



Model in image and graphics are illustrative.

**cybertip!ca**®

**20 YEARS OF SERVING CANADIANS**

## SINCE THE START

The Government of Canada's steadfast support of *Cybertip.ca* under the *National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet* is essential to the success of this national service.



**Government  
of Canada**

**Gouvernement  
du Canada**

The evolution of child protection has also depended on forward-thinking organizations collaborating to solve some of the country's most challenging problems. We are extremely thankful for our founding funders, who had the foresight to invest in a tipline for reporting the online sexual abuse of children so many years ago:

**Bell**

**BellMTS**

 **TELUS®** Wise

 **ROGERS™**

This report was published in September 2022 by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. Unless otherwise indicated, statistics and figures referenced in this document were compiled by the Canadian Centre, in part based on records it maintains and represent the time period between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022, with other numbers being related to the time stated when the number is used. Reasonable best efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the records.

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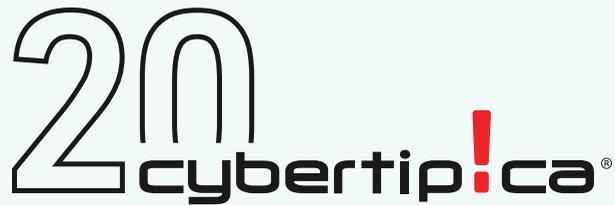
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## 20 YEARS OF SERVING CANADIANS:

### *A Message from the Executive Director*

For 20 years, our organization has been in the trenches, fighting for children and childhood. Our evolution into the online world began with us supporting families of missing children then starting to see children disappear as a result of an online encounter. In the early 2000s, there were only a handful of hotlines around the world addressing child sexual exploitation on the internet, and as we learned more about the violence that lurked on the internet, we quickly recognized that Canada needed its own place to report the online sexual abuse of children. As the “little engine that could” charity in the middle of Canada committed to the safety and protection of children, we decided to pursue the creation of Canada’s national tipline.

Cybertip.ca’s first report came in on September 26, 2002, at roughly 11 a.m. Setting up a public tipline to report the online exploitation of children while the internet was still a fledgling entity came with a lot of unknowns. We were unsure if we would get a single report. We could never have predicted the harms the internet would bring to children and youth over the next two decades, nor Canadians reliance on the national tipline that today receives thousands of reports each month.

Over the 20 years of operating Cybertip.ca, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) has witnessed the evolution of technology and how it has been weaponized against children. Without regulation and the safeguards afforded in the offline world, the internet has adversely flourished into an unrestricted space where children and adults intermix. Offenders have unfettered access to children and youth, as well as other like-minded individuals who validate, educate, and facilitate further harm. The internet is simply the wild, wild west.

Cybertip.ca has played a critical role under the Government of Canada’s *National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet* by being on the frontlines of the fight against the ever-present and ever-evolving threats impacting children and childhood. From advocating for and witnessing legislative change; developing innovative technology; offering unparalleled information and research; and adopting critical support systems for survivors and their families, this report outlines how C3P has evolved into a world-leading organization through the operation of Cybertip.ca, and in recent years, Project Arachnid.

Established in 2017, Project Arachnid is our victim-centered tool for disrupting the online distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and harmful-abusive content. This global tool has led to the **removal of more than seven million images of CSAM<sup>1</sup>** situated in more than 100 countries, helping to break the cycle of victimization for survivors. These efforts have been made possible in part by the **12 international hotlines and child-protection organizations working alongside C3P** within Project Arachnid.

Six years ago we launched the first-ever survey for survivors of CSAM—a population that had been seen endlessly online but rarely heard. We knew after reading the responses from the 150 brave survivors who completed the survey

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<sup>1</sup> As of August 16, 2022

the world needed to hear their voices. In 2018, we brought together the first CSAM survivor advocacy group—the Phoenix 11. Watching their impact on the world’s understanding of this crime and how they have helped galvanize international governments has been inspiring in a space filled with so much darkness. They, and the countless other survivors and victims that we work with, are why we battle for children every day.

The unique insights we have gained over the years has provided us with a lens into the availability and distribution of CSAM online, and tech’s failure to prioritize the protection of children and survivors from the start. We use this imperative data from Cybertip.ca and Project Arachnid to expose the flagrant harm to children and hold tech accountable for their role in this crisis. Within three days of releasing our 2021 *Project Arachnid: Online Availability of CSAM* report, where we identified French telecommunications company Free for hosting Project Arachnid’s largest source of detected CSAM, **the company deleted thousands of files containing millions of suspected images of child sexual abuse** from their servers (for a full case study, see page 19).

Through our understanding of the systemic failures and barriers to removing CSAM, we provide policymakers the necessary data and information to develop effective regulatory frameworks to combat CSAM and harmful-abusive content online. The Government of Canada and other international leaders, including those in the U.K., Australia, and EU, have raised recommendations stemming from the operation of Cybertip.ca and Project Arachnid in regulatory discussions. This knowledge and data help move the needle for children all over the world.

The pandemic has globally accelerated harm to children. Through our work with survivors, youth, and families, we are seeing unprecedented levels of aggression, violence, and degradation towards children online. **In 2021 alone, the hybrid team of support services and Cybertip.ca analysts directly assisted over 3,000 children and their families—ranging from help with image removal, to connecting with therapeutic services, to building safety plans for caregivers.** Without any form of regulatory intervention, this number will rapidly grow.

It has been an honour to serve and support Canadians, and we are extremely grateful to the Government of Canada for placing their confidence and trust in us to do so. Yet, there is much work to be done to protect children.

As we write this report, the world is facing a public safety crisis; Canadian teens are being aggressively sextorted online and some are dying because of it. With sexual crimes against Canadian children trending upwards at an alarming rate, it is time for the government to act and regulate technology companies. Over the past 20 years, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to reducing online child victimization, supporting survivors, and pushing for accountability and transparency in the online space. We may not have known 20 years ago this is where we would be, but we have a clear vision of what needs to happen next to change the world for children.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lianna McDonald".

Lianna McDonald  
Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection

# OUR JOURNEY: A HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Cybertip.ca has played an integral role in reducing online child sexual exploitation and abuse across Canada, and internationally with Project Arachnid. Major milestones over the past two decades include:

- 2002:** Cybertip.ca was **officially launched** in response to the growing problem of child sexual exploitation online .  
*Bill C-15A* received Royal Assent and the ***Criminal Code of Canada*** was amended to include **the offence of luring a child through the internet for a sexual purpose**. Cybertip.ca was instrumental in the passing of this law, having advocated for the change for over two years.
- 2004:** Following a successful pilot phase, **Cybertip.ca was adopted under the Government of Canada's National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet**. The Canadian Coalition Against Internet Child Exploitation (CCAICE) was formed. Chaired by Cybertip.ca, CCAICE is a voluntary multi-sector group of industry, government, non-governmental, and law enforcement stakeholders from across the country working to address the problem of online child sexual exploitation.
- 2005:** Cybertip.ca was **officially announced as Canada's national tipline** alongside the Deputy Prime Minister and attorneys general from across Canada
- 2006:** **Cleanfeed Canada was launched**. This initiative involved Cybertip.ca providing a URL list to participating ISPs who voluntarily block access to CSAM hosted outside Canada.
- 2008:** The *Tackling Violent Crime Act* **raised the legal age of sexual consent** in Canada from 14 to 16, the first time it has been raised since 1892. Cybertip.ca was instrumental in this much- needed change to better protect children.
- 2009:** Cybertip.ca was named as the **designated reporting entity under Manitoba's mandatory reporting of child pornography** within the *Child and Family Services Act*.  
In partnership with Bell, Cybertip.ca released its **first major study** entitled *Child Sexual Abuse Images: An Analysis of Websites by Cybertip.ca*.
- 2011:** Cybertip.ca was designated as the reporting entity under section 2 of the *Bill C 22, An Act Respecting the Mandatory Reporting of Internet Child Pornography by Persons who Provide an Internet Service*.
- 2014:** C3P shared its ***Digital Agenda to Protect Canada's Youngest and Most Vulnerable Victims*** with then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, which outlined ways to reduce the availability of CSAM, identify more victims, and enhance resources and training to stop offenders and support survivors.

