Protecting and supporting children.

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children uses Adobe solutions to aid the search for missing children, inform the public, and educate children to help prevent future victimization.

“Adobe solutions touch everything that we do—from finding children to engaging the public—and help us fulfill our mission of keeping children safe.”

Michelle DeLaune, Senior VP and COO, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

**SOLUTION**

Adobe Experience Cloud, including Adobe Experience Manager within Adobe Marketing Cloud and Adobe Analytics within Adobe Analytics Cloud, Adobe Acrobat Pro DC, part of Adobe Document Cloud, Adobe Creative Cloud for enterprise

Adobe Customer Solutions, Adobe Managed Services on Microsoft Azure

Adobe Sensei

**RESULTS**

- **47% INCREASE** in site engagement increases public awareness; Missingkids.org saw 40% increase in funds raised through website
- **COMMUNICATES** details on missing children to more people faster, with more efficient site updates
- Uses **AGE PROGRESSION** on images to help identify children even years after they go missing
- Supports **EDUCATION** and **PREVENTION** programs to help children protect themselves from threats
Adobe Customer Story

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Established in 1984
Alexandria, Virginia
www.missingkids.org

Never giving up hope

One of the most traumatic ordeals that a parent or family can endure is having a child go missing. Whether a child is missing for days, months, or even years, families refuse to give up hope. The hope, courage, and determination of these family members—and the search for their missing children—is neverending.

For more than 34 years, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has been working with law enforcement and the public to help identify and find missing children and reunite them with their families. Before 1984, there was no coordinated, national system for addressing missing children cases. NCMEC was founded to provide a more cohesive response to reports of missing children, bridging communication between law enforcement, the public, families, and private entities focused on the recovery of missing and exploited children.

"Every child deserves a safe childhood," says Michelle DeLaune, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at NCMEC. "In 2017, there were more than 460,000 reports of missing children. Every day NCMEC staff are working diligently to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation, and prevent these crimes from happening to other children."

In its earliest days, NCMEC served primarily as a call center that collected information about missing children. Over the years, these efforts expanded to distributing information to as many people and places as possible including publishing photos and details of missing children on milk cartons, on posters, and in flyers mailed to homes. Today, NCMEC reaches a global audience by disseminating critical information through a broad range of digital touchpoints across web, mobile, and social media channels.

Adobe supports continued digital transformation at NCMEC by sharing expert advice and advanced digital technologies that touch everything that NCMEC does, from age-progressing photos of missing children and forensic image analysis to training, education, and prevention programs. Adobe Creative Cloud for enterprise, Adobe Document Cloud, and Adobe Experience Cloud solutions are used by NCMEC to help identify and find missing children, reduce child exploitation, and bring perpetrators to justice.

"By taking advantage of every digital channel available, we can communicate messages about missing and exploited children on a much wider scale," says Gavin Portnoy, Vice President of Strategic Advancement & Partnerships at NCMEC. "With years of expertise in digital solutions, Adobe is an ideal partner to help us work more effectively across digital mediums to keep children safe."
Keeping the search alive for years

NCMEC never gives up hope that missing children will one day be found—even if the search takes decades. NCMEC’s Forensic Imaging Team works with Adobe Photoshop CC to create age-progressed photographs every two years that show what a missing child may look like in the present day. Distributing age-progressed photographs increases the chances that someone will recognize the child as they age into a teenager or young adult. In one remarkable instance, a grown man discovered that he was a missing child when he recognized his own photograph on the NCMEC website 34 years after he was reported missing.

To age-progress photos, forensic imaging specialists carefully study photographs of a child from the time he or she went missing—their bone structure, smile lines, even folds of their ears—to paint a digital portrait. For children who go missing as infants, artists use images of parents and siblings to create composites of what the child may look like. Aided by Adobe solutions, the process of creating a realistic image combines art and science.

"We've helped to reunite hundreds of families because someone recognized age-progressed images we created using Adobe Photoshop," says DeLaune. "Seeing those children reunited with their families years later reminds us why we will never give up on finding our missing children."

Saving vulnerable children

Missing children aren't the only focus of NCMEC’s efforts. NCMEC also works closely with law enforcement to find and recover victims of sexual exploitation. Using Adobe Photoshop CC, NCMEC cleans and magnifies photographs to turn the smallest detail into a lead that can be used to help identify victims, their captors, and even the location where they’re being abused. Adobe Premiere Pro CC and Adobe Audition CC help the team analyze both the visual and audio details of video footage in their search for clues.

"We review more than two million images and videos of child sexual exploitation every month," says DeLaune. "Adobe Creative Cloud apps play an essential role in helping us identify victims, determine their possible locations, and ultimately provide law enforcement with information that can help them rescue a child from harm."

