



# ECPAT Newsletter

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes

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## perspectives

### A challenge for the real world

*by Major Giorgio Stefano Manzi, Italian  
Internal Affairs Ministry, International  
Police Cooperation Department*

Global action to counter the commercial sexual exploitation of children cannot be exclusively repressive but should concentrate on preventive measures. In this respect, the study of possible current and future scenarios is important, particularly when it comes to technological advances and second-guessing the way they will be used by those who would harm children.

Child pornography, for example, involves the physical abuse of a child as well as the distorted use of technologies that are being perfected with the intention of benefiting the world. At the same time, the virtual 'non-places' where abusive and exploitative images of children are exchanged and where children are groomed for abuse are no longer only chatrooms, Internet Relay Chats (IRC) and newsgroups. Now, infancy as a commodity is consumed in new Internet spaces, such as those created by Multi-User Dimension (MUD) systems, through new resources for data transmission, and in the practice of sex tourism in countries still unable to combat this crime against children.

The evil use of new technologies is

of particular concern as we act on the present and look to the future. I remember how, in the early 1990s, paedophile pornographers began to utilise newly emerging bulletin board systems (BBS) to exchange pornographic materials. These systems were territorially confined. The cost was affordable only if connections were made within the same telephone district, because connections were made by dialling into the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) and transcontinental connections were still expensive. With the expansion of the Internet – and its affordability – the first mailing lists appeared, within which the first online 'communities' of paedophiles and other sexual abusers of young people developed. People on these restricted lists began to exchange not just textual messages but also pictures and movies. 'Old' technologies were still used, as photos were scanned for input and analogue films were made into newer digital formats. Soon, these paedophile mailing lists evolved into news groups (long-distance and geographically diverse, or telematic, discussion groups) in which anonymity favoured the extreme degeneration of both text and graphic production.

By the late 1990s, new technologies' unintended facilitation of anonymous



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■ Editors: Deborah Muir and Cath Croxton ■ Layout: Manida Naebklang  
 ■ Address: 328 Phayathai Road, Bangkok 10400, Thailand ■ Telephone: (662) 215-3388, 611-0972 ■ Fax: (662) 215-8272  
 ■ Email: [info@ecpat.net](mailto:info@ecpat.net) ■ Website: [www.ecpat.net](http://www.ecpat.net) ■ All information/ suggestions/ comments/ articles are welcome.

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## What does it all mean . . .

### Broadband

A high-speed, high-capacity transmission channel for simultaneously passing multi-media information, such as pictures, videos and data between users.

### Encryption

A process by which data is converted into a format that may not be read or accessed by a human or a computer without the proper mechanisms to decode it.

### Internet Relay Chat (IRC)

A form of instant communication over the Internet (similar to instant messaging using MSN or Yahoo Messenger). It is mainly designed for group communication in discussion forums called channels, but it also allows one-to-one communication.

### MUD

Multi-User Dimensions is a computer program that allows multiple players to connect simultaneously through an Internet server to engage in a shared game or activity. Sometimes known as Multi-User Dungeons because the concept derives from the Dungeons and Dragons games, some MUD programs allow for 'social' contact (discussions etc) while others involve users in role-playing. A user can adopt and take control of a computerised persona or character in a 'fantasy' realm.

### Secure Shell

A program to log into a computer over a network, to execute commands in a remote machine, and to move files from one machine to another. It provides strong authentication and secure communications.

### Steganography

The art and science of hiding messages within data for an intended user. On a webpage, for example, a steganographic message will appear to be something else, such as an article, a picture, or a 'cover' message.

### Telnet

A way to access a remote computer (with permission), as if you were logged on directly. This allows the user to call up any files or programs on the remote computer, and to issue commands as though they were sitting at it. Telnet can enhance the functioning of MUD systems.

### Third-generation (3G) networks

The next generation of wireless networks incorporating the use of mobile phone technology into a multi-media setting. It will allow users to keep connected to the Internet at all times and places, sharing a wide range of information in all formats and at immense speeds.

networking and sharing of materials among paedophiles generated a pro-paedophilia 'ideological' boost and the spread of a paedophilic 'culture', whereby the likes of the Paedophile Liberation Front and NUMBLA used websites – often resident in countries with lax Internet and child protection laws – to promote adults' use of children for sex and tolerance of paraphilia, or dangerous sexual desires. Consequent to the development of techniques for encrypting online texts and graphics, such as through the use of steganography (*see panel at left*), more restricted paedophilic groups were created. Not only were audio-video-graphic materials (progressively more immediate because they were produced directly in a digital format) exchanged, but information was shared on the physical and actual availability of children, very often the sons and daughters of members of the groups.

The internal organisation of these groups, with names such as Shadows Brotherhood, Fun Club and The Group, reveals a tendency to esotericism and medieval corporatism. It is worth noting how an agreement to share materials through a kind of 'blood pact' has an economic character, and that at the core of these paedophile rings is a mutually binding 'contract'. Each member can then access the entire information patrimony of the group (that is, the children, data on how to find them, the material produced), while adding their own information as proof of loyalty. Bonding may also involve the exchange of information about how to approach criminal networks in countries affected by sex tourism, so as to arrange meetings with children in a 'protected' environment.

