

Safeguarding Newsletter

Spring Term

Issue 2

Many thanks to those of you who have provided feedback following our first issue - we shall continue to focus on Online Safety in this edition.

Encountering violent online content starts at primary school

- Children describe violent content as 'unavoidable' online
- Teenage boys more likely to share violent material to 'fit in' with peers
- Recommender algorithms and group messaging fuel exposure
- Children's willingness to report harmful content undermined by lack of trust in process

Children first see violent online content while still at primary school and describe it as an inevitable part of being online, according to [new research commissioned by Ofcom](#).

All children who took part in the research came across violent content online, mostly via social media, video-sharing and messaging sites and apps. Many tell us this is before they have reached the minimum age requirement to use these services.

Link to the rest of the article : [here](#)

Source: Ofcom

How online predators use privacy apps. New podcast episode from the IWF

Published: Thu 15 Feb 2024

In Conversation with Tegan Insoll, Head of Research at Suojellaan Lapsia, and Dan Sexton, Chief Technology Officer at the IWF.

New research shows online offenders are choosing end-to-end encrypted messaging apps to contact children and to spread child sexual abuse material amid renewed calls for Meta to rethink its planned roll out of end-to-end encryption on Facebook Messenger.

A new podcast from the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) focuses on new research from Finnish child protection agency Suojellaan Lapsia which shows how offenders operate and the methods they use.

Preliminary findings from Suojellaan Lapsia's ReDirection Project show how end-to-end encrypted apps are deliberately chosen by people looking to contact children or share and find child sexual abuse imagery because of a perceived reduced risk of detection or prosecution.

The report, which can be found [here](#), has sparked renewed calls for Facebook owner Meta to reconsider its decision to roll out end-to-end encryption on Messenger, one of the world's most used private messaging services.

While Meta says the move will make Messenger more secure, the IWF and others have been critical, saying introducing end-to-end encryption without also bringing in new child protection measures risks disabling many safety and detection features which have been successfully deployed on the platform.

Speaking on the podcast, Tegan Insoll, Head of Research at Suojellaan Lapsia, said end-to-end encryption could make it harder to prevent the spread of child sexual abuse imagery online, and more difficult to detect offenders.

Ms Insoll said: *"Our research already is showing that a quarter of the offenders that we have surveyed on the dark web are already using messaging apps and, mostly, end-to-end encrypted messaging apps to contact children. And nearly a third are also using messaging apps to search for and view child sexual abuse material."*

She added: *"It gives that sense of safety and security for offenders which could potentially lead to further offending as they feel comfortable that they are not being detected and they feel safe in their ability to continue these crimes without prosecution."*

Link to the rest of the article : [here](#)

Source: IWF – Internet Watch Foundation

Guide to Recovering a Hacked Account - National Cyber Security Centre

The topic of cybersecurity is becoming more and more important, yet this has not been matched by online safety literacy. Crime has been increasingly moving into the online space, which has grown greater as the UK marches towards the total digitalisation of government services such as education. Educational establishments present a target ripe for hackers be they external criminals, or people within your institution set on causing mischief. The National Cyber Security Centre, is dedicated to helping reinforce awareness and knowledge of counter-criminal practices within the public sector. It is with this in mind that they have published, their 'recovering a hacked account' guidance. If interested in finding out more, please follow the link below:

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/recovering-a-hacked-account>

Source: Andrew Hall – Specialist Safeguarding Consultant, success In Schools Ltd.

Sextortion - A Guide for Parents

With incidents of sextortion significantly on the increase around the world it's important that both professionals and parents know the signs and how to help and support their children. Although anybody can be targeted, the surge appears to be boys aged 14+ and the motivation is usually financial. In the past offenders would often threaten to share the victims' intimate images with friends and family but that very rarely happened, however we are now starting to see this happen more frequently, including threats of physical violence and more.

Internet Matters have a really useful web page with lots of advice and support for parents and their children.

You can find the web page [HERE](#).

Source: Alan MacKenzie (e-safetv adviser)

YouTube and Artificial Intelligence

It won't be a surprise to anyone that AI generated content is now finding its way onto all the platforms that are popular with children, and that includes YouTube. Much of this content is benign, but as always bad actors will use it for their own gain. On a positive note YouTube has just updated their policy whereby any person uploading content onto YouTube and that content features synthetic media (e.g. generative AI), the user must disclose this when uploading.

However, YouTube has excluded children's animations from the disclosure process. YouTube is the most popular online platform by a large margin for children and we all know that content creators can exploit this for their own financial gain, clickbait, scams and much more. Creating new content for children is now easier than it ever was, you can create a script, animation, song and video in less than an hour using AI so children are going to be getting swamped with all this new content.

You can see a full write-up about this in Wired magazine [HERE](#).

Source: Alan MacKenzie (e-safetv adviser)

Staying Mentally Healthy during exam time (Young Minds)

As we head towards the main exam time it's worth reflecting upon how we can support young people at what can be a very stressful time.

Young Minds have a series of support pages aimed to help with exam stress and anxiety. Their advice is available to help school staff, parents and carers and, of course, young people themselves. You can find this helpful advice at the links below:

[School staff](#)
[Parents](#)
[Young people](#)

Source: Andrew Hall – Specialist Safeguarding Consultant, Success In Schools Ltd.

Next time.....?

We are keen to hear any feedback from our 2nd newsletter. Please let us know of any topics you would like to see next time, or any feedback you would like to provide using this [link](#). We anticipate covering vaping/drug awareness in the next edition.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and our pastoral teams monitor and support each student in their care. Any concerns should be directed to your child's form tutor in the first instance.

Should the concerns be of a more serious nature, they will be picked up by Mrs King or Mrs Searby, our safeguarding team. They can be contacted directly on esafe@beths.bexley.sch.uk. This mailbox is monitored during term time only.

Support over the holidays

Please find below some links to organisations providing support over the Easter period:

Mental Health:

[Kooth](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Childline](#)

[NHS Choices](#)

[Shout](#)

[Mind](#)

Food Banks:

[Bexley](#)

[Dartford](#)

[Greenwich](#)

[Bromley](#)

Restaurant deals/cheap meals for kids

Moneysaving expert has collected information regarding some cheap eating out options over the holidays, as per link below:

[Kids eat 'free' or for '£1'](#)

Mrs King



Mrs Searby

