

What are Splash Pages?

And their deterrent value for child sexual exploitation offenders online

FACTS



Splash pages are used to attract users, indicate a message or redirect users to other web pages



Splash pages are used by Non-Governmental Organisations, Industry and Law Enforcement Agencies



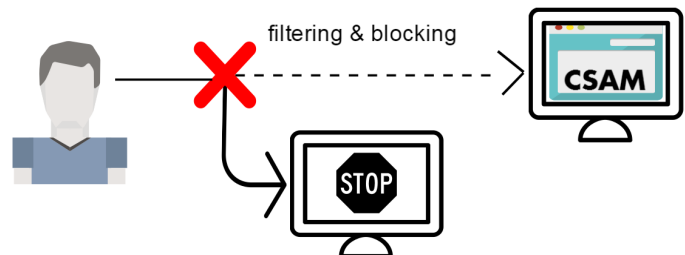
When splash pages are used to stop a user from accessing content, they are referred to as 'stop pages'

How does it work?

A splash page is a page or image that appears over the entire screen or a portion of it while the web page sought by the user is loading.

Splash pages can be used for all kinds of purposes as they are a way of inserting a message onto a web page. Advertisers often use them to attract users or they can be used to tell you, for example, that you have typed an incorrect web address or that a particular web site no longer exists.

Splash pages are also used to keep users away from certain content. For example, a splash page can appear when someone is trying to access known child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and will obstruct access to the desired content as the final step in a deterrence scheme that involves filtering and blocking*.



* For more information see factsheet: What is Filtering & Blocking?

Denying access to Child Sexual Abuse Material

Splash pages are used by some companies - notably Microsoft and Google - in their search facilities as part of deterrence schemes intended to prevent people from intentionally or accidentally accessing child sexual abuse material online. Whenever someone attempts to access a page that is known to contain this type of material, the user will be denied access. When a splash page is used, the user will be subsequently redirected to a deterrence message.

Splash pages can contain varied information. The simplest version of a splash page contains a message indicating that access to the intended site has been denied. This is called an error-message or a 404-message. Splash pages can contain additional information as to why access has been blocked (with or without information about relevant legislation). This information can be complemented by a referral to sources of help or advice if they are worried about their sexual feelings towards children.

A splash page can also contain explicit warnings or messages explaining the illegality of the users' conduct or of the searched content. For users who do not agree with certain content being blocked, sometimes information on how to direct complaints about the denial of access is offered. Finally, some splash pages contain information and/or links to hotlines set up to report child sexual abuse content online.

By providing such information, splash pages can help build knowledge about the illegality of child sexual abuse material and related conduct. They can also help to instill a fear of being apprehended and redirect users to sources of help. Splash pages help to create a safer online environment by educating users about reporting mechanisms and by preventing unwanted exposure to such content. Ultimately, splash pages deter users from accessing CSAM.