



CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®

*Helping families. Protecting children.*

# CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES ON THE INTERNET

A Cybertip.ca Analysis

cybertip!ca®

January 2016



**CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®**  
*Helping families. Protecting children.*

The **Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc.** (Canadian Centre) is a charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, assist in the location of missing children and prevent child victimization. The Canadian Centre operates [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca), Canada's tipline to report sexual abuse and exploitation on the Internet, as well as other prevention and intervention services to assist the Canadian public. Our mission is to:

**REDUCE** the incidence of missing and sexually exploited children

**EDUCATE** the public on child personal safety and sexual exploitation

**ASSIST** in the location of missing children

**ADVOCATE** for and increase awareness about issues related to missing and sexually exploited children

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Images used in this report are stock photos and have been obtained under license. The data analyzed to produce this report was obtained through the operation of [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca), Canada's national tipline to report the online sexual exploitation of children. Data analysis was carried out solely by staff at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc.



## Child Sexual Abuse Images on the Internet: A Cybertip.ca Analysis

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2</b>	Background
<b>4</b>	Introduction
<b>6</b>	The Growing Problem of Child Sexual Abuse Images
<b>8</b>	Cybertip.ca: Processing Child Sexual Abuse Reports
<b>14</b>	Cybertip.ca: Results Involving Child Sexual Abuse Images and Videos
<b>22</b>	Conclusions and Recommendations
<b>24</b>	Appendix

# BACKGROUND



Model, in image and intended as illustrative

The Canadian Centre operates Cybertip.ca, Canada's tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children. The tipline was established as a pilot initiative on September 26, 2002, and then in May 2004, along with the RCMP's National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre, became part of the Government of Canada's *National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet*.

**Cybertip.ca's mandate is to protect children from online sexual exploitation by:**

- ▶ Receiving and processing tips from the public about potentially illegal material, as well as activities regarding the online sexual exploitation of children, and referring any relevant leads to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or child welfare agency; and
- ▶ Providing the public with information and other resources, as well as support and referral services, to help Canadians keep themselves and their families safe while using the Internet.

Cybertip.ca accepts reports regarding:

- ▶ Child sexual abuse material (child pornography)
- ▶ Online luring
- ▶ Children exploited through prostitution
- ▶ Child sex-tourism
- ▶ Child trafficking
- ▶ Making sexually explicit material available to a minor
- ▶ Agreement or arrangement between two individuals to commit a sexual offence against a child
- ▶ Non-consensual distribution of intimate images





*The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, through Cybertip.ca, is part of the Government of Canada's National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet.*

Model in image and intended as illustrative

# INTRODUCTION

As Canada's tipline, Cybertip.ca is in a unique position to collect and analyze data on the subject of online child sexual exploitation – and in particular, the issue of child sexual abuse images and videos on the Internet. Since its inception in 2002, Cybertip.ca has received over 175,000 reports from the public concerning children being sexually exploited on the Internet. Currently averaging approximately 3,000 reports per month, child sexual abuse imagery continues to be the most significant form of child exploitation reported to Cybertip.ca (95% of reports).

While Cybertip.ca's role involves addressing all aspects of online child sexual exploitation, this report specifically focuses on child sexual abuse images and videos on the Internet reported to the tipline over the last 8 years (2008 to 2015). The tipline has some of the most comprehensive information in Canada regarding online child victimization — information that provides insight into child sexual abuse and exploitation, its victims and their vulnerabilities, and its perpetrators and their techniques. The misuse of technology has accelerated the propagation of child sexual abuse images, normalized the sexualization of children and made it abundantly easier for offenders to participate in this illegal behaviour.

This report highlights the seriousness of this issue and the need for more to be done to identify the children portrayed in the images and videos, stop offenders and reduce the availability and propagation of this content. While global efforts are being made to identify these children, the challenges to do so are immense. Like other organizations working in this area, our agency is deeply concerned about the children abused within this material. The information presented in this report raises significant concerns surrounding offenders' sexual interest in very young children and the responsibility child protection agencies have in understanding the role of child sexual abuse images in offending behaviour, and the risks posed to children by those who access, possess, share or create such images.

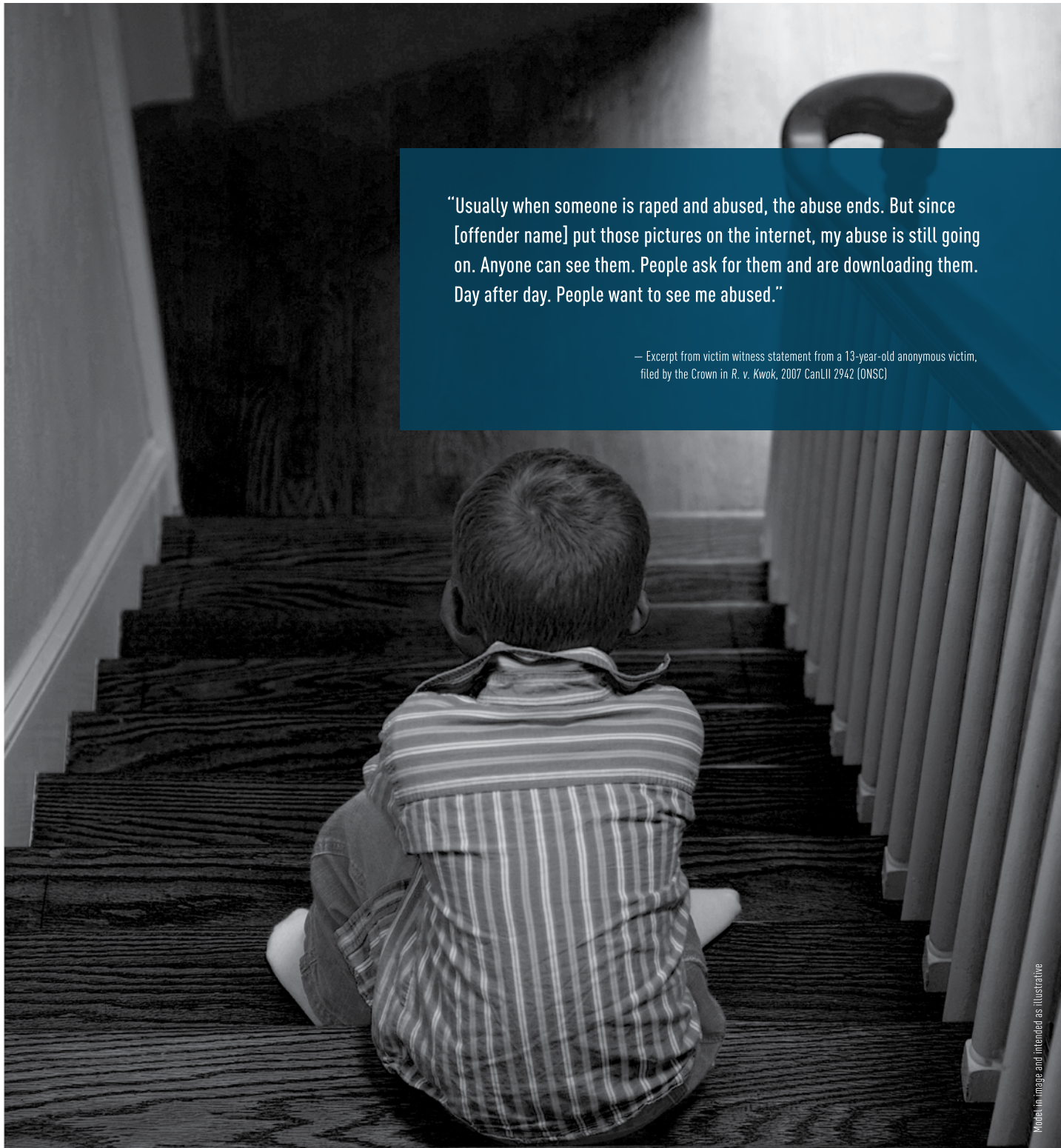


## The Term “Child Pornography”

It is important to note that the definition of “child pornography” under Canadian law is not limited to images and videos that depict actual children. Child pornography includes anime, as well as written material and audio recordings that advocate or counsel sexual activity with a child or that have the dominant characteristic of describing (for a sexual purpose) unlawful sexual activity with a child. Also, while the term “child pornography” may minimize the crime or give the impression that the children being abused are complicit in the abuse, it is the term used in the *Criminal Code*\* (Canada) and we use it when referring to offences under the Code. The term “child sexual abuse” more clearly describes the assaults taking place against children and is a more accurate term for images and videos depicting this form of abuse.

