
Fighting to free the
world of CSAM.

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2021 Insights EU Hotlines



INHOPE

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**CHAPTER 01**

Introduction



Formed by nine founder hotlines in 1999, INHOPE has expanded beyond Europe into a global organisation with a shared vision of an internet free of CSAM.

The role of INHOPE member hotlines

INHOPE is the leading global network combatting online Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). The Network consists of 50 hotlines in 46 countries (as of December 2021) operating in all EU member states, Russia, South Africa, North & South America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

The INHOPE network of hotlines has established an effective and well-recognised mechanism for the rapid removal of CSAM within Europe. The mechanism has evolved over more than 20 years and involves a multi-stakeholder approach to combatting CSAM involving hotlines, the internet industry, law enforcement and governments. This approach has fostered deep jurisdiction-specific expertise, competence and trust, with INHOPE's ICCAM platform providing not only a means of rapidly and accurately coordinating reports between members, but of adding value in the form of intelligence for partners in law enforcement. Hotlines have an unmatched expertise in building relationships with public and private stakeholders nationally, across the political and legal landscape.

INHOPE member hotlines enable the public to anonymously report online material they suspect may be illegal. Across the INHOPE network, over 200 hotline analysts work every day to find and remove this content from the internet and to share data with law enforcement so they can identify victims and perpetrators. Hotline analysts are the first responders in the fight against CSAM, and their expertise and incredible dedication have contributed the removal of millions of instances of CSAM online. Analysts are experts on content assessment and have long-established working relationships with national law enforcement and industry to support content removal and victim identification.

INHOPE's hotline members receive reports relating to online child sexual abuse material, as well as other types of reports depending on their mandate, including inappropriate child related images, child grooming activities, adult pornography (accessible to children), extreme adult content, racism and xenophobia, promoting violence against individuals, terrorism and drugs etc. Each hotline publishes the issues they handle on their website.



CHAPTER 02

ICCAM

ICCAM is a secure platform used to collect, exchange, and classify reports of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) which supports the rapid removal of this illegal material from the internet.



ICCAM

ICCAM enables the secure exchange of illegal material portraying child sexual abuse between hotlines located in different jurisdictions, with the aim of quick removal from the internet. Once a hotline receives a public report, the hotline analyst assesses the reported material, and if it is believed that there is illegal material on that page, the URL is inserted into ICCAM. The system then crawls all information found on that URL and the analyst can classify each picture and/or video separately as baseline (internationally illegal according to INTERPOL's criteria), nationally illegal or not illegal.

The data in this report and the data from ICCAM cannot be directly correlated, as they differ too greatly in what they are measuring. ICCAM relates to the processing of actual reports and specific actions relating only to online CSAM, whereas public reporting data measures general activity of hotlines not limited to only Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). Also, ICCAM contains potentially illegal material, whereas this report shows the total number of reports received by a hotline (both illegal and not illegal). As such, the numbers in this report for total reports received are significantly higher. The totals for other categories only refer to illegal content and will be of similar levels.

In 2021, ICCAM was being used by hotlines in every country, except in Croatia, Cyprus, Italy and Spain where legal challenges or other national agreements hinder the usage of ICCAM.

In Italy the technology is still not used at all, whereas the Croatian hotline uses only the forwarding function of ICCAM. It cannot, for instance, assess reports via the platform, but can exchange URLs of potential CSAM with other hotlines.

CHAPTER 03

Acknowledgments



This important work could not be done without support, funding and partnerships.

Acknowledgments

The work of INHOPE is financially supported by the European Commission. This report is funded under the Connecting Europe Facility of by the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology as part of the Safer Internet Digital Service Infrastructure.



CHAPTER 04

Data Presented

Listing the sources of the data in this report.



Data presented in this report

The INHOPE Network consists of 29 member hotlines from European states that are under the auspices of the European Network of Safer Internet Centers (SICs). These SICs are currently co-funded by the European Commission under the Connecting Europe Facility programme. Every quarter, hotlines that receive co-funding from the European Commission submit data on the reports received from the public. They report on the total number of reports, the type of reports received, the actions taken on received reports, and the relative hosting location of the reported content. This report provides a statistical overview of the public reports received by European hotlines for 2021, which are part of the INHOPE network.

The list below shows the data included in this report for each quarter of 2021.

1. Stopline – Austria (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
2. Child Focus – Belgium (Q1, Q3, Q4)
3. Safenet- Bulgaria (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
4. CNZD – Croatia (Q1, Q2, Q4)
5. STOPonline.cz – Czech Republic (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
6. Red Barnet – Denmark (Q1)
7. Vihjeliin – Estonia (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
8. Nettivihje – Finland (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
9. Point de Contact – France (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
10. FSM – Germany (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
11. eco. Germany (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
12. jugendschutz.net - Germany (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
13. Safeline – Greece (Q1, Q3, Q4)
14. Barnaheill – Iceland (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
15. Hotline.ie – Ireland (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
16. Telefono Azzurro – Italy (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
17. Save the Children – Italy (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
18. Drossinternets.lv – Latvia (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
19. svarusinternetas.lt – Lithuania (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
20. BEE SECURE Stopline – Luxembourg (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
21. Be Smart Online - Aġenzija Appoġġ – Malta (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
22. Meldpunt Kinderporno – Netherlands (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
23. Dyżurnet.pl – Poland (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
24. Linha Internet Segura – Portugal (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
25. Esc_Abuz – Romania (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
26. Spletno Oko – Slovenia (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
27. INCIBE – Spain (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
28. Internet Watch Foundation - United Kingdom (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)

SOURCE

Important to note is that all INHOPE member hotlines receive and exchange public reports depicting potential child sexual abuse material online. This is the core of the INHOPE network and their work on this topic is presented in this report. However, some hotlines also receive reports on other topics and remove this material from the digital world. These topics include:

- Child abduction
- Trafficking in children for sexual purposes
- Sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism
- Child erotica / Inappropriate Child related images
- Child nudism
- Child grooming activities
- Sexually explicit adult material
- Extreme or offensive adult content
- Adult pornography
- Adult pornography accessible to children
- Hate speech
- Racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism and other forms of intolerance
- Misogyny
- Cyberbullying
- Sexting
- Sextortion
- Suicide and self-harm
- Pro-ana and pro-mia sites
- Violence / Abhorrent violent material / Promoting violence against an individual
- Promotion, incitement or instruction in crime
- Terrorism
- Praise of war crimes/ crimes against humanity
- Violent extremist material
- Prostitution
- Drugs
- Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Sales to minors
- National Socialism
- Political Extremism
- Unsolicited commercial emails
- Economic Crime and financial scams
- Identity Theft
- Personal Data Violation
- Zoophilia

More information on the work of hotlines is available in the hotlines' annual reports. The reporting pages and websites of each INHOPE member hotline can be found [here](#).

CHAPTER 05

European Data 2021



Deep dive into the data from European Hotlines in 2021.

TOTAL REPORTS

Total Reports

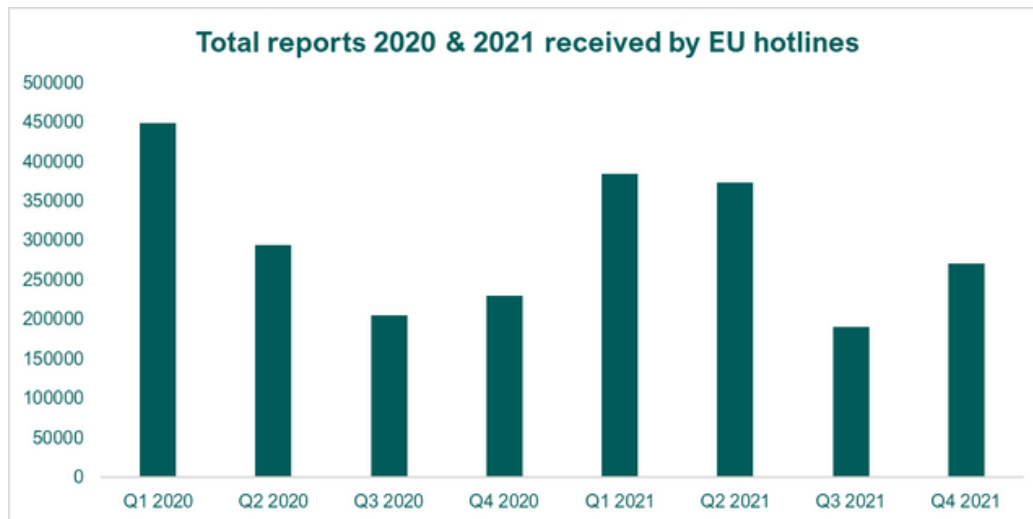


Figure 1. Total number of reports received by European hotlines in 2020 and 2021

European hotlines received a total of 1.218.420 reports in 2021, compared to 1.180.428 in 2020. The reports are on CSAM, as well as:

