



NCMEC Notice Tracking System

Removal of Apparent Child Pornography by Electronic Service Providers

In an effort to further decrease the proliferation of child pornography online, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) developed a Notice Tracking System. This system allows NCMEC to monitor the length of time an Electronic Service Provider continues to host apparent child pornography after being notified of its existence.

When a website is reported to the CyberTipline and deemed to contain images of apparent child pornography, the NCMEC analyst attempts to determine a jurisdiction for the person responsible for posting the content. If located, the information is made available to law enforcement for possible investigation of that individual and the notice is not sent to the ESP. This process provides law enforcement the opportunity to preserve the evidence and serve legal process to provider for complete records. However, if a jurisdiction cannot be determined, NCMEC notifies the Electronic Service Provider responsible for hosting the apparent child pornography through a process within the CyberTipline. This notification contains the exact URL where apparent child pornography is located, information regarding the CyberTipline, and further details about 18 USCS § 2258A. To allow law enforcement additional time to review the report, notifications are sent the day after the CyberTipline report has been processed. Each business day, NCMEC generates a report of the notifications sent and imports the data into the Notice Tracking System. After notifying the Electronic Service Provider, each URL is manually accessed and reviewed to determine if the company has removed the apparent child pornography content. If the URL is no longer active or the apparent child pornography was removed, NCMEC documents that information in the Notice Tracking System. All active URLs are moved into another queue for additional steps. The NCMEC analyst manually reviews all active URLs from all previous notifications. As the URLs are removed, they are documented as 'down' along with the corresponding date.

Through this process, the Notice Tracking System compiles information and stores it for future analysis. The system allows NCMEC to assess how long the URLs remain active after initial notification. If an Electronic Service Provider does not remove the apparent child pornography within 5 business days of receiving the initial notice, NCMEC re-contacts the ESP by e-mail. If the apparent child pornography remains active for 10 business days after the initial notice, NCMEC calls the company to determine the status of the notification. NCMEC continues to access URLs on a daily basis and communicates with companies until the apparent child pornography is removed.

For each Electronic Service Provider, the Notice Tracking System quickly compiles statistics regarding the number of notifications sent, how many of the notifications resulted in the removal of apparent child pornography, and the average number of days the content remained on the URL.