

Meldpunt Kinderporno op internet

HOTLINE AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES
ON THE INTERNET

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Towards an internet free of child sexual abuse

COLOPHON

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To support its activities the Hotline against child abuse images on the Internet receives subsidies from the Ministry of Justice and the European Commission via the 'Safer Internet Plus Programme', www.ec.europa.eu/saferinternet

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1 Foreword

For almost fifteen years now Meldpunt Kinderporno/the Dutch Hotline against child sexual abuse images on the Internet (hereafter: Meldpunt) has been fighting against an invariably increasing amount of child pornography on the Internet and other forms of child abuse online.

Millions of people use the Internet on a daily basis. We cannot imagine today's world without this medium and we all know its advantages: quickly looking up something by way of google, e-mailing, networking, chatting, downloading music. However, a huge drawback lies in the fact that the Internet has also caused an enormous increase in the exchange of child sexual abuse images. This medium also makes it relatively easy to come into contact with a child, for instance by way of chat, with the purpose of abusing it.

In 2009 Meldpunt received 9029 reports. Of these 1373 contained illegal material coming from a Dutch server; two and a half times as many as in 2008! The site helpwanted.nl, on which young people can report online sexual abuse, received 171 complaints. This is one third less than in 2008, in which year this reporting site received extra attention due to the campaign "Cyber groomers will not let go".

Fortunately, Meldpunt does not stand alone in the fight against child sexual abuse online and child sexual abuse through the Internet. For this cause we collaborate (inter)nationally with a number of organisations:

- **THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE.** On 29 October 2009, the Dutch Minister of Justice Mr. Hirsch Ballin announced that as from 2010 the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings will also report on the nature and scale of child pornography and the sexual abuse of minors in the Netherlands. Meldpunt, together with the Dutch branch of the international organisation ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) have been lobbying for years to achieve this.

- **DUTCH POLICE.** Meldpunt forwards punishable images of child sexual abuse to the Dutch police, so that they can take further action. In 2009, 1373 reports have been passed on to the police. The police have also started the "Verbeterpro-

gramma kinderporno”, a program to improve the combat of child sexual abuse images, which is in line with the plans drawn up by the Dutch Minister Mr. Hirsch Ballin. Emphasis will be more on the producers of child pornographic material and less on the downloaders.

- **LEASEWEB, ONE OF THE BIGGEST WEB HOSTING PROVIDERS IN EUROPE.** Leaseweb, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, Meldpunt and the Swedish company NetClean, started a pilot to proactively filter so-called upload websites (which are the main cause of the increased number of reports in the Netherlands) by means of hash technology. Hash technology makes digital fingerprints (hashes) of images. The filter checks whether there is a match with fingerprints of punishable images, in which case these can be blocked.

- **INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS (ISPS) IN COOPERATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND ECP-EPN (PLATFORM FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY).** For instance, in 2009 ECP-EPN initiated the establishment of the Internet Safety Platform, one of its tasks taken on is to investigate the possibilities of filtering child sexual abuse images. The expertise Meldpunt gained through the years has been a valuable contribution to this filtering project.

- **INHOPE MEMBERS.** Inhope is the International Association of Internet hotlines. Meldpunt was one of its founding members in 1999. It pleases us immensely that now, ten years later, there are 36 partner organisations active in this network. In 2009 new hotlines have been set up in Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and South Africa.

- **OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT STAND UP FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS.** In 2010 we move our office to the “Kinderrechtenhuis”, the Child’s right Home in Leiden, a former orphanage at the Hooglandse Kerkgracht, which in the near future will become an (inter)national centre for everything closely connected with children’s rights. We see this as a fantastic opportunity to share knowledge and to campaign even more actively in 2010 and the years to follow.

We would like to thank the Ministry of Justice and the European Commission for their collaboration and financial contribution in 2009. We also thank our associates, sponsors and contributors for their input and cooperation and hope we can count on their support again in 2010.

[Towards an internet free of child sexual abuse!](#)

The board of the Hotline against Child Sexual Abuse Images on the Internet,

Jules Mulder, chairman

Tom Erents, Treasurer

Board Member: Jan Mark Wams

I thought I was
downloading a cartoon.
But it appeared to be a video
about **three little kids**.
During the whole video they had
to do all kinds of things
being totally naked,
among which Twister and
massaging each other.
Disgusting!

2 Numbers and trends

- **Increasing number of reports about illegal content on Dutch servers.**

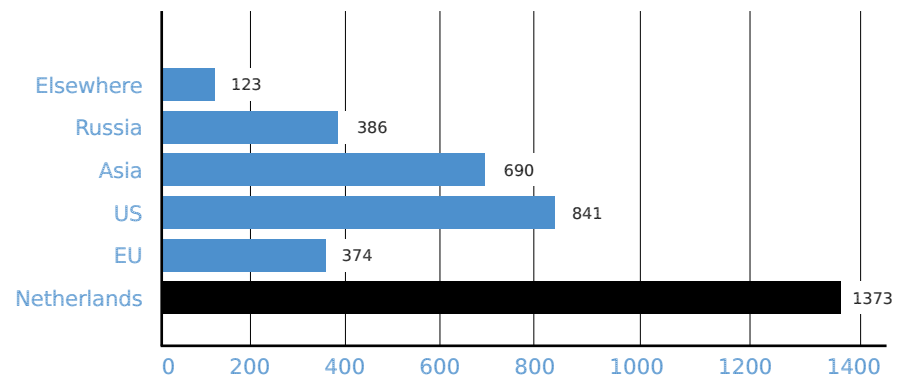
In 2009 Meldpunt received 9,029 reports, 3,787 of which contained illegal material according to the Dutch Law. Of these 1,373 contained prosecutable material coming from Dutch servers; two and a half times as many as in 2008. If distribution takes place from the Netherlands, Meldpunt forwards the report to the Dutch National Police.

Most reports about illegal content concern images, distributed by individual users through so-called 'upload' services. These services are partly free and very popular for the sending of files. Unfortunately, they are also often used to distribute illegal content.

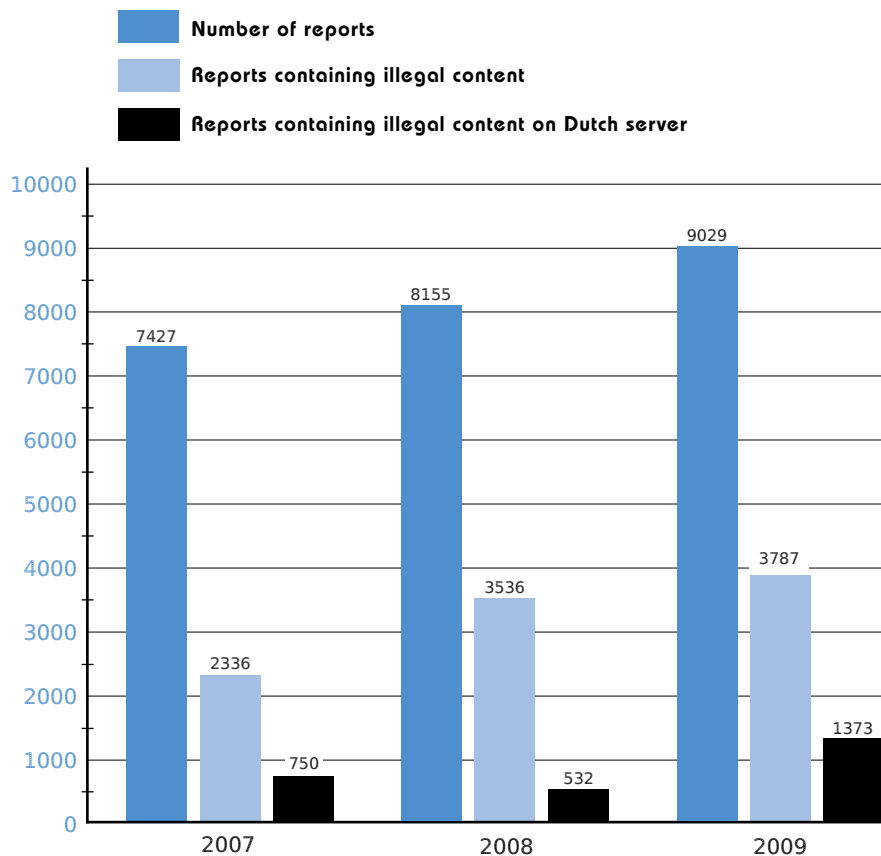
A considerable smaller number of reports are about illegal (often commercial) websites that directly offer child abuse images.