- Sexualised posing/ Sexualised child modelling/ inappropriate child-related images
- Computer-generated CSAM
- Text-based CSAM
- Child Nudism
- Child Grooming
- Trafficking of children for sexual purposes
- Sexual exploitation of children in the context of travel and tourism
- Adult pornography
- Extreme adult content
- Hate Speech (according to national legislation, hate speech can be related to racism, xenophobia, religion, national origin, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability)
- Online sexual coercion and extortion
- Sexual harassment
- Violence
- Terrorism
- Drugs
- Incitement to suicide
- Financial scams
- Procuring (prostitution)

TOTAL REPORTS

2020 and 2021 saw a substantial increase of reports compared to previous quarters. This may be due to a few factors:

- The realisation of the effects of COVID-19. Worldwide lockdowns started in the middle to end of Q1 2020 which affected the capacity of certain hotlines to process reports by not being able to work from an office where CSAM reports are processed. Most lockdowns started during Q2 2020, and subsequently the main challenge noted by hotlines was how COVID-19 affected their capacity to process reports. Also, COVID-19 could have potentially had an impact on the quantity of CSAM being produced, as well as being reported to hotlines.
- The Dutch hotline has implemented a new open-source platform called SCART (Sexual Child Abuse Reporting Tool) which was designed to improve the hotline workflow regarding handling reports.
- More awareness in the general public of how and what to report.
- Technological development in the realms of detection and recognition of content.



TOTAL REPORTS

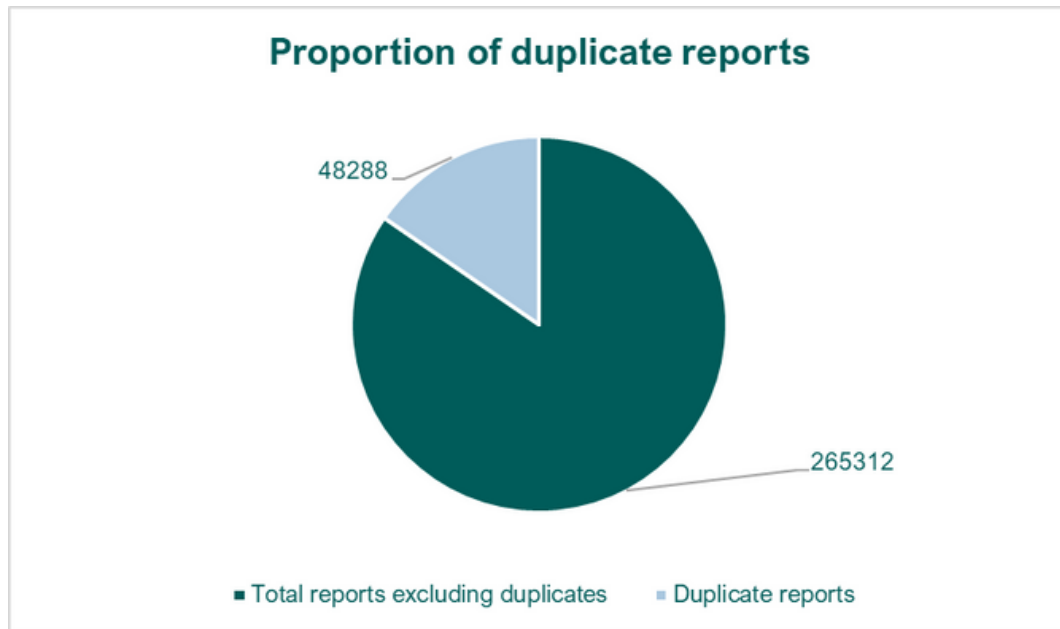


Figure 2. Proportion of total reports that had been reported more than once or previously actioned.

The figure above shows that vast majority of reports received by EC funded hotlines in 2021 were unique reports that had not been previously actioned. It is important to note that each hotline may define duplicates in a different manner, such as:

- URLs with the same content repeated the same month.
- Mass reports (more than 10) referring to files on the previously reported domain which are not found.
- Two reports submitted by the same person (if personal details are given) with the same reported URL.
- Same URL being reported within 72 hours.
- The figure above shows the duplicates as reported by the hotlines according to their own definition of a duplicate.

