

# Controlling Child Pornography

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# Overview

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- Background to the problem
- Role of the Internet in child pornography
- Profile of users
- Controlling Internet child pornography

# Background to the Problem

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- What do we mean by child pornography?
  - Varying legal definitions of 'child' and 'pornography'
  - Non-legal definition: any record of sexual activity involving a prepubescent person
  - May involve still photographs, videos and audio recordings
  - Variable in degree of graphic content

## Levels of Image Severity (Taylor et al 2001):

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1. Indicative	Non-sexualised images from legal sources
2. Nudist	Naked images from legal sources
3. Erotica	Images of varying nakedness taken secretly
4. Posing	Posed images of varying nakedness
5. Erotic Posing	Sexualised posed images
6. Explicit erotic posing	Images emphasising genitals
7. Explicit sexual activity	Images involving sexual activity by children
8. Assault	Images involving sexual touching by adults
9. Gross assault	Images involving sexual acts by adults
10. Sadistic/bestiality	Images involving pain or animals

## History:

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- Sexualisation of children ancient
- 'Pornography' began with camera in 19<sup>th</sup> c
- Increase in 1960s
- Success in controlling hard copy
- Explosion with Internet in 1980s
- Need for new approaches

# Victims of child pornography:

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- Most know the producer of the image
- Twice victimised – direct and indirect
- Short term effects
  - Physical pain
  - Psychological distress
  - Pressure to cooperate – shame and loyalty
- Long term effects
  - Psychological effect intensify
  - Distorted model of sexuality

## Legal Responses to Child Pornography:

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- 1880s – age of consent 10.
- 1978 – first federal law on child pornography
- 1988 - first law specifying computers
- 1998 – abortive attempts to tighten laws re virtual images and ‘apparent’ age
- Subsequent amendments to federal law

## Current Legal Situation in US:

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- Child anyone under 18
- More stringent standard applied to children than to adults
- Possession is an offence
- Variation in legislation among states, and internationally



# The Role of the Internet in Child Pornography

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- Access to vast quantities
- Instantly available
- Accessed 'anonymously' and in private
- Networking and image-sharing
- Inexpensive
- High quality and durable
- Convenient storage
- Variety of formats
- Modifiable digital images (eg morphing)

## Size of problem:

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- Difficult to be accurate about size
- More than 1 million images at any one time
- 200 new images daily
- Offenders in possession of up to half-million images
- One site 1 million images in a month
- 50,000-100,000 active in child pornography rings – 1/3 from US

# Components of the Problem:

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## ■ Production

- Creation of images
- Premium on new images
- Professional – may not be attracted to children
- Amateurs – trade home-made images
- Growth with high-quality digital equipment

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## ■ Distribution

- Uploading and dissemination of images
- Cross state/international borders
- Infrequent in open areas of net (eg web-sites)
- Email/chatrooms risky because of police stings
- Most commonly via newsgroups and P2P

## Methods of distribution:

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Web-sites	Little available - quickly shutdown by ISPs and police
Web-cam	Broadcast in real-time
E-mail	Sent as attachment – risky
Newsgroups	Dedicated child pornography groups – favoured method
BBS	Advice on techniques and site ratings
Chat rooms	To locate children – risky
P2P	Permit closed groups to trade

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## ■ Downloading

- Accessing images
- May require password or fee
- Images do not have to be saved
- Increasingly require good computer skills
- Producers, distributors and downloaders may be same person

# Sources of digital evidence:

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- The offender's computer
  - Hard drive
  - Log records
- Hand-held devices
  - Embedded computer systems
- Servers
  - IP addresses
- On-line activity
  - Digger engine software

# Profile of Users

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- No one type
  - Not necessarily involved in hands-on offending
  - Come from all walks of life
  - Three broad psychological categories
    - Recreational
    - At-risk
    - Sexual compulsive



## Offending typology (Krone 2004)

Browsers	Stumble across images
Private fantasizers	Create digital images
Trawlers	Seek out through open browsers
Non-secure collectors	Collect from open chat rooms
Secure collectors	Closed newsgroups
Groomers	Develop on-line relationships
Physical abusers	Sexually abuse children
Producers	Record sexual abuse
Distributors	Disseminate images

## Role of pornography in sexual offending:

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- Pornography use is an expression of existing sexual interests
- Pornography is used to prime the individual to offend
- Pornography has a corrosive effect
- Pornography has a cathartic effect
- Pornography is a by-product of paedophilia

# Controlling Internet Child Pornography

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## ■ Challenges

- Structure of the Internet
- Uncertainties of jurisdiction
- Lack of regulation
- Differences in legislation
- Expertise of offenders
- Adaptation of Internet technology
- Volume of Internet activity

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## ■ General considerations

- Acquire technical knowledge and expertise
- Establish links with other agencies
- Establish links with ISPs
- Prioritise efforts

## Specific responses:

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- Computer industry self regulation
  - Removing illegal sites
  - Establishing complaints sites/hotlines
  - filtering browsers/search engines

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## ■ Legislative regulation

- Making ISPs legally responsible for site content
- Requiring preservation of ISP records
- Requiring user verification
- Regulating anonymous remailers
- Using key escrowed encryption

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## ■ Related industries

- Blocking credit card transactions
- Boycotting sites by advertisers

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## ■ Workplace responses

- Adopting and enforcing workplace codes of conduct
- Auditing computer use
- Filtering web usage



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- Citizens' groups
    - Educating the public
    - Searching the Internet

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## ■ Parental strategies

- Use of filtering software
- Review web ratings
- Use of child-oriented search engines

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## ■ Law enforcement responses

- Locating child pornography sites
- Conducting undercover sting operations
- Setting up honey trap sites
- Publicizing crackdowns
- Traditional criminal investigations

## Major law enforcement operations:

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- Operation Avalanche
- Operation Cathedral
- operation Candyman
- Operation Pin

# Key agencies involved in controlling internet child pornography:

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- Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section
  - [www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/childporn.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/childporn.html)
- CyberSmuggling Center
  - <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/home>
- Cyber Tipline
  - <http://www.cybertipline.com>
- Innocent Images
  - <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/innocent.htm>
- Internet Crimes Against Children
  - <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/programs/index.htm>
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
  - <http://www.missingkids.com/>
- US Postal Inspection Service
  - <http://www.usps.com/>

# Conclusions

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- Internet has transformed the problem of child pornography
- Offenders vary in their level of interest and involvement in hands-on offending
- Controlling the Internet presents unique difficulties
- Local police departments can play a key role in combating Internet child pornography

# Further Reading

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- Wortley, R. & Smallbone, S. (2006). Internet child pornography. *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police Series*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice