

Artificial intelligence (AI) and child sexual exploitation and abuse

Authored by: Paris Newman and Eva Notté

Presented by: Mr. Leap Chhengla

Content

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Literature Review
- Preliminary Findings
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Interactive Discussion

Introduction

- Rapid growth in AI accessibility and use in daily life.
- AI as a double-edged sword—producing both advancements and risks.

Methodology

- Systematic desk review of 47 sources including both academic and grey literature
- Semi-structured interviews with six AI/ technical experts with work experience in the field of online children's rights and safety
- Conducted 3 FGD in Cambodia , Nepal, Philippines, Kenya and Ukrainain Refugee children (2FGD with children and 1 FGD with key stakholdder)

Literature Review

What is AI?

AI can be defined as technological systems, machines and computer programs that are capable of performing various tasks, which prior to its advent, required human intelligence (Anjila 2021; IWF 2023).

Literature Review

This paper proposes the urgent need for prevention and response initiatives that centre the following key principles:

- **Child Safety-by-Design:** Placing children's safety at the centre throughout the entire lifecycle of an AI product, from design/development, to deployment and maintenance.
- **Whole-of-society approach:** Action and collaboration across key societal stakeholders, such as governments, AI/technology companies, law enforcement, children's rights organisations, educators and parents/carers.
- **'Augmented' intelligence:** Using AI to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse online is only part of the solution to this complex problem, and should always involve humans in any decision-making processes to address risks identified using AI tools.
- **AI-driven child sexual exploitation and abuse is real child sexual exploitation and abuse:** Offences against children facilitated through AI need to be treated as seriously as offences that occur wholly offline or in-person, due to severe, real-life physical, emotional and mental health, safety and wellbeing ramifications for children everywhere.

Literature Review

The Future of AI

- Future advancements in AI technologies are unpredictable.
- Researchers discuss the evolution toward General AI, which would exhibit human-level intelligence and perform a wide range of intellectual tasks (eSafety Commissioner, 2023).
- Future developments may exceed current human comprehension and expectations (Kokolaki and Fragopoulou, 2025).

Literature Review

AI and the amplification of child sexual exploitation and abuse

- AI technologies can be used to amplify child sexual exploitation and abuse offences, both online and offline.
- Creation of AI-generated CSAM ('deepfakes'): Generative AI enables easy, large-scale production of photorealistic CSAM with almost no technical skill required
- Grooming, sexual extortion and trafficking of children: There is evidence of AI technologies being used to automate and scale grooming and sexual extortion of children in various ways (Thorn 2024) such as Creation of Fake Child Profiles, AI-Generated CSAM for Grooming, Impersonation via Chatbots and Reduced Barriers for Offenders:
- Technologies that facilitate child sexual exploitation and abuse: Lack of safety measure, Harmful Training Data, and Misused of Chatbot.

Literature Review

Overview: Current legal context in relation to AI and CEA

- **Ambiguity and Inconsistency:** Global legal status regarding AI-driven child sexual exploitation and abuse (CEA) is unclear, particularly in classifying AI-generated CSAM as 'real' CSAM (Olson, 2022; NCMEC, 2024).
- **Outdated Legislative Frameworks:** Most countries have not updated laws to explicitly criminalize AI-generated CSAM or the use of AI for child exploitation (Kokolaki et al., 2025). The UN Convention on Cybercrime may provide a positive step forward, but no binding international legal framework currently exists (UN General Assembly, 2024).
- **Challenges in Prosecution:** The absence of a coordinated global legal framework complicates efforts for law enforcement agencies, especially when victims and perpetrators are located in different jurisdictions (Urbas, 2021).

Literature Review

AI technology and the prevention of child sexual exploitation and abuse

- **Support and accelerate CSAM detection and response:** AI can enhance the detection and response to CSAM and alleviating the burden on human investigators and reducing systemic injustices in the process.
- **Conversation analysis:** AI can be used to analyse conversations online, either in public forums, chatrooms or direct messages, to detect suspicious interactions that might indicate child sexual exploitation and abuse, such as grooming or sexual extortion
- **Chatbots and honeypots:** AI chatbots can help combat child sexual exploitation and abuse by providing a safe reporting channel for children, analyzing interactions for suspicious behavior, and acting as honeypots to detect and deter offenders, although their use raises legal and ethical concerns.

Literature Review

AI technology and the prevention of child sexual exploitation and abuse

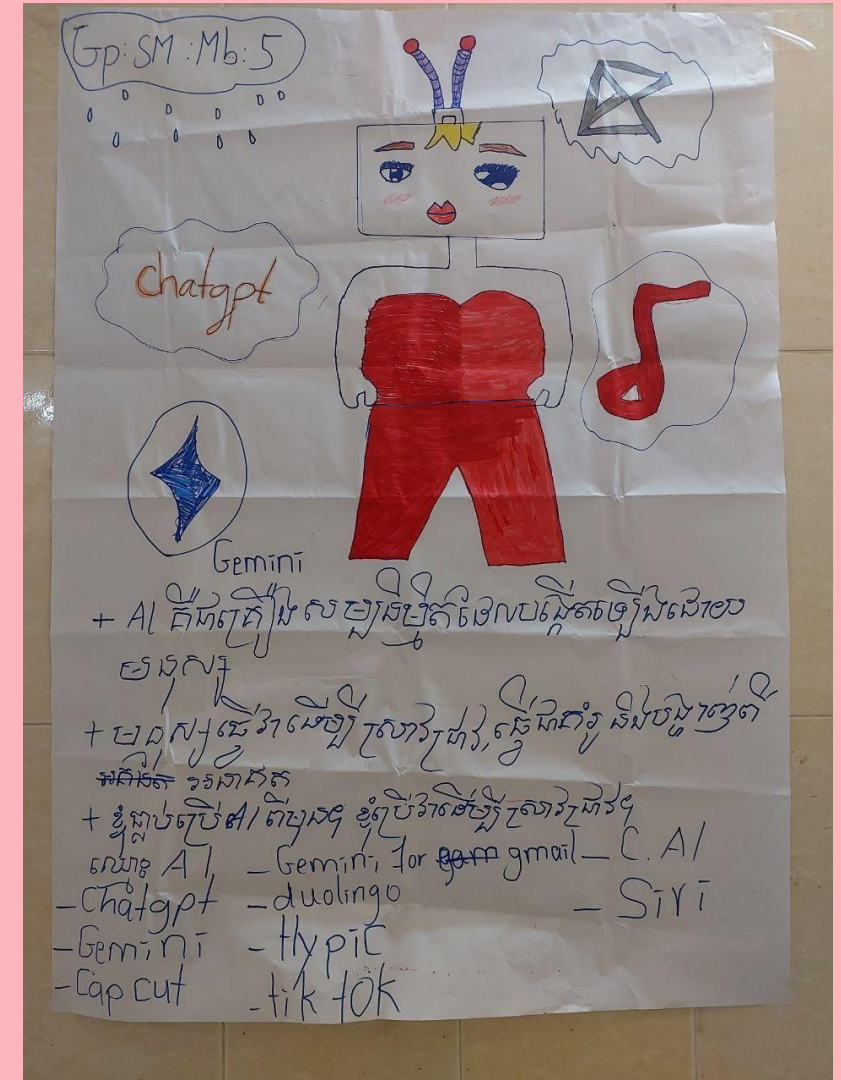
- **Analyse and identify suspicious transactions:** AI could be used to identify suspicious transactions that could signify child sexual exploitation and abuse
- **Web crawlers to identify child sexual exploitation and abuse:** Web crawlers are an AI tool that are programmed to automatically browse the internet, analysing, interpreting, categorising and extracting information from websites relevant to a specific topic
- **Trafficking victims and offenders identification:** AI technology is increasingly recognized as a valuable tool in the fight against child trafficking, particularly through the use of AI web crawlers and the potential to analyze surveillance footage from public places like hotels and transit stations to identify at-risk individuals,

Preliminary Findings from primary data collection in Nepal and Cambodia

What is AI?

Children perceive AI as a helpful tool, often describing it as a "smart machine" that assists in daily tasks and provides answers to questions.

Common applications include ChatGPT, Gemini, Canva, TikTok, Capcut, Roblox, and YouTube, primarily for research, entertainment, and communication.



Preliminary Findings

Age and Exposure

- Students started using AI or smartphones around 13–14 years old (grades 7–8)
- Mostly the children use the app that was introduced by their friend that they don't think about the risk of those before they are using it.
- No parent check their app in their smartphone as they start using since they are young age
- Most students had no awareness of “Deepfake.”
- They are learning about algorithms and privacy issues mainly through social media experiences (like TikTok's personalized feed).

Preliminary Findings

- Children use AI in basically every part of their life: for helping them with homework, getting new information, but also helping in social situations, being creative
- Children see AI not as something new, but something that is part of their everyday life. Therefore, they also do not appreciate messages to stop using it because it's dangerous, but that we should assume that they are using it and how they can use it safely

Preliminary Findings

- Children are a bit confused because they see a lot of benefits, but they hear about the risks, although they don't see them themselves. They need more guidance in this.
- Stakeholders / Adults focus more on the negatives and risks, Children focus more on the benefits.
- Children have a very basic understanding of AI and confuse AI a lot with social media, the distinction between AI and social media is not clear. This can also stem from AI being embedded in many social media apps.

Preliminary Findings

- Children are a bit confused because they see a lot of benefits, but they hear about the risks, although they don't see them themselves. They need more guidance in this.
- Stakeholders / Adults focus more on the negatives and risks, Children focus more on the benefits.
- Children have a very basic understanding of AI and confuse AI a lot with social media, the distinction between AI and social media is not clear. This can also stem from AI being embedded in many social media apps.
- Children are not very aware of and focused on privacy and data safety with AI. An example is one of the scenarios they discussed, where they did focus on privacy issues of sharing an edited image with AI on social media, but they didn't think about any privacy concerns when uploading a photo onto an AI app

Recommendations

AI Company:

- Establish clear rules and measures for using AI
- Strengthen safety and privacy protection for users.
- Implement stricter age-based usage controls and strengthen privacy protections
- Provide solutions or support when users face problems while using AI.
- AI companies should be mindful and responsible in their work because what they create can affect others.
- Create a blocking function to prevent the generation of inappropriate images (e.g., sexualized or face-swapped photos).
- Introduce AI literacy and safety training courses in every school.

Recommendations

Gorvernment:

- Establish laws and regulations on the use of AI.
- Enforce strict measures and penalties against offenders who misuse AI.
- The government should raise public awareness about AI because today many AI tools are used to edit photos and videos—sometimes turning them into nude or inappropriate images.
- Establish safety systems within communities.
- Promote education and awareness about AI (recommendation to schools).

Recommendations

Parent/Caregivers:

- Establish laws and regulations on the use of AI.
- Encourage people to think independently rather than relying too much on AI, which can help reduce certain problems.
- Enforce strict measures and penalties against offenders who misuse AI.
- The government should raise public awareness about AI because today many AI tools are used to edit photos and videos—sometimes turning them into nude or inappropriate images.
- Establish safety systems within communities.
- Guide parents to understand how to use AI safely.

Conclusion

Concerns about overreliance on AI and its effects on critical thinking were prevalent, with children worried that reliance could diminish their creativity and problem-solving abilities.

Calls for proactive engagement with children in discussions about AI illustrate the importance of their perspectives in shaping safe and effective AI use.

These findings highlight the dual nature of AI in children's lives—its potential benefits and significant risks. There is a clear need for increased education, strong privacy protections, and guidance from adults to ensure children can navigate AI safely and responsibly.

Interactive discussion

- How to make AI tools safer for children by nature? which features, settings would be safe? or Recommendations to make AI safer Children

Thank You

