

Canadian Centre for Child Protection has seen a variety of responses to the notices issued and the removal of material through Project Arachnid. In some cases notices from Project Arachnid have been whitelisted by certain ESPs and material is removed within a matter of minutes of a notice being issued. Of the material hosted on the public Internet that Project Arachnid detects and issues notices on, 15% is removed within 1 day and 50% of the material is removed within 4 days of a notice being issued. The least responsive ESPs, which make up approximately 10% of the notices, take on average almost 2 weeks to remove material.

70. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection also runs into roadblocks getting CSAIO removed from the dark web as well as from so-called “bulletproof” hosting services which are services that are provided by some domain hosting or web hosting companies. These companies provide considerable leniency in the kinds of material they allow their customer to upload and make available, which can include “child pornography”.

71. Since the beginning of 2019, Project Arachnid had detected more than 5,500 dark web URLs as hosting CSAIO without any recourse to send notices for the removal of the material. Project Arachnid also detected more than 10,000 URLs for images of CSAIO on three domains administered and hosted by a bulletproof hoster in the public domain. Neither the hosting provider nor the sites administrator have responded and much of the material continues to remain online.

72. Project Arachnid issues notices on CSAIO related to prepubescent children as well as identified pubescent/ post-pubescent children. While the material in both of these groups is illegal, the typical methods of distribution and locations where the CSAIO is found differs between prepubescent victims and pubescent/post-pubescent victims.

73. Project Arachnid detects a large volume of CSAIO related to prepubescent victims that is made available on dark web forums, but actually sits on open web sources in encrypted archives. These encrypted archives cannot be detected by industry using real-time scanning techniques. Offenders post the

encryption keys on the Dark web, with the encrypted archive being made available on the open web. The use of anonymous file hosting services and/or “bullet proof” hosters are also very common with the distribution of CSAIO involving prepubescent victims.

74. To provide an example of where material related to prepubescent victims is commonly found, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection reviewed data related to one specific image of a prepubescent victim. Project Arachnid detected 32 modified versions of such image, which involved the child being sexually assaulted. These 32 variations of the image were detected by Project Arachnid on 605 URLs online. Of the 605 URLs, 541 related to a file hosting service that allows users to upload files anonymously. There were also 27 postings wherein the image was either posted directly on a dark web service or posted in a public encrypted archive that was linked to from a dark web service.

75. In contrast, CSAIO involving pubescent/post-pubescent victims is often found in more public forums and less covert areas of the Internet. Project Arachnid detects a significant amount of the material related to pubescent/post-pubescent victims on adult pornography sites. When a child appears to be close to sexual maturity, images of that child may be comingled with adult pornography images, which can result in the material becoming more readily available and prevalent on adult pornography services. In some cases, it can be very difficult to determine that the image is of a person under the age of 18 without the additional context that the child in question has been identified.

76. In a review of one image related to a commonly detected series involving a pubescent victim of CSAIO, Project Arachnid found 60 variations of the image posted to 538,729 unique URLs. The vast majority (99%) of these URLs were dedicated to adult pornography or publicly advertised adult pornography.

77. One matter that is of grave concern to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and CRI is that many of the images/videos of a child who has been sexually abused include a child who is fully visible and identifiable. This visibility not only heightens the degree of the privacy and dignity violation to that child, but also presents a clear risk to the child’s personal safety and psychological security,