**2016:** Cybertip.ca was **named the designated reporting entity** for receiving and responding to requests from Manitobans negatively impacted by the non-consensual distribution of an intimate image. Cybertip.ca released the study *Child Sexual Abuse Images on the Internet: A Cybertip.ca Analysis*, an overview of the information received through reports to the tipline from 2008 to 2015, with a particular focus on child sexual abuse images. Shortly after, C3P launched the *International Survivors' Survey* to learn more from survivors of this heinous crime.

The first Victim Impact Statement was submitted by C3P in Manitoba.

**2017:** C3P **launched Project Arachnid** – an innovative, global tool that helps detect known CSAM and reduce its online availability by issuing notices to service providers for removal.

C3P released the **results of the first-of-its-kind International Survivors' Survey**. Since its release, 200+ additional survivors have completed the survey.

The first Community Impact Statement was submitted by C3P in Manitoba.

**2018:** C3P, with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, brought together a group of CSAM survivors, known as **the Phoenix 11**, for the first time. Their insights profoundly changed the way C3P addressed survivor support and advocacy.

**2019:** Project Arachnid was bolstered by the **addition of Shield by Project Arachnid**, a proactive tool industry can use to quickly detect known CSAM on their service, which will, in turn, speed up its removal.

C3P **released the framework** *How We Are Failing Children: Changing the Paradigm*, an urgent call to action for governments, industry, and hotlines around the world that is grounded in the best interests of the child, and their right to dignity, privacy, and protection from harm.

**2020:** C3P released a report that examined the availability of CSAM-specific reporting mechanisms on 15 major platforms, along with presenting five recommendations for companies that allow user-generated content on their service.

**2021:** C3P released the *Project Arachnid: Online availability of child sexual abuse material report*, which provided unprecedented insight into the availability of CSAM and the role vast networks of lesser known internet companies play in facilitating the spread.

C3P **launched a survey for protective caregivers of CSAM survivors** to better understand the impact on families as a whole. To date, 25 family members have completed the survey.

**2022:** C3P's Executive Director Lianna McDonald was **appointed as a member of an expert advisory group** tasked with providing the Minister of Canadian Heritage advice on how to design a legislative and regulatory framework to address harmful content online.

C3P released a child safety analysis of the two largest mobile app stores—Apple's App Store and Google Play—which looked at how, and if, Apple and Google are enforcing app age ratings on their mobile app. The resulting research led to many findings that raised significant concerns for the protection of children/youth online, and for families who use age ratings to gauge safety.

# CYBERTIP.CA: EVOLVING TO HELP CANADIANS

For the past 20 years, Cybertip.ca has been Canada's tipline for reporting the online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. The tipline launched September 26, 2002, as a pilot project in Manitoba. In May 2004, Cybertip.ca was adopted under the Government of Canada's *National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet*.

## Cybertip.ca's Role in Protecting Children

### Triage reports:

When Cybertip.ca started 20 years ago, there were four main reporting categories. As online harm to children evolved and the *Criminal Code of Canada* was updated to reflect this changing reality, Cybertip.ca began taking on more reporting categories, expanding its services to the Canadian public.

### REPORTING CATEGORY EXPANSION

#### 2002:

-  Child Pornography<sup>2\*</sup>
-  Luring
-  Child Prostitution\*
-  Child Sex Tourism\*

#### 2008:

-  Child Trafficking

#### 2013:

-  Making Sexually Explicit Material Available to a Child
-  Agreement or Arrangement with another Person to Commit a Sexual Offence Against a Child

#### 2015:

-  Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images (NCDII) of an individual under 18 years of age

# 20

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**377,000+** reports processed from the public



**11,181,000+** reports processed related to Project Arachnid



**104,000+** reports forwarded to a Canadian law enforcement agency



**3,945,000+** total reports forwarded to international hotline



**22,210,000+** reports where a notification was sent to electronic service providers<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The terms with asterisks have now been updated to reflect the growing awareness of the importance of language in framing these offences. "Child prostitution" is now "exploitation through prostitution of a child under 18," "child sex tourism" is "travel to sexually exploit a child," and "child pornography" is "child sexual abuse material."

<sup>3</sup> All statistics as of August 1, 2022.

## Public Education and Awareness

Information gleaned from Cybertip.ca gives C3P the ability to create education and prevention material that empowers Canadians—children, youth, families, teachers, child-serving organizations, law enforcement—with the tools and knowledge to help keep kids safe online. This includes critical national programming and prevention resources such as:

- **Kids in the Know:** Kids in the Know (KIK) is an interactive, safety education program that uses age-appropriate lessons to increase children’s personal safety skills in order to reduce their risk of victimization online and offline.
- **Commit to Kids:** Commit to Kids (C2K) provides policies, strategies, and a step-by-step plan to help reduce the risk of sexual abuse happening within child-serving organizations. In 2016, C3P created online training to help those who work with children better understand the issue of child sexual abuse, how it happens, the impact, and how identifying risks can help safeguard the children in their care.



## EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS



**18 million** pieces of resources printed and distributed across Canada



Schools in **every single** province and territory across Canada uses KIK.



**745,000+** accounts created for professionals to receive child sexual abuse prevention training



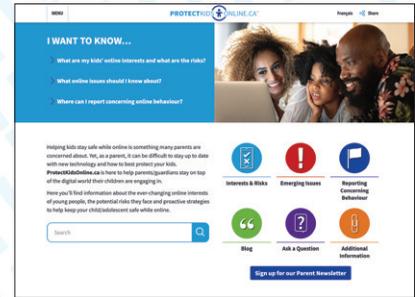
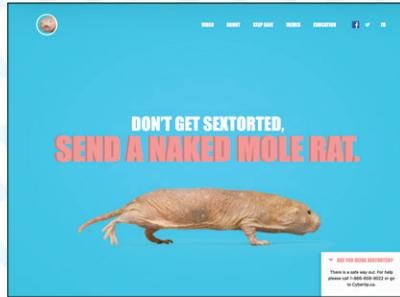
2019: RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki looking through Cybertip.ca education resources.



2010: [left to right] C3P Executive Director Lianna McDonald, then-Minister of family Services and Housing, the Honourable Gord Mackintosh, and then-Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Vic Toews at the Commit to Kids program launch.



2016: [left to right] City of Winnipeg Councillor Jeff Browaty, C3P Associate Executive Director Signy Arnason, Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman, C3P Executive Director Lianna McDonald, and C3P Director of Education Noni Classen at the launch of a program to enhance the safety of children at City-run facilities.



Models in images and intended as illustrative.

### Sites for Families and Youth

**NeedHelpNow.ca:** With the increase in sextortion and aggressive tactics being used by offenders, this website has become a valuable source of information and support for youth who are dealing with an intimate image/video being shared online.

**“Thank you for being here to help at this low point in my life.” – YOUTH WHO REACHED OUT THROUGH NEEDHELPNOW.CA**

**DontGetSextorted.ca:** More than half a million naked mole rat memes and gifs from been downloaded from this website that uses humour to cut through the clutter and reach youth with information about sextortion and how they can stay safe.

**“So two days ago in school we had this presentation for being safe online. It was the usual sh\*t we had every year, really predictable. But for the final video this [naked mole rat] video comes outta left field and surprises us all and made us laugh. I really love this one and hope more like this gets made.” – STUDENT COMMENT**

**ProtectKidsOnline.ca:** A one-stop website for families to learn more about the current online interests and risk of children of all ages. Blogs are regularly posted to cover current trends and topics, while offering ideas on how caregivers can have online safety conversations.

