Thorn

Skoll Awardee Profile

Organization Overview

Key Info

Social Entrepreneur
Julie Cordua

Year Awarded
2019

Issue Area Addressed
Peace and Human Rights

Sub Issue Area Addressed
Human Rights, Peace

Countries Served
USA, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Vietnam

Website
http://www.thorn.org

Twitter handle
thorn

Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/wearethorn/
About the Organization

The Internet has proven fertile ground for exploitation. Reported child sexual abuse content in the U.S. alone has grown seven-fold since 2011. It is violent, features younger children, and is globally networked. In the dark corners of the web, online marketplaces cultivate dedicated communities that normalize abuse, create demand for new abuse, and groom new abusers. Law enforcement lacks capacity and up-to-date tools to identify perpetrators and victims, and many of the tech companies built on user-generated content have failed to root out abuse on their platforms.

Thorn builds technology to defend children from sexual abuse. Thorn’s Spotlight tool combines publicly available classified ad and online forum data with smart algorithms to help law enforcement identify an average of eight child sex trafficking victims every day. Thorn also works to speed the identification of children featured in sexually abusive material. Thorn also leverages its growing dataset to deliver deterrence campaigns designed to reach potential consumers of abusive content.

Law enforcement in every U.S. state and in over 30 countries now use these tools, facilitating interagency and cross-border collaboration that speeds investigations. Thorn is building a future in which abusers can no longer act with impunity, where the problem of child sexual abuse is brought into the light, and the networks that support it disintegrate.

Impact

- Equipped more than 8,500 law enforcement officers across 2,000 law enforcement agencies in 35 countries with its tools
- Tools speed investigation time by up to 65 percent
- Helped officers identify over 10,000 child victims of sexual trafficking and children whose abuse was recorded and distributed.

Path to Scale

Expanded partnerships with law enforcement result in increased adoption of Thorn’s tools, a reduction in time to stop abuse and an increase in risk for perpetrators. Activation of the tech industry helps eliminate abuse content from their platforms. Education and engagement with the public change risky and abusive behaviors.

Social Entrepreneur

Julie Cordua is the CEO of Thorn and has helped grow the organization from inception in 2012.
She previously served as the VP of Marketing/Communications of (RED), where she helped establish the brand as one of the most successful cause marketing initiatives in history, delivering more than $160 million to fight HIV/AIDS across Africa. Earlier in her career she worked for Motorola’s mobile phone division and helped launch HELIO, a mobile virtual network operator. Julie was raised in Lindsay, California, a small farming community in California’s Central Valley. Julie holds a B.A. from UCLA and an M.B.A. from Northwestern.

**Ambition for Change**

The online sexual abuse of children is no longer a problem hidden in the dark, but instead one that technology providers, law enforcement agencies, NGOs children and caretakers have the awareness, tools and ability to address.