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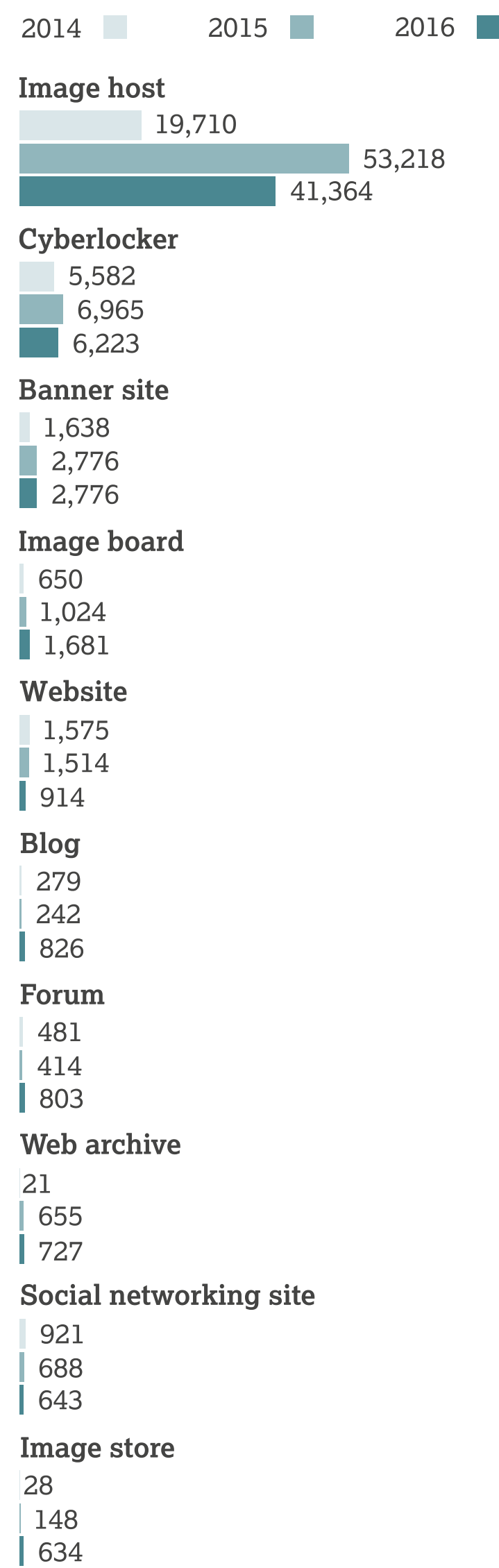


Image hosting sites and **cyberlockers** were abused significantly more than other services.

Social networks are among the least abused site types.

In 2016, 54,025 URLs (94%) were hosted on a free-to-use service where no payment was required to create an account or upload the content. In the remaining 6% of cases, the content was hosted on a paid-for service, or it wasn't possible to tell whether the hosting was free or paid for.

Image Hosts

Image hosts are most consistently abused for distributing child sexual abuse imagery.

Offenders distributing child sexual abuse imagery commonly use image hosts to host the images which appear on their dedicated websites, which can often display many thousands of abusive images. Where our analysts see this technique, they ensure that the website is taken down and each of the embedded images is removed from the image hosting service. By taking this two-step action, the image is removed at its source and from all other websites into which it was embedded even if those websites haven't yet been found by our analysts.

The award-winning **IWF Image Hash List**, launched in 2016, can help image hosts to tackle this abuse.