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*** Content Warning**

This report contains detailed and disturbing information regarding child sexual exploitation and predation networks. The subject matter includes descriptions of criminal activities, abuse, and systemic violence against children that may be deeply distressing, triggering, or traumatic for readers. Reader discretion is strongly advised.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utilizing a keyword based analysis of X (formerly Twitter), the [Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change](#) (CABC) conducted research on accounts that may be involved in proliferating Child Sexual Abuse Materials (“CSAM”) or fantasy CSAM online. After refining for relevance, around +- 500 accounts were found that utilized a selection of keywords that have, in the past, been used to propagate CSAM or fantasy CSAM, with some accounts being identified as directly posting content that is determined CSAM.

The CABC conducted a network analysis on the relevant accounts in order to determine whether they reference one another and researchers found that several authors in our defined list references other authors in the list when posting content. This may indicate that certain authors act in concert with one another either loosely or with coordination. It was further found that X’s AI Model has the propensity to further bolster the support or spread these accounts further, when users asked for similar accounts.

The report then examined different platforms, Telegram being the most prominent due to the sharing of Telegram Group links on X. On the platform, several groups were found that were dedicated to posting explicit content and, indeed, CSAM as well as offering exchanges of CSAM or directing users to pay for access to premium groups focused on “CSAM” content. During the writing of this report, one such group was suspended for violating Telegram’s Terms and Conditions, however, requests for the exchange of CSAM remained on other groups. In addition, it is likely that in future, these reported groups will be restored with added protection layers.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report follows our second report in this series, namely [The State of Child Predation on South African Social Media](#) “*After 12 is Lunch*” (hereinafter “the Child Predation Report”), and serves to investigate the accounts allegedly involved in perpetuating harmful content such as Child Sexual Abuse Materials (“CSAM”) online or, indeed, the fantasization / role play of such content. In the [previous report](#), the [Centre for Analytics and Behavioural Change](#) (CABC) found that the sexualisation of minor children is rife on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), however, counter narratives existed in the conversation.

Most concerning, however, was the perpetuation of CSAM content by a network of accounts on X. These posts were often captioned with hashtags or keywords such as #ama2k or ama2000 which refers to the period that the subject of the image or video being born after the year 2000. While an individual born in the year 2000 is 25, at the time of publishing, the captions are often utilized to refer to individuals in school or in and around the age of 18 or younger.

This report hones in the network of accounts involved in sharing content with the hashtag #ama2k or other similarly situated keywords. In addition, it evaluates the interaction of different platforms in the perpetuation of this type of harmful content. In particular, this report looks at X, Telegram, Facebook and WhatsApp.

CSAM proliferates on online social media platforms. As the Stanford Internet Observatory (SIO) noted in 2023¹, the posting, sharing and trading of CSAM can be considered the most harmful negative outcome of global online connected communities. An expression of which is social media. While the SIO report focuses predominantly on self-generated CSAM, many concepts and directions present in the report are relevant for the exploration of CSAM on social media more generally. Notably, the use of hashtags, references to contact numbers, ‘menus’ of content, and the transfer of users from one social network to another through links or contact details.

¹ [Cross-Platform Dynamics of Self-Generated CSAM](#) (2023)

A key methodology employed by the SIO and replicated in this report is the use of network analysis to identify communities of CSAM producers and users. This is explored further in the report.

Returning to an understanding of the systemic reality of CSAM on social media, the authors Salter and Hanson², explore the historical development of social media as a site for Child Exploitation (CE). In their retelling of this history, what comes to light is the early prevalence of this issue, from as early as the late 1980's. As they continue to recount the narrative, the term cyberlibertarianism emerges, in other words, the ideology driving forward the stance that individual freedom should be the utmost protected right, unencumbered by regulation, of internet users. An expression well-viewed through the analysis of the trajectory of regulation within media more broadly, but importantly across social media in the past few years.

Namely in the cases of X, and the Meta suite of platforms and predominantly focused on mis- and disinformation but insidiously affecting the moderation of pornographic content, including CSAM³. This is important as it delimits the context within which the content explored in this report resides. A space fraught by deeply unregulated communities within which the system for the proliferation of CSAM is fostered, on public social media, public to its broadest extent such that nothing more than an email address, easily unverified or obfuscated, is needed to be exposed, or indeed to generate this content. In turn easily hidden through niche hashtags, 'inside' terms or networks of referral.