**“Thank you for this website. It’s hard for parents to keep up with everything that is happening online.” – PARENT COMMENT**

**CYBERTIP.CA ALERTS:**  
Cybertip.ca Alerts are notifications sent out to inform the public of concerning technology trends seen through the tipline and offers ways for families to stay safe and get help if need be. Since 2013, Cybertip.ca has released 20 alerts discussing risks with specific apps, emerging offender tactics, and what families need to talk about.



Model in image and intended as illustrative.

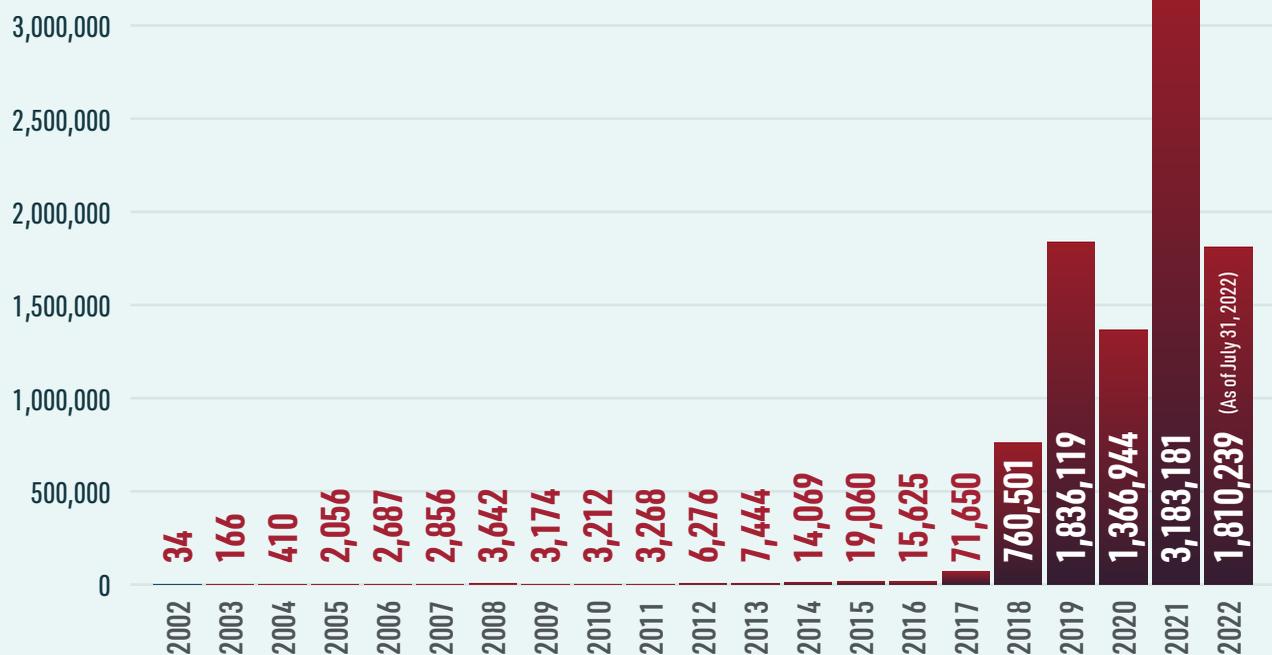
## Leveraging Technology: Shifting to Reduce the Online Availability of CSAM

When Cybertip.ca launched 20 years ago, it relied on the public to report the CSAM they found online. As the internet grew with zero checks and balances, child sexual abuse and exploitation elevated to epidemic levels. It was painfully clear the model for reporting and addressing CSAM was no longer adequate, particularly since it was not reinforced by any legislation to hold platforms and services accountable for its availability.

In 2017, we made a monumental change in how we approached the detection of CSAM and harmful-abuse material of children by creating Project Arachnid—an innovative tool to combat the growing proliferation of CSAM on the internet. This victim-centered tool crawls the open web in search of images of CSAM, and, when detected, issues a removal request to the hosting provider. This process is triggered thousands of times per day.

The introduction of Project Arachnid meant that Cybertip.ca no longer had to strictly rely on the public reporting CSAM, and bolstered the capacity to disrupt CSAM distribution at a speed exponentially faster than existing methods. This accounts for the sharp and significant increase in reports starting in 2017 in the graph below.

### NUMBER OF CSAM REPORTS PROCESSED BY CYBERTIP.CA AND PROJECT ARACHNID



*“The use of tools such as Project Arachnid to assist in proactively detecting this content and complying with take down notices for the sake of a child should be our nature. I could never adequately express the hope these initiatives give me, and I know we are a long way away from solving the problem completely but imagine the strength in knowing one day the suffering can come to an end.” - SURVIVOR OF CSAM*

## Taking the Call: Cybertip.ca Analysts



*"I can't express the depth of my gratitude. You are all amazing. Thank you to you and your team. You have helped my daughter to feel like she has some power and choices in her life again. I will be forever grateful"*

– MOTHER OF AN EXPLOITED YOUTH

What started as a team of five and the vision of a safer world for children has grown to 80 people, including **20 analysts**, now delivering programs, services, and support to Canadian children and families. As the complexity of calls and cases has increased, the job of analysts have shifted from triage to frontline support, often being the **first and only point of contact for a child or family in crisis**. The critical role Cybertip.ca analysts play in giving families hope cannot be understated.

*"I've worked with Cybertip.ca for 10 years. One case that has stuck with me from my early days was a report about a YouTube link. It was a young girl, about seven years old, playing with her Barbies. Harmless right? Nothing stood out to me in the video to suggest that something potentially illegal was occurring or that the child was at risk. Until I read the comments. Were the girl's parents aware of the comments? How these adult males were discussing how when she bent over towards the camera, that you could see down her shirt? The comments went on, and were disgusting. An otherwise harmless video, within a matter of minutes, completely sexualizing this child. I could see the commenters were following a list of young girls, around the same age as the one I had just seen. In that moment I felt completely powerless. You want to help, but how? How can I protect all of these kids when I don't know who they are? I think back to this report often, how much the analyst position has changed from 10 years ago."*

– Cybertip.ca analyst





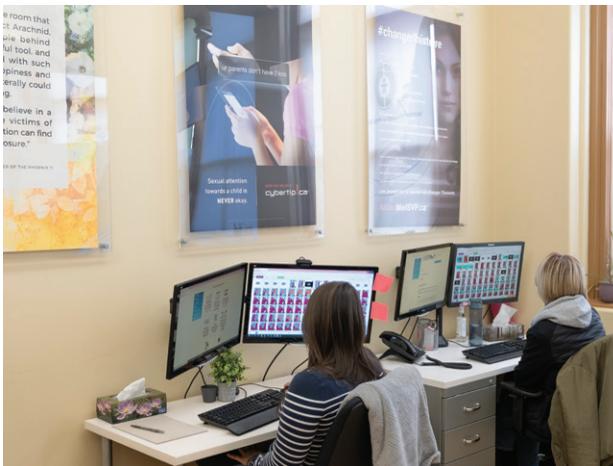
2022: The Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Public Safety, visited C3P to learn about the centre's work and the increasing risks facing children and families in Canada.



March 2009: Cybertip.ca System Specialist Stephen Sauer [right], and then-CWTA president Bernard Lord [left] discuss daily operations of the tipline.

