



## IWF statement regarding Wikipedia webpage

A Wikipedia webpage was reported through the IWF's online reporting mechanism on 4 December 2008. As with all potentially illegal online child sexual abuse reports we receive, the image was assessed according to current UK legislation and in accordance with the [UK Sentencing Guidelines Council](#) (page 109). The content was considered to be a potentially illegal indecent image of a child under the age of 18, hosted outside the UK. As such, in accordance with IWF procedures, the specific webpage was added to the IWF list. This list is provided to ISPs and other companies in the online sector to help protect their customers from inadvertent exposure to potentially illegal indecent images of children.



Following representations from Wikipedia, IWF invoked its [Appeals Procedure](#) and has given careful consideration to the issues involved in this case. The procedure is now complete and has confirmed that the image in question is potentially in breach of the Protection of Children Act 1978. However, the IWF Board has today (9 December 2008) considered these findings and the contextual issues involved in this specific case and, in light of the length of time the image has existed and its wide availability, the decision has been taken to remove this webpage from our list.

Any further reported instances of this image which are hosted abroad, will not be added to the list. Any further reported instances of this image which are hosted in the UK will be assessed in line with IWF procedures.

IWF's overriding objective is to minimise the availability of indecent images of children on the internet, however, on this occasion our efforts have had the opposite effect. We regret the unintended consequences for Wikipedia and its users. Wikipedia have been informed of the outcome of this procedure and IWF Board's subsequent decision.

### Notes

IWF is the UK's internet 'Hotline' for the public and IT professionals to report potentially illegal online content within our remit. We work in partnership with the online industry, law enforcement, government, the education sector, charities, international partners and the public to minimise the availability of this content, specifically, child sexual abuse content hosted anywhere in the world and criminally obscene and incitement to racial hatred content hosted in the UK.

We are an independent self-regulatory body, funded by the EU and the wider online industry, including internet service providers, mobile operators and manufacturers, content service providers, filtering companies, search providers, trade associations and the financial sector as well as other organisations that support us for corporate social responsibility reasons.

We help internet service providers and hosting companies to combat abuse of their networks through our national 'notice and take-down' service which alerts them to potentially illegal content within our remit on their systems and we provide unique data to law enforcement partners in the UK and abroad to assist investigations into the distributors of potentially illegal online content. As sexually abusive images of children are primarily hosted abroad, we facilitate the industry-led initiative to protect users from inadvertent exposure to this content by blocking access to it through our provision of a dynamic list of child sexual abuse URLs. As a result of the blocking initiative it is possible to:

- Reduce the occasions when innocent internet users might be exposed to traumatic and unlawful images.
- Diminish the re-victimisation of children by restricting opportunities to view their sexual abuse.
- Disrupt the accessibility and supply of such content to those who may seek out such images.