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Online Child Sexual Abuse, Perpetrators, and Investigation: A Bibliography

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Scope

This bibliography to published research literature covers issues related to child victims of online sexual abuse and their perpetrators. Included are English language articles, chapters, and reports.

Organization

Publications are divided into two sections. The first section beginning on page 3, is specific to victims. The second section beginning on page 27 is specific to perpetrators and investigation of online abuse. Publications are listed in date descending order within each section.

Disclaimer

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Online child sexual abuse and perpetrators

A bibliography

Lundrigan, S., Conway, P., & Daly, E. (2025). Relationship between parents' and daughters' self-reported attitudes, protective behaviours and online behaviours in relation to remote-coerced child sexual abuse. *Child Protection and Practice,* 100096. DOI:10.1016/j.chipro.2025.100096

In 2021, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) ran a public awareness campaign aimed at providing parents and 11–13-year-old daughters with the knowledge to build resilience against online groomers who attempt to elicit remote-coerced sexual imagery of children. A parent-child paired response survey was conducted as part of the campaign monitoring. The purpose was to use the survey data to investigate the relationship between awareness campaign exposure, parents/carers' self-reported attitudes and protective behaviours and children's self-reported attitudes and online behaviour in relation to remote-coerced child sexual abuse (RCCSA). 3132 participants, comprising 1566 parents/carers and 1566 of their daughters aged 11–13. Three surveys were conducted: pre-campaign launch, six weeks into campaign and 12 weeks into campaign. Surveys were completed by parent/carer and child pairs. Correlational and regression analysis was conducted on the aggregated responses. Viewing more campaign materials was associated with more positive outcomes. However, this did not increase the likelihood that girls would tell someone if they received a request for explicit material. Daughters are more willing to disclose a request for explicit material when they have stronger ties with friends and family and weaker ties with strangers and when parents are open to seeking information and employing multiple strategies to respond. Four recommendations for RCCSA prevention were made: prioritise empowerment models over safety models for children, prioritise talking over strict controlling measures, raise awareness of the full range of motivations and offending types, and tailor interventions to specific audiences.

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Ray, A., & Henry, N. (2025). Sextortion: A scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 26*(1), 138-155. DOI:10.1177/15248380241277271

Sextortion refers to making threats to share nude or sexual images to coerce the victim into complying with certain demands, such as paying a ransom, sharing intimate images, or engaging in unwanted acts. Sextortion occurs in a diverse range of contexts, including intimate partner abuse, cyberbullying, sexuality or sex worker "outing," online dating, "cybersex," sex trafficking, online sexual exploitation of children, computer hacking, and organized crime. Despite the heightened media focus, few studies have measured the prevalence, nature, and impacts of sextortion. We conducted a scoping review with the aim of providing a comprehensive overview of existing empirical research on sextortion victimization and perpetration among youth and adults. In total, 24 studies were identified based on predefined eligibility criteria. We found that studies focusing on youth reported prevalence ranging from 0.7% to 5.0%, while studies involving adults ranged from 4.0% to 18.7%. The review found that young people and sexual minorities are more likely to experience victimization, while men, young people, and sexual minorities are more likely to self-report engaging in sextortion offending. The review found that perpetrators are more likely to be intimate partners or other known persons as opposed to strangers and that there was an overlap between sextortion perpetration and victimization. Finally, we also found that sextortion can result in significant harms, and that reporting and help-seeking remain very low due to shame, fear, and negative perceptions of police and digital platforms. The findings highlight existing gaps and provide recommendations for future research, policy, and practice.

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Walsh, K., Mathews, B., Parvin, K., Smith, R., Burton, M., Nicholas, M., … & Tran, N. (2025). [Prevalence and characteristics of online child sexual victimization: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study](). *Child Abuse & Neglect, 160*, 107186. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.107186

Online child sexual victimization is increasingly facilitated by technology, but evidence of its prevalence and characteristics remains scarce. Reliable population-based data is critical to understand the magnitude and nature of the problem, and inform evidence-based prevention. The objective was to determine the prevalence of nonconsensual sharing of sexual images of the child by any perpetrator, and of online sexual solicitation by any adult perpetrator; and to determine the characteristics of these experiences. A nationally representative sample of 3500 individuals aged 16–24 years in Australia, comprising a sub-sample of participants in the Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS). We administered the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire-R2: Adapted Version (ACMS). Survey items captured self-reported information from participants about whether, before age 18, they had experienced nonconsensual sharing of sexual images of themselves by any perpetrator, and online sexual solicitation by an adult. Follow-up items generated information about the characteristics of these experiences. We generated weighted national prevalence estimates for each experience, and estimated chronicity (number of times the experience occurred), age at onset, and perpetrator characteristics. National prevalence of nonconsensual sharing of sexual images of the child before age 18 was 7.6 % (95 % CI 6.6–8.6 %), and of online sexual solicitation by an adult was 17.7 % (95 % CI 16.3–19.2 %). Girls were significantly more likely than boys to experience both nonconsensual image sharing victimization (10.9 % v 3.8 %) and online sexual solicitation by an adult (26.3 % v 7.6 %) before age 18. Gender diverse individuals experienced higher online sexual solicitation (47.9 %), although cell sizes were small. Chronicity of online sexual solicitation (median: n = 5) was higher than nonconsensual image sharing victimization (median: n = 2). Median ages at onset were 15 (image sharing) and 14 (sexual solicitation). Most perpetrators of nonconsensual image sharing were other known adolescents (48.8 %) and adolescents who were current or former romantic partners (23.4 %), while perpetrators of online sexual

solicitation were typically unknown adults (86.7 %). Online childhood sexual victimization is widespread in Australia, especially for girls. Many children's experiences begin in middle childhood, and events are often chronic. Results can inform enhanced targeted prevention efforts.

Bradbury, P., Bleakley, P., & Martellozzo, E. (2024). 'I had no choice': Adult neutralisation of online sexual engagement with children. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology,* 1-10. DOI:10.1007/s11896-024-09645-2

This study explores sexual contact between adults and minors on live internet chat websites like Omegle using the five-point framework of neutralisation to better understand how this behaviour is justified and rationalised by adult participants in such acts. A thematic content analysis was performed based on a sample of 100 requests for advice posted by anonymous users on two open-source platforms from legal professionals. These requests were all from unidentifiable adults. The key themes identified were 'denial and minimisation of responsibility', 'the motivated poster', 'awareness of behaviour', 'child sexual abuse (CSA)', and 'content moderation and censorship'. The results highlight several processes of blame-shifting and neutralisation that are commonly used by adults when describing incidences of sexual contact with minors on Omegle. It enhances our understanding of sexual interactions occurring on live chat platforms, including those that are harmful and illegal, and presents opportunities for proactive intervention and moderation.

Carlberg Rindestig, F., Gillander Gådin, K., Semb, O., & Dennhag, I. (2024). Unwanted online sexual solicitation among young people in a Swedish psychiatric sample: Occurrence and associations with depression and anxiety. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 33*(5), 589-607. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2024.2416633

Technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV) is a ubiquitous societal problem with negative health consequences. Child and Adolescent Psychiatric (CAP) patients are burdened with more violence exposure than other groups, but more work is needed to chart their exposure to

TFSV specifically and to understand how it relates to their mental health. In this study, we aimed to investigate the occurrence of unwanted online sexual solicitation (UOSS) in a young Swedish psychiatric sample. We also aimed to measure the associations between psychiatric symptoms and exposure to UOSS, offline sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and offline bullying. We also aimed to analyze possible differences between boys and girls. Our results show a high occurrence of UOSS (48.61%), which is higher than in the general population. UOSS was significantly higher among girls (57.31%) than boys (20.59%), but boys in the CAP group were burdened with more UOSS victimization than boys in general. Co-occurrence of UOSS with other types of offline and online harassment was substantial. UOSS, together with age and offline sexual harassment, predicted anxiety and depressive symptoms among both girls and boys. UOSS also showed a significant interaction effect with gender, suggesting that boys exposed to UOSS suffer higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms than girls exposed to UOSS. Preventing and treating mental health difficulties needs to consider contextual circumstances such as exposure to sexual violence online.

Dulawan, A., & Bance, L. (2024). [Deafening echoes: Lived experiences of adult survivors of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children](#). *Asean Social Work Journal, 12*(2). DOI:10.58671/aswj.v12i2.94

Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) is a global phenomenon of technology-facilitated sexual violence that has become prevalent in the Philippines. This exploratory qualitative study aimed to establish an in-depth understanding of the enduring effect of OSAEC victimization and utilize the phenomenological perspectives to identify key components of a trauma intervention for the population. Specifically, in-depth interviews were held with 5 adult survivors who were initially screened for trauma and 5 psychologists who are providing therapy to survivors of sexual violence. The themes showed that adult survivors of OSAEC face instability across various aspects of their life, including financial constraints, complex family relationships, huge family responsibilities, and health issues. Furthermore, they manifest persistent trauma symptoms such as hounding fears, intrusive memories, avoidance

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behaviors, negative affect and cognitions. Feelings of shame and stigma related to their past experiences likewise contribute to social isolation and emotional distress. Despite these challenges, the survivors demonstrate resilience through supportive relationships and faith-based coping. Facilitating the recovery of the survivors necessitate an integrative and survivor-focused therapeutic intervention that addresses the digital aspects of the abuse; builds skills in coping and emotional regulation; and fosters resilience. At the family and community level, empowerment is needed through advocacy and education to enable them to provide support and healthy environment for survivors to thrive. The recovery programs must likewise be anchored on responsive institutional systems around the survivors.