TOTAL REPORTS

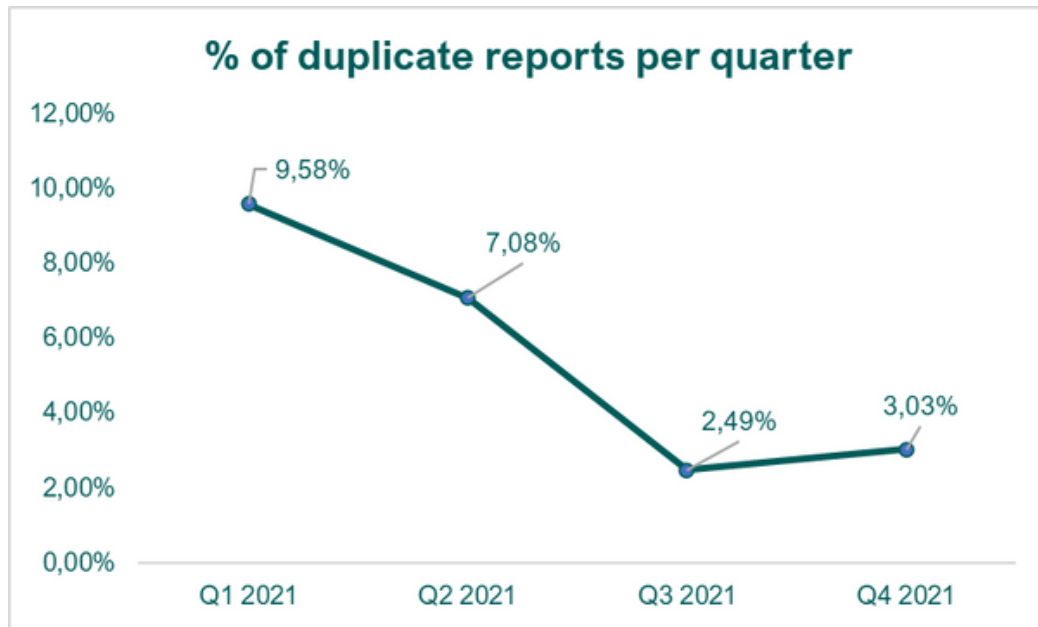


Figure 3. Percentage comparison of total reports that had been reported more than once or previously actioned per quarter

The figure above provides a breakdown by quarter of the proportion of duplicate reports received by European hotlines in 2021. It should be noted that not every hotline records the category 'duplicate' and therefore the number of respondents is smaller than the total number of hotlines who provided data for that quarter. The second half of 2021 saw a decrease in the percentage of duplicate reports compared to the first half.

Type of Content

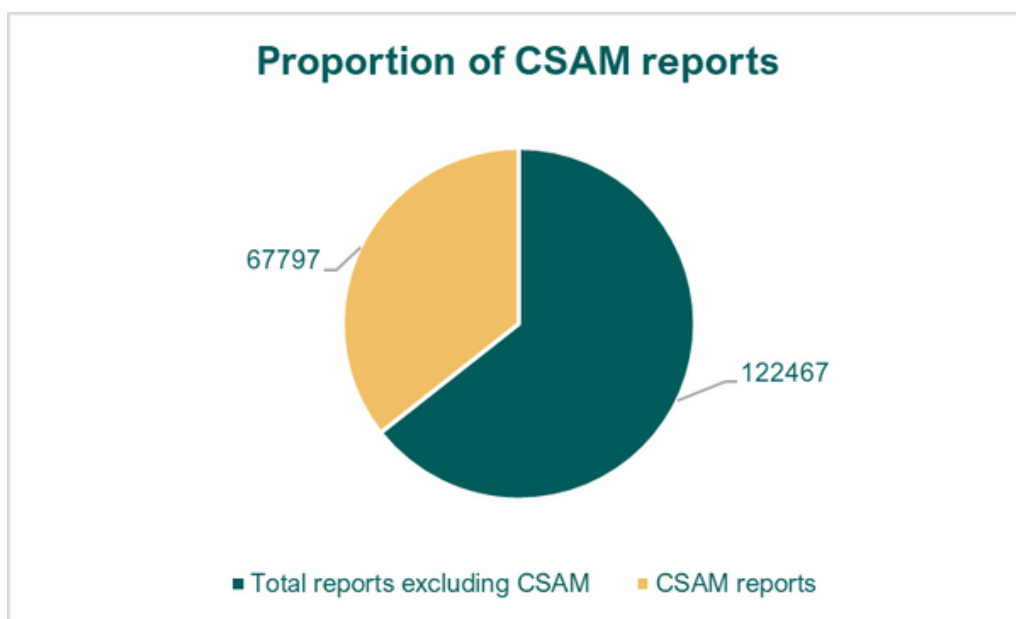


Figure 4. Proportion of CSAM reports reported to European hotlines compared to reports on other topics (see INHOPE Annual Report to see other topics of reports that hotlines process)

The above figure shows the proportion of reports received by EC funded hotlines in 2021 that were indicated to be child sexual abuse material.