\* *Criminal Code*, R. S. C. 1985, c. C-46





“Usually when someone is raped and abused, the abuse ends. But since [offender name] put those pictures on the internet, my abuse is still going on. Anyone can see them. People ask for them and are downloading them. Day after day. People want to see me abused.”

— Excerpt from victim witness statement from a 13-year-old anonymous victim, filed by the Crown in *R. v. Kwok*, 2007 CanLII 2942 (ONSC)

Model in image and intended as illustrative

# THE GROWING PROBLEM OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES AND VIDEOS

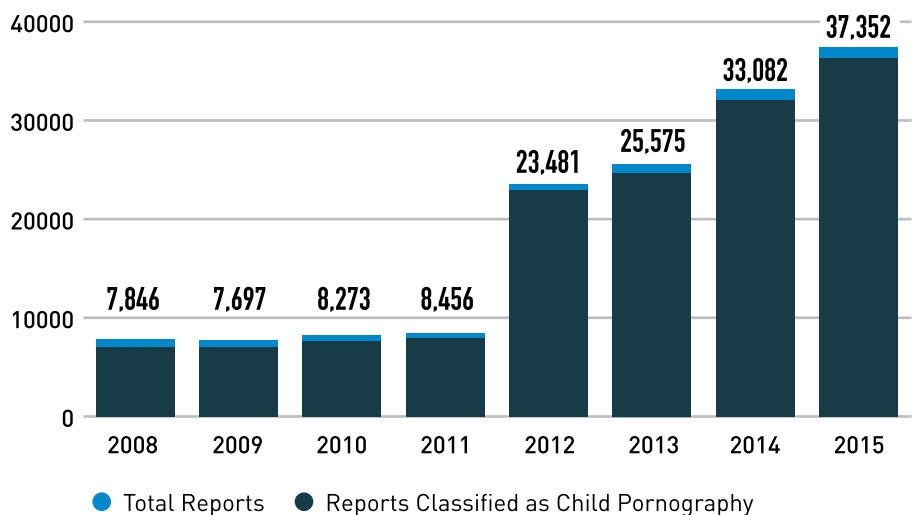


95.89% of reports<sup>1</sup> pertained to online child sexual abuse images and videos.

Child pornography is a recording of a child being sexually exploited or abused. The image or video becomes a permanent record of a child's abuse and can propagate indefinitely. In order to produce the content, a child has to be assaulted or posed deliberately in a sexualized way. In our experience, possessing, distributing and making child sexual abuse content is rarely, if ever accidental. Offenders participating in the consumption of child sexual abuse images and videos assist by creating a market for this type of material.

Over the past decade, the role of technology in facilitating sexual offences against children has significantly evolved; as has our understanding of sexual offending behaviour and the manifestation of these activities on the Internet. Like many other hotlines around the world, Cybertip.ca has seen a marked increase in the volume of reports over the past few years. In 2015, the tipline processed 37,352 reports and it is expected that this will continue to increase in the coming years. This significant rise in reporting is primarily related to the public's concerns involving child sexual abuse images and videos on the Internet.

## Total Reports to Cybertip.ca by Calendar Year



Total number of reports submitted to Cybertip.ca from 2008 to 2015: 151,762. Of that, the public classified 145,522 reports as pertaining to concerns surrounding child pornography.

<sup>1</sup> Reports received from 2008-2015



While the Internet did not create the problem of child sexual abuse images and videos, it does provide offenders with the unparalleled opportunity to access, possess and trade child sexual abuse images and material, often anonymously. It allows individuals to easily connect with offenders around the world who share similar sexual interests towards children, and paves the way for individuals to agree or make arrangements online for the commission of a sexual offence against a child. To help combat and address this reality, in 2012, the Government of Canada added a new offence to the *Criminal Code* (Canada) making it illegal for a person to, by means of telecommunication, make an agreement or arrangement to commit a sexual offence against a child (section 172.2).

For offenders, child sexual abuse images and videos can:

▶ Contribute to sexual arousal and satisfaction <sup>2</sup>	▶ Normalize sexual interest in children <sup>3</sup>
▶ Desensitize the viewer to the harm being perpetrated against the children in the content <sup>4</sup>	▶ Be shown to children in an attempt to normalize sexual contact between children and adults <sup>5</sup>
▶ Be used to keep a child silent about the sexual abuse <sup>6</sup>	▶ Be shared with other offenders, sometimes in exchange for other images or videos <sup>7</sup>
▶ Be used to obtain profit <sup>8</sup>	



<sup>2</sup> *R. v. Sharpe*, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 45, 2001 SCC 2 at para 93

<sup>3</sup> *Sharpe*, at paras 87-88 and 165

<sup>4</sup> *Sharpe*, at paras 87-88

<sup>5</sup> *Sharpe*, at paras 91, 205-206

<sup>6</sup> *R. v. P. (B.E.)*, 2014 MBQB 79 at para 9

<sup>7</sup> *Sharpe*, para 204; *R. v. D.G.F.*, 2010 ONCA 27 (CanLII), para 25; *R. v. Lang*, 2015 ABPC 25, para 3(25) and 5(1—9)

<sup>8</sup> *R. v. Way*, 2015 ONSC 3080 (CanLII) at para 25; and *R. v. M. (L.)*, 2008 SCC 31 (CanLII) at para 5; *R. v. Hewlett*, 2002 ABCA 179 at paras 27-28

# CYBERTIP.CA: PROCESSING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTS

Cybertip.ca receives reports concerning the online sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of children from the Canadian public. The following are the steps involved when an individual wants to submit a report about child sexual abuse material and how Cybertip.ca processes the report:



An individual comes across content displaying what might be child sexual abuse material.



They go to cybertip.ca or phone 1-866-658-9022 to report the information.



The Cybertip.ca webserver receives the information in a secure fashion.



The report is prioritized for analysis based on the information it contains and then according to the order it was received.



A Cybertip.ca analyst reviews the reported content.



For content that appears to be child sexual abuse material, the analyst assigns a secondary (Cybertip.ca) classification based on the *Criminal Code* (Canada) definition of Child Pornography.



The analyst analyzes the images/videos that appear to be child pornography material. A “full analysis” is completed on at least two images or videos (where possible) and a “fast image analysis” is completed on any remaining images/videos.



Internet searches and technology tools are used to determine where the child sexual abuse material is located.



The report information is sent to the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or INHOPE<sup>9</sup> hotline. For those reports involving a child potentially in need of protection, report information may be forwarded to the appropriate child welfare agency.

<sup>9</sup> INHOPE is an international association of Internet hotlines, of which Cybertip.ca is Canada's representative.

## IMAGE AND VIDEO ANALYSIS

From 2008 to 2015, Cybertip.ca analyzed 43,762 unique child pornography images and videos. As websites displaying child sexual abuse material can contain hundreds of unique images, and to ensure rapid and timely forwarding of reports pertaining to potentially illegal content, Cybertip.ca analysts complete a “full analysis” on at least two child sexual abuse images or videos (where possible) and a “fast image analysis” on any remaining images on the page.

### Full Analysis

For web pages displaying content that appears to meet the *Criminal Code* (Canada) definition of child pornography, analysts complete a “full analysis” on at least two of these images or videos (where possible). One image or video selected for a full analysis is the image or video on the page that depicts the most intrusive act of abuse against a child (see *Severity of Child Sexual Abuse* on page 11) and the second image or video selected for analysis is the one on the page that depicts what appears to be the youngest child (child with the lowest sexual maturation rating) (see *Age Range (Sexual Maturation Rate) of Children* on page 10).

A full analysis involves assessing and documenting information such as the sexual maturation rate of each child in the image or video, the severity of abuse in the image or video, the environment in which the image or video was taken, whether an adult is involved in the abuse act against the child (if applicable), and the sexual abuse or exploitation perpetrated against the child (if applicable), among others.

From 2008 to 2015, the tipline completed a full analysis on 34,561 images and videos, resulting in 46,859 children being assessed (a single image can include multiple children).

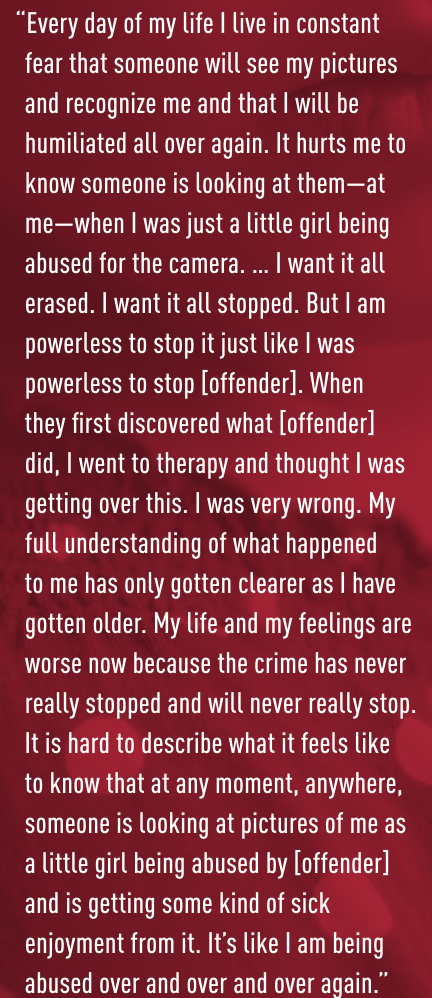
### Fast Image Analysis

In October 2014, Cybertip.ca began analyzing images through a “fast image analysis” process. This process permits for data to be collected on all images assessed as child pornography on a reported webpage. For every image assessed through fast image analysis as meeting the *Criminal Code* (Canada) definition of child pornography, the sexual maturation rate for what appears to be the youngest child in the image and the highest severity for the abuse acts occurring in the image is recorded.

This process allows analysts to classify an image and compute its various hash values in mere seconds. This process results in a large increase in the number of new hash values added daily into the Cybertip.ca database, further feeding into the efficiencies of projects that are dependent on this system.

As of December 31, 2015, 9,201 images have been assessed as child pornography through fast image analysis.

*Note: While the images and videos assessed within this report are unique, content may include series of images and videos that involve the same child(ren).*



“Every day of my life I live in constant fear that someone will see my pictures and recognize me and that I will be humiliated all over again. It hurts me to know someone is looking at them—at me—when I was just a little girl being abused for the camera. ... I want it all erased. I want it all stopped. But I am powerless to stop it just like I was powerless to stop [offender]. When they first discovered what [offender] did, I went to therapy and thought I was getting over this. I was very wrong. My full understanding of what happened to me has only gotten clearer as I have gotten older. My life and my feelings are worse now because the crime has never really stopped and will never really stop. It is hard to describe what it feels like to know that at any moment, anywhere, someone is looking at pictures of me as a little girl being abused by [offender] and is getting some kind of sick enjoyment from it. It’s like I am being abused over and over and over again.”

— Excerpt from a victim impact statement by a now adult victim of child pornography, quoted in *Paroline v. United States*, 134 S. Ct. 1710 (2014) (No. 12-8561) at page 3

## Age Range (Sexual Maturation Rate) of Children

The age range of a child in a sexual abuse image or video is estimated based on a sexual maturation rating (SMR), as defined in *Medical Analysis of Child Pornography*.<sup>10</sup>

The estimate of the child's SMR is based on physical development in comparison to data on the median age of each stage of development:

**SMR 1** is roughly equivalent to children 0 (zero) to 8 years of age.

**SMR 2** is roughly equivalent to children 8-11 years of age.

**SMR 3** is roughly equivalent to 11-12 years of age for girls and 12-14 years of age for boys.

**SMR 4** is roughly equivalent to 12-16 years of age for girls and 14-15 years of age for boys.

Entry into **SMR 5** occurs at 16-17 years of age for girls and 15-16 years of age for boys.

*Note: Analysts only select SMR 5 when the age of the child at the time the image or video was taken has been provided to [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca) by the child or someone who personally knows the child in the content.*

A child who shows no evidence of sexual maturation is assessed as having a SMR of 1. Recognizing the significant differences in developmental milestones within this age range (0 to 8 years of age), which impacts the ability and opportunity for the abuse to be discovered, analysts began assessing whether a child with a SMR of 1 appeared to be a baby or toddler (age 4 or under) starting in 2009.

If analysts are undecided about the child's SMR, they err on the side of caution and choose the higher SMR, meaning the child is assessed as falling into the older age range.



<sup>10</sup> Cooper, S.W. (2005). Medical Analysis of Child Pornography. In Cooper, S.W., Estes, R.J., Giardino, A.P., Kellogg, N.D., & Vieth, V.I. (eds.), *Medical, legal & social science aspects of child sexual exploitation: a comprehensive review of pornography, prostitution, and internet crimes* (pp. 213-242). St. Louis, Missouri: G.W. Medical Publishing, Inc.





Model in image and intended as illustrative

## Severity of Child Sexual Abuse

For every analyzed image and video, analysts assess the severity of the abuse acts occurring against the child(ren) in the material. Severity levels are as follows:

<b>Severity 1</b> (Sexual Posing)	Images or videos of children posing nude or partially nude where their sexual organs are exposed.
<b>Severity 2</b> (Extreme Sexual Posing)	Images or videos of children where the primary focus is on their genitalia. Usually in a close-up, or where there is manipulation of the buttocks or legs to expose the anus or genitalia.
<b>Severity 3</b> (Explicit Sexual Activity/Assaults)	Images or videos of children in explicit sexual acts, ranging from self-masturbation to those sexual acts involving adults and other children.
<b>Severity 4</b> (Extreme Sexual Assaults)	Images or videos of children involved in extreme sexual acts that are at the worst end of the scale such as acts involving bestiality, bondage, weapons, defecation/urination, etc.

For material where a full analysis is completed, the sexual abuse or exploitation act(s) are recorded for each child in the image or video. There may be multiple acts associated to a single child.

## LIMITATIONS IN IMAGE AND VIDEO ANALYSIS

This report is limited to the information received and analyzed by the tipline. With respect to websites, it is Cybertip.ca's policy to visit the exact uniform resource locator (URL) provided by the reporting person. Analysts do not actively search out content.