Analysed from the criminological point of view, the Internet has been transformed in recent years into a big store where paedophiles and voyeurs can look or shop around for 'articles'. They can go to websites for the provision of photos and films, to newsgroups for the sharing of mailing lists and URLs (the link to a particular Internet site), to IRCs in order to identify, groom and approach children, and to systems of instant messages. These are enhanced through encrypted plug-ins (software that adds extra features to these programs).

Too often, however, the 'technological' paedophile is confused with hackers or crackers, whereby the former is regarded as engaging in deviant behaviour from the informatic point of view. This is far from true. The paedophile exploits the technology, he controls it, but he does not abuse it. On the contrary, he is very attentive not to fall prey to the traps of software or copyright piracy. His presence is silent as he moves through the underbrush of encrypted systems of communication, in the virtual tunnelling systems, Secure Shells (*see panel*), in Voice Over IP (which allows phone calls over the Internet, so feared by police investigators). Arrogance is not his daily habit. He is a terribly 'serious' criminal. He is so serious that he meditates on the new borders and territory to be invaded: the Telnet, for example, (*see panel*) in order to modify the initially carefree and joyful nature of MUD. Or to exploit the third-generation mobile phone system, avoiding the Internet monitoring, in order to reach a child directly.

It is widely accepted that MUD systems (*see panel*) are among the newest challenges in efforts to counteract the abuse and exploitation of children, directly and indirectly, via the Internet. This is because the level of risk for a child is extremely high in the virtual non-places of MUD, where the related interactive games commonly attract teenagers. Adults who engage a child through MUD often aim to 'transform' the child's sexuality, by presenting him or her with different and sexually undefined identities. The ultimate goal in subjecting the child to 'dialectic tortures' is to confuse the young interlocutor about their gender identity, by means of continuous sexual solicitations, until the child enters a 'land' of marked perversion in which the abusive adult means to assume the role of guide. Evil and perverse.

A new scenario is rapidly coming true, along with what the (positive) theorists of the web have foretold for a long time. We are witnessing the transformation of a mere technological tool into a complex meta-instrument through which new realities can be created, realities that seem closer and more similar to the real world than can be imagined. The children of the world – our children – must be protected not only from exploitation, physical and worldly violence, but also from the dangers that loom within new communications systems. The dangers of physical and psychological harm emanating from the unreal but seductive spaces that paedophiles and other abusers of children infest – like a technological cancer – are being launched as yet another challenge to defenders of children. We will meet this challenge.

## Internet safety must be a priority

by John Carr, NCH Internet Adviser

Around 1995-96, the Internet started its long march towards the mass market, away from the high-octane world of military research and big business and the more trusting cloisters of the academy. Everyone connected with children's education and welfare could see the Internet's potential benefits. But it was not long before the downside became apparent. The amount of child pornography being produced and circulated increased immediately. Chatrooms became a hunting ground for paedophiles. Pornography was everywhere. But when child protection agencies tried to talk to people in the British Internet industry about these things, with only one or two honourable exceptions, we were almost invariably met with hostility. This hostility derived from notions of free expression and an attitude that business was not responsible for content and how individuals used the Internet.

The notion that wider society, or democratically elected politicians, or their civil servants should have a say in anything to do with the Internet was anathema to those who felt it was their invention. But the initial rush of enthusiasm for the Internet meant that, in one sense, it did not matter how awful some of these start-up Internet companies were (in terms of how bad they were as businesses, their indifference to the wider social agenda, or their insufficient attention to thinking about some of their customers). New customers just kept on coming. But then three things began to happen.

The number of appalling cases involving online and related real-world sexual abuse and exploitation of children continued to rise. The Internet bubble burst, margins got tighter, and every net business had to look to its customer base in a different and more careful way. Thirdly, the number of Internet users was reaching a new critical mass, exposing Internet companies to new types of customers who were not geeks but 'ordinary people' with different attitudes and priorities.

Running alongside this were two further key developments. Initially, few civil servants understood anything about the

Internet, and even fewer politicians. They did not want to interfere with it because of the economic growth it seemed to promise, and they did not know how to anyway. Self-regulation became the mantra, but it was a doctrine of expediency, not of choice. The same was true within law enforcement. In 1995-96, operational police personnel who actually knew about modems could be counted on the fingers of one hand. These conditions no longer apply, and many people within government and law enforcement now have a sophisticated grasp of Internet-based applications for communications and other new technology developments. Secondly, there have been important improvements in technology. Faster processors, cleverer artificial intelligence systems and the spread of broadband are perhaps the most important.

The first sign of a major shift in business attitudes towards recognition of their social responsibilities with regard to protecting children (against both harmful materials and people) was Microsoft's announcement last September that it was withdrawing from the chatroom market altogether, except in those countries (Canada, Japan and the United States) where MSN was established as a fee-paying service and where the company therefore had some data about who logged on. This decision has been both praised and treated with cynicism. But for my own part there is one irreducible and undeniable fact: I believe there is evidence that Microsoft will go some way to ensure its brand is not associated with, or even in the same space as, anything to do with child abuse and exploitation or any illegal sexual images. For example, Microsoft is funding much research and activity that seeks to address these and other related issues.

Next came two momentous decisions from Britain's mobile phone network operators, which are preparing for the introduction of third-generation (3G) networks linked to new and sophisticated handsets with Internet access. In January 2004, all six of them decided to introduce an age-verification system for all handsets connected to their networks. Unless you can show that you are 18 or above, from December 2004 your handset will not be able to access a range of adult content

and services on the operators' own networks. Chatrooms have been classified as an adult service, and one or more of the operators is likely to classify Internet access as an adult service. As well, anyone who wants to publish any material through the networks' channels will have to classify it as being suitable either for universal access or adult-only access. All six of the relevant 3G companies have also said they are pre-installing filtering and blocking software on all their network servers.

