



Internet Facilitated Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Minors: A Bibliography

© 2024 National Children's Advocacy Center.
All rights reserved.

Preferred citation: National Children's Advocacy Center. (2024). Internet Facilitated Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Minors: A Bibliography. Huntsville, AL: Author.

*This Bibliographic work was conducted as part of the **PROMISE Elpis Project** and **Co-Financed by the European Union**. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*



Co-funded by
the European Union

Scope

This bibliography covers literature relevant to how perpetrators manipulate and groom their victims of sexual abuse online. While not comprehensive, every effort has been undertaken to provide the most relevant literature on this topic. Scholarly articles, reports, book chapters, and books are included. Links to open source publications are included.

Organization

Listings are divided into two sections. While there is overlap in *trafficking* and *commercial sexual exploitation (CSE)*, there are also some differentiations. Therefore, publications specific to trafficking begin on page 3. Publications specific to CSE begin on page 21. Publications are listed in date descending order within each section.

Disclaimer

This bibliography was prepared by the Senior Digital Information Librarian of the National Children’s Advocacy Center (NCAC) for the purpose of research and education, and for the convenience of our readers. The NCAC is not responsible for the availability or content of cited resources. The NCAC does not endorse, warrant or guarantee the information, products, or services described or offered by the authors or organizations whose publications are cited in this bibliography. The NCAC does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed in documents cited here. Points of view presented in cited resources are those of the authors, and do not necessarily coincide with those of the NCAC.

Internet Facilitated Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Minors

A Bibliography

Trafficking

Cotterill, D. (2023). The impact of social media, the internet, and legislation on online minor sex trafficking. *Journal of Digital Life and Learning*, 3(2), 18-45.
DOI:10.51357/jdll.v3i2.226

This paper examines the impact of social media and the internet on the online sex trafficking of minors and assesses the impact of internet laws and legislation designed to stop online sex trafficking. Online sex trafficking of minors has been identified as a significant problem in North America and around the world, generating approximately 32 billion dollars annually. The expansion of the internet over the past 20 years has provided sex traffickers with a new way to conduct business. This article provides a review of the literature (studies, reports, gray material) published between 1996 and 2022. A review of statistics, the role of the trafficker and the characteristics of the victims provide context to the discussion of anti-trafficking laws and legislation. This review was conducted using a critical social theories lens to determine inherent bias in the work, presumed assumptions, structural inequalities, and how the growth of the internet has impacted social change. Findings indicate that the laws and legislation designed to protect victims of sex trafficking have been largely ineffective and that ethical considerations and biased results limit the methodology of many studies.

Spowart, S. (2023). [Online sex trafficking of minors—exploring effective interventions & prevention](#). In K. Monahan (Ed.), *Sexual Violence - Issues in Prevention, Treatment, and Policy*. DOI:10.5772/intechopen.110255

Gezinski, L. B., & Gonzalez-Pons, K. M. (2022). Sex trafficking and technology: A systematic review of recruitment and exploitation. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1-15.
DOI:10.1080/23322705.2022.2034378

With passage of Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Traffickers Act and Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (FOSTA-SESTA) in 2018, technology became inextricably linked to sex

trafficking in the United States (U.S.) public policy arena. FOSTA-SESTA aimed to combat sex trafficking by legislating digital spaces; however, largely missing from legislative debate was the inclusion of prevalence data to inform this policy making. Therefore, the purpose of this systematic review was to synthesize the existing empirical evidence on online-facilitated sex trafficking. Twenty-one articles were included in this systematic review, of which the vast majority focused on the U.S. and domestically trafficked youth. Findings indicate very few empirically documented cases of online-facilitated recruitment of victims for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Greater empirical evidence exists for trafficked persons advertised online for sexual exploitation; however, the person posting these advertisements (e.g., self, friend, trafficker) varies. Overall, the actual prevalence of online-facilitated trafficking remains unknown, suggesting the need for rigorous and large-scale representative studies. Opportunities for leveraging technology to support survivors and service organizations are discussed. In contrast to sweeping legislation that targets web platform providers, policy is needed that reduces structural risk factors to prevent exploitation and trafficking.

Öhlund, L., & Almeida, T. (2023, August). Mapping the digital injustices of technology-facilitated sex trafficking. In: Abdelnour Nocera, J., Kristín Lárusdóttir, M., Petrie, H., Piccinno, A., Winckler, M. (Eds). *Human-Computer Interaction – INTERACT 2023* (pp. 523-527). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. DOI:10.1007/978-3-031-42293-5_66

As technology and social media develop and expand, technology-facilitated sex trafficking becomes increasingly difficult to take action against and prevent. Technology-facilitated sex trafficking implies the use of digital tools such as social media platforms to coordinate trafficking and (mis)lead persons into sexual exploitation, e.g., commercial sex. To address and prevent sex trafficking as it expands through technology, legal frameworks can both help and interfere with the work provided by aid organizations and authorities. We present an expert interview study with six professionals from authorities, women shelters and NGO organizations working alongside the Swedish (governance) Model. Our findings show that digital technology is useful yet heavily challenging for anti-trafficking organizations and authorities in their fight against sex trafficking, exploitation, and digital child abuse. More resources and tools are needed to mitigate the (mis)use of technology and prevent abuse. To do this, we discuss the need to recontextualize efforts against

trafficking within the structural conditions and legal model of Swedish society that facilitate exploitation. Furthermore, we propose a series of risk-mitigating approaches which centers four questions for the HCI community working towards anti-trafficking efforts.

Martinho, G., Gonçalves, M., & Matos, M. (2022). “It takes a community to save a child”: Child trafficking knowledge of the Portuguese community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 50(2), 1028–1047. DOI:10.1002/jcop.22698

This study aims to explore the knowledge of the Portuguese community on child trafficking. Through an online inventory, with a sample of 492 community members, with a mean age of 40.53 and mostly female (70.7%), participants were more knowledgeable about forms of exploitation, risk and vulnerability factors, the profile of the victims, and the situation in Portugal about child trafficking. On the contrary, they were less knowledgeable about the dynamics of child trafficking. Having a college education, and contacting with the subject through informal or/and formal sources were predictors of a higher level of knowledge of child trafficking. This study reinforces the importance of the community as a whole in fighting child trafficking. To protect children against child trafficking, public policies should prioritize the role of the community. An empowered community can actively contribute to the prevention, signaling, and (re)integration of victims of child trafficking.

Mendel, J., & Sharapov, K. (2022). ‘Stick them to the cross’: Anti-trafficking apps and the production of ignorance. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 8(3), 233-249. DOI:10.1080/23322705.2020.1801284

There is a long history of ignorance production around trafficking in human beings. A proliferation of anti-trafficking apps plays an important role in the reinforcement of this ignorance. Anti-trafficking apps work in different ways from other (mis)information tools, but there is a lack of academic research on the topic. This paper addresses this gap through an agnotological approach focusing on how ignorance is produced and becomes productive, rather than seeing ignorance as just a lack of knowledge. We investigate how anti-trafficking apps are used to manipulate (mis)understandings of and responses to human trafficking by enabling new types of awareness raising, user participation and ignorance production. The networking of ignorance that this allows

– and the integration of this into new aspects of everyday life – illustrates de Goede’s warning that “the network is problematic as a security technique...because, ultimately, it has no outside”.

Raza, M., & Feehs, K. (2022). [Dispelling sex trafficking conspiracy theories: The Truth behind who Is recruited by traffickers and how](#). *William & Mary Journal of Race, Gender & Social Justice*, 29(3), 653-689.

Schrock, W. (2022). [Internet-era human trafficking and the need for a better international legal instrument](#). *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender & Class*, 22, 120.

