

We recommend the term "sextortion" is no longer used as it does not convey that the act in question involves the sexual abuse and exploitation of a child, with extremely serious consequences for the victim. Instead, the more accurate expression, "online sexual coercion and extortion of children", should be used.

Online sexual coercion and extortion is one of the new crime phenomena of the digital age. It affects adults and minors alike, and it is facilitated by technological expansion, growing internet coverage and the widespread availability of mobile devices.

When minors are targeted as victims, these are the main motivations identified in the adults perpetrating the crimes:

- **A sexual interest in children**, where the objective of the extortive exchange is to procure sexual material (photos or videos depicting the child) or an offline sexual encounter;
- **An economic interest**, where the objective is to gain financially from the extortion.

(A combination of both is also possible)

Victims can be reluctant to come forward to law enforcement or seek help as they are embarrassed about the material the perpetrator has, or because they are unaware that they are victims of crime.

Other motivations may include malice or social gains such as attention, popularity and affirmation. In these cases the perpetrator is usually another minor, who may be unaware of the illegal aspect of their behaviour. For many young people, sexting (sexual communication that includes sharing of self-generated sexually explicit material (SGSEM)) is a common form of flirting and experimenting.

Teens engaging in the creation of SGSEM can do it consensually, but also as a result of coercion. There are different motivations for creating an image or media in the first place:

- Created by a minor following a request from another;
- Created by a minor and sent to a recipient who did not ask for it;
- Used to coerce further material from a minor who previously created some;
- Redistributed by a recipient to other peers or to a public web archive (i.e. social media platform or blog) and potentially harvested further.

Peer-oriented SGSEM is a more complex scenario than the standard coercive and exploitative case previously described. Victims may believe this to be normal and expect to be asked for images by peers, while the requesting peers may not be aware of the legal consequences of sharing a private image of another person. Education is therefore key for young people to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable online communication.

People may become a victim because of their...

- 1 vulnerability, either on a relational level (expressions of neediness or youthful-sounding screen names) or on a technical level (lack of online safety skills);
- 2 absence of or poor parental control;
- 3 openness to oversharing, including self-generated sexual material;
- 4 significant amount of time spent online every day;
- 5 use of social networks and other means of online communication, especially through mobile devices;
- 6 tendency to befriend strangers online;
- 7 relaxed approach towards sexualised interactions/communications online;
- 8 lack of technical knowledge (use of strong passwords, how to deal with suspicious links, etc.).

NUMBER OF ITEMS FOUND: 29

SEARCH



TYPE



Article/Story, Event, How-To Guide, Landing Page, Multimedia, News/Press Release, Operation, Page, Publication/Document

TARGET GROUP



SEARCH

03  
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12  
Apr  
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## EUROPEAN UNION SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME THREAT ASSESSMENT

PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT

12  
Apr  
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20  
Jan  
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## FRANCE ARRESTS 14 SUSPECTS IN SWEEP AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

05  
Oct  
2020

## COVID-19 SPARKS UPWARD TREND IN CYBERCRIME

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

05  
Oct  
2020

## INTERNET ORGANISED CRIME THREAT ASSESSMENT (IOCTA) 2020

PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT

03  
Apr

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NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

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Apr  
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Mar  
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NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

02  
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## J-CAT POSTER

PUBLICATION/DOCUMENT

11  
Dec  
2019

## OPERATION CHEMOSH: HOW ENCRYPTED CHAT GROUPS EXCHANGED EMOJI 'STICKERS' OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

NEWS/PRESS RELEASE

08  
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2019

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