Meldpunt received 2,460 reports from partner hotlines abroad in the past year. The international association of hotlines INHOPE turns out to be an effective tool in the fight against child sexual abuse images.

ORIGIN OF REPORTS CONTAINING ILLEGAL CONTENT



TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTS A YEAR (FROM INTERNET USERS AND PARTNER HOTLINES)



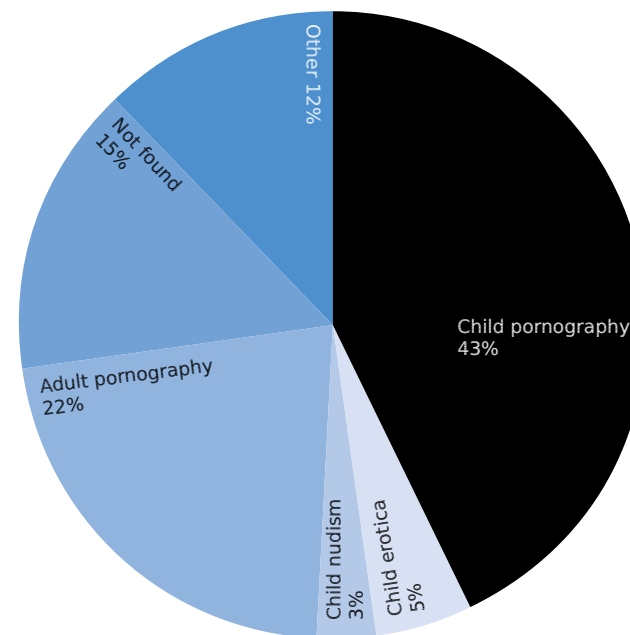
• Nature and content of the images

Nature and content of the reported images vary from images without an obviously erotic content, like children in their underwear, to images of sexual abuse of children. To judge the images Meldpunt therefore distinguishes several categories, depending on the poses and sexual acts (see diagram below). 43% of the reports actually contained child sexual abuse images.

In 15% of the reports no child abuse images were found. This percentage does not differ so much from previous years. Owners of (commercial) sites with child sexual abuse images often change the location of the server on which the images are filed to avoid the possibility to be traced.

5% of the reports contained child erotica, so-called "modelling sites" on which children are depicted scantily dressed and often with their genitalia emphasized.

NATURE AND CONTENT IMAGES, 2009



• **Reports according to internet service category**

On the reporting page of www.meldpunt-kinderporno.nl internet users can indicate to which category of internet services their report belongs.

- Most reports – 8,176 of 9,029 – are about websites where internet users have come across (supposedly illegal) images of child sexual abuse.
- 391 reports have come from internet users who found spam in their mailbox containing (supposedly illegal) images of child sexual abuse.
- 79 reports are from internet users who have come across (supposedly illegal) images of child sexual abuse on usenet, a separated part of the Internet, consisting of discussion groups and news groups.
- In the case of 161 reports the indicated category is ‘chat/msn’. This category also includes reports from youngsters who stated they had been sexually harassed via the Internet and reports from adults about dubious chat boxes.
- 148 reports are from internet users who, while downloading files via so-called peer to peer networks, have also downloaded (supposedly illegal) images of child sexual abuse.
- 10 reports are from internet users who came across (supposedly illegal) images of child sexual abuse on their mobile phone.