The SIO report further notes that content is often not shared directly on a social media platform, a trend embodied through the use of terms such as 'I do not own this content' or 'dm (direct message) to remove', alongside telegram links, all of which are prevalent

² ["I Need You All to Understand How Pervasive This Issue Is": User Efforts to Regulate Child Sexual Offending on Social Media](#) (Salter and Hanson, 2021).

³ [Reversal of content policies at Alphabet, Meta and X threaten democracy, warn experts \(the Guardian, 2023\)](#)

in the South African context and further explored in this report. An important signifier that the information explored here is merely the easily accessible surface of the deep web of networks and content sites which host and facilitate CE and CSAM.

What is further true and important to understand the environment of CSAM on social media in South Africa, is the intersectional, patriarchal and overarching rape culture which permeates the South African social fabric.

The Optimus Study South Africa (OSSA)⁴ estimates the prevalence of child sexual abuse at 36.8% of boys and 33.9% of girls surveyed or interviewed as adolescents, providing a total prevalence of 35.4% or 1 in every 3 children within the sample. While this is a major cause for concern, a 2022 UN report on preventative and response-based action by global governments ranks South Africa as 5th in the world regarding efforts to protect children and adolescents from abuse and exploitation⁵. This is a clear indicator of the depth of awareness of the problem of CSE and CSAM in South Africa, yet remains all too far away from the lived experiences of individuals exposed to abuse and is juxtaposed against lax social media platform regulation which fails to meet the espoused standards and values of national efforts to curb GBVF, CE, and CSAM.

The remainder of the report explores social media data gathered to understand the scope of CSAM material on public social media.

⁴ [The prevalence of child sexual abuse in South Africa: The Optimus Study South Africa](#)

⁵ <https://outoftheshadows.global/data>

2. METHODOLOGY

A narrow set of keywords / hashtags were isolated based on their propensity to be used in harmful explicit posts or CSAM. This set of keywords was inserted into a social media analytics tool which analyzes public social media, namely X, for posts that use the keywords.

Thereafter, the CABC isolated 500 accounts which used the keywords most frequently in their posts. A manual review of each of the 500 accounts was undertaken by researchers in order to determine whether their posts are relevant to the focus area. Accounts that were not relevant were excluded from the analysis. All accounts that posted explicit content were included in the analysis. It should be clarified that just because an account posted explicit content does not mean that they engage in the perpetuation of CSAM, however, at least implicitly, these accounts engage in fantasization of teenagers or young women.

Relevant accounts were then placed into a network mapping application which looked at the interaction between the different accounts in order to map at least part of the network. Researchers encountered difficulties in mapping the full network because the social media analytics platform and the network mapping tool operate independently meaning a direct one-to-one transfer of all accounts and interactions was not possible. Instead the active connections that emerged through mentions and engagements could be represented resulting in the focused clusters shown in the visualization.

In addition to insights drawn from the network mapping, the CABC noted in the Child Predation Report that certain accounts engage in posting cycles where several images or videos would be posted on a single day and then lack of posting for a period. This led to preliminary finding that the content was being collected and / or shared from a different platform prior to posting on X. It is difficult to determine where these posts originate from without cross-platform tracing capabilities and digital source verification, however, investigating the interaction between platforms may provide an indication of

the extent to which CSAM content proliferates as well as the various avenues undertaken to proliferate such content.

3. NETWORK ANALYSIS

After refining for relevance and narrowing the dataset with a focused set of keywords, the team initially isolated the top 500 accounts. These accounts were then exported into a network analysis tool to examine patterns of interaction. Once processed, duplicate, inactive, and non-engaged accounts were filtered out, leaving only those that actively interacted through mentions or direct engagements.

As a result, the network condensed to the smaller set of nodes seen in the visualization, where individuals (orange), organizations⁶ (green), and mentions (purple) form distinct clusters. This refined view highlights the true centers of activity and influence within the conversation, rather than the broader but less connected set of 500 accounts. Accounts acted as central hubs driving conversations, and which remained peripheral with limited engagement.

⁶ Our analytics tool characterised an account as an organisational account, which is likely due to the user converting or establishing the account as a professional account on X.

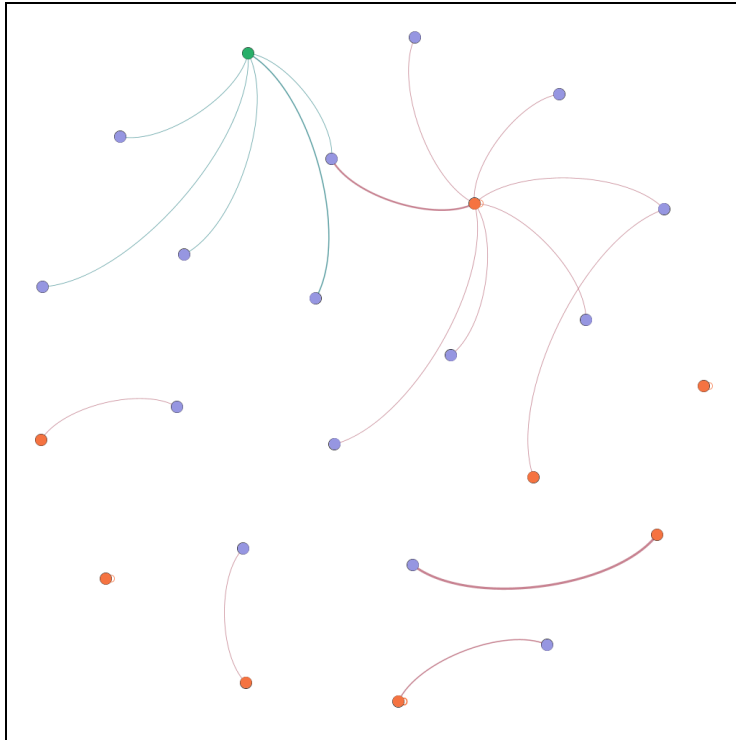


Figure 1: Network Interactions

Organizational Green Node

- The green node represents an organization that connects directly to several mentions (purple nodes).
- This suggests the account characterised as an organisation is a central actor in the network either being mentioned frequently by individuals or actively mentioning others.
- Its central position and multiple outward connections indicate influence across multiple mentions.

Individual Orange Nodes

- Several orange nodes act as individual influencers.
- The largest orange hub in the right-hand cluster has multiple purple mentions linked to it, showing it is highly active in driving the conversation or frequently being referenced.

- Other orange nodes form smaller isolated clusters, representing individuals with limited but targeted influence.

Mentions Purple Nodes

- Most purple nodes connect to a single orange or green node, highlighting that mentions are one-directional and not reciprocal.
- This reflects a broadcast-like communication style, where central individuals and organizations push content that references others without deep engagement back.

3.1 ACCOUNT INTERACTIONAL ANALYSIS

As the network graph above indicates, there are a few authors that drive the majority of the conversation and references other authors in our network in their posts. This may suggest that there is a coordinated network or, at the very least, a loosely affiliated network of posters that refer to certain accounts when posting CSAM and / or fantasy CSAM content on their pages due to their tendency to expose their audiences to similar types of content.

In addition, the explicit content is also treated as products with one account posting “DM me Black Friday special for free”. In a now deleted post, one of the accounts provided his gmail account for “collaborations” or “private meet-ups” as well as for his network to provide him with further videos and stating specifically “.... #teens that want to send me such awesome videos email me [email omitted]” (see Figure 2 below).