Now, British Telecom (BT) announced in June that it would block access to all known child pornography sites. Under the new system, a 404 error message appears when anyone types in, whether by accident or design, an address that has previously been identified by Britain's Internet Watch Foundation as containing abusive images of children. It is as if the page does not exist. Already, three other British-based Internet service providers (ISPs) say they will follow BT's lead, and children's organisations plan to press all the others (about 400) to follow suit. Inquiries to BT from overseas ISPs are also known to be flooding in.

BT's move to block illegal websites is a logical consolidation of a decision by all ISPs in Britain in 2002 to block access to all known newsgroups that contain child pornography. As a result, there were almost no reports last year of any illegal images on newsgroups across Britain. The inability to log onto such newsgroups from British-based ISPs has made a huge dent in the traffic, and made it impossible for most people in Britain to find such sites. Nonetheless, BT was brave to step forward and acknowledge that, technically, the blocking of websites containing child pornography could indeed be done, when other businesses were somewhere between hostile and very lukewarm to the idea. It has set the standard that others will now have to meet.

The way I see it, in Britain we have a happy confluence of four streams. The first is an energetic and effective NGO sector that is campaigning for progressive change in this area. The second is a more self-confident government and a law-enforcement community that now seems more willing to intervene on behalf of the wider public interest. The third is a new kind of business leader in the technology sector that is sensitive to these currents and wants to embrace and endorse them in a search for a larger market share. Finally, technological advances and cost reductions have underpinned all of the above and transformed the aspirational into the actual.

The challenge for all of us in the ECPAT network is to generalise these achievements and adapt them to our local conditions so we can make real inroads into the problem on a worldwide basis. These technical and policy fixes will never be enough on their own. They must work alongside first-class education and awareness programmes, but they are a very good start. At the end of the day, we need to assert that it is no longer appropriate, if it ever was, to think about the Internet as an adult medium, where special measures are needed to make provision for children's occasional or intermittent use. It is clear that children and young people are major and constant users of the Internet. If anything, they are disproportionately represented among Internet users. We need to start thinking about the Internet as if it were a main street or town square, not a night club. Website home pages should be thought of as public spaces, rather like shop windows. If we can gain acceptance for this idea, it has profound implications for global Internet policies and would mark the evolution of the Internet from wild frontier to civilization.

*NCH is a children's charity in Britain. John Carr is also a member of the British Home Office's Internet Taskforce on Child Protection.*

## Credit cards: Room for action against criminals

*by Dr Sarah Philipson, Telecom Consultant for ECPAT Sweden and formerly the Vice-President at TeliaInfoMedia*

Much of the child pornography distributed online involves no monetary exchange. Nevertheless, a lot is bought – often by using credit cards, which means it is technically possible to trace the transaction between the seller and the buyer. But so far, credit card companies have been unwilling to assist in such tracing, partly due to the web of intermediaries between them and the vendors. Tracing such transactions would not solve the problem of child pornography, but it would play an important part in countering its wider distribution, especially at the level of a buyer's first payment for such material.

When a peddler of child pornography recruits a new customer, they usually have to use an established commercially available payment system. The simplest ones are credit cards or billing services (invoicing services provided by telecom operators or utility companies). Credit

cards give the vendor the money immediately and make it easy for the customer to complete the transaction. Credit cards also give the vendor the advantage of a global payment system, while billing services usually have to be based on local national service providers.

But once a customer becomes recurrent, the method of payment may be moved off the Internet. Arrangements may be made for buyers to make direct payments to special bank accounts, which are constantly changed to avoid detection. When the buyer-seller relationship enters into this phase, it is very difficult for the police to get to them, unless the crime ring is busted for other reasons and police get access to the vendor's billing records.

In light of this, the police may be best off to concentrate on finding crime rings as they recruit new customers. However, credit card companies and banks will need to provide much more support than they have done so far.

## Danger for children at Pakistan's cafes

By Tufail Muhammad, Pakistan Paediatric Association, ECPAT Affiliate Member, Pakistan

Pakistan may not be in the front rank of countries with a high degree of computer usage and Internet connectivity. But 1812 cities and villages in the country are connected to the net, up from just 350 three years ago, while an estimated 2 million people in the country now go online. Favourable official policies on information technology have encouraged this increase and similarly, cable television has crept into homes across the country. For the most part, Pakistani society has embraced these new technologies. However, along with easier Internet access and its benefits has come the problem of online pornography.