This Comment examines the current international legal framework on human trafficking and points out significant gaps in which traffickers can operate. Additionally, this paper identifies an ideal next step that the international legal regime can take to address this issue. Part I examines how the definition of human trafficking evolved over the past century. It will also address how the fluctuating means of trafficking, and shifts in focus on the different aspects of the activity, results in a constantly changing definition of human trafficking and who is subsequently considered a victim. Part II will examine how and to what extent the internet changed the landscape of human trafficking. Additionally, it will discuss new avenues through which trafficking is conducted and how these technology platforms complicate prosecution and curbing the activity on an international scale. Part III dives into the Palermo Protocol as well as other components of the international legal framework that can be utilized to combat online human trafficking.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022). [Global report on trafficking in persons](#).
https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLOTiP_2022_web.pdf

The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons aims to shed light on a shared problem and drive action against this crime by providing policymakers and practitioners with the information and analysis they need to sharpen responses and improve prevention. For the first time, the Report also features contributions from young academics as part of UNODC’s efforts to support the next generation of researchers and build new connections to support effective solutions.

L'Hoiry, X., Moretti, A., & Antonopoulos, G. A. (2021). [Identifying sex trafficking in Adult Services Websites: An exploratory study with a British police force](#). *Trends in Organized Crime*, 1-22.

Human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation and modern slavery have experienced an unprecedented boom over the past decade due to the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs), particularly in digital and networked environments. These developments have created new opportunities for human exploitation and illegal profiteering. Adult Services Websites (ASWs), online platforms on which sex workers post profiles advertising their services, are a key conduit for human traffickers to exploit their victims. Alongside profiles of independent sex workers, traffickers are posting false ASW profiles, advertising the forced services of their victims and camouflaging these false profiles amongst legitimate adverts. In response, police practitioners are proactively investigating ASWs to identify suspect profiles. A key obstacle for practitioners, however, is to distinguish between ASW profiles posted by independent, consenting sex workers advertising their services, and those posted by traffickers exploiting their victims. The exploratory study presented in this paper seeks to address this particular challenge. Working with a British police force, the researchers in this study gathered existing knowledge on the traffickers' use of ASW profiles to create a bespoke tool of analysis, the Sexual Trafficking Identification Matrix (STIM). The aim of this tool has been to identify 'risk indicators' on ASW profiles and to flag these for potential police investigation. This paper presents the results of this exploratory study and its four stages. Furthermore, more broadly, it reflects on the use of evidence-based tools by law enforcement to tackle complex domains of offending such as those of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Raets, S., & Janssens, J. (2021). Trafficking and technology: Exploring the role of digital communication technologies in the Belgian human trafficking business. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 27, 215-238. DOI: 10.1007/s10610-019-09429-z

Over the past few years, the agenda-topping issue of human trafficking is increasingly bracketed with the use of digital technologies. Though the trafficking-technology nexus is a growing area of public and policy concern, as far as empirical research is concerned, the subject is still a relatively

open field. As a result, quite a few unknowns regarding the interaction between technological developments and trafficking in persons remain unresolved. In this context, the present research paper principally aims to build on the existent body of literature in order to broaden our comprehension of the matter at hand. Based on a systematic literature review and interviews with convicted offenders as well as anti-trafficking practitioners in Belgium, this paper presents an overview of the various ways in which technology can be leveraged both in the perpetration and the counteraction of human trafficking activities. In addition, the question of how technology relates to the traditional workings of trafficking is considered from a cyber-criminological point of view. That is, a connection is drawn between the use of technological tools by human traffickers and our current understanding of the business of trafficking in persons.

Watson, H. (2021). [Pornography-Based Sex Trafficking: A Palermo Protocol for the Internet Age](#). *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 54, 495.

This Note seeks to close procedural gaps and alleviate policing frustrations through a proprietary examination of the Protocol’s “exploitation” definition and suggests an amendment to the Protocol that uniformly criminalizes coerced pornography across all signatory nations.

Grubb, J. A. (2020). The rise of sex trafficking online. In T. Holt, & A. Bossler, (Eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyberdeviance* (pp.1151-1175). Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-78440-3_55

Human trafficking has been in existence for thousands of years but commonly has been labeled slavery. Early examples are present in Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome and more recently in Europe and Africa more expansively with the Arab Slave Trade and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Modern discourse on human trafficking has been heavily influenced by the practice of white slavery in the late nineteenth century. Throughout the twentieth century, a number of national and international efforts, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were made to address human trafficking. Starting near the end of the twentieth century, attention on sex trafficking began to take off, with governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and higher education examining the prevalence and economic magnitude of the crime. Right around the turn of the millennium, there emerged an increased awareness regarding the relationship between the rise of

the Internet and the sex industry more broadly. With expansion of the Internet, as well as different forms of communication, research has increasingly indicated sex trafficking as being intimately linked with social networking and online classified advertisements. Knowledge about sex trafficking on these platforms has led to increased efforts to combat the act through legislation, community awareness, and education, as well as through technological developments in the private and academic sectors. As this body of research further develops, there is a need for recognizing how the Dark Web and remote online sexual exploitation fit into this picture.

Moore, J. L., Houck, C., Hirway, P., Barron, C. E., & Goldberg, A. P. (2020). Trafficking experiences and psychosocial features of domestic minor sex trafficking victims. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(15-16), 3148-3163.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517703373>

Domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) is an increasingly recognized traumatic crime premised upon the control, abuse, and exploitation of youth. By definition, DMST is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” within domestic borders, in which the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years. The present study described the demographics, psychosocial features, and trafficking experiences (e.g., environments of recruitment, relationship to trafficker, solicitation) of DMST victims. A total of 25 medical records of patients under the age of 18 who disclosed their involvement in DMST to medical providers between August 1, 2013, and November 30, 2015, were retrospectively reviewed. The majority of patients were female, and the mean age was 15.4 years old. Most patients lived at home and/or were accompanied at the evaluation by a parent/guardian. High rates of alcohol or substance use/abuse (92%), being placed in a group home or child protective services (CPS) custody (28%), a history of runaway behavior (60%), and/or exposure to other child maltreatment (88%) were identified. Our data indicated variation in reported trafficking experiences; however, patients commonly reported an established relationship with their trafficker (60%) and recruitment occurred primarily as a result of financial motivation (52%). Patients were prevalently recruited in settings where there were face-to-face interactions (56%), whereas the solicitation of sex-buyers occurred primarily online (92%). Victims who disclosed involvement in DMST had complicated psychosocial histories that may have rendered them susceptible to their exploitation, and reported a variety of DMST experiences

perpetuated by traffickers. Although preliminary in nature, this study provided empirical evidence of the predisposing factors, motivations, and experiences of victimized youth uniquely from the perspective of patients who sought medical care.

O'Brien, J. E., & Li, W. (2020). The role of the internet in the grooming, exploitation, and exit of United States domestic minor sex trafficking victims. *Journal of Children and Media*, 14(2), 187-203. DOI:10.1080/17482798.2019.1688668

The Internet (e.g., social networking, online marketing, and encryption technologies) has been identified as a means to facilitate domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST; a.k.a., commercial sexual exploitation of children). At the same time, the Internet is increasingly being identified as a method of primary prevention and intervention for DMST among youth. However, to-date there are limited examinations of the role of the Internet in the lives of youth who experience DMST victimization. The current study aims to consider the role of the Internet in DMST grooming, exploitation, and exit. In-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 20 service providers in North Carolina and Texas. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded line-by-line using a grounded theory approach. Results feature two overarching themes in service provider interviews: 1) Initial exploitation and 2) Exit from exploitation. Within each of these larger themes were subthemes including technology facilitated risk and prevention needs. Overall, these qualitative findings reveal the role of the Internet in: (1) Facilitating DMST, (2) Preventing Internet-facilitated DMST, and (3) Victim exit and survivorship. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Carney, E. (2019). [Protecting internet freedom at the expense of facilitating online child sex trafficking: An explanation as to why CDA's Section 230 has no place in a new NAFTA](#). *Catholic University Law Review*, 68, 353.

