

Three hundred representatives of a wide range of law enforcement and policy agencies and Internet service provider groups attended the conference, **Combating Child Pornography on the Internet**. Gareth Grainger, ABA Deputy Chairman and Andree Wright, Director Policy and Content Regulation Branch represented the ABA. This is Gareth Grainger's report on the conference.

Conference report:

Combating child pornography on the Internet

The conference looked ways of dealing with child pornography on the Internet. Key points raised at the conference included:

Vice Chancellor Schüssell:

Interpol says the Internet has become the primary means of propagating child pornography and this can't be tolerated;

- global consensus seems to be emerging;
- there must be zero tolerance of child pornography;
- production, distribution and possession must be deemed criminal offences;
- there must be a means to enforce worldwide bans;
- the system of hotlines must be further enhanced as a law enforcement tool;
- the computer industry must accept their responsibilities through codes of conduct, blocking and filtering software and parental control facilities.

Vice-President Gore

There is significant European Union/USA dialogue to prevent the use of the Internet for the exploitation of children using child pornography;

- the Internet has become a channel for exploitation of children;
- we must encourage Internet service providers to establish self-regulatory mechanisms.

Mr Maxwell Taylor

University College Cork, Ireland

Child pornography is only one aspect of the broader issue of the abuse of children. There are three aspects to the issue: the nature of child pornography

and how it works; the Internet and how it works; and pornography and the way it connects with children;

- the Internet is the primary means of distribution of all these images. It can confer anonymity of posting and downloading. Encrypted transmissions allow the individual secure access from the privacy of their own home;
- the Internet is only anonymous because it is allowed to be. It has allowed the emergence of a sense of a virtual paedophile community which is an important source of reinforcement, support, and protection, almost self-sustaining;
- the primacy of child protection issues in law enforcement must be emphasised. 'New' material needs to be separated from old material. There needs to be cooperative research and a coordinated approach;
- it is important to get the balance right between freedom, liberty and control.

Eric Holder,

US Deputy Attorney-General

Children are our most precious and fragile resource. Their protection must be an international priority;

- there is a world role for governments to play in the regulation of illegal content on the Internet. Prosecutions have increased 10 per cent per annum in the USA in recent years;
- hotlines have received strong support from some governments—US Congress has given funds to Cybertipline in the USA.

There are four challenges to be faced:

1. we must take the necessary steps to obtain evidence to identify child

pornographers;

2. we must respect the right to privacy and use proper legal processes;
3. we must work together with hotlines and law enforcement agencies;
4. we must work together to educate citizens and consumers about the tools available to them to protect users from harmful material.

Agnès Fournier de Saint-Maur, *INTERPOL*

One million still images were seized in Operation Cathedral in 12 countries;

- new problems need new solutions;
- the Internet is a place where people go to seek victims for sexual abuse;
- a sophisticated world wide 'cottage' industry has sprung up around child pornography;
- it is essential to define standards of what is and what is not illegal.

Nigel Williams

Hotlines and the Internet

Definition: a hotline is an initiative responding to illegal material on the Internet (especially child pornography) which receives reports from users and has formal procedures for responding which may include notifying industry and/or law enforcement.

- the first hotline was established in 1996 in the Netherlands;
- hotlines deal with child pornography; racist or extreme political material; many specialise in newsgroups or the web;
- hotline successes: thousands of reports have been received and thousands of images have been removed; have lead to arrests and prosecutions.