Gholamrezaei, H., Falsafinejad, M. R., & Khodabakhshi-Koolaee, A. (2024). A grounded theory exploration of perspectives, underlying factors, and preventive strategies of online sexual abuse: A stakeholders' view. *International Journal of High Risk Behaviors and Addiction, 13*(4). DOI:10.5812/ijhrba-150810

Sexual abuse of children is a growing social concern, with online communication significantly facilitating access to vulnerable children and increasing the risk of sexual abuse, particularly on online platforms. This study aimed to analyze the experiences, underlying factors, consequences, and preventive strategies of online sexual abuse from the perspectives of subject-matter experts. This study was conducted in 2023 in Birjand, South Khorasan Province, Iran. The participants included 15 specialists in sex education who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews until data saturation was achieved and were analyzed using Corbin and Strauss's method. Data analysis using the grounded theory approach revealed five main categories, ten axial codes, and 41 open codes: (1) Easy access to high-risk cyberspace, (2) failure to understand the potential risks of cyberspace (e.g., unsupervised content production and parents' preoccupation with personal concerns), (3) immaturity in social interactions (e.g., hidden shame and fear of discussing sexual issues, ineffective parent-child communication), (4) harms of unsupervised cyberspace (e.g., psycho-social harm and early sexual awakening),

and (5) awareness and clarification as keys to preventive support (e.g., raising parental awareness, providing parental education, and seeking professional counseling support). Knowledge about online child sexual abuse in Iran is limited. The findings from this study provide valuable insights that can contribute to the development of effective strategies for preventing online sexual abuse in children and adolescents.

Hull, I., Christensen, L. S., McKillop, N., & Rayment-McHugh, S. (2024). Females' engagement in offline and online sexual offending and their interactions with the criminal justice system: A gender and age comparison. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 08862605241299445. DOI:10.1177/08862605241299445

This study aimed to extend limited extant knowledge of female-perpetrated sexual offenses, including child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offenses, that enter the criminal justice system. Sexual offenses actioned by the police in one jurisdiction of Australia between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2021 (N = 37,864) were analyzed to explore the prevalence of sexual offenses and types of sexual offenses perpetrated; the relationship between perpetrator gender, age, and offense type; and the relationship between perpetrator gender, age, offense type, and likelihood of law enforcement action (N = 34,835). Consistent with previous research, (predominantly adult) males were responsible for most sexual offenses before police. Females were responsible for 12.2% of all offenses over this period, with juvenile females (10 – 17 years) implicated in a significant proportion (10.2%) of all offenses. In fact, juvenile females were responsible for the majority of assaultive CSAM offenses, whereas juvenile males mostly perpetrated offline child sexual abuse offenses. Regarding adults, there was a minimal, statistically significant difference between gender and offense type. Odds of perpetrating an online assaultive CSAM offense were 20 times higher for juvenile females compared to both adult males and adult females, and 7.69 times higher for juvenile females compared to juvenile males. Finally, for the same offense type, gender and age differentially impacted law enforcement action. For all offense types, enforcement and gravity (e.g., arrest and referral to court) of further action, were significantly lower among all females and juvenile males

compared to adult males. Juvenile females were least likely to have any serious action taken. These findings provide a seminal platform from which to expand much-needed research on female-perpetrated offending to inform policy and practice.

Lally, L., Webb, I., & Quayle, E. (2024). [Risk factors as indicators for online child sexual abuse: A systematic review](). *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies, 24*(2), 6.

Online child sexual abuse has been described as a serious public health issue worldwide in today's society. The long-term consequences of such abuse have been well-reported, and the risks in which youth are made more vulnerable to this abuse must be better understood. The objective was to synthesise and evaluate the literature regarding risk factors of online sexual exploitation by focusing on the following question: What are the risk factors that make children vulnerable to online child sexual abuse and solicitation? A systematic review was completed using search strings within several databases, a hand search was conducted, and results were removed based on the title, abstract and then full paper. The final review consisted of seventeen papers, and a quality assessment was carried out. The findings highlighted several risk factors for online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Those at risk included: females, those of older age, those who engaged in risky online behaviours, those who frequently used the internet or chatrooms and online messengers, those experiencing psychological and psychosocial difficulties, and prior exposure to adverse experiences. The limitations of the study included not being able to generalise the results due to origin. There was room for bias within the studies analysed as a number of them were self-report. This review highlights that parents, policymakers, and the education systems need to prepare children for the dangers of the internet and ensure there are adequate services in place if abuse occurs.

Lusky-Weisrose, E., Klebanov, B., Friedman-Hauser, G., Avitan, I., & Katz, C. (2024). Online sexual abuse of children with disabilities: Analyzing reports of social workers' case files in Israel. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 154*, 106869. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106869

Online child sexual abuse (OCSA) is a growing social concern. However, its manifestations among children with disabilities (CWDs), who face an increased risk of sexual abuse, remain largely unexamined. This study aims to fill this gap by examining professionals' perspectives of the OCSA of CWDs through their work at the 105 Hotline, an Israeli national call center that accepts queries and reports of the cyber victimization of minors. A mixed methods research design was employed. A quantitative analysis was performed on 114 case files involving the OCSA of CWDs, followed by a thematic content analysis of 23 follow-up files by social workers. The quantitative findings revealed various characteristics of the survivors, their families, and OCSA. The qualitative analysis revealed that professionals indicate multiple interrelated risk factors for the OCSA of CWDs on three levels: child, related to the child's characteristics and disability traits; family, referring to familial complexities, parenting challenges, and socio-economic position; and relational, referring to the online abusive relationships between the perpetrator and the survivor. Furthermore, the online platform comprised characteristics that enhanced the risk of OCSA of CWDs. The understanding that the OCSA of CWDs as a compounded risk that encompasses personal and environmental risk dimensions is necessary and should guide all professionals' decisions and actions. There is also an urgent need for governmental and community efforts to develop measures, policies, and support systems to reduce OCSA risks for CWDs. Moreover, knowledge and interventions should be developed for professionals and parents of CWDs to improve the identification and response to this overlooked phenomenon.

Schmidt, F., Bucci, S., Quayle, E., & Varese, F. (2024). Addressing technology-assisted child sexual abuse during an initial clinical assessment: A modified Delphi Study. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 31*(5), e3071. DOI:10.1002/cpp.3071

Technology-assisted child sexual abuse (TA-CSA) is defined as any type of sexual abuse with an online element occurring under the age of 18. The literature suggests that victims often experience difficulty in finding support that adequately addresses the online elements of TA-CSA. Research also suggests that practitioners are unsure about how to best approach TA-CSA during initial assessments. This modified Delphi study with healthcare professionals and researchers as experts was conducted to understand best practice principles on how to approach the topic of TA-CSA when a young person presents to clinical services. An online, two round modified Delphi study was completed. Round 1 consisited of statements generated from existing published TA-CSA literature. One hundred and twelve participants were invited to complete Round 1. Twenty-four participants responded to Round 1, and of those responders, 15 completed Round 2. All healthcare professionals (10) and eight researchers were located in the United Kingdom. The remaining researchers were based in North and South America, Australia and Europe. Participants agreed that there is a need to provide practitioners with guidance on how to approach TA-CSA and that asking general questions about online life can help ease into the topic of TA-CSA. Additionally, a clear multi-agency approach and adequate training can provide practitioners confidence in their ability in managing risk and disclosure of TA-CSA. This study provides important initial findings in approaching TA-CSA within an initial assessment. However, future research is necessary in understanding the transferability of these findings to clinical settings.

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Stänicke, L. I., Reiremo, G. K., Scheie, S. I., Jessen, R. S., & Jensen, T. K. (2024). Navigating, being tricked, and blaming oneself—A meta-synthesis of youth's experience of involvement in online child sexual abuse. *Child & Family Social Work.* DOI:10.1111/cfs.13152

Social media use is an integrated part of youth's social life, enabling access to knowledge and social exploration, but it also increases the risk of experiencing online child sexual abuse (OCSA). Quantitative reviews of OCSA provide insights into prevalence, risk factors, and mental health outcomes, but we have limited knowledge about how youth experience OCSA. This study aims to synthesize qualitative studies on youth's (12–24 years of age) first-person experiences of OCSA. We conducted a systematic database search and included 16 studies. The meta-synthesis resulted in three meta-themes: (1) "Navigating in a digital world – feeling safe and understood," (2) "Being lured, tricked, and caught up in online child sexual abuse," and (3) "Facing the consequences – feeling powerless and blaming oneself." Although the studies included most females, findings apply to all genders and across ages. The results highlight how online sexual engagement is a way to explore social and sexual relationships and address a basic need to be understood and supported. However, when trust is misused, developmental tasks related to autonomy and agency may be shattered, replaced with shame and self-blame. These findings point to the need to openly and nonjudgementally address OCSA so that it can be disclosed, and the psychological impact can be addressed.

Tunagur, M. T., Oksal, H., Büber, Ö., Tunagur, E. M. K., & Sarıgedik, E. (2024). Risk factors and predictors of penetrative online child sexual abuse. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care.* DOI:10.1016/j.pedhc.2024.10.002

Online child sexual abuse (CSA) involves sharing abusive images, sexual communications, and forming pedophilic networks, leading to both short- and long-term psychiatric issues for victims. The present study aimed to identify risk factors for penetrative online CSA. Analysis of medical records from 1,501 cases at a child advocacy center in Turkey identified 221 cases of online CSA, categorized into penetrative and nonpenetrative groups. Among 1,501 cases, 19.2% involved online CSA. Victims' mean age was 14.50 ± 1.65 years; perpetrators averaged 23.00 ±

9.60 years. Most victims were girls (92.3%) and had dropped out of school (79.2%). Instagram was the most common platform (71.5%). Higher rates of sexting, risky behaviors, and threats of exposure were seen in the penetrative group. Predictors included the victim's age, sexting, running away, and threats of exposure. Key differences between penetrative and nonpenetrative online CSA underscore the need for targeted prevention and intervention.

Ali, S., Haykal, H. A., & Youssef, E. Y. M. (2023). Child sexual abuse and the internet—a systematic review. *Human Arenas, 6*(2), 404-421. DOI:10.1007/s42087-021-00228-9

Child sexual abuse is a growing social concern. Today, online communication chiefly facilitates access to vulnerable children and increases cases of child sexual abuse. The current article also aims to highlight digital platforms' role in prevailing online child sexual abuse worldwide. The researchers conducted a Systematic Review of existing literature and selected a sample of n = 42 articles witnessing the Internet's role in facilitating child sexual abuse. The cited literature indicated that online child sexual abuse widely involves child pornography for commercial and non-commercial purposes. Several online platforms provide scheduled online child sexual abuse sessions that are mostly unidentifiable for law enforcement agencies. Similarly, for non-commercial purposes, predators use different strategies and fulfill their objectives. These predators not only entice children, but also continue extorting the victims. Although the online child sexual abuse method may vary from person to person, the purpose is the same for all. In this regard, the current study gives practical recommendations to mitigate online child sexual exploitation in a better possible manner. Especially in developing countries, counteracting against online child sexual abuse to alleviate the deliberate online exploitation can remarkably decrease children's rights violation.