*"I often get asked how I do the work I do every day and how it might impact my life; especially now having kids of my own. I find comfort in knowing that we are no longer sending website reports in the abyss. We are providing hope to victims/survivors and their families that their content will be removed, and that we are there to help without judgment. I find strength in working for an organization that is pushing the envelope and in being part of a team who genuinely cares about making this world a better place for kids, including my own."*

– Cybertip.ca analyst



*"When I first started working for Cybertip.ca as an analyst, I was ignorant to the scope and depth of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. Learning more about the families and individuals impacted has been both eye opening and heartbreaking. Having an opportunity to hear the stories of survivors drives me to continue doing all I can to fight for hope, relief, and change."*

*One of my favourite things about C3P and Cybertip.ca, aside from the incredible team, is the dynamic nature of the organization. No process or goal is unchanging. There is always forward mobility, adapting to the needs, and changing with the times. With more knowledge comes innovation. And no mountain is too high."*

– Cybertip.ca analyst

# REDUCING THE AVAILABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF CSAM



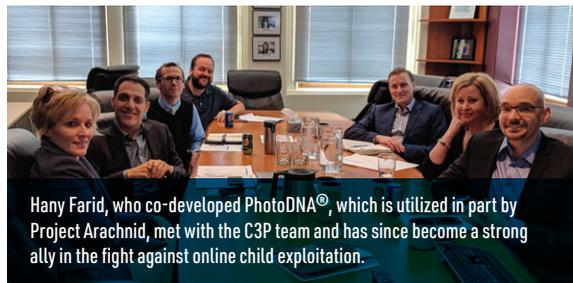
*“On a visit to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection’s office, we came to the room that shelters Project Arachnid and the people behind such a powerful tool and I was flooded with such profound happiness and hope that I literally could not stop crying.*

*That is one of the many things this type of abuse has taken from its victims, the hope that there’s an end to the suffering. It made me believe in a future where victims of child exploitation can find justice and closure.”*

– CSAM SURVIVOR

Cybertip.ca was created to reduce the online sexual victimization of children. Its core function of taking reports from the public remains the same—in fact, its services are being utilized more than ever—but our service delivery, tools, and technology to advance our mandate and better support Canadians have evolved to face the ever-changing online risks and harm to children.

Recognizing there needed to be a drastic shift in the CSAM removal model, C3P launched Project Arachnid 2017. This global-reaching system unifies automated CSAM detection methods with a team of dedicated analysts around the world to quickly send removal notices to electronic service providers (ESPs).

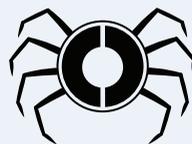


Hany Farid, who co-developed PhotoDNA®, which is utilized in part by Project Arachnid, met with the C3P team and has since become a strong ally in the fight against online child exploitation.

## TO DATE, PROJECT ARACHNID HAS:<sup>4</sup>



Sent notices leading to the removal of more than **seven million** images of CSAM



Project  
Arachnid™

[projectarachnid.ca](http://projectarachnid.ca)



Detected more than **37.6 million** suspect images



Sent **12+ million** removal notices<sup>5</sup> to content providers



Issued notices to companies in over **100** countries



Detected an average of **666,000** unique suspect images per month.

<sup>4</sup> Since January 17, 2017 to August 1, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> As of August 1, 2022.

## Through Project Arachnid We Know

Most tech companies are not effectively leveraging readily available tools to prevent the re-upload of known CSAM.



Nearly half (48 per cent) of all media Project Arachnid has issued notices on had been **previously flagged to the service provider**.

Youth victims have been left behind.



Post-pubescent victims' images were found to have **significantly longer removal times**—56 days for post-pubescent versus 40 days for pre-pubescent CSAM—along with higher rates of recidivism.

Project Arachnid is an effective tool; however, there still are lengthy removal times for many images.



The median removal time for content targeted by Project Arachnid was **24 hours**. Alarming though, 10 per cent of actioned media—representing thousands of victims—took 42 days or longer.

There is an entire chain of actors that have the ability to disrupt the distribution of CSAM; the notification and accountability spectrum must be broader.



For example, payment companies can be made aware of continued Project Arachnid notifications being sent to a hosting provider. One only needs to look to Visa and Mastercard's service withdrawal from MindGeek, and the subsequent changes to their site, Pornhub, to understand the effectiveness of this model.



### SHIELD

By Project Arachnid

As Project Arachnid grew in scope, the Cleanfeed Canada URL list was incorporated as an option within Shield by Project Arachnid,™ a no-cost API developed for ESPs to assist with the proactive detection of known CSAM and harmful-abusive content. Roughly 85 ESPs are currently utilizing Shield.

As Project Arachnid grew in scope, the Cleanfeed Canada URL list was incorporated as an option within Shield by Project Arachnid,™ a no-cost API developed for ESPs to assist with



*"I feel like Project Arachnid should be common sense to government. The images and videos of our abuse should not be publicly available. And they don't have to be. I want to stress how our rights to find and remove the images of child sexual abuse should outweigh any privacy rights that are protecting pedophiles to hide the content." – SURVIVOR OF CSAM*

## A Global Epidemic Needs International Collaboration

These efforts have been made possible in part due to the **12 hotlines and child-protection organizations, and their 29 analysts, working alongside C3P** within Project Arachnid. Together, we are making a difference for survivors all over the world who have had no control over the distribution of their CSAM. Together, we are offering hope.

**!** *“Global collaboration is absolutely essential if we really want to tackle online crimes against children. We must all work together to galvanize our efforts to develop meaningful solutions that have a global capacity to help those most vulnerable.”* – AMBER RUDD, UK HOME SECRETARY, AT A 2017 ROUNDTABLE IN WASHINGTON

### GLOBAL HOTLINES AND CHILD-PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN PROJECT ARACHNID TO CLASSIFY MATERIAL





2022: ECPAT Sverige (Sweden) came to Winnipeg for the first time to discuss working in Project Arachnid and global child protection initiatives.

**!** *“Behind every image and video there is a child, so every single removal is important. As long as the child sexual abuse material circulates online, the abuse continues. For us it’s important that we together within Project Arachnid can contribute to end the harm caused by the dissemination.”* – ANNA KARIN HILDINGSON BOQVIST, SECRETARY GENERAL AT ECPAT SWEDEN



2018: Director of Cybertip.ca Stephen Sauer visited Red Papaz (Colombia) to help analysts board Project Arachnid.



2022: C3P Associate Executive Director Signy Arnason and Katariina Leivo from Suojellaan Lapsia Ry (Protect Children), a key ally in Finland.

**!** *“This collaboration recognizes that the horrific crimes involving CSAM do not respect national borders and the challenge to combat this is a global one. By teaming up with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection we are looking to improve things globally and for New Zealanders.”* – FORMER CHIEF CENSOR DAVID SHANKS, TE MANA WHAKAATU CLASSIFICATION OFFICE, NEW ZEALAND.

**!** *“Every child has the right to heal without the fear of the recordings of their abuse circulating online forever. Our work with CSAM victims and peer-support groups for parents of child victims of online sexual violence have truly confirmed to us the utmost importance of using the most efficient and effective tools to end the cycle of abuse.”* – NINA VAARANEN-VALKONEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SENIOR SPECIALIST AND PSYCHOTHERAPIST, SUOJELLAAN LAPSIA RY /PROTECT CHILDREN

# SUPPORTING VICTIMS & SURVIVORS



*“These past few days, I have had a ray of hope because of the constant response I’ve been getting from all of you at Cybertip and I want to say a very big thank you.”* – 17-YEAR-OLD VICTIM OF SEXTORTION

In the last five years, C3P has dedicated a significant amount of resources to supporting survivors and elevating their powerful voices to challenge the inadequate responses to the prevalence of child sexual abuse images on the internet.

Our work with survivors alongside our commitment to harnessing the power of Project Arachnid to reducing the global availability of CSAM has enabled C3P to develop an expertise in offering end-to-end, wrap-around services to assist this unique population.

C3P has developed a survivors system that integrates Cybertip.ca staff with C3P support services, and utilizes evidence-based practices to support survivors from a multidisciplinary lens. Cybertip.ca is available to assist those who have been sexually victimized online in a number of ways, such as:

- Helping to reduce the availability of sexual images/videos online through Project Arachnid.
- Connecting survivors and their caregivers to other support services such as counselling/therapy or victim services that may be available in their region.
- Assisting with victim impact statements for situations specific to online exploitation.
- Providing survivors with information about financial options/remedies specific to online victimization that may be available in their region.
- Offering informational resources and guidance around safety planning specific to online risks and concerns to assist survivors and their caregivers in moving forward.

