**Microsoft and NetClean Provide PhotoDNA Technology to Help Law Enforcement Fight Online Child Sexual Exploitation**

***PhotoDNA image-matching technology available at no charge to help law enforcement more quickly identify and rescue victims.***

**London, UK — March 19, 2012 —** Microsoft Corp. and NetClean today announced a joint effort to combat the sexual exploitation of children by making Microsoft PhotoDNA technology available and accessible to law enforcement agencies worldwide to help enhance child sex abuse investigations, thereby empowering law enforcement to more quickly identify and rescue victims. PhotoDNA is a signature-based, image-matching technology already used by online service providers for disrupting the spread of some of the worst-known images of child pornography online. Today’s news provides law enforcement, at no charge, a variety of options to take advantage of the same effective technologies to fight child sexual exploitation that technology companies themselves already use.

“We can't allow people to keep trading these horrifying images online when we have the technology to help do something about it,” said Stuart Aston, Chief Security Officer at Microsoft UK, “Without innovation and public demand for technology companies and electronic service providers to play a more productive and proactive role in the fight against online child exploitation, the technological advantage will remain with the abusers rather than those working to protect abuse victims. Law enforcement agencies are doing incredible work to fight child sexual exploitation every day, and we are proud to joinwith NetClean to support that mission.”

“This technology saves time and resources, but most importantly, it saves kids,” said Christian Sjöberg, founder and CEO of NetClean. “We are arming law enforcement with tools that can help them better investigate child exploitation cases and get these horrible criminals off the streets. NetClean Analyze Digital Investigator (DI) and PhotoDNA aim to help expedite their efforts to put an end to child pornography.”

**The Growing Problem of Child Pornography Online**

Before the internet, it was relatively difficult for paedophiles to find and share child pornography and images of child rape, let alone build connections amongst themselves to facilitate such abuse. It was a world of the physical, where one paedophile had to meet another on the streets and somehow discover a mutual affinity for the sexual exploitation of kids before they might share with and encourage each other. The internet has enabled marvellous progress for mankind in countless ways, but as the world has become vastly more interconnected, the child pornography problem has soared.

Since 2002, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) reports it has reviewed more than 65 million images of child pornography online, with the volumes steadily increasing, the crimes becoming more violent and the victims getting younger. An estimated 10 percent of images reviewed by NCMEC in 2011 involved infants and toddlers, who cannot tell anyone about their abuse.

In the UK, the Internet Watch Foundation’s hotline processed 48,702 reports in 2010, which is a 27.6 per cent increase over 2009.

The more complex the problem grows, the more sophisticated the technology must be in order to help address it. As such, although law enforcement around the world works diligently to combat child exploitation and the spread of child pornography online, investigators are challenged by massive amounts of data and limited resources.

**Supporting Law Enforcement Through Technology Innovation**

PhotoDNA is an image-matching technology developed by Microsoft Research in collaboration with Dartmouth College that creates a unique signature for a digital image, something like a fingerprint, that can be compared with the signatures of other images to find copies of that image. NCMEC and online service providers such as Microsoft and other online service providers currently use PhotoDNA to help find, report and eliminate some of the worst-known images of child pornography online.

Although initially designed for online service provider use, law enforcement globally has voiced strong interest in the potential use of PhotoDNA in child sexual exploitation investigations since its introduction in December 2009. Based on the expressed need, Microsoft and NetClean are working together to make PhotoDNA available to law enforcement worldwide through tools that many agencies already use. With today’s announcement, law enforcement worldwide can now use this technology to help with the following:

•                To create a link between online service reports and law enforcement investigations to help speed the identification of victims, so they can be rescued and their abusers brought to justice

•                To allow faster review of the massive number of seized images so investigators and prosecutors cantackle more cases

•                To limit the exposure of investigators to the corrosive effects of viewing abuse images

Specifically, PhotoDNA will be available to law enforcement at no charge via the following:

* **NetClean Analyze.** PhotoDNA is beingmade available through a new version of NetClean Analyze, a free technology toolbox for police forces working with child sexual exploitation (CSA) image cases,which is already used by law enforcement in many countries worldwide. (<http://www.netclean.com/eng/?page_id=34>) NetClean Analyze is a multidimensional platform for CSA investigations that helps streamline workflows for varioustasks involved in cases. The easy-to-use interface helps provide a powerful and fast application able to deal with millions of files at the same time. The integration of PhotoDNA adds to tools already available in NetClean Analyze to help investigators save time by quickly identifying duplicate images in investigations. The new version will also include functionality to support connections between NetClean Analyze and the Child Exploitation Tracking System (CETS) where appropriate.
* **Child Exploitation Tracking System** **(CETS).** PhotoDNA is being integrated into CETS, a collaborative global law enforcement program supported by Microsoft technology for child pornography investigations that helps law enforcement agencies eliminate duplication, making it more efficient for the agencies to follow up on leads, collect evidence and build cases against suspected child pornographers. CETS is currently used by agencies in Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, Italy, the UK and the US.
* **Direct licencing.** Certain law enforcement agencies with the technical capacity and resources required to manage PhotoDNA source code integration themselves can licence directly for use of PhotoDNA in child sexual exploitation investigations.

Welcoming today’s announcement, a spokesperson for the Internet Watch Foundation said:

“The Internet Watch Foundation has been working to eliminate online child sexualabuse images and videos for 15 years. Over this time we have progressively seen more content featuring the rape and sexual torture of younger children. We have therefore grown our expertise and experience to be nimble in our tracking and targeting of this content.”

“It is of great importance for us to collaborate with those at the cutting edge of technology to give us the most effective tools possible to do our work.

“PhotoDNA gives us the opportunity to make massive progress in protecting victims from their sexual abuse images being seen time and time again and it will enable us to quickly identify unknown victims in order to share information with law enforcement agencies.

“The development of PhotoDNA and the decision to make this technology available to law enforcement globally is a fantastic leap forward to eliminating this content and aiding those whose job it is to rescue children and arrest offenders.”

Additional information about Microsoft PhotoDNA technology and news is available in the Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit’s PhotoDNA Newsroom at <http://www.microsoftphotodna.com>.

**About NetClean**

[NetClean Technologies](http://www.netclean.com) is a world leader in technical solutions for preventing the spread of child sexual abuse content. The products are developed in cooperation with police authorities and NetClean’s proactive solutions are employed by millions of users. NetClean’s client portfolio includes, among others, mid-size to multinational companies as well as government agencies, internet providers and police authorities. Currently, law enforcement agencies in 30 countries useNetClean’s Analyze, as well as more agencies undergoing trials. NetClean works closely with several non-profit organizations, for example the World Childhood Foundation founded by Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden.

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**About Microsoft EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa)**

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**Microsoft PR Contacts**

Rapid Response Team, Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, (503) 443-7070,

rrt@waggeneredstrom.com <or insert local contact information as appropriate>

**NetClean PR Contacts**

Laura Spence, LEWIS PR, 02078022626,

netclean@lewispr.com

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