This Comment argues that § 230, which has inadvertently stripped women and children of their most basic human rights, has no place in an international trade agreement. Part I discusses § 230 in depth by analyzing the intent, legislative history, and accomplishments of the legislation. It also illustrates how § 230 has been broadly interpreted and applied by courts in cases dealing with human trafficking. Part II looks at the two statutes recently passed into law, discussing the

arguments made by both opponents and supporters of each bill. Part III provides a brief background of NAFTA, analyzes why it needs to be updated, and illustrates how certain tech companies and associations are trying to include § 230 language in the new agreement. Part IV first argues that § 230 should not be included in a new NAFTA by using Backpage as an example of how the statute has negatively impacted this nation's justice system. This section discusses how Backpage is not the only website engaged in this activity and analyzes the recent bills' legislative impact on these types of platforms. Part IV also demonstrates why the internet no longer needs the same protections afforded by § 230 and that it is time to start regulating it. This section concludes by discussing recent concessions made by tech companies admitting that § 230 must be amended.

Diba, P., Antonopoulos, G. A., & Papanicolaou, G. (2018). [The role of the Internet in the process of trafficking humans in the UK](#). e Janus-faces of cross-border crime in Europe, 97.

The aim of this chapter is to present an account of the role of the Internet and digital technologies in the processes of human trafficking in the United Kingdom. It addresses a country-specific empirical gap in the literature considering the role of digital technologies, a special field that is rapidly emerging and significantly extends the study of human trafficking, an issue that has attracted considerable policy and research interest in the past twenty years.

Obertová, Z., & Cattaneo, C. (2018). Child trafficking and the European migration crisis: The role of forensic practitioners. *Forensic Science International*, 282, 46-59.
DOI:10.1016/j.forsciint.2017.10.036

Trafficking in children is one of the worst forms of human rights violation and is categorised as a serious crime. Children at high risk of becoming victims of trafficking are runaways, children with a history of abuse, and migrant children. Internationally, cases of child trafficking are increasing the most in Europe, which is likely the result of the current migration crisis. In crises, preventing and combating human trafficking needs to be prioritized, considering that the aims of humanitarian action include saving lives, easing suffering and preserving human dignity. The involvement of forensic practitioners in investigations of cases of child trafficking mainly concerning the identification of victims may save lives and certainly alleviate suffering of the child victims and their families searching for them. Moreover, by aiding the prosecution process through thorough

documentation and expert reporting forensic practitioners may contribute to the protection, rehabilitation and possibly compensation of the child victims, and thus to the restoration of their rights and dignity. So far, forensic practitioners were rarely specifically mentioned as actors in the counter-trafficking efforts in the multitude of policies, regulations, guidelines and recommendations concerning different aspects of child trafficking. This seems surprising considering that the expertise and experience of practitioners from forensic sciences including cyber forensics, document analysis, forensic biology, anthropology, and medicine can be utilised for gathering intelligence in cases of suspected human trafficking, for identifying the victims as well as perpetrators, and for securing evidence for legal proceedings as this paper shows. While this article mainly discusses the role of forensic pathologists and anthropologists, with a specific focus on the identification of child victims of trafficking in the context of the European migration crisis, the notions regarding the contribution of forensic sciences to the counter-trafficking efforts can be adapted to other geographical and sociopolitical contexts.

Cardenas, A. A. (2017). [The SAVE Act of 2015: Congress' attempt to reprioritize online child sex trafficking](#). *St. John's Law Review*, 91, 505.

This Note argues that the SAVE Act will not achieve Congress' goal of prosecuting website operators and stopping the influx of online child sex trafficking advertisements. However, the potential pitfalls of this legislation does not mean the Act should be thrown out in its entirety. Instead, the Act should be rewritten to include well-crafted, yet informative definitions of online child sex trafficking, while also lowering the mens rea requirement and requiring website operators to engage in more due diligence. Part I outlines the background of Internet sex trafficking in general. Section A discusses the parties involved in online child sex trafficking advertisements, the transition of the crime from the street and onto the Internet, and the benefits the Internet has provided this criminal industry. Section B details how law enforcement and anti-human trafficking interest groups pressure online classified websites to stop these illegal advertisements from being posted. Next, Part II provides an overview of statutes enacted before the SAVE Act that relate to the Internet and online child sex trafficking advertisements. Section A summarizes the CDA and the First Amendment. Section B discusses the unconstitutionality of the state statutes enacted in New Jersey, Tennessee, and Washington to combat online child sex trafficking advertisements.

Section C outlines the current debate on abolishing child sex trafficking from the Internet. Furthermore, Part III discusses the SAVE Act's history and language as well as its advantages and disadvantages. This part argues that the SAVE Act will be ineffective because of (1) judicial hesitation, (2) inadequate wording, and (3) irresponsible deference. Finally, Part IV provides solutions to the SAVE Act's deficiencies. Section A proposes new definitions of the terms used in the statute to avoid vagueness and overbreadth and suggests lowering the mens rea standard for website operators. Section B proposes the use of facial recognition programs to find unlawful posts.

Litam, S. D. A., & Bach, J. E. (2017). "Otis": A case study of an online attempt to purchase children for sex. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 26(7), 806-817.

The researchers analyzed court documents to develop a case study of an individual convicted of buying sexual services from exploited children. Findings indicate that the subject deviates from preexisting victim selection processes and demonstrates characteristics inconsistent with existing sexual offender typologies that likens offender behaviors to the hunting techniques and behaviors of predatory animals. As evidenced in the case study, the individual perceived the victims solely as a means of deviant sexual satiation and did not participate in traditionally established victim acquisition techniques. In addition, the researchers propose adopting terminology that adheres to the term consumer rather than buyer as it better represents some offenders' disconnect and lack of empathy in the victim acquisition process.

Miller-Perrin, C., & Wurtele, S. K. (2017). Sex trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. *Women & Therapy*, 40(1-2), 123-151.
DOI:10.1080/02703149.2016.1210963

In recent years, the problem of child sex trafficking has become a topic of international discussion and concern. Child sex trafficking can include many forms of commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution, pornography, and child sex tourism. Children who fall prey to these forms of sexual exploitation are of particular concern because of their vulnerable status and the impact these experiences have on their development. This article provides a comprehensive review about what is currently known about child sex trafficking by examining definitions, estimates of the problem,

child risk factors and consequences, and approaches to protection, prosecution, promotion of recovery and reintegration, and partnerships for promoting collaboration and cooperation.

O'Brien, M. A. (2017). [Free speech or slavery profiteering: solutions for policing online sex-trafficking advertisement](#). *Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment & Technology Law*, 20, 289.

Online sex trafficking is big business. The Department of Homeland Security estimates that sex trafficking generates billions of dollars per year. The marketplace for sex has moved from the street corner to classified ad websites such as Backpage.com, and all too often the victims of online sex trafficking are minors. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported an 846 percent increase in reports of child sexual exploitation between 2010 and 2015-growth the organization attributes to the availability of sex ads on websites such as Backpage.com. Law enforcement agencies and victims have sought to hold Backpage.com liable for facilitating human sex trafficking. To defend against this barrage of litigation, Backpage.com has argued that a statutory corollary of the First Amendment insulates the company from liability. Using Backpage.com as a paradigm, this Note analyzes the constitutional and policy tensions underlying regulation of online sex trafficking and advocates a crowdsourced model for monitoring online sex advertisement.

Sykiotou, A. P. (2017). [Cyber trafficking: Recruiting victims of human trafficking through the net](#). *Europe in Crisis: Crime, Criminal Justice, and the Way Forward*, 1547.

Many forms of trafficking appear to be using the cyberspace as means of victims' recruitment or for advertising trafficking "services and products". Up to now sex- and labour trafficking, child pornography, selling of babies, trafficking of organs and mail order brides are some of the forms of cyber-trafficking. Traffickers, clients, service providers and various stakeholders facilitate the trafficking process tool, trafficking is considered as cybercrime. The problem is that there are no international texts on cybercrime except at regional level the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention. Prevention is crucial to cyber-trafficking, however it generally depends on the importance given to international, regional and local cooperation and between various entities responsible for combating trafficking, as well as to specialized capacity development programmes.

