

Internet Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse Material: A Bibliography

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Scope

This selected bibliography covers international literature related to various aspects of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offenders, victims, and investigation. Included are citations and abstracts to articles, books, book chapters, and reports.

Organization

This bibliography lists publications covering eight subject areas listed in the table of contents. Publications are listed in date descending order within each section. Some entries appear in multiple sections. Links to open access publications are provided.

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Internet Facilitated Child Sexual Abuse Material

A Bibliography

I. Producers and consumers

Beier, K. M., Nentzl, J., von Heyden, M., Fishere, M., & Amelung, T. (2024). [Preventing child sexual abuse and the use of child sexual abuse materials: Following up on the German Prevention Project Dunkelfeld](#). *Journal of Prevention*, 45(6), 881–900.
DOI:10.1007/s10935-024-00792-0

Sexual interest in minors (i.e., pedophilia and hebephilia) is considered a risk factor for Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and the use of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). This study examined the long-term development of CSA, CSAM use, associated cognitions, and quality of life among self-referred, help-seeking individuals diagnosed with pedophilic or hebephilic disorder (PHD) outside the judicial system. Of the 110 eligible men who had undergone therapy for PHD due to psychological distress or risk of offending, 56 were available for follow-up assessment 1–11 years after treatment. Behavioral manifestations, offense-supportive cognitions, and quality of life were evaluated using interviews and psychometric measures. At follow-up, 7.7% of participants with a history of CSA had re-offended, whereas 89.1% of previous CSAM users reported recidivism, although with less severe material. No new CSA offenses occurred among those without prior CSA. Treatment led to increased cognitive victim empathy and reductions in CSA-supportive and CSAM-supportive attitudes, but only the latter improvement persisted through follow-up. Participants exhibited elevated CSA-supportive attitudes relative to community norms at all time points and diminished quality of life at follow-up. Pedophilic and hebephilic disorder carry a persistent risk of sexual offending, particularly regarding CSAM use. Therapeutic gains in offense-supportive cognitions may erode over time without ongoing care. A comprehensive public health approach encompassing early detection, prevention, and expanded treatment access that addresses both the risk of reoffending and overall well-being

is crucial for reducing sexual victimization and improving mental health outcomes for individuals from this target group.

Blokland, A., Daser, A., de Boer, M., Gannon, C., Gnielka, F., Huikuri, S., ... & Lehmann, R. (2024). [Why do users continue to contribute to darknet Child Sexual Abuse Material forums? Examining social exchange, social capital, and social learning explanations using digital forensic artifacts.](#) *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 153, 106815.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106815

The darknet hosts an increasing number of hidden services dedicated to the distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM). Given that by contributing CSAM to the forum members subject themselves to criminal prosecution, questions regarding the motivation for members contributing to darknet CSAM forums arise. The objective was building on insights gained from research into clearnet communities, here we examine the extent to which social incentives generated by the online CSAM community may explain members' posting behavior on darknet CSAM forums. We analyze digital forensic artifacts on the online behavior of members of a darknet CSAM forum that was shut down by law enforcement agencies in July 2015. We apply group-based trajectory modelling (GBTM), social network analysis, and mixed-effect survival models. Applying GBTM three posting trajectories can be distinguished. Social network analyses finds the reply network to be more centralized than predicted by chance. Mixed-effect survival models show positive associations between the length of members' first post and the time since members' first registration on the forum and subsequent posting. Contrarily, the number of replies received appears to mitigate subsequent posting. Findings show posting activity on the forum to be concentrated in a minority of forum members who show posting trajectories that are both frequent and persistent. Results further suggest persistence in posting is motivated by social identity and, to a lesser extent, differential association processes.

Brown, J., & O'Neill, R. (2024). The “virtual” child: The unconscious functions of child sexual exploitation material. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, e1892. DOI:10.1002/aps.1892

The narratives of individuals using child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) highlight the individual and unconscious functions of this type of sexual offense. Fluid cycles of projection into and identification with the children in the imagery were evident, as were marked differences in the intensity and exclusivity of pedophilic sexual preference. Anger was a common trigger, but conscious awareness of any associated hostilities toward the child in the imagery was vigorously defended against. The Internet, the now dominant context of child sexual abuse, offers a distinct type of environment, on the porous boundary between the internal and the external, that seems to encourage regression to early, varied paraphilic sexuality and part-object relations. Interactions in online forums facilitated the projection of pedophilic interests and sadistic impulses into other users. Broad empirical findings on the characteristics of those who use CSEM, coupled with this study and clinical experience, suggest that many who engage in this activity have an essentially neurotic structure.

Christensen, L. S., & Woods, J. (2024). [The underexplored topic of females who perpetrate child sexual abuse material offenses: What do we know about this offending group?](#). *Sexuality & Culture*, 1-14. DOI:10.1007/s12119-023-10188-7

Despite the emerging field of research on females who engage in contact child sexual abuse offenses, we know little about females who engage in child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offenses. This is concerning given the global proliferation of CSAM and recent research identifying female-perpetrated CSAM offending is more prominent than previously thought. This paper contributes to the underdeveloped field, by offering a beneficial and timely stop gap of current research on women who engage in CSAM offenses. In doing so, the synthesis explores the prevalence of females who engage in CSAM, why some females might perpetrate CSAM offenses (including co-offending, prior victimization, mental health, opportunity, and sexual motivation), the harms of female-perpetrated CSAM offending, and how the media

portrays this offending group. To further extend our knowledge in this field, ideas for future research are also provided throughout. This paper should be useful for various disciplines including psychology, criminology, and law, globally, who are interested in better understanding CSAM offenses perpetrated by females.

Henry, N., & Beard, G. (2024). [Image-based sexual abuse perpetration: A scoping review](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25(5), 3981–3998. DOI:10.1177/15248380241266137

Image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) refers to the nonconsensual creating, taking, or sharing of intimate images, including threatening to share images. It can also include coercing someone into sharing intimate images, or sending unwanted intimate images. In recent years, there has been growing attention to the nature, scope, and impacts of IBSA, but comparatively little attention has been paid to the perpetration of these harms. This scoping review consolidates and synthesizes the existing knowledge on the perpetration of IBSA against adults. The review involved a systematic search of scholarly and gray literature across select databases. In total, 26 studies met the inclusion criteria. Studies were included if they were published in English between 2013 and 2023 and reported on findings of a sample of adults over the age of 16 who admitted IBSA perpetration behaviors. The review found that prevalence of subtypes of IBSA varied significantly across the studies. There was consensus that adults who engage in IBSA perpetration are more likely to be men, younger adults, and LGBTIQ+. Motivations were multifaceted, but tended to relate to social rewards, power dynamics, sexual gratification, and retaliatory impulses. Dark Tetrad traits were found to be positively associated with IBSA perpetration. The research also indicates on overlap between victimization and perpetration, as well as an association with other offending behaviors, such as intimate partner violence. Prevention interventions should be focused on changing the opportunities, affordances, and infrastructures for offending, as well as addressing problematic societal attitudes and norms,

with early interventions focused on building resilience and self-esteem, and promoting healthy behaviors and respectful relationships.

Hörnle, T., Tetal, C., & Wössner, G. (2024). Reoffending after convictions related to child sexual exploitation material: Data from the German Federal Central Criminal Register. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 153, 106806. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106806

As digitalization has made it easier to produce, copy, and distribute child sexual exploitation material (CSEM), the possession and distribution of child sexual abuse images has become more widespread. Thus, the need to assess the risk of subsequent sex offenses – above all, sexual abuse of children by individuals who have been convicted of CSEM offenses – becomes more and more important. The main objective of this paper is to contribute to the understanding of the respective size of two groups of offenders: first, offenders who commit CSEM offenses without ever crossing the line to sexual abuse of children, and second, so-called crossover offenders, that is, individuals who commit CSEM offenses and engage in child sexual abuse. Identification of differences between these two groups facilitates analyzing the risk that someone convicted of a CSEM offense might in the future sexually assault children. We used data from the German Federal Central Criminal Register (Bundeszentralregister), a data set that includes information about all persons convicted of any criminal offense, including “child pornography” offenses, by a court in Germany. For persons convicted of CSEM offenses only, with no additional concurring sex offenses, the rate of subsequent convictions for child sexual abuse is very low (1.1 % after a six-year follow-up period, adult offenders). This risk is even lower if offenders are older than 30 years of age, and it is slightly higher for offenders with previous offense-specific convictions (i.e., previous sex offenses). The mere existence of a conviction for a CSEM offense is not an indication that the convicted person poses a significant risk of committing child sexual abuse. To pinpoint such a risk more accurately, the following factors should be examined: the existence of offense-specific prior records, the presence of crossover-offending in the form of concurring offenses, and the age of the offender.

Insoll, T, Díaz Bethencourt, E, Ovaska, A, Lahtinen, H-M & Vaaranen-Valkonen, N. (2024). [Knowledge to prevent online sexual violence against children: Insights from a survey of child sexual abuse material offenders. 2KNOW Project.](https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/post/2know-preliminary-findings-report)
<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/post/2know-preliminary-findings-report>

Through a comprehensive survey, the study aims to shed light on the pathways that lead to such criminal behaviour, with the ultimate goal of developing more effective prevention strategies. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions that address the root causes of online sexual violence against children. By gaining a better understanding of the offenders' perspectives, the project seeks to inform policymakers, the tech industry, and civil society about the most effective ways to prevent and tackle online sexual violence against children. The research emphasises the urgent need for prevention measures, including the development of perpetration prevention programs, interventions by tech platforms, and robust legislation to protect the safety and wellbeing of children globally.

Insoll, T, Díaz Bethencourt, E, Ovaska, A & Vaaranen-Valkonen, N. 2024. [Multilingual perspectives on child sexual abuse material offenders: Insights from English, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish-Speaking offenders. 2KNOW Project.](https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/post/2know-languagefocused-report)
<https://www.suojellaanlapsia.fi/en/post/2know-languagefocused-report>

The language-focused report examines and compares key findings from the Preliminary Findings Report across four languages: English, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish. This report presents data from the 'Help us to know' survey of individuals who have searched for CSAM on a dark web search engine, collected in English, Russian, Portuguese and Spanish, and offers unprecedented insights into the backgrounds and motivations of English-speaking, Russian-speaking, Portuguese-speaking and Spanish-speaking CSAM offenders. Understanding the patterns and motivations of CSAM consumption across different languages is key to developing more effective prevention and intervention strategies. By providing a multilingual analysis, we aim to provide a better understanding of the offenders' perspectives, that can

inform policymakers, the tech industry, and civil society about the most effective ways to prevent and tackle online sexual violence against children.

Langvik, E., Størdal, T. R., Steel, C. M., Christiansen, L. F., & Iversen, A. (2024). Public perception of individuals who commit Child Sexual Abuse Material offences: Exploring the impact of demographic variables and cross-national differences. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 106922. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106922

Lay perceptions of persons who download and distribute Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) is an underexplored subject. There is a need for understanding the factors that influence perceptions as the public perceptions have implications for endorsement of sex offender rehabilitation that in turn can influence the availability of treatment programs and stigma for help-seeking. The objective was to explore public perceptions of individuals that commit child sexual abuse offences, to compare the results to those obtained in a large US sample, and to explore associations between demographic variables, general perceptions and endorsement of imprisonment and treatment for individuals that commit CSAM offences. An online survey were distributed in Norway in February 2023. 618 individuals responded, 76 % were female, mean age 34.99 (SD = 14.23), the majority (>70 %) had higher education, and 44 % had children. Consistent with prior research, the public perceptions overestimated the risk of future contact offences and recidivism. Women overestimated the percentage of risk of contact offences and pedophilic interest more than men. The overestimation was significantly less in this sample compared to the US sample ($d = 0.39-0.96$). Those working with online child abuse had perceptions of persons committing CSAM offences that were more aligned with empirical findings. Demographic variables were only marginally associated with endorsement for treatment and imprisonment, except for having children, which was associated with endorsement of imprisonment. Perceived risk of contact offences, pedophilic preference, and assumed childhood sexual victimization were associated with perceptions of individuals committing CSAM offences as different than those committing physical sexual abuse and both

endorsement of treatment and imprisonment. The perceptions of those who commit CSAM offences showed a stronger association with endorsement for treatment and imprisonment than demographic variables.

Napier, S. S., Seto, M. C., Cashmore, J., & Shackel, R. (2024). Characteristics that predict exposure to and subsequent intentional viewing of child sexual abuse material among a community sample of Internet users. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 156, 106977. DOI: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106977

An important element of reducing the sexual abuse and exploitation of children is to understand the behaviors of individuals who consume child sexual abuse material (CSAM), including the predictors of continued use. The objective was to investigate predictors of 'ever viewing' CSAM and subsequent intentional use among individuals in the community. This study used multivariate logistic regression analysis to identify significant predictors of ever viewing CSAM (n = 742) in an anonymous survey of 5512 Internet users in the community, and of subsequent intentional CSAM use among a subset of 459 CSAM viewers. The characteristics of respondents that were significantly associated with ever viewing CSAM were being male, older in age (25–34 and 55+ years cf. 18–24 years), residing in Australia, New Zealand, or Canada (cf. the United Kingdom), earlier exposure to adult pornography (<14 years), experiencing childhood physical abuse or neglect, viewing bestiality pornography featuring adults, viewing bondage/S&M (BDSM) pornography featuring adults, being likely (self-reported) to have sexual contact with a child, and visiting pedophilic chat forums online. In the subset sample, almost half (218, 47.5 %) viewed CSAM again intentionally after first exposure. Predictors of subsequent intentional viewing of CSAM after adjusting for age and country of residence were being male, ever experiencing loneliness, searching for CSAM intentionally at first exposure, being likely (self-reported) to have sexual contact with a child, and visiting pedophilic chat forums online. The findings have strong implications for prevention of first exposure to CSAM, and of continued CSAM use after exposure does occur.

Soldino, V., & Seigfried-Spellar, K. C. (2024). [Criminological differences between contact-driven and online-focused suspects in online child sexual grooming police reports](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 149. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106696

Differences exist between contact and noncontact-driven online child sexual abuse offenders; however, there is still a notable lack of empirical studies with police samples from non-English speaking countries, including Spain. We address this gap by analyzing the criminological characteristics of online child sexual grooming (OCSG) suspected offenders from de-identified law enforcement investigations in Spain. We anonymously coded data provided by Spanish law enforcement agencies from 257 OCSG cases (i.e., unique chat logs between a suspect and minor) extracted from 98 police reports with index investigation years from 2008 to 2021. A total of 101,391 messages were analyzed. Three distinct datasets were created: 257 OCSG cases, 120 unique suspects (79 online-focused, 41 contact-driven), and 234 unique victims. Each dataset focused on different criminological variables for analysis, such as grooming strategy, motivation, and victim high-risk behaviors. There were no significant differences between suspects on gender, age, or criminal offense history. Contact-driven suspects were more likely to use positive rapport ($\phi = 0.18$), send unprompted sexually explicit images of themselves ($\phi = 0.19$), and offer something in exchange ($\phi = 0.25$). Victims of contact-driven individuals were more likely to be male ($\phi = 0.52$) and offer something in exchange for sex or sexually explicit images ($\phi = 0.18$). Victims of online-focused individuals were more likely to be younger ($r = 0.26$). These findings suggest criminological differences in the online grooming strategies between contact-driven and online-focused suspected offenders in Spain.

Bruggen, M. (2023). [Child sexual abuse material networks on the darkweb: A multi-method approach](#) (Doctoral dissertation, Leiden University).

Garrington, C., Kelty, S., Rickwood, D., & Boer, D. P. (2023). [A conceptual framework for internet child abuse material offenders: Risk-relevant therapy based on assessed risk factors](#). *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 1–17. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2023.2251149

Offenders who commit sexual offences against children are progressively recognised, prosecuted, assessed and treated. As technology advances, internet child sexual abuse material (I/CAM) offences increase in pertinence to forensic assessment and treatment. A new proposal in I/CAM therapeutics, the Estimated Risk of Internet Child Sexual Offending (ERICSO) is a framework for individualised, risk-relevant treatment formulation based on identified risk factors. An international scoping review of I/CAM treatment programmes was conducted prior to elucidating our proposed treatment model for I/CAM offenders. Combining risk-relevant and compassionate therapies, we propose a treatment framework based on the risk-needs-responsivity model and relevant factors, recognising diversity of I/CAM offenders. Incorporating proven constructs in offender assessment and treatment with specific application to the I/CAM offender cohort, the ERICSO assists professionals to formulate risk-relevant, individual therapy and set meaningful goals. The delivery of compassionate therapeutic interventions to I/CAM offenders will improve rehabilitative outcomes and community protection.

Newman, E. F., Efthymiadou, E., Quayle, E., Squire, T., Denis, D., Wortley, R., ... & Koukopoulos, N. (2023). [The impact of a public health campaign to deter viewing of child sexual abuse images online: A case study of the UK Stop It Now! Campaign](#). *Sexual Abuse*. DOI:10.1177/10790632231205784

Public campaigns offer an opportunity to prevent child sexual abuse by raising awareness and promoting help available to bystanders, victims, and those at risk of perpetrating the abuse. This paper explores the impact of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation's 'Stop It Now!' campaign in the UK (2015–2018) on help-seeking. Helpline calls (11,190 unique callers), website analytics (109,432 new website visitors) and three website-hosted surveys (N = 252) provided data on help-seeking, awareness, and self-reported behavior. Results indicated that there were more visitors to the help website during active campaigning periods, and helpline callers and website

visitors were more likely to seek help after viewing campaign materials during active than non-active campaign periods. Help-seekers were predominantly men concerned about their own behavior. Survey 2 respondents concerned about their own behavior (n = 53) indicated that their awareness of the law (75.5%), and legal and personal consequences (67.9%) had changed after hearing about the campaign, and 66% reported a change in behavior. Public health campaigns may be an effective way to promote help-seeking and prevent abuse.

Salter, M., & Wong, T. (2023). [Parental production of child sexual abuse material: A critical review](#). *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. DOI:10.1177/13634607231201723

The representation of women who engage in child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offenses in the media is important to understand because the misconstruction of offending may marginalize victims of these offenses and stymie the reporting by victims. The current study aimed to explore how women who perpetrate CSAM offenses are represented in the media. A search of all newspaper articles reporting CSAM offenses perpetrated by women published in English over a 6-month period (1 May 2020 to 31 October 2020) was conducted (N = 68 articles). A qualitative content analysis identified three themes: (1) newspaper headings do not suggest women, including mothers, engage in CSAM offending; (2) women who co-offend are actively involved in the CSAM offending; and (3) CSAM cases perpetrated by women are reported factually as opposed to emotively. Overall, the findings are positive, indicating advancements in the factual, as opposed to stereotypical, reporting of women who engage in CSAM offenses.