TYPE

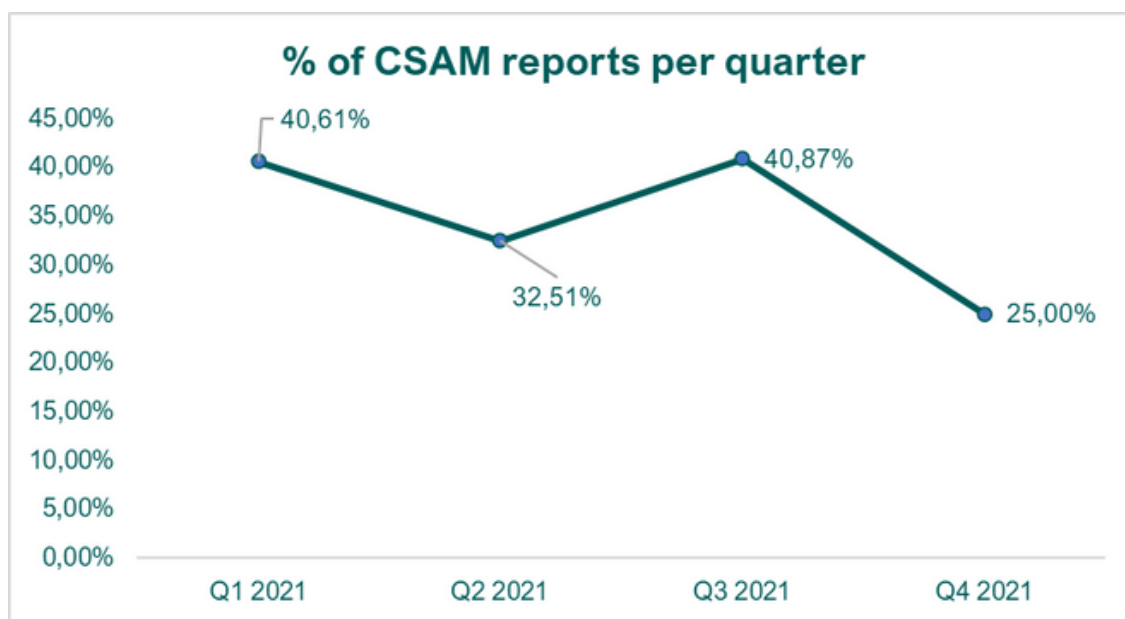


Figure 5. Proportion of CSAM reports reported to European hotlines out of all reports received per quarter.

The figure above provides a breakdown by quarter of the percentage of reports specifically on the topic of CSAM online received by European hotlines in 2021.



Hotline Spotlight

Self-Generated Content

INTERNET WATCH FOUNDATION

INHOPE member hotline Internet Watch Foundation continues to see an exponential increase in what is termed “self-generated” child sexual abuse content. In these cases, children are groomed, deceived or extorted into producing and sharing a sexual image or video of themselves. The images and videos predominantly involve girls aged 11 to 13 years old, in their bedrooms or another room in a home setting.

Of the 252,194 webpages actioned by the IWF during 2021, almost three quarters (182,281) were assessed as containing self-generated imagery. This is a 28% increase on 2020 when 44% of actioned reports 68,000 were assessed as containing self-generated imagery. You can find out more in the 2021 Annual Report of the Internet Watch Foundation [here](#).

LOCATION

Location of Content

The table below provides a breakdown by quarter of location of content reported to European hotlines in 2021.