While we have no way of knowing for certain, it is possible that what is reported to Cybertip.ca is not a reflection of the most severe material available. It is believed that the most severe content may be hosted in locations that are more secure or hidden, or that require individuals to commit a child abuse-related offence to gain access to the online content (e.g., sending a child sexual abuse image in order to receive a password to access a website).<sup>11</sup>

### Image Assessment Considerations

- ▶ When selecting images or videos to complete a full analysis on, analysts first choose the image or video that depicts the most severe abuse against the youngest child.
- ▶ Prior to October 2014, analysts only had the ability to perform a full analysis on images and videos and were required to complete a full analysis on at least two child sexual abuse images or videos (where possible) on a page. Therefore, when fast image analysis was implemented thereafter, the purpose was to ensure data was collected about all child sexual abuse images on a page – enhancing the information available to the tipline. For fast image analysis, the data is limited to images and the sexual maturation rate for what appears to be the youngest child in the image and the highest severity for the abuse acts occurring in the image.
- ▶ The dynamic and responsive nature of Cybertip.ca's data collection means that changes are continuously being made to the database. Thus, the number of images and videos with specific data may not always total the number of unique child sexual abuse images and videos analyzed by the tipline (e.g., information about the environment where images or videos appear to have been taken has been tracked since 2013 and is only available for 22,777 images and videos).

### Technical Considerations

- ▶ The public may report URLs that are password-protected or otherwise inaccessible. These reports are forwarded to law enforcement and not analyzed by Cybertip.ca.
- ▶ Assessment only occurs at a particular time, when the analyst accesses the reported URL. We recognize that content on a website displaying child sexual abuse material can change regularly.
- ▶ Cybertip.ca visits the exact uniform resource locator (URL) provided by the reporting person.

<sup>11</sup> For example see *R. v. Lang*, 2015 ABPC 25, wherein a 1500 page report of chat logs between the offender and other users was tendered to the court to illustrate the trading arrangements among offenders (paragraphs 3(25) and 5 (1-9)).

“Unfortunately, the incidence of this behaviour appears to be increasing and expanding as technology becomes more sophisticated, encouraging the production of child pornography and greatly facilitating its distribution. The victims are innocent children who become props in a perverted show, played out for an ever-wider audience not only of voyeurs but of perpetrators.”

— *R. v. D.G.F.*, 2010 ONCA 27, at para 22

# CYBERTIP.CA: RESULTS INVOLVING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES AND VIDEOS

## CHILDREN IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES AND VIDEOS

A full analysis was completed on 46,859 children and the following information regarding the approximate age, sex and apparent ethnicity pertains to these children.

### Approximate Age of Children

Since 2008, the SMR has been assessed for 43,597 children (for 3,262 children, the SMR was indistinguishable<sup>12</sup>). The approximate ages were:

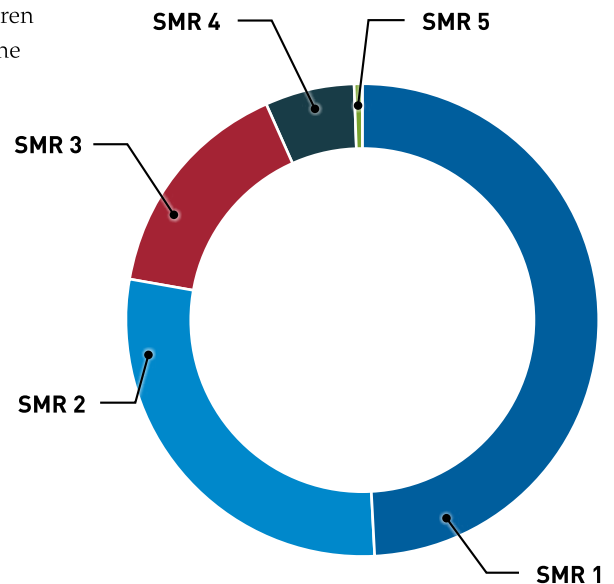
**49.64% (21,640)** of children appeared to be under 8 years old (SMR 1)

**28.66% (12,493)** of children appeared to be between 8 and 11 years old (SMR 2)

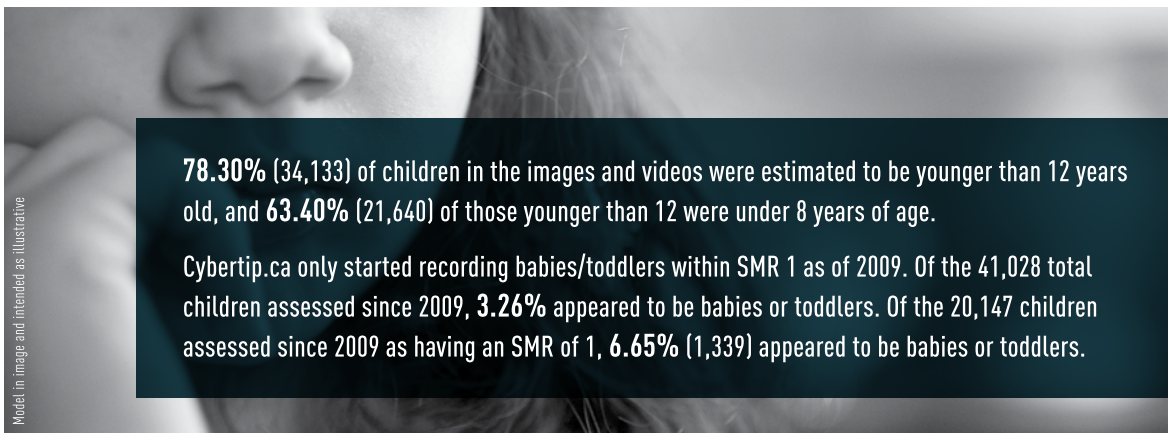
**15.39% (6,710)** of children appeared to be 11-12 years old for girls and 12-14 years old for boys (SMR 3)

**6.02% (2,626)** of children appeared to be 12-16 years old for girls and 14-15 years old for boys (SMR 4)

**0.29% (128)** of children appeared to be 16-17 years old for girls and 15-16 years old for boys (SMR 5)



<sup>12</sup> Indistinguishable is selected for the SMR of a child when an image or video clearly depicts a child (e.g., based on relative stature) however the child's genitals and breasts (for girls) cannot be seen to the extent necessary to assess the SMR.



**78.30% (34,133)** of children in the images and videos were estimated to be younger than 12 years old, and **63.40% (21,640)** of those younger than 12 were under 8 years of age.

Cybertip.ca only started recording babies/toddlers within SMR 1 as of 2009. Of the 41,028 total children assessed since 2009, **3.26%** appeared to be babies or toddlers. Of the 20,147 children assessed since 2009 as having an SMR of 1, **6.65% (1,339)** appeared to be babies or toddlers.



## Sex of Children

Sex was recorded for 45,406 children (for 1,453 children, the sex was indistinguishable<sup>13</sup>).

**80.42% (36,517)** children were **girls**

**19.58% (8,889)** children were **boys**

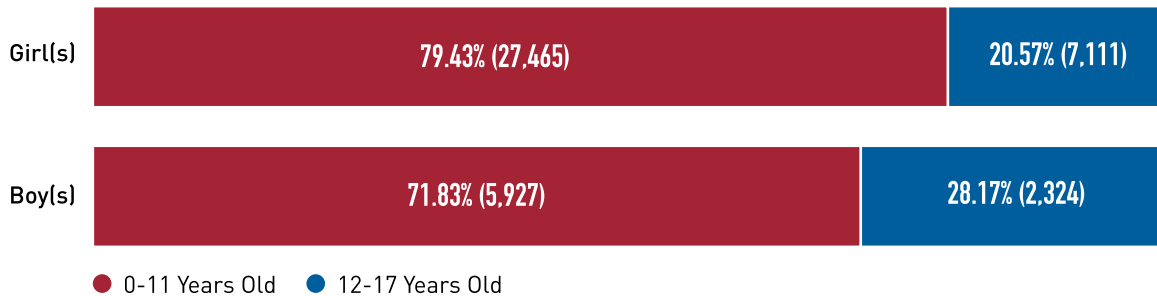


Models in images and intended as illustrative

## Approximate Age in Association with Sex of Children

Information about both the approximate age of the child and sex of the child was recorded for 42,827 children (for 4,032 children, the approximate age and/or the sex was indistinguishable).

### Sex and Age of Children



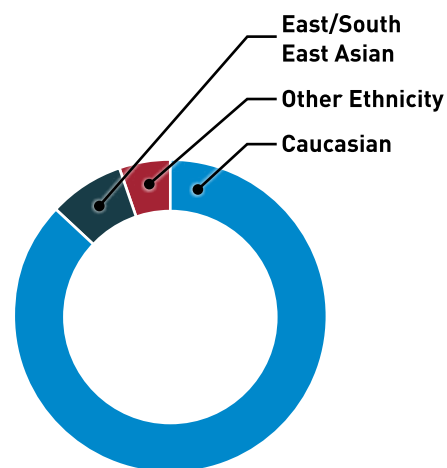
## Apparent Ethnicity of Children

In 2009, Cybertip.ca began tracking the apparent ethnicity based on a visual assessment of the children in the images and videos. The apparent ethnicity of children was recorded for 41,464 children (for 1,344 children, apparent ethnicity was indistinguishable<sup>14</sup>).

**87.12% (36,122)** of children appeared to be **Caucasian**

**7.65% (3,170)** of children appeared to be **East/South East Asian**

**5.24% (2,172)** of children appeared to be of **Other<sup>15</sup> Ethnicity**



<sup>13</sup> Indistinguishable is selected for the sex of a child when an image or video clearly depicts a child (e.g., based on relative stature) however the child's genitals are not visible.

<sup>14</sup> Indistinguishable is selected for the apparent ethnicity of a child when there are no visible characteristics to assist in determining ethnicity.

<sup>15</sup> Due to the small size of the numbers, the following categories have been combined into Other for apparent ethnicity: Aboriginal (81), Arab/West Asian (628), Black (543), Latin American (713) and Other (207).

## SEVERITY OF ABUSE IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES AND VIDEOS

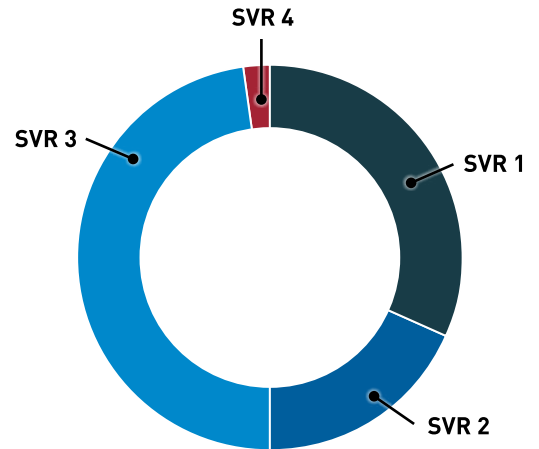
A severity level was determined for 43,760 images and videos:

**31.80%** (13,917) of images and videos involved **sexual posing (Severity 1)**

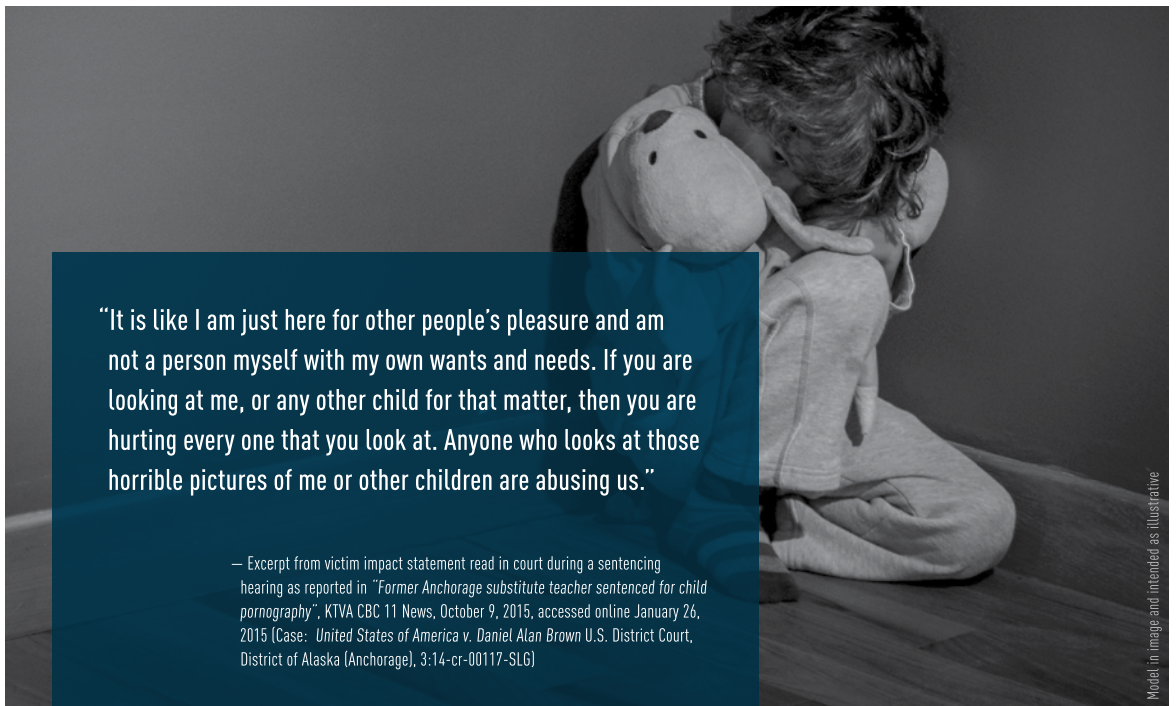
**18.20%** (7,963) of images and videos involved **extreme sexual posing (Severity 2)**

**47.77%** (20,906) of images and videos involved **explicit sexual activity/assaults (Severity 3)**

**2.23%** (974) of images and videos involved **extreme sexual assaults (Severity 4)**



**50%** of images and videos depict explicit sexual activity/assaults and extreme sexual assaults against children



“It is like I am just here for other people’s pleasure and am not a person myself with my own wants and needs. If you are looking at me, or any other child for that matter, then you are hurting every one that you look at. Anyone who looks at those horrible pictures of me or other children are abusing us.”

— Excerpt from victim impact statement read in court during a sentencing hearing as reported in “Former Anchorage substitute teacher sentenced for child pornography”, KTVA CBC 11 News, October 9, 2015, accessed online January 26, 2015 (Case: *United States of America v. Daniel Alan Brown* U.S. District Court, District of Alaska (Anchorage), 3:14-cr-00117-SLG)

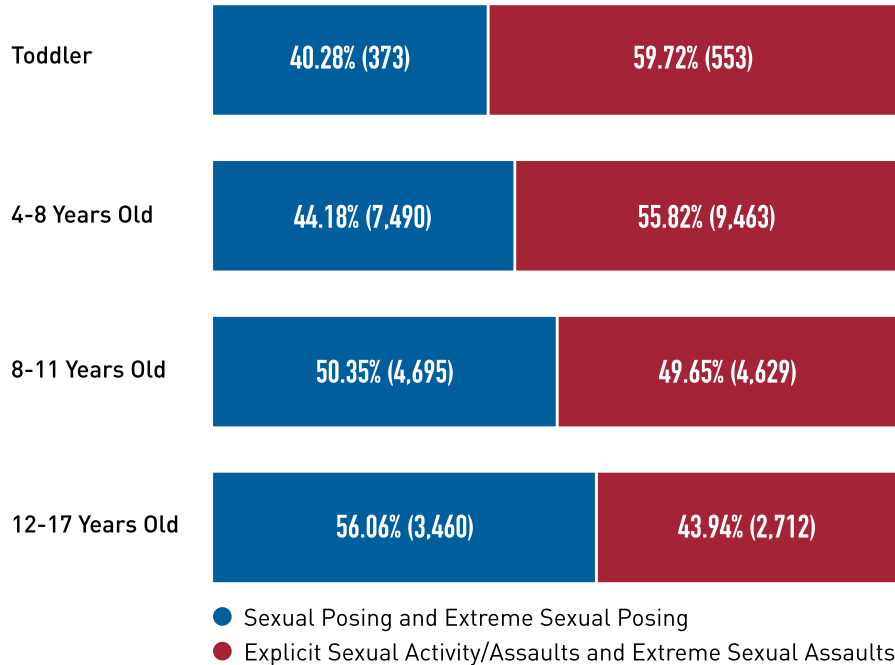
Model in image and intended as illustrative

## Types of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Acts Against Children

In addition to the severity level that is determined for each image and video (and reflects the highest severity for the abuse acts occurring in the content), since 2013, analysts have been recording the sexual abuse or exploitation act(s) occurring against each child in an image or video when completing a full analysis. A total of 34,601 sexual abuse and sexual exploitation acts have been recorded (a child can be abused through more than one act).