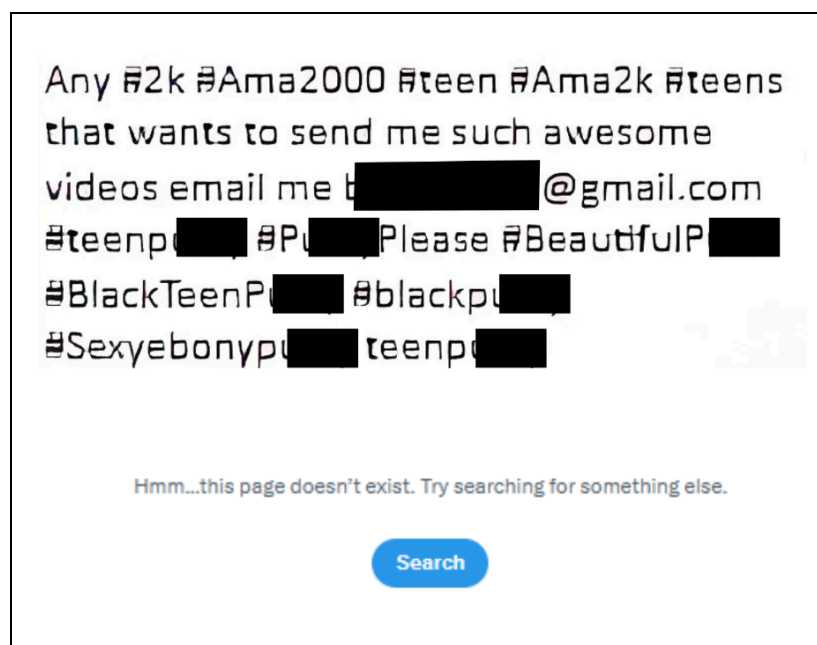


Figure 2: Account providing Gmail

While our Network Map above indicates around 20+ plus accounts from the 500 authors engaging with one another, the analysis was restricted to the engagement between our defined authors and does not include third party actors (accounts not reflected in the 500 authors) reposting such content. There is highly likely a further underground group of individuals that repost the content as illustrated in the engagement snippet of one such post below.

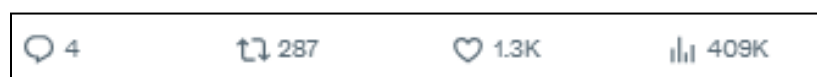


Figure 3: Snippet of Engagement on a relevant post

In one of the comments depicted in Figure X above, researchers further discovered that the large language model-based conversational agent developed for X, namely Grok, may itself be prone to proliferating accounts involved in the distribution of CSAM or fantasy CSAM accounts. The model is architected to handle a wide range of queries, including those that may be declined by other AI systems due to more restrictive content handling parameters.

As noted in Figure 4 below, one user requested Grok to provide similar accounts and the AI obliged by giving the user several accounts broken down by what their posts focus on as well as noting that the accounts provide explicit content. It is noteworthy that the model is able to provide the accounts at request, however, it has not been trained to moderate accounts for potential abuse of children.



Figure 4: Grok Providing a User Similar Accounts.

Furthermore, and as alluded to throughout this report as well as the prior report - our analysis extends solely to accounts that utilize the specific keywords that have a propensity to bring in CSAM or fantasy CSAM content. Without an advanced image and / or video monitoring tool to scrape the entirety of X, our analysis cannot reveal the true scale of the network proliferating CSAM or fantasy CSAM on X. However, based on the findings above, we can make the following *prima facie* observations: (1) There is a network, whether loose or coordinated; (2) The network is centralised around keywords which have the tendency to bring in CSAM or fantasy CSAM content and (3) the network extends to different platforms and avenues for proliferation / collection of CSAM or fantasy CSAM content.

4. CROSS-PLATFORM ACCOUNT LINKING

Beyond interacting intraplatform, the CABC further observed cross-platform account linking by different accounts, most notably Telegram groups, where certain users were directed to join Telegram groups focused on explicit content, sometimes for an entry fee to, what is labelled, 'premium' sites. Below are two figures showing total mentions by unique authors within our *defined* list of authors. This excludes retweets. The second figure indicates total mentions by unique authors but includes retweets between the defined accounts as well as accounts external to the defined accounts.

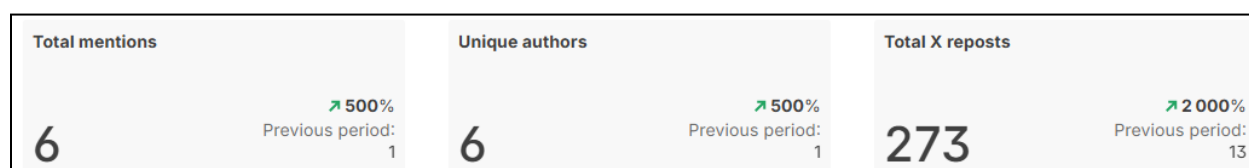


Figure 5: Mentions referencing different platforms

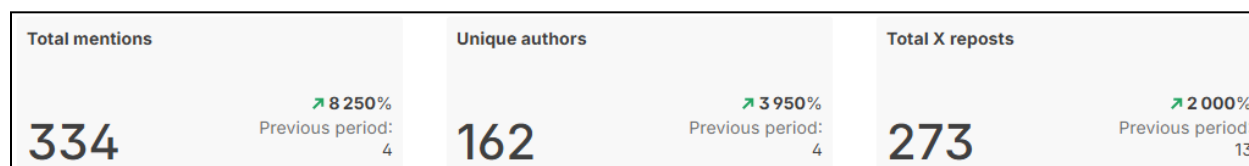


Figure 6: Mentions including retweets of posts referencing different platforms

Figure 5 above indicates that within a one year period, around 6 unique accounts posted content with both a link to an external platform as well as utilized the keywords in the post. Figure 6 indicates that the unique authors rises to 162 accounts when accounting for the retweets of those 6 mentions.