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Brown, S. (2023). [Key messages from research on child sexual abuse by adults in online contexts. Key Messages from Research](). University of the Sunshine Coast and University of the West of England.

Online environments and interactions are now fundamental to everyday life. Both adults and children routinely use digital communications technology and the internet – through social media, text messaging, online gaming, message boards, streaming, etc – and this creates increased opportunities for some to abuse. This paper brings together learning from existing research on child sexual abuse committed by adults in online contexts, the people who commit that abuse, and their victims. It is designed to be read alongside Key Messages from Research on Child Sexual Abuse Perpetrated by Adults and the forthcoming Key Messages from Research on Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Online Contexts, both published by the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre).

Jeglic, E. L., & Winters, G. M. (2023). [The role of technology in the perpetration of childhood sexual abuse: The importance of considering both in-person and online interactions.](). *Children, 10*(8), 1306. DOI:10.3390/children10081306

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a pervasive global problem. To date, prevention efforts have largely focused on legislative efforts, parent and child education, and environmental protections. Due to the proliferation of the Internet, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, recent prevention efforts have focused on online CSA. However, the extent to which technology is being used in the perpetration of in-person, contact CSA remains unclear. This study examined the role of technology in the perpetration of in-person, contact CSA using a sample of 332 adult CSA survivors who completed an anonymous online survey. Overall, we found that only 8.5% of the sample reported that they met the perpetrator online through social media, chatrooms, and other online applications. When looking at the role of technology in the perpetration of the abuse, 35% reported texting with the perpetrator, 27% reported engaging in online chats, and 33% spoke to the perpetrator on the phone. Few participants reported sending (11%) or receiving (13%) photographs or videos that were sexual in nature. Technology use was reported more

frequently in CSA involving adolescents than CSA involving children aged 12 and under. There were no differences in the use of technology based on the age of the person who perpetrated the CSA. These findings will be discussed as they pertain to prevention efforts for CSA.

Puentes, J., Castillo, A., Osejo, W., Calderón, Y., Quintero, V., Saldarriaga, L., ... & Arbeláez, P. (2023). Guarding the guardians: Automated analysis of online child sexual abuse. In *Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF International Conference on Computer Vision* (pp. 3728-3732).

Online violence against children has increased globally recently, demanding urgent attention. Competent authorities manually analyze abuse complaints to comprehend crime dynamics and identify patterns. However, the manual analysis of these complaints presents a challenge because it exposes analysts to harmful content during the review process. Given these challenges, we present a novel solution, an automated tool designed to analyze children's sexual abuse reports comprehensively. By automating the analysis process, our tool significantly reduces the risk of exposure to harmful content by categorizing the reports on three dimensions: Subject, Degree of Criminality, and Damage. Furthermore, leveraging our multidisciplinary team's expertise, we introduce a novel approach to annotate the collected data, enabling a more in-depth analysis of the reports. This approach improves the comprehension of fundamental patterns and trends, enabling law enforcement agencies and policymakers to create focused strategies in the fight against children's violence.

Tolbaru, C. E. (2022). Fight against sexual abuse and online exploitation of children–key priority at the European Union level. *International Journal of Legal and Social Order, 1*(1), 347-356.

We are experiencing a period full of physical and virtual uncertainty and insecurity, the Covid-19 period being a milestone regarding the increase of the phenomenon of sexual abuse and online exploitation of children. The wide accessibility of technology creates the opportunity for

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offenders to commit such crimes on children. Protection of children against any form of violence or abuse is a key priority at the European Union level, aiming at fighting the online and offline abuse on children, including production and diffusion of materials showing abuses on children, such as online sexual exploitation of children. In this regard, the European Union efforts aim at creating a specific legal framework in order to make easier for the Member States to detect and report the cases of online sexual abuse, to prevent such situations, and to support the victims. Thus, the Commission wants to clarify the role that the online service providers should have in order to protect the children. The main problem identified is the scarce reporting of such crimes, and therefore, the impossibility of identifying the victims.

Vaswani, N., Mullen, L., Efthymiadou, E., & Allardyce, S. (2022). [The Risk of Online Sexual Abuse (ROSA) Project](#).

This paper describes the work of the ROSA Project and summarises the findings of the independent evaluation. For the purposes of the Faithfull Paper, the report also includes some secondary analyses of young people's behaviour and supplementary materials not included in the independent evaluation. In particular, this report describes findings in relation to young people we worked with directly as part of this project.

Vega Torrelo, A. (2022). [Easier said than done: Analysis of EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse in the online realm.](#) University of Glagow.

This research aims to understand the securitization process of online child sexual abuse by analysing the EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse in the online realm published in 2020 and other additional sources. The objectives are to get insights into how this institution presented this threat, to analyse what tools are being used and how whether a securitization process is being carried out. For that purpose, employing critical discourse analysis as the research method and following Balzacq's conceptualization of the securitization theory, this research examines all the initiatives proposed in the strategy,

analysing the securitization through speech and practice. The main finding is that the European Commission has failed to successfully securitize online child sexual abuse. Gaps between the speeches and practices have been identified: measures to tackle this issue have been presented, but the needed actions that follow have not been completely executed. Further, issues concerning the Commission's authority and unbalanced power relation with the functional actors, lack of prioritization of the initiatives as well as lack of criticism and suitable connexions among the initiatives have been identified.

Joleby, M., Landström, S., Lunde, C., & Jonsson, L. S. (2021). Experiences and psychological health among children exposed to online child sexual abuse–a mixed methods study of court verdicts. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 27*(2), 159-181. DOI:10.1080/1068316X.2020.1781120

Cases of online child sexual abuse (OCSA) are increasing dramatically in number, but research on this relatively new type of crime and its psychological consequences is limited, leading to major challenges for the judiciary. The present mixed methods study investigated 98 legal cases of OCSA (children aged 7–17 years, M = 12.3, SD = 1.92) in Swedish District Courts to see if and how children's experiences and psychological health were described in the written verdicts. The results revealed that the children's psychological health was mentioned in less than half (48.0%) of the cases. Thematic analyses identified several potential vulnerability factors (e.g. poor psychological health, low self esteem, loneliness) and several potential psychological consequences (e.g. psychological suffering, self-harming and/or suicidal behavior, internalized self-loathing, impaired relationships) among the children, all of which were similar to what research has shown among victims of offline CSA. The sexual abuse situation was often perceived as threatening, and many children felt that they had no other choice than to comply. In addition, the sexually abusive act was depicted as distressing and sometimes painful. In light of these findings, we suggest that OCSA should not be viewed as essentially different or less severe than offline CSA.

Davidson, J., Schimmenti, A., Caretti, V., Puccia, A., Corbari, E., Bogaerts, S., … & DeMarco, J. N. (2020). Exploring policing and industry practice in the prevention of online child sexual abuse. In *Child sexual abuse: Forensic Issues in Evidence, Impact, and Management* (pp. 657-677). Academic Press.

This chapter considers child online protection in the context of a study funded by the European Commission which explored industry and policing practice in the prevention and investigation of online child sexual abuse cases. The research was conducted in four EU countries (United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands) and employed a mixed-methods approach including stakeholder interviews; industry case studies; national police surveys in three countries; and a national youth victimisation survey in three countries. The findings suggest that the scale of online child sexual abuse continues to grow and that the police are ill-equipped to respond; front line police officers are the first to respond first but are not trained to do so, and finally, those officers who have received specialist training are more likely to respond appropriately and to feel confident in working on such cases. There are pockets of good practice but there is a need to foster more centralised collaborative procedures between industry and law enforcement, both at national and international levels.

Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Hanson, E., Whittle, H., Alves-Costa, F., & Beech, A. (2020). Technology assisted child sexual abuse in the UK: Young people's views on the impact of online sexual abuse. *Children and Youth Services Review, 119*. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105451

There is little research exploring the impact of technology assisted child sexual abuse (TA-CSA) and how this is similar to/differs from offline. This novel study aimed to understand the impact following TA-CSA from the perspective of young people, including identifying additional elements or complexities arising from the digital element. Quantitative data was collected in the UK from 30 young people, 16 completed qualitative interviews, and screening data was collected from another 230 young people. All were recruited via a children's helpline, a children's charity or a law enforcement agency. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, by

telephone or online; questionnaires were completed online. A mixed methods approach was employed to enable a fuller, richer understanding of TA-CSA using triangulation of data from different sources. TA-CSA occurred in 46.4% to 62.5% of cases. No statistically significant differences were found between TA-CSA and offline for impact of abuse; although the study was somewhat underpowered. Qualitative analysis identified similar impacts to offline CSA, but also six ways in which technology facilitated the initiation, escalation and maintenance of abuse (e.g., ease of access, control of the night time space, blackmail using images) and complicated the impact in five ways (e.g., permanence and loss of control of images, revictimisation). This study showed that although TA-CSA is sometimes viewed as less serious than offline CSA, the emotional, psychological and behavioural outcomes appear to be the same. Furthermore, the role of technology as a facilitator of abuse and the additional complexities in impact need to be accounted for in practice guidelines and policies.

