



## **FACT SHEET #1**

### **Children, young people and IT**

#### **Increase in child pornography**

- In pre-Internet days in the UK, arrests for child pornography generally involved a handful of images. In 2005, a man was sentenced for possessing 1,000,000 illegal indecent images of children. Arrests for child pornography offences were also comparatively rare. In 1988, when the UK's child pornography laws were finally established, the police prosecuted only 35 people.
- By the end of 2001, the annual prosecution rate had gone up to 549, a 1,500% increase, which matched directly the growth in the Internet in the UK. By the end of 2003, the annual rate had increased fourfold again to over 2,000 cases - a 6,500% increase on 1988. In 2003, the UK Yorkshire police reported that they handled 700% more cases involving child pornography than in the previous two years.
- In the USA, the FBI's Innocent Images initiative recorded a 2,050% rise in new cases opened regarding Internet child pornography between 1988 and 2001.
- In 2005, Federal Police in Argentina reported that cases of child pornography had risen five-fold in the previous year.

#### **Scale of child pornography**

- The Argentinean federal police investigations found that at certain times, as many as 2 million persons were connected to child pornography sites – and that within 2 minutes, it was possible to access 14-hundred child pornography images.
- Protegeles, a European NGO formed to track and remove Internet child pornography, received 28,900 complaints and identified roughly 1800 online child abuse communities worldwide between 2001 and 2004.
- The Internet Watch Foundation reported that in 2003, it received reports of 73 potentially illegal newsgroup names, 24 newsgroups regularly hosting child abuse images, as well as 33 pay-per-view websites and 66 ordinary websites per week hosting potentially illegal child abuse images.
- In 2003, UK researchers reported that during six weeks of monitoring the Internet, they found 140,000 child abuse images posted during that time.

- A US Customs Service survey in 2001 found 100,000 sites on the Internet related to child pornography. The same year, American filtering software company N2H2 reported 231 new child porn sites online every month – or about eight sites a day – although some sites went offline during the six-month period of their survey.
- After a year searching more than one million Web pages each day, the Visa credit card company reported it had identified 400 sites identified as carrying child pornography. The survey was part of the company's clampdown on the use of Visa to sell illegal pornography.
- UK police told the Guardian newspaper in 2003 that the scale of peer2peer traffic in illegal images of children dwarfed almost any other child abuse network they had encountered.
- In Lincolnshire, UK, one man was found with 450,000 images of child pornography. Another in New York had one million images.

### **More children abused**

- In 2003, the NSPCC reported that for the six weeks that its researchers monitored the Internet, 20 children were estimated to have been abused for the first time, and more than 1000 images of each child created. They also found younger children being abused – in more recent photos, about half were aged between nine and 12, and the rest were younger.
- A number of studies show that there is a strong link between collecting child abuse images and hands-on abuse. The largest study, by the US Postal Inspection Service, found that 36% of the 1807 child pornographers arrested in the seven years to March 2004 were confirmed child abusers. This led to the identification and rescue of 839 child victims.
- A US Federal Prisons study in 2000 found 76% of those convicted of Internet-related crimes against children admitted to previously undetected contact sex crimes against children – at an average of 30 child victims each. A study by the Toronto police put the correlation between collecting child pornography and hands-on abuse at around 40%. The clear message is that anyone in found in possession of child pornography stands a significant chance of being a hands-on abuser.

### **A global problem**

- In 2000, three men from Indonesia and Russia, and a couple from Texas USA, were charged with selling pictures and videos of children having sex with adults through web sites named "child rape" and "Lolita hardcore". Some of these children were as young as four. The Texas couple charged US\$29.95 per month for access to the sites from which they made US\$1.1 million a year. Two-thirds of that money was paid to the webmasters in Indonesia and Russia. Their customers extended to several continents.
- When the US police took down the Landslide web site in 1999, they found the names of around 300,000 people in 66 countries who had bought child pornography using their credit cards.
- Organized crime has moved into this area. Some police operations have shown that they can make as much as US\$2 million per month. As a result more and more children are being recruited for abuse in order to create more new images to sell. People who buy or

collect these images are therefore morally and legally very directly responsible for the abuse of the children in those images.

- The UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography reported in 2005 that commercial child pornography sites, many of them in Eastern Europe, were linked to organised crime and child trafficking and prostitution.
- More than half the child abuse imaged reported to authorities in Britain in 2002 came from the USA. Russia, the Ukraine and countries in South East Asia are fast catching up with the US as sources of Internet child pornography.
- Cheap international travel and cheap, easy-to-use digital cameras linked to the Internet are combining to produce an increasingly mobile, globally-oriented group of child abusers and child pornographers. Internet child pornography is linked to child sex tourism, with child abusers filming their sexual abuse of children for sale or trading through online and peer2peer networks.

### **Exposure to sexual predators**

- Online stalking of children is on the rise in the US. In 2003, the Cyber Tip Line received 2600 complaints about online sexual predators, up 23% on the previous year.
- A UK national survey in 2004 of online experience of more than 1500 young people aged 9-19 found a third had received unwanted sexual or nasty comments online. As well 46% said they had given out personal information online.
- A national US survey in 2001 found that almost one in five of the young people aged 10 to 17 had received an unwanted sexual solicitation in the past year, two-thirds of those were in chat rooms.
- An online ECPAT survey in Thailand in 2000 found 92% of the young respondents had been persuaded to chat about sex online, and only a quarter told their parents about it.
- In 2002, Japanese police listed teen prostitution and pornography as the most common Internet crime, with half their cases related to prostitution by teenagers via Internet dating.

### **Exposure to abusive material**

- The ECPAT survey in Thailand found 71% of the young people had accessed pornographic sites, 45% frequently.
- The 2004 UK national survey of 1500 young people found more than half had come into contact with online pornography, mainly adult.
- In the US, a national Youth Internet Survey in 2001 found a quarter of the young people aged 10 to 17 reported unwanted exposures to sexual material, mostly while surfing or searching the Web but some via email or instant messages.

# Children, young people and IT

## CASE STUDY: THAILAND

- A 2004 National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre survey in Thailand found that 52% of Internet users were aged 15-24, and another 10% were aged 6-14.
- The under-14s used the Internet for email, online games, information searching and chat rooms. Most under 20s spent their after school hours on the Internet, often until midnight.
- An online survey in Thailand by ECPAT in 2000, found 71% of the Thai youth who responded had visited a pornographic website at least once, 45% as repeat visitors.
- 43% of children and 63% of young people had stumbled upon websites that shocked them because of 'ugly' pictures, nude pictures or bad language.
- 21% of Thai children and 18% of Thai young people used web cams – with 22% of the children saying they'd actually recorded themselves.
- A third of the young people had visited an online dating board, and 13% had posted their personal details.
- 95% of Thai youth and half the children used emails, 69% of youth and nearly half the children used online chat rooms - especially private chat rooms.
- 92% of children and youths who used online chats had been invited to speak about sex
- Half of the children and nearly all the young people reported having virtual correspondents, and 39% and 75% respectively said they had virtual friends.
- Half of the young people and 21% of children had shared personal details with their virtual friends.
- Nearly half of the children and youths with virtual friends had discovered that at least one of them was an imposter
- A quarter of children and more than a third of youths had met in person with someone they knew from the Internet. A quarter of those children and half the young people were alone for the first meeting.
- For 58% of the children and 46% of the young people their first meeting was a surprise and for 25% and 32% respectively, it was a shock.