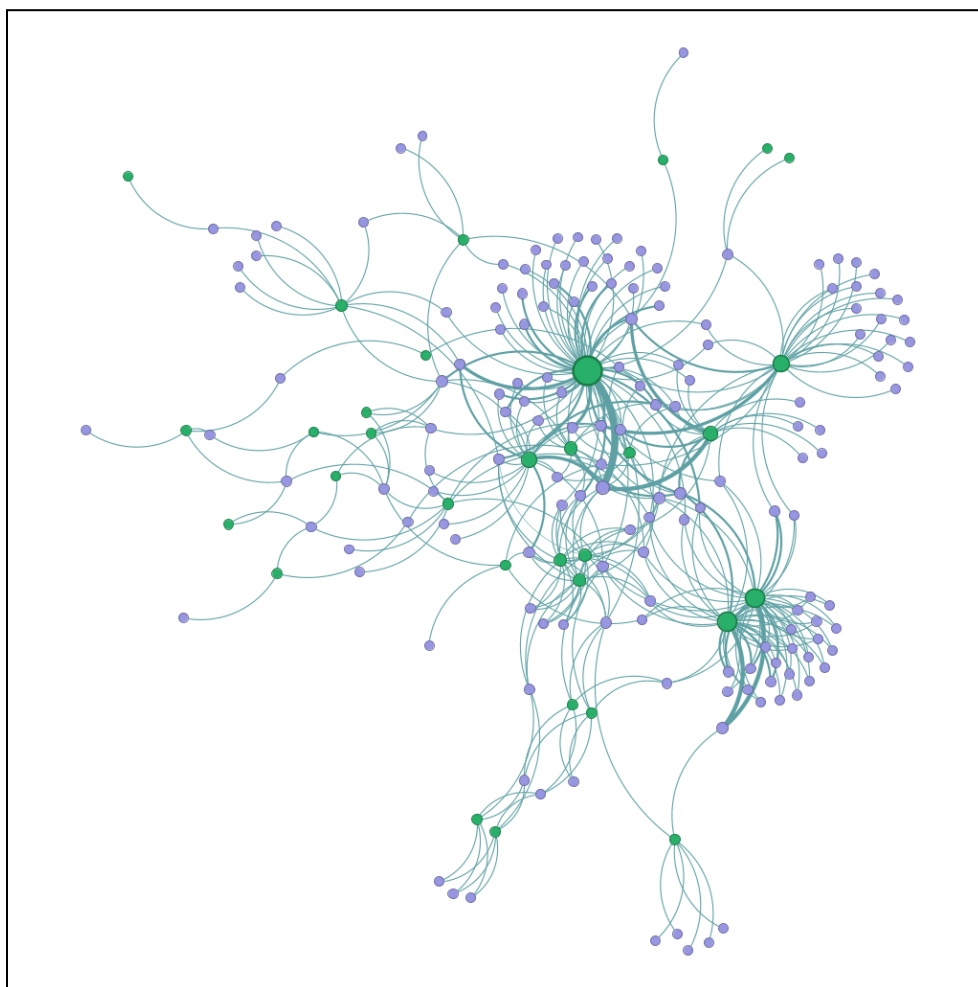


Figure 7: Network of Links

Figure 7 above is a visual representation of the sharing of the links where the green nodes indicate the most shared links (including the same images) between the authors and the purple represents the authors that share the links on the posts.

The accounts predominantly provided either their cellphone numbers for further perpetuation of explicit content on WhatsApp or links to their Telegram groups, as noted above. The use of Telegram and WhatsApp are, presumably, due to their ability to close off groups and create discretion in the perpetuation of CSAM and other explicit content. The devolution to Telegram and WhatsApp is indicated in the post labelled Figure 8 and 9 below.

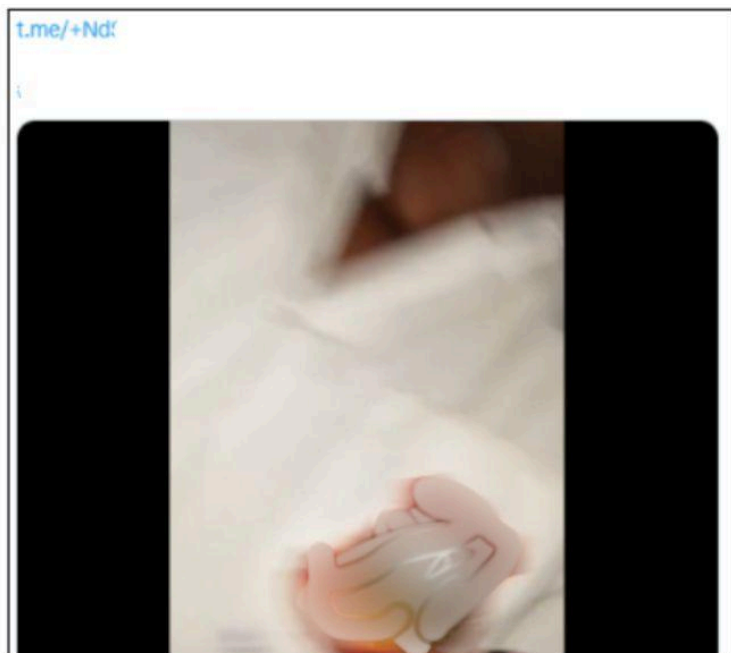


Figure 8: Post directing accounts to Telegram

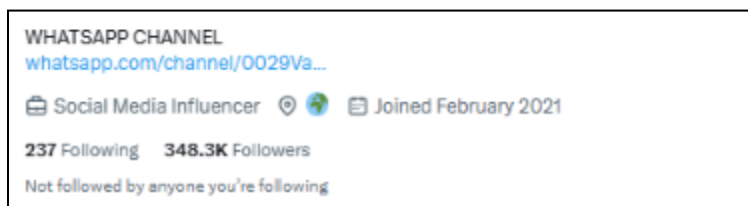


Figure 9: User bio directing accounts to WhatsApp

Unlike X, often described as the global townsquare, WhatsApp and Telegram are free, cloud-based messaging and social media applications for instant messaging, voice calls and video calls. Both applications can facilitate one-to-one communication as well as have broadcast channels and groups with select members.

These channels and / or groups are used to facilitate the proliferation of explicit content including child sexual abuse materials. On Telegram for example, every participant to a group can post while Channels follow a subscription model and only administrators can post.

For new and old members. This is a preview of our premium channel where we post High school le@ks / black t33n, white t33nns [2-14] / inc€st videos and other D@rk Contents 🚫

PREMIUM GROUP SALES 🥰👉👉👉👉👉

1 GROUP=R89/\$5.5 ✓

4 GROUPS=R320/\$18.5 ✓✓

6 GROUPS=R499/\$28.5 🏆✓✓✓

Subscribe via RSA Banks 🇿🇦 OR PayPal 🇺🇸

Figure 10: Telegram “Menu” with costs of access.

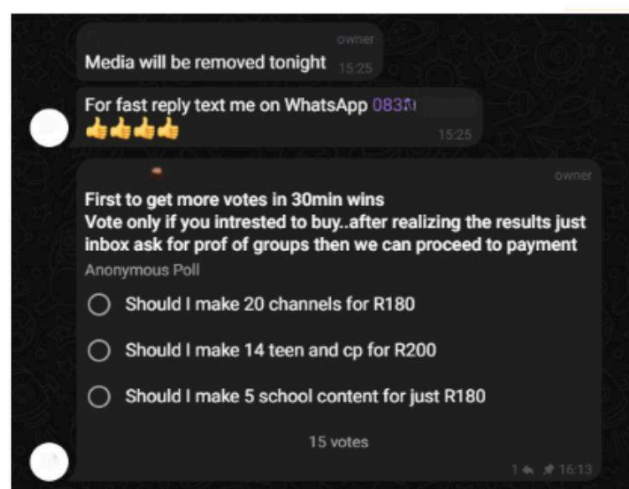


Figure 10a: Telegram “Menu” with costs of access.

The posts reflected above were made in “public” facing groups with no bar to entry and often provide “sample” explicit content. Account administrators or individuals that are admin in other groups often post the cost of joining premium groups and provide a “menu” of the type of groups and the explicit content provided in said groups. Note the use of “t33n” and “cp” to evade censorship from Telegram itself. Cp, in particular, refers to “child porn” and t33n is an intentional misspelling of teen,.

The user with the name “content provider” also provides his WhatsApp number for users to engage with him on WhatsApp. An analysis of the account indicates that he

may be located in Gauteng. It should further be noted that, at time of writing, the group wherein this content was posted was suspended due to violating Telegram's Terms of Service.

Despite the above action, the proliferation of CSAM content continues in other avenues. For example, the two posts below remain up on two other groups on Telegram, one being a chatroom located in Durban (Figure 11) and the other purporting to be a group that facilitates casual sexual encounters in exchange for money (Figure 11a/b). The last post was sent to a group chat which has a variety of content, including spam, however posts such as that reflected in Figure 11, 11a and 11b are sporadically reflected in the group.

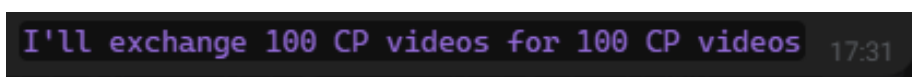


Figure 11: User requesting Child Sexual Abuse Material Exchange

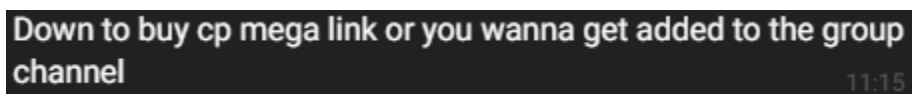


Figure 11a: User Indicating CSAM content for sale

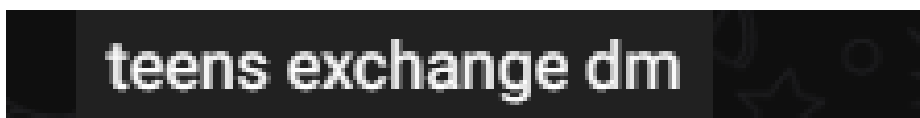


Figure 11b: User requesting Child Sexual Abuse Material Exchange

Many of these groups have a short lifespan, particularly those dedicated to CSAM content. However, as soon as one group is shut down another is created to replace it with more stringent access controls and less visible to the public. This, in addition to the migration to different platforms such as WhatsApp makes a platform based approach to CSAM futile.

5. REPORTING

Upon finalising the report, the CABC undertook to report all instances of Child Sexual Abuse Materials as well as references made to Child Sexual Abuse Materials Across Telegram and X. This involved reporting accounts on X and reporting posts on Telegram. A sample of 8 accounts were reported on the 23rd of September 2025.

At time of publishing, zero accounts were suspended / removed from X. However, during the reporting period, one key group involved in CSAM distribution was banned on Telegram. While removal and / or suspension is a step in the right direction, it is likely that the groups will be recreated in future which represents a significant issue in both platform moderation as well as combatting child sexual abuse material online.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the findings above, the CABC recommends the following:

- Shift from reactive to proactive, where platforms build in safeguards from the start regarding explicit content and protecting children.
- Civil society should advocate for systemic change by demanding transparency through independent third-party audits.
- Push for detailed transparency reporting in respect of CSAM content, how moderation takes place and if indigenous languages are accounted for in moderation.
- Foster Cross-Sector Collaboration between Social Media Platforms and Civil Society in order to strengthen moderation, reporting mechanisms and accountability both of platforms and users.
- Another consideration may be for the blanket ban on all explicit content on social media platforms due to the potential for the proliferation of content that may harm children as well as provide an avenue for exploitation of children for monetary or other nefarious and illegal purposes.

7. CONCLUSION

This report investigated accounts that may be involved in the proliferation of CSAM and / or fantasy CSAM content. It found that there is a coordinated or loosely connected network of accounts that post content and refer to each other in posts. It further found that X's AI system, namely Grok, has the potential to further spread accounts that may be involved in harmful content.

The report further analysed Telegram's groups that may be involved in the proliferation of CSAM and found that these groups are "fee for entry" groups where users may have free reign to post and have access to CSAM. Despite the removal of groups that proliferate CSAM, it is likely that other groups will be set up to replace and continue the practice.

Given the above, reporting the accounts for suspension and / or removal remains a good mechanism, it is equivalent to placing a plaster over a gunshot wound. Platforms need to take accountability for the proliferation of posts that harm children.

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