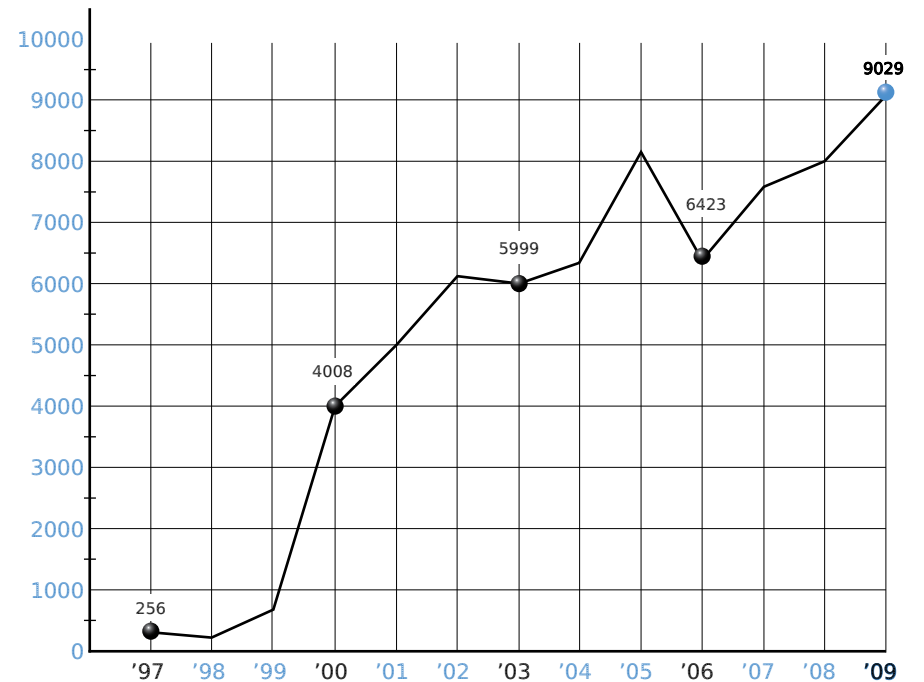
REPORTS CATEGORIZED ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT INTERNET SERVICES

Website	Spam	Usenet	Chat/MSN	Peer to peer	Mobile phone	Other	Totally
8176	391	79	161	148	10	64	9029

• **Increase in the number of reports 1997-2009**

Since the start of Meldpunt the number of reports has risen considerably. Next to an increase in the amount of child sexual abuse images on the Internet, the growing number of internet users and the greater public awareness of Meldpunt could be possible explanations for this increase.

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF REPORTS



- **Results www.helpwanted.nl**

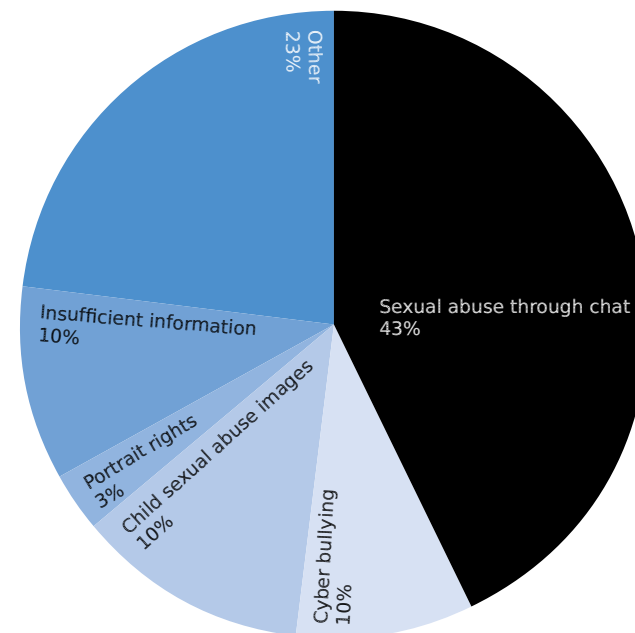
In June 2007 Meldpunt started the youth website www.helpwanted.nl. This website is specially intended for young people between 12 and 18 years old to report online sexual abuse. The website also contains information about the safe use of Internet and about what youngsters can do if they are being harassed online.

In 2009 Meldpunt received 171 reports through www.helpwanted.nl. This is one third less than in 2008, when the campaign 'Cyber Groomers won't let go' generated more attention for the reporting site.