There appears to be a high demand for pornography in Pakistan, where clandestine mini cinemas screen pornographic material, and pornographic videos and CDs can be easily bought or rented on the black market. The country's Internet service providers (ISPs) estimate that more than 60 per cent of Internet users in Pakistan visit pornographic sites regularly and many such users, both children and adults, go to cafes or clubs to access the net. Yet the production, exhibition, sale, hire and distribution of 'obscene literature and advertisements' is illegal, and sections of the penal code make it an offence to sell, rent, distribute, exhibit or circulate such material to anyone aged under 20. There are, however, no legal provisions specifically to protect children from being used in the production of pornography, or to address crimes relating to online child pornography. In addition, little attention is paid to the potential for pornography to be employed as a tool by adults seeking to sexually harm a child, whereby a targeted child is encouraged or made to view pornographic images as a means to desensitise the child and 'groom' him or her into a situation of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Across Pakistan, Internet clubs are generally located in busy markets and shopping plazas, though some are in semi-residential areas. The clubs range from well-maintained and well-equipped facilities to spartan kiosks housing a few outdated machines. A typical club is small, and usually has about 10 to 20 personal computers along with a server and a counter for the manager, who is commonly the club's owner. The doors of these clubs are made of coloured or tinted glass. Inside, there are usually small wooden or cardboard cabins, each with a PC facing away from the door. A narrow passage runs between the cabins. Many clubs have cabins with two chairs and a door, which can be locked from the inside. Children are subject to little supervision inside the cabins.

The clubs provide a PC with facilities for Internet chatting, browsing, and audio and video clipping. Headphones are available at no extra cost and users can bring their own CDs to listen to songs or watch movies, whatever the rating.

Almost 80 per cent of children (mostly boys) who visit the clubs access pornographic material, according to a study by the Pakistan Paediatric Association (PPA) and Save the Children Sweden (*Exposure of children to pornography at the Internet cafes of Pakistan*, 2001.) The study in Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar found that some of the children chat online, but more often they download pornographic images or watch pornographic movies. The children, aged from 12 to 18, come from two social strata: young labourers who pool their earnings and visit the cafes to access pornography together and the lower middle class who are familiar with computers. The second group may have PCs at home but are unlikely to access pornography while with their family. They may spend most of their pocket money on the net and many pool money or get it through

**Inside, there are usually small wooden or cardboard cabins, each containing a PC facing away from the door. Many clubs have cabins with two chairs and a door, which can be locked from the inside. Children are subject to little supervision when they are inside the cabins.**

other means. Many children interviewed for the study said they accessed pornography for fun and usually shared their experience with friends. The owners informed the interviewers that some children watched sex movies on rented CD-ROMs. The study also referred to newspaper reports alleging that children had been

secretly photographed and filmed in booths at the clubs.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has blocked more than 10,000 pornography websites in the past two years and framed a code of conduct for Internet clubs. The code is not legally binding, but the PTA has issued public warnings to club owners, and in some cases local authorities have raided clubs and confiscated pornographic materials. The ground situation, however, has changed very little. In the meantime, the Government is considering developing a project to distribute free web-filtering software to parents and club owners through the PTA's website. The software would be secured by a password and only the installer could remove or disable it. Its use could be made mandatory for the clubs and industry experts estimate at least 25 per cent of Pakistan's Internet users would take advantage of it.

Since 2003, the PPA and Save the Children Sweden have held several seminars and meetings with Internet club owners, ISPs, parents, teachers, media representatives and children to address concerns about children's access to online pornography, and the consequences of this. PPA has also developed and disseminated a local adaptation of ECPAT's NetSmart rules on safe Internet usage by children. At the consultations, most club owners opined that pornographic

websites should be blocked at the ISP level, while ISPs said that this was technically difficult. They recommended more efficient control and supervision at the clubs, and changes to the cabin system. Parents felt it was impossible for them to control their children's usage of the Internet at home.

The efforts of the Working Group on Child Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation, which comprises PPA, the

National Commission on Child Welfare and Development, Sahil, Rozan, Sach, Vision, Save the Children Sweden and Save the Children UK, have spurred a national debate on concerns about the risks posed to children by the Internet, and encouraged the PTA to take actions. This group has initiated discussions with parliamentarians and will hold a national consultation with stakeholders in October to address concerns about pornography, the Internet and Internet clubs.

## Hotlines a major force to combat child pornography

by Theo Noten, ECPAT Netherlands

Hotlines are an important example of collaborative action against online child pornography as members of the public, Internet service providers (ISPs), hotline staff, local and international police work together against those who access and distribute child pornography over the Internet. One such hotline is Netherlands-based Meldpunt, which collects reports of online child pornography and refers information to the police. A rising percentage of complaints it receives result in charges being laid. Yet these reports also indicate that digital cameras, web-cams and scanners are facilitating easier distribution of child pornography while more aggressive tactics are being used to direct people to access such material.

In 2003, Meldpunt, which works closely with ECPAT Netherlands, received 5999 complaints, leading to 3914 reports registered with national police forces. In the Netherlands alone, Meldpunt reported to the police 208 incidents of child pornography distribution. Almost 100 cases went to court. The high number of reports leading to criminal charges in the Netherlands is a consequence of the close link between the hotline operators and the Dutch police, who trust the expertise of Meldpunt to assess whether the child pornography reported to the hotline is liable to prosecution. In cases requiring action abroad, and depending on the country in which the material originates, Meldpunt sends its reports to other hotlines associated with INHOPE (International Network of Hotlines Combating Illegal Material Online). INHOPE is a partnership between many European hotlines and others from around the world and coordinates hotline responses to illegal use and content on the net.

The number of complaints to Meldpunt last year was roughly the same as in 2002, but reports of child pornography rose by 67 per cent. This increase was mainly due to reports on spam (unsolicited email) referring people to websites containing child pornography, which in turn lead to websites offering even more disturbing material. These sites commonly have URLs originating in places with inadequate child pornography laws, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In its 2003 report, Meldpunt noted the deluge of spam suggested a growing commercialisation of child pornography, and more research was needed on this.

