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Home Office
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**VIRTUAL GLOBAL
TASKFORCE**

PROTECTING
CHILDREN ON-LINE

AN EU AND VIRTUAL GLOBAL TASKFORCE CONFERENCE
PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO MAKE THE INTERNET SAFER

"EVERY CHILD MATTERS. EVERYWHERE"
CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

Photograph (from left to right): **The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Cllr Wallace Browne
& The Rt Hon Lord Rooker, Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office**

INTRODUCTION

The EU and Virtual Global Taskforce conference brought together approximately 250 participants from Government, law enforcement, industry and child protection organisations from across the globe.

The Conference achieved its aim to develop simple, practical and deliverable actions to combat on-line child abuse. Outcomes included a raised awareness of the challenges and opportunities involved in tackling on-line abuse at political, law enforcement and industry level; identified methods for sharing good practice across all sectors; and the development of new national and international partnerships and strategies to reduce the sexual exploitation of children in the virtual environment and subsequently in the real world.

From top to bottom:
Conference Audience

Jim Gamble, Deputy Director General, National Crime Squad, and Chairman of the Virtual Global Taskforce

Paul Goggins MP, UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Chairman of the Home Secretary's Taskforce on Child Protection on the Internet

VIRTUAL GLOBAL TASKFORCE

The Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) is an international alliance of law enforcement agencies working together to deter and prevent individuals from committing child abuse on-line. The VGT comprises the National Crime Squad (NCS) for England and Wales, the Australian High Tech Crime Centre (AHTCC), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Interpol.

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The Home Secretary's Taskforce for Child Protection on the Internet was established in March 2001. It aims to make the UK the best and safest place in the world for children to use the Internet, and to help protect children around the globe from abuse fuelled by criminal misuse of new technologies. The Taskforce is chaired by Home Office Minister Paul Goggins and is a partnership between representatives of the Internet industry, child welfare organisations, the Police and Government.

C.EOP centre

The creation of the UK's new **Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)** centre was announced at the conference. Deputy Director General of the National Crime Squad, Jim Gamble, has been appointed to set up and manage the new centre which will bring about a real and dynamic partnership between law enforcement, non-governmental organisations, children's charities, government departments and industry partners with a common aim of protecting children from sexual abuse, on and off-line.

THEMES

Key themes arose in almost every discussion. These were the importance of:

- Developing and mapping multi-stakeholder partnerships.

- Sharing and building on good practice.

- Improving communication, and exchange of information, within and across sectors.

- Meeting regularly to share, listen and challenge.

- Evaluating existing work.

- Using existing systems, practices, and networks.

- Thinking creatively to develop new solutions.

- The role of CEOP and the Virtual Global Taskforce in facilitating international action.

Setting the Context: What is Child Abuse?

The sexual abuse of children is not a new phenomenon but the rapid development of digital technology and the Internet has significantly increased the problem, facilitating the production, sharing and trading of child abuse images. The Internet offers a world where child sex offenders feel secure, anonymous and not alone having a sexual interest in children. Sites are also created by offenders who produce and sell child sex abuse images for financial gain. This material is not just another commodity being exchanged on the Internet - the children depicted are real human beings.

Delegates were invited to consider whether "child sex abuse images" was a better term than "child pornography" given that this more accurately reflects the nature of the sexual activity and the lack of consent involved in producing these images.

WHAT THE WORKSHOPS SAID…

Public Awareness: Making Safety Messages Work
Facilitated by Rachel O'Connell, University of Central Lancashire

This workshop asked what were the most effective public awareness messages and how could networks for future sharing be established. Presentations were given by INSAFE (Europe's Internet safety information resource), the SAFT Programme (Safety, Awareness, Facts and Tools - a cross-European project to promote safe use of the Internet among children and young people), Childnet International and Microsoft.

- Importance of positive safety messages, promoting "cyber-wellness", engaging actively with children and young people.

- Need to map the usage of children and young peoples' use of technology.

- Establish an effective knowledge management database system with effective evaluation programmes. **ACTION:** CEOP to establish this database by April 2006.

- A framework to enable the involvement of all stakeholders including the media should be considered.

From left to right:

Pamela Passman, Vice President for Corporate Affairs, Microsoft Corporation, USA

Peter Robbins, Chief Executive, Internet Watch Foundation

Controlling Internet Content: Limiting Access to Child Abuse Images
Facilitated by Peter Robbins, Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

This workshop focused on strengthening responses to controlling access to child abuse images. Presentations were given by INHOPE (Association of Internet Hotline Providers), AOL, BT (British Telecom), the IWF and Ask Jeeves.

- Encourage the creation of a European Taskforce to look at the benefits of a European self-regulatory approach with members drawn from amongst others, European ISPs (Internet Service Providers), mobile network operators and search engines whilst respecting the cultural and social differences that exist in EU Member States.

- Technological innovations should be shared with key stakeholders at an early stage to avoid new developments being exploited by criminals involved in child abuse content and in an attempt to keep solutions one step ahead of problems.

- Development of an educational and awareness programme for all Internet-users in the UK with the possibility of seed-corn funding from Ofcom (UK independent regulator and competition authority) but funded by ISPs, and in collaboration with CEOP.