In 2021, C3P managed more than **3,000 requests for support from survivors, youth, and/or their caregivers**; in the **last three months alone, we have assisted more than 540 individuals**. On average, there are **200 cases open at once**.



*“Thank you so much again for the call. I have been feeling so alone and lost for the past year and suddenly me and my daughter have all these strong support systems. Thank you for the work that you do.”*

– ADULT SURVIVOR  
OF ONLINE  
EXPLOITATION



2013: [left to right] Pam Murchison, Carol Todd, Glen Canning, Krista Canning, Jo-Anne Landolt, Leah Parsons, and Jason Barnes met with then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper and C3P for a roundtable regarding the devastating impacts of youth's intimate images being shared online.

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## Survivor Advocacy Groups

We are dedicated to working collaboratively with survivors, so we can change the world for these individuals, their families, the children still enduring abuse, and to prevent abuse from happening wherever possible.

### The Phoenix 11

For almost four years, C3P and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) have been working with the Phoenix 11, a group of survivors whose child sexual abuse was recorded, and in the majority of cases, distributed online. This group has banded together as a powerful force to challenge the inadequate response to the prevalence of CSAM. Their collective has grown stronger each year, advocating for survivors that have not had a voice at an international level.



### The Chicago Males

C3P and NCMEC started working with a group of male survivors to learn about their experiences and better understand the unique social stigma males face around sexual abuse. This group is working together to advocate for much-needed change in addressing online child sexual abuse and supporting survivors.

### Mothers of Child Sexual Abuse Material Survivors

To learn about the hardships families of survivors endure for years after the hands-on abuse has ended, C3P brought together a group of mothers whose children's sexual abuse was recorded and distributed online. We learned from moms that there is an emotional continuum long after "the discovery" of the abuse that often includes loss of relationships, financial instability, and a constant worry about their child(ren)'s safety, to name only a few examples. Their insight is crucial to guiding the creation of support resources.

To learn more about the survivor advocacy groups' mission and impact on the protection of children, visit [protectchildren.ca/survivors](https://protectchildren.ca/survivors).

# TODAY'S PUBLIC SAFETY CRISIS

## *Addressing Online Harm and Violence Against Children*

Kids were not considered when the internet was constructed. The protections afforded to children offline never made it online. The results of our collective failure to act has been devastating.

### The Growing Proliferation of CSAM Online:



From 2020-21, Project Arachnid sent just over 2.2 million takedown notices. In 2021-22, it climbed to more than six million—**roughly a 177 per cent increase.**



Possession of, or accessing CSAM incidents increased by 807 cases in 2021, representing a 21 per cent increase compared to 2020. This is a 74 per cent increase in incidents compared to the previous five-year average.<sup>6</sup>



In all of 2021, Cybertip.ca received 260 reports around the sextortion of a youth under 18—almost all of these related to the creation and distribution/potential distribution of CSAM. In only the first seven months of 2022, Cybertip.ca has **already received 533 reports.**

<sup>6</sup> “A comprehensive portrait of police-reported crime in Canada, 2021.” Statistics Canada, August 2022



2011: [Left to right] Scott Naylor, OPP, the Honourable Rob Nicholson, C3P Executive Director Lianna McDonald, and C3P Associate Executive Director Signy Arnason after Cybertip.ca was named the federal entity for providers of an internet service to report CSAM online.

## Taking on Project Arachnid's Largest Source of Detected CSAM: *Free case study*

From 2018 to 2020, Project Arachnid detected more than 18,000 archive files, collectively containing nearly 1.1 million pieces of apparent CSAM or harmful-abusive content, hosted on a public file hosting service operated by French telecommunication provider Free. This service required no registration or contact information from users, and offered a generous file size limit for uploaded media as well as the ability to protect files through passwords, all likely reasons it became a popular platform for CSAM distribution.

Beginning in 2018, C3P began corresponding with company officials, providing them with lists of direct links to the file archives containing CSAM hosted on their system. Project Arachnid also continued to detect and issue notices on newly uncovered CSAM and harmful-abusive media to the company. As of May 18, 2021, nearly 3,000 archives for which removal notices were issued were still publicly accessible, according to Project Arachnid records.

C3P made these findings publicly available in the 2021 *Project Arachnid: Online availability of child sexual abuse material report*, which spawned a subsequent article on Forbes.com that focused on Free and named its owners.

Within 10 hours of the article's release, the file-hosting site stopped allowing anonymous users to upload material, essentially cutting off the service for CSAM distribution. Days later, all files that had been previously actioned by Project Arachnid were also made unavailable; taking 1.1 million pieces of CSAM offline.

## Run it Up the Chain: *Trichan shutdown case study*

In March 2019, Project Arachnid encountered a sharp increase in CSAM on a collection of internet forums based in the Netherlands known as the Trichan imageboards. In fact, the volume was so great, C3P had to retool its crawler to manage the flow of data being detected.

Project Arachnid began issuing takedown notices, however, despite the repeated emails to the websites' contact addresses, the vast majority of flagged material stayed up on the site. Eventually, Project Arachnid email notices simply bounced back as undeliverable.

Along with sending the notices, Project Arachnid gathered data on images posted alongside detected CSAM. C3P analysts began assessing those additional images and determined, based on a sample of more than 51,000 total detected images, it was likely that nearly 34 per cent of the images on the websites were CSAM, with the remainder being possible CSAM and harmful-abusive content.

Armed with this information, and the continued lack of response from the Trichan administrator, C3P approached the imageboard's upstream provider to have the content removed. C3P was met with varied responses—some told C3P to take redirect notices to the Netherlands' hotline, while others took action to block the IP address of the Trichan sites.

This set off a game of cat and mouse: the Trichan forums would change hosting providers, C3P would reach out to the new host, the IP would be blocked, and the cycle would start again. At one point, the websites went totally offline, only to reappear three months later utilizing a technique to disrupt the automated detection of CSAM on the sites. While this made it harder for Project Arachnid to compare image hash values, it was not impossible, and the crawler continued to identify images and send removal notices. C3P also engaged with the latest hosting provider, and with few options to turn to for service, the Trichan forums were taken offline entirely.



Over two and a half years, Project Arachnid detected more than 1.5 million verified media on the Trichan forums.

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## Online Harms Against Youth

Online sexual violence is unsolicited and unwanted sexual actions and behaviours directed towards youth online, and it is increasing in frequency and intensity at an alarming rate. This includes issues such as sextortion, luring, and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

- In 2021/22, Cybertip.ca has seen a 37 per cent increase in the overall online victimization of children. Offenders are intensifying control tactics, increasing the use of humiliation, utilizing multiple accounts to target youth, and even coaching kids to commit suicide.
- **In July 2022 alone, Cybertip.ca received 322 reports from youth being sextorted**, carried out by offenders that have little regard for what happens to the teen they are terrorizing online.
- In the first half of 2022, Cybertip.ca has seen a 120 per cent increase in luring reports per month.
- In many cases, **youth are not telling anyone what is going on**. This underscores Cybertip.ca's critical role in not only providing caregivers and youth with the skills and resources that help children navigate online situations safely, but also providing them information on where to go and how to ask for help if someone is harming them online.



*"I am deeply moved by how you interacted with me yesterday, I really felt reassured even though I was shaking after all that had happened. I am again very thankful for how good of a person you were to me and I now feel relieved."* – 15-YEAR-OLD VICTIM OF SEXTORTION

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## Harmful-abusive Content Removal: Expanding Beyond Criminal Definitions

C3P's children's rights framework, released in 2018, outlined the many ways the CSAM epidemic is not being addressed appropriately, including the rigid adherence by companies to narrow criminal law definitions for content removal. This has meant a significant proportion of children's harmful-abusive images remain online, ranging from images taken before/after an abusive event, a child posed in a sexualized manner, partial nudity, and stolen images of children used in a sexualized context. This "awful but lawful" content is harmful to children, and must be removed to prioritize children's best interests.