Scurich, N., & Krauss, D. A. (2023). Risk assessment of child-pornography-exclusive offenders. *Law and Human Behavior*, 47(4), 499–509. DOI:10.1037/lhb0000537

A sizeable percentage of federally sentenced child pornography offenders have no history of other criminal offenses (hereinafter “child-pornography-exclusive offenders”). There is a critical legal need to assess the recidivism risk of this population. The Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT) is a commonly used actuarial instrument developed specifically to

assess the risk of recidivism among child pornography offenders. Hypotheses: We hypothesized that there would be a sound scientific basis supporting the use of the CPORT in the United States as well as research demonstrating its applicability to child-pornography-exclusive offenders, given that the instrument is currently being used in forensic settings. Method: We critically examined all of the existing empirical studies that constitute the research base of the CPORT. Results: The empirical studies of the CPORT suffer from at least three significant limitations: extremely small samples of recidivists, inordinate amounts of missing data, and potentially outdated samples. Further, none of the studies have tested the CPORT in a sample of offenders in the United States. An illustrative example of how the instrument has been misapplied in forensic settings and courtroom testimony is provided. Conclusions: These issues make it inappropriate to use the CPORT on child-pornography-exclusive offenders in the United States at this time. We conclude by describing avenues for future research that can advance our understanding of this distinct and growing population of offenders. (PsycInfo Database Record © 2023 APA, all rights reserved).

Insoll, T., Ovaska, A. K., Nurmi, J., Aaltonen, M., & Vaaranen-Valkonen, N. (2022). [Risk factors for child sexual abuse material users contacting children online: Results of an anonymous multilingual survey on the dark web](#). *Journal of Online Trust and Safety*, 1(2). DOI:10.54501/jots.v1i2.29

This study explores a sample of 1,546 anonymous individuals who voluntarily responded to our "Help us to help you" survey when searching for child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on the dark web. Nearly half (42%) of the respondents reported that they had sought direct contact with children through online platforms after viewing CSAM, and 58% reported feeling afraid that viewing CSAM might lead to sexual acts with a child or adult. This study analyses whether certain risk factors are linked to a higher likelihood of contacting children after viewing CSAM. It finds that certain factors are associated with a self-reported likelihood of having contacted children online after viewing CSAM, including more frequent use of CSAM, older age of first

exposure to CSAM, viewing CSAM depicting toddlers and infants, having thoughts of self-expressing prior to viewing CSAM, and being in contact with other CSAM users.

Cale, J., Holt, T., Leclerc, B., Singh, S., & Drew, J. (2021). [Crime commission processes in child sexual abuse material production and distribution: A systematic review](#). *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, (617), 1–22.

This review synthesises empirical studies from the past decade investigating child sexual abuse material (CSAM) production and distribution to gain insight into crime commission processes involved in these crimes. The findings highlight overlaps in risk factors for child sexual abuse and CSAM production and distribution, and possible unique risk factors specific to the latter. A substantial amount of CSAM is produced in family contexts, and there are different motivations and strategies for producing CSAM. Taken together, the findings provide important foundational information about the variety of crime commission processes involved in CSAM production and distribution, helping the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies for this increasingly prolific type of crime.

Christensen, L. S., Moritz, D., & Pearson, A. (2021). Psychological perspectives of virtual child sexual abuse material. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(4), 1353–1365.
[DOI:10.1007/s12119-021-09820-1](#)

Virtual child sexual abuse material (VCSAM) has become a growing global concern amongst policy and practice professionals. This theoretical paper aimed to provide a discussion on the landscape for the types of virtual material and apply psychological perspectives to further our limited understanding of these offenders. When considering the landscape, the types of morphing were explored along with the issues that have resulted due to the advances in 3D software and hardware rendering, including difficulties distinguishing VCSAM from child sexual abuse material involving real children. Throughout the paper, logic is drawn from the strong theoretical basis of child sexual abuse material offenders, allowing for the application of

theoretical perspectives, such as schemas, cognitive distortions, the person-situation interaction, and rational choice theory. This paper offers some preliminary foundations and insights in an attempt to better understand VCSAM offenders, while providing avenues for further research. Overall, this paper offers a valuable and timely resource for psychology and law enforcement disciplines, along with policy makers, at an international level.

Elbert, M. J., Drury, A. J., & DeLisi, M. (2021). Child pornography possession/receipt offenders: Developing a forensic profile. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 1-14. DOI:[10.1080/13218719.2021.1904447](https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2021.1904447)

Child pornography possession/receipt offenders are a controversial offender group due to mixed and occasionally divergent evidence about their risk profile, offending history and psychopathology. Using a population of male offenders who ever perpetrated a sexual offense from a federal jurisdiction in the central United States, the current study developed an exploratory post hoc empirical profile of these offenders. The profile has some success in the validation component of our study and showed significant associations with self-reported sexual abuse of child victims ages 3–12 years, but non-significant associations to adolescent and adult victims. It significantly linked to the conceptually expected victim group and the significant statistical effect withstood controls for generally robust indicators of antisocial conduct including antisocial personality disorder, arrest onset, total adverse childhood experiences, age and race. We view the findings as exploratory and encourage additional empirical study of this important offender group.

Steel, C. M. S., Newman, E., O'Rourke, S., & Quayle, E. (2021). Collecting and viewing behaviors of child sexual exploitation material offenders. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 118. Advance online publication. DOI:[10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105133](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105133)

The collecting behaviors of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) offenders provide insight into their cognitions and motivations that have clinical applications. This study analyzed the CSEM collecting and viewing behaviors of previously convicted offenders. A postal letter

soliciting participation in an online survey was sent to adults previously convicted of CSEM offenses in the United States. Comparison information from a non-offending population of adults within the United States (N = 524) was collected and compared to the CSEM respondents (N = 78). A mixed-methods approach was utilized. The CSEM group was compared to a gender-matched sample from the non-offending group for general adult sexual exploitation material (SEM) viewing. Exploratory analyses of CSEM offender behaviors related to collecting, collection diversity, and recidivism were conducted. The majority (78%) of the offenders did not organize their content and 74% deleted their entire collection on at least one occasion. Offenders viewed more diverse categories of adult SEM than non-offenders, including more bestiality, hentai, teen, and nudist/naturist material. None of the offenders viewed CSEM exclusively, and 74% viewed more adult SEM than CSEM. The age range of CSEM content viewed did not support highly preferential viewing but did support general novelty seeking. The self-reported recidivism rate was 10%, with infrequent post-conviction CSEM activity. Treatment professionals should not assume that pedophilic interests are the sole or even primary motivator for CSEM behavior. Problematic Internet usage, general pornography consumption, coping issues, or novelty seeking may be more appropriate targets for some offenders.

Gottfried, E. D., Shier, E. K., & Mulay, A. L. (2020). [Child pornography and online sexual solicitation](#). *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 22(3), 1–8.
DOI:10.1007/s11920-020-1132-y

This review highlights recent literature regarding online sexual offending, including the prevalence, characteristics, a brief review of recent typology literature, victimization risk factors, risk factors of being a “crossover” offender, rates and risk factors for recidivism, and a discussion of prevention efforts. Online sexual offenders are overwhelmingly White men with relationship problems who were rarely previously arrested for felonies. They score lower on measures of antisocial behavior, compared to offenders who commit contact sexual offenses

against children. Individuals who commit pornography offenses are at lower risk to commit contact offenses and their risk factors include having sexual interest in children and antisocial attitudes. Online offenders are different from contact sexual offenders and from offenders who commit both types of offenses. Recidivism in online noncontact offenders is difficult to assess due to the lack of empirically supported tools and the inappropriateness of using popular actuarial tools that lack norms on these offenders, but a new measure (CPORT) is being studied for use with this population.

Knack, N., Holmes, D., & Fedoroff, J. P. (2020). Motivational pathways underlying the onset and maintenance of viewing child pornography on the Internet. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 38(2), 100–116. [DOI:10.1002/bsl.2450](https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2450)

The staggering rate at which incidents of child pornography (CP) are increasing highlights the need for proactive approaches to this problem. Improving the efficacy and accessibility of interventions designed for individuals who view CP provides one means of addressing this growing concern. This article explores the self-identified motivations underlying the onset and maintenance of viewing Internet-based CP among a sample of 20 men receiving treatment for this behavior. Our findings suggest two primary motivational pathways, namely a desire to achieve sexual gratification and/or an attempt to avoid emotional pain. We propose a behavioral facilitation process, initiated by extensive exposure to Internet pornography, to explain the use of CP in men without a sexual interest in children. We also discuss factors that appeared to facilitate the maintenance of this behavior. Our findings indicate that social skills deficits, maladaptive coping strategies, and a lack of sexual education require further investigation regarding their role in promoting or precluding desistance from viewing CP.

Wilson, T. J. (2020). [Collaborative justice and harm reduction in cyberspace: Policing indecent child images](#). *The Journal of Criminal Law*, 84(5), 474–496.
DOI:10.1177/0022018320952560

The exponential increase on the internet of indecent images of children (IIOC) has been followed by a transformation within criminal justice. The scale, nature and rapid technological evolution of such crimes—often of distant initial geographical origin—requires collaborative justice and harm reduction arrangements with internet companies and NGOs. The diminished reach (declining criminal justice interventions) and power (even in identifying crimes for intervention) of state authority with the current collaborative model, however, has resulted in inadequate social regulation and policing in response to IIOC crimes on the surface web. There is a considerable risk that the Online Harms White Paper proposals to establish overarching government authority to generally reduce harmful conduct will not fully resolve problems that go much wider than the technological, commercial and consumer protection on the surface web issues emphasised in that document. Only political choices about funding and fundamental rights compliant legislation can (a) prevent the hollowing out of criminal justice capacity and capabilities to deal with IIOC offenders and (b) ensure an essential compatibility and consistency in police operational ability—including the access sought to anonymised communication data via an encryption key—and legal principles when dealing with IIOC crimes across all levels of the internet, including ‘the dark web’. These issues are examined as a case study in civic epistemology about the influence of neoliberalism in technologically focused policy making.

Bickart, W., McLearn, A. M., Grady, M. D., & Stoler, K. (2019). [A descriptive study of psychosocial characteristics and offense patterns in females with online child pornography offenses](#). *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 26(2), 295–311.
DOI:10.1080/13218719.2018.1506714

Despite a growing body of literature on females who sexually offend, there is a dearth of research on online sexual offending in women. This study collected descriptive psychosocial

and offense conduct data on 98 females convicted of online sexual offenses housed in United States federal prisons. Psychosocial history results demonstrated that 60% of the subjects reported a history of sexual abuse (n = 59), while 46% reported physical abuse (n = 45). In addition, 47% reported a history of outpatient mental health treatment (n = 46), and 15% reported prior inpatient mental health treatment (n = 15). The majority (n = 70) of the women's offenses involved the victimization of accessible minors to produce child pornography for distribution on the Internet, most often in association with a male co-offender. Typically, the subject's child was the victim and the focus of the child pornography. Contact offending frequently (n = 39) occurred in the context of the production of child pornography. The implications of these findings, especially regarding the role that women play in the creation and distribution of child pornography, are discussed as well as important directions for future research.

Elliott, I. A., Mandeville-Norden, R., Rakestrow-Dickens, J., & Beech, A. R. (2019). Reoffending rates in a UK community sample of individuals with convictions for indecent images of children. *Law and Human Behavior*, 43(4), 369–382. DOI:10.1037/lhb0000328

Although they remain a relatively small proportion of all identified sex offenders, there is increasing concern about individuals with offenses relating to indecent images of children (IIOC) online. This study examined the reoffending rates of a sample of IIOC-only (n = 584, 84.6%) and mixed IIOC-contact (n = 106, 15.4%) offenders who participated in a U.K. community intervention and the predictive validity of risk and psychological assessment outcomes. Proven reoffending rates were 24.8% for any reconviction and 12.6% for sexual reconvictions after a 13-year average follow-up. Rates differed significantly, with the mixed group 2 times more likely to receive any reconviction and 3 times more likely to receive a sexual reconviction. Only 2.7% of the IIOC-only group was convicted of a subsequent contact offense. Prior general offenses were found to be significantly predictive of general reconviction and prior sexual convictions were significantly predictive of sexual convictions, albeit with weak predictive power. Reliable

change on treatment “domains” was not predictive of either general or sexual reconvictions. While lower reconviction rates do not minimize the seriousness of IIOC use, these findings highlight the need for comprehensive assessment of proven and self-reported offending history to make sound risk decisions and the need for larger samples with longer follow-ups and comparisons between detected and undetected IIOC users. The findings also raise questions about the nature and efficiencies related to treatment for a population in which rates of reconviction appear to be relatively low. (PsycINFO Database Record © 2019 APA, all rights reserved)

Rimer, J. R. (2019). “In the street they’re real, in a picture they’re not”: Constructions of children and childhood among users of online child sexual exploitation material. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 90, 160–173. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.12.008

From an anthropological perspective, examine CSEM users’ constructions of children and childhood online and offline, and explore how these factor into their crimes. The participants were CSEM users in UK group programs. In-depth ethnography, including 17 months of participant observation in group programs with 81 CSEM users, 31 semi-structured interviews with group participants, and inductive analysis of themes illuminated by childhood theory from anthropology. When referring to children offline, many participants claimed to align with Euro-American norms and constructions surrounding children’s learning, protection, irrationality, inexperience, asexuality, and innocence. However online, many constructed children differently: as less or not “real,” and as sexualized. This rendered children in CSEM fundamentally different, which facilitated offending, assisted in overcoming barriers, and allowed participants to hold conventional beliefs about children and childhood while engaging in incongruent online activity. Vital in this process was Internet use and associated distancing, detachment, anonymity, and cultural othering. The program used victim empathy to restore dominant norms to online children, for which participants invoked feelings, recognized their role in abuse, extrapolated consequences for victims, and reinforced norms. Constructions of children and childhood were central in offending. The complexities of negotiating “real” versus “not real” in

both offending and victim empathy are discussed, as are conceptual distinctions between “constructions” and “cognitive distortions,” and implications for treatment and prevention.

Johnson, S. A. (2018). Erotica and the sexual offender: The importance of restricting sex offenders from using or possessing erotica and pornography. *Forensic Research & Criminology International Journal*, 6(1).

The Courts are struggling with issues of civil liberty in regards to sexual offenders. The rights of sexual offenders to possess pornography or erotica is of utmost concern. When an individual's erotica has become intertwined in sex offense or other violent behavior, the erotica has now become part of the offender's violent fantasies and behavior. The offender should no longer have access to or possession of any erotica that involves the offender's offense behavior or target victim population. This has become an issue of constitutional rights and even some in the sex offender treatment profession fail to see the connection. For the Courts, this is an important issue to rethink when imposing probation, parole, or other restrictions on the sex offender. What follows is a discussion of the importance of restricting sex offenders from accessing or possessing any erotica or pornography that is related in any way to their sexual offense behavior or other violent crime

Ly, T., Dwyer, R. G., & Fedoroff, J. P. (2018). Characteristics and treatment of internet child pornography offenders. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 36(2), 216–234.
DOI: 10.1002/bsl.2340

In the realm of sexual offenses, there has been a decrease in hands-on offenses, but an increase in online offenses against children. The current issue is whether online and offline sexual offenders are alike or differ. This literature review investigates the differences among individuals who have committed child pornography offenses, individuals who have committed contact offenses against children, and individuals who have committed both. This review discusses the various typologies that have been proposed of those who have committed online offenses against children, the diagnostic implications of having committed child

pornography offenses, and the current state of treatment and prevention of individuals who have committed online sex offenses against children. The studies examined were found from psychology databases, listserv links, and references of those collected articles. Only articles in English were included in the review. Overall, Internet child pornography offenders (ICPOs) tend to score significantly differently from contact offenders on various psychological measures. These findings may imply that ICPOs have different treatment needs than contact offenders.

Malamuth, N. (2018). "[Adding fuel to the fire"? Does exposure to non-consenting adult or to child pornography increase risk of sexual aggression?](#) *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 41, 74–89. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2018.02.013

This article is the first to integrate the vast research literatures on non-consenting adult and on child pornography (also a form of non-consenting pornography) by using the framework of the Confluence Model of sexual aggression. In contrast to the contradictory conclusions reached by various reviewers and commentators who have typically emphasized a particular methodology or parts of the literature, this review finds a great deal of consistency and convergence among the differing methodologies and literatures that have examined the impact of pornography on individuals. It is concluded that pornography use may add to the risk of sexual aggression only for those men already predisposed to aggress sexually due to more primary causes than pornography use.

Merdian, H. L., Moghaddam, N., Boer, D. P., Wilson, N., Thakker, J., Curtis, C., & Dawson, D. (2018). Fantasy-driven versus contact-driven users of child sexual exploitation material: Offender classification and implications for their risk assessment. *Sexual Abuse*, 30(3), 230–253. DOI:10.1177/1079063216641109

Since the advent of the internet, convictions for the possession, display, trading and distribution of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) have risen steadily, but little is known about the appropriate assessment and treatment of this offender group, especially in regards to their risk of reoffending. It has been suggested that a conceptual distinction of fantasy- vs. contact-

driven CSEM users might be of merit. Sixty-eight offenders recruited from sex offender treatment providers were assessed via an anonymous computer survey including a variety of clinical and risk-related variables; the findings showed differences in the psychological profiles between CSEM users and contact child sex offenders. Numerical and spatial methods were employed to identify subgroups of CSEM users; these confirmed the two-fold distinction of fantasy vs. contact driven offending. The spatial representation of participants identified three dimensions as crucial in the classification of these subgroups: direct sexual contact with a minor, possession of fantasy-generating material, and social contact with other users with a sexual interest in minors, potentially differentiating distinct offender subgroups with different risks and needs. The current study informed the development of an empirical model of CSEM users that could aid in the assessment of risk of reoffending and cross-over to contact sex offending.

Steely, M., Ten Benschel, T., Bratton, T., & Lytle, R. (2018). All part of the process? A qualitative examination of change in online child pornography behaviors. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 31(3), 279-296. DOI:10.1080/1478601X.2018.1492389

Over the past two decades, there has been increased attention on offending behaviors and motivations of child pornography offenders (CPOs). Although existing research has provided a knowledgeable foundation in regard to this offending subpopulation, the literature has been relatively limited on examining changes in offender behaviors and motivations. This study used interviews with 25 online CPOs in a southern state to identify themes underlying offending behaviors and motives at onset, as well as, continuation of offending over time. We found that offenders reported various circumstances (ranging from intentional to unintentional) and motivations (including thrill-seeking and attraction) at onset; however, CPOs reported thrill-seeking and attraction to be the most common factors driving their continued offending. We applied these themes to the existing literature on child pornography offending and recommended directions for future research. Based on our findings, we offered considerations for the treatment of CPOs.

Henshaw, M., Ogloff, J. R., & Clough, J. A. (2017). Looking beyond the screen: A critical review of the literature on the online child pornography offender. *Sexual Abuse*, 29(5), 416–445. DOI:10.1177/1079063215603690

This article reviews the current literature pertaining to those who engage in child pornography offending. The basic characteristics of online child pornography offenders (CPOs) and related typologies are briefly presented prior to reviewing the comparative literature pertaining to CPOs and child contact sexual offenders. In general, CPOs have been found to be relatively high functioning and generally pro-social individuals with less extensive and diverse offending histories than contact offenders. CPOs also display high levels of sexual pre-occupation, deviant sexual interests, and deficits in interpersonal and affective domains that surpass those of contact offenders. Although further research is required to replicate and clarify preliminary findings, the available evidence indicates that existing sexual offender risk assessment tools and treatment programs are not suitable for use with CPOs, and thus require revision and empirical evaluation prior to widespread use among this population. The article concludes with implications for clinical practice and directions for future research.

