

Chapter 36

Child Online Pornography: Criminal Methods and Investigation

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ABSTRACT

Online child pornography is a ubiquitous predicament over the internet, and its pessimistic effects and steady growth are significant in today's society. Online CSAM trading has recently gained much attention as well as "moral outrage" for national and international governments and law officials due to the ease of availability and sustained connectivity. The chapter is structured to highlight a deeper understanding of the term "CSAM" that is more diverse than the stigmatized expression of word child pornography and addresses the dark internet modalities frequently used by pedophiles to attract innocent victims. The authors also explored numerous innovative digital technologies and methods used by law enforcement officers around the world, together with corporate and non-governmental organizations to combat this unseen enemy.

INTRODUCTION

The Digital Technology and Internet has turned out to be an integral and comprehensive part of our everyday lives. (Brenner, 2007). It has transformed communications to the extent that it is now our preferred medium of daily communication. We are using the Internet in almost everything we do. More than ever before, we exist in what Consoli & Hoekstra (2008) denote as a 'technological context' in which technology is not merely omnipresent, but has become ubiquitous across all aspects of our everyday lives, activities, and interactions.

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Technological innovations transformed or digitized existing crimes, and co-created various new, more 'high-tech' types of crimes (Van der Wagen, 2018). The assumption that cybercrime entails a large variety of crimes explains why most definitions are very vague. Yar & Steinmetz (2013), for example, describes cybercrime as "a range of illicit activities whose 'common denominator' is the central role played by networks of information and communication technology (ICT) in their commission". They consider cybercrime to be "computer-mediated activities which are either illegal or considered illegal by certain parties and which can be carried out through global electronic networks". Adult involvement in sex with children is increased. Since there is an exponential increase of unparalleled exposure of cyberspace while previously it was either well-hidden or latent. There is growing public and professional concern over facilitated sexual offenses on the Internet, leading to a greater number of convictions and psychiatric recommendations for these crimes (Middleton et al., 2009; Motivans & Kyckelhahn, 2007).

Inevitably, child pornography, rather an old phenomenon, was already popular among paedophiles, both in its amateur and professional variations and has clad to be the second after drug trafficking, most money making globalized illicit business (Violence against Children in CYBERSPACE - ECPAT).

By 1977, around 250 magazines having CSAM material were already popular among paedophiles throughout United States (Wortley and Small bone, 2006) while the real explosion in child pornography has come by the wide expansion of growing publicity of World Wide Web in early 1990s. Information technologies have a conspicuous effect to established new state of art adaptations used by the offenders to conquer the conventional methods (such as sharing email attachment, chat rooms etc.) by virtue of latest dark web Internet technology (e.g., Tor Network, Free net, Dark Web, or even through Social media and Cloud computing) for trading and publicizing of CSAM materials over the internet with extensive opportunities regardless of geographical limitations. Due to ease accessibility of these Internet sources, obscene information is gathered and possessed by all possible outlets such as home computers, email, websites, music clouds, mobile devices, apps, and social networking platforms, including WhatsApp, Kik Messenger, Instagram, and Snap chat, make CSAM trading more alluring among paedophiles (James, 2017). Even though child predators do not hesitate in selling and purchasing of such pornographic materials to anyone at a very low monetary cost (Child Sexual abuse images - Cybertip.ca. (n.d.)).

MAJOR ONLINE THREATS TO CHILDREN

In this digital age, when children have been more familiar with technology, if we fail to take the requisite precautions on time it may also pose grave safety concerns of children. The following are six areas of online child exploitation (Protecting Children from Online Sexual Exploitation).

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) legally referred to as child pornography relates to contents portraying a child's real or virtual participation in sexual abuse activity focused primarily on sexual gratification genital exposure. The phrase "child sexual exploitation material" (CSEM) can be used to include all other sexualized materials that depict children in a broader context of pornography. (ECPAT terminology guidelines - Luxembourg guidelines Sexual exploitation). INHOPE, the International Association

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