A total of 33,375 sexual abuse and exploitation acts were recorded and associated to an SMR (1,226 acts were associated to a child with an indistinguishable SMR).

### Severity of Abuse and Age of Children



\* See Appendix: Flowchart of Types of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Acts in Association with Age of Children for more detailed information.



Model in image and intended as illustrative

There were a total of 27,203 abuse acts involving prepubescent children and of those, 53.84% involved explicit sexual activity/assaults and extreme assaults.



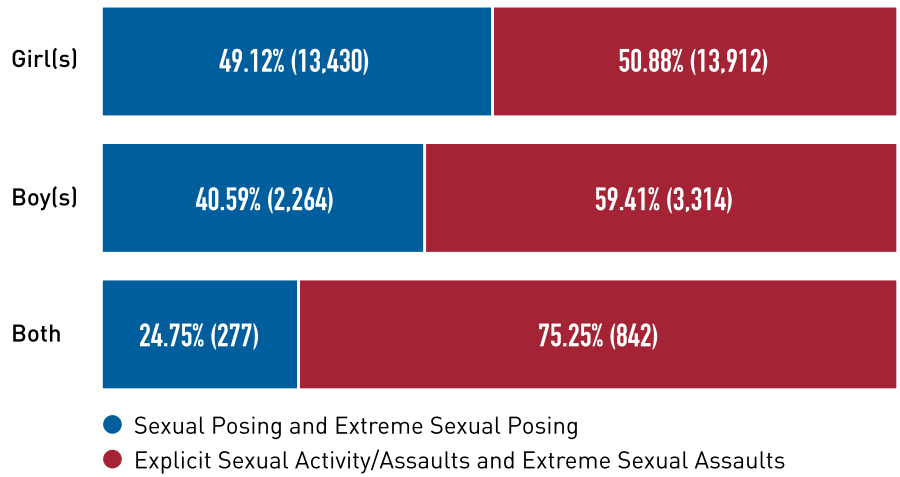
Model in image and intended as illustrative

As the age of the children decreases, the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation acts become more intrusive. When babies and toddlers were seen in child sexual abuse material, 59.72% of abuse acts involved explicit sexual activity/assaults and extreme sexual assaults against the child.

## Severity of Abuse in Association With Sex of Children

For the 34,039 images and videos where a severity level and the sex of children<sup>16</sup> in the images and videos were determined:

### Severity of Abuse and Sex of Children



The inclusion of a boy child in an image or video increased the likelihood that the content depicted explicit sexual activity/assaults or extreme sexual assaults.

<sup>16</sup> 9,721 images and videos included at least one child where the sex was indistinguishable, some in combination with children where the sex was distinguishable.

Since 2008, Cybertip.ca has been tracking whether or not a child's face is visible in images and videos of child sexual abuse. In 2010, the tipline also began to track whether a child's face is blocked/blurred in an image or video or whether it's been covered. For **77.05%** of the children in the content, their faces were visible whereas in the remaining content, the children's faces were not visible or were blocked/blurred or covered.



Model in image and illustration is illustrative.





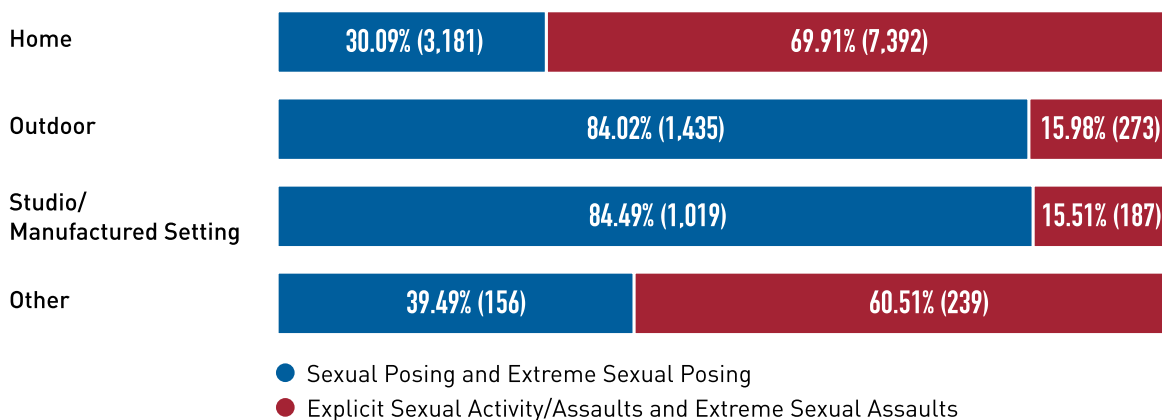
## SURROUNDINGS WITHIN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES

Since 2013, Cybertip.ca has recorded information about the surroundings where child sexual abuse images and videos appear to have been taken. In order to do so, analysts consider any indicators visible in the images and videos (e.g., beds or other household furniture suggesting a home environment or trees indicating an outdoor setting). This information has been recorded for 22,656 images and videos. When images and videos with indistinguishable surroundings (2,494) are removed:

- 68.68% (13,848) of images and videos appeared to be in a **home setting**
- 15.25% (3,074) of images and videos appeared to be in an **outdoor setting**
- 10.81% (2,180) of images and videos appeared to be in a **studio/manufactured setting**
- 5.26% (1,038) of images and videos had “Other<sup>17</sup>” selected as the surroundings

## Surroundings in Association With Severity of Child Sexual Abuse

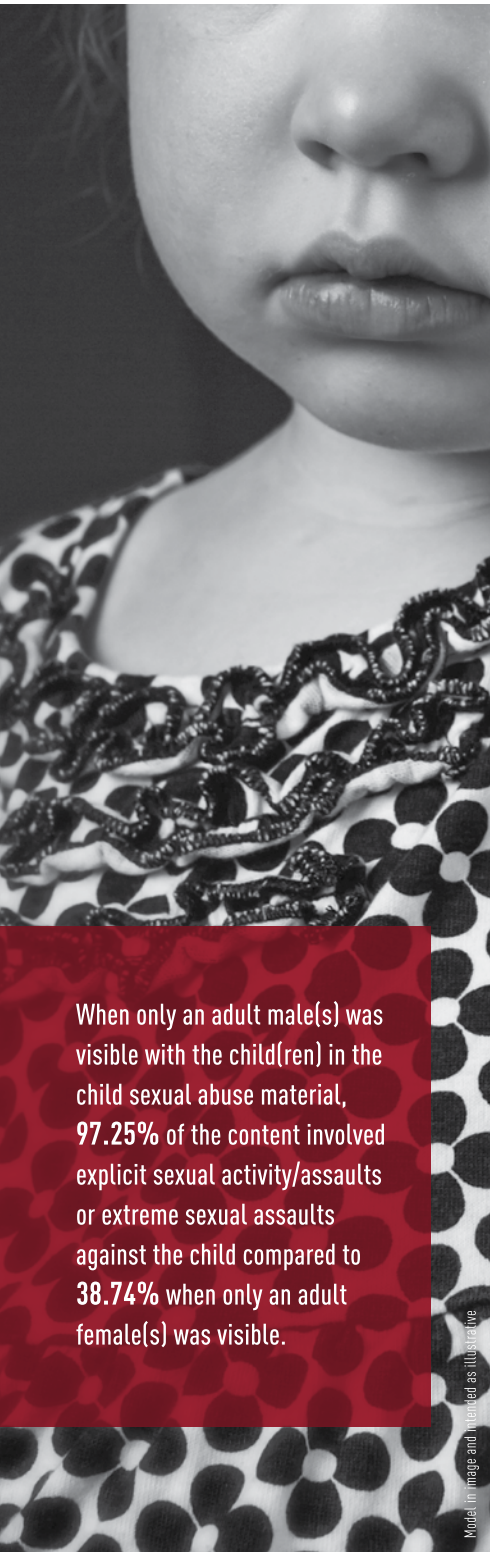
### Image Surroundings and Severity of Abuse