Seto, M. C., & Eke, A. W. (2017). Correlates of admitted sexual interest in children among individuals convicted of child pornography offenses. *Law and Human Behavior*, 41(3), 305–313. DOI:10.1037/lhb0000240

Recent research on a risk assessment tool for child pornography offending suggests that admission of sexual interest in children is a risk factor for any sexual recidivism. Admission is easily vulnerable to lying, however, or to refusals to respond when asked about sexual interests. This may become a particular issue when individuals are concerned about the potential impact of admission of sexual interest on sentencing and other risk-related decisions. In this study, we identified the following behavioral correlates (coded yes/no) of admission of sexual interest in children in the risk tool development sample of 286 men convicted of child pornography offenses: (a) never married (54% of sample), (b) child pornography content

included child sexual abuse videos (64%), (c) child pornography content included sex stories involving children (31%), (d) evidence of interest in child pornography spanned 2 or more years (55%), (e) volunteered in a role with high access to children (7%), and (f) engaged in online sexual communication with a minor or officer posing as a minor (10%). When summed, the average score on this Correlates of Admission of Sexual Interest in Children (CASIC) measure was 2.21 ($SD = 1.22$, range 0–6) out of a possible 6, and the CASIC score was significantly associated with admission of sexual interest in children, area under the curve (AUC) = .71, 95% CI [.65, .77]. The CASIC had a stronger relationship with admission in a small cross-validation sample of 60 child pornography offenders, AUC = .81, 95% CI [.68, .95]. CASIC scores may substitute for admission of sexual interest in risk assessment involving those with child pornography offenses.

Kuhle, L. F., Schlinzig, E., Kaiser, G., Amelung, T., Konrad, A., Röhle, R., & Beier, K. M. (2016). The association of sexual preference and dynamic risk factors with undetected child pornography offending. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 23*(1), 3–18.
DOI:10.1080/13552600.2016.1201157

The risk for using child abuse images (CAI) is difficult to assess, especially as it mostly remains undetected by legal authorities. The present study investigates the association of aspects of sexual preference and dynamic risk factors with CAI only and mixed offending (CAI and child sexual abuse) over lifetime and within six months prior to assessment. A sample of 190 undetected, self-identified pedo- and/or hebephiles was investigated. Multinomial logistic regression analyses revealed that sexual preoccupation is of great importance, especially for recent CAI only and mixed offending, as well as lifetime mixed offending. Although inconclusive, a sexual preference for early-pubescent children seems to be of interest for recent and lifetime offending. A sexual preference for prepubescent children, additional paraphilias and sexualised coping have shown some, although no statistically meaningful association with lifetime offending. Gender preference, exclusivity of pedohebephilia and offence-supportive attitudes did not show any significant relation with offending behaviour.

Merdian, H. L., Moghaddam, N., Boer, D. P., Wilson, N., Thakker, J., Curtis, C., & Dawson, D. (2016). Fantasy-driven versus contact-driven users of child sexual exploitation material: offender classification and implications for their risk assessment. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 30(3), 230–253. DOI:10.1177/1079063216641109

Since the advent of the Internet, convictions for the possession, display, trading, and distribution of child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) have risen steadily, but little is known about their appropriate assessment and treatment, especially concerning their risk of reoffending. It has been suggested that a conceptual distinction of fantasy- versus contact-driven CSEM users might be of merit. Sixty-eight offenders recruited from sex offender treatment providers were assessed via an anonymous computer survey including a variety of clinical and risk-related variables; the findings showed differences in the psychological profiles between CSEM users and contact child sex offenders. Numerical and spatial methods of data analysis were used to identify subgroups of CSEM users; these confirmed the twofold distinction of fantasy- versus contact-driven offending. The spatial representation of participants identified three dimensions as crucial in the classification of these subgroups: direct sexual contact with a minor, possession of fantasy-generating material, and social contact with other users with a sexual interest in minors; potentially differentiating distinct offender subgroups with different risks and needs. The current study informed the development of an empirical model of CSEM users that could aid in the assessment of risk of reoffending and cross-over to contact sex offending.

Johnson, S. A. (2015). Child pornography users & child contact offenders: Applications for law enforcement, prosecution and forensic mental health. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health and Human Resilience*, 17(4), 666–669.

Child pornography offenders are a new breed of sexual offender. Although they may present with similar characteristics and problems/issues of contact sex offenders, their ability to access child and deviant pornography is relatively easy. The research literature has begun to address the child

pornography offender (CPO) and found many factors related to crossover from online to actual contact sexual offenses with children. Some offenders appear to limit their sexually offending behaviour to online only whereas others progress to contact sexual offenses- either way children are being victimized. My concerns are that law enforcement, prosecution and forensic mental health professionals need to take this data concerning the child pornography offender and use it to guide their interviews, interrogation and assessments. In addition, it is difficult and impossible to accurately identify which of the child pornography offenders will become contact offenders and which will limit their sexual offense behaviour to online only.

Seto, M. C., & Eke, A. W. (2015). Predicting recidivism among adult male child pornography offenders: Development of the child pornography offender risk tool (CPORT). *Law and Human Behavior*, 39(4), 416-429. DOI:10.1037/lhb0000128

In this study, we developed a structured risk checklist, the Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT), to predict any sexual recidivism among adult male offenders with a conviction for child pornography offenses. We identified predictors of sexual recidivism using a 5-year fixed follow-up analysis from a police case file sample of 266 adult male child pornography offenders in the community after their index offense. In our 5-year follow-up, 29% committed a new offense, and 11% committed a new sexual offense, with 3% committing a new contact sexual offense against a child and 9% committing a new child pornography offense. The CPORT items comprised younger offender age, any prior criminal history, any contact sexual offending, any failure on conditional release, indication of sexual interest in child pornography material or prepubescent or pubescent children, more boy than girl content in child pornography, and more boy than girl content in other child depictions. The CPORT was significantly associated with any sexual recidivism, with moderate predictive accuracy, and thus has promise in the risk assessment of adult male child pornography offenders with further cross-validation. (PsycINFO Database Record © 2015 APA, all rights reserved)

Babchishin, K. M., Hanson, R. K., & VanZuylen, H. (2015). Online child pornography offenders are different: A meta-analysis of the characteristics of online and offline sex offenders against children. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44(1), 45–66.
DOI 10.1007/s10508-014-0270-x

The current meta-analysis compared the characteristics of online child pornography-only offenders, typical (offline) sex offenders against children, and offenders with both child pornography and contact sex offences against children (mixed). Based on 30 unique samples (comparison *ns* ranging from 98 to 2,702), the meta-analysis found key differences between groups. Offenders who committed contact sex offences were more likely to have access to children than those with only child pornography offences. In contrast, offenders who used the internet to commit sexual offences had greater access to the internet than those with contact sex offenders. Differences between the groups, however, were not limited to differential opportunities. Sex offenders against children and mixed offenders were found to score higher on indicators of antisociality than online child pornography offenders (CPOs). CPOs were also more likely to have psychological barriers to sexual offending than sex offenders against children and mixed offenders (e.g., greater victim empathy). Mixed offenders were found to be the most pedophilic, even more than CPOs. The findings suggest that offenders who restricted their offending behavior to online child pornography offences were different from mixed offenders and offline sex offenders against children, and that mixed offenders were a particularly high risk group.

Steel, C. M. (2015). Web-based child pornography: The global impact of deterrence efforts and its consumption on mobile platforms. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 44, 150–158.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.12.009

Our study is the first to look at mobile device use for child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) consumption, and at the global impact of deterrence efforts by search providers. We used data from Google, Bing, and Yandex to assess how web searches for CSEM are being conducted, both at present and historically. Our findings show that the blocking efforts by Google and

Microsoft have resulted in a 67% drop in the past year in web-based searches for CSEM. Additionally, our findings show that mobile devices are a substantial platform for web-based consumption of CSEM, with tablets and smartphones representing 32% of all queries associated with CSEM conducted on Bing. Further, our findings show that a major search engine not located in the United States, Yandex, did not undertake blocking efforts similar to those implemented by Google and Microsoft and has seen no commensurate drop in CSEM searches and continues to profit from ad revenue on these queries. While the efforts by Google and Microsoft have had a deterrence effect in the United States, searchers from Russia and other locations where child pornography possession is not criminalized have continued to use these services. Additionally, the same lax enforcement environment has allowed searchers from the United States to utilize Yandex with little fear of detection or referral to United States law enforcement from the Russian authorities. © 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Clevenger, S. L., Navarro, J. N., & Jasinski, J. L. (2014). A matter of low self-control? Exploring differences between child pornography possessors and child pornography producers/distributors using self-control theory. *Sexual abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 28(6), 555–571. DOI:10.1177/1079063214557173

This study examined the demographic and background characteristic differences between those arrested for child pornography (CP) possession (only), or CP production/distribution, or an attempted or completed sexual exploitation of a minor (SEM) that involved the Internet in some capacity within the context of self-control theory using data from the second wave of the National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (N-JOV2). Results indicate few demographic similarities, which thereby suggest these are largely heterogeneous groupings of individuals. Results also indicate CP producers/distributors engaged in a greater number of behaviors indicative of low self-control compared with CP possessors. Specifically, offenders arrested for CP production/distribution were more likely to have (a) had problems with drugs/alcohol at the time of the crime and (b) been previously violent. In contrast, the only indicator of low self-control that reached statistical significance for CP possessors was the previous use of violence.

Moreover, in contrast to CP producers/distributors, full-time employment and marital status may be important factors to consider in the likelihood of arrest for CP possessors, which is congruent with the tenets of self-control theory.

Faust, E., Bickart, W., Renaud, C., & Camp, S. (2014). Child pornography possessors and child contact sex offenders: A multilevel comparison of demographic characteristics and rates of recidivism. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*.
DOI:10.1177/1079063214521469

Considerable debate surrounds the topic of whether possessing or distributing online images of child pornography (CP) represents a new type of crime perpetrated by conventional sex offenders (e.g., child contact [CC] sex offenders), or whether individuals who commit these crimes differ from contact sex offenders in meaningful ways. The current study compares groups of Internet (CP) and CC sexual offenders, with each group's sexual offending history exclusively confined to its offense category. *T* tests were used to conduct bivariate comparisons of group demographics and criminal histories. Rates of recidivism were examined using survival curves and Cox proportional hazard regression models. Results showed significant differences on demographic and criminal history variables, with CP offenders demonstrating a lower frequency of prior criminal offending and substance abuse, and higher rates of pre-incarceration employment and level of education. Rates of recidivism were significantly different between the two groups, with CP offenders showing lower rates of re-offense for most measures of recidivism. When controlling for background characteristics and the timing of the event, CC offenders were at much greater risk for having an arrest for a new crime or a non-sexual violent crime than CP offenders. Treatment and policy implications are discussed, along with suggestions for future research.

Houtepen, J. A., Sijtsema, J. J., & Bogaerts, S. (2014). From child pornography offending to child sexual abuse: A review of child pornography offender characteristics and risks for cross-over. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 19*, 1359-1789.
DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2014.07.011

In this review, concrete directions are provided for individual risk assessment, treatment planning, and future research on child pornography offending. First, based on reviewing offender characteristics, including demographics, socio-affective difficulties, cognitive distortions and psychosexual issues, it is concluded that despite individual differences, many child pornography offenders have psychological difficulties in multiple areas of functioning. Based on earlier child pornography offender typologies, it is proposed that risk factors of individual offenders can be viewed along the lines of two continua: (1) features related to criminal behavior, and (2) sexual deviance/fantasy. These continua not only give insight into psychological differences between offender types, but also allow for variation in the severity of psychological difficulties within offender types and therefore may enhance individual risk assessment and treatment planning. Moreover, risk factors for cross-over are discussed, including individual characteristics, factors related to engagement with the internet, and the offline environment. Future research should focus on the integration of risk domains within particular offending types. Specifically, research is needed on non-offending pedophiles in order to gain more insight into the relationship between pedophilia and child pornography offending in general.

Merdian, H. L., Curtis, C., Thakker, J., Wilson, N., & Boer, D. P. (2014). The endorsement of cognitive distortions: Comparing child pornography offenders and contact sex offenders. *Psychology, Crime & Law, 20*(10), 971-993.
DOI: 10.1080/1068316X.2014.902454

This study examined the endorsement of cognitive distortions in child pornography offenders (CPOs), using an established assessment tool, the Abel and Becker Cognition Scale. The scale was expanded to include cognitions specific to child pornography offending, extracted from

Howitt and Sheldon's Children and Sexual Activities Inventory (C&SA). Three samples of CPOs, child sex offenders and offenders with both offence types responded to the cognition items. An exploratory Principal Component Analysis suggested six main components of the scale. CPOs were significantly less likely to endorse these statements in general, and this was more pronounced on items that project blame onto the child or other people, describe a need for power and consider children as sexually active. The statements extracted from C&SA did not differentiate between the groups. These findings are discussed under consideration of the relationship between cognitive distortions and contact sex offending, and in reference to the general criticism concerning the definition and appropriate measurement of cognitive distortions.

Smid, W., Schepers, K., Kamphuis, J. H., van Linden, S., & Bartling, S. (2014). Prioritizing child pornography notifications: Predicting direct victimization. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 27(4), 398-413. DOI:10.1177/1079063213514453

The growing number of notifications for child pornography (CP) possession constitutes a capacity problem for police forces entrusted with the investigation of these offenses. Notifications of CP offenses in which the investigation reveals concurrent direct victimization, in the form of contact offenses, grooming, online offending, or the production of CP material, form a potential target group for prioritization. The first of the twofold aims of this study was to validate the occurring distinction between mixed suspects (i.e., CP possession suspects who were also ever associated with direct victimization) and CP-only suspects (i.e., CP possession suspects who were never associated with direct victimization) to predict an outcome of the investigation including direct victimization. The second aim was to explore variables related to direct victimization among CP-only suspects. A total of 150 files of police investigations into notifications for CP offenses were studied. Findings confirmed significantly greater prevalence of direct victimization as an outcome of the investigation among mixed suspects than CP-only suspects (90% vs. 10%). Among CP-only suspects, direct victimization was predicted by (a) prior

police contacts, charges, or convictions concerning noncontact sexual offending, (b) the confiscation of more than two computers during the house search, and (c) a more serious nature of the CP material that formed the basis for the notification in terms of younger victims and more extreme content. These variables may point to a small subgroup of heavily invested CP offenders who are at a higher risk to cross the line to direct victimization. Cross-validation of these preliminary findings is indicated.

Wolak, J., Liberatore, M., & Levine, B. N. (2014). Measuring a year of child pornography trafficking by US computers on a peer-to-peer network. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 38(2), 347-356. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.10.018

We used data gathered via investigative “RoundUp” software to measure a year of online child pornography (CP) trafficking activity by U.S. computers on the Gnutella peer-to-peer network. The data include millions of observations of Internet Protocol addresses sharing known CP files, identified as such in previous law enforcement investigations. We found that 244,920 U.S. computers shared 120,418 unique known CP files on Gnutella during the study year. More than 80% of these computers shared fewer than 10 such files during the study year or shared files for fewer than 10 days. However, less than 1% of computers (n = 915) made high annual contributions to the number of known CP files available on the network (100 or more files). If law enforcement arrested the operators of these high-contribution computers and took their files offline, the number of distinct known CP files available in the P2P network could be reduced by as much as 30%. Our findings indicate widespread low level CP trafficking by U.S. computers in one peer-to-peer network, while a small percentage of computers made high contributions to the problem. However, our measures were not comprehensive and should be considered lower bounds estimates. Nonetheless, our findings show that data can be systematically gathered and analyzed to develop an empirical grasp of the scope and characteristics of CP trafficking on peer-to-peer networks. Such measurements can be used to combat the problem. Further,

investigative software tools can be used strategically to help law enforcement prioritize investigations.

Aebi, M., Plattner, B., Ernest, M., Kaszynski, K., & Bessler, C. (2013). [Criminal history and future offending of juveniles convicted of the possession of child pornography](#). *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 26(4), 375–390.
DOI:10.1177/1079063213492344

Most child pornography is distributed online. It is estimated that 3% to 15% of child pornography consumers are juveniles. The present study analyzed a consecutive sample of 54 male juveniles convicted of the possession of child pornography. Demographic characteristics, criminal history, and subsequent offending were assessed from criminal files and official reports. Juvenile possessors of child pornography were compared to three different groups of juveniles: Juvenile possessors of other illegal pornography (n = 42), juveniles who committed a sexual contact offense against a child (n = 64), and juveniles who committed a sexual contact offense against a peer or adult (n = 104). Juvenile possessors of child pornography were found to have downloaded the illegal material more frequently and over a longer time period than juvenile possessors of other illegal pornography. Furthermore, juvenile possessors of child pornography differed from juveniles who had committed a sexual contact offense in terms of demographics and showed fewer previous and subsequent offending than juveniles who sexually offended against a peer or adult. We conclude that juvenile possessors of child pornography need a specific target intervention focusing on dysfunctional Internet use and sexually deviant arousal.

Hurley, R., Prusty, S., Soroush, H., Walls, R. J., Albrecht, J., Cecchet, E., ... & Wolak, J. (2013, May). Measurement and analysis of child pornography trafficking on p2p networks. In *Proceedings of the 22nd international conference on World Wide Web* (pp. 631-642). International World Wide Web Conferences Steering Committee.

Peer-to-peer networks are the most popular mechanism for the criminal acquisition and distribution of child pornography (CP). In this paper, we examine observations of peers sharing known CP on the eMule and Gnutella networks, which were collected by law enforcement using forensic tools that we developed. We characterize a year's worth of network activity and evaluate different strategies for prioritizing investigators' limited resources. The highest impact research in criminal forensics works within, and is evaluated under, the constraints and goals of investigations. We follow that principle, rather than presenting a set of isolated, exploratory characterizations of users. First, we focus on strategies for reducing the number of CP files available on the network by removing a minimal number of peers. We present a metric for peer removal that is more effective than simply selecting peers with the largest libraries or the most days online. Second, we characterize six aggressive peer subgroups, including: peers using Tor, peers that bridge multiple p2p networks, and the top 10% of peers contributing to file availability. We find that these subgroups are more active in their trafficking, having more known CP and more uptime, than the average peer. Finally, while in theory Tor presents a challenge to investigators, we observe that in practice offenders use Tor inconsistently. Over 90% of regular Tor users send traffic from a non-Tor IP at least once after first using Tor.

Long, M. L., Alison, L. A., & McManus, M. A. (2013). Child pornography and likelihood of contact abuse: A comparison between contact child sexual offenders and noncontact offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 25(4), 370-395.
DOI:10.1177/1079063212464398

This study examined a sample of 120 adult males convicted of offences involving indecent images of children (IIOC); 60 had a previous contact child sexual offence (dual offenders) and 60 had no evidence of an offence against a child. Analyses explored socio-demographic characteristics, previous convictions, and access to children. Of the 120 offenders, a subsample

of 60 offenders (30 dual offenders and 30 non-contact) were further examined in terms of the quantity of IIOC, types of IIOC, and offending behavior. The study found the two offender groups could be discriminated by previous convictions, access to children, the number, proportion, and type of IIOC viewed. The IIOC preferences displayed within their possession differentiated dual offenders from non-contact IIOC offenders. Within group comparisons of the dual offenders differentiated sadistic rapists from sexual penetrative and sexual touching offenders. The paper suggests there may be a homology between IIOC possession, victim selection, and offending behavior. Implications for law enforcement are discussed in terms of likelihood of contact offending and assisting in investigative prioritization.

