



**Atlas Free®**

# **What You Need to Know About Online Sexual Exploitation of Children**

Childhood should be filled with joy, safety, and love.  
But right now, countless kids are being exploited and sold online.

For traffickers, the internet is a weapon. **Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC)** is one of the fastest-growing forms of human trafficking, infiltrating digital spaces everywhere. Every click, message, or upload can become a tool for predators to exploit children in ways that often go unseen—and unchallenged. It's a system thriving in plain sight, and it's time to disrupt it. But that's where you can come in.

## What is OSEC?

OSEC refers to the abuse, exploitation, and trafficking of children through digital platforms. Exploiters use live streaming, messaging apps, social media, and even gaming platforms to target, groom, and abuse children. In many cases, these crimes are monetized, with perpetrators selling or distributing exploitative content for profit.

**OSEC isn't confined to hidden corners of the internet—it's happening on popular apps and platforms used every day, including social media, messaging apps, and gaming platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, and Discord.**

## How Big is the Problem?

In 2022, over 29 million reports of online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) were made to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. This marked a **35% surge** from the previous year, driven by the unchecked growth of digital platforms. The crisis is growing faster than ever—and demands immediate action.

## How Does it Happen?

Exploiters don't need physical access to abuse children. They use technology to target vulnerable kids through grooming and coercion, often manipulating them into sharing explicit content. Some examples of exploitation include:

- **Traffickers livestreaming abuse:** For a global audience willing to pay.
- **Fake job offers or scholarships:** Used to lure children into exploitation.
- **Blackmailing children:** Threatening to share private information or photos if demands aren't met.

## Why is OSEC Hard to Stop?

- **Anonymity:** Predators use encryption, fake profiles, and hidden servers to evade detection.
- **Rapid Spread:** Exploitative content can go viral in minutes, making it nearly impossible to fully remove.
- **Jurisdictional Challenges:** The global nature of the internet means laws often lag behind the crime.

Prosecuting both the production and consumption of OSEC is crucial to dismantling the systems that enable exploitation, ensuring justice for survivors, and preventing future harm. Holding perpetrators accountable at every level sends a clear message that exploiting children online will not be tolerated.



## How You Can Protect and Prevent

For Parents, Educators, and Advocates:

- **Stay Involved:** Know the apps, games, and platforms kids are using—and who they're interacting with.
- **Start the Conversation:** Create open, judgment-free discussions about online safety and exploitation.
- **Support the Fight:** Organizations like Atlas Free are actively working to protect kids and hold exploiters accountable. In 2023, we welcomed a partner instrumental in the takedown of Pornhub into our global network, strengthening efforts to combat online exploitation in the U.S. and worldwide.





## What is Atlas Free Doing About OSEC?

At Atlas Free, we're confronting the systems that enable OSEC head-on by:

- **Supporting Survivors:** We have over 66 safe homes around the world that provide trauma-informed care, education, and restoration for survivors.
- **Prevention Programs:** Educating families and communities about the dangers of OSEC and how to stay safe online.
- **Advocacy:** Pushing for stricter legislation and corporate responsibility to protect children from being exploited online and accessing pornography online.

## The Bottom Line

OSEC is thriving because it hides behind the screens we use every day. But it's not inevitable. Together, we can make online spaces safer for children and dismantle the systems that exploit them.

We need to make OSEC socially unacceptable. Let's fight for a future where children can use the internet to explore, learn, and connect—without fear.

## How You Can Disrupt It

Join the movement that refuses to stand by, fighting OSEC head-on with their monthly gift on Team Freedom. Your monthly gift fuels survivor care, pushes for vital policy change, and pressures tech platforms to take responsibility. Together, we can protect children and dismantle this system.

**Click here to give your first monthly gift.**

Give monthly and join the fight.  
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