Industry has no-cost access to Project Arachnid's harmful-abuse content hash list, which **flags online content that does not meet the global standard of CSAM but is still harmful to survivors and children**, through its public availability. While the material might not meet a legal threshold, it can often violate a provider's terms of service (TOS). Since 2020, Project Arachnid has been sending automated harmful/abusive notices to industry to request the removal of this content. To date, Project Arachnid has issued over **1.5 million notices of harmful-abusive content to ESPs**.



*“As a survivor of this type of abuse, I’d like to emphasize the importance of a child-centric approach to the removal of this content. The continuous trading of our imagery is a constant burden on our lives. We want to remind industry that these are real children in these photos that they receive notices for. And we want them, as well as governments, to stop protecting the rights of these predators over the rights of the innocent they are destroying.*

*We plead that all images associated with a child’s abuse be removed quickly, even ones seemingly innocent. Just because a photo does not depict the actual abuse itself doesn’t mean it’s not harmful for the child in it. In reality it shows just how broken we are—what child willingly smiles for a camera while being raped?”*

– SURVIVOR OF CSAM

## Awful but Lawful: “Teen” website case study

In January 2021, Cybertip.ca began receiving reports from victims and/or their parents about a website about “Teens”, which featured the tagline “The best free Jailbait and teen picture gallery on the internet.” The site consisted primarily of pictures of teens in bathing suits, underwear, suggestive poses, and even topless but covering their breasts; imagery that does not meet Canada’s *Criminal Code* definition of child pornography, but clearly was being used for a sexual purpose. Reports to Cybertip.ca suggested that a significant amount of the content was copied, without consent, from public and semi-public social media profiles owned by the victims. Several also noted they had attempted to contact the site administrator to remove the images, but with no luck.

By January 19, 2021, Cybertip.ca had processed 877 reports tied to the site. C3P reached out to the site admin, informing them they were hosting material that violated their OWN terms of service, but received no direct or meaningful response.

The website utilized a service from Cloudflare that masked the servers hosting the website. C3P notified Cloudflare regarding the nature of the site, and the company eventually agreed to disclose the origin of the host server to C3P – an Ontario-based hosting provider. C3P reached out to the company about the actions of its customer, and the company gave the site admin 24 hours to take the site down. As of January 27, 2021, the site no longer contained any content, other than a homepage message that read “the end?”

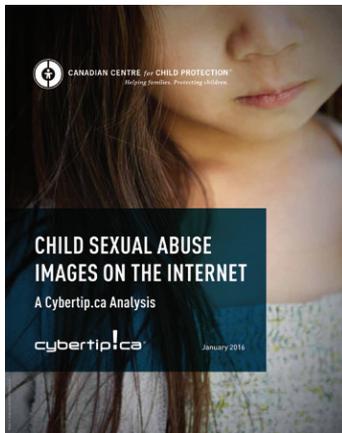
C3P followed up with concerned parents and victims who had reported to Cybertip.ca to let them know the steps that had been taken, and the demise of the site. A number responded, sharing the impact of the experience on their family and child, and expressed relief that the site no longer had content:

*“I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your help and time. You helped us we really needed help. I don’t know what to say. Thanking you is not enough.”*

*“As a parent whose daughter was on this site, I appreciate the prompt action to have the account deleted.”*

# RESEARCH: KNOWLEDGE EQUALS CHANGE

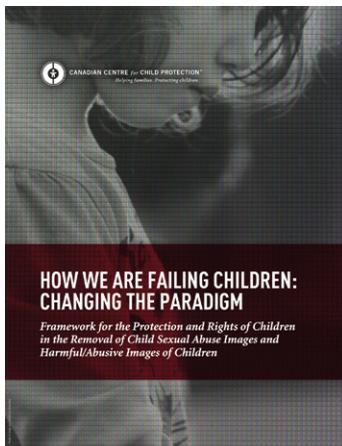
The data pulled from Cybertip.ca, Project Arachnid, and our derived research has given us a unique insight and knowledge into the availability and distribution of CSAM online, hands-on and online abuse, the systemic failures that allow this to occur, and where the gaps in child protection lie in order to hold industry and government accountable, promoting transparency. Our innovative research can assist policymakers in developing effective regulatory frameworks that protect children and support survivors.



## 2016: *Child Sexual Abuse Images on the Internet: A Cybertip.ca Analysis*

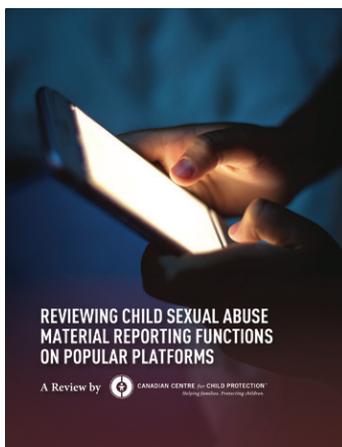
This report, which examined 43,700+ unique images and videos classified by Cybertip.ca as CSAM, was the first real look at the serious prevalence of CSAM online, and resulted in urgent recommendations for more to be done to identify the children in the images and videos, and disrupt the distribution of this harmful content.

This report's findings were the impetus for both the *International Survivors' Survey* and Project Arachnid.



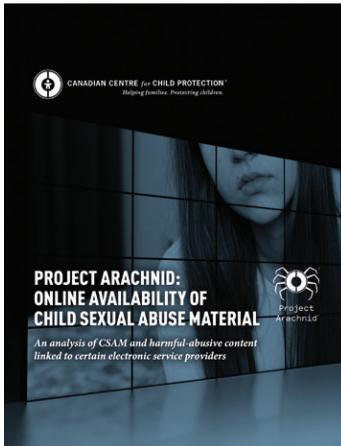
## 2019: *How We Are Failing Children: Changing the paradigm*

This framework redefined C3P's approach to content removal and the continuum of harm faced by survivors and children being exploited online; it acts as an urgent call to action for governments, industry, and hotlines around the world. The framework's set of principles for action, which prioritizes the protection and rights of children, has been a roadmap for C3P and Cybertip.ca's consultations with governments and other child-protection organizations within the CSAM removal space.



## 2020: *Reviewing Child Sexual Abuse Material Reporting Functions of Popular Platforms*

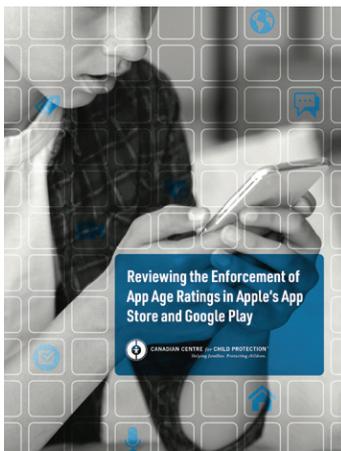
C3P's research found some of the most popular web platforms lacked content reporting functions specific to CSAM, often leaving victims feeling hopeless in their efforts to get their own abusive material removed. In order to clarify and streamline the process for reporting CSAM, the report offered five recommendations for companies that allow user-generated content on their service. Following its release, C3P was notified by some platforms named in the report, including Facebook and TikTok, that they would be making changes to their reporting functions.



## **2021:** *Project Arachnid: Online availability of child sexual abuse material*

This report offered a never-before-seen look into the availability of CSAM online and how these companies respond to removal notifications from Project Arachnid. The findings showed that expecting industry voluntarily to invest in resources to prevent the availability of CSAM has been an ineffective strategy, and points to a need for governments to impose meaningful regulation at a global scale that prioritizes the protection and privacy of children and survivors.

The report's set of recommendations are intended to assist policymakers in developing effective regulatory frameworks to combat CSAM and harmful-abusive content online.



## **2022:** *Reviewing the Enforcement of App Age Ratings in Apple's App Store and Google Play*

This child safety analysis looked at how, and if, the two largest mobile app stores—Apple's App Store and Google Play—enforced app age ratings. The resulting research led to many findings that raised significant concerns for the protection of children/youth online and for families who use app age ratings to gauge safety.