Martin, J., & Alaggia, R. (2013). Sexual abuse images in cyberspace: Expanding the ecology of the child. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 22(4), 398–415.
DOI:10.1080/10538712.2013.781091

Cyberspace has added a new dimension to the ecology of children made the subjects of sexual abuse images distributed online. These images cannot be permanently removed and can continue to circulate in cyberspace forever. A review of the current literature suggests that helping professionals are not consistently aware of or do not probe possibilities of online sexual victimization in the investigation, assessment, and treatment of child sexual abuse. Nor is this issue adequately addressed in their education and training. There are gaps in the literature regarding how to identify and provide treatment for these children. New assessment and treatment targets are needed to enhance existing practice approaches. A contemporary ecological model that incorporates an explicit consideration of the cybersystem is provided as a starting point for practitioners to be aware of the possibility that images of child sexual abuse were recorded and distributed online.

Merdian, H. (2013). The three dimensions of online child pornography offending. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 19*(1), 121–132. DOI:10.1080/13552600.2011.611898

The internet has opened up opportunities for non-contact sex offending, such as the viewing of child pornography. This paper proposes a model for the classification of child pornography offenders as an aid for their assessment and treatment, deducted from empirical studies and existing typologies for child pornography offenders. Different subgroups of child pornography offenders may be described according to three dimensions: (1) type of offending, (2) the motivation behind child pornography offending and (3) the situational and social engagement in the offending behaviour. Distinct pathways of child pornography offending can be identified, related to differing criminogenic needs, severity of offending, and appropriate assessment and treatment strategies for the offenders.

Westenberg, M. (2013). Establishing the nexus: The definitive relationship between child molestation and possession of child pornography as the sole basis for probable cause. *University of Cincinnati Law Review, 81*(1), Article 9, 337–360.

Lee, A. F., Li, N. C., Lamade, R., Schuler, A., & Prentky, R. A. (2012). Predicting hands-on child sexual offenses among possessors of internet child pornography. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 18*(4), 644–672. DOI:10.1037/a0027517

The recent Supreme Court ruling in *U.S. v. Comstock* (2010) upheld the constitutionality of The Adam Walsh Act, which provides for civil commitment of child pornography (CP) offenders certified as *sexually dangerous*, thereby approving litigation of all such prisoners in the federal system. The two studies reported here sought to address the question: *What is the likelihood that an individual convicted of child pornography offenses has a prior history of a hands-on sexual offense involving a child or has a high probability of committing such an offense?* Our sample consisted of 349 participants: 113 who committed an Internet sexual offense only and no other known or self-reported hands-on sexual offense, 176 child molesters who reported no Internet sexual offense, and 60 child molesters that reported committing an Internet sexual

offense. Study 1 yielded two scales, one reflecting Antisocial Behavior (AB) and one reflecting Internet Preoccupation (IP). Those two scales predicted membership in the combined sample of child molesters with a high degree of accuracy ($c = 0.75$). Study two revealed that all three groups were discrete with respect to AB and IP. By increasing the IP scale by 1 point, the odds of being an IO rather than a CM increased by 86%. The plotted conditional probabilities increased linearly as values on the AB scale increase, from 0.27 when AB = 0 to 0.84 when AB = 13. Our results are discussed in terms of risk discrimination among possessors of child pornography, relevance of risk to the statutory third prong element of serious difficulty, and the policy implications of the findings reported here.

Merdian, H. L. (2012). Offenders who use child sexual exploitation material: Development of an integrated model for their classification, assessment, and treatment [Doctoral thesis]. University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.

A comprehensive review was undertaken, establishing the knowledge basis regarding CSEM offending and the offenders who engage in it. The identified differences between CSEM offenders (CSEMOs) and contact sex offenders (CSOs) and the nature of their offending led to the development of a theoretical model of CSEM offending, suggesting a classification of CSEM users on three dimensions: CSEM offending with or without direct sexual contact to a minor (fantasy-driven versus contact-driven offending), the individual's motivation to offend, and the level of networking with other offenders. The question of risk of reoffending in CSEMOs, especially concerning cross-over to contact sex offending with a minor, was examined in terms of actual reoffending data and in the context of behavioural consequences resulting from general pornography consumption. The findings further confirmed the value of the two-fold distinction of CSEMOs, with contact-driven offenders presenting higher risk of direct sex offending based on a greater inclination for sexual violence. A review of existing risk assessment tools and established risk factors for sexual reoffending pointed to the value of structured professional guidelines when assessing CSEM offenders.

Neutze, J., Grundmann, D., Scherner, G., & Beier, K. M. (2012). Undetected and detected child sexual abuse and child pornography offenders. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 35(3), 168–175. DOI:10.1016/j.ijlp.2012.02.004

Current knowledge about risk factors for child sexual abuse and child pornography offenses is based on samples of convicted offenders, i.e., detected offenders. Only few studies focus on offenders not detected by the criminal justice system. In this study, a sample of 345 self-referred pedophiles and hebephiles was recruited from the community. All participants met DSM-IV-TR criteria for pedophilia or hebephilia (paraphilia not otherwise specified), were assured of confidentiality, and self-reported lifetime sexual offending against prepubescent and/or pubescent children. Two sets of group comparisons were conducted on self-report data of risk factors for sexual reoffending. Measures of risk factors address the following dimensions identified in samples of convicted offenders: sexual preferences (i.e. co-occurring paraphilias), sexual self-regulation problems, offense-supportive cognitions, diverse socio-affective deficits, and indicators of social functioning (e.g., education, employment). Men who admitted current or previous investigation or conviction by legal authorities (detected offenders) were compared with those who denied any detection for their sexual offenses against children (undetected offenders). Group comparisons (detected vs. undetected) were further conducted for each offense type separately (child pornography only offenders, child sexual abuse only offenders, mixed offenders). Although there were more similarities between undetected and detected offenders, selected measures of sexual-self regulation problems, socio-affective deficits, and social functioning data demonstrated group differences.

Eke, A. W., Seto, M. C., & Williams, J. (2011). Examining the criminal history and future offending of child pornography offenders: An extended prospective follow-up study. *Law and Human Behavior*, 35(6), 466–478. DOI:10.1007/s10979-010-9252-2

We examined police occurrence and criminal records data for a sample of 201 registered male child pornography offenders originally reported by Seto and Eke (Sex Abuse J Res Treat 17:201–210,2005), extending the average follow-up time for this sample to 5.9 years. In addition, we

obtained the same data for another 340 offenders, increasing our full sample to 541 men, with a total average follow-up of 4.1 years. In the extended follow-up of the original sample, 34% of offenders had new charges for any type of reoffense, with 6% charged with a contact sexual offense against a child and an additional 3% charged with historical contact sex offenses (i.e., previously undetected offenses). For the full sample, there was a 32% any recidivism rate; 4% of offenders were charged with new contact sex offenses, an additional 2% of offenders were charged with historical contact sex offenses and 7% of offenders were charged with a new child pornography offense. Predictors of new violent (including sexual contact) offending were prior offense history, including violent history, and younger offender age. Approximately a quarter of the sample was sanctioned for a failure on conditional release; in half of these failures, the offenders were in contact with children or used the internet, often to access pornography again.

Neutze, J., Seto, M. C., Schaefer, G. A., Mundt, I. A., & Beier, K. M. (2011). Predictors of child pornography offenses and child sexual abuse in a community sample of pedophiles and hebephiles. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 23(2), 212-242. DOI:10.1177/1079063210382043

Little is known about factors that distinguish men who act upon their self-identified sexual interest in prepubescent or pubescent children from those who do not. Even less is known about pedophiles or hebephiles who are not involved with the criminal justice system. In this study, a sample of 155 self-referred pedophiles and hebephiles was recruited from the community. All participants met DSM-IV-TR criteria for pedophilia (or paraphilia not otherwise specified for those who were sexually attracted to pubescent children). Two sets of group comparisons were conducted on sociodemographic variables and measures of dynamic risk factors. The first set was based on recent activity and compared men who had committed child pornography only or child sexual abuse offenses in the past six months with men who remained offense-free during the same period. The second set was based on lifetime offense history (excluding the most recent six months) and compared child pornography offenders with child sexual abuse

offenders and men who had committed both kinds of offenses. Overall, there were more similarities than differences between groups.

Nielssen, O. (2011). Child pornography offenders detected by surveillance of the Internet and by other methods. *Criminal Behaviour & Mental Health*, 21(3), 215–224.
DOI:10.1002/cbm.809

Availability of child pornography on the Internet has created new opportunities for offending. It has been noted that many people charged with offences relating to this had not previously been identified as sexual offenders against children. Our aim was to compare the characteristics of people charged with child pornography offences as a result of police monitoring of the Internet with those detected by other means. We hypothesised that those apprehended via the Internet would be more likely to be older and less likely to have severe psychiatric disorder or to have been previously charged with a sexual offence involving contact with a child than those identified by other means. Data were extracted from the findings of clinical examinations by the authors either in the course of preparing reports for court, or in the course of providing treatment. There were 52 men detected by police Internet surveillance and 53 men detected by other means, the latter including 16 men who had not been charged with an offence at the time of referral. Those detected via the Internet were more likely to be in possession of very large quantities of child pornography. Those detected by other means were more likely to have major psychiatric and substance abuse disorders and to report childhood sexual abuse. A subgroup analysis of the 89 people who were facing charges at the time of the assessment found that the only significant differences were in the amount of material and the history of sexual abuse. The men recruited to this study, conducted over a period of nearly 10 years, reflect the changing nature of the technology used to commit this type of offence in that time. The characteristics of the subjects did not confirm the stereotype of an Internet child pornography offender who was high functioning and otherwise well-adjusted and carried a low risk of other types of offences.

Seto, M. C., Hanson, R. K., & Babchishin, K. M. (2011). Contact sexual offending by men with online sexual offenses. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 23(1), 124-145. DOI:10.1177/1079063210369013

There is much concern about the likelihood that online sexual offenders (particularly online child pornography offenders) have either committed or will commit offline sexual offenses involving contact with a victim. This study addresses this question in two meta-analyses: the first examined the contact sexual offense histories of online offenders, whereas the second examined the recidivism rates from follow-up studies of online offenders. The first meta-analysis found that approximately 1 in 8 online offenders (12%) have an officially known contact sexual offense history at the time of their index offense ($k = 21$, $N = 4,464$). Approximately one in two (55%) online offenders admitted to a contact sexual offense in the six studies that had self-report data ($N = 523$). The second meta-analysis revealed that 4.6% of online offenders committed a new sexual offense of some kind during a 1.5- to 6-year follow-up ($k = 9$, $N = 2,630$); 2.0% committed a contact sexual offense and 3.4% committed a new child pornography offense. The results of these two quantitative reviews suggest that there may be a distinct subgroup of online-only offenders who pose relatively low risk of committing contact sexual offenses in the future.

Sheldon, K. (2011). What we know about men who download child abuse images. *British Journal of Forensic Practice*, 13(4), 221-234. DOI:10.1108/14636641111189981

This review aims to focus on men who access, download, and circulate child abuse images across the internet as the most frequently occurring type of internet sex offender. Design/methodology/approach - Some of the misconceptions associated with this behaviour are outlined and the extent to which internet offenders display some of the criminogenic factors thought to be associated with the multi-factorial theories of sexual offending are reviewed. Findings - One conclusion from this paper is the general impression that internet offenders show many of the characteristics of paedophiles. Their theoretical importance is that

they appear to be "desisters" from acting out their sexual interest in children by hands-on offending. Originality/value – It is argued that there is a need for more research to stimulate our understanding of this type of offender. Furthermore, what of those who both download material and offend directly against children? They present a dilemma for the literature as some research would suggest that they are not entirely like the internet or the contact sexual offenders in their psychological make-up; they are the group most in need of reappraisal.

Wolak, J., Finkelhor, D., & Mitchell, K. (2011). Child pornography possessors: Trends in offender and case characteristics. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research & Treatment*, 23(1), 22–42. DOI:10.1177/1079063210372143

This article describes trends in child pornography (CP) possession cases that ended in arrest in 2000 and in 2006, using data from the National Juvenile Online Victimization Study, a two-wave longitudinal survey of a national sample of more than 2,500 U.S. law enforcement agencies. In 2006, there were an estimated 3,672 arrests for CP possession, compared with 1,713 arrests in 2000. Many characteristics of the offenders and the offense remained stable. In both 2006 and 2000, most offenders were White, non-Hispanic males and socioeconomically diverse. Few were known to have committed previous sex crimes. Most had CP that depicted preteen children and serious sexual abuse. In 2006, however, a higher proportion of offenders were aged 18 to 25 years, used peer-to-peer (p2p) networks, had images of children younger than 3 years, and had CP videos. P2p users had more extreme images (e.g., younger victims, sexual violence) and larger numbers of images than those who did not use p2p networks. Findings reflect heightened efforts in the criminal justice system to combat CP crimes. More cases originated with investigations of CP possession and involved proactive investigations aimed at detecting CP. The great majority of cases were successfully prosecuted, with more offenders sentenced to incarceration and serving longer sentences than in 2000. As in 2000, one in six cases that began with investigations of CP possession detected offenders who had molested children.

Hessick, C. B. (2010). Disentangling child pornography from child sex abuse. *Washington University Law Review*, 88, 853–902.

Recent years have seen a significant increase in the criminal penalties associated with possession of child pornography. The new severity appears to be premised on arguments that blur the distinction between those who possess images of child pornography and those who sexually abuse children. In particular, sentences have been increased based on arguments that possession of pornography is equivalent to or worse than child sex abuse, arguments that viewing child pornography increases the risk that an individual will sexually abuse a child, and arguments that those who possess child pornography are abusing children undetected. This Article identifies instances where possession of child pornography and child sex abuse have been conflated, critically evaluates the arguments that promote such conflation, and identifies independent concerns with conflation. Specifically, it argues that blurring the distinction between the two crimes allows us to continue to misperceive child sex abuse as a stranger-danger issue and that when law enforcement statistics aggregate possession and child sex abuse, the public may be misled into believing that law enforcement is successfully battling child sex abuse. The Article concludes that the modern trend of increasing sentences for possession of child pornography ought to be reviewed, and it suggests several possible areas of reform.

McCarthy, J. A. (2010). Internet sexual activity: A comparison between contact and non-contact child pornography offenders. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 16(2), 181–195.
DOI:10.1080/13552601003760006

By exploring the internet sexual activity of two groups of adult male child pornography offenders (n=110), this study sought to identify potential risk factors associated with those offenders who also sexually abused minors. In this endeavour, six areas of internet sexual activity were explored: (1) the level of involvement with child pornography; (2) the level of involvement with nonpornographic material depicting minors; (3) the online seduction of

minors; (4) the level of communication with individuals who also have a sexual interest in minors; (5) the level of involvement with adult pornography; and (6) the level of involvement in internet chatrooms related to adults. Results indicated that child pornography offenders are a heterogeneous group. Additionally, dispositional factors related to substance abuse, antisocial orientation and deviant sexual interest and situational factors related to internet sexual activity discriminated child pornography offenders who sexually abused minors from those who did not.

Niveau, G. (2010). Cyber-pedocriminality: Characteristics of a sample of internet child pornography offenders. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 34(8), 570-575.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2010.01.011

This descriptive study focused on cyber-pedocriminality, a term chosen to describe the phenomenon of child pornography on the internet. Two specific questions were addressed: whether cyber-pedocriminals present with a specific sociodemographic or psychological profile and what type of contents can be found in the criminal material. Method: A group of 36 offenders were referred to the Geneva Institute of Legal Medicine to undergo court-ordered psychiatric testing. Each participant was clinically evaluated by a psychiatrist according to DSM IV-TR classification and assessed using the Internet Addiction Scale and the Sexual Compulsivity Scale. The participants' criminal and medical records were evaluated, and the pornographic material discovered in their homes analyzed. Results: The participants did not display specific sociodemographic characteristics. The majority of offenders exhibited personality disorders of the dependent- and avoidant-type with a marked tendency towards sexual and internet addictions. Few of the participants had any prior criminal records involving sexual behavior with children, but some offenders had questionable social behavior, suggesting the possibility of crimes that had remained hidden. The child pornography found in the possession of the offenders was both voluminous and criminal in nature. Conclusion: The arrested cyber-pedocriminals may possess key characteristics compatible with the specific modalities of internet use. The issue concerning the relationship, in this category of offenders,

between cyber-pedocriminality and crimes involving physical contact remains complex and unclear. Practice implications: The type of material confiscated from the offenders justifies the importance given to national and international operations carried out by law enforcement agencies. The study of cyber-pedocriminality is important to assess the gravity of the violent acts perpetrated against children in reality, which often remain unknown to the justice system.

Seto, M. C. (2010). Child pornography use and internet solicitation in the diagnosis of pedophilia. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 39(3), 591–593. DOI:10.1007/s10508-010-9603-6

The DSM-V Paraphilias subworkgroup has proposed a number of changes to the diagnostic criteria for pedophilia (Blanchard, 2009a). In this commentary, I briefly discuss some of these changes in light of recent research on internet facilitated sexual offenders and focus on the relevance of child pornography and internet solicitation when considering the diagnosis of pedophilia.

Sheehan, V., & Sullivan, J. (2010). A qualitative analysis of child sex offenders involved in the manufacture of indecent images of children. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 16(2), 143–167. DOI:10.1080/13552601003698644

This study aimed to explore qualitatively the lived experiences of four males convicted of manufacturing indecent images of children to determine whether there were similarities or differences in their experiences, perspectives and behaviours which might lead to a better understanding of this offence type. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is used to examine the participants' responses to a semi-structured interview. The results identify links between formative life experiences and subsequent offending, and indicate that the majority of the producers had an awareness of their sexual interest in children prior to engagement with the internet. All participants possessed a collection of images covering the full spectrum of seriousness. The analysis identified differences between the experiences, perceptions and behaviours of “sharing producers” and “non-sharing producers”. Sharing producers had greater levels of access to their victims and the nature of their abuse was more serious, while

their manipulation focused on persuading victims to collaborate with the abuse. The findings of the study suggest that producers of indecent images of children may not be a homogeneous group, and that some are meeting quite different needs than others by engaging in the behaviour.

Winder, B., & Gough, B. (2010). "I never touched anybody—that's my defense": A qualitative analysis of internet sex offender accounts. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 16*(2), 125–141. DOI:10.1080/13552600903503383

There is an ongoing public debate about internet sex offenders: do they progress to contact offences, or are their deviant interests sufficiently satisfied through downloading indecent images of children? Also, do such individuals accept that they create victims in the absence of direct physical contact with children? This paper presents an analysis of the accounts offered by individuals convicted of internet-based sexual offences involving the downloading and viewing of images of children ($n = 7$). The data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA); a number of themes were generated from the rich data set produced. Here we focus upon the dominant theme of "self-distancing" wherein interviewees variously and often creatively rejected the view that they were creating child victims, actively dis-identified from the sex offender label and generally downplayed their accountability relating to their offending activities. Findings are discussed in relation to policy implications and treatment.

Bourke, M. L., & Hernandez, A. E. (2009). The 'Butner Study' redux: A report of the incidence of hands-on child victimization by child pornography offenders. *Journal of Family Violence, 24*(3), 183–191. DOI:10.1007/s10896-008-9219-y

This study compared two groups of child pornography offenders participating in a voluntary treatment program: men whose known sexual offense history at the time of judicial sentencing involved the possession, receipt, or distribution of child abuse images, but did not include any "hands-on" sexual abuse; and men convicted of similar offenses who had documented

histories of hands-on sexual offending against at least one child victim. The goal was to determine whether the former group of offenders were “merely” collectors of child pornography at little risk for engaging in hands-on sexual offenses, or if they were contact sex offenders whose criminal sexual behavior involving children, with the exception of Internet crimes, went undetected. Our findings show that the Internet offenders in our sample were significantly more likely than not to have sexually abused a child via a hands-on act. They also indicate that the offenders who abused children were likely to have offended against multiple victims, and that the incidence of “crossover” by gender and age is high.

Elliott, I. A., & Beech, A. R. (2009). Understanding online child pornography use: Applying sexual offense theory to internet offenders. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 14*(3), 180–193. DOI:10.1016/j.avb.2009.03.002

This review outlines the links between contemporary etiological and offense-process theories of child sexual abuse and our current knowledge of individuals who commit offenses related to online child pornography. First, we integrate previous behavioral typologies into a four-category internet offender typology. Second, we summarize development of etiological theory and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these theories in explaining the child pornography offender. Third, we outline the potential situational and ecological factors relating to the online environment that may also be a cause for the development and maintenance of prurient online behavior. Fourth, we review theories of the offense process and apply these to research into the modus operandi of child pornography offenders. Finally, we examine the usefulness of this approach in the assessment of risk and the treatment of online offenders.

Endrass, J., Urbaniok, F., Hammermeister, L. C., Benz, C., Elbert, T., Laubacher, A., & Rossegger, A. (2009). The consumption of Internet child pornography and violent sex offending. *BMC Psychiatry, 9*(1), 1–7. DOI:10.1186/1471-244X-9-43

There is an ongoing debate on whether consumers of child pornography pose a risk for hands-on sex offenses. Up until now, there have been very few studies which have analyzed the

association between the consumption of child pornography and the subsequent perpetration of hands-on sex offenses. The aim of this study was to examine the recidivism rates for hands-on and hands-off sex offenses in a sample of child pornography users using a 6 year follow-up design. The current study population consisted of 231 men, who were subsequently charged with consumption of illegal pornographic material after being detected by a special operation against Internet child pornography, conducted by the Swiss police in 2002. Criminal history, as well as recidivism, was assessed using the criminal records from 2008. 4.8% (n = 11) of the study sample had a prior conviction for a sexual and/or violent offense, 1% (n = 2) for a hands-on sex offense, involving child sexual abuse, 3.3% (n = 8) for a hands-off sex offense and one for a nonsexual violent offense. When applying a broad definition of recidivism, which included ongoing investigations, charges and convictions, 3% (n = 7) of the study sample recidivated with a violent and/or sex offense, 3.9% (n = 9) with a hands-off sex offense and 0.8% (n = 2) with a hands-on sex offense. Consuming child pornography alone is not a risk factor for committing hands-on sex offenses – at least not for those subjects who had never committed a hands-on sex offense. The majority of the investigated consumers had no previous convictions for hands-on sex offenses. For those offenders, the prognosis for hands-on sex offenses, as well as for recidivism with child pornography, is favorable.

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

This paper outlines the current literature on what is known about the processes by which individuals utilize the Internet for child sexual abuse. First, three ways in which the Internet is utilized are outlined: (1) by dissemination of sexually abusive images of children for personal and/or commercial reasons; (2) by communication with other individuals with a sexual interest in children: and (3) by maintaining and developing online pedophilic networks. Second, content and availability of abusive images are described, and the difficulties faced by criminal

justice agencies in both the definition of abusive images and their prohibition is discussed. Third, the potential for offenders to 'cross-over' from online offenses to contact sexual victimization of children is examined and placed within a context of various Internet offender typologies that have been developed. Finally, implications of this body of research for law and public policy are considered.

Sheldon, K., & Howitt, D. (2008). Sexual fantasy in paedophile offenders: Can any model explain satisfactorily new findings from a study of Internet and contact sexual offenders? *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 13(1), 137–158.
DOI:10.1348/135532506X173045

There is widespread acceptance that sexual fantasy plays a role in sexual offences but little clarity as to the nature of this relationship. This paper seeks to understand better the role of fantasy in offending behaviour through the study of sexual fantasy in Internet child pornography offenders when compared with contact offenders. Differences in the patterns of sexual fantasy associated with the different offender types are explored in order to understand how fantasy content is associated with contact offences with children and desisting from such direct acting out. Participants were all convicted of child sexual offences and recruited with the help of the probation and prison services. Out of these, 16 were Internet-only offenders, 25 were contact offenders with no history of Internet offending and 10 were offenders with a mixed contact and Internet offending history. A variety of self-completion questionnaires including fantasy were completed on an individual basis together with a detailed interview. The most common sexual fantasies were typical adult-male heterosexual fantasies though a variety of child-oriented and other fantasies were also common. Contact offenders reported fewer girl-oriented sexual fantasies although the groups did not differ in terms of boy-oriented fantasies. There was evidence that confrontational fantasies were commoner among contact offenders than Internet offenders. There are relationships between early sexual experiences and fantasy but peer sexual contacts seemed to be important rather than sexual abuse. Generally, the contact offenders seem to have less sexual fantasy pertinent to their offending

than did Internet offenders. Fantasy deficit may be involved in contact offending against children.

Webb, L., Craissati, J., & Keen, S. (2007). [Characteristics of Internet child pornography offenders: A comparison with child molesters](#). *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 19(4), 449–465. DOI:10.1007/s11194-007-9063-2

The aim of this exploratory study was to compare internet sex offenders with a matched group of child molesters in the Greater London Area. Over an 8-month period 210 subjects were assessed, of whom 90 were internet sex offenders and 120 were child molesters. A wide range of background data was collected, including a number of psychometric measures to determine risk and personality traits. The research identified a number of similarities between internet sex offenders and child molesters on background variables. Specifically, in comparison to the child molesters, the internet offenders reported more psychological difficulties in adulthood and fewer prior sexual convictions. The socio-affective characteristics of internet offenders and child molesters look similar, but the antisocial variables, such as, 'acting out' and breaking social rules underlines their difference. The follow up research was carried out after a short period of time at risk—averaging 18 months—but suggested that internet sex offenders were significantly less likely to fail in the community than child molesters in terms of all types of recidivism.

Manning, J. C. (2006). The impact of Internet pornography on marriage and the family: A review of the research. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 13(2–3), 131–165. DOI:10.1080/10720160600870711

Since the advent of the Internet, the sex industry has profited from an unprecedented proximity to the home environment. Consequently, couples, families, and individuals of all ages are being impacted by pornography in new ways. Examining the systemic impact of Internet pornography, however, is relatively uncharted territory and the body of systemically-focused research is limited. A review of the research that does exist was undertaken and many negative

trends were revealed. While much remains unknown about the impact of Internet pornography on marriages and families, the available data provide an informed starting point for policy makers, educators, clinicians, and researchers.

Seto, M. C., Cantor, J. M., & Blanchard, R. (2006). [Child pornography offenses are a valid diagnostic indicator of pedophilia](#). *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 115(3), 610–615. DOI:10.1037/0021-843X.115.3.610

This study investigated whether being charged with a child pornography offense is a valid diagnostic indicator of pedophilia, as represented by an index of phallometrically assessed sexual arousal to children. The sample of 685 male patients was referred between 1995 and 2004 for a sexological assessment of their sexual interests and behavior. As a group, child pornography offenders showed greater sexual arousal to children than to adults and differed from groups of sex offenders against children, sex offenders against adults, and general sexology patients. The results suggest child pornography offending is a stronger diagnostic indicator of pedophilia than is sexually offending against child victims. Theoretical and clinical implications are discussed.

Kim, C. (2005). [From fantasy to reality: The link between viewing child pornography and molesting children](#). NCPA Child Sexual Exploitation. *Update*, 1(3).

Seto, M. C., & Eke, A. W. (2005). The criminal histories and later offending of child pornography offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 17(2), 201–210. DOI:10.1007/s11194-005-4605-y

The likelihood that child pornography offenders will later commit a contact sexual offense is unknown. In the present study, we identified a sample of 201 adult male child pornography offenders using police databases and examined their charges or convictions after the index child pornography offense(s). We also examined their criminal records to identify potential predictors of later offenses: 56% of the sample had a prior criminal record, 24% had prior

contact sexual offenses, and 15% had prior child pornography offenses. One-third were concurrently charged with other crimes at the time they were charged for child pornography offenses. The average time at risk was 2.5 years; 17% of the sample offended again in some way during this time, and 4% committed a new contact sexual offense. Child pornography offenders with prior criminal records were significantly more likely to offend again in any way during the follow-up period. Child pornography offenders who had committed a prior or concurrent contact sexual offense were the most likely to offend again, either generally or sexually.

Greenfield, P.M. (2004). Inadvertent exposure to pornography on the internet: Implications of peer-to-peer file-sharing networks for child development and families. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 25(6), 741-750. DOI:10.1016/j.appdev.2004.09.009

This essay comprises testimony to the Congressional Committee on Government Reform. The Committee's concern was the possibility of exposure to pornography when children and teens participate in peer-to-peer file-sharing networks, which are extremely popular in these age groups. A review of the relevant literature led to three major conclusions: (1) Pornography and related sexual media can influence sexual violence, sexual attitudes, moral values, and sexual activity of children and youth. (2) Peer-to-peer file-sharing networks are part of an all-pervasive sexualized media environment. This total environment, including file-sharing networks, leads to a tremendous amount of inadvertent and unintentional exposure of children and young people to pornography and other adult sexual media. Peer-to-peer networks and the Internet differ from other sexualized media in that young people construct important components of this sexualized environment themselves. (3) A warm and communicative parent-child relationship is the most important nontechnical means that parents can use to deal with the challenges of the sexualized media environment, including peer-to-peer file-sharing networks. In addition, open parent-child channels for communicating about sexual and media experiences, sex education at home or school, and parental participation with children on the Internet are constructive influences. For boys already at risk for antisocial

behavior, parents should carefully monitor and severely limit access to pornography on file-sharing networks and elsewhere.

Krone, T. (2004). A Typology of Online Child Pornography Offending. Canberra, Australia: Australian Institute of Criminology.

The Internet has increased the range, volume and accessibility of sexually abusive imagery, including child pornography. Child pornography depicts the sexual or sexualised physical abuse of children under 16 years of age. Australia has joined many other nations in an international effort to combat this multi-faceted global menace that combines both heavily networked and highly individualised criminal behaviour. This paper examines the typology of online child pornography offending, as well as law enforcement responses to the problem. This work is a result of a collaborative program between the Australian Institute of Criminology and the Australian High Tech Crime Centre.

Seto, M. C. (2004). Pedophilia and sexual offenses against children. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 15(1), 321–361. DOI:10.1080/10532528.2004.10559823

This article reviews the definition and assessment of pedophilia, describes the relationship between pedophilia and sexual offenses against children, and provides an overview of our current theoretical understanding of the etiology of pedophilia. A great deal is known about the assessment of pedophilia—attributable to public and professional concerns regarding the empirical association between pedophilia and sexual offenses against children—but much remains to be learned about pedophilia, including its prevalence in the general population, cross-cultural manifestations, developmental trajectories, and causes. Recent research suggests that neurodevelopmental problems and childhood sexual abuse play a role in the etiology of pedophilia, but the mechanisms that are involved are unknown. Future directions for research on assessment methods and etiology are highlighted.

Carr, J. (2003). Child abuse, child pornography and the Internet. United Kingdom: The Children's Charity.

Sullivan, J., & Beech, A. (2003). Are collectors of child abuse images a risk to children? In A. MacVean, & P. Spindler (Eds.) *Policing pedophiles on the internet* (pp. 11–20). England UK: The New Police Bookshop.

Burke, A., Sowerbutts, S., Blundell, B., & Sherry, M. (2002). Child pornography and the Internet: Policing and treatment issues. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 9(1), 79–84. DOI:10.1375/pplt.2002.9.1.79

A recent increase in the number of referrals for individuals who have accessed child pornography over the Internet has led to a need for clinicians to familiarise themselves with the language and concepts associated with this type of sexual offence. A brief review of the area highlights the legal dilemmas posed by the nature of the Internet. While definitional issues are a primary focus in legal processes, a demonstrated sexual arousal to children is more relevant in therapy. Modifications of traditional treatment approaches are suggested to facilitate therapeutic progress for this population. Discussion focuses on the early motivation for treatment, cognitive distortions, victim impact and cycles of offending behaviour. This work is offered as an early intervention to prevent potential future progression to hands-on sexual offending against children.

Quayle, E., & Taylor, M. (2002). Child pornography and the Internet: Perpetuating a cycle of abuse. *Deviant Behavior*, 23(4), 331–361. DOI:10.1080/01639620290086413

Thirteen men convicted of downloading child pornography were interviewed with a view to understanding how these men talked about the photographs and the function such talk played in their accounts. The interviews were informed by earlier work with defended subjects and were analyzed within a discursive framework. Quotations are used from the interviews to illustrate the analysis. Six principal discourses emerged within these accounts in relation

to child pornography: sexual arousal; as collectibles; facilitating social relationships; as a way of avoiding real life; as therapy; and in relation to the Internet. These are discussed in the context of previous research. The analysis illustrates the important role that the Internet plays in increasing sexual arousal to child pornography and highlights individual differences in whether this serves as a substitute or as a blueprint for contact offenses. It also draws our attention to the important role that community plays in the Internet and how collecting facilitates the objectification of children and increases the likelihood that in the quest for new images children continue to be sexually abused. Discourses focusing on both therapy and addiction serve to distance the respondent from personal agency and allow for continued engagement with child pornography.

Itzin, C. (1997). Pornography and the organization of intra-familial and extra-familial child sexual abuse: Developing a conceptual model. *Child Abuse Review*, 6(2), 94–106.
DOI:10.1002/(SICI)1099-0852(199705)6:2<94::AID-CAR310>3.0.CO;2-I

This paper uses a case study (the experience of having been sexually abused as a child) and a review of the relevant literature as the basis for developing a conceptual model of the relationship between intra-familial and extra-familial child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation, and the role of adult and child pornography in it. The paper illustrates some of the characteristics and effects of pornography and child sexual abuse including: gender; intra- and intergenerational patterns of victimization; coercion and compliance; the sexualization of the child; pornography and prostitution; and the function of incest as a form of pimping for the perpetrator and as grooming for extra-familial abuse. It also illustrates the way in which pornography is a part of all forms of intra-familial and extra-familial abuse and is itself a form of organized abuse. © 1997 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Howitt, D. (1995). Pornography and the paedophile: Is it criminogenic? *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 68(1), 15-27. DOI:10.1111/j.2044-8341.1995.tb01810.x

There are few case-study-based reports of the role of pornography in the lives of sex offenders in contrast with numerous studies of a survey and statistical nature. Very little is known about the ways in which offenders process pornographic and other erotic materials as part of their offending patterns. The research reported in this study was based on case studies of fixated paedophiles in a private clinic for sex offenders. The men were interviewed about a range of matters including their offending, their psychosexual histories, pornography, fantasy, and sexual abuse in childhood. Commercial pornography was rarely a significant aspect of their use of erotica although some experience of such materials was typical of the men. Most common was 'soft-core' heterosexually oriented pornography. Explicit child pornography was uncommon. However, offenders also generated their own 'erotic' materials from relatively innocuous sources such as television advertisements, clothing catalogues featuring children modelling underwear, and similar sources. In no case did exposure to pornography precede offending-related behaviour in childhood. All of the offenders had experienced childhood sexual abuse by adults or older peers. The relationship of these findings to previous research and implications for legislation are noted.

Knudsen, D. D. (1988). Child sexual abuse and pornography: Is there a relationship? *Journal of Family Violence*, 3(4), 253-267. DOI:10.1007/BF00989976

Sexual abuse is now a major form of child maltreatment; however, the causes of such exploitation are obscure. A review of official reports and other research indicate that the circumstances surrounding sexual abuse are inadequately specified to allow specific causal interpretations. The role of pornography in contributing to such abuse is explored by reviewing laboratory studies and the circumstances of child sexual abuse. An assessment of the research literature suggests that pornography is a minor and indirect influence on child sexual maltreatment.

II. Victims of child sexual abuse material

Dai, T. T., Spiller, L. R., Kellogg, N. D., & Gelfond, J. (2025). [Anogenital findings in confirmed victims of child sexual abuse materials](#). *Pediatrics Open Science*.
DOI:10.1542/pedsos.2024-000315

The purpose of this study is to describe the medical evaluation including history, physical examination, and diagnostic testing results in children/adolescents who are confirmed subjects of child sexual abuse materials (CSAM), and to compare these findings with age-matched controls who are suspected victims of sexual abuse without CSAM. This retrospective case-control study examined anogenital findings and disclosure patterns in children < 17 years old, who were evaluated for sexual abuse/assault at an urban children's hospital and who had additional history of being photographed and/or videotaped while performing sexual acts. Two control subjects per study subject were matched by age (+/- 6 months), gender, acute versus non-acute examination, and type of sexual contact. Photodocumentation of all anogenital examinations were reviewed by two child abuse pediatricians blinded to the clinical history. There were 22 cases and 44 controls. Females comprised 91% (60/66) of the cases/controls. Fourteen cases (14/22; 64%) disclosed details of sexual abuse. Eight cases (36%) did not make a disclosure of sexual abuse; 4 were preverbal. While half of the cases (12/22; 55%) were evaluated within 120 hours of the most recent sexual abuse contact, only one had an abnormal anogenital examination. There were no significant differences in exam findings or diagnostic tests when cases were compared to controls, but more than one-third of cases were preverbal or denied abuse. Children with objective evidence of sexual abuse via CSAM were unlikely to have examination findings of trauma and were frequently unable/unwilling to fully disclose their abuse.

Ballin, M., Humphries, K., Lewis, A., Rolan, G., & Ronken, C. (2024). [Survivor perspectives on institutional use of child sexual abuse material](#). *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*. DOI:10.5204/ijcjsd.3581

This literature review draws together literature describing how child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is currently used in institutional contexts – by police, courts, academic and policy researchers and private sector entities. In doing so, it reveals that there has historically been scant engagement with victims and survivors about such uses, and little research into the impacts of reuse for individuals who are depicted in CSAM. Despite the specificities of CSAM experience (as described by victims and survivors), and the recognised value of lived experience perspectives, inclusion of CSAM victim and survivor perspectives in research design and policies governing institutional reuse of this material is still a rarity. We hypothesise that better outcomes can be achieved for children and adults who experience victimisation through CSAM if these perspectives are prioritised in ways that are supported by human-centred and trauma-informed research and practice.

Siegel, J. A., Miller, A. M., Krieger, M. A., & Eaton, A. A. (2024). “Anything I could do to not have it paralyze me was welcome”: Coping strategies employed by survivors of image-based sexual abuse. *Psychology of Violence*. 15(1), 66–75. DOI:10.1037/vio0000526

Image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) is a form of technology-facilitated sexual violence in which intimate photos or videos are nonconsensually taken, shared, and/or threatened to be shared. The shift to fully virtual social interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic facilitated a spike in IBSA victimization during this time, and—with many organizations functioning at limited capacity—survivors had limited resources available to them to manage the distress associated with victimization. The purpose of this study was to understand the coping strategies used by diverse survivors of IBSA during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. We conducted structured interviews using a trauma-informed approach. Using codebook thematic analysis, we analyzed the data from 36 survivors of IBSA during the pandemic (Mage = 31.01; two participants did not disclose age). The sample was diverse in terms of genders,

racess, and sexual orientations represented. We identified five groups of coping strategies employed by participants: avoiding distressing feelings, reputational damage control, retaliatory sextortion, seeking emotional support, and pursuing justice. Many participants used multiple strategies to manage the distress associated with their IBSA victimization. Survivors of IBSA cope with their victimization in diverse ways, some of which have not been previously reported in coping strategies literature and may be unique to the experience of IBSA. (PsycInfo Database Record © 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

Sullivan, M. A. (2024). Restitution in child sexual abuse material cases. *Department of Justice Journal of Federal Law & Practice*, 72, 31.

Eke, A. W., & Seto, M. C. (2023). Correspondence of child age and gender distribution in child sexual exploitation material and other child content with age and gender of child sexual assault victims. *Sexual Abuse*, 35(3), 375–397. DOI:10.1177/107906322211089

Accessing child sexual exploitation material (CSEM; child pornography in legal statutes) can indicate sexual interest in children. It logically follows then that the age and gender of the depicted children may reflect specific interests in those age/gender groups, and if so, may correspond to age and gender of any known contact offending victims. We had data on CSEM characteristics and child victims for 71 men convicted of CSEM offenses who also had contact sexual offenses against children; some had also sexually solicited children online. Sixty-four men had 134 prior or concurrent child victims, and 14 men reoffended directly against 17 children during follow-up. There were significant, positive associations (with moderate to large effect sizes) between age and gender of children depicted in CSEM and age and gender of child contact or solicitation victims. Examining future offending, though with only 14 recidivists, all men who sexually reoffended against a girl had more girl CSEM content, and all men who sexually reoffended against a boy had more boy CSEM content. Our results suggest that CSEM characteristics can reflect child preferences. This information can be relevant in clinical

settings, police investigations, and community risk management, though it does not rule out interest in, or offending against, victims of other ages or gender. We discuss these findings in the context of other evidence regarding victim cross-over, and suggest future research.

Nguyen, T. N. A. (2022). [European 'right to be forgotten' as a remedy for image-based sexual abuse: A critical review](#). *KnowEx Social Sciences*, 2(01), 59–72.
DOI:10.17501/27059901.2021.2105

Image-based sexual abuse, defined as the non-consensual creation or dissemination of private sexual images, has been proved to be a form of sexual violence against women. Despite the borderless impacts of image-based sexual abuse due to its online nature, very little scholarly attention has been given to the legal remedies that victims can take in a more regional context. This article advocates for a new joined-up approach that supports victims of image-based sexual abuse to reclaim control through the right to be forgotten under European data protection law. Under this right, the victims as data subjects can request the data controllers – service providers hosting abuse materials – to erase their non-consensual private sexual images from the platforms. Case study method was conducted with Google, Facebook and Telegram to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, focusing on three main critiques: platform policies, reporting options, and removal practice in response to image-based sexual abuse. Based on the analyses of these digital platforms' policies and practices, the research identifies five challenges and limitations: (1) limited extraterritorial application of domestic law while dealing with transnational abuse; (2) ambiguous language about how to remove data; (3) absence of standardised terms to define and address all forms of image-based sexual abuse; (4) lack of liability fulfilments from digital platforms; and (5) lack of multi-stakeholder cooperation addressing the abuse. The research concludes that the right to be forgotten is a promising remedy to protect victims of image-based sexual abuse in this digital era, but it needs a multi-stakeholder approach to be able to keep up with transnational violence like image-based sexual abuse.

Salter, M., Wong, W. T., Breckenridge, J., Scott, S., Cooper, S., & Peleg, N. (2021). Production and distribution of child sexual abuse material by parental figures. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, (616), 1-17.

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is widely available online. Existing research indicates that the parents and parental figures of victims are notably represented in offender populations. However, there is limited research in this area. Drawing on Australian media and legal databases, this study created a database of 82 cases of CSAM production and distribution perpetrated by parents and/or parental figures from 2009 to 2019. The study found that perpetrators are most often the male parental figures of the victims, and victims are predominately girls under nine years of age. The findings reveal distinct patterns and scenarios of parental CSAM offending that may inform prevention, early intervention and improved responses to victims. The study documented the significant impact of parental CSAM offending on victims and the need for specialist victim support.

Wahid Satar, S. N. A., Norhayati, M. N., Sulaiman, Z., Othman, A., Yaacob, L. H., & Nik Hazlina, N. H. (2021). [Predisposing factors and impact of child victimization: A qualitative study](#). *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(17), 9373. [DOI:10.3390/ijerph18179373](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18179373)

Sexual abuse of children is increasing at an alarming rate. This study aims to describe the risk factors and the effects of sexual abuse on children. This unobtrusive qualitative study was conducted on children aged 10 to 18 years old who experienced sexual abuse and followed-up at a psychiatric clinic between the years 2019 and 2021. The information from case records was transcribed. Thematic analysis was performed. Thirty case records were reviewed. The mean age of the victims was 14.6 years; 94% of the victims had experienced vaginal penetration, and 23% of the cases involved incest. The results indicated that socio-psychological predisposing factors involving family structure and dynamic dysfunction, low intrapersonal strength, social influence, and low family socioeconomic status could lead to sexual victimization. This sexual

victimization can then lead to emotional turmoil, negative effects on cognitive, academic and social function, negative parental reactions toward the incident, the creation of baby–mother relationships and love–hate relationships, and a lack of goals and hope for the future. Children who experienced sexual abuse may show rape or pregnancy symptoms but may also show entirely non-specific ones. A thorough examination of their history, including biopsychosocial aspects, is necessary to appropriately care for them.

Durkin, M. (2020). Restitution for child pornography: Reframing a system for victims harmed by too many. *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*, 52, 557.

Cassell, P. G., & Marsh, J. R. (2019). [The New Amy, Vicky, and Andy Act: A positive step towards full restitution for child pornography victims](#). *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 31(3).

In this article, we describe the impact of this important new legislation. We set the stage by describing the need for restitution for child pornography victims, using the story of the lead victim in the Act (“Amy”) as an illustration of why restitution is needed. We then turn to the problematic legal regime that was created by the Supreme Court’s Paroline decision, noting some of the confusion in the lower courts following the ruling. Against this backdrop, we then discuss the AVAA, explaining how it will be a useful step forward for victims of these crimes.

Gewirtz–Meydan, A., Lahav, Y., Walsh, W., & Finkelhor, D. (2019). [Psychopathology among adult survivors of child pornography](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 98.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104189

The majority of studies investigating child pornography have focused on conceptualizing the problem and the harm of the crime, evaluating the risk for child pornography offending, or discuss preventive measures. Little is known about survivors of this type of crime. This research explores the relationship between child pornography victimization and psychopathology in adulthood. Specifically, we examined the contribution of emotional reactions at the time of the crime and shortly after (guilt, embarrassment and avoidance) on psychopathology among

adult survivors of child pornography. The study was conducted among 107 child pornography adult survivors, aged 18–63 ($M = 39.48$, $SD = 12.31$). All participants were sexually molested during the crime. An online survey was completed by a convenience sample of adult survivors of child pornography. Findings indicate survivor's current age predicted current psychopathology symptoms. Survivor's emotional reactions of guilt and embarrassment at the time of the crime and shortly after were significantly associated with elevated psychopathology, above and beyond demographic characteristics and features of the crime. The present results suggest the way survivors of child pornography react to the crime might shape their mental health in the long term.

Gewirtz-Meydan, A., Walsh, W., Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2018). [The complex experience of child pornography survivors](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 80, 238–248.
DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.03.031

This research explores the complex experiences of survivors of child pornography production. The study was conducted among a convenience sample of child pornography adult survivors ($N=133$), using an online survey which included a series of open-ended questions. Nearly half of respondents reported that they felt the production of sexual images caused specific problems that were different from the problems caused by other aspects of the abuse. Nearly half of the sample worried all the time that people would think they were willing participants or that people would recognize them, one-third refused to talk about the images and 22% denied there were images. The qualitative analysis identified three major themes which emerged from the survivor's perspective as adults: Guilt and shame, their ongoing vulnerability and an empowerment dimension the images sometimes brought. Recommendations for further research and additional implications are discussed.

Walsh, W. A., Wolak, J., Lounsbury, K., Howley, S., Lippert, T., & Thompson Jr, L. (2018).
Lessons learned: conducting research with victims portrayed in sexual abuse images
and their parents. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(24), 3829–3839.
DOI:10.1177/0886260516640545

Victims portrayed in sexual abuse images may be resistant to participate in research because of embarrassment or shame due to the sensitive nature and potential permanency of images. No studies we are aware of explore reactions to participating in research after this type of crime. Telephone interviews were conducted with convenience samples of parents ($n = 46$) and adolescents who were victims of child sexual abuse ($n = 11$; some of whom were portrayed in sexual abuse images), and online surveys were completed by adult survivors depicted in abuse images ($N = 133$). The first lesson was that few agencies tracked this type of crime. This lack of tracking raises the question as to what types of data should be collected and tracked as part of an investigation. The second lesson was that few victims at the two participating agencies had been portrayed in sexual abuse images (4%–5%). The third lesson was that once possible cases were identified, we found relatively high percentages of consent to contact and interview completions. This implies that researchers and service providers should not be hesitant about conducting research after an investigation of child sexual abuse. The fourth lesson was that the vast majority of participants reported not being upset by the questions. We hope that the data presented here will encourage agencies to reconsider the types of data being tracked and will encourage researchers to conduct in-depth research with populations that are often difficult to reach to continue improving the professional response to child victimization.

Ost, S. (2016). [A new paradigm of reparation for victims of child pornography](#). *Legal Studies*, 36(4), 613–638. DOI:10.1111/lest.12128

This paper sets out the distinctive harm caused and wrong done to child pornography victims. It presents a paradigm of reparation within a restorative justice framework that explains the significance of material reparation for these victims. The paper demonstrates that because of the particular nature of child pornography offences and the harms and wrongs occasioned, existing avenues for legal redress in England and Wales and the USA are generally inadequate and ill-fitting, and that a new mechanism for effecting suitable reparation is required. It concludes by sketching a new mode of restorative justice for victims of child pornography, emphasising significant matters that must be addressed alongside financial redress in order to facilitate victims' restoration.

Martin, J. (2015). Conceptualizing the harms done to children made the subjects of sexual abuse images online. *Child & Youth Services*, 36(4), 267–287. DOI:10.1080/0145935X.2015.1092832

The innovation of the Internet and the proliferation of new digital technologies in everyday life have unfortunately created more opportunities for the sexual abuse of children and especially the global distribution of child sexual abuse images online (CSAIO). Most of the current therapeutic interventions being used were designed to treat 'conventional' sexual abuse trauma. Victims of CSAIO may experience ongoing trauma because the recordings of their abuse have the potential to be endlessly viewed and shared by those with a sexual interest in children some of whom may be known to them. However, little is known about the potential psychological harm to victims, the extent to which existing trauma treatment modalities are applicable to them, or what modifications of these treatments may be required for effective treatment. This paper explores current ways of understanding the harms done to the victims of CSAIO and presents cautions and recommendations for moving forward.

Slane, A. (2015). Legal conceptions of harm related to sexual images online in the United States and Canada. *Child & Youth Services*, 36(4), 288–311.
DOI: 10.1080/0145935X.2015.1092837

This article examines the history of legal discussion of the harms of child pornography possession and viewing in the United States and Canada, with special attention to the evolving conception of direct harms to children and youth pictured in these images. The article further addresses ongoing uncertainty about harms associated with images that do not record an instance of sexual abuse, but where the harm arises solely from non-consensual distribution of nude and/or sexual images. Achieving greater understanding and recognition of both the similarities and differences between the harms that arise from the “permanent record of abuse” and from ongoing circulation and use of images beyond the subject’s control are necessary in order to equip both clinical and legal practitioners with the knowledge they need in order to provide appropriate support for victims of the varied forms of sexual abuse related to sexual image online.

Martin, J. (2014). “It’s just an image, right?”: Practitioners’ understanding of child sexual abuse images online and effects on victims. *Child & Youth Services*, 35(2), 96–115.
DOI:10.1080/0145935X.2014.924334

Child sexual abuse images online (CSAIO) present new and daunting challenges for practitioners working in the field of child sexual abuse (CSA). Current understanding of the phenomenon is severely limited due to a lack of theoretical and empirical research in the area. This article reports findings from a study that examined practitioners’ experiences with, and views of, CSAIO. Participants differed in how they conceptualized what constituted online CSA images and held varying degrees of concern regarding the potential effects of CSAIO on the child. Some practitioners were uncertain about whether child victims of CSAIO experience particular effects different from or over and above those caused by conventional (non-Internet related) CSA. A key finding was that most practitioners did not have a clear understanding of

CSAIO. This article includes recommendations for future research regarding the implications of technology in the field of CSA.

Wells, W. E. (2014). Protecting the victims of child pornography: An analysis of the current state of the law, with a view towards amending the CDA 230 Safe Harbor. South Orange, NJ: Seton Hall University.

Cassell, P. G., Marsh, J. R., & Christiansen, J. M. (2013). The case for full restitution for child pornography victims. *George Washington Law Review*.

This Article explores the issues of restitution to the victims of child pornography and other federal sex offenses in depth and contends that Congress meant what it said in Section 2259 — specifically that child pornography victims must receive an award for the “full amount” of their losses from any defendant convicted of harming them. This approach is consistent not only with the plain language of the statute but the well-established tort principle that any intentional wrongdoer is jointly and severally liable with other wrongdoers for an innocent victim’s losses. Requiring defendants to pay for the full amount of the losses that they have caused will address the significant financial losses suffered by child pornography victims.

Livingstone, S., Kirwil, L., Ponte, C., & Staksrud, E. (2013) In their own words: What bothers children online? with the EU Kids Online Network. EU Kids Online, London School of Economics & Political Science, London, UK.

Walsh, W., Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2013). Prosecution dilemmas and challenges for child pornography crimes: The Third National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (NJOV-3). Crimes Against Research Center.

Results from the National Juvenile Online Victimization (N- JOV) Prosecutor Study indicate that prosecutors use a mix of strategies to handle defendants who possess large amounts of child

pornography (CP). Prosecutors reported difficulties with computer forensics and the police investigation, but not so much with defense strategies. One-quarter of prosecutors who dealt with CP cases had one that went in front of a jury in the past 2 years. Nearly half of prosecutors would like clearer guidelines about the types of CP cases accepted for federal prosecution.

Cooper, S. W. (2012). [The impact on children who have been victims of child pornography](#). Written testimony before the US Sentencing Commission.

Giannini, M. (2012). Slow acid drips and evidentiary nightmares: Smoothing out the rough justice of child pornography restitution with a presumed damages theory. *American Criminal Law Review*, 49(4), 1723-1776.

The article focuses on the presumed damages theory in child pornography restitution cases. Topics include the proximate cause requirement for restitution, the denial of recovery for child pornography victims, and the doctrine of presumed damages. Information is provided on victim relief for privacy and defamation torts.

Quayle, E., & Jones, T. (2011). [Sexualized images of children on the internet](#). *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research & Treatment*, 23(1), 7-21. DOI:10.1177/1079063210392596

Despite an increase in research on child abuse images and sex offender risk, we still lack specific data about the characteristics of the children found within these images. Such data would assist us with understanding the exploitation of children through abusive images and the choice of images by offenders. We accessed sexualized child images submitted to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) in the United Kingdom. In 1998, CEOP developed a database (ChildBase) of child abuse images gathered from police seizures across the United Kingdom. This database is continually updated and is operationally used to identify victims. We randomly selected 10% of the 247,950 images, submitted during 2005-

2009, and sorted them into the following categories: gender, age, and ethnic group (White, Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latino). Codes (n = 24,550) were analyzed using frequencies and cross tabulations in relation to gender, age, and racial group. The odds of the abuse images being female versus male were about 4 to 1, and the odds of the images being of White children versus non-White children were about 10 to 1 (9.805). There was a significant gender difference in age distribution of all the children within the images. The limitations of this study are also discussed along with possible implications and recommendations for future research.

Leonard, M. (2010). "I did what I was directed to do but he didn't touch me": The impact of being a victim of internet offending. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 16(2), 249-256.
DOI:10.1080/13552601003690526

The trauma of being a victim of sexual abuse is very difficult to live with, but for victims of internet offending there are added complexities for him/her in trying to make sense of what has happened. They are often "directed" by the offender to perform sexual acts on themselves and/or others, which creates huge confusion for the victim in terms of even using the common language of perpetrator/offender because of the victim needing to make sense of the fact that they touched themselves and/or others in many incidents and, for them, does this make them the perpetrator? The perpetrator role of being the "director" needs to be explored with the victim in the very layers of what this means as opposed to the perpetrator doing the touching, but also needs to be considered in treatment programmes when often internet offenders debate the "I didn't touch her/him". This paper will explore the complexities as a therapist working with victims of internet abuse as well as the impact of this on assessment and treatment of internet offenders.

von Weiler, J., Haardt-Becker, A., & Schulte, S. (2010). Care and treatment of child victims of child pornographic exploitation (CPE) in Germany. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 16*(2), 211-222. DOI:10.1080/13552601003759990

The online distribution of abusive images has risen dramatically over recent years and this raises many questions concerning the children within the images, particularly in relation to identification and provision of services. From October 2004 until September 2007, Innocence in Danger e.V. conducted an empirical study concerning the care and treatment of victims of child pornographic exploitation (CPE) in Germany by contacting all specialized institutions nationwide dealing with sexually abused children. This was achieved through questionnaires and interviews. A total of 245 cases of child pornographic exploitation (197 girls, 48 boys) and 280 suspected cases of child pornographic exploitation were identified. It was reported that cases of CPE were of a higher complexity than offline abuse, more demanding for professionals and raised many questions about professional involvement. Identified challenges included the issue of permanence once abusive images have been distributed online, and the coping strategies of children which might foster resilience. The study concludes that even though child pornographic exploitation is much talked about, there is still a lack of knowledge in how to identify, approach and help such children.

Mitchell, K. J., Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2008). Internet sex crimes against minors. *Family & Intimate Partner Violence Quarterly, 1*(1), 25-44.

The article discusses the study which examines the sexual victimization of children through the Internet. It refers to the findings from the National Online Victimization Study which monitors sex crimes on nationally representative sample of youth and children. It looks into the types of sex crimes such as attempted and completed sexual assault, child pornography, and transmitting of illegal sexual materials. The authors describe the types of victimization that occur in the Internet and the children who are most vulnerable. They also suggest the area where law enforcement needs to direct its resources in order to effectively address this problem.

Rogers, A. (2008). Child pornography's forgotten victims. *Pace Law Faculty Publications*. Paper 541. 847-863.

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate that possession of child pornography is not a victimless crime. It will illustrate the problem and explain the harm suffered by its victims. It will then trace factors that may have contributed to the perception that possession of child pornography is a victimless offense. The first factor is the dual nature of the child pornography laws that addresses both actual and future harm. When this duality is applied to possessors, their link to actual harm appears attenuated because the possessor is not involved in the acts of sexual abuse inherent in producing the images. The second factor is that a number of scholars have criticized generally possession offenses as a tool for preemptive prosecutions, but they have not exempted child pornography from their condemnation. Finally, technology itself is a cause. The growth of the Internet and the ability to find images from the comfort of one's home further weakens the connection between the victim and the viewer; this distance is exacerbated by a general sense that nothing is real in cyberspace.