Another disturbing trend is that many reports, especially those

### Tip-off nets crime ring

A follow-up on a tip by the INHOPE hotline in Germany (ECO) in 2002 resulted in the German police disbanding one of the world's largest international child pornography networks last September. The network comprised more than 26,500 Internet users in 166 countries.

Operation Marcy was initiated in response to a report filed by the Spanish hotline Protegeles, which was forwarded by German hotline FSM to ECO. The report was lodged with the German police in May 2002. After an investigation lasting more than a year, police were able to arrest suspects with the help of computer files obtained from a man arrested in the city of Magdeburg. The files included an email distribution list used for exchanging child pornography images, including images of babies.

Across the world, some 26,500 suspects were identified. In Germany alone, 745 computers, 35,000 CDs, 8300 floppy disks and 5800 videos were seized.

concerning MSN groups and associated accounts, suggest that the images being circulated are extremely violent and depict more and more very young children. No money changes hands in these groups and membership is usually gained by sharing one's own images. In the case of reports concerning MSN groups, whose anonymous hotmail accounts all originate in the US, police outside the US must refer to American authorities all reports linked to MSN services, a process that slows counteractions.

Until law enforcement everywhere proves up to the task, hotlines remain critical to acting against online child pornography. But they are a tool and not a solution. Until all governments implement adequate laws and provide good support for their enforcement, URLs in lax countries will still be used to disseminate child pornography. We must continue to lobby for adequate legislation and law enforcement worldwide, and pressure the communications industry to act against commercial sexual exploitation of children. In the meantime, support must be provided to existing hotlines and for setting up new hotlines in countries where none exist.

For more information, see [www.meldpunt.org](http://www.meldpunt.org) and [www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org)

## Europe leads way to address legal loopholes

by Karin Johansson, Programme Officer for Legal Matters,  
ECPAT Sweden

The European Union (EU) clearly states that child pornography is increasing and spreading through the use of new technologies and the Internet. Now, it has taken an important step in seeking to criminalise some uses of the new technology, through the EU Council Framework Decision on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography, which entered into force in December 2003.

Legislators and law enforcement often have been one step behind people who deal with child pornography on the Internet. The Internet is a jungle that seems impossible to legislate completely. Due to the rapid evolution of new technology, perpetrators quickly change their methods when they recognise that law enforcement is closing in on them, and legislators and law enforcement all over the world have not been able to put an end to the increasing availability of child pornography on the Internet. With the EU's framework decision, however, law enforcement should be able to take more and harder actions against those who use and those who make and distribute child pornography, not only in the EU but also in other regions that follow Europe's lead.

The framework decision describes what actions regarding sexual exploitation of children and child pornography should be criminalised in each of the union's 25 member states. Under the decision, all acts including the production, distribution, dissemination or transmission, supply or making available, acquisition or possession of child pornography are to be criminalised, whether a computer system is used for any of this or not.

The decision makes it possible to prosecute anyone who contributes to this criminal activity in any way, thus taking a big step towards closing loopholes and ensuring that Internet-related child pornography use and distribution can be acted against more successfully, right across Europe.

A critically important element has been to include in the framework decision a definition of child pornography that refers not just to images of abuse of real children, but also to images of 'artificially created' children engaged in sexually explicit conduct. This means that images that are produced with computer animation are classified as child pornography, even where no real child is used to make the image. The definition also includes 'morphed' images, whereby pictures of real people are digitally altered, or several pictures are put together to look like one picture, for example, where an image of an adult is made to look like a child. This is a significant step forward because it shows recognition that all child pornography, whether it involves the exploitation and abuse of a real child or not, is a violation of the rights of all children and should be criminalised.

The EU member states have until 20 January 2006 to take the necessary legislative measures to comply with the framework decision. The laws in some countries may already be in accord with the framework decision, for example in criminalising people who buy access to child pornography. But several European countries will have to change their national legislation to comply with EU law.

Among these countries is Sweden, which as an initial measure has increased the maximum penalty for gross child pornography crimes from four to six years' imprisonment. By 'gross', the Swedish penal code means the production and wide distribution of child pornography, for which there is a heavier penalty than possession of such material. While the Swedish Government believes this is the only legislative change it needs to make to comply with the framework decision, ECPAT Sweden argues that at least one more change is necessary. This change has to do with the acquisition of child pornography, whether or not the material is downloaded.

Purchasing child pornography on the Internet with credit cards is a common procedure. In late May 2004, Swedish police carried out a coordinated raid, the biggest of its kind in Sweden, against 118 Swedish men who are all accused of buying access to child pornography on the Internet with their credit cards. The police are now examining the evidence and it will probably take months before anyone is brought to trial. No charges have been laid yet.

To be prosecuted for criminal possession of child pornography in Sweden, the accused has to be proved to have downloaded images, be they still photos or films, onto a hard drive, CD-ROM, DVD or a similar device. Accessing child pornography sites by buying entry with a credit card, for example, is not considered a criminal offence if the buyer has not saved the pictures onto his computer or printed them.

There have been several cases in Sweden where people have gone free because of this loophole in the national legislation. At least two of the men arrested in the May raid are making use of this loophole in their defence. It remains to be seen how many others among the 118 arrested will resort to a similar defence.