- A multi-stakeholder partnership approach between hotlines is needed where models of good practice are exchanged. On this theme, the IWF volunteered to receive copies of all the INHOPE reports (approximately 350,000 per annum) to determine the scale of the problem of child abuse websites, subject to a funding stream being identified to carry out such work.

Image Identification: Finding Real Victims
Facilitated by Terry Jones, IPTAC (Training - Awareness - Consultancy)

The aim was to encourage industry, law enforcement and others to work together to fill gaps in the process of identifying victims of on-line child abuse and their abusers. Presentations were given by Interpol, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the US Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and Greater Manchester Police and companies LTU Technologies and Visiphor Corporation.

- Identification of the victims of on-line child abuse needs to be a political and policing priority.

- NCMEC have produced some guidelines for investigators in relation to certain aspects of victim identification enquiries. This work should inspire a manual of good practice. **ACTION:** NCMEC to begin collation of contributions on good practice in collaboration with VGT and CEOP. Manual to be finalised by June 2006.

- In order to effectively identify victims, structures need to be developed which enable child abuse images seized locally to be fed into national/international databases.

- Creative thinking by law enforcement and those at the cutting edge of technology needs to be facilitated. Discussions will take place regarding reconvening the workshop with selected/interested parties. **ACTION:** NCS to agree a date for future discussions in a real or virtual setting to take place by April 2006.

Pay-per-View Sites:
Working with Payment Providers to Reduce Harm
Facilitated by Tony Thomas, NCS

This workshop aimed to promote more effective joint working between law enforcement and financial institutions to better disrupt, displace and permanently dismantle financial mechanisms supporting pay for view websites. Presentations were given by National High Tech Crime Unit (NHTCU, NCS), Visa, MasterCard, the French Gendarmerie Nationale and the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC).

- Improved coordination and intelligence sharing between international law enforcement is needed. This might be for Interpol to facilitate.

- Utilise existing anti-money laundering facilities and keep abreast of new and emerging payment mechanisms. **ACTION**: NCS to develop links between the Financial Action Taskforce and the VGT by 1 April 2006.

- Build on ICMEC model to establish an independent data clearing house in collaboration with banks and financial institutions in order to remove obstacles to sharing information. **ACTION:** CEOP and ICMEC to discuss developing further.

- **ACTION:** MasterCard to conduct an initial research project, by 1 April 2006, on possibilities for identifying spending patterns in order to find a rules based solution (similar to those used by banks to identify fraudulent activity) in order to find other offenders / merchants.

- **ACTION:** Australian High Tech Crime Centre to coordinate development of a manual to inform investigators of the financial and other mechanisms used to move criminal money. Each VGT partner, and others where possible, will contribute in relation to their own jurisdiction. For discussion at the next VGT Board meeting in March 2006.

From left to right:

John P Clark, Acting Assistant Secretary, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, DHS

Robert Alandt, Vice President of Global Acceptance Compliance, Visa International

From left to right:

Torben V Rudgaard, LYCOS Europe

Darren Kane, Group Regulatory Manager and Agency Liaison, Telstra BigPond, and Kevin Zuccato, Director, Australian High Tech Crime Centre

Private and Public Interactive Services: Safeguarding Children throughout the On-line Environment
Facilitated by Annie Mullins, Vodafone

This workshop aimed to increase awareness within industry, to agree strategies to better inform and educate users and to make it easier for the public to report problems and get helpful advice from industry and law enforcement. Presentations were given by Telstra BigPond, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Coalition for Internet Safety, AOL and Lycos.

- Kids will chat, tools are needed to protect them and to create a safer environment. Quick wins such as banners in chat rooms can work as "speed bumps" in this virtual highway. UK grooming law is a good example of how to get actionable intelligence. Good practice is the way forward. Restricting what ISPs can and cannot do will not work.

- Don't close down the safer options - this will drive them to unmoderated areas such as Internet Relay Chat (IRC). Moderators have a valuable role to play. Parents have an important role too.

- Need for VGT to collate and share law enforcement good practice on working in this environment.

Partnership Approaches:
Joint Working Across Sectors and National Boundaries
Facilitated by David Middleton,
UK National Offender Management Service

This workshop demonstrated the benefits of partnership approaches across sectors and national borders. It aimed to reinforce VGT themes and revitalise the EU Safer Internet Action Plan forum. Presentations were given by the EU Safer Internet Action Plan, the VGT, the UK Home Secretary's Taskforce on Child Protection on the Internet and Poland's Nobody's Children Foundation.

- Importance of private sector involvement.

- **ACTION:** Home Office to issue a questionnaire asking for details about existing cross-border and cross-sectoral partnerships.

- VGT Board will consider hosting a web page on the VGT site to share details and web links about these partnerships. Information to be made available on the web by July 2006.

