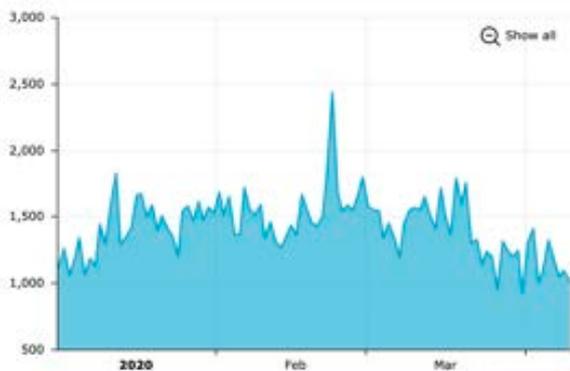




Crimes against children

Increased opportunity for online grooming and webcam exposure

Support organizations such as the Dutch Centre for Sexual Violence (CSG) voiced their fears about the likelihood of increased domestic and online (sexual) abuse during the Corona crisis. People are spending more time indoors, children are spending a lot more time online, stress increases and there is much less social contact with outsiders, teachers, friends or extended family. The crisis is the topic of conversation everywhere, including on the Darknet's forums dedicated to online child abuse.



Posts activity on Darknet child abuse forums is unaffected

The situation is discussed as a potential opportunity for 'capping'. This entails a recording (capture or cap) of a webcam conversation with a child, usually with the aim of getting them to perform sexual acts or to undress.

Re: Quarantined

Sun Mar 15, 2020 21:11

All of europe's schools are closed ... all those boys being at home ... with parents at work ...

I think all cappers are calling in sick at work !



Crimes against children

Post activity stable, more material uploaded

In last week's baseline report we noticed that, although COVID-19 was a topic on CSE (child sexual exploitation) related imageboards and forums, there was no notable increase in the number of forum posts. This pattern continued last week.

A deeper dive into the data shows that the number of shared links has increased substantially. Links are urls pointing to downloadable images or videos from file hosting services. Although Web-IQ indexes only text from CSE forums, these hyperlinks highly likely to point to child abuse material.

Links shared to clearnet image files

3 189
January 2020

2 790
February 2020

9 255
March 2020

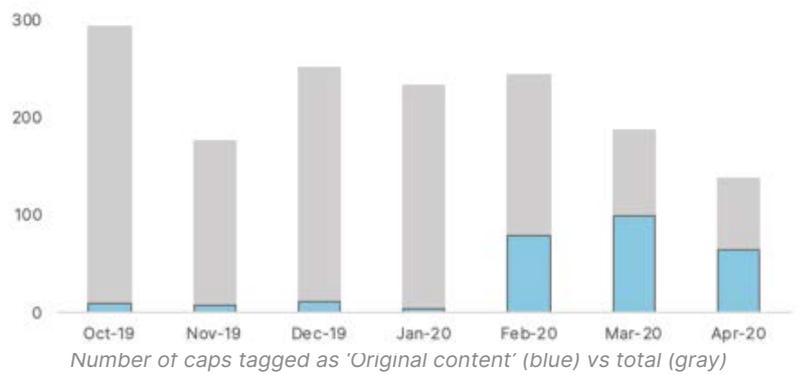


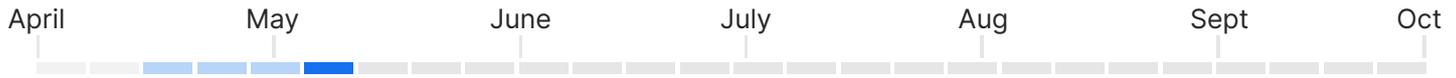
Crimes against children

More recordings shared of webcam chats with 12-15 year olds

Post activity on the major Darknet child abuse forums has continued to be constant. Moderators can tag uploads, such as 'Original' for not seen before material. New videos and photos are rarer and considered more valuable. The share of uploads tagged 'Original content' has increased substantially since February. In many cases, specially in the webcam category, the uploader was a participant in the webcam chat, which can be told from comments such as "I have another vid recorded by me with the same boy".

We tracked the number of webcam recordings (or 'caps', short for 'captures') tagged as 'Original content' (in blue) vs the total number of uploads (gray) in the Webcam category. By far the most common age group in these webcam recordings is between 12 and 15.



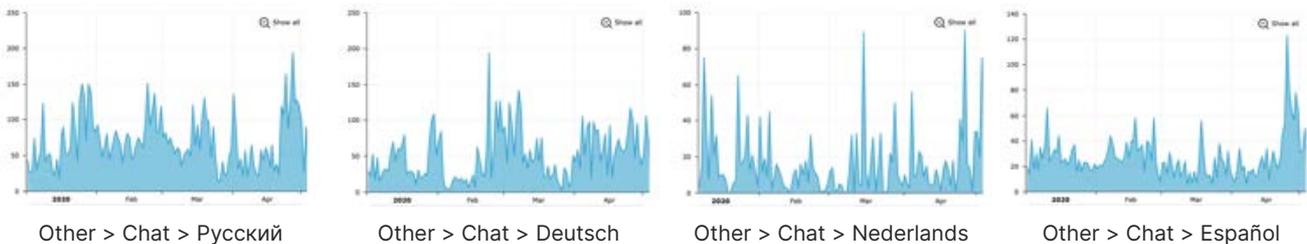


Crimes against children

Inceased activity in general chat sections provides valuable insights for law enforcement.