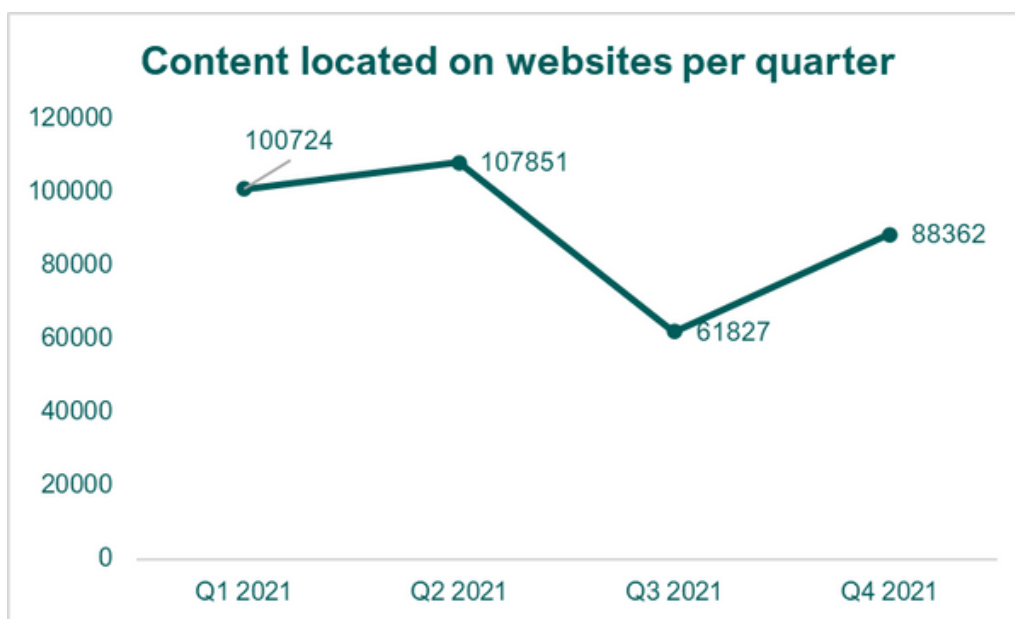


Figure 6. Content located on websites reported to European hotlines received per quarter in 2021.

The vast majority of all processed reports continues to be from websites publicly displayed on the open Internet, as opposed to cloud locations, peer to peer sharing, or private or group chat channels. The above figure provides a breakdown of the number of reports pertaining to websites per quarter in 2021.

LOCATION

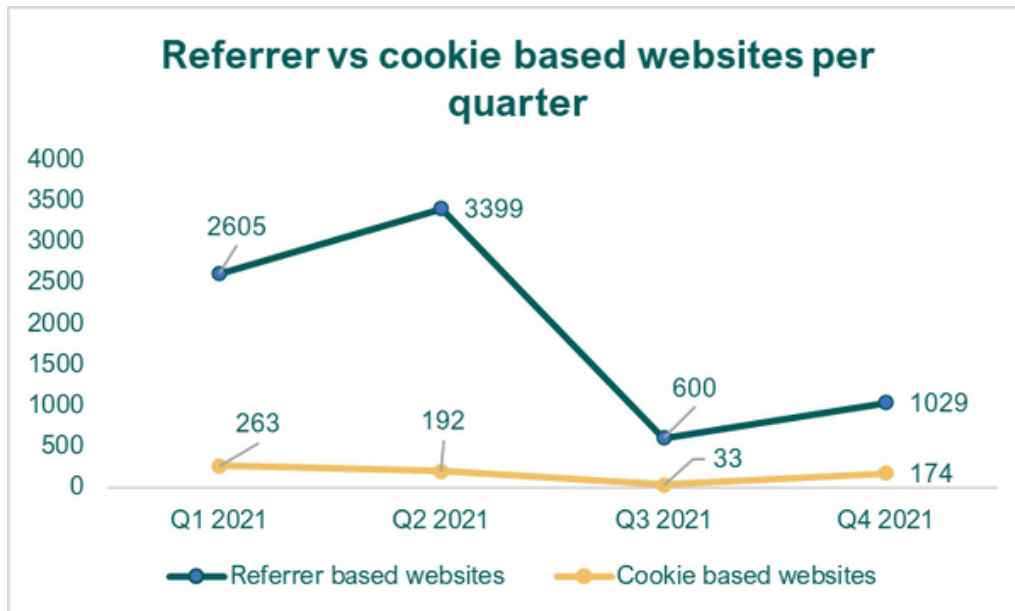


Figure 7. Comparison of referrer and cookie-based websites reported to European hotlines received per quarter in 2021.

