

Supporting Law Enforcement Operations to Combat Internet Crimes Against Children



Homeland Security

Science and Technology

CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN TAKE MANY FORMS

Technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and internet crimes against children includes online enticement of children for sexual acts, child sexual molestation, child pornography, child sex tourism, and child sex trafficking. These forms of abuse can have devastating impacts on survivors.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is combatting internet crimes against children and child exploitation through its public awareness campaigns, first responder and law enforcement training, investigations and arrests, and identification of and assistance to victims.

The mission of the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) is to deliver effective and innovative insight, methods, and solutions for the critical needs of DHS Component agencies and associated law enforcement agencies (LEAs) on the front lines of combatting child exploitation. Consistent with this mission, [RTI International](#) will conduct research to support the anti-exploitation work of DHS S&T and Component agencies.

BOOSTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CYBERTIPLINE

Using qualitative data collection methods, this project will examine the overall life cycle of CyberTipline reports and the engagement of stakeholders. The project will then identify and document the broader CyberTipline processes and protocols, from reporting to review/analysis and dissemination.

Operated by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), the CyberTipline is the nation's central clearinghouse for reports of online exploitation of children.

During the last years, the volume of reports to the CyberTipline has increased dramatically. In 2018, it received more than 18.4 million reports, overwhelming the resources required by LEAs for investigation.

Outcomes of this work will provide S&T with deeper understanding of:

- LEAs' use of CyberTipline data, including the attributes of CyberTipline reports most and least beneficial to the initiation and advancement of investigations.
- Successes and challenges faced by Electronic Service Providers (ESPs) when reporting to the CyberTipline.
- NCMEC's processes for reviewing, analyzing, and disseminating CyberTips.
- Actions that S&T might take to facilitate information sharing among stakeholders, as well as areas in which additional research could further support the needs of DHS Component agencies and LEAs.

Increasing the utility of CyberTipline reports could ultimately lead to the successful identification and apprehension of the most dangerous offenders.



PROJECT TIMELINE

This project started in September 2019. Project activities are expected to continue through September 2021.

PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC
- NCMEC, Alexandria, VA
- ESPs
- Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement communities
- DHS and its Components