The EU Council Framework Decision on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography is a globally important first step to criminalise the myriad ways in which new technology such as the Internet is used for the purposes of sexually exploiting children, whether the abuser/exploiter harms a child directly in the making of pornography or further harms a child by accessing such materials. Hopefully, it will have a great input into national legislation in and outside the EU. And hopefully, one day, legislation and law enforcement will not be several steps behind criminals who sexually exploit children, but ahead of them.

## Planning ahead for the mobile generation

by Stuart Hyde, Assistant Chief Constable, Combating Child Abuse on the Internet, West Midlands Police

Third-generation (3G) phones will put the world wide web in your pocket, making it even more accessible and deliverable. In Britain, the main licence holders for doing this have funded their new businesses to the tune of 20 billion-plus pounds. That's about US\$35 billion.

With 3G due to arrive in the mass domestic market in Britain soon, the impact of its introduction into Japan some three years ago is worth investigation. Earlier this year, I visited Japan with colleagues to see the likely consequences of this new technology and to assess the social implications. Our delegation met members of various political parties to debate issues that affect child welfare, including the impact of new technologies.

In December 2002, Vodafone KK launched its 3G network in Japan, where it is the country's seventh largest taxpayer. It bills customers on the volume of information that is uploaded or downloaded by the user and says that about half of the content downloaded has 'adult' themes. The company has raised concerns about children's safety vis a vis fast and easy access to the Internet via handsets, particularly with regard to dating sites, which have been linked to a rise in sexual and other violent crimes. While much of the social change around the use of dating sites in Japan occurred before the new technology became commercially available, the ubiquity of the Internet and increased capacity for the storage of data or images may be one factor linking the sites with crimes against children.

Mobile phone and online dating is a particular Japanese phenomenon that has grown from an older practice known as *enjo kosai*. Meaning 'compensated dating', *enjo kosai* can be a euphemism for what is, in effect, prostitution. This could include situations where an adult seeks a 'date' and sex with a child, in return for cash or gifts. In Japan, this practice used to centre mainly on telephone clubs. But the growth in 3G technologies means it has increased substantially through mobile phones and websites.

The crimes connected to these clubs range from murder and rape to extortion and prostitution of children. These types of crimes are known collectively as *teri-kura*, or telephone crime.

Japan's National Police Agency has responsibility for cyber crime committed within Japan and also plays a role in promoting security and safe Internet usage. According to the agency, reports of prostitution of children arising through the use of dating services via either mobile phones or personal computers increased by 95 per cent between 2000

and 2003. In the same period, there was a great increase in child pornography. At present, 20,000 legal dating sites exist in Japan.

In view of its concerns, Vodafone KK has developed a new range of mobile phones with standard security features that allow parents, guardians or carers to set 'limit modes' on their own or a child's phone. This effectively restricts access to certain sites or functions, unless the password is known. This has yet to be evaluated to judge its effectiveness, but it at least allows for some form of 'client-side' security. Controls discussed by Vodafone KK centre upon age verification prior to access, and parental controls that can be enabled on the user's device.

The full development of an age-verification system is likely to be a key tactic to protect children when they use handsets. More investigation on this issue is needed. But in Britain, Vodafone has at least taken a positive step in requiring that customers prove they are aged over 18 and provide credit card details before blocks on websites with adult content will be removed. Following on from British Telecom's action to block online child pornography, Vodafone is the first mobile company to take similarly oriented action to protect children.

The evolving situation in Japan raises many issues for consideration with regard to protecting children everywhere against the potential risks posed by 3G technology. Some of these issues include the following:

- In Britain and elsewhere, for example, 3G will increase connectivity and continue to blur the line between a simple telephone and Internet access.
- 3G technology allows an 'always on' functionality, and this has the potential to be exploited by criminals who want to remain mobile while uploading or downloading illegal content.
- It is essential that we strive to develop protective software and protocols before 3G is even introduced in other parts of the world.
- We also need to encourage the development of commercially available software that can be used to extract and reproduce information in an evidential format.
- The British and other publics need to learn about and understand what Internet safety programmes are being developed and introduced into schools, and complement this with action to ensure their children's protection at home.

We want the world wide web in the pocket to be safe. In view of the way young people will use this new technology, it probably needs to be made even more safe than the web accessed from a desk. Only by working together with industry and government will we achieve that.

## Progress assessed in Latin America and the Caribbean

by *Monica Darer, Regional Officer for the Americas, ECPAT Secretariat*

Recognition of the seriousness and extent of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America and the Caribbean has significantly improved since the Second World Congress against CSEC was held in Yokohama in 2001. Most governments in the region now accept, to differing degrees, that it is their responsibility to act against CSEC, in cooperation with civil society.

This advance in attitudes was evident in San Jose, Costa Rica, as Latin American and Caribbean delegates met in May for the first in a series of regional follow-up meetings across the world to address what has been achieved since Yokohama. The meeting was organised by UNICEF, ECPAT International, the Costa Rican Government and National Commission against CSEC (CONACOES), ILO/IPEC, and the Inter-American Children's Institute of the Organization of American States.

Governments throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are increasingly devising National Plans of Action against CSEC, and much work has been done to bring national legislative frameworks into better compliance with international norms and standards to protect children against CSEC. Other achievements include extensive awareness-raising efforts, especially regarding child sex tourism, and the local-level development and expansion in many countries of anti-CSEC networks and inter-institutional working groups. These moves, however, are yet to be complemented by adequate attention and action to the question of law enforcement, an area that continues to be hampered by corruption and a lack of training and implementation of child-friendly legal procedures.