Almost half (43%) of the reports is about sexual abuse through chat. For instance, young internet users were blackmailed by the threat of their sexually tinted images being distributed on the internet so as to enforce sexual contact off line. Other reports related to: violation of portrait rights, cyber bullying, reports of child sexual images on websites and peer to peer networks (for instance LimeWire) or adult pornography.

Young people may choose to remain anonymously when reporting. Many choose to do so. However, since contact data are lacking then, Meldpunt staff cannot answer back the youngster. For this reason Meldpunt will implement a chat application in 2010. The chat medium is hugely popular among young people and Meldpunt wants to help youngsters who have "online" problems, by advising them about the steps they can take. In 2009 Meldpunt began exploratory talks on this matter with the Dutch Children's Helpline, that already has a chat application which proved to be effective.

CATEGORIZATION REPORTS WWW.HELPWANTED.NL



Through www.helpwanted.nl...

Some time ago I did something stupid, I stripped before a girl in front of the web cam... she is English... now she threatens to put this video online if I do not want to cooperate anymore... **she forces me** to strip all the time... if I don't do it, she will upload the film... on you porn or something like that, I will not tell this to my parents but it has to stop... please help me.

(A FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL)



3 The Organisation

- **Beginnings, method and objectives**

At the end of the last century calls came from the Internet industry and society at large to be more active in stopping child sexual abuse images on the Internet. Since June 1996 – after the alliance had been sanctioned by the Minister of Justice at the time, Mrs. W. Sorgdrager – Meldpunt is formally involved in the fight against child sexual abuse images on the Internet.

How? By handling the reports of child sexual abuse images that internet users unintentionally come across online. By informing children, youngsters and parents about the safe use of internet through the websites www.surfsafe.nl and www.helpwanted.nl. At the latter website youngsters can also report about online sexual abuse, for instance, if they are being harassed online or if they come across child pornography. Beside reports from Dutch internet users, Meldpunt also receives reports from hotlines associated to INHOPE (www.inhope.org), an international network of hotlines dealing with illegal internet content.

The expertise gained by Meldpunt in the past ten years is shared actively with a variety of professionals who are working to achieve an internet free of child sexual abuse.

- **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To actively combat the distribution of child sexual abuse images
2. To prevent child sexual abuse via the Internet

- **Collaboration with the Dutch Police Force**

Meldpunt supports the Dutch Police Force in its fight against the distribution of child sexual abuse images.

The task of the police is to trace (digital) child pornography as well as to trace the child abusers, producers, distributors, possessors of child pornography and the victims. The police not only initiates these investigations, but they also respond to reports of civilians and Meldpunt. Identification of victims and perpetrators is its highest priority. Collaboration between the Dutch Police and Meldpunt is solid, in the sense that both parties keep each other informed about their activities. The Dutch police takes on the cases Meldpunt passes on.

In April 2006 the Dutch police started Meldpunt Cybercrime (www.meldpunt-cybercrime.nl). Civilians can report online child sexual abuse images and acts of terrorism via the Internet to this police hotline. Among other things Meldpunt distinguishes itself from this hotline by the possibility to report anonymously. Moreover, its independent position gives Meldpunt the opportunity to advocate for more safety online for children.

- **Subsidy**

To support its activities Meldpunt receives subsidy from the Ministry of Justice and the European Commission through the Safer Internet Plus Plan. This EU programme intends to stimulate safe use of the Internet and new online communication technologies. Another objective lies in reducing illegal content on the Internet. In December 2008 a joint subsidy request by ECP-EPN and Meldpunt for the Digibewust (Digital Awareness) campaign has been granted by the European Commission.

In 2009, the following organisations have supported Meldpunt financially or otherwise: KPN, XS4ALL, SIDN, DELL, Habbo and AT5.

- **Handling reports**

The primary task of Meldpunt lies in handling reports. Most complaints come directly from private internet users who came across child sexual abuse images unintentionally. A smaller number come from associated INHOPE hotlines. Like in the Netherlands internet users can submit a report to these hotlines. Meldpunt does not do any investigating work and advises reporters against actively searching themselves, however well-intentioned. Detection remains a police matter.