69.91% of child sexual abuse images and videos taken in what appears to be a home environment captured explicit sexual activity/assaults and extreme sexual assaults.

In early 2016, Cybertip.ca began tracking images and videos taken in a public facility (e.g., public pool, change room, gym) as a separate category than “Other.” Content captured in these environments is indicative of voyeuristic behaviour.

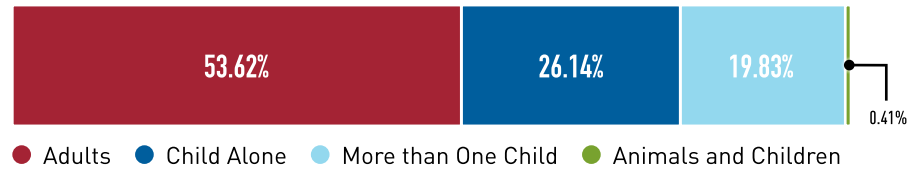
<sup>17</sup> Image/video setting of “Other” includes content that appears to have been taken in a public facility (e.g., school, public pool, change room, shower, gym), a vehicle, a tent, etc.



## WHAT IS BEING RECORDED?

Of the 12,600 individuals recorded as engaged in sex acts in the images and videos:

- 53.62% (6,756)** involved **adults** committing a sexual assault
- 26.14% (3,294)** involved the **child alone** engaged in a sex act(s)
- 19.83% (2,498)** involved **more than one child** engaged in a sex act(s)
- 0.41% (52)** involved **animals and a child(ren)** engaged in a sex act(s)



## ADULTS VISIBLE IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES AND VIDEOS

In 2009, Cybertip.ca began recording information about adults that are visible in child sexual abuse images and videos (both if they are directly engaged in a sex act against a child and if they are not engaged but present in the content). Since that time, 14,812 adults were viewed in 12,297 images and videos.

### Sex of Adults

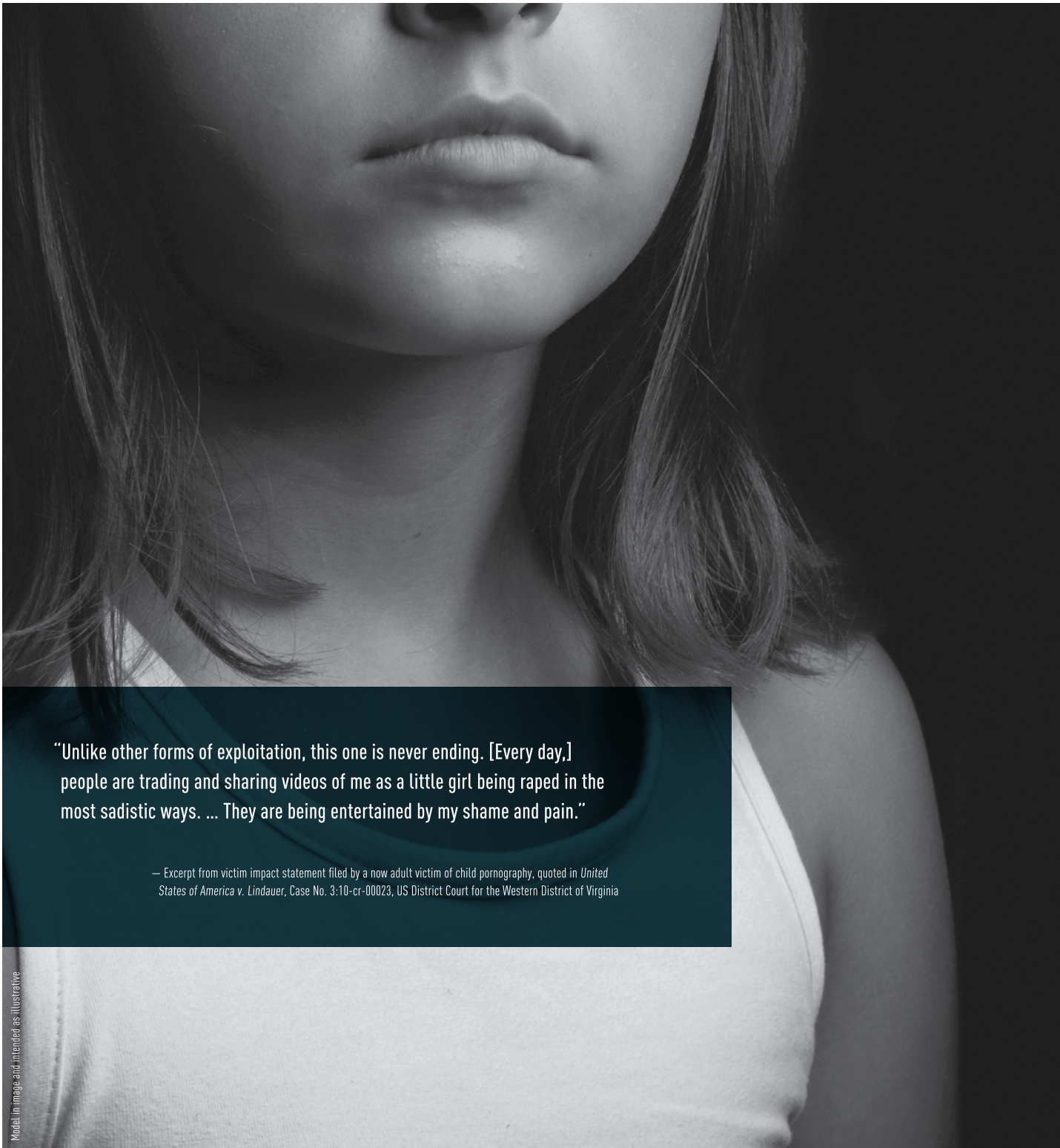
Of the 13,395 adults where sex was determined (sex was indistinguishable<sup>18</sup> for 1,414 adults):

- 83.35% (11,165)** were adult **males**
- 16.65% (2,230)** were adult **females**



When only an adult male(s) was visible with the child(ren) in the child sexual abuse material, **97.25%** of the content involved explicit sexual activity/assaults or extreme sexual assaults against the child compared to **38.74%** when only an adult female(s) was visible.

<sup>18</sup> Indistinguishable is selected for the sex of an adult when an image or video clearly depicts an adult (e.g., based on relative stature), but the adult's genitals are not visible.



“Unlike other forms of exploitation, this one is never ending. [Every day,] people are trading and sharing videos of me as a little girl being raped in the most sadistic ways. ... They are being entertained by my shame and pain.”