### **GLOBAL INFLUENCE**

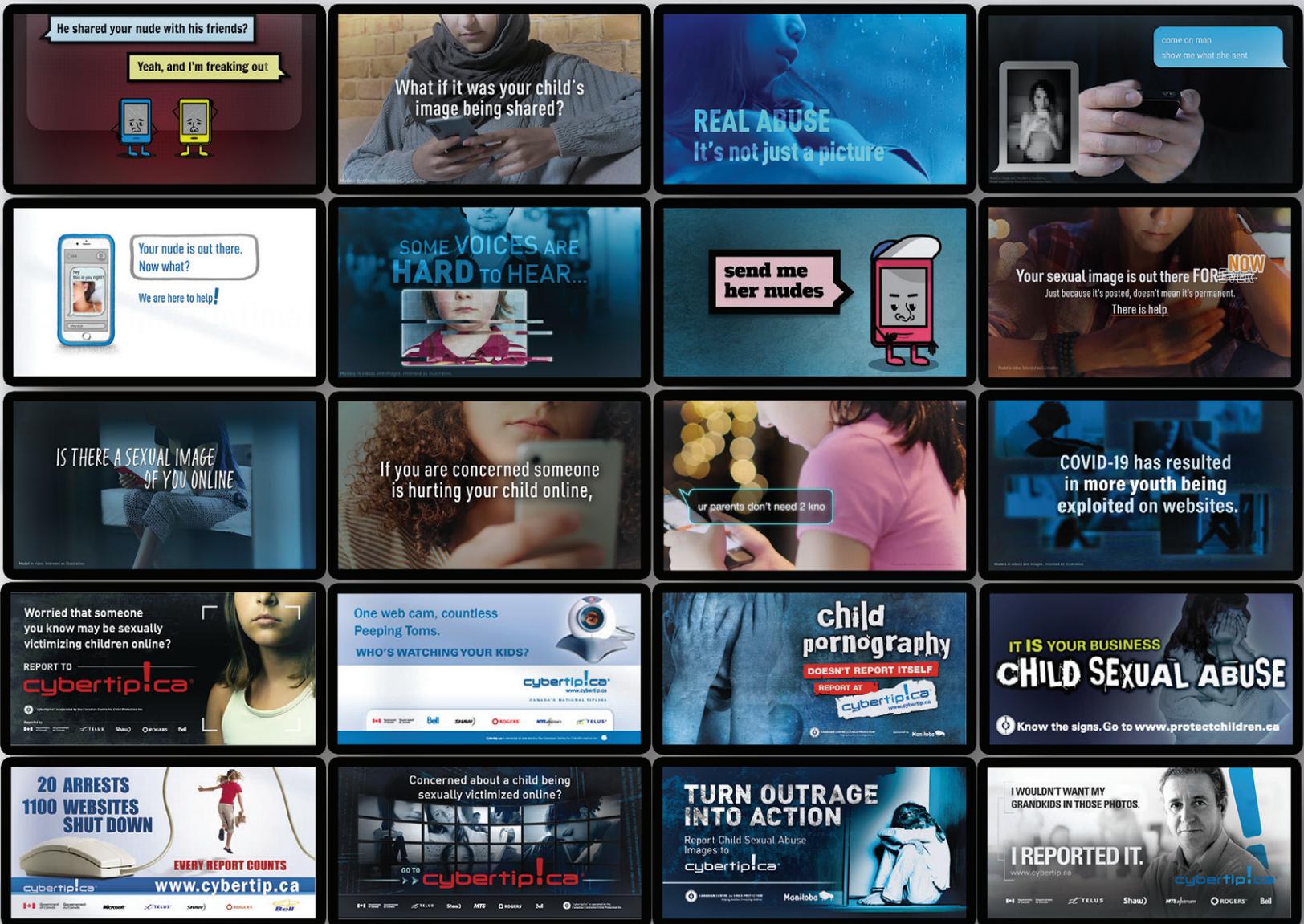
The data and knowledge C3P has garnered through the operation of *Cybertip.ca* and Project Arachnid, its subsequent research, and our work with survivors, has positioned Canada as a world-leader in the ecosystem of CSAM removal and victim support.

This has resulted in building relationships and leading consultations with governments and child-protection organizations around the world—particularly those in the Five Eyes countries and EU—to identify potential improvements in global systems of CSAM removal with the ultimate goal of ending the online propagation of CSAM and improving the wellbeing of survivors.

# PUBLIC AWARENESS

Part of Cybertip.ca's mandate is reaching Canadian families with the important information they need to protect children online. Since 2005, Cybertip.ca has **initiated 84 campaigns** regarding the issue of children being sexually exploited on the internet. While traditional methods of reaching Canadians have moved more into online media, the messaging is the same: Cybertip.ca is here to help.

## Over the years



Models in images and intended as illustrative.



### Naked Mole Rat

This campaign blew up after being featured in *The New Yorker*. Using a humour-based approach to cut through the clutter of typical online safety discussions, Dongetsextorted.ca focused on ways youth can avoid being sextorted and keep themselves safe. **Over a half a million naked mole rat memes/gifs** have been downloaded globally from the website, along with the accompanying safety lesson.



### Twitter Birthday Plea

For Twitter’s 15<sup>th</sup> birthday, C3P collaborated with survivors—those who have been exploited on the platform and other social media sites like it—to wish the company a “happy” birthday in a video that shared the collective experiences of survivors, and demanded online platforms to do better for survivors by prioritizing the removal of CSAM.



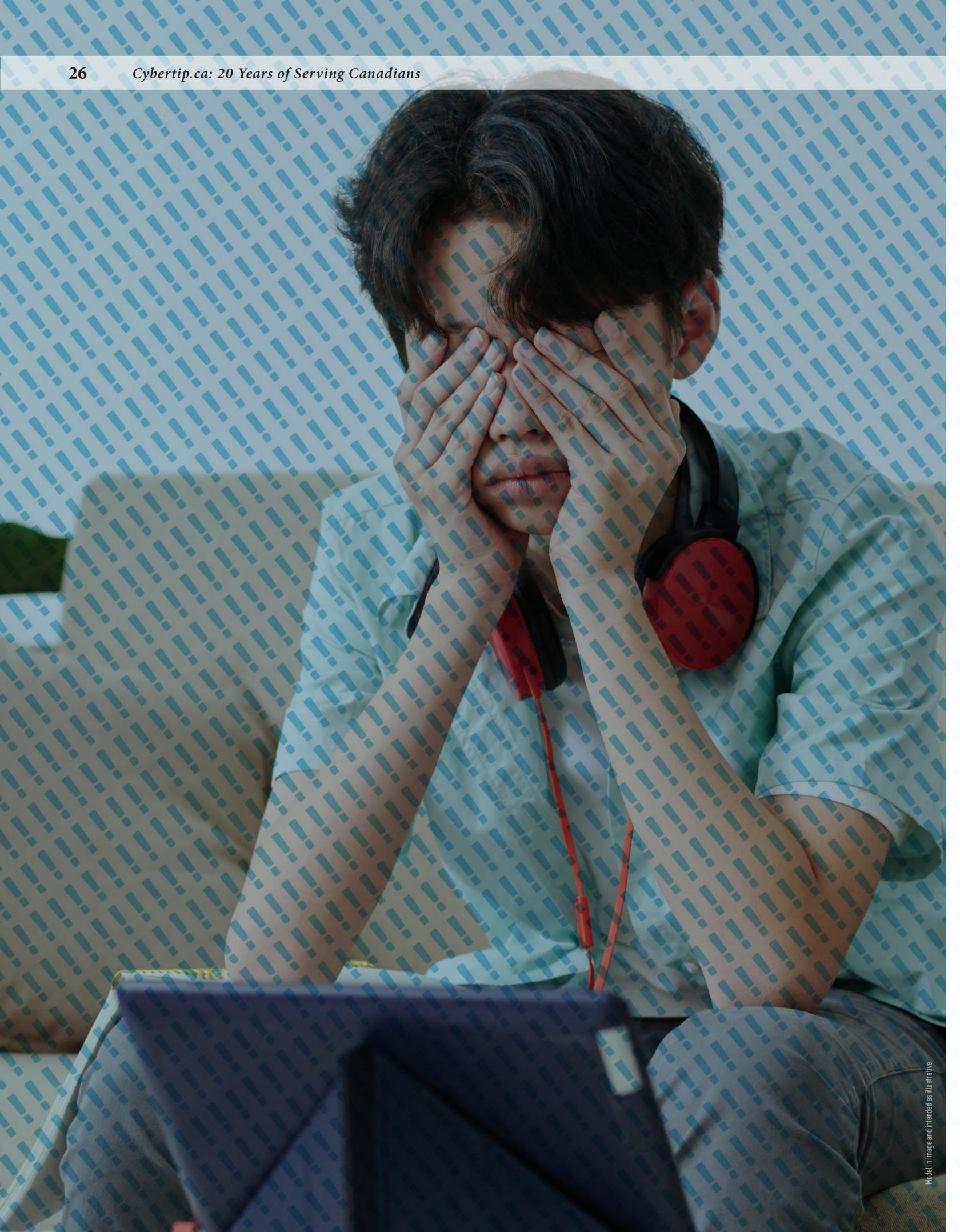
### Unwanted Followers

This chilling video tells the real story of countless victims whose abusive imagery continues to exist online. They have had to live this traumatic reality for decades due to platforms and services on the internet that have been allowed to operate without oversight. The video made its **debut at a 2021 G7 meeting** in London before its public release.

### The Unwanted Film Fest

85 million films. 195 countries. Playing online everywhere. The Unwanted Film Fest was launched in New York City where a physical installation let visitors experience the speed at which CSAM propagated online last year—one image every two seconds—while the web experience asked users to stand with survivors and demand tech companies stop the upload of known child sexual abuse material. More than **2,000 signatures from 50 countries** have been collected.





# LOOKING FORWARD

It has been a privilege to serve Canadians over the past two decades. The knowledge gained by working alongside all of the brave children/youth, survivors, and their families will remain a focal point for C3P in fighting for the protection of children and reducing online victimization. The past 20 years has taught us many lessons, and none more important than the urgency to act on behalf of those most vulnerable to the future in front of us. We cannot turn away from the online abuse and violence being inflicted upon children. Looking forward, we must urgently respond with:

- Governments imposing meaningful regulation that prioritizes the protection and privacy of children and survivors. Expecting industry to voluntarily invest in resources to prevent the availability of CSAM has been an ineffective strategy. **The guardrails afforded children offline, must also exist online. Cybertip.ca will continue to publish its data and push for greater transparency among the technology companies.**
- Survivors' voices being prioritized in the dialogue around CSAM removal and the supports available to this unique population. **Cybertip.ca will work with survivor groups, individual survivors, and their families to better understand how to support victims, provide opportunities for advocacy, and protect other children from exploitation.**
- Advancing global collaboration to effectively target CSAM and harmful abuse imagery online. **Cybertip.ca will continue onboarding child protection organizations/hotlines and their analyst teams to help scale up the capacity of Project Arachnid to expedite the removal of historical CSAM and reduce the re-victimization of child victims whose abusive material is newly posted online.**
- Broadening **removal** efforts to address online harms against children that do not fit within narrow criminal law definitions. Content moderation based upon narrow legal definitions does not serve the best interests of children/victims whose abusive material has been shared online. Lawful but awful material is still harmful to child victims/adult survivors the longer it remains online. **Through Project Arachnid, C3P will continue to send removal notices involving harmful and abusive material involving children to reduce online child victimization and harm.**
- Addressing the online abandonment of teen victims. For the most part, youth ages 13-17 have been left to navigate online environments alone, considered to be "adults" in digital spaces without the developmental capacity to compete with the adults seeking to harm them. Youth need to know how to get help if they are being victimized online. **We will continue to evolve our support for those impacted by the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, as well as other situations involving youth being aggressively targeted, such as sextortion to disrupt the availability of their abusive material.**

We are at a pivotal time in history. The next steps, particularly those guided by government, will determine if we'll be telling a different story 20 years from now. Child safety measures/protocols must be established on the internet and we are as committed as ever to ensuring this becomes a reality within Canada and beyond.

# PARTNERS

Cybertip.ca relies upon our partners, foundations, as well as donations to deliver our essential services. We are extremely grateful for the support from both the private and public sectors over the past 20 years. Countless Canadian children are safer today as a result of our combined efforts.

## Founding Partners

The evolution of child protection has always depended on forward-thinking organizations collaborating to solve some of the country’s most challenging problems. While no one could have predicted how the internet would evolve and what that would mean for children and youth, two decades ago these four companies had the foresight to take a chance on a little charity in the middle of Canada. We are grateful that the following companies saw the benefit and need for a national tipline for reporting the online exploitation of children:



## Major Contributors

Our work would not be possible without support from the private and public sectors. We thank all of our contributors and acknowledge their commitment to making the protection and safety of children a priority.



## Government Allies

The Government of Canada has provided ongoing support to our organization since May 2004. Public Safety Canada’s steadfast support of Cybertip.ca under the *National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet* is essential to the success of this national service. This strategy also involves the RCMP’s National Child Exploitation Crime Centre.



Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada

Cybertip.ca also receives support from the Government of Manitoba and is a designated agency in the province to receive reports under *The Child and Family Services Act* (Manitoba), as well as to provide supports and information pursuant to *The Intimate Image Protection Act* (Manitoba).



C3P’s Project Arachnid initiative is supported, in part, by the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the United Kingdom. The goal is to work in collaboration on a global scale to reduce the availability of CSAM.



Home Office

## International Foundations

Recognizing the global reach of our work, C3P has received support from international foundations. We are incredibly grateful to have these international partners:



## Law Enforcement Allies



C3P has formal arrangements with various law enforcement agencies across the country, including 28 service-wide protocols, and four licensing agreements.

Since the launch of Cybertip.ca, C3P has worked alongside law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across Canada and collaborated with them on a range of initiatives, including public awareness, education, and processing reports from the public regarding the online sexual exploitation of children. However, as more formalized protocols between C3P and LEAs were put in place, the bar of protection has been raised with highly-successful professional development opportunities, new initiatives, and province-wide educational offerings that created a common language and understanding of child exploitation.

We are proud to work alongside these key groups, along with countless LEAs across the country:



Royal Canadian Mounted Police  
Gendarmerie royale du Canada



C3P has formalized agreements with the following law enforcement agencies:

*Abbotsford Police Department*

*Halton Regional Police Service*

*Peterborough Police Service*

*Barrie Police Service*

*Hamilton Police Service*

*RCMP National Division*

*Brandon Police Service*

*Kingston Police Service*

*Regina Police Service*

*Brantford Police Service*

*Manitoba First Nations Police Service*

*Sault Ste. Marie Police Service*

*Central Saanich Police Service*

*Moose Jaw Police Service*

*Treaty Three Police Service*

*Chatham-Kent Police Service*

*New Westminster Police Department*

*Vancouver Police Department*

*Durham Regional Police Service*

*Niagara Regional Police Service*

*Victoria Police Department*

*Edmonton Police Service*

*Nishnawbe Aski Police Service*

*York Regional Police Service*

*Gananoque Police Service*

*Ontario Provincial Police*

*Greater Sudbury Police Service*

*Ottawa Police Service*



*“Thank you so much for all of your work on this. If the rest of the world would put in an effort like this, it would be a better place.” – CYBERTIP.CA ASSISTING U.S. LEA WITH USE OF PROJECT ARACHNID.*



**CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION<sup>®</sup>**  
*Helping families. Protecting children.*

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