Joleby, M., Lunde, C., Landström, S., & Jonsson, L. S. (2020). "All of me is completely different": Experiences and consequences among victims of technology-assisted child sexual abuse. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*. DOI:10.3389/fpsyg.2020.606218

The aim of the present study was to gain a first-person perspective on the experiences of technology-assisted child sexual abuse (TA-CSA), and a deeper understanding of the way it may affect its victims. Seven young women (aged 17–24) with experience of TA-CSA before the age of 18 participated in individual in-depth interviews. The interviews were teller-focused with the aim of capturing the interviewee's own story about how they made sense of their experiences over time, and what impact the victimization had on them in the short and long terms. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed a broad range of abusive experiences that had profoundly impacted the individuals' lives, health and self-concepts. Three dominant themes emerged from the analysis – From thrilling to abusive, Negative effect on health and wellbeing, and A new self after the abuse. From thrilling to abusive captures the wide range of experiences described, starting from the child's own sexual curiosity to descriptions of having been manipulated or threatened into engaging in sexual activity, as well as the sometimes

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long and complex process of understanding the severity of one's experiences. Negative effect on health and wellbeing describes the victimization's comprehensive impact on the life and health of the participants, how they blamed themselves for what had happened, and the struggle of having to live with the constant fear of pictures from the abuse resurfacing. A new self after the abuse depicts how the victimization impacted the way participants viewed and thought about themselves in relation to others, and distorted their views of their bodies. The findings are discussed in relation to previous research on both offline CSA and TA-CSA, as well as theoretical and practical implications.

Jonsson, L. S., Fredlund, C., Priebe, G., Wadsby, M., & Svedin, C. G. (2019). Online sexual abuse of adolescents by a perpetrator met online: A cross-sectional study. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 13,* 1-10. DOI:10.1186/s13034-019-0292-1

The current study aimed at exploring adolescents' experiences of online sexual contacts leading to online sexual abuse by a perpetrator whom the victim had first met online. Associations with socio demographic background, experience of abuse, relation to parents, health and risk behaviors were studied. The participants were a representative national sample of 5175 students in the third year of the Swedish high school Swedish (M age = 17.97). Analyses included bivariate statistics and stepwise multiple logistic regression models. In total 330 (5.8%) adolescents had gotten to know someone during the preceding 12 months for the purpose of engaging in some kind of sexual activity online. Thirty-two (9.7%) of those, the index group, had felt that they had been persuaded, pressed or coerced on at least one occasion. Sexual interaction under pressure was seen as constituting sexual abuse. These adolescent victims of online sexual abuse, the index group, did not differ with respect to socio-demographic background from the adolescents without this experience, the reference group. The index group had significantly more prior experiences of different kind of abuse, indicating that they belong to a polyvictimized group. More frequent risk behavior, poorer psychological health, poorer relationships with parents and lower self-esteem also characterized the index group. Online sexual abuse, without experiences of offline abuse, was associated with a poorer

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psychological health, at least at the same level as offline sexual abuse only. The study made clear the importance of viewing online sexual abuse as a serious form of sexual abuse. Professionals meeting these children need to focus not only on their psychological health such as symptoms of trauma and depression but also need to screen them for online behavior, online abuse and other forms of previous abuse.

Açar, K. V. (2017). Organizational aspect of the global fight against online child sexual abuse. *Global policy, 8*(2), 259-262. DOI 10.1111/1758-5899.12418

Online child sexual abuse is a relatively new form of crime against children which requires a more concerted action on a global scale. Intricate organizational, technical, legal and socio-psychological issues surrounding this phenomenon make the current structure and possible solutions to organizational problems extremely complicated to analyse, evaluate and discuss. This commentary focuses on the organizational aspect by dividing the complex global response into four simple layers: governments and inter-governmental agencies, police and judicial bodies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Undoubtedly, developing more effective global policies for the fight against online child sexual abuse relies on deeper understanding of the current structure and the roles of each layer.

Quayle, E. (2017). [Over the internet, under the radar: Online child sexual abuse and exploitation—A brief](). Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice.

In early 2016, the Centre for Youth & Criminal Justice (CYCJ) at the University of Strathclyde facilitated two 'invite only' seminars for professionals from a wide range of backgrounds who encounter issues around adolescent 'risk-taking behaviour online' and 'e-safety'. A separate paper published by CYCJ describes the content of these events and outlines the recommendations that emerged from these seminars in relation to improving outcomes for Scotland's children with regards to digital safety. Further to these seminars, CYCJ commissioned the following brief literature review in relation to online harmful sexual

behaviour displayed by children and adolescents. This review was written to contextualise some of the debates that took place at the seminars with what we know from current research evidence. It was also written to help ground some of the recommendations from the seminars with findings from the relevant international literature. The review highlights some emerging findings relating to adolescent harmful sexual behaviour online, notes some of the conceptual issues raised by young people being active producers of online explicit content and discusses an emerging digital landscape where many of the traditional certainties we have in working with young people who sexually abuse are subverted, creating new challenges for agencies and practitioners.

Smallbone, S., & Wortley, R. (2017). Preventing child sexual abuse online. Online risk to children: Impact, protection and prevention, 143-162. DOI:10.1002/9781118977545.ch8

This chapter focuses on online grooming and solicitation and internet child pornography. These are the two aspects of online abuse that seem to have attracted the most public concern, law enforcement attention and research interest. The chapter proposes a typology within which to organise prevention strategies for online sexual abuse. The typology is based on a fusion of the preventative health care model and the routine activities approach. A comprehensive approach to prevention should include a mix of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activities targeting offenders, victims and settings. Sexual abuse, including online abuse, relies to a significant extent on children's vulnerabilities associated with their sexual deference to adults. Police are assisted in the task of removing internet child pornography material by various groups such as the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and CyberTipline. It is not yet clear whether vulnerabilities associated with online abuse are the same as those associated with contact sexual abuse.

DeMarco, J., Cheevers, C., Davidson, J., Bogaerts, S., Pace, U., Aiken, M., … & Bifulco, A. (2017). Digital dangers and cyber-victimisation: A study of European adolescent online risky behaviour for sexual exploitation. *Clinical Neuropsychiatry, 14*(1), 104-112.

The engagement and use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) has increased exponentially across societies worldwide with implications for social and psychological development in young people. In this context, the risk of negative sexual experience and victimisation online is known to have real world consequences for young people. This article seeks to: explore the nature of adolescent risk taking online behaviour from a group of young adults in different European countries; develop types of online risk profiles; explore the impact of help-seeking and to consider the potential real world harmful consequences. A survey was administered across the United Kingdom, Ireland and Italy of 18 to 25 year olds in higher education, asking them about their online experiences between the ages of 12 and 16. Risky behaviour on and off-line, types of victimisation (on and offline) and sexual solicitation requests online were analysed together with help-seeking behaviour. Four profiles concerning adolescent risky behaviours were identified through cluster analysis. Each were distinguishable by a pattern of latent constructs linked to risk offline and online. Two were considered normative (adapted adolescents and inquisitive online) and two high risk (risk-taking aggressive and sexually inquisitive online). Additionally, regression analysis demonstrated significant factors linked to predicting both likelihood of meeting an adult for sexual purposes, and help-seeking behaviour. The profiles developed are a useful tool for educators, police and health and social care practitioners in identifying adolescents at risk in order to undertake preventative work. Common help-seeking behaviour from peers could be used to effect interventions.

DeMarco, J., Davidson, J., Bifulco, A., Scally, M., Cheevers, C., Schimmenti, A., ... & Bogaerts, S. (2016). EU online child safety: What does the literature say?. *Crimen et Delictum: International Journal of Criminological and Investigative Sciences, 11*(1), 1-19.

The purpose of this review is to introduce both the research and political context of the European Commission's ISEC Illegal Use of the Internet work programme and the EU Online Child Safety investigation. This includes examining the social, psychological and legal contexts of online crimes perpetrated against children, inclusive of a holistic engagement with the relevant policy, legislation and law enforcement procedures within the European Union. The primary aim of this study is to explore the prevalence of online childhood sexual abuse (online CSA) including the production, distribution and collection of childhood indecent images, online grooming and elements of 'sexting' from the perspective of law enforcement and industry. The study covers four European countries and their associated practices: UK, Netherlands, Italy and Ireland, all of which will provide a comparative perspective of crosscultural procedures and processes in law enforcement, industry practice and victimisation. This paper will address a summary of the key findings from the scoping phase covering all elements of the criminal justice process. Specifically, key summaries and themes emerging from the literature consulted are presented and recommendations are made for progress and as indicators for the project as it develops.

Schulz, A., Bergen, E., Schuhmann, P., Hoyer, J., & Santtila, P. (2016). Online sexual solicitation of minors: How often and between whom does it occur?. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 53*(2), 165-188. DOI:10.1177/0022427815599426

This study examined how frequently online sexual solicitation of adolescents and children by adults occurs and what characteristics the perpetrators have using a novel methodological approach. In an online survey, we investigated the frequency of online sexual solicitation exhibited by adult Internet users (N ¼ 2,828), including a subgroup recruited on pedophilia-related websites. Perpetrators soliciting adolescents were compared to those soliciting children concerning solicitation outcomes (e.g., cybersex) and demography. In total, 4.5

percent reported soliciting adolescents and 1.0 percent reported soliciting children. Most solicitors of adolescents and children were from pedophilia-related websites (49.1 and 79.2 percent). Solicitation frequently involved sexual outcomes (47.5 percent), which also followed nonsexual interaction. The minors' age did not affect the odds of sexual outcomes. A substantial proportion of perpetrators were female. This study offers unprecedented data on the number of adults soliciting minors. Although adolescents were more often target of solicitation, the risk of sexual outcomes was equally high in solicitation of children, suggesting younger children to be considered in prevention efforts as well. Nonsexual interactions resulting in sexual outcomes need to be more closely examined to inform appropriate prevention efforts. Moreover, awareness should be raised about females as perpetrators.

Martellozzo, E. (2015). Policing online child sexual abuse-the British experience. *European Journal of Policing Studies, 3*(1), 32-52. https://repository.mdx.ac.uk/item/86013

Incidents of child sexual abuse (CSA) are frequently documented and have recently attracted intense police, public scrutiny and efforts of social control across the Western world. This paper aims to explore the very concerning issue of online CSA and the way in which the police is responding to this growing problem. It will present some of the challenges the police in the United Kingdom face daily in dealing with the threats to children's online safety. It argues that although proactive undercover policing has helped police forces to unmask sex offenders who predate innocent victims online, the advancement of technology is making the work of police officers more and more challenging. The findings presented have been collected over the last decade (2003-2013) during two exploratory, grounded theory studies, which involved the interviews with 21 police officers and forensic examiners and the observation and analysis of three police operations at the London Metropolitan Police Paedophile Unit in London.