— Excerpt from victim impact statement filed by a now adult victim of child pornography, quoted in *United States of America v. Lindauer*, Case No. 3:10-cr-00023, US District Court for the Western District of Virginia

Model in image and intended as illustrative



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



“Collectors of child pornography seek to distance themselves from the direct physical and emotional harm caused to children. However, the collectors of this filth are a vital part of the evil menace it represents and bear responsibility for its malignant growth right along with its creators.”

— R. v. Kwok, 2007 CanLII 2942 (ONSC), at para 49

Model in image and internet as illustrative.

It is through our work in operating Cybertip.ca for the past 13 years that our organization has witnessed the growing proliferation of child sexual abuse images and videos on the Internet. There is an urgent need to adapt the way that we are fighting this issue. With an increased focus on privacy-related issues in Canada, we must not lose sight of its direct impact on the protection and well-being of children whose sexual abuse has been memorialized and shared online for the world to view. The evolving advantages of technology, combined with the shield of anonymity, have created an imbalance between adult offenders and our ability to keep children safe and secure.

The information in this report is intended to provide important insight about child sexual abuse and the exploitation and abusive acts these offenders are perpetrating against children. The harsh reality is that 78.29% of the images and videos analyzed by Cybertip.ca depict very young, pre-pubescent children under 12 years of age, with the majority of those being under 8 years of age (63.40%). 50% of the images and videos assessed by analysts involve explicit sexual activity/assaults. Additionally, there is the alarming concern that as the age of the children decreases, the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation acts become more intrusive. When babies and toddlers are seen in the images and videos, 59.72% of the abuse acts involve explicit sexual activity/assaults and extreme sexual assaults against the child.

We know that more needs to be done to identify and support child victims of sexual abuse, identify and prosecute offenders, and reduce the availability of child sexual abuse material (images, videos, writing, etc.) on the Internet. There is an urgent need to shift the way in which we view this problem. Child sexual abuse occurs in homes and communities across Canada and around the world. Efforts must be focused on preventing child sexual abuse from occurring in the first place so offenders’ opportunities to also record and share the abusive content with others is limited. For this to occur, adults around children need to be educated about the abuse process, how to recognize inappropriate behaviour, interrupt sexual abuse and facilitate disclosures by children. While significant progress has been made in the last decade, we must strengthen our commitment to fight the exploitation and sexual abuse of children.

Beyond the primary goal of removing children from abusive environments, there is much to be learned from identified children of sexual abuse content.



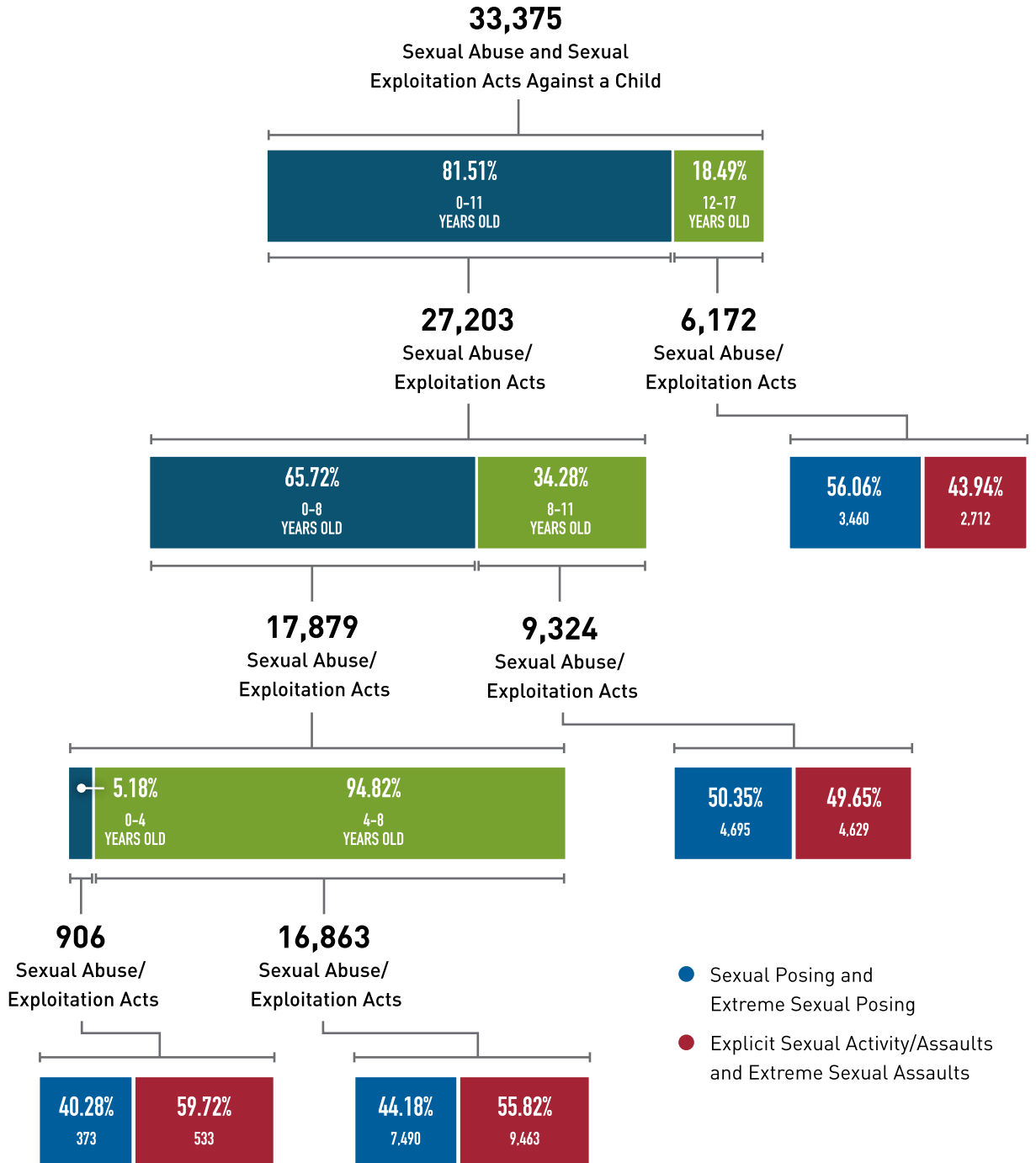
In 2014, the Canadian Centre launched a multi-year plan titled *Digital Agenda for Protecting Canada's Youngest and Most Vulnerable Children*. This *Digital Agenda* specifically focuses on child sexual abuse imagery that pertains to children under 12 years of age, and the information in this report only serves to underscore the urgent need to address child sexual abuse and those with a sexual interest in children. What is particularly disturbing is the interest offenders have in images and videos involving very young children. **These children are most likely being accessed and sexually abused by someone they know.** Not only is it devastating for a child to be abused, but to have the abuse recorded and distributed on the Internet adds another layer of trauma.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE CANADIAN CENTRE'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ▶ Identify and rescue more victims in child sexual abuse material by working closely with child exploitation units, and improve support services in Canada to better protect the rights of victims when abuse material is circulating online.
- ▶ Reduce the availability of child sexual abuse material to Canadians by leveraging technology to disrupt the growing problem of sexual abuse material online, strengthening private sector involvement, and strengthening Canada's role internationally.
- ▶ Increase reporting by Canadians through national public awareness campaigns and working with relevant stakeholders to promote reporting.
- ▶ Stop offenders by enhancing resources and training in Canada including increased police and forensic capacity, adopting best practices related to reducing online sexual exploitation of children and adapting the *Criminal Code* (Canada) and related legislation to aid in the tackling of this problem.
- ▶ Focus efforts on prevention and education using recognized prevention programming in addition to the creation of new resources for parents, health care professionals, and public facilities (e.g., pools).

# APPENDIX

## Types of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Acts in Association With Age of Children







CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®  
*Helping families. Protecting children.*

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