On Darkweb forums where child sexual abuse is discussed, the past few weeks have shown a mix of reactions. Some users have more time, are spotting new opportunities for grooming unsupervised children, or finally have the time to update their collection. On the other hand there are notes from users whose current home situation doesn't allow them to visit these sites. This resulted in an increase of links to (likely abusive) material being shared, and recorded webcam chats with teenagers in particular, without a substantial increase of the number of posts.

Recently, the darkweb forums are showing increased posting activity mainly in the Chat sections. The daily total increased to 2 000 on 25-29 April. General chat and Russian language chat have seen a particular rise in activity during that period, the latter possibly related to a dedicated Russian language site that had downtime during this period. Other chat sections show additional, but minor increases:



Post activity in language-specific sections since the beginning of 2020

Large discussion boards contain local chat sections like these, that are usually language and/or geography based. As these boards also serve as a community chat where 'everyday' topics are discussed, during the Corona crisis we've seen the intensity of local discussions go up with domestic developments. This way, they may also provide a glimpse into the geographical location of forum members. This can provide valuable leads for law enforcement investigations, since the individual IP addresses and locations of Darknet users are unknown.

by [redacted] Wed Apr 22, 2020 5:05

[redacted] wrote: 1 Wed Apr 22, 2020 3:06

The US is unravelling. The pandemic was the Jenga piece that not only exposed the lies we've been telling ourselves for 40 years, but could actually fracture us into new nations. So sad because we have the resources to help lead. Just glad Merkel (a scientist) is keeping her folks safe. God I wish I were German or Danish or Norwegian or Finnish or, Jesus Christ, even Canadian.

Sorry, was I becoming despondent? Things are great! I live on a cloud of hope: hope that Axel will release a new video.

Image

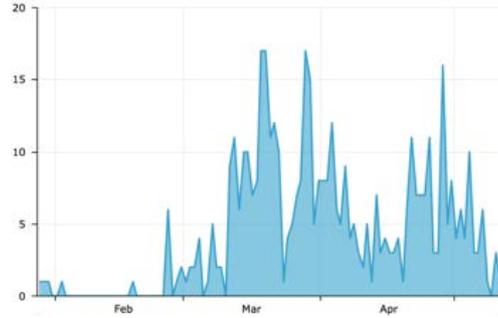
Same over here in Europe.... things could easily get out of hand over here. Some country's don't have a solid financial situation, others do. The ones that do always need to help out the ones that don't. Now with the Corona situation, the country's that don't have a solid financial situation, they need far more help again. Country's like Germany and The Netherlands are against another great financial injection to help them. It's like this since the Euro was introduced, and it will be a problem so long as the Euro exist.



Crimes against children

More time is spent in general chat sections of the CSE forums

Darkweb CSE (child sexual exploitation) forums are large communities of like-minded people. Discussions are not solely focused on the abuse of children; general discussions on a wide range of topics also take place - they are 'hangouts'. In the past week, Corona was a much less discussed topic.



Daily mentions of COVID-19 related terms

This does not mean that there was less activity - to the contrary: the main English-speaking chat section on the largest CSE Darknet forum has never seen as much activity since the beginning of 2020 (see chart below), with over 2670 messages in the last week. The most likely reason for the increase is that users have more free time.



Daily posts in the biggest English-speaking chat thread. Zero means the site was unavailable.

Prevention of transnational child sex offenses due to restricted travel

Due to lockdown measures, travel has been largely restricted, and international travel has been nearly impossible. These travel restrictions also function as a barrier against transnational child sex offenses ('child sex tourism'). Even though mentions of potential travel destinations are generally few on the English-speaking parts of the CSE forums, we did see that the travel restrictions are disrupting child sex offender travel plans.

Re: Indian Miscellaneous Videos

by [redacted] Wed Apr 15, 2020 18:37

[redacted] wrote: ↑
Indian Boy Suck Man

Sat Apr 11, 2020 13:39

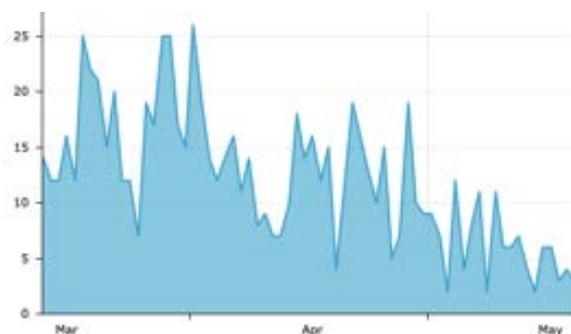
Thanks so much for this video! I was considering returning to the region before COVID ruined the year in travel, and my fantasy was to find a boy just like this to 69 with.



