	1,250	1,895	859
Legal Guardian	45,810	21,974	40,745	20,354	35,778	18,550
Mother	131,777	50,956	80,981	49,396	282,223	134,688
Neighbor/Family friend	444,422	209,373	338,145	172,858	383,084	212,720
Online Enticement/Self & Offender Produced	233,177	90,386	178,465	115,319	115,531	70,104
Other Relative	21,525	12,031	33,076	26,190	36,112	18,987
Photographer	175,440	77,247	92,228	53,904	185,431	80,093
Trafficking	48,478	20,423	37,472	17,547	46,666	21,340
Sister	9,909	4,024	7,163	4,199	4,227	1,995
Step-Father	191,915	80,080	166,067	100,676	173,314	74,224
Step-Grandparent	24,032	9,312	14,808	7,830	14,604	6,042
Step-Mother	4,813	2,122	3,379	1,607	3,113	1,146
Stranger	10,578	4,630	8,513	5,592	11,577	5,058
Uncle	276,524	119,621	187,597	99,164	195,602	85,222

C. <u>Details of Identified Child Victims Added to NCMEC's CVIP Database of Victims</u>

After law enforcement notifies NCMEC that a child victim has been identified, NCMEC adds that child to NCMEC's CVIP database of victims. The charts below show all identified victims added to NCMEC's CVIP database of victims for the first time in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023, separated by age and gender.

Identified Victims Added to NCMEC's CVIP Database of Victims Separated by Age and Gender in CY 2021				
Gender	Pubescent	Prepubescent	Infant/Toddler	Grand Total
Male	209	255	16	480
Female	615	344	38	997
Total	**824**	**599**	**54**	**1,477**

Identified Victims Added to NCMEC's CVIP Database of Victims Separated by Age and Gender in CY 2022				
Gender	Pubescent	Prepubescent	Infant/Toddler	Grand Total
Male	714	546	80	1,340
Female	1,984	1,012	128	3,124
Total	**2,698**	**1,558**	**208**	**4,464**

Identified Victims Added to NCMEC's CVIP Database of Victims Separated by Age and Gender in CY 2023				
Gender	Pubescent	Prepubescent	Infant/Toddler	Grand Total
Male	420	234	20	674
Female	802	446	64	1,312
Total	**1,222**	**680**	**84**	**1,986**

NCMEC also creates series for victim identification and tracking purposes prior to law enforcement having identified a child victim. The chart below indicates the number of new series of unidentified child victims that NCMEC added to its CVIP database of victims in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023 in order to further NCMEC's child identification efforts.

New Series of Unidentified Child Victims Added to NCMEC's CVIP Database of Victims		
CY 2021	CY 2022	CY 2023
5,139	6,692	8,160

D. <u>Law Enforcement Submission of Seized CSAM Content to NCMEC for Victim Identification</u>

Even though law enforcement agencies are generally not legally required to submit files to CVIP, several Federal, State, and Local agencies and ICAC Units do submit images and videos files to CVIP for review.[10] The chart below shows which agencies submitted files to CVIP, broken down by number of submissions and total files, in CY 2021, CY 2022, and CY 2023.

Image/Video Reviews Submitted by Law Enforcement Agencies	CY 2021		CY 2022		CY 2023	
	Reviews Submitted	# of Files Submitted	Reviews Submitted	# of Files Submitted	Reviews Submitted	# of Files Submitted
DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement	809	12,653,468	826	13,372,923	1,079	5,620,845
Federal Bureau of Investigation	1,193	7,886,714	1,128	16,247,247	1,061	16,037,152
Other Federal Agencies	56	4,913,651	40	624,301	35	4,624,157
Total Federal Agencies	**2,058**	**25,453,833**	**1,994**	**30,244,471**	**2,175**	**26,282,154**
Total Local/State/ICAC Agencies	**2,589**	**10,067,264**	**2,077**	**3,318,782**	**2,206**	**5,803,031**
Coast Guard Investigative Service	3	2,158	0	0	4	122
Department of the Army CID	66	177,293	72	127,810	83	96,997
Naval Criminal Investigative Service	104	86,613	100	129,209	154	162,333
U.S. Air Force OSI	37	142,774	26	31,048	31	38,814
U.S. Marine Corps CID	1	10	0	0	1	9
Department of Defense	0	0	0	0	1	1,839
Total Military Agencies	**211**	**408,848**	**198**	**288,067**	**274**	**300,114**
Total International Agencies	**19**	**213**	**33**	**445**	**18**	**57**
Total Law Enforcement Submissions	**4,877**	**35,930,158**	**4,302**	**33,851,765**	**4,673**	**32,385,356**

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[10] In addition to the lack of any legal requirements for law enforcement to submit seized content to NCMEC's CVIP to further child victim identification and restitution efforts, the current submission process is entirely manual and serves to disincentivize law enforcement agencies from submitting all content seized during the course of a CSAM investigation. Currently efforts are underway to create a legislative solution that would enable law enforcement to electronically transfer seized content directly to NCMEC's CVIP. This would enhance victim identification work, support survivors in restitution actions, ease the burden of a manual system on law enforcement, and ensure greater availability of a consistent data set of seized imagery.

Appendix A

Date Range (Calendar Year)	Total Number of CyberTipline Reports Received by NCMEC
CY2023 (1/1/23-12/31/23)	36,210,368
CY2022 (1/1/22-12/31/22)	32,059,029
CY2021 (1/1/21-12/31/21)	29,397,681
CY2020 (1/1/20-12/31/20)	21,751,085
CY2019 (1/1/19-12/31/19)	16,987,361
CY2018 (1/1/18-12/31/18)	18,462,422
CY2017 (1/1/17-12/31/17)	10,214,753
CY2016 (1/1/16-12/31/16)	8,297,923
CY2015 (1/1/15-12/31/15)	4,403,657
CY2014 (1/1/14-12/31/14)	1,106,071
CY2013 (1/1/13-12/31/13)	505,280
CY2012 (1/1/12-12/31/12)	415,650
CY2011 (1/1/11-12/31/11)	326,310
CY2010 (1/1/10-12/31/10)	223,374
CY2009 (1/1/09-12/31/09)	119,547
CY2008 (1/1/08-12/31/08)	102,029
CY2007 (1/1/07-12/31/07)	105,261
CY2006 (1/1/06-12/31/06)	76,584
CY2005 (1/1/05-12/31/05)	70,768
CY2004 (1/1/04-12/31/04)	112,017
CY2003 (1/1/03-12/31/03)	81,987
CY2002 (1/1/02-12/31/02)	43,078
CY2001 (1/1/01-12/31/01)	24,442
CY2000 (1/1/00-12/31/00)	19,245
CY1999 (1/1/99-12/31/99)	9,668
CY1998 (1/1/98-12/31/98)	4,560