The meeting revealed several gaps across the region. For example, existing NPAs are rarely used as a base for strategic action and collaboration among key actors. Brazil is an exception, as it has built a nationally inclusive committee to monitor the country's NPA. This committee has national reach, a budgetary allocation, a clear operational framework and a consensual, articulated work plan. Impressive initiatives have emerged from a coordinated and collaborative process.

Several commitments made at Yokohama have been neglected, including the development of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Despite capacity and resource limitations, existing institutions that could take on this responsibility have, for the most part, failed to do so. Another commitment, adopted by the region at a pre-Yokohama governmental congress in Uruguay in 2001, was to address and fight the demand that drives CSEC. Yet there is still a lack of attention paid to gaining a better understanding of demand, especially from those who sexually exploit children within their own communities.

### Young people voice concern

by *Adriana M. Vásquez, EICYAC Regional Representative*

As a representative of the ECPAT International Child and Youth Advisory Committee (EICYAC), I also participated in the San Jose meeting, along with two other young people from Costa Rica. It was a great opportunity for any young person who cares about ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Our participation was an interesting experience. We could see there have been advances in fighting CSEC, and that this problem has become a priority for many governments in the region, even if some of their actions are not entirely effective, or the presentations they made about their actions were not fully accurate. It also worried us that the issue of care for victims appeared weak in the government presentations, as this is an area that needs more focus.

The protection of children against CSEC took precedence in all the presentations. But even though children and young people are the intended recipients of the protective actions discussed and the subject of the various action plans, their presence at the meeting was virtually non-existent. I was greatly concerned because the participation of children and young people in government actions was not mentioned in the presentations, even though our participation is included as a high priority among the commitments made by governments under the Agenda for Action at the Yokohama World Congress. For this reason, we young people had to look for a last-minute space within the formal schedule – a very limited five minutes – to give the participants our views. We wanted participants to learn about the development of youth networks and the need to have everyone's support to strengthen them, as well as to recognise the need to take joint actions.

Our presentation was welcome and had a positive effect. We had wanted to defend and ensure the right of children and young people to participate in all actions directed towards assisting and protecting children and young people. If we have achieved that, then it will have been worth participating.

An important outcome of the meeting is the creation of an inter-agency working group to establish a regional system to monitor the compliance of regional and international anti-CSEC commitments by governments. ECPAT joins UNICEF, ILO/IPEC, Save the Children, the IOM and the Inter-American Children's Institute in forming the group.

## NGOs make a stand in Costa Rica

While most government reports to the Yokohama follow-up meeting in Costa Rica in May mentioned the importance of joint work with non-government organisations, the meeting did not offer an opportunity for NGOs to present their contributions to efforts to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), nor their point of view on government fulfilment of commitments.

ECPAT's representatives therefore organised a discussion session for NGO participants outside the official meeting schedule. This session drafted a communiqué raising specific concerns that were not addressed in government reports.

Some of these concerns dealt with:

- A lack of public policies and institutionalisation of mechanisms to enable full compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Agenda for Action.
- The absence of a gender and power perspective in anti-CSEC strategies.
- Inadequate budgetary allocations for implementing Nationals Plans of Action.
- The failure to evaluate the impact of anti-CSEC actions.
- The need for a mechanism to monitor the fulfilment of government commitments (to be reflected in the adaptation of existing norms and regulations).
- The dependence of governments on international monetary assistance for solutions to CSEC-related problems.
- The need for NPAs to address the particular reality of indigenous populations.
- The need to include civil society in decision-making forums.
- Recognition of the leading role that children and young people should assume in everything related to public policies.
- The need for a greater commitment and visibility of actions aimed at combating corruption and impunity with regard to human rights violations against children, with an emphasis on sexual crimes.

## Papua New Guinea signs Agenda for Action

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is the 161st country to place the commercial sexual exploitation of children on the national agenda by adopting the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action. The commitment to the Agenda was formally announced on 26 May by the Minister for Community Development, Lady Carol Kidu, and signed at Parliament House in the capital, Port Moresby.

The announcement followed the National Workshop on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children on 20 May, which was facilitated by Child Wise Australia in partnership with the Australian High Commission, People against Child Exploitation (PACE) PNG and the Department for Community Development.

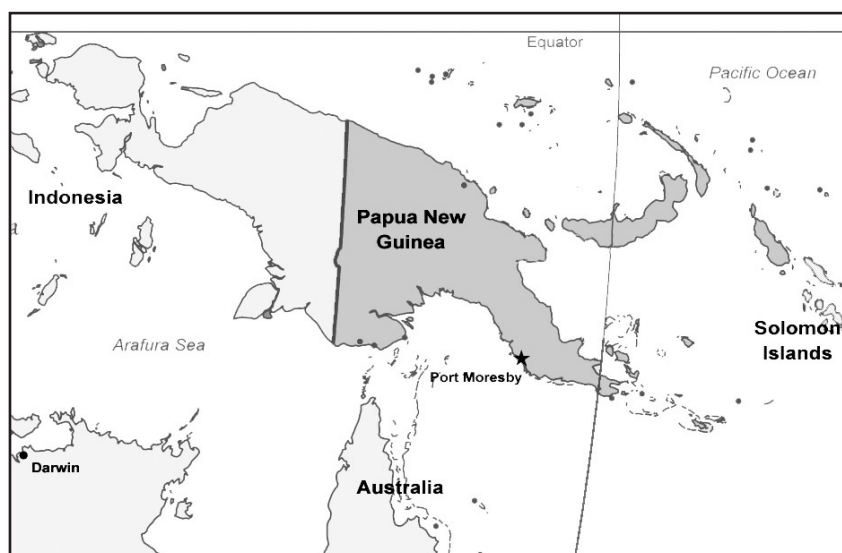
At the workshop, Lady Kidu encouraged all stakeholders and government departments to work together, warning that while the Government would indeed adopt the Agenda, implementation was far more important than signing. Delegates also pledged to promote the Agenda and the

