Technology and Child Trafficking: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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A service of Children’s at Scottish Rite
Objectives

• List three examples of social media apps that can be used by perpetrators

• List two ways technology is used to groom and recruit children into child sexual abuse and child sex trafficking

• Describe the link between pornography and the commercial sexual exploitation of children

• List two ways technology can be used to fight child sexual abuse and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
What’s the Big Deal About Technology?

• Texting vs Calling
  – Decline in the number of teens who report “talking” on cell phone
  – 90% of teens say they exchange texts everyday
  – Send & receive over 60 texts per day (avg)
  – 1/3 of teens use texting apps like WhatsApp or Kik

• Smartphones, Tablets, Computers
  – 24% of teens are online almost constantly
  – 92% of teens report going online daily
  – Social media, Apps

• Video games
  – World of Warcraft, Xbox, PS4, etc

Madden et al. 2013
THE COMMON SENSE CENSUS
MEDIA USE BY TWEENS + TEENS

This 2015 national survey details the media habits and preferences of American 8- to 18-year-olds and shows just how central a role media plays in the lives of Generation Z.

TWEENS
8-12 Years Old

TEENS
13-18 Years Old

AVERAGE DAILY MEDIA USE
Excluding time spent using media for school or for homework

TWEENS
6 hours
5:55 Total Hours

TEENS
9 hours
8:56 Total Hours
# How Teens Use Technology to Communicate

## Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat Top Social Media Platforms for Teens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vine</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different social media site</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Types of Technology to be Discussed

- Social Media and Apps
- Webcams
- Sexting/Sextortion
- Specific Websites
- Gaming systems
Technology as Recruitment Tool

• Build relationships via apps, approach to meet in person

• Offer “modeling” contracts via Facebook or other apps

• Pornography – show to victims to normalize upcoming behavior and show child how to perform
Online Solicitation

• “Grooming” child for future online or offline exploitation

• Access children through:
  ▪ Chat rooms
  ▪ Social media
  ▪ Facebook and other platforms
  ▪ Gaming sites

• May lead to child sharing sexual images of self, meeting offender in person to have sex, engage in sex acts with others

• Means of control
  ▪ Manipulation, false romance, friendship, deceit
  ▪ Coercion with threats, “sextortion”
  ▪ Use sexual images to teach children about sex, lower inhibitions

ECPAT, 2014; Wolak, 2013
Online Solicitation: Grooming

- Survey of 31 offenders in prison treatment program
- Used chat rooms (81%) and online profiles (48%) to “meet” children
- What attracts them to an individual child?
  - Child mentioning sex in any way
  - Child appears “needy” or “submissive”
  - Screen name (sounds young or has sexual content)

“...they’re always online shows low sense of parental contact or interest in child.”

“...when a child will do anything to keep talking to you.”

Malesky, 2007
Online Predation: U.S. Study

• U.S. study of those arrested for online child sex crimes
• Majority of victims were females, between 13-17 years
• Majority of victims without a history of delinquency
• Majority of offenders:
  ▪ Communicated online for >1 month
  ▪ Engaged in contact offenses
  ▪ Did not engage in sexual violence
• 37-45% engaged in sexual intercourse with victim
• Elaborate deceit in small portion

Wolak, 2013
Social Media Basics

• Hashtags
  – People search for a specific hashtag
  – Ex. Ex. Stuck in traffic! Ugh! #ATL #ATLtraffic
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57dzaMaouXA

• Importance of “Likes”
Facebook

- Most used social networking site worldwide
- Social Status
  - Teens showing waning interest in FB, yet continue to use it as part of teenage socializing
  - Teens focus on the maintenance and content of social media presence
- Automatic location tagged on posts and photos – this should always be TURNED OFF
- Threat of posting harassing or embarrassing information on FB
  - “tagging”
Instagram

• Photo-sharing social networking site
  – Artsy filters, likes
• Captions, hashtags
• “Follow” and “tag” friends/strangers/celebrities
  @kimkardashian
• New direct messaging feature
Instagram

• Pros
  – Sense of social acceptance
  – Creativity
  – Privacy settings

• Cons
  – Hashtags
  – Geotagging
  – Creepy vs popularity
descending_into_wanderland Had a nap and then a bath, day is going from bad to worse. Also I just found out that as well as doing a workshop for theatre I need to do an essay as well. Yay for more school work not done. #weight #weightgain #weightloss #bodycheck #fat #depressed #depressing #depression #suicide #suicidal #secretsociety #cry #crying #alone #lonely #fast #eat #eatingdisorder #ana #mia #ed #diet #binge #bingeeating #anorexia #bulimia #legs #thighs #scars #selfharmmm
Self-Harm Posts

Can we help?
Posts with words or tags you're searching for often encourage behavior that can cause harm and even lead to death. If you're going through something difficult, we'd like to help.

Get Support
See Posts Anyway
Cancel
Snapchat

- People exchange pictures and videos which expire after 10 seconds or less
- “Pictures disappear”
  - Screenshot, digging around in the hidden files, taking a picture of the phone with another phone
- Save snaps without the senders knowledge
  - Snapbox (ios)
  - SaveMySnaps (android)
  - Snapcrack (ios)
  - Casper (android)
“My Story” allows all snapchat friends to see your story (compilation of photos/videos) for 24 hours

“Current Events” and other geolocation “Snap Stories”
Snapchat
• Described as ‘Tinder for Teens’, allows users to make new friends using their Snapchat and Instagram accounts.
• Users 13-17 don’t have access to adult section of app but NO age verification
• Profile sign up asks about types of dates user desires
• Matches users by location – uses phone geo-locator, predators can discover wealth of info about user
• Developers have resisted making safety improvements
Yellow
Twitter

• 140 character “tweet” limit
• Allows people to quickly and easily connect with friends, celebrities, local organizations/businesses, public figures, etc.

- Form of “microblogging”
- Cyberbullying, abuse
- Mean Tweets
You Tube

• Smart phones allow you to directly upload to YouTube

• Dangerous behaviors for attention or to get on TV

• Comfortable with creating own videos
Blogging/Microblogging

Tumblr

- User can post photos, quotes, links, music, and videos from your browser, phone, desktop, email
- User can customize look, color etc
- People can comment
- “banned” for children under the age of 13
Blogging/Microblogging

• Pros
  – Can display art, recipes, projects
  – Self expression, independence

• Cons
  – Self harm and suicide promoting blogs
  – Porn easy to find
  – Cyberbullying

Relatable Post #1750

When someone suggest that I do my homework early.

so-relatable.tumblr.com
Ask.fm

- Enables people to ask each other questions
  - Anonymously/non-donanonymously
  - No age restrictions so predators reach out

Afterschool

- Users can post anonymous messages that only other people at their school can see
- Uses kids FB profiles to verify they’re students at a specific hs before granting access
R u dating anyone;
yeaah lol
12 months ago

Katelin?
she's freaking perfect like so pretty and funny and weird and hilarious and omg
12 months ago

Describe the guy you like.
he's really cool and funny and cute and sweet and a really good athlete and adorable lmao
12 months ago

Whats ur fav color
pink
12 months ago

Who are ur best girl and guy friends?
best girl friends: katelin kaylee frances paige nadya
best guy friends: ryan caleb
12 months ago
thanks max decoff
Welcome
18 days ago

**do you have a phone or a kik**
Yeah my phone is 334-306-4088 and my kik is pookie5678
18 days ago

**yes I'm sure** max decoff
Well I'm sure they aren't ignoring you,
18 days ago

people are avooying me every time I talk to them
Well are you sure they are avoiding you??
18 days ago

When you were little, what did you want to be when you grew up?
Veterinarian
18 days ago

**diesnt feel like it** max decoff
Why do you say that?
18 days ago

**do people not like me** max decoff
I know people do
18 days ago
Yik Yak

• Lets users post anonymous messages/photos that can be seen by anybody within a set radius

• “geofences” around middle and high schools
Yik Yak

.cancel

Rules

1. You do not bully or specifically target other yakkers.

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3. Zero-tolerance policy on posting people’s private information.

4. Don’t clutter people’s feeds with useless or offensive yaks. If you see a useless or offensive yak, make sure to do your part by downvoting or reporting it.

5. If your yaks continue to be reported, you will be suspended.

6. Ride the Yak.
Others

• **Vine**
  - Six second videos
  - Friends, celebrities, news media
  - Shutting down

• **Omegle**
  - Videochatting app that connects users with strangers

• **Periscope**
  - Streaming video app allowing people to live-broadcast anytime from anywhere
Dating Apps

• **Blendr**
  – Focuses on users with similar interest in proximity
  – “geosocial networking”

• **Tinder**
  – Combines online dating, GPS, and instant messaging

• **Down**
  – Sorts a user’s fb friends based on whether they are “Down” to hookup
Messaging Apps

• Alternative to texting
  – No message limits
  – Use data or wi-fi

• Whatsapp
  – Most popular messaging app
    • 1 billion users

• Facebook Messenger
  – Integrated with the FB chat, mandatory
  – “free texting from facebook”
  – Get messages instantly (like a text)

• Groupme
kik Messenger

• 240 million users
  – 40% of teenagers use this app
• Children under 13 prohibited (still popular with minors)
  – Doesn’t require e-mail or phone verification
• Easy way to communicate with friends
• Cons
  – Child exploitation
  – Chats are easily deleted
  – Used to “chat” with strangers
  – No parental controls
  – “promoted chats” (in which brands text with users)
kik Messenger

• Cons
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Skype, Facetime, and ooVoo

• Skype
  – Used for voice, text, video
  – Available on computers, tablets & cell phones
  – Local and International calls, text & chats

• Facetime
  - Apple devices only, Android has app alternatives
  - Video chatting via WiFi or 4G connections

• ooVoo
  - Users can have group chats for free
  - Teens use it to “hang out” with their friends
Others...

- Vine
- TBH
- Pinterest
- Chat roulette
- Omegle
- Timehop
Webcams

- Teens have conversations via webcam with people they met on another site – convinced to share nude images

- Cameras can be hacked – pictures taken without consent
“Sexting”

• Sending sexually explicit messages, photos or videos primarily via cell phones or other social media
• Sexting dangers include legal consequences
  – Distribution of child pornography
Sexting/Sextortion

- “Revenge porn”

- Perps take pornographic pictures of victims and threaten to send them to friends/family or post online if victim doesn’t comply
Websites Where Buying Occurs/Facilitated

- Craigslist, Backpage
- Tagged
- Buyer Review Boards (USA Sex Guide, ERA, EROS)
Dark Web

• Portion of internet that is undetectable by normal means

• Popular with large-scale trafficking organizations (drug and people)

• Many child pornography sites are on the dark web

• Transactions done entirely in bitcoin so difficult to trace
Gaming Systems

- Internet connected gaming consoles (Wii, Playstation, etc.) can be set up to allow chat

- Perpetrators impersonate younger players to begin relationships with victims

- Chats become more and more personal and can move into private chatrooms for illicit conversation
Live Streaming

• Live streaming becoming more prevalent

• Is actual footage of abuse happening in the moment

• Material often gone because video is live-streamed to end user and not captured

• Entire villages in SW Asia are being wired for live streaming of sex with children – greatest demand coming from US and Europe
Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

• Peer to Peer (P2P) file sharing distribution and sharing of digital media using peer-to-peer (P2P) networking technology.
  ▪ Allows users to access media files such as books, music, movies, and games using a P2P software program that searches for other connected computers on a P2P network
  ▪ Concept made popular by sites like Napster
  ▪ Offenders using P2P technology more prolific in downloading habits
  ▪ Users can log in and share files – can receive thousands of images almost instantly – able to build massive collections within hours
  ▪ Hard to track by law enforcement
Complexities of Technology

- Hard to track
- Anonymity
- Multiple avenues
- Huge use – can’t “block” all forms of tech
- Benefits to technology
Pornography Online

• 100,000+ sites:
  ▪ Illegal child porn
  ▪ Legal ‘teen’ or ‘barely legal’ porn

• 2006: Over 20M searches using the terms ‘teen porn’ or ‘teen sex’

• 2012: Nearly twice that number

• GoogleTrends shows searches are steadily increasing

• Worldwide, the length of visits to the site has continued to increase

• $97 BILLION industry worldwide, child porn takes in $3 billion
Types of Pornography

- **Soft-core**
  - Less explicit, graphic, more aesthetic; contains “love-scenes;”

- **Hard-core**
  - Explicit, obscene; penetration and intercourse

- **Feature**
  - “Hollywood,” contains a plot

- **Gonzo**
  - Lack of storyline; “point of view”

- **Subgenres**
  - Alt porn, amateur, ethnic, fetish, “teen,” facial abuse, rape, group sex, sexual orientation-based, “revenge porn”

(Dines, 2010)
Internet Pornography


[Image: Total visits to Pornhub: 23 billion visits, 64M per day, 2.6M per hour, 44K per minute, 729 per second]
How it’s Viewed

Traffic by Game Console

- Playstation: 53%
- Xbox: 34%
- Wii: 7%
- Nintendo Wii: 5%
- Nintendo 3DS: 1%
- PS Vita: 1%

Change in Traffic Share from 2015 to 2016

- Playstation: ▲13%
- Xbox: ▼10%
- Wii: ▼24%
- 3DS: ▼38%
- PS Vita: ▲8%

Traffic by Phone, Desktop & Tablet

- Desktop: 28%
- Phone: 61%
- Tablet: 11%

Change in Traffic Share from 2015 to 2016

- Desktop: ▼8%
- Phone: ▲9%
- Tablet: ▼1%
Child Pornography

“At its essence, child pornography is a photographic record of child sexual abuse”.

ECPAT, 2008; Cooper, Estes, Giardino, Kellogg, Vieth, 2005
Child Pornography

• 2 categories
  ▪ Not sexually explicit, naked/seductive images of children
  ▪ Images of children engaging in sexual activity

• It is also used to lower resistance of children to performing sexual acts
  ▪ Makes ‘synthetic’ (computer-generated) child pornography analogously dangerous

ECPAT, 2008; Cooper et al, 2005
Exploitation via Pornography

- Children tricked/coerced into sexual acts for production of pornography made without child’s knowledge
- Consumers of child pornography are further exploiting children and contributing to the production (demand leads to supply)
- Makers of pornography blackmail, intimidate, coerce victims with the images so that they don’t tell, say no, etc.
- Shared Hope International estimates that 1 in 5 online pornographic images are of children

ECPAT, 2008
Implications of Viewing Porn

• Risk factors that correlate with sexual assault
  – Alcohol use
  – Distorted perceptions
  – Rape attitudes
  – Pornography use
  – Hyper-sexuality
  – Antisocial behaviors

• Adolescent sex offender risk factors
  – Prior sexual abuse
  – Atypical sexual fantasies/interests
  – Early exposure to sex and pornography

Seto & Lalumière, 2010
Impacts on Youth

• Average age of exposure: 12.2 years
  – 11.8 years for boys
  – 12.8 years for girls

• Many young men report that their sex education came from pornography
  – 2010 article: Ask girlfriends to perform sexual acts shown in pornography

• Exposure to “X-rated material”
  – 6x more likely to have sexually aggressive behaviors

Ybarra, Mitchell, Hamburger, Diener-West, & Leaf 2010
Online Sex Offender to Contact Offending

• 2000-2009:
  – Number of arrests in the US for internet sex crimes has tripled

• Most internet offenders are motivated by sexual interest in children

• Two types of online offenders:
  – Child pornography offenders (fantasy-driven)
  – Solicitation offenders (contact-driven)
Online Sex Offender Recidivism

• Reoffending Risk?
  – 1 in 20 reoffended
  – 2% committed contact offense
  – 3.4% committed new child pornography offense

• Risk factors
  – Lower education level
  – Being single
  – Possessing non-internet child pornography
  – Not possessing images of adolescent minors
  – Prior sex offender treatment
Pedophiles vs Child Abusers

- **Pedophiles**
  - Develop sexual interest in children around puberty
  - DSM V as a paraphilic disorder

- **Some pedophiles will never make contact offenses against a child**
  - Many self-reporting pedophiles have moral standards
  - Strongly oppose contact-offending
  - Believe relations with a child is immoral and can destroy a child’s life
The “Satiate” Defense

• Some pedophiles argue that viewing child pornography “satiates” their desires and keeps them from offending
  – “Virtual” child sex

• Experts argue that this is not the best treatment
  – Spending hours online could lead to more anti-social behaviors
Connections to Trafficking

• Many buyers begin interest in prostitution via porn

• Sex buyers use significantly more pornography than non-buyers
  - ¾ of buyers said they received their sex education from pornography
  - Compared with slightly more than ½ of non-buyers

• “The message is clear: if prostitution is the main act, porn is the dress rehearsal.”
  – Victor Malarek, *The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It*

Newsweek, 2011
Implications

• Increased traffic, time spent, and search terms used on the site suggest a growing tolerance for pornography

• Research clearly shows correlates between pornography consumption and trafficking/exploitation
Examples of Links

• Police have rescued six children and arrested 65 people in Australia as part of a multinational police operation cracking down on a global child exploitation ring. (Australian bust related to Toronto company)

• “Behind every child abuse image there is a real victim who has been sexually exploited and abused, and we need to do everything we can to remove these children from harm and arrest those involved in that exploitation.”