Leary, M. G. (2007). Self-produced child pornography: The appropriate societal response to juvenile self-sexual exploitation. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and Law*, 15, 1.

Quayle, E., & Taylor, M. (Eds.). (2005). *Viewing child pornography on the internet: Understanding the offence, managing the offender, helping the victims*. Russell House Publishing.

Wolak, J., Finkelhor, D., & Mitchell, K. (2005). Child-pornography possessors arrested in internet-related crimes: Findings from the National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (p. 4). Alexandria, VA: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. NCJ 210701.

The N-JOV Study collected information from a national sample of law enforcement agencies about the characteristics of Internet sex crimes against minors and the number of arrests for these crimes during a 1-year period. The goals of the study were to estimate a baseline number of arrests during a 1-year period, so that the increase in the number of these cases can be measured in the future; to develop a statistical portrait of the characteristics of Internet sex crimes against minors and how such cases are handled by the criminal justice system; and to organize the cases into a typology useful for tracking and analysis. The study found that law enforcement agencies at all levels made an estimated 2,577 arrests for Internet sex crimes against minors during the 12 months that began on July 1, 2000. The types of crimes for which arrests occurred were as follows: Internet-related contacts between offenders and victims that resulted in sexual assaults and the use of the victims in the production of child pornography (39 percent of arrests); Internet solicitations for sexual contact made to undercover law enforcement officers posing as minors (25 percent of arrests); and the possession, distribution, or trading of Internet child pornography by offenders who did not use the Internet to sexually exploit identified victims or solicit undercover investigators (36 percent of arrests). Two-thirds (67 percent) of offenders who committed any of the types of Internet sex crimes against minors possessed child pornography. The vast majority of offenders were non-Hispanic White males older than 25 who were acting alone. Most investigations (79 percent) involved more than one law enforcement agency. State, county, and local agencies were involved in 85 percent of all cases; Federal agencies were involved in 46 percent of the cases. Apparently there were fewer dismissals and acquittals in cases that involved Internet-related sex crimes against minors than for conventional prosecutions of child sexual abuse.

Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. (2004). Child pornography: Patterns from NIBRS. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is committed to improving the justice system's response to crimes against children. OJJDP recognizes that children are at increased risk for crime victimization. Not only are children the victims of many of the same crimes that victimize adults, they are subject to other crimes, like child abuse and neglect, that are specific to childhood. The impact of these crimes on young victims can be devastating, and the violent or sexual victimization of children can often lead to an intergenerational cycle of violence and abuse. The purpose of OJJDP's Crimes Against Children Series is to improve and expand the nation's efforts to better serve child victims by presenting the latest information about child victimization, including analyses of crime victimization statistics, studies of child victims and their special needs, and descriptions of programs and approaches that address these needs.

Taylor, M., & Quayle, E. (2003). Child pornography: An internet crime. Psychology Press.

Two complementary perspectives on child pornography— legal and psychological—are presented and an emergent typology for understanding the nature of such pictures on the Internet is outlined. Data from the Combating Paedophile Information Networks in Europe (COPINE) project is used to illustrate the nature of the material available to people with a sexual interest in children, where it can be found and how offenders use and are changed by the Internet. It concludes with a consideration of issues that are of concern in relation to child pornography, the Internet and offending behaviour.

Adler, A. (2001). The perverse law of child pornography. *Columbia Law Review*, 101(2), 209–273.

Johnson, D. B. (1994). Why the possession of computer-generated child pornography can be constitutionally prohibited. *Albany Law Journal of Science and Technology*, 4, 311–332.

Burgess, A. W., & Hartman, C. R. (1987). Child abuse aspects of child pornography. *Psychiatric Annals*, 17(4), 248–253. DOI:10.3928/0048-5713-19870401-08

Reports on the child sexual abuse (CSA) aspects of child pornography from the viewpoint of the negative impact on the cognitive, psychological, and social development of the child victim. Elements of CSA, sex ring dynamics, acute symptoms, and adaptive behavioral responses of victims and perpetrators are discussed. Treatment issues include the careful evaluation of unresolved childhood sexual abuse and the disclosure aspects of abuse, which confronts males with gender identity problems related to bi- or homosexuality. It is argued that the CSA victim's symptoms may best be understood under the diagnosis of chronic or delayed posttraumatic stress. (PsycINFO Database Record © 2012 APA, all rights reserved)

Tyler, R. P., & Stone, L. E. (1985). Child pornography: Perpetuating the sexual victimization of children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 9(3), 313–318. DOI:10.1016/0145-2134(85)90026-2

Children have been sexually exploited throughout recorded history. The invention of the camera and subsequent related technological advances (slides, movies, instant picture cameras and videotape) have provided new avenues for the exploitation of children by facilitating the distribution of pictorial representations of these children on a world-wide basis. A major use of commercial child pornography is to convince a potential child victim that the sexual acts desired by the adult offender are fun, exciting, can satisfy the child's curiosity and are a societally acceptable means of expressing affection. Commercial child pornography publications contain numerous pictures of children viewing child pornography, in some cases

replicating the pose(s) depicted in the viewed material. Although many jurisdictions have now prohibited child pornography, the need for a world-wide ban continues, as the remaining producers distribute their material throughout the world.

Pierce, R. L. (1984). Child pornography: A hidden dimension of child abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 8(4), 483-493. DOI:10.1016/0145-2134(84)90030-9

In the decade of the 70s, much was learned about abused and neglected children and their families, Public outcry demanded action at the state, regional and national level hoping that the effort would generate more effective methods of identification, intervention and treatment. Consequently, researchers and theoreticians initiated efforts that were aimed at providing a better understanding of why some parents abuse or neglect their children while others do not. In spite of all the energy and time, one form of child abuse continues to flourish relatively unnoticed—child pornography, or as it is more commonly known in the trade, kiddie or chicken porn. Because of the dearth of information about the subject, this paper addresses five key issues: (1) Who are the children who become the young stars of pornographic films? (2) How many children are estimated to be involved in this activity? (3) What are the presumed effects of such involvement on children? (4) Legal issues related to the control of the pornographic industry; and (5) What is the challenge to social work and other helping professionals?

III. Legislation

Bleakley, P., Martellozzo, E., Spence, R., & DeMarco, J. (2023). Moderating online child sexual abuse material (CSAM): Does self-regulation work, or is greater state regulation needed?. *European Journal of Criminology*. DOI:10.1177/14773708231181361

Social media platforms are crucial public forums connecting users around the world through a decentralised cyberspace. These platforms host high volumes of content and, as such, employ content moderators (CMs) to safeguard users against harmful content like child sexual abuse material (CSAM). These roles are critical in the social media landscape however, CMs' work as "digital first responders" is complicated by legal and systemic debates over whether the policing of cyberspace should be left to the self-regulation of technology companies, or if greater state-regulation is required. In this empirical policy and literature review, major debates in the area of content moderation and, in particular, the online policing of CSAM are identified and evaluated. This includes the issue of territorial jurisdiction, and how it obstructs traditional policing; concerns over free speech and privacy if CMs are given greater powers, and debates over whether technology companies should be legally liable for user-generated content (UGC). In outlining these issues, a more comprehensive foundation for evaluating current practices for monitoring and combatting online CSAM is established which illustrates both the practical and philosophical challenges of the existing status quo, wherein the state and private companies share these important responsibilities.

Lireza, L., & Koci, G. (2023). Child cyberpornography in EU countries: The ways of protecting children's integrity. *Perspectives of Law and Public Administration*, 12, 230.

European countries have made significant progress in strengthening their legal frameworks and policies to prevent and combat child cyberpornography. However, effective prevention and combat efforts require a comprehensive and coordinated approach that involves sharing information and intelligence across borders, cooperating in investigations and prosecutions, and providing support to victims and their families. The research will be conducted using a mixed-methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection and

analysis. The paper, examines the legal measures taken by European countries to prevent and combat child cyberpornography. It analyzes the legal frameworks and policies in different European countries, the challenges faced in implementing and enforcing these legal measures, and the effectiveness of these measures in combatting child cyberpornography. The effectiveness of measures such as age verification, content moderation, and reporting mechanisms will be analyzed to determine their impact on preventing child cyberpornography. Artificial intelligence (AI) technology is also becoming increasingly important in preventing and combatting cyberpornography involving children. From the other side, interstate cooperation can also play a critical role in promoting international education and awareness-raising efforts to prevent child cyberpornography.

Chousou, S., Magaud, J., Pavoni, L., Williams, M., & G'sell, F. (2022). [Is encryption a fundamental right? A case study on CSAM regulation in the EU](#). SciencesPo–Chair Digital, Governance and Sovereignty.

Two current policy debates collide into a complex and evolving European legal landscape: Is it possible to protect children and prevent the dissemination of child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) when end-to-end encryption (E2EE) technology makes messages inaccessible to law enforcement? As CSAM continues to proliferate online messaging platforms, political debates and long legal proceedings are looking to create criminal proceedings backdoors and obligations for telecommunications and online media firms to scan their services for CSAM evidence. Some argue that encryption in the era of digitization is not up for debate, rather it approaches a state of fundamentality. Encryption protects privacy and security online, both of which are recognized as undisputed fundamental rights. But is encryption itself a fundamental right? What happens when a fundamental right enables crimes against the most vulnerable in our society? Is there a way to protect children from CSAM while simultaneously protecting the right to private communications online for all? By examining the role of encryption and the current regulatory framework in the EU, with an emphasis on the developing proposal to

prevent and combat child abuse by screening private messages, we establish the fundamentality of encryption in the private lives of all internet users, including children.

Christofoletti, C., Barbosa, P. A. R., & Rodriguez, V. G. (2021). The automatic and private detection of child pornography on the Internet: Hashes and the appearing conflict with the new European privacy laws. *Derecho Penal y Criminologia*, 42, 57.

In the confidentiality and retention provisions of the European Virtual Privacy Directive (which came into force in December 2020) a threat to automatic child pornography detection methods, the European Commission proposed, in September 2020, a repeal provisional of these provisions. The argument is the existence of a necessary collision between the compliance policies currently practiced by platforms such as Facebook and Instagram and the new European privacy guidelines. At the center of the discussion is hashing technology, a scanning system for the identification of previously known criminal content. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that such a collision does not exist, provided certain precautions based on the principles of reasonableness and utility are taken.

Leary, M. G. (2022). [§ 230 of the Communications Decency Act: Regarding child sexual abuse material-the experiment is done and it failed](#). CUA Columbus School of Law Legal Studies Research Paper, (2).

Two truths coexist: The Internet has brought with it tremendous changes for learning, connection, and business; and the Internet and other digital platforms have led to an unprecedented exploitation of children on a scale never before seen or even imagined. This is due in large part to §230 of the Communications Decency Act – the law which these platforms have perverted to immunize their activity from liability for the tremendous harms caused. This duality has led to great debate about whether this 1996 law has any value in the 21 st Century. This article answers that question by focusing on the issues surrounding child exploitation on the Internet. It does so because, some in the modern debate attempt to reframe §230's origin

as one singularly focused on Internet freedom. This is a false narrative, ignoring the actual context in which §230 became law. This article re-examines the actual history of §230, its connection to child protection, and corrects the artificial reframing of §230 as legislation focused only on creating an unregulated Internet. It examines the child protective landscape from which it emerged and the promises its proponents made regarding protection. It then compares those intentions and promises to the present day climate regarding child exploitation on the Internet, specifically focusing on the problem of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) – also known as child pornography in the United States. Observing the cavernous fissure between one of the many intentions of §230 and the reality of online child exploitation it argues that the need to reform §230 and return it to one of its original purposes is now. This article argues that need is prescient not only because of the grave reality of CSAM online, but also because of one of the very intentions behind §230 – to protect children.

Salter, M., & Richardson, L. (2021). The Trichan takedown: Lessons in the governance and regulation of child sexual abuse material. *Policy & Internet*, 13(3), 385–399.
DOI: 10.1002/poi3.256

Amidst renewed concern about the prevalence of online child sexual abuse material, the global technology sector is refocusing on models of multistakeholder governance and the development of new technological solutions. This paper argues that the language of multistakeholderism and technological solutionism obscures the administrative and commercial practices that facilitate the widespread distribution of abuse material. To illustrate this point, the paper describes the 2019 intervention of the Canadian Centre for Child Protection in the operations of “Trichan”, three websites that were amongst the largest purveyors of abuse material on the open web for 7 years. The case study underscores the materiality of the Internet and the role of commercial relations within the infrastructure stack in the provision of illegal content. While identifying opportunities for the mass removal of abuse material, the paper questions the discretion granted to technology companies under laissez faire regulation, and

troubles characterizations of Internet infrastructure as neutral and instrumental factors in the epidemic availability of abuse material.

Cullen, O., Ernst, K. Z., Dawes, N., Binford, W., & Dimitropoulos, G. (2020). ["Our laws have not caught up with the technology": Understanding challenges and facilitators in investigating and prosecuting child sexual abuse materials in the United States](#). *Laws*, 9(4), 28. DOI:10.3390/laws9040028

With technological advances, the creation and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) has become one of the fastest growing illicit online industries in the United States. Perpetrators are becoming increasingly sophisticated and exploit cutting-edge technology, making it difficult for law enforcement to investigate and prosecute these crimes. There is limited research on best practices for investigating cases of CSAM. The aim of this research was to understand challenges and facilitators for investigating and prosecuting cases of CSAM as a foundation to develop best practices in this area. To meet these objectives, qualitative interviews and focus groups were conducted with participants throughout the western United States. Two major themes arose from this research: Theme 1: Challenges to investigating and prosecuting CSAM; and Theme 2: Facilitators to investigating and prosecuting CSAM. Within Theme 1, subthemes included technology and internet service providers, laws, lack of resources, and service provider mental health and well-being. Within Theme 2, subthemes included multidisciplinary teams and training. This research is a first step in understanding the experiences of law enforcement and prosecutors in addressing CSAM. Findings from this study can be used to support the development of best practices for those in the justice system investigating and prosecuting CSAM.

Signorato, S. (2020). Streamlining the fight against child sex offenders through EU regulation of IP address. *Journal of Eastern European Criminal Law*, (01), 77–86.

The sexual abuse and the sexual exploitation of children, which includes child pornography, are very serious crimes which must be combated to the highest degree. At present, however, there are still too many legal obstacles in the prevention and the prosecution of these crimes. One of the main obstacles is the difficulty encountered in the collection of IP addresses, which often constitute very important evidence. Each Member State has its own legislation, and there are no clear EU indications regarding the retention period of IP addresses. In this article, a four-year retention period of the IP address is proposed in order to balance the needs of the protection of fundamental rights as well as those of investigative activity. This suggested retention period derives from the analysis of the regulations regarding data retention and the data on the investigative practices of all the Member States, taking into account the need to protect fundamental rights.

Witting, S. K., & Angula, M. P. (2020). Leveraging international law to strengthen the national legal framework on child sexual abuse material in Namibia. *Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 53(1), 4–31.

With the gazetting of the Regulations of the Child Care and Protection Act 3 of 2015, on 30 January 2019, a crucial regulatory piece of children's rights in Namibia has finally been operationalised. However, the Act insufficiently addresses new emerging online offences against children such as the possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material, and hence leaves a considerable gap in the protection of children's rights. As the Namibian Constitution follows a monist approach to international law, this article argues that the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography can be directly applied to complement the national legal framework to prosecute cases of possessing and disseminating child sexual abuse material, while upholding fair-trial principles.

Atabekova, A., & Filippov, V. (2018). [Legislation response to use of minors' self-generated sexual content for their ICT-facilitated sexual coercion](#). *European Research Studies*, 21(4), 763–772.

The third Millennium has brought to life new digital contexts of human activities that include positive, negative and even alarming phenomena with regard to human development and safety. Among other things minors' self-generated content has become a tool for their ICT-facilitated sexual coercion and extortion. Therefore, the national legislations should implement adequate measures to withstand such activities. The paper follows the authors' report made at the 21st session (June 2018) of the Council of Europe Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). The report focused on the reference in national legislations to ICT-facilitated sexual coercion and/or extortion of children due to use of their self-generated sexually explicit visual content. The paper aims to explore the legal instruments which Member States use to respond to the mentioned challenge, to systematize the above tools and to evaluate them in terms of their compliance with internationally binding legislation. The materials included officially submitted information by 42 Lanzarote Committee Member States. The methodology integrated comparative, descriptive, conceptual, evaluative approaches to the subject matter study. The analysis made it possible to identify typical ways that Lanzarote Committee Member States use to withstand the issue under study. The research relevance stems from the revealed promising national practices regarding the criminalization of minors' ICT-facilitated sexual coercion that uses their self-generated sexual content.

International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children. (2018). [Child sexual abuse material: Model legislation and global review](#).

This groundbreaking report, often referred to as ICMEC's Rule of Law project, analyzes child sexual abuse material (CSAM) legislation in 196 countries around the world, and offers a "menu" of concepts to be considered when drafting anti-CSAM legislation. First released in April 2006, the report is currently in its 9th edition. The latest edition's findings show that since inception

150 countries have refined or implemented new anti-CSAM legislation, 140 countries criminalize simple CSAM possession, 125 countries define CSAM, and only 32 countries require ISP reporting of suspected CSAM.

Vyas, K., & Gupta, A. (2018). [A global quagmire: Child sexual abuse and child pornography](#). *Supremo Amicus*, 7, 112-125.

Buono, L. (2012). Gearing up the fight against cybercrime in the European Union: A new set of rules and the establishment of the European Cybercrime Centre (Ec3). *New Journal of European Criminal Law*, 3(3-4), 332-343. DOI:10.1177/203228441200300307

In the never-ending cat-and-mouse game between the law and the (r)evolution of technologies there always seems to be new mice around. Botnet attacks, phishing, social networks, Voice over Internet Protocols (VoIPs) and geo-locative software are posing new menaces that were unknown, or largely underestimated, only few years ago. Although technology neutral, the legislation should, to the extent possible, respond to these constantly changing trends and threats. This article focuses on the European Union's new approach to fight cybercrime giving a preliminary assessment of the new proposal for a Directive on attacks against information systems, intended to replace the 2005 Framework Decision. The article also explores the establishment of the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) by 2013 and its key features.

McLelland, M. (2012). [Australia's 'child-abuse material' legislation, internet regulation and the juridification of the imagination](#). *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(5), 467-483. DOI:10.1177/1367877911421082

This paper investigates the implications of Australia's prohibition of 'child-abuse material' (including cartoons, animation, drawings, and text) for Australian fan communities of animation, comics and gaming (ACG) and slash fiction. It is argued that current legislation is

out of synch with the new communicative environment brought about by the Internet since a large portion of the fans producing and trading in these images are themselves minors and young people. Habermas's analysis of the conflict between instrumental and communicative rationality is deployed to demonstrate that legislators have misrecognised the nature of the communicative practices that take place within the 'lifeworlds' of fan communities resulting in an unjust 'juridification' of their creative works. Drawing on Japanese research into the female fandom surrounding 'Boys' Love' (BL) manga, it is argued that current Australian legislation not only forecloses the fantasy lives of young Australian fans but also harms them by aligning them with paedophile networks. Finally, drawing upon Jean Cohen's paradigm of 'reflexive law' the paper considers a possible way forward that opens up channels of communication between regulators, fans, domain host administrators and media studies professionals that would encourage a more nuanced approach to legislation as well as a greater awareness of the need for self-regulation among fan communities.