There are many challenges for national governments, police and judiciary in the fight against human trafficking. An effective strategy against cyber-trafficking would demand together with a universal legislation on cybercrime a uniform technological infrastructure that would allow the rapid intervention of the prosecuting authorities on the location and identification of the perpetrators and the preservation of evidence as well as a strong international cooperation.

Devi, S. B., & Velayutham, C. (2016). A Study on the Technological Impact in Child Trafficking. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(8), 1047-1071. DOI:10.5958/2249-7315.2016.00670.5

Children are the most vulnerable targets of violence. Child trafficking has been one of the growing issue but it is the least reported cases in India. The technological development has also led to online child trafficking through various online platforms. On the other hand, Social media has become one of the essential tool where child violence are addressed and discussed about. The emergence of the new media has brought with it new opportunities for expanding media mobilization for child development interventions in the country. In this study, the researcher aims to create an extensive literature in understanding about child trafficking and its various forms. The main objective of the study is to develop in-depth knowledge about the intervention of technological advancement in child trafficking issues. This paper reflects the nature of occurrence, causes and reason behind child trafficking as well as the preventive measures have been discussed. Hence, using a perspective of human rights, this study is an evident of how social media and technological tools holds considerable prospects for empowering people to become informed and active advocates of child rights, especially in the issue of child trafficking.

Sarkar, S. (2015). Use of technology in human trafficking networks and sexual exploitation: A cross-sectional multi-country study. *Transnational Social Review*, 5(1), 55-68. DOI:10.1080/21931674.2014.991184

There are few data on the use of technology in human trafficking. This study attempted to address this gap in knowledge through field surveys that took place in India, Nepal, Thailand, Hungary, and the United Kingdom between 2010 and 2013. This research comprised face-to-face interviews with a total number of 246 individuals in 5 countries, consisting of 97 female victims, 64 traffickers, and 85 clients. The interviews were designed to help understand the role of technology

such as the Internet, online social networking, and mobile phones in human trafficking. The survey was carried out using semi-structured questionnaires to find out how victims used technological devices under pre- and post-trafficking circumstances, how they advertised themselves, how diverse services and technologies were used to trade in sexually exploited trafficked people, and how clients explored, communicated, and paid for their sex transactions. The results showed that traffickers and their networks made good use of sophisticated software in order to safeguard their anonymity, make use of online storage and hosting services, and use advanced encryption techniques to counteract digital forensic investigations by the police.

Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2014). Sex trafficking of minors (STM) in metropolitan, micropolitan, and rural communities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *40*, 113-123.

The purpose of the study was to examine professionals' awareness, knowledge, and experiences working with youth victims of sex trafficking in metropolitan and non-metropolitan communities. Professionals who worked with at-risk youth and/or crime victims were recruited from all counties in a southern, rural state in the U.S. to complete a telephone survey. Surveys included closed and open-ended questions, which were theme coded. Professionals' ($n = 289$) were classified into one of four categories based on the counties in which they worked: metropolitan, micropolitan, rural, and all three community types. Although there were many similarities found in trafficking situations across the different types of communities, some expected differences were found. First, as expected, more professionals in metropolitan communities perceived CSEC as being a fairly or very serious problem in the state overall. Consistent with other studies, more professionals in metropolitan communities had received training on human trafficking and reported they were familiar with the state and federal laws on human trafficking (Newton et al., 2008). Significantly more professionals in metropolitan (54.7%) communities reported they had worked with a suspected or definite victim of STM compared to professionals in micropolitan communities (29.8%). There were few differences in victim characteristics, vulnerability factors, and trafficking situations (e.g., relationship to trafficker, traffickers' techniques for controlling victims, transportation, and Internet-facilitation of trafficking) across the community types. There is a continued need for awareness building of STM and training, particularly in non-metropolitan

communities, as well as adoption of screening tools, integration of trauma-informed care, and identification of best practices.

Hughes, D. M. (2014). [Trafficking in human beings in the European Union: Gender, sexual exploitation, and digital communication technologies](#). *Sage Open*, 4(4), DOI:10.1177/2158244014553585

In this article, the intersection of gender, trafficking for sexual exploitation, and use of digital communication technologies are analyzed based on data from the European Union (EU). Over the past two decades, an increase in trafficking in human beings in the EU has been accompanied by an increase in the development and availability of digital communication technologies. The first statistical analysis of trafficking in human beings (2008-2010) carried out by the European Commission found 23,632 victims of human trafficking in the reporting member states. Eighty percent of victims were women and girls; 20% were men and boys. The majority of the victims (62%) were trafficked for sexual exploitation. Digital communication technologies are widely used for trafficking for sexual exploitation, and more rarely for trafficking for forced labor. This article concludes that the combination of gender, trafficking for sexual exploitation, and use of digital communication technologies has created a nexus of victimization for women and girls. Based on this analysis and other sources of information, the European region is the world's leading region for trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Fredlund, C., Svensson, F., Svedin, C. G., Priebe, G., & Wadsby, M. (2013). Adolescents' lifetime experience of selling sex: Development over five years. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 22(3), 312-325.

Lifetime experience of selling sex among adolescents was investigated together with sociodemographic correlates, parent-child relationship, and the existence of people to confide in. Changes over time regarding the selling of sex were investigated through a comparison of data from 2004 and 2009. This study was carried out using 3,498 adolescents from a representative sample of Swedish high school students with a mean age 18.3 years. Of these adolescents, 1.5% stated that they had given sexual services for reimbursement and both male and female buyers existed. The adolescents who had sold sex had a poorer parent-child relationship during childhood

and had fewer people to confide in about problems and worries. Changes over time were found especially regarding the Internet as a contact source and also immigrant background.

Leary, M. G. (2013). Fighting fire with fire: Technology in child sex trafficking. *Duke Journal of Gender, Law, and Policy*, 21, 289-323.

Anecdotal evidence suggests child sex traffickers are utilizing more technological tools to traffic children. However, the debate continues regarding whether current law enforcement responses are effective against this increasingly sophisticated crime. This article and research covering a decade of federal cases sheds light on that question and offers fact-based guidance for future steps to pursue in combatting child sex trafficking.

Rafferty, Y. (2013). [Child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation: A review of promising prevention policies and programs](#). *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 83(4),559-575. DOI:10.1111/ajop.12056

Child trafficking, including commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative criminal activities in the world. The global enslavement of children affects countless numbers of victims who are trafficked within their home countries or transported away from their homes and treated as commodities to be bought, sold, and resold for labor or sexual exploitation. All over the world, girls are particularly likely to be trafficked into the sex trade: Girls and women constitute 98% of those who are trafficked for CSE. Health and safety standards in exploitative settings are generally extremely low, and the degree of experienced violence has been linked with adverse physical, psychological, and social-emotional development. The human-rights-based approach to child trafficking provides a comprehensive conceptual framework whereby victim-focused and law enforcement responses can be developed, implemented, and evaluated. This article highlights promising policies and programs designed to prevent child trafficking and CSE by combating demand for sex with children, reducing supply, and strengthening communities. The literature reviewed includes academic publications as well as international and governmental and nongovernmental reports. Implications for social policy and future research are presented.

Vanderschaaf, V. (2013). [Spotlight on: How the internet facilitates underage victimization in human trafficking](#). *Children's Legal Rights Journal*, 34, 135.

Dalton, R. (2012). Abolishing child sex trafficking on the internet: Imposing criminal culpability on digital facilitators. *University of Memphis School of Law Journal*, 43, 1097.