• The arrests included 40 schoolteachers, nine doctors and nurses, 32 people who volunteered with children, six law enforcement personnel, nine pastors or priests, and three foster parents

• More than 350,000 images and more than 9,000 videos of child sexual abuse were found during the investigation, and arrests are continuing, Beaven-Desjardins said.

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/nov/15/child-abuse-investigation-australia-arrests
More than 50 members of a child pornography ring who engaged in what authorities describe as "horrific" and "unspeakable" crimes have been arrested for sexually exploiting children from 12 years old to as young as infants.

Top federal law enforcement officials say agents busted the global online pornography ring following an intense international investigation that began in 2009. The ring, based in the United States, reached across five continents and 14 countries.

"In order to become part of the Dreamboard community, prospective members were required to upload pornography portraying children under 12 years of age or younger,"

Those arrested outside the U.S. were picked up by officials in Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Kenya, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Qatar, Serbia, Sweden and Switzerland.
“In my mind, pornography is a lot more harmful than even prostitution, because you take a picture or video of someone, they are forever exploited at the age and time that they are, so you can take a girl off the streets, and the exploitation stops, but their photos and videos are out there forever.”

Trafficking survivor, Jessica Richardson
Recovery for the Victim

• Recovery from exploitation via technology is difficult
  ▪ Images remain – often have been shared worldwide
  ▪ Notification from DOJ every time image is uncovered unless they opt out
  ▪ Unable to receive appropriate restitution from consumers of the images

• May also be trafficking victim
  ▪ Trauma associated with trafficking
  ▪ Criminal justice concerns (charges for prostitution-related offenses)
Technology to Fight

• DemandTracker
  ▪ Decoy ads – tracks phone numbers used to respond to ads
  ▪ Cannot confirm phone number used to actually purchase sex with a minor

• TraffickCam
  ▪ Free smartphone app allows users to take pictures of hotel rooms
  ▪ Guides users to take four pictures of their hotel room, input hotel name and room number
  ▪ Can be cross-referenced with other images online to find similarities (useful with web-based advertising for services)
Technology to Fight

• THORN
  ▪ Spotlight program
    • Web-based tool to assist law enforcement in victim identification
    • Combines vast amount of victim data contained in online ads – reduces time LE needs for data search
  ▪ BEFREE Text Program
    • Text shortcut option to reach out for assistance
    • Goal is to help victims but also used by witnesses to allow them to reach out
  ▪ Partner with Project Vic
    • Partner with FBI, Homeland Security, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, and Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce to maintain a central repository for abuse images
Technology to Fight

• Photo DNA
  ▪ Developed by Microsoft, gifted to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
  ▪ Filters materials investigators find on suspected offenders computers/phones/etc.
  ▪ Allows for image comparisons to determine if pictures are new or are of previously identified victims
  ▪ Tech sites such as Google and Microsoft use to filter images online; Facebook and Twitter also use to block offensive images from their sites
What Else Can Be Done – Prevention

• Individual Level
  ▪ Services for child sexual abuse victims
  ▪ More attention on at-risk youth
  ▪ Educate on safe social media and technology use
    • Education for at-risk girls
      – The Voices Project (Atlanta)
      – My Life My Choice (Boston)
    • Demand prevention
      – Education for male youth (CAASE - Chicago)
      – Educate potential buyers on the implications of online exploitation
      – Penalties for buyers of sex & consumers of child pornography
      – Penalties for exploiters
What Else Can Be Done – Prevention

• Community/Environmental
  ▪ Advocate for better training (parents, judges, law enforcement, etc.)
  ▪ Bystander intervention trainings
  ▪ Business community involvement

• Societal
  ▪ Work toward change in social norms/acceptance of pornography/child pornography
  ▪ Advocate for better recovery services for victims of online exploitation
References

References