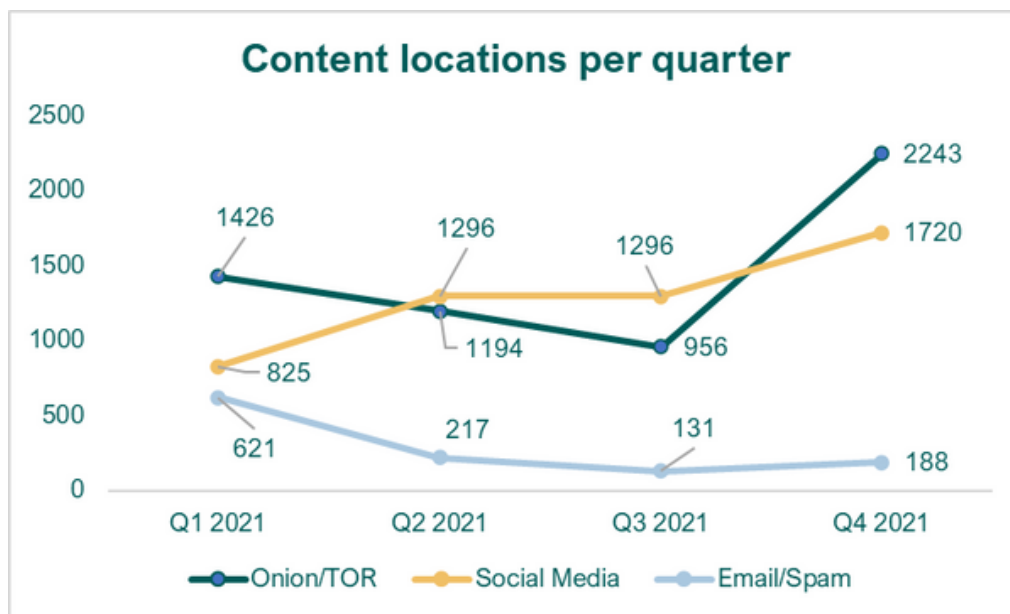


Figure 8. Comparison of report locations Onion/TOR, social media and email/spam to European hotlines received per quarter in 2021.

The above figure breaks down the number of reports of content on onion/TOR, social media, and email/spam. In Q4, the locations of social media and onion/TOR saw an increase while reports of content on email/spam continually decreased during 2021.

Reporting channels

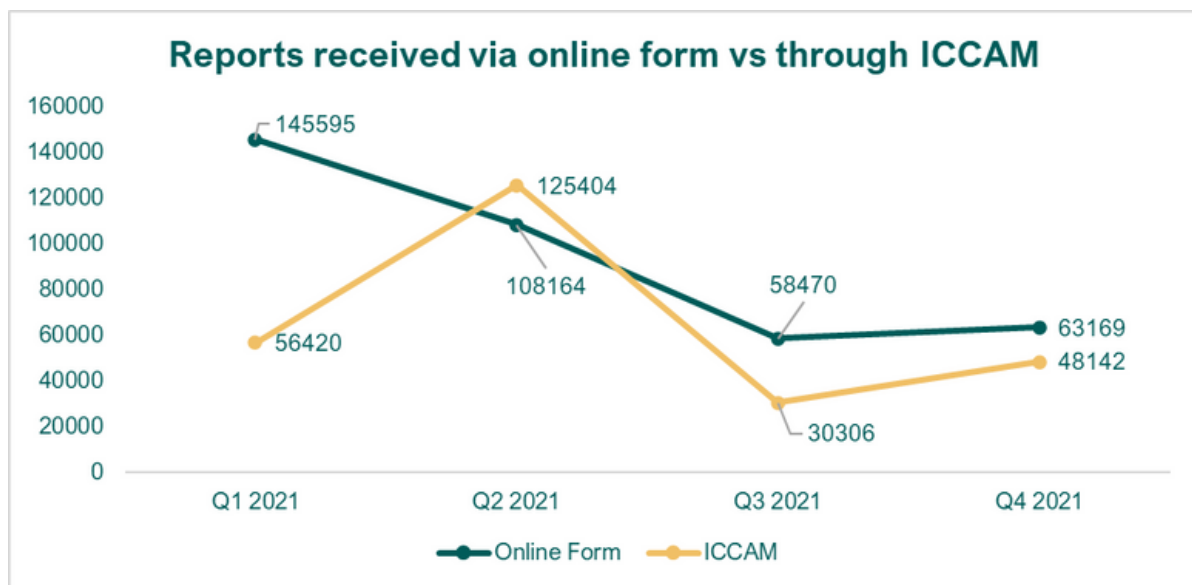


Figure 10. Comparison of reports received via online form and ICCAM by European hotlines per quarter in 2021.

The figure above compares the number of reports received through the two most common reporting channels: a hotline's online reporting form and ICCAM. In all quarters but Q2, a higher level of reports were received through online forms.