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Mohler-Kuo, M., Landolt, M. A., Maier, T., Meidert, U., Schönbucher, V., & Schnyder, U. (2014). Child sexual abuse revisited: A population-based cross-sectional study among Swiss adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 54*(3), 304-311. DOI:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.08.020

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is one of the most serious public health problems among children and adolescents, owing to its widespread prevalence and serious health consequences. The present study aimed to assess the prevalence of, and characteristics and circumstances associated with, CSA. An epidemiological survey was conducted on a nationally representative sample of 6,787 ninth-grade students (15.5 ± .66 years of age) in Switzerland. Self-reported computer-assisted questionnaires were administered between September 2009 and May 2010. Various forms of sexual victimization were assessed using the newly developed Child Sexual Abuse Questionnaire. Overall, 40.2% and 17.2% of girls and boys, respectively, reported having experienced at least one type of CSA event. Lifetime prevalence rates were 35.1% and 14.9%, respectively, for CSA without physical contact, 14.9% and 4.8% for CSA with physical contact without penetration, and 2.5% and .6% for CSA with penetration among girls and boys. The most frequently experienced event was sexual harassment via the Internet. More than half of female victims and more than 70% of male victims reported having been abused by juvenile perpetrators. Depending on the specific event, only 44.4%–58.4% of female victims and 5.8%–38% of male victims disclosed CSA, mostly to peers. The present study confirms the widespread prevalence of CSA. The high prevalence of CSA via the Internet and the frequent reports of juvenile perpetrators suggest emerging trends in CSA. Low disclosure rates, especially among male victims, and reluctance to disclose events to family members and officials may impede timely intervention.

Katz, C. (2013). Internet-related child sexual abuse: What children tell us in their testimonies. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35*(9), 1536–1542. DOI:10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.06.006

Communication technologies are an essential part of our daily social life; however, they also result in a rapid increase in the phenomenon of child sexual abuse through the Internet. Studies that were conducted on this issue mainly focused on the offenders' profile and prevention strategies. The aim of the current paper is to characterize the narratives of alleged victims of child sexual abuse using the testimonies of twenty children who were referred to investigative interviews following suspected sexual abuse through the Internet. Of these twenty children, eight children were reluctant to provide allegations even though external evidence indicated a high possibility that abuse had occurred. Twelve other children provided narratives in response to open-ended invitations. Intensive thematic analysis revealed five key categories: the suspect's grooming process, the offline meeting, "he can do anything", the secret, and the dynamic between the children and the interviewers. The conclusions of the study indicated the emotional state of the children, the dynamic with the perpetrators and its uniqueness, the clinical and the forensic process and prevention.

Quayle, E., Jonsson, L., & Lööf, L. (2012). Online behaviour related to child sexual abuse. Interviews with affected young people. ROBERT, Risktaking online behaviour, empowerment through research and training. European Union & Council of the Baltic Sea States.

Most young people in Europe have access to the Internet. In a study by Livingstone et al. (2011), including 25 142 children between 9–16 years old in 25 countries in the European Union (EU), the average age for first time contact with the Internet was 9 years old. In this study 60% reported that they used the Internet on a daily basis and 33% that they used the Internet once or twice a week. Access to the Internet is not only increasing, but today many youth have their own mobile phones with internet access. In the study by Livingstone et al. (2011) 35% of the youth used their own PC, 24% their own laptop and 12% a handheld device (e.g. iPod Touch, I-phone

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and Blackberry) when going online. The most common activities online were doing schoolwork (85%) followed by online gaming (83%) and watching video clips (76%). Most young people are alone when using their mobile phone and the Internet (Medierådet, 2010). This differs from other media forms, e.g. watching television and playing games on the computer, that more often are done together with a friend or an adult. This means that young people most of the time are alone when surfing the net, without adults being able to supervise or to hinder the youth from possible risk taking online. Most young people seem though to be well aware of the fact that there are safe and risky behaviours connected with the use of Internet (Jonsson et al, 2009).

Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2005). The Internet and family and acquaintance sexual abuse. *Child Maltreatment, 10*(1), 49-60. DOI:10.1177/1077559504271917

This article explores the dynamics of cases involving family and acquaintance sexual offenders who used the Internet to commit sex crimes against minors. Although the stereotype of Internet crimes involves unknown adults meeting juvenile victims online, Internet use can also play a role in sexual crimes against minors by family members and acquaintances. Data were collected from a national sample of law enforcement agencies about arrests for Internet-related sex crimes against minors. Family and acquaintance offenders were nearly as numerous as offenders who used the Internet to meet victims online. They used the Internet in various ways to further their crimes including as a tool to seduce or groom, store or disseminate sexual images of victims, arrange meetings and communicate, reward victims, or advertise or sell victims. Prevention messages and investigation approaches should be revised to incorporate awareness of such cases and their dynamics.

Perpetrators and Investigation

Lindholm, A., Rantatalo, O., Lindberg, O., & Lundmark, R. (2024). The investigation of online child sexual abuse cases in Sweden: Organizational challenges and the need for collaboration. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Policing, 11*(1), 1-15. DOI:10.18261/njsp.11.1.7

Investigating online child sexual abuse (CSA) crimes is challenging for law enforcement agencies, demanding both digital expertise and knowledge about offences against children while exacting a mental toll on investigators. This article identifies challenges in the investigative process, drawing on audit reports, interviews with police management, observations of meetings, and a workshop with online CSA investigators. The findings reveal difficulties in resource allocation due to varying case sizes and rapid escalation. In addition, while online CSA investigators handle most cases, they require support from other police units; however, a widespread fear of these cases among non-specialized investigators complicates collaborative efforts. Lastly, a culture of organizational "compartmentalization" was described as hindering collaboration, as different branches of investigation remain separated. We discuss how these challenges pose problems to online CSA investigation practices.

Marie-Astrid, H. (2024). Revision of Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. EPRS: European Parliamentary Research Service. Belgium.

In September 2021, the Commission launched a REFIT initiative to assess the implementation of Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, with a view to revising it. This appraisal takes stock of reports published by the Commission, positions adopted and analyses submitted by EU institutions and agencies, and the relevant European Court of Human Rights case law. The directive requires the EU Member States to criminalise a series of offences, including online child sexual abuse. Yet, it does not cover all of the related technological issues or provide clues on how to reconcile

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respect for fundamental rights with the urgent need to combat sexual abuse against children. The directive must be understood within the broader frame of applicable EU legislation, including the proposed regulation on online child sexual abuse currently under discussion. Analysis demonstrates a need to amend the directive, with a focus on stronger preventive measures, educational programmes and assistance to victims, and more efficient investigation and prosecution mechanisms including through international cooperation.

Neroni Rezende, I. (2024). The proposed Regulation to fight online child sexual abuse: An appraisal of privacy, data protection and criminal justice issues. *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, 1-22. DOI:10.1080/13600869.2024.2324548

Protecting children online is a priority for the EU legislator. Since July 2021, an interim regulation allows service providers to derogate from confidentiality safeguards in the e-privacy Directive to fight child sexual abuse online. The European Commission aims to repeal this legislation with a proposal of May 2022. This Regulation will require providers to monitor users' content communication for online child sexual abuse, among other things. Privacy experts worry that confidentiality standards (i.e. end-to-end encryption) will be weakened and that the Regulation will serve as a basis for indiscriminate interception of content communications. However, the implications of the proposal go beyond privacy and data protection and will impact criminal justice rights too. Therefore, this contribution presents a comprehensive analysis of the proposal from a privacy, data protection and criminal justice perspective. It examines the proportionality of the measure and its implications within the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice (AFSJ). Specifically, it looks at purpose limitation issues in data exchanges and the admissibility of such evidence in criminal proceedings. The aim is to show that the EU, while aiming at increasing data circulation in the AFSJ, might not be ready for this challenge from an infrastructural and fundamental rights standpoint.

Paquette, S., & Brouillette-Alarie, S. (2024). Online sexual offending against children: Recidivism rates and predictors. *Sexual Abuse,* 10790632241309631. DOI:10.1177/10790632241309631

Recidivism among individuals who have sexually offended poses a significant public health and safety concern. It is crucial to assess the predictive validity of traditional risk factors in individuals engaged in online child exploitation. This study examines recidivism rates and risk factors among individuals involved in online child sexual exploitation, analyzing data from a sample of 228 adult males who had committed sexual and nonsexual offenses at their index crime. The findings suggest that offense-supportive cognitions (Harrell's C = .73-.75) and emotional congruence with children (Harrell's C = .77) serve as predictors for contact sexual recidivism. Consumption of child sexual exploitation material and bestiality pornography are linked to online sexual recidivism (.69 and .75, respectively) and negatively related to sexual recidivism (.29 and .32, respectively). Overall, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of recidivism patterns and risk factors among individuals engaged in online sexual offenses against children, emphasizing the need for tailored intervention strategies in this population.

Popa, L. (2024). International cooperation in the investigation of online child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation crimes. In *Prevenirea şi combaterea criminalităţii: probleme, soluţii şi* perspective (pp. 309-316).

The article examines combating cybercrime, focusing on online child sexual abuse and exploitation. The author highlights the complexity of this problem, determined by the cross-border nature of the crimes and the rapid evolution of technologies. The present study emphasises the importance and the need for international cooperation for the analysed category of crimes. Information sharing between national and international authorities is essential for identifying offenders and protecting victims. The article explores forms of international legal assistance, with rogatory commissions and joint investigation teams being central, but also explores forms of international legal assistance specific to this category of

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crime. Compliance with and implementation of international conventions are also highlighted as vital in combating such crimes. Thus, the article provides a detailed analysis of the challenges and solutions needed to counter online child sexual abuse and exploitation, highlighting the need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach.

