




WHITEPAPER

Managing CSAM Investigations at Scale

How AI-Assisted Triage and Automation
are Transforming Child Protection



“Technology in service
of the investigator.
Always.”

KEY STATISTICS – EMEA 2025

32+ MILLION

reports of CSAM submitted to NCMEC in the last reported year — a record high

60%

reduction in case processing time achieved through AI-assisted triage and automation

4.2X

more cases closed per investigator per year following implementation of automated triage

87%

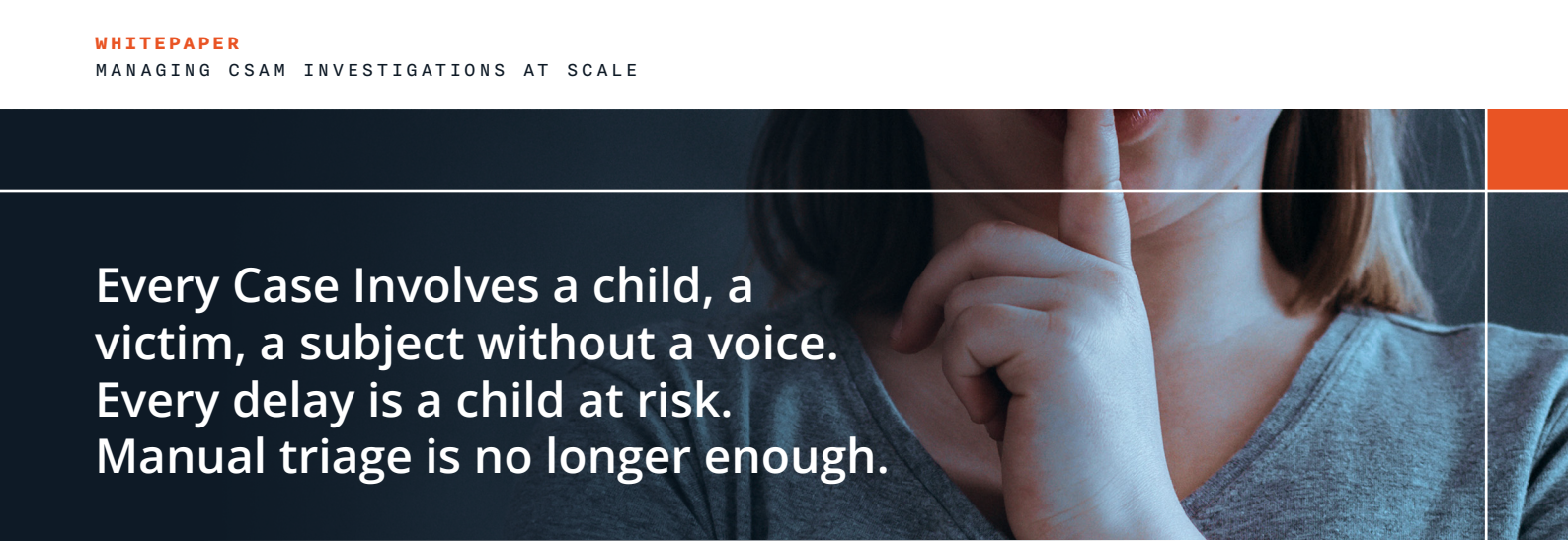
of CSAM investigations now involve encrypted devices

THE CHALLENGE

Managing CSAM Investigations at Scale

The volume of Child Sexual Abuse Material reaching law enforcement is at an historic high and continues to grow. Online platforms, encrypted services and dark web infrastructure have enabled the production, distribution and storage of CSAM at a scale that was unimaginable a decade ago.

For the investigators and examiners tasked with processing this material, the challenge is not a lack of commitment or capability — it is a lack of tools designed to operate at the volume and complexity the modern caseload demands.



Every Case Involves a child, a victim, a subject without a voice. Every delay is a child at risk. Manual triage is no longer enough.

The Scale Problem

Traditional manual review workflows were not designed for current case volumes.

- Case backlogs growing across EMEA investigative units
- Average time from referral to charge increasing year on year — a gap reflected globally by the fact that, in the first six months of 2025 alone, US Homeland Security Investigations received over 500,000 CSAM-related referrals yet acknowledged that volume cannot translate into a commensurate number of investigations or arrests (HSI Cyber Crimes Center, 2025)
- Victim identification delayed by processing bottlenecks
- Investigator attrition increasing due to exposure and burnout, compounded by the sheer volume of material requiring manual grading

The Human Cost

Behind every processing delay is a child who remains unidentified and at risk.

- Delays in device examination and image grading extend active abuse situations
- Perpetrators remain active during protracted investigations
- Secondary trauma rates among CSAM investigators among the highest in law enforcement — peer-reviewed research confirms CSAM investigators score significantly higher on PTSD measures than non-CSAM law enforcement peers (Burns et al.; Perez et al.), and a 2022 study of specialist ICAC units found that only 62% of agencies provided confidential mental health services for their staff (Child Rescue Coalition, 2022)
- Recruitment and retention in specialist units increasingly difficult — participation is voluntary, and wider officers (CSE, drugs, organised crime) increasingly encounter CSAM without specialist training or tools to handle it

THE SOLUTION

AI-Assisted Triage: What Changes and Why

Artificial intelligence and automation do not replace the judgement of trained CSAM investigators — they amplify it. By handling the volume and legal grading tasks — assigning material to Category A, B or C in line with charging standards, and producing court-ready descriptions so investigators can present evidence without requiring courts to view images directly that currently consume investigator time, AI-assisted triage ensures that professional expertise is directed to where it has the greatest impact.

- **Automated hash matching:** Known CSAM material identified instantly against global databases including NCMEC PhotoDNA, without requiring manual review.
- **AI-assisted categorisation:** Machine learning models pre-categorise material by severity and type, giving investigators a prioritised queue rather than an undifferentiated volume. Intelligent de-duplication: Duplicate material across multiple seized devices identified and consolidated, eliminating redundant review.
- **Welfare controls:** Configurable exposure limits, automatic blurring of non-evidential content and session logging protect investigator wellbeing.
- **Victim identification support:** Integration with leading international victim identification suites accelerates the most critical outcome of any CSAM investigation.

CELLEBRITE'S APPROACH

Purpose-Built for Child Protection Investigation

Cellebrite's CSAM investigation capabilities are integrated across our product suite and are designed in close collaboration with specialist child protection units, welfare professionals and legal advisors across EMEA.

- **INSEYETS UFED**
Industry-leading physical and logical extraction from encrypted and locked devices including the latest smartphone models.
- **Physical Analyzer**
AI-assisted content analysis, hash matching, categorisation and priority scoring across extracted device content.
- **Automated IIOC reporting**
Court-ready evidence packages — including SFR-style statements suitable for disclosure — formatted to meet CAID, NCMEC and jurisdiction-specific IIOC reporting standards.
- **Multi-device correlation**
Links between devices, accounts and individuals identified automatically from cross-device data analysis.
- **Investigator dashboard**
Customisable workflow interface with built-in welfare controls, session limits and progress tracking.
- **Training and certification:** Cellebrite CCO certification specifically covers CSAM investigation workflows and best practice.

IMPLEMENTATION

What Getting Started Looks Like

Cellebrite works alongside specialist units to design an implementation pathway that respects the sensitivity of the work and the operational constraints of the team.



Phase 1: Assessment

- Current workflow and toolset review
- Volume and capacity benchmarking
- Welfare and duty-of-care framework review
- Gap analysis and prioritised recommendation

Phase 2: Deployment

- Phased implementation with parallel running
- Specialist training for all examiners
- CCO certification pathway for the team
- 30-day post-deployment review and optimisation

INVESTIGATOR WELFARE

Protecting the People Who Protect Children

No brief on CSAM investigation tooling is complete without addressing the welfare of the investigators who do this work. Cellebrite's approach treats investigator welfare not as an afterthought, but as a core design requirement.

Our tools include built-in session limits, automatic content blurring for material that does not require direct review, and detailed usage logging to support line manager welfare conversations. We work with welfare professionals and occupational health leads during implementation to ensure the platform supports — not undermines — the duty of care your agency holds for its people.

NEXT STEPS

Begin the Conversation

We understand that decisions in this space are not made quickly or lightly. Cellebrite is committed to supporting that process at whatever pace is right for your agency.

We invite CSAM investigation leads, forensic examiners and child protection unit commanders to a private, confidential briefing with no obligation and no generic sales approach.

→ Private 30-minute call with a dedicated regional CSAM specialist— not a generalist account manager

→ Peer agency references available on request

→ Honest assessment of where automation adds the greatest value in your specific context

→ Welfare-led approach to implementation from day one