Not included in this figure are reports received by other means, such as fax, post, telephone, or SMS, as the number of reports is insignificant and few respondents collect this data. Not all reporting locations per report are accounted for, as some hotlines do not report on this data.



Hotline Spotlight

Spike in Reports

IONION/TOR HOSTING

Stopline, INHOPE's Austrian member hotline, reported a spike in reports of content hosted on Onion/TOR websites in 2021. Stopline noted a considerable increase in Q1, when 1.229 reports of this type were submitted, compared the rest of 2021. On the next page is a graph comparing the report totals per quarter.

In 2021, Stopline received 4.670 reports in total based on content hosted on Onion/TOR networks, and over 4.000 of these reports were actionable. You can find out more in Stopline's Annual Report [here](#).

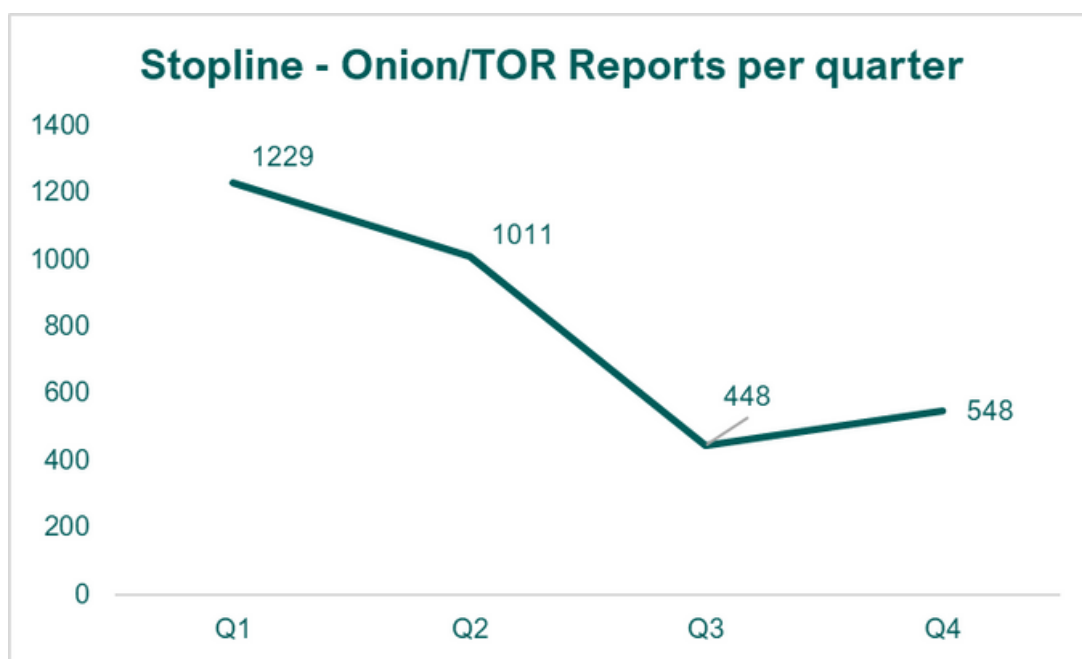
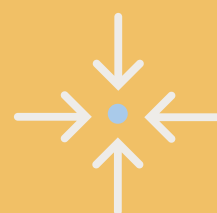


Figure 9. Comparison of Onion/TOR reports to Stopline per quarter in 2021.



CHAPTER 06

Conclusion



A brief summary of what has been achieved during an unusual time.

Conclusion

The unique working conditions of 2020 and 2021 and their effects on hotline workflow cannot be overstated. When examining the reporting data, and particularly the actions taken, it is important to acknowledge this work was done while adhering to regulations imposed due to COVID-19 and most changes noted in the data over time may have their root causes in effects caused by the pandemic.

Nevertheless, the INHOPE network remained resilient and adaptable during this timeframe and all hotlines gave their best efforts to remain operational even in cases of significantly reduced capacity in the face of record-breaking reporting levels. European hotlines in the INHOPE network processed over 1 million reports in 2021. Their tireless work has resulted in the removal of illegal material online which depict sexual abuse of real children. Removing this material from the internet makes a significant impact on our society and shows the importance of working collectively as a worldwide network.

The work done by hotlines provides key intelligence to law enforcement partners which leads to safeguarding of victims, as well as identification of perpetrators. The collaboration of INHOPE member hotlines and their commitment to participate in information exchange and find solutions to at times impossible challenges, has been commendable in 2021.

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