

For Release: Thursday, Oct. 3

Media Contacts:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

(703) 837-6111

media@ncmec.org

www.missingkids.org/e2ee



**Statement of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Regarding the End-to-End Encryption Discussion**

ALEXANDRIA, Va., Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019 –The current international discussion about privacy on the internet appropriately highlights concerns regarding online data security. We all want tech companies to ensure that our online activity isn't hacked, inadvertently disclosed to the public, or sold without our consent. But a privacy solution must be balanced with the reality that many members of the public use the internet for illegal and abusive conduct.

As the nation's clearinghouse for missing and exploited children issues, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) bears witness every day to how the internet is used to perpetuate online demand for graphic sexual abuse images of children. While the sexual exploitation of a child most often occurs in private settings, abusive images and videos are shared on the most public of forums – the open internet. Offenders email images to others; upload them to photo-sharing and social media sites; and share them via private chat and messenger apps. If tech companies shutter their visibility to this dehumanizing abuse of children by adopting end-to-end encryption without a solution in place to safeguard children, those who are sexually exploited will be invisible and left as collateral damage while offenders will continue to create, share, and collect child sexual abuse images without detection.

The risk to children isn't theoretical or minor. Every day at NCMEC we analyze tens of thousands of reports of children who are raped and sexually abused while photos and videos are made. Over the past 20 years, we've received more than 55 million reports of child sexual abuse to our CyberTipline - in 2018 alone we received over 18 million reports. The abuse is graphic and violent, and the sharing of images online drives the market for offenders to create more images and abuse hundreds of thousands of children each year. Many of these children are infants – too young to cry out for help or identify their abusers. Many are abused by adults they trust – a parent, relative or babysitter. Many are enticed and blackmailed into producing sexually explicit imagery.

Tech companies use hashing, PhotoDNA, artificial intelligence, and other technology to recognize online child sexual abuse, remove it, and report it to NCMEC. We make these reports available to law enforcement agencies around the globe. The ability for tech companies to "see" online abuse and report it is often the only way that law enforcement can rescue a child from an abusive situation and identify and arrest an offender.

If end-to-end encryption is implemented without a solution in place to safeguard children, NCMEC estimates that more than half of its CyberTipline reports will vanish. The transmission of child sexual abuse images and sexual enticement messages won't stop because this criminal activity is encrypted. End-to-end encryption will simply close a curtain to what happens online, enabling encrypted platforms to become lawless environments where the lack of oversight and visibility into criminal activity emboldens offenders.

We oppose privacy measures that fail to address how the internet is used to entice children into sexually exploitive situations and to traffic images and videos of children being raped and sexually abused. NCMEC calls on our tech partners, political leaders, and academic and policy experts to come together to find technological solutions that will enhance consumer privacy while prioritizing child safety.

###

About the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Since 1984, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® has served as the leading private, nonprofit organization helping to find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation and prevent future victimization. As part of its work as the clearinghouse and resource center on issues relating to missing and exploited children, NCMEC operates a hot-line, 1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678), and has assisted in the recovery of more than 304,000 missing children. NCMEC also operates the CyberTipline®, a mechanism for reporting suspected child sexual exploitation, which has received more than 55 million reports. To learn more about NCMEC, visit www.missingkids.org.

OUR MISSION

Find Missing Children

Reduce Child Sexual Exploitation

Prevent Future Victimization



Hope is why we're here.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® was founded in 1984 by John and Revé Walsh after their 6-year-old son, Adam, was abducted from a shopping mall in Florida and murdered. His tragic death, and that of other missing children, inspired a movement to create a coordinated national response to the issues of missing and exploited children.

Our private, non-profit organization, based in Alexandria, Virginia, has been at the forefront of child protection for more than three decades. We work with victims, their families, private industry, law enforcement and many other stakeholders to achieve our mission.

A man with a beard is hugging a young child from behind. The image has a warm, yellowish tint.

FINDING Missing Children

Our work to find missing children includes:

- Operating a 24/7 national hotline, 1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678) for tips and reports related to missing and sexually exploited children
- Creating and distributing billions of missing child posters
- Redistributing AMBER Alerts® to millions of people
- Rapidly deploying our team of retired law enforcement to assist in critical missing children cases
- Creating age-progressed photos to help search for children missing for 6 months or more
- Using forensic technology and facial reconstructions to search for the identities of deceased child victims
- Connecting victims' families to therapeutic and peer support

A group of hands of various ages and skin tones are stacked together in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The image has a teal tint.

REDUCING Child Sexual Exploitation

Our work to reduce child sexual exploitation includes:

- Operating the CyberTipline®, the centralized reporting system in the U.S. for child sexual exploitation
- Analyzing millions of reports and providing information to law enforcement that can help stop the victimization of a child
- Working with law enforcement to identify and rescue children in sexually abusive images and videos
- Helping locate victims of child sex trafficking and providing some of the essentials they need to begin their recovery
- Assisting law enforcement with tracking non-compliant sex offenders

A group of children are sitting on the floor in a classroom, looking towards the front. The image is in black and white.

PREVENTING Future Victimization

Our work to provide training and education includes:

- Creating safety education programs for children – KidSmartz® and NetSmartz® – based on our experience and data
- Training law enforcement and other safety and child-serving professionals who work on cases of missing and sexually exploited children
- Providing child safety tools, including Safety Central, a free digital Child ID app

MissingKids.org



Media Contact:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

(703) 837-6111

media@ncmec.org

www.missingkids.org/e2ee



NCMEC End-to-End Encryption Media Asset Inventory

*MEDIA: You are free to use these assets, in whole or in part.
Please credit "National Center for Missing & Exploited Children"*

- **Interview clips with NCMEC President and CEO John F. Clark**
(<https://vimeo.com/363876299/f8380fb95f>)
- **VIDEO: Victim Statements, TRT 3:21** (<https://vimeo.com/362369248/4cbdb1843e>) – This video includes statements from five survivors of child sexual abuse imagery who will be impacted by end-to-end encryption's disruption of the ability to detect child sexual abuse imagery online.
- **VIDEO: CyberTipline Success Story, TRT 1:52** (<https://vimeo.com/362349874/3fcdbd133c>) – This video outlines the impact of NCMEC's CyberTipline with the details of a successful case, demonstrating the ability to protect children from abuse that will be lost if end-to-end encryption is implemented without an exception for detecting child sexual abuse imagery.
- **VIDEO: Be Careful What You Share, TRT 0:55** (<https://vimeo.com/254584484/5b3a2a03e4>)
- **B-roll of our headquarters**, located in Alexandria, VA (<https://vimeo.com/342995472/3929667296>)
- **Graphics**, including the "Anatomy of a CyberTipline Report" and "Explosive Growth in CyberTipline Activity."

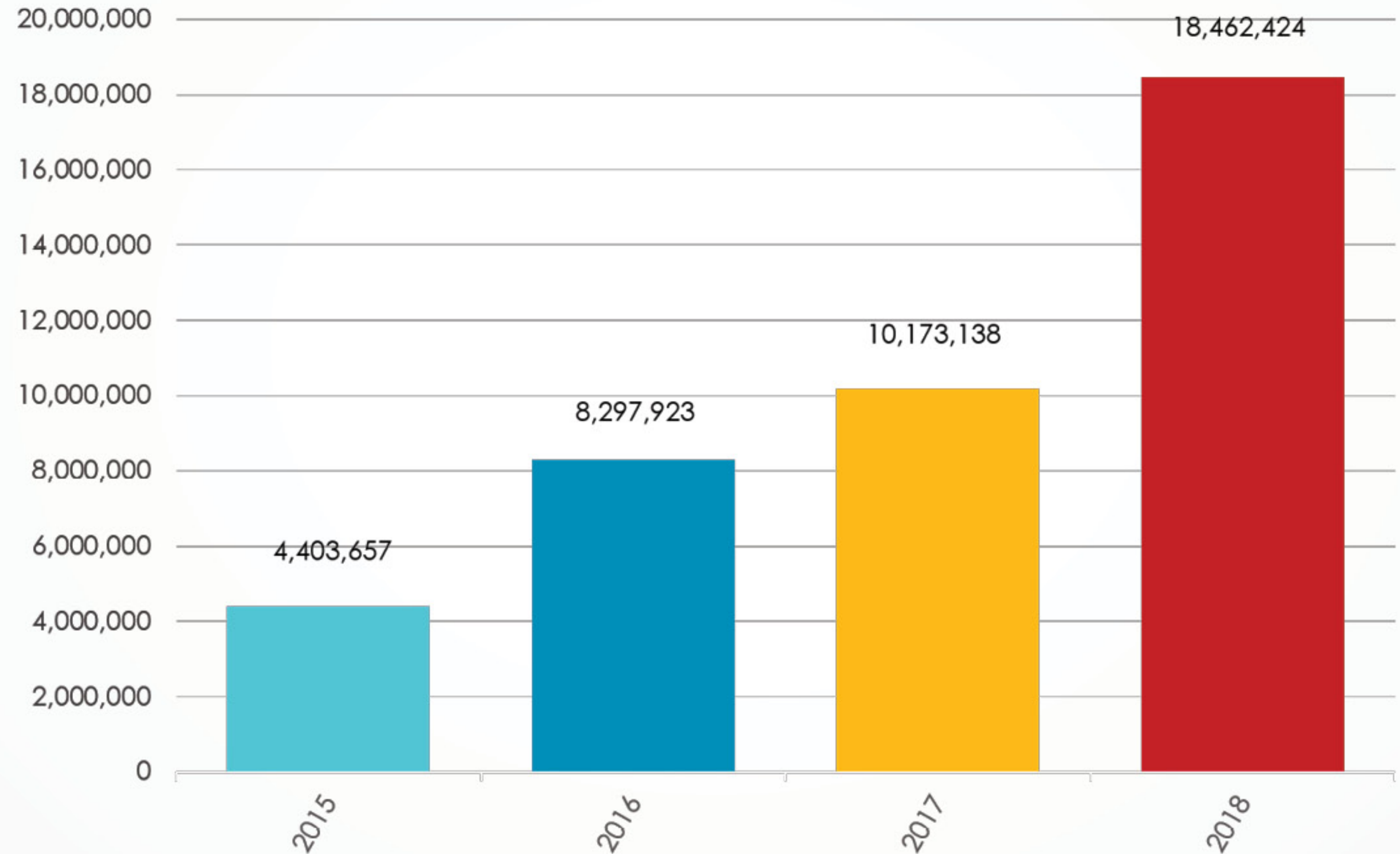
Anatomy of a CyberTipline Case



Reports of Child Sexual Exploitation

Explosive Growth in CyberTipline Activity

CyberTipline Reports: 2015-2018



Copyright © 2019 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.