Protecting the future

As NCMEC works to help find missing children and reduce child sexual exploitation, it also creates age-appropriate educational programs for children and their families to help prevent victimization from happening at all. The KidSmartz program teaches children about abduction, cyberbullying, and personal safety through quizzes, music, videos, and animations, bringing child safety into the digital age.

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These educational programs keep the attention of children with relevant and engaging content. For young children, lessons focus on general safety tips, such as not sharing personal information online and saying "no" when a situation feels uncomfortable. NCMEC’s NetSmartz program also has age-appropriate resources for teens. The lessons take on a more serious tone, with peers sharing real-life warnings about risky behaviors.

NCMEC uses Adobe Creative Cloud apps to design and produce its educational materials. Their artists create graphics in Adobe Photoshop CC, Adobe InDesign CC, and Adobe Illustrator CC. Whether they are graphic designs or cartoon characters, they are animated in Adobe Animate CC, Adobe Character Animator CC, and/or Adobe After Effects CC. Finally, video editors cut and organize the scenes in Adobe Premiere Pro CC, while using Adobe Media Encoder CC to render its needed final format.

"Our prevention programs are based on real situations, but by presenting lessons in a fun, age-appropriate way, we can help children learn to stay safe," says DeLaune.

Getting the public invested
The KidSmartz program is a powerful way to connect with the public and share vital information that can help keep children safe. Equally important is engaging with the public about missing and exploited children. It can literally be a case of life or death. The more people who see information about a child—and the faster the team can create and publish a new poster—the sooner that child can be found. Adobe Customer Solutions team members from around the world joined NCMEC at its headquarters for a three-week on-site discovery to understand what additional Adobe solutions the organization could employ to reach more people.

"Working with Adobe Customer Solutions, we had an all-in partner that was fully invested in our success," says Portnoy. "We worked with them to take a hard look at all phases of our workflows and digital experiences, from start to finish, to improve virtually every aspect of each audience’s experience."

On the back end, with Adobe Experience Manager Managed Services, NCMEC consolidated and transformed its website, which is the organization’s most powerful tool to reach a broad audience. Adobe Customer Solutions and Managed Services assisted in the go-live process for the new website, both in terms of deploying the Adobe Experience Manager software and helping to design a better user experience. This assistance helped NCMEC shift more of its resources to creating engaging web content.

Using Adobe Experience Manager Sites, NCMEC streamlined workflows to update its website. The organization can now publish information more quickly, reaching more people faster. All case information, including forms and images from the forensic imaging specialists, are uploaded and centrally managed on Adobe Experience Manager Assets Managed Services hosted on Microsoft Azure.
"It’s important that we can update the website with any new images and information that we receive quickly to maximize our chance to find a missing child," says Portnoy. "Adobe Experience Manager gives us the agility we need, while leveraging Microsoft Azure enhances data security; taking advantage of the Adobe and Microsoft partnership was a no brainer."

NCMEC also improved its website design and navigation, with a visually rich, informative, and intuitive approach. The new site provides several opportunities for visitors to engage, including providing support for victims and families, creating video or print profiles of missing children for the news media, donating money, or volunteering as a child advocate in their community. Families can quickly access a checklist of resources and numbers to call if their child is missing.

Always getting better

Since the new platform was implemented, NCMEC has seen improvements in how information and content are shared internally and externally. NCMEC continuously strives to make content and information more consumable by the public, always improving its odds of finding and saving another child.

Adobe Analytics, part of Adobe Analytics Cloud within Adobe Experience Cloud, delivers data that helps NCMEC understand how changes to the layout, visuals, and content encourage engagement.

Using this data, NCMEC made changes to the website that lowered bounce rates by 88% compared to the previous year. The organization also increased total website page views by 47.9% and traffic to the donation and fundraising pages during this period increased 218% in just three months. Overall, Missingkids.org saw a 40% increase in funds raised through the website. With an expanding audience and additional funding, NCMEC can get the public more involved in cases of missing and exploited children and improve the odds of finding and saving the next child.

“There is always room for improvement with what we do—from internal processing of information to how we communicate,” says DeLaune.

NCMEC is particularly excited about what it might accomplish with Adobe Sensei, Adobe’s artificial intelligence and machine learning technology. Adobe Sensei artificial intelligence can potentially help forensic artists clean up images for law enforcement faster or create age-progression composites in less time. On the website, NCMEC can potentially use Adobe Sensei to push more relevant search results and missing children cases to website viewers, increasing the potential of rescuing a missing child.

“Adobe solutions touch everything that we do—from finding children to engaging the public—and help us fulfill our mission of keeping children safe," says DeLaune. "With Adobe as a partner, and leveraging cross-cloud technologies, we feel like the sky is the limit with what we can achieve."