subsequent development of a National Plan of Action against CSEC.

PNG's action is an indication of the momentum garnered at the September 2003 Pacific Regional Workshop on Combating Poverty and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth, which was organised by ECPAT International, UNESCAP and UNICEF.

At that workshop, ECPAT particularly lobbied for the adoption of the Agenda by Pacific Island countries, noted as a priority in the 2001 Regional Commitment and Action Plan of the East Asia and Pacific Region against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Of the 12 Pacific Island countries that participated in the meeting, only six had already adopted the Agenda. The Government of the Cook Islands officially adopted it during the workshop. Now, with PNG's important move, four more countries – Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu – also need to follow suit.



## Colombia: Hard work rewarded

Congratulations to Stella Cardenas, of Fundacion Renacer, ECPAT Colombia, for the recognition given to her by the humanitarian organisation Columbia Universal for her 16 years of direct service to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in Bogotá, Cartagena and Barranquilla.

## Chile: Creating positive imagery

As part of its micro-project programme, ECPAT is supporting RAICES, a member of ECPAT Chile, to run a three-month journalism workshop for CSEC victims in recovery. Participants will create a video on a topic they consider important, assisted by an experienced journalist and RAICES staff. The aims include allowing participants the opportunity to shape a positive image of themselves on camera and to develop their skills and sense of accomplishment.

## Kenya: Talking about CSEC

In Kenya, ECPIK is running a national campaign to raise awareness about CSEC issues. Television is to be a major tool of communication for the campaign, with advertisements running nationally and a talk show held recently to discuss CSEC concerns. The talk show featured a lawyer, a counsellor and ECPAT's National Coordinator, Alphaxard Chabari, discussing CSEC concerns with people who work with children who have been sexually abused and exploited.

## Spain: Tourists targeted

The ECPAT Spain Consortium is also in campaign mode, launching in June an awareness-raising campaign against CSEC. The messages contained in pamphlets, posters, stickers and videotapes especially target people travelling from Spain to areas known for child sex tourism. Promotional materials urging an end to child sex tourism have been distributed, while sensitisation activities include anti-CSEC training programmes aimed at the tourism sector, the media and other professions. The campaign is being supported by UNICEF Spain, the World Tourism Organisation, government departments, tourism authorities, police, child protection agencies and international organisations.

## Colombia: Youth plans ahead

The second ECPAT Colombia youth meeting examined how young people in Colombia can continue to contribute to the fight against CSEC. Meeting in Cartagena from June 22 to 24, young people from Fundacion Renacer programmes determined that, aside from raising awareness and encouraging youth participation, the group would aim to develop, undertake and evaluate CSEC prevention projects; ensure the voice of young people is included in political decision-making on issues



## O'Grady's still networking

The evolution of the campaign to end child prostitution in Asian tourism was a key topic of conversation when Ron O'Grady and his wife, Alison, visited the office of the ECPAT International Secretariat in Bangkok in July. Over lunch with Secretariat staff, Ron described the beginnings of ECPAT in the 1980s, the setting up of an official office in downtown Bangkok in 1991, and the way in which expanding links among people concerned about sexual exploitation of children in the region spurred the development of a global coalition. Critical to the formation of this network, according to Ron, was information sharing that in turn led to a deeper understanding of the complexity and multiple manifestations of sexual exploitation of children across the world. When the Bangkok office opened, Ron had thought the ECPAT campaign would last four years. Now, more than a decade later, he and Alison are still working to protect children.

related to children's rights; integrate and support other groups working against CSEC; and build and develop a leadership and campaigning programme for young people. The group also worked on creating its own website.

## Central America: Reforms pushed

A variety of initiatives is planned as the Central American Project to Strengthen the Protection of Children against CSEC (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) enters its third year. Activities include developing police manuals and curricula, a manual for immigration personnel, and norms for child-friendly judicial procedures. Project partners will continue to lobby for the implementation of legislative reforms they have drafted to strengthen anti-CSEC legislation. We welcome CEMUJER as the new project partner in El Salvador.

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**in focus**

## **Brazil marches for children**



In Brazil, three leading campaigners for children's protection and rights lead the way in one of many local rallies to mark the country's national day against child sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation on 18 May. From left, Serys Slhessarenko, Senadora Patricia Saboya Gome and Deputada Maria do Rosário, all members of a parliamentary commission inquiring into sexual exploitation, march with other activists to raise awareness of the need to protect children against sexual harm. ECPAT Brazil is a member of the country's National Committee on Sexual Violence Against Children, which plays a central role in organising events to mark this day, for which related activities stretched over an entire week this year.