Cockbain, E., Brayley, H., & Laycock, G. (2011). [Exploring internal child sex trafficking networks using social network analysis](#). *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 5(2), 144-157. DOI:10.1093/police/par025

This article explores the potential of social network analysis as a tool in supporting the investigation of internal child sex trafficking in the UK. In doing so, it uses only data, software, and training already available to UK police. Data from two major operations are analysed using in-built centrality metrics, designed to measure a network's overarching structural properties and identify particularly powerful individuals. This work addresses victim networks alongside offender networks. The insights generated by SNA inform ideas for targeted interventions based on the principles of Situational Crime Prevention. These harm-reduction initiatives go beyond traditional enforcement to cover prevention, disruption, prosecution, etc. This article ends by discussing how SNA can be applied and further developed by frontline policing, strategic policing, prosecution, and policy and research.

Nazemi, N. (2011). Role of Internet in Human Trafficking. *Indian Journal of Social Development*, 11(2), 517-540.

Kunze, E. I. (2009). Sex trafficking via the internet: How international agreements address the problem and fail to go far enough. *Journal of High Technology and Law*, 10, 241.

Chase, E., & Statham, J. (2005). [Commercial and sexual exploitation of children and young people in the UK—A review](#). *Child Abuse Review*, 14(1), 4-25.

This paper reviews recent information and data relevant to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people in the UK. Three main aspects of exploitation are addressed: abuse through prostitution; abuse through pornography; and the trafficking of children and young people to and through the UK for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Most published research in this area relates to young people exploited through prostitution. The review explores the range of vulnerability factors, the processes used to engage young people in prostitution and the types of support strategies for those being exploited. Rather less information is currently available on the scale of child pornography, or the links between the use of pornography and other forms of sexual abuse. The internet as a modern technology for proliferating child pornography is discussed, alongside its role in providing opportunities for paedophiles to access and ‘groom’ children for sexual purposes. Finally, the review provides a summary of research on trafficking of children to and through the UK for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and demonstrates the limited knowledge about this topic. Copyright © 2005 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Gallagher, B., Christmann, K., Fraser, C., & Hodgson, B. (2003). [International and internet child sexual abuse and exploitation-issues emerging from research](#). *Child & Family Law Quarterly*, 15, 353-370.

This article examines knowledge concerning cases of child sexual abuse involving an international element or use of the internet - risks to children that have received widespread official attention only in the last few years. In particular, it draws upon the authors' ongoing research, other (completed) research and the wider literature to establish what is known about these cases in terms of their extent and nature, and their implications for policy and practice.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors

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 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.

Drejer, C., Riegler, M. A., Halvorsen, P., Johnson, M. S., & Baugerud, G. A. (2023). [Livestreaming technology and online child sexual exploitation and abuse: A scoping review](https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221147564). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. DOI:10.1177/15248380221147564

Livestreaming of child sexual abuse (LSCSA) is an established form of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA). However, only a limited body of research has examined this issue. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated internet use and user knowledge of livestreaming services emphasizing the importance of understanding this crime. In this scoping review, existing literature was brought together through an iterative search of eight databases containing peer-reviewed journal articles, as well as grey literature. Records were eligible for inclusion if the

primary focus was on livestream technology and OCSEA, the child being defined as eighteen years or younger. Fourteen of the 2,218 records were selected. The data were charted and divided into four categories: victims, offenders, legislation, and technology. Limited research, differences in terminology, study design, and population inclusion criteria present a challenge to drawing general conclusions on the current state of LSCSA. The records show that victims are predominantly female. The average livestream offender was found to be older than the average online child sexual abuse offender. Therefore, it is unclear whether the findings are representative of the global population of livestream offenders. Furthermore, there appears to be a gap in what the records show on platforms and payment services used and current digital trends. The lack of a legal definition and privacy considerations pose a challenge to investigation, detection, and prosecution. The available data allow some insights into a potentially much larger issue.

Laird, J. J., Klettke, B., Hall, K., & Hallford, D. (2023). Toward a global definition and understanding of child sexual exploitation: The development of a conceptual model. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 24*(4), 2243-2264.
DOI:10.1177/15248380221090980

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a serious and persistent global issue affecting up to 5% of the child and youth population worldwide; yet there is no universally accepted definition. To develop a theoretically robust definition of CSE, this review systematically synthesized literature examining CSE definitions aiming to develop a conceptual model and typology. Electronic databases were searched to February 2021, yielding 384 nonduplicative records. Inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed and grey literature investigations of sexual exploitation, with a mean sample age of 18 years or younger, available in the English language. Literature review and data extraction followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Sixty-six studies met final inclusion criteria. Two independent reviewers extracted relevant data and used an epistemological approach to thematically analyse meaning and patterns across CSE definitions. Key findings demonstrate that CSE nomenclature is widely inconsistent, and despite growing awareness of this severe form of abuse, language continues to perpetuate stigma and criminalisation, utilising terms such as ‘adolescent or child prostitute’. Our findings propose a scientifically and trauma-informed definition and conceptualisation of CSE, based on

the following four-dimensional components: (1) A child/young person; (2) sexual acts; (3) abuse; and (4) exploitation (abuse + exchange). In this systematic review, a unified definition and conceptual model aims to advance knowledge and understanding of CSE, contributing to the progression of social norms which embrace nuances of trauma-informed practice and support for the identification and recovery of children, young people and families affected by sexual exploitation.

Moss, C., Smith, S. J., Kim, K., Hua, N., Noronha, N., Kavenagh, M., & Wekerle, C. (2023). [A global systematic scoping review of literature on the sexual exploitation of boys](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 142, 106244. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106244

Background: Sexual exploitation of children (SEC) is a widespread crime which impacts the child victim across developmental, health and well-being domains. As victims, boys have received much less clinical and research attention. While context-specific factors likely shape the SEC risk, under-recognized gender norms can deny boys' vulnerability. Professional failures to recognize and respond adequately to boys' sexual exploitation may prevent access to support. Objective: This systematic scoping review updates and broadens a previous review of literature addressing prevalence, victim/offender/facilitator characteristics, control mechanisms, as well as the health correlates and outcomes regarding sexual exploitation of boys. This review included international peer-reviewed and gray literature from 38 countries in 14 languages. Participants and setting: Studies from the years 2000 to 2022 that included samples of boys under age 18, or sex-disaggregated data for children under 18, were included. Case studies, systematic reviews, and those reporting on retrospective experiences by adults over 18 were excluded. A total of 254,744 boys were represented across 81 studies. Methods: A systematic scoping review considered qualitative and quantitative peer-reviewed publications from eight, English-language databases. English and non-English non-peer reviewed publications ('gray literature') was identified by both ECPAT International's global network of member organizations and citation chaining. Results: Overall, 81 peer-reviewed (n = 51) and gray literature (n = 30) documents from 38 countries were included. In total, 254,744 youth participated in peer-reviewed studies (N = 217,726) and gray literature (N = 37,018). General prevalence of sexual exploitation of boys was reported at up to 5 %, with higher rates noted in specifically vulnerable sub-populations (e.g., 10 %, trans youth;

26 %, street-connected youth). The literature indicates that sexual exploitation of boys is reported as occurring primarily between 12 and 18 years old. Multi-level factors are linked to SEC, including individual (e.g., disability status), relationship (e.g., child maltreatment, dating violence), community (e.g., community violence), and societal domains (e.g., discriminatory beliefs). SEC victimization is linked with youth mental and physical health concerns, particularly sexual health. Post-traumatic stress symptomatology or disorder was rarely evaluated. Evidence-based treatments were not available, which may be related to a lack of gender-based theoretical models for understanding SEC specifically. Conclusion: The sexual exploitation of boys is a prevalent public health, child rights, and clinical issue. All young people experiencing sexual exploitation face sex- and gender-specific challenges, and this remains the case for boys with indications including family rejection, implicit community tolerance for abuse to service accessibility barriers. Actioning our duty to care for all children requires gender- and trauma-informed lenses. Ongoing surveillance of all forms of violence against children, with gender disaggregation, is essential for practice and policy advancement.