Crimes against children

Changing routines and revivals of old habits of watching child abuse material

Even though the pandemic still lasts, it is slowly and increasingly becoming a smaller part of the discussions on the Darknet child abuse forums, with 36 mentions in the last week, less than a quarter of what it was during the peak in March. Overall, last week followed the stable trend in post activity, continuing at the normal rate of 12 500 posts.



Darknet CSE activity related to COVID-19

Dozens of members who were gone, some for a very long time, returned to CSE-related communities during the crisis months. Not only to communities where abuse material is shared, but also to support sites. The pandemic changes routines, and reduces stability. One of the returning users to a support community explains his reasons:

“I was on here a lot with the same user[name] a long time ago. [...] I hope I can get back into the site. I left because I left Tor as a whole and thought I can take care of this myself. Nope.”

30 March 2020

In discussions about capping (capturing webcam chats, mostly with teenagers), these oldtimers provide advise, disclosing that they have returned from a time away and may not be able to catch up with advancements that happened during their time away.

I also stopped. I couldn't even tell you what the situation the last 3 years was as I stopped talking on tor. I hear TOX is the new thing now. I just can't be bothered to study how to run it through tor. Is there a tutorial? If so I can give it a go. To be honest I never heard of you but that's not bad on your part as you are young and I was absent recent years. But others seem to have you in high regard and you seem to be capable young man/boy (which ever you prefer) so PM me if you wish to get in touch with one of the old cappers. I'm not giving you a bait video tho.

Re: I will start capping, 10 April 2020

There are a few examples of 'coaching' of the new generation of cappers on the CSE forums and difficult to say whether this constitutes a new trend. These usernames resemble (or are equal to) usernames on no longer available forums. As we have described in our reports, we do know from the past weeks that a number of forum members with additional spare time have chosen to spend it on sharing and generating new content.

Good luck -- I hope you succeed! Capping is hard. It was hard back when I used to do it in the late-90s and early 2000s. Cam sites weren't well moderated back then.

Re: I will start capping, 11 April 2020



Crimes against children

Fewer links shared due to unavailability of image hosters

This week we dive into the effect of unavailability of clearnet file hosters on the spreading of CSAM on Darknet CSE forums. We believe that long downtimes of clearnet image hosters has caused a major drop in the number of links being shared on Darknet CSE forums. By getting rid of child abuse material on clearnet hosts, governments can deal a major blow to the spread of this material, even on the Darknet.

Number of shared links that direct to clearnet image files

3 189

January 2020

2 790

February 2020

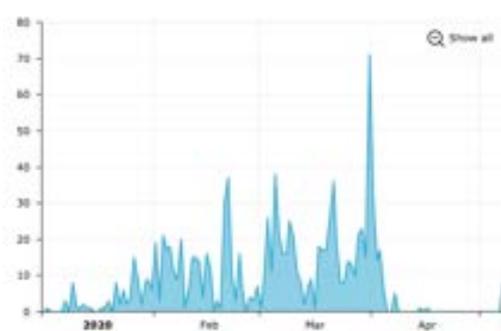
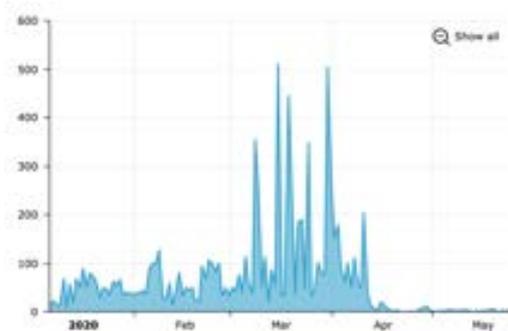
9 255

March 2020

2 802

April 2020

During the course of April, the number of links dropped substantially. Although the total is at the same level as February, the cause does not seem to be an decrease of interest in sharing, but the fact that two major hosts are down. In fact, around 23 May, a user noted that there was **no usable image host** at that moment.



Daily number of download links to two hosters with major downtime

Major CSE forums keep a list of recommended file hosts. A good file hoster doesn't want to be on this list. Links from other hosts are not allowed. These lists are often long, and include the host's file size limit, retention time and strictness of filtering. They can also require special circumventions, such as changing a sites HTML to upload large files.

Potential new allowed hosts require testing before they are recommended; an alternative may not be immediately available. There is still CSAM being shared using less popular services that, for instance, only allow smaller files. In fact, we expect that in a while the number of links will increase even more, when users start requesting re-uploads ('reups') of no longer accessible files from other users.



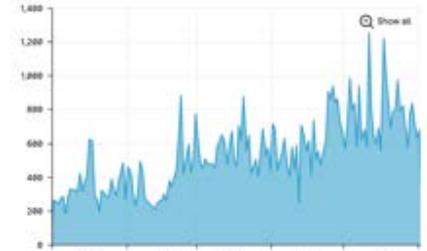
Crimes against children

General chat remains active; still limited options for image link sharing

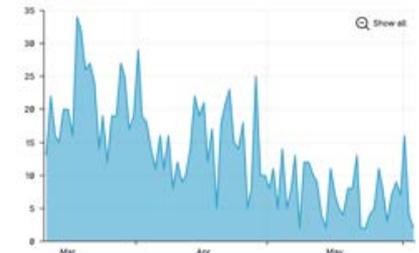
The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every part of society, including darknet CSE environments. The higher general level of activity in discussion sections sustained last week, and there was a further drop in Corona, lockdown and other related keywords as a discussion topic or photo theme.

We are now looking back on the week ending 1 June. On that date, a number of lockdown restrictions in parts of Europe are lifted and a trend break is therefore to be expected.

Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) is often shared by uploading links that point to an image or file on a hosting site - usually on the clearnet, but darknet hosts are gaining ground. A number of 'recommended' file hosts for sharing are still offline and links pointing to those sites no longer work. The number of clearnet links to image files act as our index for the file sharing volume. The month of May is showing a further decrease, based on 1-29 May data.



Activity remains high in general chat sections! These are 'random' discussions not covered by a particular topic.



Further drop in darknet CSE activity related to COVID-19

Number of shared links that direct to clearnet image files

3 189	2 790	9 255	2 802	1 500
Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020

Re: Put the Camera on Me (2003)

Fri May 29, 2020 3:50

Could someone please repost, the datafilehost links are not working and haven't been working since a week now.....

Re: Put the Camera on Me (2003)

Fri May 29, 2020 9:05

I agree with Robin, please guys somebody can re-post this video, but with another host; PLEASE!!!

Asking other users to re-upload files for which downloads point to now inactive services.

Trying to profit from COVID-19 by 'selling photos of my daughter'

We encountered this instance on a major darkweb 'paste' site where anonymous messages can be posted and replied to. The message is a parent offering photos of their daughter for 0.003 Bitcoin. The site is known for frequent posts containing links to CSEM - as well as many kinds of scam, leaked data and copied text from other sites. It is not unlikely that the post points to actual CSEM, however the story is likely to be false. It is yet another example of how some people will use any means to profit from a crisis.



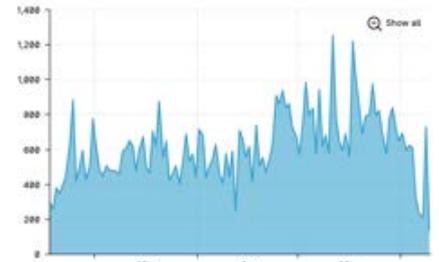


Crimes against children

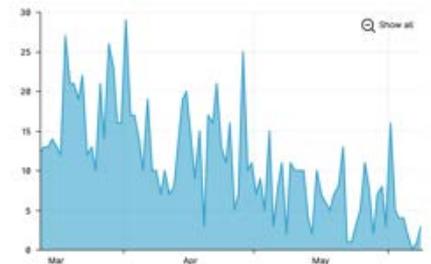
Search for new suitable image hosters; current events again viewed as opportune

As a lot of countries are starting to open up domestically per 1 June, corona returns as a discussion topic, although much less compared to March. Current events including riots in the US and worldwide protests against racism are also a topic on CSE forums. Some users see an opportunity in these destabilizing events as well, stating it may have a 'positive' impact on the accessibility of minors due to lack of supervision, increased poverty and law enforcement capacity being needed elsewhere.

On 5-6-7 June there was a clear dip in activity which we attribute to lesser -but not zero- accessibility of the major content sharing forums. Forums where CSEM is shared are under continuous DDoS attacks.



Before and after a dip in activity dip on 5-7 June similarly high level of activity can be observed.



Frequency of COVID-19 as a discussion topic on dark web CSE forums

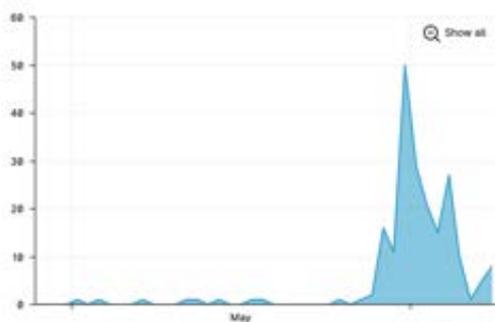
Re: Random Thoughts
by [redacted] Thu Jun 04, 2020 1:02

[redacted] wrote: 7 Tue Jun 02, 2020 21:31
How many pedos do you think are taking advantage of this troubled times? If you know what I mean! :lol::lol:

don't let your guard down.
Riots maybe in the streets, and people are on lockdowns and quarantines, but that don't mean a specific group of law enforcers will just give up on their job. They all have fat wives to feed! :lol:

At the same time, the search is on for new, suitable image hosts. We reported earlier that a number of hosts became unusable. A list of 150 candidate services was posted on one of the forums, these are being tested. An admin is apparently uploading to these services, checking retention time, whether Javascript is required and other characteristics that make it potentially unsafe, or unusable via Tor.

