

ACMA hosts online investigation technical training course

Law enforcement officers from around Australia joined content classification staff from both the ACMA and New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs for an online investigation technical training course, held on 17 and 18 February in North Sydney.

The ACMA-sponsored training was designed primarily for staff of the ACMA's Content Classification Section, who are responsible for investigating complaints about online content believed to be prohibited under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (the BSA).

The training was tailored to the specific needs of online investigators, including:

- > locating and capturing content through a variety of established and emerging online technologies
- > understanding the technical frameworks behind those technologies
- > developing advanced skills in determining source locations.

The course was energetically presented by Mike Duffey, a Special Agent within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Computer Crimes Center, who has delivered similar courses for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and Internet Crimes against Children organisations in the United States.

There were 32 participants from agencies such as the Australian Federal Police; Australian Crime Commission; and the NSW, Queensland, Tasmanian and Victorian police forces. All attendees made the most of the rare opportunity for collaboration and knowledge-sharing between officers involved in the investigation of online content.

Feedback from the event indicates that the course was warmly received and beneficial to all participants. The ACMA looks forward to facilitating similar training in coming years. 🌐

Online content complaints

The ACMA administers the national regulatory scheme for online content. The scheme was established under the BSA, and is designed to address community concerns about offensive and illegal material on the internet and mobile phones.

Under Schedules 5 and 7 to the BSA, the ACMA investigates complaints about online content believed to be prohibited or potentially prohibited. Such categories include:

- > RC and X18+ material
- > R18+ material that is not subject to a restricted access system
- > MA15+ material provided by a mobile premium service or a service that provides audio or video content upon payment of a fee, and that is not subject to a restricted access system.

Classifications are based on criteria outlined in the *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*, the National Classification Code and the Guidelines for the Classification of Films and Computer Games 2005.

Since the online content complaints scheme began on 1 January 2000, the ACMA has received over 13,500 complaints about online content and taken action on more than 9,500 items of prohibited content as a result.

If the content is hosted in or provided from Australia, and is prohibited or is likely to be prohibited, the ACMA will direct the content service provider to remove or prevent access to the content on their service.

If the content is not hosted in or provided from Australia, and is prohibited or is likely to be prohibited, the ACMA will notify the content to the suppliers of approved filters in accordance with the Internet Industry Association's Code of Practice. If the content is also sufficiently serious—for example, illegal material such as child pornography—the ACMA will refer the material to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Complaints can be made using the online complaint form at www.acma.gov.au/hotline.



Mike Duffey, Special Agent, Florida Department of Law Enforcement Computer Crimes Center, delivering the online investigation training.