Price, S., McKillop, N., Scanlan, J., Rayment-McHugh, S., Christensen, L., & Prichard, J. (2024). [A review of digital interventions as secondary prevention measures to combat online child sexual abuse perpetration](). *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 33*(7), 869-890. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2024.2415549

Interventions implemented in the digital space play an important role in the response to global concerns about the prevalence of online child sexual abuse. Digital detection software (e.g. Sweetie) utilized to combat this behavior is a well-known example. Far fewer examples of digital interventions focused on its prevention exist. This review sought to identify digital interventions currently being implemented that aim to prevent online child sexual abuse, or intervene early, through deterrence and redirection. Guided by the PRISMA scoping review framework, a search was conducted across four databases, with snowballing from reference lists of selected sources. After exclusion criteria were applied, six sources were selected for review. Findings suggest that digital interventions (e.g. warning messages and chatbots) can be used to deter and redirect individuals at-risk of, or in the early stages of engaging in online child sexual abuse, with greater deterrent effects observed when messaging aligns with situational crime prevention principles. However, limited application and evaluation of these interventions to date constrains inferences regarding the impact of these prevention efforts. To supplement findings, several other emerging examples of digital interventions and conceptual/theoretical works (that did not meet the original inclusion criteria) are cited. Findings of this review should be considered alongside these other examples to inform the ongoing design and scaling up of digital interventions aimed at preventing online child sexual abuse.

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Santopietro, M., Guest, R., Seigfried-Spellar, K. C., & Elliott, S. J. (2024). A multi-factor knuckle and nail bed verification tool for forensic imagery analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 154,* 106910. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106910

The grooming process involves sexually explicit images or videos sent by the offender to the minor. Although offenders may try to conceal their identity, these sexts often include hand, knuckle, and nail bed imagery. We present a novel biometric hand verification tool designed to identify online child sexual exploitation offenders from images or videos based on biometric/forensic features extracted from hand regions. The system can match and authenticate hand component imagery against a constrained custody suite reference of a known subject by employing advanced image processing and machine learning techniques. We conducted experiments on two hand datasets: Purdue University and Hong Kong. In particular, the Purdue dataset collected for this study allowed us to evaluate the system performance on various parameters, with specific emphasis on camera distance and orientation. To explore the performance and reliability of the biometric verification models, we considered several parameters, including hand orientation, distance from the camera, single or multiple fingers, architecture of the models, and performance loss functions. Results showed the best performance for pictures sampled from the same database and with the same image capture conditions. The authors conclude the biometric hand verification tool offers a robust solution that will operationally impact law enforcement by allowing agencies to investigate and identify online child sexual exploitation offenders more effectively. We highlight the strength of the system and the current limitations.

Choi, K. S., & Lee, H. (2023). The trend of online child sexual abuse and exploitations: A profile of online sexual offenders and criminal justice response. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1-20. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2023.2214540

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of technology-facilitated crimes against children worldwide has increased substantially and become one of the most serious crime problems. Due to these considerations, there is a lack of large-scale systematic reviews investigating

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Cybercrime in and of itself could be challenging to investigate in comparison to traditional ones due to the elusiveness of the cyber realm. Specifically, investigating internet crimes against children comes with specific challenges. These offenses target vulnerable children who are less likely to realize their victimization, lowering the probability of reporting to the proper authorities. With these obstacles in mind, this research study utilizes data information regarding the characteristics of online CSAM users and their practices to inform law enforcement, parents, and the public for preventative and strategic purposes. Furthermore, this study diagnoses the significant challenges of investigating technology-facilitated crimes against children by examining how the current criminal justice system responds to these incidents. The policy recommendations discussed offer a holistic lens for highlighting this critical issue and implementing practical and proactive training solutions for law enforcement and the public.

Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., & Colburn, D. (2023). Which dynamics make online child sexual abuse and cyberstalking more emotionally impactful: Perpetrator identity and images?. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 137*. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106020

The migration of offenses against children to the online environment requires a revised understanding of how episode dynamics aggravate the harm. The study objective was to assess the contribution of various online offense episode elements to the overall negative emotional impact. The sample comprised 2639 IPSOS KnowledgePanel members aged 18 to 28, 1215 of whom reported episodes of online sexual abuse or cyberstalking that occurred prior to the age of 18. The analysis was based on 2056 episodes with detailed follow-up information. Participants were recruited online and filled out online questionnaires about online sexual abuse and cyberstalking episodes, their characteristics, and the negative emotional impact (NEI) associated with each episode. NEI was derived from a factor analysis of 8 impact items. Higher negative emotional impact was associated with forms of sexual image misuse: non-consensual sharing, non-consensual taking and threatened sharing/sextortion. Peers made up a majority of offenders, and their impact was just as great as adult offenders. Known

perpetrators, including intimate partners, also made up the largest proportion of offenders and their impact was just as great as online strangers or anonymous offenders. Online safety awareness and prevention need a larger focus on peer and acquaintance offenses, particularly around the misuse of sexual images.

Ortega-Barón, J., Machimbarrena, J. M., Caba-Machado, V., Díaz-López, A., Tejero-Claver, B., & González-Cabrera, J. (2023). Solicitation and sexualized interactions of minors with adults: Prevalence, overlap with other forms of cybervictimization, and relationship with quality of life. *Psychosocial Intervention, 32*(3), 155-163. DOI: 10.5093/pi2023a15

Sexual solicitation and sexualized interaction with minors by adults constitute one of the most pernicious risks of the Internet. Little is known about the age range in which this phenomenon is most prevalent or the relationship and overlap of this problem with other risks, such as peer-to-peer cybervictimization and cyber dating abuse. Additionally, little empirical evidence exists on whether the overlap between these types of online victimization affects health-related quality of life (HRQoL). This study aimed to: 1) analyze the prevalence of sexual solicitation and interaction according to sex and stage of adolescence; 2) relate this problem to other forms of online victimization (cybervictimization and cyber dating abuse); 3) analyze the overlap between these forms of online victimization and differences in HRQoL scores. A cross-sectional and analytical study with 3,578 adolescents (52.7% girls) aged between 10-15 years was carried out. Of the adolescents in the study sample, 12.6% (n = 448) had received sexual requests and 6.4% (n = 230) had interacted sexually with adults. Sexual solicitation was most common among girls in middle adolescence. Of the participants, 33.9% (n = 1,216) had been involved in some form of online victimization. Peer cybervictimization and cyber dating abuse were positively and significantly correlated with sexualized solicitation/interactions with adults. Victims with the overlapping of all three types of online victimization (2.7%, n = 98) presented the lowest HQRoL scores (p < .001).

Sutton, S., & Finkelhor, D. (2023). [Perpetrators' identity in online crimes against children: A Meta-analysis](). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.* DOI:10.1177/15248380231194072

Public and police concern about internet crimes against children has been primarily typified as a stranger danger problem. However, existing research suggests a variety of perpetrator ages and relationships to the victim. A more accurate estimate will help inform prevention efforts. This study provides a meta-analysis examining the identity of perpetrators in internet crimes against children. Databases were searched for published and unpublished studies using a detailed search strategy. In total, 32 studies met full inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria was the following: (1) the victim sample consisted of children under the age of 18 years or young adults (18–25) asked to respond retrospectively; (2) the study victims experienced abuse through the use of technology; (3) the study reported the identity of the perpetrator, either the relationship to the victim or the age of the perpetrator; (4) the study was available in English. The overall proportion of offenders under the age of 18 as a proportion of all identified offenders was 44% (95% CI: 0.28–0.60). The overall proportion of acquaintance and family offenders as a proportion of all identified offenders was 68% (95% CI: 0.62–0.75). Between study variability was explained by data source, with higher proportion of juvenile offenders in studies using survey data. This meta-analysis confirms that most perpetrators of online crimes against children are not strangers to their victims and a large portion of perpetrators are juveniles. Prevention education needs to focus more on inappropriate behavior from anyone in addition to the dangers about communicating with strangers.

Thomas, K., Hamilton-Giachritsis, C., Branigan, P., & Hanson, E. (2023). Offenders' approaches to overcoming victim resistance in technology-assisted child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 141*. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106143

Perpetrators of technology-assisted abuse use an abundance of strategies to manipulate and sexually abuse children online, however victim resistance during and post abuse has yet to be explored in detail. This study aimed to explore the strategies perpetrators use to overcome

direct victim resistance and the strategies victims use to resist perpetrators' demands. The sample was recruited through Childline, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). This consisted of 10 semi-structured interview transcripts of 1 male and 9 female victims of technology-assisted sexual abuse, who were aged between 9 and 15 years old at the time of the abuse (M = 13.09, SD = 2.0). This study qualitatively analysed secondary data collected by Hamilton-Giachritsis et al. (2020). The interview transcripts were analysed using a thematic analysis. The thematic map consisted of two key themes and six sub-themes. Results identified how all perpetrators appeared to adapt their strategies of overcoming victim resistance using a variety of approaches. These ranged from isolating victims and depriving them of sleep, to more extreme approaches such as threats to share sexual images of the victims. Victims also used a range of strategies to resist and de-escalate the abuse, such as feigning ignorance and complying with some but not all requests. This study identified the key strategies used by offenders to overcome victim resistance, and the strategies young people used to resist, de-escalate and end the abuse.

Ortega-Barón, J., Machimbarrena, J. M., Calvete, E., Orue, I., Pereda, N., & González-Cabrera, J. (2022). Epidemiology of online sexual solicitation and interaction of minors with adults: A longitudinal study. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 131.* DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105759

There have been very few longitudinal studies on online sexual solicitation and the online interaction between minors and adults. Still less evidence exists on the relationship of these problems with minors' Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL). This study aimed to analyze the point prevalence, period prevalence (prevalence over time) and incidence (new cases over time) of online sexual solicitation and interactions between minors and adults throughout three consecutive time periods and to compare the HRQoL among categories of victims (non-victims, new victims, ceased victims, intermittent victims, and stable victims). The participants were 1029 Spanish students (43 % boys, 57 % girls), aged 12–15 years. A longitudinal study was

conducted over a 13-month period, with measurements taken at three time points. For sexual solicitation, the point prevalence was 11.3 % at wave 1 (W1), 11.9 % at wave 2 (W2), and 16.1 % at wave 3 (W3). For sexualized interactions, prevalence rates were 4.8 %, 7 %, and 7.1 %, respectively. However, throughout the study, almost 23 % of minors reported some sexual solicitation and 14 % reported some sexual interaction. In this same period of time, the incidence of new cases was 1 in 10. Being a victim during W1 meant that in W3, there was almost twice the risk of having a low HRQoL. In general, those who were not victims of either solicitation or sexualized interactions with adults presented better HRQoL than those who experienced victimization. This study presents the magnitude and seriousness of the problem and discusses the practical implications.