Benavente, B., Díaz-Faes, D. A., Ballester, L., & Pereda, N. (2022). Commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Europe: A systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 23*(5), 1529-1548. DOI:10.1177/1524838021999378

The objective of this review is to provide a systematic and critical summary of findings regarding empirical studies conducted on commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in Europe. The purpose is to gain an understanding of the characteristics and main topics addressed in European research on CSEC, identify gaps, and give suggestions for future studies. The review was guided by the “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis—Protocols”. A comprehensive search on several databases was conducted to identify published and unpublished empirical research on CSEC in Europe, revealing 3,846 documents. In total, 56 research papers that focused specifically on CSEC in European samples were included. Research concerning European studies of CSEC and trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation has developed significantly over the last 20 years but is still rather limited and mainly focused on the UK and Sweden. Most of the studies reviewed suffer from important methodological flaws such as an inaccurate definition of the phenomenon analyzed, small and convenience samples, and

nonvalidated and nonspecific instruments. Findings from this study demonstrate the need for greater exploration and research around a number of areas of sexual exploitation of children in Europe. Further work is necessary in terms of capacity building, training, and awareness-raising for society as a whole and, specifically, professionals providing direct support to children and young people at risk of exploitation.

Lindenbach, D., Dimitropoulos, G., Bhattarai, A., Cullen, O., Perry, R., Arnold, P. D., & Patten, S. B. (2022). Confidence, training and challenges for Canadian child advocacy center staff when working with cases of online and in-person child sexual exploitation. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 31(3), 297-315. DOI:10.1080/10538712.2022.2037803

Child Advocacy Centers are interdisciplinary hubs that play a vital role in responding to child maltreatment, especially sexual abuse. Sexual abuse cases increasingly involve an online component, but no studies have examined the experience of Child Advocacy Center staff in dealing with online sexual exploitation. This study surveyed 37 staff at five Child Advocacy Centers in Alberta, Canada to understand their ability to recognize and respond to concerns about online and in-person sexual exploitation of their clients. The majority of respondents (54%) dealt with cases that involved grooming, luring, sexual abuse and child sexual abuse imagery (also known as child pornography) in the last year. Staff were equally confident in their ability to recognize and respond to grooming, luring, sexual abuse and child sexual abuse imagery. However, staff were more likely to have formal training in identifying sexual abuse and less likely to encounter difficulties in responding to sexual abuse relative to grooming, luring or child sexual abuse imagery. Clinicians used similar therapies when working with youth impacted by sexual abuse versus child sexual abuse imagery. Given that most Child Advocacy Center staff in our sample dealt with online child sexual exploitation, additional training in this area may be warranted.

Demetis, D., & Kietzmann, J. (2021). Online child sexual exploitation: A new MIS challenge. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 22(1), 9. DOI:10.17705/1jais.00652

This paper deals with the difficult yet increasingly important MIS phenomenon of online child sexual exploitation (online CSE). Through the use of secondary and publicly available data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as primary data from a cybercrime police unit in the United Kingdom, this study takes a grounded theory approach and organizes the role that

technologies and social actors play in shaping online CSE. The paper contributes to IS theory by providing a consolidated model for online CSE, which we call the technology and imagery dimensions model. This model combines the staging of the phenomenon and the key dimensions that depict how the use of technology and imagery both fuels and defuses the phenomenon. In informing the construction of the model, the paper extracts, organizes, and generalizes the affordances of technology and discusses the role of information systems in detecting online CSE.

Franchino-Olsen, H. (2021). [Vulnerabilities relevant for commercial sexual exploitation of children/domestic minor sex trafficking: A systematic review of risk factors](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 22(1), 99-111. DOI:10.1177/1524838018821956

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) occur across the United States, violating the rights and health of far too many children and youth. Adequate prevention efforts should seek to understand the factors that make minors vulnerable to sexual exploitation in order to properly design programs to prevent victimization. This review presents the identified risk factors collected via a systematic literature review. Following full-text review, 15 studies were selected for inclusion by meeting the following criteria: original quantitative or qualitative research studies published in English from January 2010 to September 2017 with titles or abstracts that indicated a focus on the risk factors, vulnerabilities, or statistics of CSEC/DMST and a domestic focus on CSEC/DMST (for U.S.-based journals) with findings that did not combine associations between minors and adults in the study. Relevant risk factors and vulnerabilities found in this review include child abuse and maltreatment, caregiver strain, running away or being thrown away, substance use, peer influence, witnessing family violence or criminality, poverty or material need, difficulty in school, conflict with parents, poor mental health or view of self, involvement in child protective services, involvement in juvenile detention or delinquency, early substance use, and prior rape or adolescent sexual victimization.

Seymour-Smith, S., & Kloess, J. A. (2021). [A discursive analysis of compliance, resistance and escalation to threats in sexually exploitative interactions between offenders and male children](#). *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60(3), 988-1011.
DOI:10.1111/bjso.12437

There is a notable scarcity of empirical studies focusing on online sexual grooming using real world, naturally occurring data. Limited research with real victims (as opposed to decoys) has indicated that more overt forceful threats are employed by offenders in such interaction; however, they tell us little about how these threats are built up and managed by both parties. Furthermore, the majority of research focuses on female victims, with limited attention paid to male victims. The current study presents a discursive psychology analysis of chat logs between one offender (posing as a teenage girl) and five male victims under the age of 16 years, in order to explore how victims attempt to resist such manoeuvres in situ, and how offenders manage such resistance. The sexualized nature evidenced in our data contrasts with other findings which suggest that boys are not sexually solicited and that interactions with boys are less aggressive and forceful. Our findings demonstrate for the first time how an offender escalated his issuing of threats following victims' resistance and non-compliance to requests. Turning points that appeared odd in the online interactions suggest that they may be used to encourage children to be more reflective about any further engagement.

Henry, C. (2020). Designing effective digital advertisements to prevent online consumption of child sexual exploitation material. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 29(8), 877-899.
DOI:10.1080/10538712.2020.1841354

The necessity of developing effective and innovative primary prevention strategies is a pressing objective in stemming the harm caused by the production and consumption of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM). Digital media interventions – including search engine advertisements – hold promise as prevention tools to deflect potential users away from CSEM and redirect them to therapeutic services. This study aimed to establish an evidence base for effective advertising in this context by creating mock-up helpline advertisements and testing them in focus groups and interviews with staff and clients of New Zealand's major treatment service providers for harmful sexual behavior. Prior to testing these advertisements in situ (on online platforms), this paper reports on a foundational creative and qualitative investigation of effective advertisements

– what imagery, text, and design features are most likely to succeed in diverting people away from seeking CSEM and encouraging them to reach out to a helpline? The findings of this study offer deeper understanding of the mindset, emotions, and barriers to reaching out that are experienced by onset CSEM users, as well as suitability of certain imagery and text for advertising in this context, and thereby contribute to strengthening primary prevention efforts in combatting CSEM consumption.

Holt, T. J., Cale, J., Leclerc, B., & Drew, J. (2020). [Assessing the challenges affecting the investigative methods to combat online child exploitation material offenses](#). *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 55. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2020.101464

Technology has dramatically simplified the process of engaging in a variety of crimes, particularly the distribution of child exploitation materials, or CEM. The ability to share photos and video across the globe through high speed Internet connections and mobile devices has made it easy to access CEM. At the same time, technology has complicated the investigation of these crimes by increasing the scope of spaces to police that is operated by public and private entities. This review outlines the challenges inherent in the investigation of CEM in the context of Wall's typology of policing online spaces, recognizing formal and informal sources of social control. The methods used by law enforcement to affect CEM are discussed, highlighting current limitations inherent in online investigations; namely the sheer scope of the problem and the nexus between rapid technological advances and commensurate legal responses, among others. The review highlights the need for engagement from industrial and non-governmental organizations in addition to law enforcement in order to facilitate the investigation of CEM offenses; strategies to improve the state of policing CEM need to include integrating public and private sphere responses to these offenses.

