

Making sure Artificial Intelligence does not undermine Online Safety

October 2024

Warning: The following action contains references to child sexual abuse, but not any explicit detail.

The February 2021 Synod meeting resolved:

The gospel calls us to relate to each other with love, treating each other with dignity and respect, and to condemn exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people. God's people are called to pursue justice, including by empowering those who are exploited and abused....

In our age, there is a need to prevent and address human rights abuses online, including acting against the promotion and facilitation of child sexual abuse.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly developing. While AI can have significant benefits for some uses, unfortunately, there are online predators making use of it to enhance their ability to sexually abuse children in the online world.

The UK Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has reported that AI-generated child sexual abuse material has increased. They reported that they had started to see perpetrators with a mix of images of real child sexual abuse and AI-generated child sexual abuse. The AI-generated images can mean police waste valuable resources seeking to rescue a child from sexual abuse who is not being subjected to real-world sexual abuse or who does not exist at all. It is becoming extremely difficult to tell the difference between AI-generated images and real images (as an example, the image displayed here was AI-generated).



There are businesses that have developed generative AI apps with the purpose of removing a person's clothing from an image of a real person. Many allow for free trials before charging for ongoing use. Such apps are open to abuse. In the case of children, the apps can be used to generate fake sexual images of children and the fake images used for sexual extortion of the child. Such extortion can include coercing the child to provide real images of themselves.

The eSafety Commissioner stated of such apps:

It is difficult to conceive of a purpose for these apps outside of the nefarious. Some might wonder why apps like this are allowed to exist at all, given their primary purpose is to sexualise, humiliate, demoralise, denigrate or create child sexual abuse material of girls according to the predator's personal predilection. A Bellingcat investigation found that many such apps are part of a complex network of nudifying apps owned by the same holding company that effectively disguises detection of the primary purpose of these apps in order to evade enforcement action.

In March 2024, it was reported that ClothOff had more than four million monthly visits and invited users to "undress anyone using AI." It charged £8.50 for 25 credits and did not provide meaningful age verification for users.

The IWF reported that one online guide for child sexual abuse perpetrators contained a section explicitly encouraging perpetrators to use 'nudifying' tools to generate material to subject children to sexual extortion. The author of the guide claimed to have successfully blackmailed 13-year-old girls into sending 'intimate' images.

Recent investigations have uncovered the existence of organised sexual extortion groups. These groups operate across borders and use call centre-like operations to communicate with hundreds of potential victims at once.

The negative psychological impacts of sexual extortion include feelings of low self-esteem, withdrawal, worthlessness, anger and guilt. In some cases, victims have engaged in self-harm or killed themselves.

AI developers can restrict how their technology can be used. It has been possible to limit what some AI models can generate by limiting the training data they have been exposed to.

We need to make it clear that the community cares about preventing abuse, especially child sexual abuse, in the online world.

What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters to:

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon Mark Dreyfus, QC MP

Attorney-General
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Salutation: Dear Attorney-General

The Hon. Michelle Rowland MP

Minister for Communications
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letter:

- Express deep concern at serious harms that are facilitated in the online world, especially child sexual abuse.
- Note the rapid development of artificial intelligence and ask that the government get in front of the technology developments to ensure online safety and well-being by:
 - requiring artificial technology (AI) products to be safe by design;
 - giving the eSafety Commissioner the power require that a generative AI model can be taken down until such time as it can be made safe from generating child sexual abuse material and non-consensual intimate images;
 - prohibiting generative AI apps that have the purpose of removing a person's clothing from an image of a real person;
 - prohibiting platforms from hosting clothing-removing apps for download or use;
 - prohibiting the provision of advice, tools or manuals that explicitly advise on how to use AI tools to produce child sexual abuse material;
 - prohibiting search engines from returning results to users for generative AI services to produce child sexual abuse material; and
 - prohibiting the creation generative AI chatbots that allow for sexual communication with a simulated child.

Please send us copies of any replies you get to your letters.