Parviainen, J., & Rajamäki, J. (2022, June). Analysis of sexual abuse of children online and CAM investigations in Europe. In Proceedings of the 21th European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security (ECCWS 2022). Academic Conferences International Limited. DOI:10.34190/eccws.21.1.276

Child sexual abuse or child´s exploitation online as sexual violence including Child Abuse Materials (CAM/CSAM) is a global phenomenon. This case study aims to get information on the current nature of crimes by online published surveys, reports, articles, and documents as an international and cross-border cybercrime in Europe. To get information of children´s own experiences of some European countries, information on how they react to sexual messages or sexual harassment online or how they recognize a threat to be a victim of sexual abuse online are important aspects to understand the phenomenon at all. The sexually motivated offenders and their behavior online conversations are also important to recognize to get more information of this criminal activity at all. If sexual abuse has been done only online, the knowledge of the current events helps law enforcement authorities (LEAs) to understand how they could find reliably the needed digital evidence for pre-trial investigations and judicial processes. The authorities' workload can be high in CAM/CSAM cases first with handling enormous digital data, but also with nature of cases which has seen widely causing different

forms of stress also to professionals. From this point of view, this study also aims to describe how the different forensic tools and technological solutions would help LEAs with their jobs, for example, by classifying different materials into different categories, recognizing better victims and suspects, or winning time to investigate other crimes.

Joleby, M., Lunde, C., Landström, S., & Jonsson, L. S. (2021). Offender strategies for engaging children in online sexual activity. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 120*. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105214

Following technological developments, there has been increasing interest in online offenders' use of digital communication technology to sexually groom and abuse children. However, research has thus far primarily explored offenders' interactions with decoys instead of actual children, and initial evidence indicates that conversations with actual children may include more overt persuasion and extortion than conversations with decoys. This study aims to describe online offenders' interactions with actual children when inciting them to engage in online sexual activity. Swedish court judgements including 50 offenders (aged 16–69, median = 28.9) and 122 child victims (aged 7–17, median = 13.0) were analyzed. By using an explorative mixed-methods approach, we thematically analyzed what strategies the children were exposed to, and looked for patterns between the strategy used and the characteristics of the abuse, victim, or offender. We identified two types of strategies that the children were exposed to: pressure (threats, bribes, or nagging, N = 56), and sweet-talk (flattery, acting as a friend, or expressing love, N = 25). Overall, the offenders who used pressure were younger and targeted older children than the offenders who used sweet-talk. This study expands the existing knowledge about the variety of manipulative strategies used by online offenders and adds support to the initial literature showing substantially more pressure and coercion in online offenders' interactions with actual children. The study also identifies some patterns between the strategy used and the age of the offender and victim that warrant further investigation in future studies

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Longobardi, C., Fabris, M. A., Prino, L. E., & Settanni, M. (2021). Online sexual victimization among middle school students: Prevalence and association with online risk behaviors. *International Journal of Developmental Science, 15*(1-2), 39-46. DOI:10.3233/DEV-200300

In Europe, 82% of minors use a social network (SN). Although SNs offer opportunities for social interaction, they also involve some risks, such as online sexual victimization (OSV). As many as 39% of teenagers are estimated to be at risk of OSV. The literature suggests that risky online behaviors, such as sexting, indiscriminate expansion of SNs, and intimate and face-to-face relationships with strangers met online, can increase the risk of OSV among adolescents. The aim of the study was to investigate the prevalence of OSV and related risk factors in a sample of early adolescents. A cross-sectional study was conducted based on 310 Italian adolescents (12–14 years old) who completed the Juvenile Online Victimization Questionnaire (JOV-Q). Sixty percent of the sample reported at least one form of OSV, with males more at risk than females. Age, gender, and online risk behaviors are predictors of different kinds of OSV. In the whole sample, the most frequent kind of OSV was unwanted exposure to sexual content, followed by sexual pressure, online grooming, and sexual coercion. Sexting and indiscriminate expansion of one's network increase the likelihood of having been the target of at least 1 OSV in the past year. Early adolescents can face a higher risk of OSV than adolescents, based on known percentages. The study of the prevalence and risk factors in this age group therefore deserves specific attention in order to design programs to prevent and combat OSV.

Sanchez, L., Grajeda, C., Baggili, I., & Hall, C. (2019). [A practitioner survey exploring the value of forensic tools, ai, filtering, & safer presentation for investigating child sexual abuse material (csam).](#) *Digital Investigation, 29,* S124-S142. DOI:10.1016/j.diin.2019.04.005

For those investigating cases of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), there is the potential harm of experiencing trauma after illicit content exposure over a period of time. Research has shown that those working on such cases can experience psychological distress. As a result, there has been a greater effort to create and implement technologies that reduce exposure to CSAM.

However, not much work has explored gathering insight regarding the functionality, effectiveness, accuracy, and importance of digital forensic tools and data science technologies from practitioners who use them. This study focused specifically on examining the value practitioners give to the tools and technologies they utilize to investigate CSAM cases. General findings indicated that implementing filtering technologies is more important than safe-viewing technologies; false positives are a greater concern than false negatives; resources such as time, personnel, and money continue to be a concern; and an improved workflow is highly desirable. Results also showed that practitioners are not well-versed in data science and Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is alarming given that tools already implement these techniques and that practitioners face large amounts of data during investigations. Finally, the data exemplified that practitioners are generally not taking advantage of tools that implement data science techniques, and that the biggest need for them is in automated child nudity detection, age estimation and skin tone detection.

Broome, L. J., Izura, C., & Lorenzo-Dus, N. (2018). A systematic review of fantasy driven vs. contact driven internet-initiated sexual offences: Discrete or overlapping typologies?. *Child abuse & Neglect, 79*. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.021

Within the literature individuals who use the internet to facilitate the sexual abuse of a minor are generally classified as being fantasy or contact driven. Classification is based upon the intended location for sexual climax: fantasy driven individuals aim to reach sexual climax online, whereas contact driven individuals target minors to achieve physical sex offline. This review systematically investigates whether there is an empirical basis for the distinction between these two proposed discrete types. Comparison of tactics and behaviour are considered to examine whether the contact vs. fantasy distinction is useful. A two-stage literature selection process, considered against pre-determined inclusion criteria, identified a total of twenty-two studies. As methodological heterogeneity limited the ability to conduct pooled analysis, a narrative synthesis of data employing an interpretive approach was

conducted. This showed that the contact and fantasy distinction is ambiguous, given that both groups engage in online behaviours that provide them with online sexual gratification that can also lead to offline contact. Furthermore, no clear pattern of behaviour was found to define contact and fantasy individuals idiosyncratically. The European Online Grooming Project typology is thus proposed as a better representation of this behaviour; intimacy seeking, adaptable and hypersexualized groups. The distinction between these groups focuses primarily on the intensity of the relationship, acknowledging that sexual abuse can occur with or without offline contact. This review also highlights the need for larger, methodologically robust studies that examine the behaviour of online child sexual offenders.

De Santisteban, P., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2018). Prevalence and risk factors among minors for online sexual solicitations and interactions with adults. *The Journal of Sex Research, 55*(7), 939-950. DOI:10.1080/00224499.2017.1386763

The research on online child sexual victimization has mainly focused on the sexual solicitation of minors (i.e., sexual requests by an adult), with scarce information available on sexual interactions (e.g., cybersex or meeting in person) in which a minor is exploited by an adult. In the present study, we analyzed the prevalence and risk factors associated with both sexual solicitations and interactions of minors with adults. The sample included 2,731 minors between 12 and 15 years old (50.6% female). The minors completed several self-report questionnaires about sexual solicitations and interactions with adults, including possible risk factors (e.g., sociodemographic variables, Internet use, and psychological adjustment). Of the participants, 15.6% of girls and 9.3% of boys reported sexual solicitations, and 8.2% of girls and 7.4% of boys reported sexualized interactions with adults. Among the variables studied, several appeared related to both sexual solicitations and interactions: older age, having been involved in sexting, being a victim of cyberbullying, having unknown people in friends list, using chat, time spent online on a weekday, and depression symptoms. Gender (being female), using video chat, and instant messaging by computer were significant variables for sexual solicitation but not for sexual interaction; participation in online games was significant only for sexual interactions.

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Finally, minors reporting sexual interactions presented a higher risk profile than those reporting only sexual solicitations. These findings highlight the relevance of distinguishing between sexual solicitations and sexual interactions and suggest important avenues for prevention programs.

Zetterström Dahlqvist, H., & Gillander Gådin, K. (2018). Online sexual victimization in youth: Predictors and cross-sectional associations with depressive symptoms. *European Journal of Public Health, 28*(6), 1018-1023. DOI:10.1093/eurpub/cky102

The aim was to analyze (i) the prevalence of online unwanted sexual solicitation (USS) victimization, (ii) predictors of online USS and (iii) the associations between online USS and depressive symptoms in Swedish pupils in grades 7–9. An electronic questionnaire was disseminated in 2011 in schools in a municipality in the northern part of Sweden. Total n = 1193 (boys n = 566; girls n = 627). Logistic regression models were fitted to test the cross-sectional associations between predictors of online USS and depressive symptoms, respectively. One third of girls and every fifth boy reported online USS victimization. In boys, predictors associated with online USS were offline bullying and sexual harassment victimization. Only offline sexual harassment victimization was associated with online USS in girls. Girls victimized by online USS had about twice the likelihood to report depressive symptoms compared to non-victimized girls. There were no associations between online USS and depressive symptoms in boys. While offline bullying was associated with depressive symptoms in both genders, offline sexual harassment victimization increased the likelihood to report depressive symptoms in girls only. Online USS was common among Swedish youth, particularly among girls. Schools, parents and internet safety educators should look at co-occurrence of different forms of victimization as offline victimization was a predictor of online USS. Online USS was associated with depressive symptoms in girls and may hence be a factor driving gender inequity in mental health in youth.