Seigfried-Spellar, K. C., & Soldino, V. (2020). Child sexual exploitation: Introduction to a global problem. In T. J. Holt, & A. M. Bossler (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of International Cybercrime and Cyberdeviance* (pp. 1203-1223). Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse, which as a broad category includes various forms of offenses toward children (both online and offline), such as commercial sexual exploitation, online sexual solicitation, and child sexual exploitation material. Difficulties related

to its investigation, along with the complexity in the adoption of supranational legal regulations, have allowed child sexual exploitation to become a criminal challenge worldwide. This chapter provides an overview of child sexual exploitation offenses, including current definitions, offender typologies, and key findings based on the idiosyncratic characteristics of the digital information age. Possible control and prevention measures from an international perspective, as well as treatment programs for offenders, are discussed. Overall, child sexual exploitation is a global challenge that requires a comprehensive response through enforcement, prevention, intervention, and treatment.

Baines, V. (2019). Online child sexual exploitation: Towards an optimal international response. *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 4(2), 197-215. DOI:10.1080/23738871.2019.1635178

Efforts have been made in recent years to ensure there is sufficient capacity within nation states to respond to, and combat, Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE). The UK-led WeProtect Global Alliance initiative has outlined a Model National Response (MNR), to which a large number of nations have already committed. OCSE, like cybercrime, is very often a crime with international dimensions. If we could start again knowing what we know now about OCSE, what would a model international response look like? Does this help us identify gaps in the existing international response that can be opportunities for improvement? This article maps an optimal international response to the problem of OCSE. Drawing on and complementing the We Protect Global Alliance Model National Response (MNR), it highlights aspects peculiar to the international nature of OCSE and suggests areas for future operational coordination and research.

Ramiro, L. S., Martinez, A. B., Tan, J. R. D., Mariano, K., Miranda, G. M. J., & Bautista, G. (2019). Online child sexual exploitation and abuse: A community diagnosis using the social norms theory. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 96. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104080

This study focused on the drivers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA) among Filipino children and youth, with emphasis on community norms. An ethnographic qualitative study was conducted in two communities in MetroManila that are considered “hotspots” for child sexual abuse. One hundred and forty-four (144) males and females from various age groups served as key informants. Political officials, Internet shop managers, professionals and police officers

were also interviewed. Non-participant observations and mapping were used to provide context regarding OCSEA in the communities. The results revealed that OCSEA was committed online by heterosexual and same sex attracted men in their 40s–50s. The usual victims were girls aged 13–17 years, although boys were also noted. The victims came from poor families and were out-of-school. The various forms of online activities leading to OCSEA included sexual chatting, showing of child sex photos and live videos as well as sextortion. The online transactions were usually initiated by the peer group and some enablers. In general, online sexual activities were perceived as “normal” among young people, although regarded as “disgusting”. Online sex activities had become a source of “easy money” for the child and family. They were perceived as not harmful because of anonymity and the absence of any actual physical contact. People in the community tolerate these online practices and do not report the incidence to authorities. The effects on children and youth were predominantly social and psychological, albeit perceived as economically beneficial. Some preventive and mitigating actions were recommended to curb the incidence of OCSEA in the communities.

Rizo, C. F., Klein, L. B., Chesworth, B. R., O’Brien, J. E., Macy, R. J., Martin, S. L., ... & Love, B. L. (2019). Educating youth about commercial sexual exploitation of children: A systematic review. *Global Social Welfare*, 6, 29-39. DOI:10.1007/s40609-018-0119-7

There has been growing attention focused on the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), with many policymakers, practitioners, and anti-human trafficking advocates stressing the importance of educating youth about CSEC. To examine the state of the literature on educating youth about CSEC, and to determine key recommendations about this topic, we systematically reviewed the peer-reviewed literature. Only 13 articles on educating youth about CSEC met our broad inclusion criteria (i.e., included some content on educating youth about CSEC and was published in English before or during April of 2017). In addition to identifying few articles on the topic, only five articles were empirical in nature (i.e., collected and/or analyzed data), of which only one examined outcomes following participation in a program focused on educating youth about CSEC. Based on the existing literature, we highlight educational strategies and recommendations, including information on modality, content, target audience, content facilitator, and setting. Overall, this literature emphasizes that youth should receive education about CSEC,

and that schools—particularly those focused on middle school, high school, and high-risk students—might be promising settings for such education. However, more research is needed to determine how best to educate youth about CSEC.

de Santisteban, P., & Gámez-Guadix, M. (2018). Prevalence and risk factors among minors for online sexual solicitations and interactions with adults. *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. 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.

Halverson, H. C. (2018). [The Communications Decency Act: Immunity for internet-facilitated commercial sexual exploitation](#). *Dignity: A Journal of Analysis of Exploitation and Violence*, 3(1), 12.

This paper reviews the original intent and historical application of the Communications Decency Act (CDA), most notably Section 230, with special regard to cases of Internet-facilitated commercial sexual exploitation. Although the CDA was originally created to protect children online, Section 230 of the CDA has been interpreted by the courts to grant broad immunities to websites facilitating the sexual exploitation of children and adults alike. Through analyzing the genesis and evolution of the CDA, it becomes clear that court interpretations of Section 230 are starkly inconsistent with original Congressional intent, and that the primary way to avoid de facto decriminalization of Internet-facilitated commercial sexual exploitation is to amend the Communications Decency Act.

Acar, K. V. (2016). Sexual extortion of children in cyberspace. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 10(2), 110-126. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.163398/

This paper examines Sexual Extortion of Children in Cyberspace (SECC), which has gained notoriety despite the fact that it has recently emerged, and is also considered one of the most significant online threats to children in 2015 Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA) report of Europol. After the characteristics and frequently-observed modus operandi of SECC are described, the points of differentiation and overlap between SECC and other related concepts about online child sexual abuse will be examined. Then, the constituent elements of SECC will be identified and explained in detail; later, possible prevention strategies and research areas will be discussed individually for each one. However, whether SECC should be defined as a separate criminal act and the legal conditions of punishment in the current criminal law systems are completely ignored.

Ly, T., Murphy, L., & Fedoroff, J. P. (2016). Understanding online child sexual exploitation offenses. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 18, 1-9. DOI:10.1007/s11920-016-0707-0

In the past three decades, there has been an exponential increase in the worldwide availability of Internet access and devices that are able to access online materials. This literature review

investigated whether increased accessibility of Internet child pornography (CP) increases the risk of in-person child sexual exploitation. The current review found little to no evidence that availability of the Internet has increased the worldwide incidence or prevalence of in-person child sexual abuse. In fact, during the time period in which the Internet has flourished, international crime statistics have shown a steady decrease of in-person child sexual abuse. The only exception to this trend is an increase in Internet child pornography or luring offenses (e.g., Stats Can, 2014), which involves child abuse by definition. This article reviews the impact of the Internet on child sexual abuse. It also reviews the characteristics of online CP offenders. Treatment of these offenders and prevention of such offenses is also discussed.

Reid Chassiakos, Y. L., Radesky, J., Christakis, D., Moreno, M. A., Cross, C., Hill, D., ... & Swanson, W. S. (2016). [Children and Adolescents and Digital Media](#). *Pediatrics*, 138(5).

Today's children and adolescents are immersed in both traditional and new abstract forms of digital media. Research on traditional media, such as television, has identified health concerns and negative outcomes that correlate with the duration and content of viewing. Over the past decade, the use of digital media, including interactive and social media, has grown, and research evidence suggests that these newer media offer both benefits and risks to the health of children and teenagers. Evidence-based benefits identified from the use of digital and social media include early learning, exposure to new ideas and knowledge, increased opportunities for social contact and support, and new opportunities to access health promotion messages and information. Risks of such media include negative health effects on sleep, attention, and learning; a higher incidence of obesity and depression; exposure to inaccurate, inappropriate, or unsafe content and contacts; and compromised privacy and confidentiality. This technical report reviews the literature regarding these opportunities and risks, framed around clinical questions, for children from birth to adulthood. To promote health and wellness in children and adolescents, it is important to maintain adequate physical activity, healthy nutrition, good sleep hygiene, and a nurturing social environment. A healthy Family Media Use Plan (www.healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan) that is individualized for a specific child, teenager, or family can identify an appropriate balance between screen time/online time and other activities, set boundaries for accessing content, guide

displays of personal information, encourage age-appropriate critical thinking and digital literacy, and support open family communication and implementation of consistent rules about media use.

