

Mike Harmson- Silvestri 2019: Cohort

The research question:

What does society and industry know about the digital knowledge, training and social media awareness of police officers who investigate online sexual crimes against children?

My study involves mixed methods research comprising of two qualitative semi-structured interviews and SDA of data from the IWF. The data explores changes over ten years, 2009-2022 regarding the rise of self-generated images, top level hosting domains used for child sexual exploitation, changes to age and gender of victims and the rise in VR and live streaming.

I am a retired police detective with many years of experience working in safeguarding and online harm prevention. I have also worked in other fields, including education, children's charities, sex offender management and health and social care. Therefore, online harm prevention strategies and safeguarding children is paramount to my research.

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How will society and industry benefit from my research?

It is envisaged that my research will have an impact on both society and industry by the following:

Improve the training and online digital knowledge of police officers who work within online sexual crimes investigation,

Help organisations and charities who work with offenders to better understand the digital platforms used to offend and why they chose them,

Help children and young people to make safer choices when engaging on social media,

Help offenders to make the right choices when going online and to reduce recidivism.

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