

The Internet Part 5

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The most prevalent of all internet sex crimes is child pornography. Pornography in general is the largest unregulated money making business in the world. Child pornography has also increased to become a large money making venture. In a review of *Online Solicitation of Children: A Report Regarding the Use of the Internet to Facilitate the Commission of Sex Crimes Including Recommendations for Ensuring Child Safety*, the discussion of child pornography will be looked at more closely.

The legal definition of child pornography is a visual depiction of any kind, including a drawing, cartoon, sculpture, painting, photograph, film, video, or computer generated image of sexually explicit conduct that involves a minor. It is illegal to have, hand out, or to produce child pornography.

It is estimated that there are 14 million internet sites that contain roughly a million child pornographic images. These internet sites average 200 new child pornographic images a day. There are close to 100,000 pedophiles that have organized to create a child pornography ring. One third of these individuals reside within the United States. In the United States alone, child pornography is close to a 20 billion dollar business. The production of these images has two main sources: United States and Russia. In a country where child abuse is seen as such a tragedy, we produce 55% of the world's child pornographic images.

Each child that is presented in an inappropriate image is a victim of abuse. Locating these children is nearly impossible. Removing the images from the internet is impossible. It may be removed from one site but it is on a thousand others. Sadly, these children face a lifetime of abuse since the image is always present.

In most images, the child is forced to smile or to have a neutral face in order to show others that he/she is a willing participant and is enjoying the abuse. This technique is also used to get other children to cooperate with the abuse. If the child sees that others are enjoying it, then he/she will also like it. In many cases the child is never touched or physically harmed. With the creation of webcams and other devices, some children don't even know they are being photographed or filmed. Due to modern technology, pornographers have found a way around the legal system. The United States Supreme Court has allowed for the creation of virtual and simulated child pornography. What these individual are doing is making the child in the image unrecognizable or digital. If the child can't be proven to be real, then there is no link to child abuse. These virtual images are legal in the United States.

As modern technology continues to advance, so will the offenders. Sadly, the justice system will always be behind. In the last article of this series, we will look into what parents can do to prevent internet child abuse.