Child Pornography Offender Dynamics

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Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child pornography – child sexual abuse images, or child abuse images
- Intrafamilial prostitution – exploitation of children by family members for money, shelter, contraband, or influence
- Commercial sexual exploitation of children-domestic minor sexual trafficking
- Cyberenticement – luring and grooming of children for the purpose of sexual abuse and exploitation
- Child Sex Tourism – travel to or from a country to access children for sexual exploitation
- Self-exploitation – self-made production of child pornography as a high risk sexual behavior

Global Symposium for Examining the Relationship Between Online and Offline Offenses and Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children

May 2009
Expert Working Group

- 15 countries were represented with presenters as well as expert discussants.
- For 2 days, 45 substantive experts from the fields of psychology, social science, and analytical research with expertise in child pornography crimes, offenders and/or victims participated in focused academic exchange.
- Gaps in knowledge were additional topics included in the discourse.

Theme Sessions

- The Broader Context –
  - Included all of the presently conceived ways in which children are victimized by child pornography;
  - Discussed defining child pornography beyond just the legal parameters which would include fictional depictions, audio recordings, and text stories of the sexual abuse of children; and
  - Reviewed gaps in knowledge such as what does a collector’s content tell us about the offender and how to prevent this problem, analogizing to other issues in society e.g. drunk driving, smoking etc.

- Conceptualizing risk-
  - Defined situational factors and criminogenic approaches in prevention.
  - Discussed whether theories of contact sexual offending helps in understanding risks.
  - Considered how to advance the present knowledge base in risk assessment for Internet sexual offenders.
  - Discussed that gaps in knowledge in this area particularly regarding the disturbing trends of self-exploitation by youth (which often mirrors adult behaviors which is not illegal).
Theme Sessions

- The relationship between online and offline sexual offences against children –
  - Assessed the risk posed by child pornography offenders as compared to contact offenders (child molesters)
  - Discussed the psychological and behavioral characteristics of child pornography offenders in treatment and the importance of polygraphs
  - Reviewed the social dimensions of trading online images
  - Identified gaps in knowledge such as protective factors that might exist in offenders to determine incarceration versus probation and the need for research to understand why the conviction rate is higher for Internet crimes versus contact child sexual abuse

Information and Communication Technology

Methods of Abuse

“Memorialization of a Sexual Encounter – Even If the Encounter Is Voyeuristic”

What Are Offenders Doing?

- Exposure of children to adult pornography
- Exposure of children to child pornography for education and normalization of sexual encounter with an adult
- Production of images of children overtly and use them for extortion into compliance and silence
- Production of images overtly of nonverbal children to share online
- Production of images of children covertly for subsequent sexual gratification, as a means of networking with others online, or as a means of bartering for additional images online
What Are Offenders Doing?

- Production of images via webcams as a component of cyber-enticement
- Production of images for commercial and financial online gain
- Production of images to facilitate prostitution of children and youth offline
- Collection or production of images for the purpose of sharing with like-minded individuals for chat, masturbation, or as an entry into child sex rings
- Collection of images as the offender poses as a peer or a game mate of younger children in videogames

Worst Case Scenarios

- Production of images within the context of child abduction, rape (at times recurrent) and homicide
- Collection and/or production of sadistic or bestiality images
- Collection of images (real or virtual) of child torture

Why Do Offenders Collect?

- Sexual gratification
- Plan for action
- To enhance social skills (networking)
- To elevate one’s position among online peers
- To improve computer skills

First Response in Research on Collectors (Taylor, & Quayle 2003)
Risk Assessments

- Many methods of assessing risk include sex offender evaluations including phallometry.
- Internet child pornography has lead to a need for changes even in the classic assessments.
- Of great interest are 2 studies both of which included phallometry and polygraphy.

Seto, Cantor and Blanchard (2006)

- This study investigated whether being charged with a child pornography offense was a valid diagnostic indicator of pedophilia as represented by phallometric – assessed sexual arousal to children.
- The results indicated that child pornography offenders had almost 3X the odds of being identified as a pedophile as compared to actual contact offenders.

Bourke & Hernandez (2009)

- This study investigated whether child pornography offenders (possession and transmission, only) were at little risk for engaging in hands-on offenses or were these offenses undetected.
- Comparison of the incidence of prior contact sexual crimes documented at sentencing versus after sex offender treatment revealed a sexual contact percentage of 26% vs 85%.
Online to Offline Sexual Offending

- The Bourke & Hernandez study as well as the Seto study assists in realizing that child pornography possession is a marker for prior contact offending and pedophilia.
- Additional research has been completed to determine if online collectors become offline offenders after having spent much time with images.

Online to Offline Sexual Offending

- An early hypothesis (Taylor 1999) regarding collection of images was that after offenders went online, they discovered online communities of likeminded individuals who provided them with social support for their sexual interest in children.
- This promoted disinhibition and engagement with increasingly explicit abusive images, habituation to the materials and eventually promoted seeking offline children for sexual abuse.

Online to Offline Sexual Offending

- Subsequent research revealed however that many collection offenders would limit the types of images they collected to a certain type of abuse, avoiding escalation in severity and were more likely to seek out online contact with other offenders than with children (Quayle & Taylor 2002, Taylor & Quayle 2006).
- Research suggests a greater focus on social networking by offenders on the acquisition of sexual abuse images.
Online to Offline Sexual Offending

- Evidence emerged that collectors will ardently seek to acquire images for others with whom they share a strong online relationship
- They will also seek to increase their social status by owning and providing rare or personally produced images
- Therefore, the motive for contact sexual offending offline is to meet the needs of online associates

Online to Offline Sexual Offending

- In contrast to the common conceptualization that child pornography is a by-product of contact child sexual offending, in some cases contact offending may be a by-product of an individual’s desire to produce child pornography
- The online network of collectors is like a virtual “locker room” of individuals who share a common interest in sexual exploitation of children and sexual abuse is to produce more images

Gaps in Knowledge Regarding Online to Offline Offending

- Recognition of protective factors that might exist in offenders
- Do outreach programs such as STOP IT NOW! provide the “reality check” that some offenders need to curtail their online behaviors before they become an offline offender
- Does CP collecting lead to CSA or does CSA lead to CP collecting
A Word About Youth Offenders

- Youth offenders are thought to be one of the fastest rising type of offenders of production of adolescent (albeit still children) pornography
- The normalization of sexual harm that is aggressively marketed to teens and tweens leading to the sexualization of girls plays an important role in sexual self-objectification (APA, 2007)

Youth Offenders

- Youth who are collecting child pornography images are in a different developmental stage of sexuality as compared to adults
- Prefrontal cortex maturation is incomplete until nearly 23 years of age and impulse control, judgment and emotional responses are not intact during adolescence
- Researchers share concerns that sexual mores are dramatically being altered by media exposure (USA Today: Jan 20, 2010) since cable TV is not held to the restrictions enforced by the FCC

Youth Offenders

- Decisions regarding probation and treatment should include a knowledge of the increasing media exposure for youth to an all time high of 7.5 hours per day as compared to 6 hours per day in 1999 (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010)
Compulsive Internet Use?

- The brain shown on functional MRI studies reveals that for youth and adults alike, Internet use provides a sense of reward to the brain – as graphomotor behaviors lead to visual and cognitive positive results.
- This reward feeling occurs in the same part of the brain stimulated with gambling, obsessive shopping, and video gaming.