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A REPORT

1 An internet user submits a complaint via the online form on the website www.meldpunt-kinderporno.nl or www.helpwanted.nl

2 Meldpunt staff assess and categorize the report. They check whether the reported content is potentially illegal according to the Dutch Penal Code. If there is any doubt they consult the Dutch Police.

3 If the reported content is potentially illegal, the employee locates the country the illegal content was distributed from.

- If the material is distributed from the Netherlands, Meldpunt passes the report on to the Dutch Police. They are responsible for the subsequent steps to be taken.

- If distribution takes place from another country and if this country has a hotline associated to INHOPE, the information will go directly to the partner hotline concerned. Subsequently, this hotline will contact the local police force.

- If distribution takes place from another country than the Netherlands and this country does not have a hotline associated to INHOPE, the information will be forwarded to the Dutch police, who then will undertake action through Interpol or otherwise.

4 On request and if possible the reporter will be informed of assessment and action taken. If the content of the report is not potentially illegal, Meldpunt refers, if necessary, the reporter to the right authorities. Often these are hotlines, such as the Cyber Crime Hotline, Stichting Meld Misdaad Anoniem (Report Crime Anonymously), the Discrimination Hotline, the Advice and Child Abuse Reporting Centre or the police local to the reporter.

• **Sharing knowledge**

Fortunately, we do not stand alone in the combat against child sexual abuse - on-line and via the Internet. In the past years Meldpunt has gained a lot of expertise, important knowledge that needs to be shared.

Relating to this expertise Meldpunt also:

- Provides information to Dutch internet users;
- Informs the media;
- Collaborates with Dutch organisations that work towards a safe internet and/or preventing (online) sexual abuse of minors;
- Collaborates with internet companies;
- Lobbying in the Netherlands and at international forums;
- International collaboration with partner hotlines associated with INHOPE in projects and networks within and outside the European Union.

On a regular basis Meldpunt consults with members of Parliament and staff of the Ministry of Justice in order to keep the issue high on the political agenda.

Other organisations with whom Meldpunt consults regularly are for instance:

- ECPAT (campaigns against commercial sexual exploitation of children),
www.ecpat.nl
- ECP-EPN, initiators of Digivaardig & Digibewust (Dutch Awareness node),
www.mijndigitalewereld.nl
- Cyber crime Hotline (Police Hotline)
www.meldpuntcybercrime.nl
- NICC (National Cyber Crime Infrastructure),
www.samentegencybercrime.nl
- Children's Helpline (Youth Care Agency),
www.kindertelefoon.nl
- My Child Online (Expertise Centre Youth and Media),
www.mijnkindonline.nl
- The Child Consumer (the Child Consumer Foundation),
www.kinderconsument.nl
- Expertise Centre Media Literacy,
www.mediawijsheidexpertisecentrum.nl
- De Waag Clinic (treatment centre for sex offenders),
www.dewaag-nederland.nl

• **Board and staff**

The executive board consists of three persons. Each board member has his own relevant area of expertise.

- Chairman Mr. Jules Jules Mulder is director of De Waag, a polyclinic for forensic psychiatry that treats for instance paedophiles.
- Treasurer Mr. Tom Erents is a retired police officer, formerly working for the National Criminal Intelligence Service.
- Board member Mr. Jan Mark Wams is an ICT expert.

A staff of four perform the daily activities of Meldpunt. Every year, they see thousands of images and videos in which children are depicted being sexually abused. Because of the onerous aspects of the work, Meldpunt employees receive structural support from a psychologist.

Grooming,

To intentionally approach and seduce young people with the object to commit sexual acts, is punishable by law as from January 1, 2010.



4 Results political lobby

Meldpunt and ECPAT have already lobbied together for many years. As a result the following issues are on the political agenda or have led to changes in policy.

- **Watching child sexual abuse images and grooming are criminal offences.**

As of 1 January 2010, it is punishable by law to watch child sexual abuse images on the Internet intentionally. It is not necessary anymore that a file had been downloaded. Evidence against the perpetrator can for example be delivered through credit card payments, since these images via the Internet mostly are not free of charge. This way there cannot be any misunderstanding about the identity of the perpetrator ('it was accidentally'). Persons that watch child sexual abuse images via the Internet even without having these files on their computer, can get a penalty with a maximum of four years imprisonment.

As of 1 January 2010, 'grooming' is punishable by law. An adult who through internet is arranging a meeting with a minor off line with the intent to commit a sexual act and who is making preparations for such a meeting, is punishable by law. The problem is that the intent of a person's acts (on the Internet) often is hard to prove. For the public prosecution officer this is no reason not to prosecute, because it is not necessary that there is actual physical contact. The offence has a maximum penalty of two years.

- **Working together on filtering child pornography on the Internet**

On December 8, 2009, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Hirsch Ballin and the State Secretary of Economic Affairs, Mr. Heemskerk, together with various ICT companies, officially launched the Internet Safety Platform. One of the issues is the combat of child sexual abuse images on the internet. Since then the Platform members, together with Meldpunt, have decided to work together on the filtering/blocking

of child pornographic material on the Internet in 2010. Meldpunt will expand its activities by producing a blacklist that will be used by Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block child sexual abuse images.

- **Protecting minors should get more attention**

In 2008 the Dutch Lower Chamber asked the Minister of Justice to make a law that obliges operators of porn sites to prove that their models have actually reached the age of majority (reversed burden of proof). The Minister turned down this request, arguing that the current section of law includes the concept 'apparent age of 18 years', which should make it possible to deal with the problem of assessing if the age of a person is less than 18 years. Unfortunately however, Meldpunt has come to the conclusion that in reality these particular images receive little or no attention at all from law enforcement. In 2009 the Minister announced that the new directive "Child pornography, investigation and prosecution" explicitly seeks attention from the legal system to increase protection by way of penalization. This directive is expected in 2010.

- **Website to report child sex tourism**

The interdepartmental group for child sex tourism was founded in 2009. The object of this group is to investigate possibilities to intensify the fight against child sex tourism. Among other things, this resulted in the wish to create a website to report child sex tourism (www.meldkindersekstoerisme.nl). Meldpunt has indicated it will take up this task

- **Penalties for child pornography more severe**

Since on 1 July 2009 the punishment was increased, from six to eight years maximum, the public prosecutor has more possibilities to fight child sexual abuse images. For instance, it is now possible, due to this increased maximum punishment, to place on the suspect's computer a device with which his communication with others can be retrieved.

- **International cooperation with financial institutions**

For some years now, Meldpunt has been arguing in favour of forming a European Financial Coalition (FCAP, the financial coalition against child pornography). The FCAP is an international union of banks, credit card companies and internet busi-

nesses, who together fight child pornography. The European version of this coalition will, in all likelihood, become operational in 2010.

- **The Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Child Pornography**

The Minister of Justice, Mr. Hirsch Ballin, announced that as from 1 October 2009 the Dutch National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking will also report on the subject of child pornography. Beginning in 2011, the Rapporteur will bring out annual reports about the extent of child sexual abuse images and sexual exploitation of minors in the Netherlands.

- **Expanding capacity for victim identification**

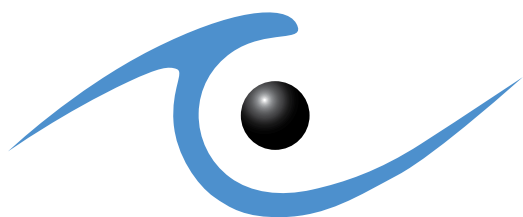
Since several years Meldpunt tries to get the focus of attention on the identification of the victims of child pornography. Victim identification costs a lot of time and human resources, its success largely depends on the number of staff available. In a letter, dated 21 December 2009, the Minister of Justice informed the Dutch Lower Chamber that earlier that year the "Detection Board" of the Board of Police Chiefs agreed to temporarily expand the number of digital detectives with seven FTEs on a national level.

In view of the constant rise in the number of reports and child abuse cases, Meldpunt argues in favour of expanding police and justice department manpower on a permanent basis.

Every image of child sexual abuse on the internet is based on the sexual abuse of a child.

After the physical abuse has stopped, **the abuse still goes on.**

Evidence keeps floating around on the Internet forever.



www.meldpunt-kinderporno.nl