In the past few weeks a file host tutorial and a step-by-step tutorial on how to upload videos were posted, illustrating the fact that it has gotten more complex to securely share CSEM. This is not made easier by the fact that a lot of candidate file hosts are in non-western languages such as Korean, Farsi, Arabic or Turkish.



The use of one of the new 'approved' image hosts, started increasing late May.



Crimes against children

Image sharing activity increasing again while new hosting services are being tested

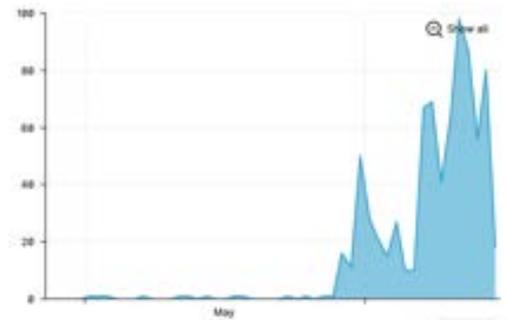
During the first two weeks of this month, image sharing increased again, after a month-long dip due to the unavailability of usable file hosts. In the first two weeks of June, almost 1500 links to image files on clearnet hosts were shared - this is an index number we apply to signal trends in file sharing activity.

Number of shared links that direct to clearnet image files					
3 189	2 790	9 255	2 802	1 403	2 800
Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020	Jun 2020 expected

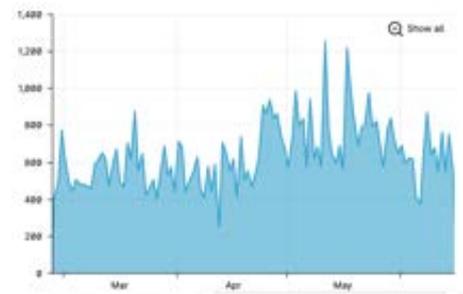
This increase doesn't immediately indicate that there no longer is a shortage of usable hosts. A large number of services are still being tested - with real images. These test images are a contributor - though minor - to the rising number of links shared.

Image Host Test-bed
 by [User] Fri May 29, 2020 4:21
 [...] Is this IH learning to filter us? Time will tell.

Comment about an image host that is still in use, but the service intermittently fails. IH=image host



The use of this host increased rapidly since late May.



Before and after a dip in activity dip on 5-7 June similarly high level of activity can (still) be observed.

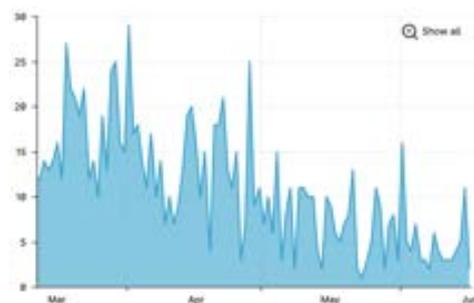


Crimes against children (continued)

The restart of tourism and potential international travel is discussed

While some countries are not even at the peak stage of COVID-19, tourist flights resumed in the Netherlands this week, with airlines taking off to a limited number of European destinations. The restart of international travel is sparking new discussions on CSE-related sites.

Especially in countries that rely heavily on (international) tourism, COVID-19 is causing rising unemployment. Poverty is a risk factor for child sex tourism. The pandemic could increase the susceptibility of countries for child exploitation by international offenders, through increased poverty, unemployment and other destabilizing factors.



Frequency of COVID-19 as a discussion topic on dark web CSE forums

- [13:02] [redacted] everyone know flights are about to open up again , where would you go south america like mexico and dominican republic or asia , manila bangkok
- [13:02] [redacted] bangkok
- [13:04] [redacted] i have been there but not dominican . bangkok was good
- [13:04] [redacted] Bangkok i mean lol
- [13:09] [redacted] i am looking more into dominican republic

From a dark web chat dedicated to online CSE, 16 June 2020

The impact of the pandemic on *adult* sex travel is discussed much more openly. On an international forum members are keeping track of the situation in worldwide destinations, discussing the local legislation and progress with regards to reopening of clubs, bars and general travel by air or ground. Travel to Ukraine, for example, is possible via flight to Belarus and then overground.

Sexual exploitation of children is not a topic on the adult forum. The presence of an established adult sex industry in a country, however, is a known risk factor for potential international child sex offenses.

Angeles City, Philippines

by [redacted] June 2020 09:28

As has been said by many people before: bars being open is relevant ONLY for those already in PH (Manila / AC / Subic. With no inward international flights happening for a long time yet for anyone not using a PH passport or a 13 A visa it is a "moot point".

Thanks for the advice. I am hoping to go back this summer.

by [redacted] May 2020 07:32

I was planning on Colombia for a long term trip of around 5-6 weeks, but Colombia is now closed until September. DR is now up. Hopefully I can get in around early July.

Comments about destinations and travel plans. Mexico, Dominican Republic, Philippines and Thailand, mentioned in the dark web quote, are among the top 10 of most discussed adult destinations as well.

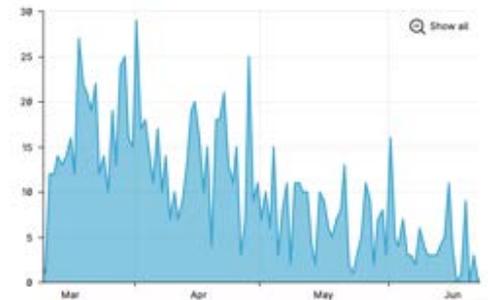


Crimes against children

Responses to news about huge increases in online child exploitation

The pandemic remains a topic of discussion on dark web forums, although the frequency is on a decline.

During the course of the pandemic the amount of child exploitation material shared online increased enormously and so did the number of reports to cybertiplines, from the public and industry. A number of news articles about this increase were cited on the darkweb last week.



Frequency of COVID-19 as a discussion topic on dark web CSE forums

Re: 19.06.2020 Europol: More Childporn in Lockdown

by [redacted] June 2020 11:24

According to the Dutch Public Broadcasting Corporation NOS, Europol says that in the lockdown period much more childporn is produced, all in the months march and april. The highest point was end of march, 10 times so much as normal, that is 1 million. Europol is based their claim on data from the National Center for Missing and exploited Children on them. Especially webcam videos are much more uploaded, but they are not saying of it is from boys or girls.

Re: 19.06.2020 Europol: More Childporn in Lockdown

by [redacted] June 2020 23:15

I knew you guys would find something to do. :lol:

From a dark web forum dedicated to online CSE

Also in the news were a number of law enforcement cases. News about arrests has always been discussed and scrutinized as these articles may contain clues about mistakes the arrested person made, or whether there may be a security flaw in any of the systems that the forum relies on. Members usually won't know each others real name, it may take some community effort to assess whether or not anything was compromised.

A Sad Reminder of Our Need for Extreme Caution!

by [redacted] June 2020 00:41

A little bit of insightful, eye-opening, and thought-provoking information is; you will notice the house search and arrest was on February 4th, 2020. "His" last post [...] was on June 18th, 2020.]

Comment on a news article about the arrest of a forum member, and his account likely taken over by law enforcement

A general observation by us during the pandemic, was that forum members on CSE forums seemed to be sharing more information - not just visual material. Potential causes include an increase of new (younger) forum members who do not have a history on other forums, as well as the general 'panic' caused by a global crisis.

After a dip in May, the file sharing volume is increasing toward pre-corona level.

We use as our index for file sharing volume the number of links to clearnet jpg files.

Number of shared links that direct to clearnet image files

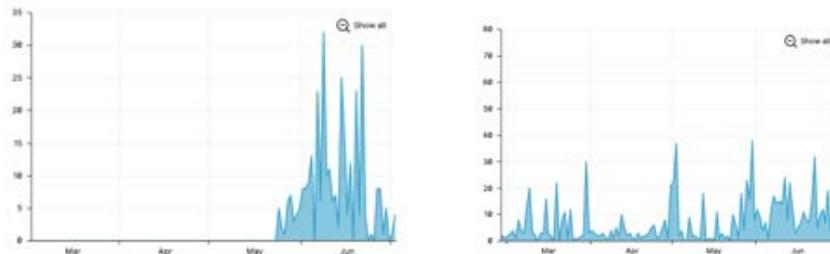
3 189	2 790	9 255	2 802	1 403	2 800
Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020	Jun 2020 expected



Crimes against children

When usable image hosters are removed, replacements immediately appear

In the link sharing charts, a visible breaking point appeared in May when there was major movement in file and image hosting availability. A slight panic arose on the content sharing forums when no usable hosters were available (and 'allowed' by the darknet site) for sharing child abuse material. This was short-lived, unfortunately: as is common in cybercrime, new services pop up virtually instantly.



Two examples of file sharing services showing increases from May.

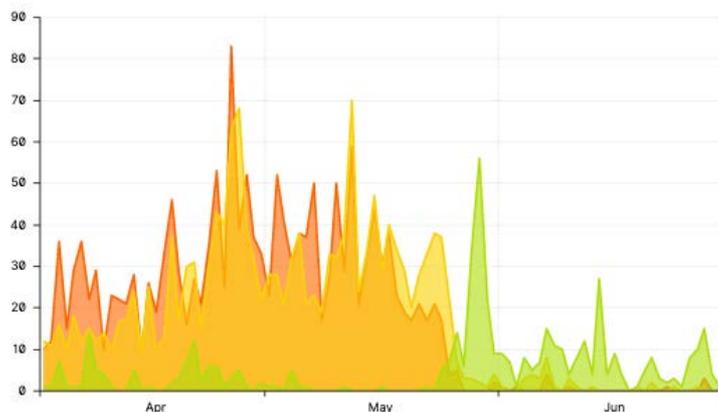
The total file sharing volume is at the same level as four months ago.

We use the number of links to clearnet .jpg files as an index for file sharing volume.

Number of shared links that direct to clearnet .jpg files					
3 189	2 790	9 255	2 802	1 403	2 750
Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	Apr 2020	May 2020	June 2020

Around the same time, multiple file hosting services, including letsupload.cc and megaupload.is, were merged into a single domain. This caused some links to temporarily fail. The members of this 'family of resilient file hosters' are now all part of bayfiles.com. The domain name refers to The Pirate Bay. It disappeared with TPB and then reappeared in 2018, but is unlikely to be affiliated to TPB this time.

Due to the merge, we will likely be finding more and more links to Bayfiles. However, as links to the former services are still working, the shift will be more gradual as forum members won't be 're-uploading' the child abuse material.



Letsupload and megaupload.is (in yellow and orange) and a visible shift to Bayfiles in May.



Crimes against children

Heightened sense of community & engagement

During the pandemic, and probably long after, people are spending much more time online. This was also observable on forums where child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) is shared. Members were more active in chats, more open and often less careful. Examples are a forum topic where members were discussing the closest they had ever been to being caught, and describing what the current situation is like in their country. These topics can reveal information that can be used to localize or identify offenders.

The pandemic also seems to have led to a change in the type of activity. Before Corona, activity was more directly related to up- and downloading. That seems to have expanded, bizarrely, to fringe activities such as games, jokes and other forms of interactive entertainment for community members.

A recent example is an online magazine, launched by one of the darkweb forums. It is explicitly promoted as a team effort and the first issue received overwhelmingly positive responses from the community:

This was very nice and is just like a regular magazine, complete with the puzzles at the end. Sudoku would be nice. Great job guys

July 09, 2020, User feedback on magazine

Why are they running this magazine and other activities?

It is an opportunity for members who may not normally upload CSEM, to contribute and create new content too, although - as one of only a few critics notes - this isn't new content, it is just a different format for the same content. It is possibly a morale booster, a very incongruous light-heartedness. A third explanation may lie in the fact that, as we noted in previous updates, 'old-timers' returned during the pandemic, which may correlate with a sense of *nostalgia in times of crisis*: "Much better than the Nudist mags I had in the 80'S."

Not a bad idea. Like a Newbie page..Site rules , Guidelines , etc. Stuff for the beginner here..Who feels up to doing that? We are always looking for more contributors.

July 11, 2020, Discussing suggestions for a next issue of the magazine

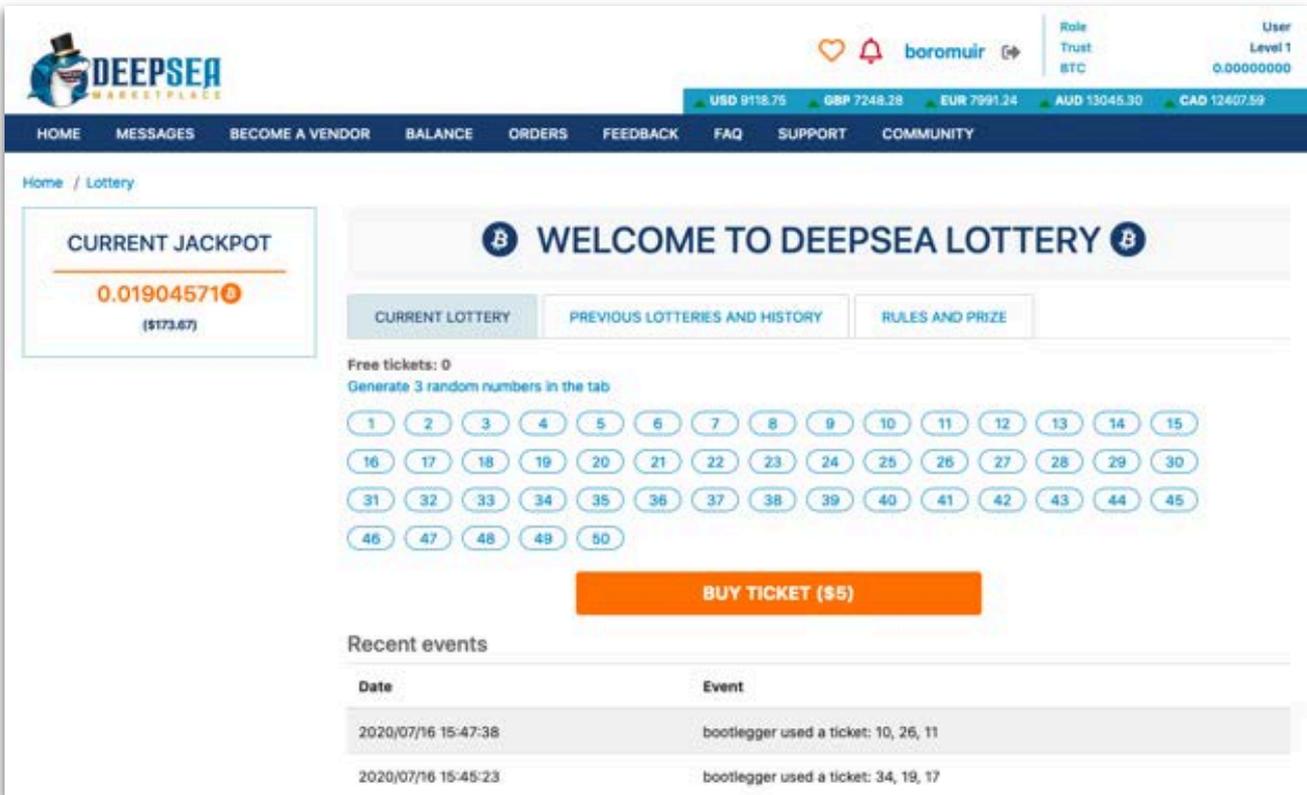
The community may become closer through increased cooperation. The question here is whether this may also lead to unjustified trusting in team members, and the risk of slack in security measures. On top of this, new initiatives (downloading pdf files or puzzles for example) may introduce new ways to make security mistakes.



Contests are common on the dark web

On-topic contests were already common on CSE sites: one site recently had their ‘first anniversary’ with a competition for best video and best banner, among other things. Another forum will reach the same milestone later this month. It provides an incentive for new content, the main currency in these places.

Contests are also very common on other (non-CSE) dark web sites, such as drugs markets. Below is a screenshot from a marketplace called Deepsea where a regular lottery is held. Events like these are among the marketing activities of darknet drugs markets and encourage customer engagement.



Crimes against children

The total file sharing volume remains stable



We use the number of links to clearnet jpg files as an index for file sharing volume. For July a slight increase is to be expected, based on month-to-date volume.



Crimes against children

File sharing volume explained

COVID-19 lockdown measures are likely to have increased online child sexual exploitation in the past months. It appears that the amount of shared child sexual abuse material is now back at the same level as before the pandemic. We draw this conclusion based on the index number we use for file sharing volume. About this number we received some questions. Why are we reporting this index and not the actual CSAM volume?

The answer is that this index is the best indicator we have for recognizing fluctuations, since *we don't know* the real volume. We index the hyperlinks that are posted, but we don't download any files. Information is gathered from e.g. URL, filename and other metadata such as retrieval dates. This can already provide useful insights, such as when a link was first seen, or which domains are most popular. However it does not tell us what's in these files, or how many images and videos are distributed.

Re: Whonix questions

Here is a link to a text file on how to install Whonix <http://dl.free.fr/AbCDefgH>

Pure Nudism boy

The size of this archive is 101 MB, and it contains 691 photos. Link to 7z archive:

<https://www.datafilehost.com/d/IJ12jk34m>

The file contents are often not obvious from the filename or URL. In these examples, the post provides more information.

As can be seen in the example, an archive file (zip, rar etc) can contain hundreds of images, while a large video may be split over multiple downloads. One link does not constitute one image or one video. This is why we use links to jpg files (that are shared in CSE forum posts) as our index for spotting trends, as jpg files are likely to point to single images. We think that this index constitutes less than 1% of the actual volume.

The question whether or not the volume of child sexual abuse material has returned to the pre-pandemic level is therefore almost as difficult to answer, as it is the result of a complex of factors. First and foremost, we should not forget that we are talking about the recording of child sexual abuse. In April, we also reported on an increase in webcam recordings.

During the first weeks of the pandemic, a large spike in activity partly caused by users uploading older archives, previously downloaded from long-gone sites.



(continued)

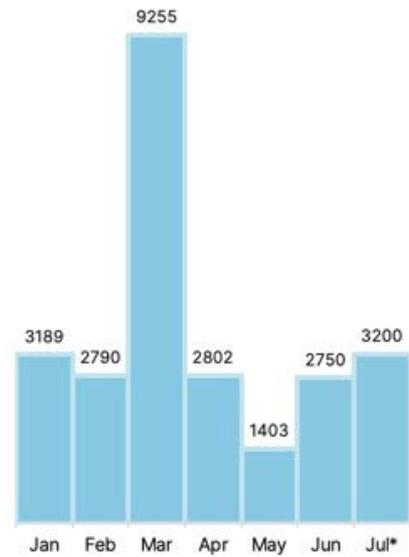
However, some technical aspects of hosting cause an increase or decrease in the volume of CSAM being re-shared on the dark web, independent of an increase in actual child abuse:

Unavailable hosts: Forums keep a list of approved and/or recommended hosts, based on different security and retention factors. Changes in a sites terms of use may render a host unsuitable. Hosting sites may go offline. Etc. As a contingency, forum members often upload images and videos to multiple sites. Even more, when there is uncertainty about image hosting availability.

Re-ups: When a major darkweb CSE site was discontinued last year, forum members flocked to a different site. This also caused a large number of re-uploads or 're-ups': forum members requesting specific images or videos from other members. This also indicates that these forums are used as a shared, non-local collection method. Re-ups are also common after an image host fails.

This is why it is common to see the volume bounce back rapidly after a period of technical problems.

Number of shared links that direct to clearrnet .jpg files



We use the number of links to clearrnet jpg files as an index for file sharing volume. For July a slight increase is to be expected, based on month-to-date volume.