

PROJECT INFORMATION

The Instant Image Identifier will be presented in the context of the Swift Removal of CSAM (child sexual abuse material) project, an initiative of the European Commission coordinated by PwC EU Services together with the Expertisebureau Online Kindermisbruik (EOKM; the Dutch INHOPE hotline), Web-IQ, and ESN.

The fight against the online sexual abuse of minors is one of the greatest challenges of this century. Illegally shared images and videos sometimes circulate on the Internet for years, meaning victims are continuously re-victimised. The purpose behind this initiative is to increase the speed with which online CSAM can be detected and removed from the internet. The objective is to foster a greater degree of coordination between the private sector, hotlines, law enforcement, and other stakeholders operating within the CSAM field and facilitate the voluntary participation of the private sector in detection and removal initiatives.

The first step of the project was to map out the existing CSAM datasets and screen them for legal and technical gaps. Every image or video within these datasets has certain characteristics, which are encoded into a hash. With these hashes, images of child sexual abuse can be traced. In the next step, recommendations were made for the development of new, advanced datasets that are suitable for use by all parties and enable classification of CSAM at different levels. This task included reviewing and possibly adapting database content and infrastructure according to predefined requirements. The Instant Image Identifier was then tested and validated to enable private sector entities, including image hosting services within the EU, to voluntarily detect and remove known online CSAM. The last step of this initiative is an integrated and large-scale campaign to make the results of the project known to a large audience. As part of this campaign, the final event is scheduled for 31 May 2022.

The project aims to build a solid foundation against CSAM by collecting hash databases and making them accessible to all parties involved in the fight against CSAM. The project started in March 2021 and it is expected to end in August 2022.