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Lilley, C. M. (2016). The role of technology in managing people who have been convicted of internet child abuse image offences. *Child Abuse Review, 25*(5), 386-398. DOI:10.1002/car.2444

The last 20 years have seen an explosion in the availability, ownership and use of devices used to access the internet. There has been a simultaneous increase in the number of people viewing child abuse images. The ease of access to this material online has removed a key inhibitor for offenders. Technology has facilitated the distribution of child abuse images, but is also used to prevent and identify offending, as well as to manage offenders. There is a range of technological tools currently used in England and Wales to manage those offenders who have been convicted of accessing child abuse images and who are living in the community. Some are specific to the computer as the situation of the crime. This article analyses the evidence base for each. The article concludes that each tool has features which might contribute to the management of internet child sex offenders, but that none have yet been proven or disproven to be effective. Copyright © 2017 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Balfe, M., Gallagher, B., Masson, H., Balfe, S., Brugha, R., & Hackett, S. (2015). Internet child sex offenders' concerns about online security and their use of identity protection technologies: A review. *Child Abuse Review, 24*(6), 427-439. https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2308

The purpose of this article is to review what is known about the technologies that internet child sex offenders use to abuse or exploit children, offenders' attitudes towards online security and surveillance risk, and their use of identity protection tactics and technologies. The peer-reviewed literature on internet sex offenders published between 2000 and 2011 was surveyed. Internet child sex offenders use a mixture of new and old technologies to abuse children. Offenders' awareness of internet-related risk appears to exist along a continuum. A number of psychological and demographic factors may influence offenders' perceptions of online security risk and their willingness to take security precautions. A surprisingly large number of apprehended offenders in the time period examined by this review did not seem to use any

technologies to disguise their identities. A major research programme into internet offenders' use of identity protection technologies, and their use of technologies in general, is needed. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Kloess, J. A., Beech, A. R., & Harkins, L. (2014). Online child sexual exploitation: Prevalence, process, and offender characteristics. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 15*(2), 126-139. DOI:10.1177/1524838013511543

This review provides an overview of current knowledge and understanding of the process of sexual grooming and exploitation of children via the Internet. Specifically, the prevalence of online sexual grooming and exploitation is explored as well as associated challenges relating to the identification of its occurrence. This is complemented by a detailed outline and discussion of the process, both online and in the physical world, and legal responses to this phenomenon. A number of factors are examined to provide an explanation of the facilitating and contributing role they may play in offense processes online. Finally, current typologies are discussed in relation to characteristics of Internet offenders in general and "groomers"/chat room offenders specifically. This review concludes by offering suggestions for future research.

Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2013). Are crimes by online predators different from crimes by sex offenders who know youth in-person?. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 53*(6), 736-741. DOI:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.06.010

We examined cases in which sex offenders arrested for Internet-related crimes used the Internet for sexual communications with minors, comparing crimes by offenders who met victims online to those by offenders who knew victims in-person prior to the offense. We collected data from a national sample of law enforcement agencies (n = 2,653) about arrests in 2009 for Internet-related sex crimes against minors, conducting detailed telephone interviews with investigators about individual cases. This paper examines a subset of arrest cases that included the use of online sexual communications (online-meeting offenders, n = 143; know-in-person/online offenders, n = 139). Compared with know-in-person/online

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offenders, online-meeting offenders were less likely to have criminal backgrounds and more likely to use online communications to deceive victims. However, deception was a factor in a minority of cases and was also used by some know-in-person/online offenders. The majority of cases in both groups involved statutory rape (i.e., nonforcible illegal sexual activity with underage youth) or noncontact offenses such as child pornography production or sexual solicitation of a minor. We conclude that crimes by online-meeting offenders should not be treated as different or more dangerous than those by know-in-person/online offenders who use online sexual communications. Rather, prevention efforts should educate about the nature of statutory rape and related noncontact offenses. The primary message should be that it is criminal for adults to make sexual overtures to minors, online or offline, no matter what their relationship to the youth.

Ybarra, M. L., Espelage, D. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2007). [The co-occurrence of Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation victimization and perpetration: Associations with psychosocial indicators](#). *Journal of Adolescent Health, 41*(6), S31-S41. DOI:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.09.010

Previous research in offline environments suggests that there may be an overlap in bullying and sexual harassment perpetration and victimization; however to what extent this may be true for perpetration and victimization of Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation is unknown. The Growing Up with Media survey is a national cross-sectional online survey of 1,588 youth, 10–15 years old, who have used the Internet at least once in the last 6 months. Cluster analysis was conducted with four scales: Internet harassment perpetration, Internet harassment victimization, unwanted sexual solicitation perpetration, and unwanted sexual solicitation victimization. A four-cluster solution was identified: youth with little to no involvement (n = 1326; 81.7%); perpetrator-victims of Internet harassment (n = 205; 14.3%); victims of both Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation (n = 45; 3.1%); and perpetrator-victims of Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation (n = 12; .9%). Involvement in Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation was associated with

concurrent reports of psychosocial problems including substance use; involvement in offline victimization and perpetration of relational, physical, and sexual aggression; delinquent peers; a propensity to respond to stimuli with anger; poor emotional bond with caregivers; and poor caregiver monitoring as compared with youth with little to no involvement. This was especially true for perpetrator-victims of Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation. Findings were replicated using a frequency-based definition of involvement, suggesting that cluster analysis is useful in identifying subgroups of youth and can be used to guide frequency-based definitions, which are easier to implement across study samples. The majority of youth are not frequently involved in Internet harassment or unwanted sexual solicitation either as victims or as perpetrators. Among those who are, however, psychosocial problems are apparent. Perpetrator-victims of Internet harassment and unwanted sexual solicitation have emerged as a particularly important group for adolescent health professionals to be aware of, identify, and treat or refer into services immediately.

Beech, A. R., Elliott, I. A., Birgden, A., & Findlater, D. (2008). The Internet and child sexual offending: A criminological review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 13*(3), 216-228. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2008.03.007

This paper outlines the current literature on what is known about the processes by which individuals utilize the Internet for child sexual abuse. First, three ways in which the Internet is utilized are outlined: (1) by dissemination of sexually abusive images of children for personal and/or commercial reasons; (2) by communication with other individuals with a sexual interest in children: and (3) by maintaining and developing online pedophilic networks. Second, content and availability of abusive images are described, and the difficulties faced by criminal justice agencies in both the definition of abusive images and their prohibition is discussed. Third, the potential for offenders to 'cross-over' from online offenses to contact sexual victimization of children is examined and placed within a context of various Internet offender typologies that have been developed. Finally, implications of this body of research for law and public policy are considered.

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Leander, L., Christianson, S. Å., & Granhag, P. A. (2008). Internet-initiated sexual abuse: Adolescent victims' reports about On-and Off-line sexual activities. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 22*(9), 1260-1274. DOI:10.1002/acp.1433

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how adolescent girls, who had been sexually (on- and off-line) deceived and abused by an Internet hebephile, reported about these acts. As we had access to documentation of 68 girls' conversations (i.e. chat logs) and involvement with the perpetrator, we were able to gauge what the victims reported during the police interview against this detailed documentation. In contrast with findings from previous research, the majority of victims reported about the off-line activities (real-life meetings) with the perpetrator. However, the victims omitted and/or denied more of the on-line activities, specifically the more severe sexual on-line acts (sending nude photos and participating in sexual web shows). There is probably a gap between what the victims reported and what they presumably remembered about the on-line activities. Factors that might have affected the victims' pattern of reports are discussed. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Martellozzo, E., Nehring, D., & Taylor, H. (2010). Online child sexual abuse by female offenders: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology, 4*(1&2), 592-609.

The expansion of the Internet and the proliferation of information technologies have created new opportunities for the sexual abuse of children. Sex offenders use the Internet to access and distribute indecent images of children and to select victims to groom for the purpose of abuse (Davidson & Gottschalk 2010; Martellozzo, 2010; Martellozzo & Taylor, 2009; Quayle, Erooga, Wright, Taylor, & Harbinson, 2006). It is a commonly held assumption, stated implicitly or explicitly in both public debates and scholarly research, that child sexual abuse is a typically male crime, in so far as offenders are generally held to be men and the level of sexual aggression involved in their offences is seen as closely related to masculine behaviour. This article aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the problem of online child sexual abuse by female offenders. As rehearsed in the literature (Martellozzo, 2011; Webster, Davidson, Bifulco, Pham, & Caretti, 2009), online child sexual abuse is predominantly a crime committed

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by men and only a small percentage of females sexually abuse children through the Internet. This article presents findings from analysis of qualitative data collected at the Paedophile Unit at the London Metropolitan Police.

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Implementing the Barnahus Quality Standards throughout Europe

PROMISE is supporting Europe to adopt the Barnahus model as a standard practice for providing child victims and witnesses of violence rapid access to justice and care. We undertake this work to fulfil the PROMISE vision: a Europe where all children enjoy their right to be protected from violence.

A Barnahus provides multi-disciplinary and interagency collaboration to ensure that child victims and witnesses of violence benefit from a child-friendly, professional and effective response in a safe environment which prevents (re)traumatisation. With the formal support from national authorities, PROMISE provides opportunities to translate national commitment into action and engage internationally in the process. In addition, regular networking and strategic communications continually activate our growing network of professionals and stakeholders who are committed to introducing and expanding Barnahus services nationally.

The first PROMISE project (2015-2017) set European standards and engaged a broad network of professionals. The second PROMISE project (2017-2019) promoted national level progress towards meeting the standards and formalised the PROMISE Barnahus Network. The third project (2020-2022) expanded these activities to include University training, case management tools, with a view to establishing a European Competence Centre for Barnahus and laying the groundwork for an accreditation system for Barnhaus. The current Project: PROMISE ELPIS (2023-2025) is managed by Charité-University Medicine, Berlin, and promotes multidisciplinary and interagency models for child victims and witnesses of sexual violence, with a specific focus on specialised interventions and excellence in practice in cases where there is a presumed online element of the sexual violence.
Access the PROMISE tools and learn more at www.barnahus.eu