Roe-Sepowitz, D., Bontrager Ryon, S., Hickle, K., Gallagher, J. M., & Hedberg, E. C. (2016). Invisible offenders: Estimating online sex customers. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 2(4), 272-280. DOI:10.1080/23322705.2015.1107711

Research on prostitution demand has well documented why men buy sex from girls and women, but there is very little understanding of the scope and scale of the issue. The lack of stable and valid measures of how many people buy sex from prostituted persons severely hinders the development of prevention and intervention efforts. This study developed a probability estimate of the population of active customers of online sex in the United States in a sample of 15 cities. In each city, the research team placed decoy online ads, advertising the sale of sexual services/prostitution, and collected text and voicemail data from potential sex purchasers. The resulting 677 phone numbers were analyzed using capture-recapture techniques to create an estimate of the number of online sex purchasers within each city. On average, within the 15 markets explored, 1 out of every 20 males over the age of 18 in a metropolitan city area was soliciting online sex ads. These results demonstrate (a) the viability of new techniques to estimate buyer populations and (b) preliminary figures on the number of purchasers buying sex online.

Sinclair, R., Duval, K., & Fox, E. (2015). Strengthening Canadian law enforcement and academic partnerships in the area of online child sexual exploitation: The identification of shared research directions. *Child & Youth Services*, 36(4), 345-364. DOI:10.1080/0145935X.2015.1096588

This article outlines the law enforcement response to online child sexual exploitation and identifies two key areas of research that would benefit from an academic focus—the link between online and offline child sexual exploitation offending, and the psychological health and wellness of online child sexual exploitation investigation employees. While there are several areas in need of research, these two areas demonstrate a unique opportunity for collaborative work. Also highlighted is a joint international research partnership among law enforcement, practitioners and academia that demonstrates the benefits of linking academic research interests with the practical needs of law enforcement. Last, are several suggestions for operationally relevant collaborative

research in this area. Such opportunities bring together various areas of expertise, which will advance our understanding of the needs of victims, and improve victim support services.

Hillman, H., Hooper, C., & Choo, K. K. R. (2014). Online child exploitation: Challenges and future research directions. *Computer Law & Security Review*, 30(6), 687-698.
DOI:10.1016/j.clsr.2014.09.007

Given the relatively new phenomenon of online child exploitation – an important area of criminological and policy concern – it is difficult to obtain long term trend data on reported convictions. Existing legislative and prosecution-based approaches, while important, are unlikely to be adequate. This analysis of the legislative and prosecution-based responses in five Commonwealth countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and United Kingdom), highlights the need for clear national and international definitions as the lack of consistency in the international legislative environment creates opportunities for sexual exploitation of children. To provide a multi-faceted and non-prosecutorial approach to address online child exploitation including the commercial exploitation of children, this paper identifies five potential research questions.

Mitchell, K. J., & Boyd, D. (2014). [Understanding the role of technology in the commercial sexual exploitation of children: The perspective of law enforcement](#). Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire.

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 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.

Mitchell, K. J., Jones, L. M., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2011). [Internet-facilitated commercial sexual exploitation of children: Findings from a nationally representative sample of law enforcement agencies in the United States](#). *Sexual Abuse, 23*(1), 43-71.
DOI:10.1177/1079063210374347

This article explores the variety of ways in which the Internet is used to facilitate the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and provides national incidence estimates for the number of arrests involving such technology-facilitated crimes in 2006. The National Juvenile Online Victimization Study is a nationally representative longitudinal study of more than 2,500 local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies across the United States. The current article utilizes Wave 2 data, which surveyed arrests in 2006 for Internet-related sex crimes against minors. Detailed data were collected via telephone interviews with investigators about 1,051 individual arrest cases. Findings show that an estimated 569 arrests for Internet-facilitated commercial sexual exploitation of children (IF-CSEC) occurred in the United States in 2006. Offenders in IF-CSEC cases fell into two main categories: (1) those who used the Internet to purchase or sell access to identified children for sexual purposes including child pornography (CP) production (36% of cases), and (2) those who used the Internet to purchase or sell CP images they possessed but did not produce (64% of cases). Offenders attempting to profit from child sexual exploitation were

more likely than those who were purchasing to have (a) prior arrests for sexual and nonsexual offenses, (b) a history of violence, (c) produced CP, (d) joined forces with other offenders, and (e) involved female offenders. Although the number of arrests for IF-CSEC crimes is relatively small, the victims of these crimes are a high-risk subgroup of youth, and the offenders who try to profit from these crimes are particularly concerning from a child welfare perspective.

Westlake, B. G., Bouchard, M., & Frank, R. (2011). [Finding the key players in online child exploitation networks](#). *Policy & Internet*, 3(2), 1-32. DOI:10.2202/1944-2866.1126

The growth of the Internet has been paralleled with a similar growth in online child exploitation. Since completely shutting down child exploitation websites is difficult (or arguably impossible), the goal must be to find the most efficient way of identifying the key targets and then to apprehend them. Traditionally, online investigations have been manual and centered on images. However, we argue that target prioritization needs to take more than just images into consideration, and that the investigating process needs to become more systematic. Drawing from a web crawler we specifically designed for extracting child exploitation website networks, this study 1) examines the structure of ten child exploitation networks and compares it to a control group of sports-related websites, and 2) provides a measure (network capital) that allows for identifying the most important targets for law enforcement purposes among our sample of websites. Results show that network capital — a combination between severity of content (images, videos, and text) and connectivity (links to other websites) — is a more reliable measure of target prioritization than more traditional measures of network centrality taken alone. Policy implications are discussed.

Frank, R., Westlake, B., & Bouchard, M. (2010, July). The structure and content of online child exploitation networks. In *ACM SIGKDD Workshop on Intelligence and Security Informatics* (pp. 1-9). DOI:10.1145/1938606.1938609

The emergence of the Internet has provided people with the ability to find and communicate with others of common interests. Unfortunately, those involved in the practices of child exploitation have also received the same benefits. Although law enforcement continues its efforts to shut down websites dedicated to child exploitation, the problem remains uncurbed. Despite this, law enforcement has yet to examine these websites as a network and determine their structure, stability

and susceptibleness to attack. We extract the structure and features of four online child exploitation networks using a custom-written webpage crawler. Social network analysis is then applied with the purpose of finding key players -- websites whose removal would result in the greatest fragmentation of the network and largest loss of hardcore material. Our results indicate that websites do not link based on the hardcore content of the target website; however, blogs do contain more hardcore content per page than non-blog websites.

Ospina, M., Harstall, C., & Dennett, L. (2010). [Sexual exploitation of children and youth over the internet: A rapid review of the scientific literature](#). DOI:10.7939/R3D21RZ85

This report examines the research evidence on the frequency, effects, risk factors of sexual exploitation of children and youth over the Internet. The report also provides information on available resources in Alberta and Canada regarding Internet safety and prevention of child and youth abuse and exploitation via the Internet.

Gallagher, B., Fraser, C., Christmann, K., & Hodgson, B. (2006). [International and Internet child sexual abuse and exploitation](#). Project Report. Huddersfield, UK. Centre for Applied Childhood Studies, University of Huddersfield.

There has, in recent years, been growing awareness and concern over cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) which have an international dimension or which involve the Internet. However, relatively little is known about these cases, as a result of which the policy and practice response may not be as appropriate or effective as it should be. This research project, directed by Bernard Gallagher, and funded by The Nuffield Foundation, was designed to further knowledge of international and Internet CSA, and in doing so contribute to the development of policy and practice.

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 Barnahus. 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



This publication has been produced with the financial support of ISF Project Grants of the European Union. The contents herein are the sole responsibility of project partnership and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission.