

# Child Sexual Abuse/ Child Sexual Exploitation Material

## DEFINITIONS

### Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Material\*

Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), as the preferred term of choice to 'child pornography', refers to materials depicting acts of sexual abuse and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child. The term 'child sexual exploitation material' (CSEM) can be used in a broader sense to encompass all other sexualised material depicting children.

These materials include children of all ages, boys and girls, and differ in level of severity of the abuse and acts ranging from children posing sexually to gross assault.

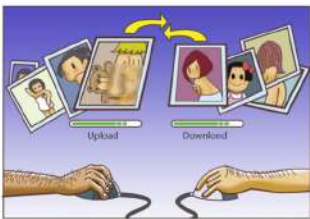
\*Definition derived from Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

### Computer/Digitally Generated CSAM/CSEM\*

The term 'computer (or digitally) generated child sexual abuse material' encompasses all forms of material representing children involved in sexual activities and/or in a sexualised manner, with the particularity that the production of the material does not involve actual contact abuse of real children but is artificially created using digital tools to appear as if real children were depicted. It includes what is referred to as 'virtual child pornography'.

Although computer generated CSAM/CSEM does not involve harm to a real child, it is still dangerous because (i) it may be used in grooming children for sexual exploitation; (ii) it sustains a market for child sexual abuse images; and (iii) it enables a culture of tolerance for the sexualisation of children and cultivates demand.

### Criminal Offenses



- Producing CSAM/CSEM;
- Obtaining access or procuring;
- (Mere) possessing;
- Offering or making available;
- Importing or exporting;
- Distributing or transmitting;
- Registering;
- Selling.

This is (partly) criminalised by the following legal frameworks:

- CRC-Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children: excludes accessing, mere possession and computer generated CSAM
- CoE Convention on Cybercrime: comprehensive including criminalisation of computer generated CSAM
- CoE Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse: comprehensive including criminalisation of computer generated CSAM
- ILO Convention 182: only covers production
- African Union Cyber Security Convention: comprehensive including criminalisation of computer generated CSAM

### Offenders and Modus Operandi

- Offenders are primarily motivated by their **sexual interest** in children or by **financial gain**;
- They operate **alone** or as part of a **network**;
- They use different **devices, software** and/or the **Internet** to produce, access or share materials;
- They sometimes apply **encryption methods** and may also use hidden online platforms to conceal their conduct and avoid being detected\*\*;
- (Computer generated) CSAM/ CSEM is sometimes used by offenders to **groom or manipulate** children into engaging in sexual activities.

\*\* Please see ECPAT Factsheet: what is Encryption?

## What can you do?

- Advocate for stronger legal frameworks that criminalise all conducts related to CSAM/CSEM;
- Advocate for better resources for law enforcement, such as dedicated capacity and tools, to tackle CSAM/CSEM and identify victims;
- Advocate and cooperate with the private sector, such as Internet Service Providers, to implement policies to disrupt circulation of CSAM/CSEM;
- Educate and raise awareness about CSAM/CSEM including online risks and online safety;
- Conduct research and collect relevant information to enhance understanding about the scope and characteristics of CSAM/CSEM;
- Report CSAM/CSEM online;
- Provide support and care for victims.