Role of Child Protection NGOs: International Cooperation and Good Practice
Facilitated by Chris Atkinson, NCS/NSPCC

Presentations were given from NGOs across the world, which celebrated the diverse nature of their work and the strong partnerships with local law enforcement. Presentations included the Children Charities Coalition on Internet Safety in the UK (CHIS) and the 'Make It Safe' ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) International campaign, Netsafe in New Zealand, Save the Children Denmark and a powerful presentation from Cambodian NGO - AFESIP (Agir pour les Femmes en Situation Précaire) on child exploitation and the plight of street children in Cambodia.

- Evaluation of VGT referrals needed. A key theme would be to develop a child focus to support services such as a tracking system to follow individual cases and establish the support services available to the victim. 'Aftercare' support services for suspects should also be available. **ACTION:** for consideration at the VGT Board in March 2006.

- A capacity and capability statement from each VGT member and industry partner, including NGOs to cover common aims, principles and core values. **ACTION:** for consideration at the VGT Board in March 2006.

- Training for professionals e.g. on victim identification is a priority. **ACTION:** VGT to coordinate and disseminate good practice training models.

- Existing networks i.e. G8/EU/UN need to be used effectively. Austrian Presidency should pursue work on victim identification. **ACTION:** UK Home Office to raise draw attention of conference outcomes to all EU and G8 Member States and encourage future Presidencies to take this work forward.

From left to right:
Claire Balfour, Netsafe
Horst Forster, Director, European Commission, Information Society and Media Directorate General

Reporting Abuse: A Joined Up Response
Facilitated by Karen Ogborn, UK Crimestoppers

The workshop identified types of crimes committed against young people on-line and the information needed for a thorough investigation. Barriers to giving information and how to encourage more reporting were explored. Current methods of reporting and potential best practice models to improve communication were discussed. Presentations were given by the NCS, NCMEC, Chat Moderators, the IWF and INHOPE.

- A list of what information law enforcement needs in order to most effectively action a report of child abuse on-line should be readily available on-line. **ACTION:** National Crime Squad to make existing information on the VGT website clearer and more user-friendly.

- A working party should be established to look at developing quicker processes for exchanging information on reports of abuse. Possible role for CEOP in being a central point for in-coming and out-going information. Consultation with local forces is also needed.

- Technology should be utilized to capture information in on-line exchanges so that screen grabs are not needed. Law enforcement should liaise with industry to develop such systems.

- A checklist is needed for use in different national jurisdictions to establish good practice in handling each individual report. An audit of practices should be carried out.

COLLATING GOOD PRACTICE AND EXISTING RESOURCES

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the conference was a desire for increased access to existing good practice in all areas relating to combating child abuse on-line.

The Virtual Global Taskforce and the UK Home Office have agreed to collate examples of **YOUR GOOD PRACTICE, EXISTING POLICIES, LEGISLATION, AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES**. This information will be made available on-line and will be accessible to you all.

If you would like your work to be included please send details - web-links would be the most useful format - to: **virtualglobaltaskforce@ncs.police.uk** This information will be available on-line by May 2006.

Examples of UK and international good practice concerning Internet safety can be found through:

The Virtual Global Taskforce: **www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com**

UK Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet: **http://police.homeoffice.gov. uk/operational-policing/crime-disorder/child-protection-taskforce**

Thinkuknow campaign: **http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/**

The Get Safe Online site: **http://www.getsafeonline.org**

Claire Balfour, Netsafe

THE WAY FORWARD

Within the next 12 months the partnerships established and commitments made at the Conference should lead to:

- A UK knowledge management database system with evaluation programmes.

- A European Taskforce looking at the benefits of a European self-regulatory approach.

- An educational and awareness programme for all Internet-users in the UK.

- A manual of good practice for investigators across the globe in relation to victim identification.

- Research on possibilities for identifying spending patterns to find a rules based solution (similar to those used by banks to identify fraudulent activity) in order to find other sex offenders / merchants of child sex abuse images.

- A manual to inform investigators across the globe about the mechanisms used to move criminal money.

- More banners in chat rooms to work as "speed bumps" to reduce crime in the virtual environment.

- Information on existing cross-border and cross-sectoral partnerships to be made available on the VGT website.

- Coordination and dissemination of training models for professionals involved in tackling on-line child abuse.

- Information about what law enforcement needs to most effectively action a report of child abuse on-line to be clearly available on the VGT website.

CONCLUSIONS

Thank you to all delegates for giving their time, energy and enthusiasm to make this conference such a success. The most difficult part comes next - maintaining this commitment so that actions proposed are followed through and partnerships developed and cemented.

The UK is committed to taking forward the results of this workshop in collaboration with international partners in all sectors. Over the next 12 months the work of the Virtual Global Taskforce and the new Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Centre will be very much influenced by the key recommendations of this conference, as should work in the EU and G8. This conference has already made a difference. Let's continue working together to make more of a difference. For every child. Everywhere.

Paul Goggins MP   **Jim Gamble**

For information on the work of the Home Secretary's Taskforce for Child Protection on the Internet, visit: **http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/operational-policing/crime-disorder/child-protection-taskforce** or email: **jon.williams37@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk**

For updates on the work of the Virtual Global Taskforce, visit: **www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com** or email: **virtualglobaltaskforce@ncs.police.uk**