McIntyre, T. J. (2010). [Blocking child pornography on the Internet: European Union developments](#). *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, 24(3), 209-221. DOI:10.1080/13600869.2010.522321

Internet blocking has become increasingly common within Europe as a tool to attempt to prevent the distribution of child pornography. However, until recently blocking systems have largely developed independently at a national level. Although there have been European measures against child pornography since 1996 these measures have previously focused on other responses such as the approximation of national laws and the development of hotlines to report illegal content. This, however, is now changing and European Union policy is moving towards greater use of blocking. For example, the Safer Internet Plus Programme has funded the CIRCAMP ('Cospol Internet Related Child Abusive Material Project') police network to promote blocking and the sharing of national blocklists and the Commission is currently proposing legislation which would require all Member States to introduce blocking systems.

This article outlines these developments and assesses the implications that they may have for freedom of expression online.

Mateo, G. (2008). The new face of child pornography: Digital imaging technology and the law. *University of Illinois Journal of Technology and Policy*, 175.

This Note explains how technological advances in digital imaging have been used to both hinder and further attempts to prosecute and prevent the dissemination of child pornography. Most importantly, this Note discusses the ways technological advances have interacted with First Amendment protections. Ultimately, this Note advocates for child-centered legislation that protects the vulnerability of children as victims of sexual exploitation rather than deferring to the “so-called” rights of pornographers and Hollywood film producers.

IV. Effects of exposure upon children and adolescents

Gassó, A. M., & Bruch-Granados, A. (2021). [Psychological and forensic challenges regarding youth consumption of pornography: A narrative review](#). *Adolescents*, 1(2), 108–122.
[DOI:10.3390/adolescents1020009](#)

Nowadays, technology has become part of the daily activities of a large part of the population. Many of the activities and development and socialization processes of minors and young people have been transferred to the online world, generating attention and concern from the educational, scientific, and forensic communities. One of the most worrying issues derived from this new online world is the consumption of pornography by teens. The objective of this literature review is to draw attention to the consequences and emotional disturbances derived from the consumption of pornography in young people, as well as the forensic implications of this phenomenon, among which are paraphilias, perpetration, and victimization of sexual assaults, and the development of new forms of online sexual victimization. The main findings suggest that the first contact with pornography starts at the age of 8 years old, with important behavioral and psychological consequences, such as hypersexualization, emotional disturbances, and the perpetuation of gender inequality. Furthermore, pornography consumption by youth has been linked to the exacerbation of paraphilias, an increase in sexual aggression perpetration and victimization, and, finally, it has been linked to an increase in online sexual victimization. Implications and future lines of research are discussed.

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

Cases of online child sexual abuse (OCSA) are increasing dramatically in number, but research on this relatively new type of crime and its psychological consequences is limited, leading to major challenges for the judiciary. The present mixed methods study investigated 98 legal

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

Massey, K., Burns, J., & Franz, A. (2021). Young people, sexuality and the age of pornography. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(1), 318–336. DOI:10.1007/s12119-020-09771-z

Recently interest into the effects of pornography on children and young people's sexual development has increased leading to an increase in studies in the area, laws being changed and public concern growing. This paper aims to recap these findings including more recent studies carried out in the UK. The literature shows links between viewing pornography and sexually explicit material and young people's attitudes and behaviours. This suggests that young people's sexuality is affected by sexual imagery and that this influences children and young people's sexual attitudes and behaviours. The impact is contingent on the young person's support network, social learning and other demographic factors, not least gender which has been consistently found to be significant. Recent studies have found changes in sexual practices of young people which are attributed to viewing pornography such as an increase in anal sex and casual attitudes to consent. Links between porn use and sexual coercion have also been found. How and in what ways children and young people are affected

by such imagery—and what can be done to reduce the negative impact on young people is debated in the light of the gaps in the literature and the issues with the existing literature. Further need for study is discussed.

Wright, P. J., Paul, B., & Herbenick, D. (2021). Preliminary insights from a US probability sample on adolescents' pornography exposure, media psychology, and sexual aggression. *Journal of Health Communication*, 26(1), 39–46.

[DOI:10.1080/10810730.2021.1887980](https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2021.1887980)

Sexual aggression is now widely recognized as a public health crisis. Using the sexual script acquisition, activation, application model (3AM) as a guide, this paper reports findings on U.S. teenagers' exposure to pornography, motivation for viewing pornography, perceptions of pornography's realism, identification with pornographic actors, and sexual aggression risk from the National Survey of Porn Use, Relationships, and Sexual Socialization (NSPRSS), a U.S. population-based probability study. Sexual aggression was operationalized as pressuring another person into having sex despite their explicit declaration of nonconsent. Having been exposed to pornography and perceiving pornography as realistic were associated with increased sexual aggression risk. A stronger level of identification with pornographic actors was associated with an increased probability of sexual aggression for males, but not females. A motivation to learn about others' sexual expectations from pornography was unrelated to sexual aggression. Results interpretation and discussion focus on the need for additional theoretical nuance and measurement specificity in the media psychology literature on pornography and sexual aggression.

Yu, C., Kågesten, A. E., De Meyer, S., Moreau, C., van Reeuwijk, M., & Lou, C. (2021). [Pornography use and perceived gender norms among young adolescents in urban poor environments: A cross-site study](#). *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 69(1), S31–S38.

[DOI:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.03.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.03.008)

The purpose of the study is to assess the prevalence of pornography use and its association with a range of perceived gender norms among adolescents aged 10–14 years across five

urban poor settings globally. The study includes 9,250 adolescents aged 10–14 years from Belgium, China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, and Indonesia, as part of the Global Early Adolescent Study. We examined the percentage of pornography use by sex and site and conducted multivariate logistic regressions to examine the relation between gender norm perceptions and pornography use, adjusting for individual, family, peer, and media exposures. Ever-use of pornography ranged from 14.5% in Ecuador to 33.0% in Belgium and was more common among boys than girls. Overall, boys who perceived greater permissiveness about romantic relations, adolescents who engaged in such relations, and adolescents who assumed that their friends were sexually active had greater pornography exposure. Pornography use did not systematically correlate with unequal gender norms. Such correlations only exist among boys in two Asian sites, where a supportive school environment, more caregiver awareness, and/or neighborhood cohesion were related to less pornography use. Pornography use is a gendered experience that begins in early adolescence. Although factors of pornography use vary across the social context, the exposure to pornography has become a normative part of adolescent sexuality development. Young people, especially those from where sexuality remains taboo, need the ability to critically process information and avoid potential risks associated with pornographic gendered and sexual stereotypes, calling for comprehensive sexuality education programs to help them build the knowledge and confidence they need.

Bonieli-Nissim, M., Efrati, Y., & Dolev-Cohen, M. (2020). Parental mediation regarding children's pornography exposure: The role of parenting style, protection motivation and gender. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 57(1), 42–51.
DOI:10.1080/00224499.2019.1590795

Communication between parent and child regarding pornography can be awkward. In the following study, we examined if parenting style (authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive) and gender was associated with parental mediation strategies (restrictive, active, and co-use) in relation to pornography exposure, mediated by threat appraisal and coping appraisal

(protection motivation theory). A sample of 1,070 Israeli parents of 10- to 14-year-old youth completed a set of online questionnaires. Findings suggested that authoritarian and permissive parents, who had lower scores in authoritative parenthood, were more likely to have dysfunctional (i.e., low-quality) communication about pornography and subsequently be less active in their mediation regarding pornography. Conversely, parents who were more authoritative were more likely to perceive the severity of pornography consumption and were more restrictive and active in mediating pornography. Finally, fathers tended to have more dysfunctional communication about pornography than mothers and were consequently less active in their mediation strategies concerning pornography.

Rostad, W. L., Gittins-Stone, D., Huntington, C., Rizzo, C. J., Pearlman, D., & Orchowski, L. (2019). [The association between exposure to violent pornography and teen dating violence in grade 10 high school students](#). *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 48(7), 2137-2147.
DOI:10.1007/s10508-019-1435-4

Exposure to pornography in general has been linked with adolescent dating violence and sexual aggression, but less is known about exposure to violent pornography specifically. The current study examined the association of violent pornography exposure with different forms of teen dating violence (TDV) using baseline survey data from a sample of Grade 10 high school students who reported being in a dating relationship in the past year ($n = 1694$). Gender-stratified logistic regression models generated odds ratios adjusted for demographics, substance use, history of suspension/expulsion, gender equitable attitudes, and tolerance of rape myths to identify significant associations between violent pornography exposure and self-reported physical, sexual, and threatening TDV perpetration and victimization. Violent pornography exposure was associated with all types of TDV, though patterns differed by gender. Boys exposed to violent pornography were 2–3 times more likely to report sexual TDV perpetration and victimization and physical TDV victimization, while girls exposed to violent pornography were over 1.5 times more likely to be perpetrate threatening TDV compared to their non-exposed counterparts. Comprehensive prevention strategies for TDV may consider

the potential risks associated with exposure to violent pornography, particularly for boys, and provide an alternative source of education about healthy sexual behavior and relationships.

Shin, J., & Lee, C. H. (2019). Exposure to internet pornography and sexually aggressive behaviour: Protective roles of social support among Korean adolescents. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 25(2), 90–104. [DOI:10.1080/13552600.2018.1528795](https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2018.1528795)

Adolescents' exposure to internet pornography and its negative effects on healthy sexual development have been extensively investigated. However, little research has addressed the identification of protective factors that can buffer these negative effects. Based on the conceptualisation of a stress-buffering model of social support, this study empirically tested whether social support would provide a buffer against negative effects of internet pornography on sexually aggressive behaviours in adolescents. Results from an online survey of two-hundred-ten (210) Korean high school students revealed that social support from parents and friends performed buffering roles, and the buffering effect of friend support was the strongest. Based on these results, practical implications for healthy adolescent sexual development were discussed.

Alexandraki, K., Stavropoulos, V., Anderson, E., Latifi, M. Q., & Gomez, R. (2018). Adolescent pornography use: A systematic literature review of research trends 2000–2017. *Current Psychiatry Reviews*, 14(1), 47–58. [DOI:10.2174/2211556007666180606073617](https://doi.org/10.2174/2211556007666180606073617)

Pornography Use (PU) has been defined as the viewing of explicit materials in the form of pictures and videos, in which people are performing intercourse with clearly exposed and visible genitals. The prevalence of PU has increased dramatically among adolescents, partly attributed to the wide availability of such online material. The aim of this systematic literature review is to map the research interest in the field and to examine whether statistically significant results have emerged from the areas of research focus. To address these aims: a) the PRISMA guidelines are adopted and; b) an integrative conceptualization (derived from the merging of two widely accepted models of understanding of Internet use behaviours) was

introduced to guide the synthesis of the findings. In total, 57 studies were integrated into the present literature review. Findings were conceptualized/ classified into individual, contextual and activity factors related to PU in adolescence. In that context, individual associated factors, such as development, victimization, mental health and religiosity, appear to have primarily captivated research interest demonstrating significant relationships with adolescent PU. Results indicate that more research focus on contextual and activity related factors is required to improve the level of understanding of adolescent PU and to inform a more holistic conceptual framework of understanding of the phenomenon during adolescence that could potentially guide future research.

Przybylski, A. K., & Nash, V. (2018). [Internet filtering and adolescent exposure to online sexual material](#). *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 21(7), 405–410.
DOI:10.1089/cyber.2017.0466

Early adolescents are spending an increasing amount of time online, and a significant share of caregivers now use Internet filtering tools to shield this population from online sexual material. Despite wide use, the efficacy of filters is poorly understood. In this article, we present two studies: one exploratory analysis of secondary data collected in the European Union ($n = 13,176$), and one preregistered study focused on British adolescents and caregivers ($n = 1,004$) to rigorously evaluate their utility. In both studies, caregivers were asked about their use of Internet filtering, and adolescent participants were interviewed about their recent online experiences. Analyses focused on the absolute and relative risks of young people encountering online sexual material and the effectiveness of Internet filters. Results suggested that caregiver's use of Internet filtering had inconsistent and practically insignificant links with young people reports of encountering online sexual material. Our findings underscore the need for randomized controlled trials to determine the extent to which Internet filtering and related technologies support versus thwarts young people online, and if their perceived utility justifies their financial and informational costs.

Dines, G. (2017). [Growing up with porn: The developmental and societal impact of pornography on children](#). *Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence*, 2(3), 3. DOI:10.23860/dignity.2017.02.03.03

Beyens, I., Vandenbosch, L., & Eggermont, S. (2015). Early adolescent boys' exposure to Internet pornography: Relationships to pubertal timing, sensation seeking, and academic performance. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 35(8), 1045-1068. DOI:10.1177/0272431614548069

Research has demonstrated that adolescents regularly use Internet pornography. This 14.10; N = 325) that (a) explains their exposure to Internet pornography by looking at relationships with pubertal timing and sensation seeking, and (b) explores the potential consequence of their exposure to Internet pornography for their academic performance. An integrative path model indicated that pubertal timing and sensation seeking predicted the use of Internet pornography. Boys with an advanced pubertal stage and boys high in sensation seeking more frequently used Internet pornography. Moreover, an increased use of Internet pornography decreased boys' academic performance six months later. The discussion focuses on the consequences of this integrative model for future research on Internet pornography.

Seto, M. C., Hermann, C. A., Kjellgren, C., Priebe, G., Svedin, C. G., & Långström, N. (2015). Viewing child pornography: Prevalence and correlates in a representative community sample of young Swedish men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 44(1), 67-79. DOI:10.1007/s10508-013-0244-4

Most research on child pornography use has been based on selected clinical or criminal justice samples; risk factors for child pornography use in the general population remain largely unexplored. In this study, we examined prevalence, risk factors, and correlates of viewing depictions of adult-child sex in a population-representative sample of 1,978 young Swedish men (17-20 years, Mdn = 18 years, overall response rate, 77 %). In an anonymous, school-based survey, participants self-reported sexual coercion experiences, attitudes and beliefs about sex, perceived peer attitudes, and sexual interests and behaviors; including pornography use,

sexual interest in children, and sexually coercive behavior. A total of 84 (4.2 %) young men reported they had ever viewed child pornography. Most theory-based variables were moderately and significantly associated with child pornography viewing and were consistent with models of sexual offending implicating both antisociality and sexual deviance. In multivariate logistic regression analysis, 7 of 15 tested factors independently predicted child pornography viewing and explained 42 % of the variance: ever had sex with a male, likely to have sex with a child aged 12–14, likely to have sex with a child 12 or less, perception of children as seductive, having friends who have watched child pornography, frequent pornography use, and ever viewed violent pornography. From these, a 6-item Child Pornography Correlates Scale was constructed and then cross-validated in a similar but independent Norwegian sample.

Baxter, A. (2014). How pornography harms children: The advocate's role. *ABA Child Law Practice*, 33(5), 113, 118–120.

Although blocking and filtering software can prevent access, unwanted and intentional exposure is always possible.² In 2005, a study of youth aged 10–17 found 42% reported wanted and unwanted exposure to online pornography in the past year.³ Continued exposure to pornography can have negative effects on children and youth. Lawyers who represent children and youth should be aware of the possibility of such exposure and prepared to advocate for them.

Horvath, M. A. H., Alys, L., Massey, K., Pina, A., & Adler, J. R. (2013). A rapid evidence assessment on the effects that access and exposure to pornography has on children and young people. London: Middlesex University.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner for England is calling for urgent action to develop children's resilience to pornography following a research report it commissioned which found that: a significant number of children access pornography; it influences their attitudes towards relationships and sex; it is linked to risky behavior such as having sex at a younger age; and

there is a correlation between holding violent attitudes and accessing more violent media. Children and young people's exposure and access to pornography occurs both on and offline but in recent years the most common method of access is via Internet enabled technology: Exposure and access to pornography increases with age; Accidental exposure to pornography is more prevalent than deliberate access; There are gender differences in exposure and access to pornography with boys more likely to be exposed to and deliberately access, seek or use pornography than girls. It concludes that there are still many unanswered questions about the affect exposure to pornography has on children: a situation the Office of the Children's Commissioner considers requires urgent action in an age where extreme violent and sadistic imagery is two clicks away. The researchers identified 41,000 items of academic literature about pornography undertaking an in-depth analysis of 276 to draw its conclusions.

Sinković, M., Štulhofer, A., & Božić, J. (2013). Revisiting the association between pornography use and risky sexual behaviors: The role of early exposure to pornography and sexual sensation seeking. *Journal of Sex Research*, 50(7), 633–641.
DOI:10.1080/00224499.2012.681403

Among the suggested problems and harms associated with widespread pornography use among young people, risky sexual behaviors have been frequently mentioned. To further explore this public health concern, this article analyzed sexual sensation seeking (SSS) as a potential confounder of the association between pornography use and sexual risks using data collected in 2010 from a population-based sample of young Croatian adults aged 18 to 25 (n=1,005). Significant, but small, correlations were found between the indicators of pornography use (age at first exposure, frequency of use in the past 12 months, and personal importance of pornography) and sexual risk taking. However, in a multivariate analysis, only age at first exposure to pornography remained a significant, albeit weak, predictor of sexual risk taking among both women and men. SSS, defined as the dispositional tendency toward the impulsive pursuit of sexual arousal and stimulation, neither confounded nor moderated this association. Overall, the findings do not support the notion that pornography use is

substantially associated with sexual risk taking among young adults, but suggest that early exposure to sexually explicit material and high SSS are additive risk factors for sexual risk taking.

Ybarra, M. L., Mitchell, K. J., Hamburger, M., Diener-West, M., & Leaf, P. J. (2011). X-rated material and perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior among children and adolescents: Is there a link? *Aggressive Behavior*, 37(1), 1-18. DOI:10.1002/ab.20367

Longitudinal linkages between intentional exposure to x-rated material and sexually aggressive behavior were examined among youth 10–15 year olds surveyed nationally in the United States. At Wave 1 in 2006, participants (n51,588) were queried about these exposures and outcomes in the preceding 12 months. Wave 2 data (n51,206) were collected approximately 12 months after Wave 1 and Wave 3 data (n51,159) were collected approximately 24 months after Wave 1. Thus, data for this project represent a 36-month time frame. A marginal model with generalized estimating equations was used to represent the population-average odds of sexually aggressive behavior over the 36 months as a function of exposure to x-rated material over the same time and to account for clustering in the data within person over time. An average of 5% of youth reported perpetrating sexually aggressive behavior and 23% of youth reported intentional exposure to x-rated material. After adjusting for other potentially influential proximal (i.e., sexual aggression victimization) and distal characteristics (e.g., substance use), we found that intentional exposure to violent x-rated material over time predicted an almost 6-fold increase in the odds of self-reported sexually aggressive behavior (aOR: 5.8, 95% CI: 3.2, 10.5), whereas exposure to nonviolent x-rated material was not statistically significantly related (aOR: 1.7, 95% CI: 0.94, 2.9). Associations were similar for boys and girls (boys nonviolent x-rated material aOR52.0, 95% CI: 0.8, 4.7; violent x-rated material aOR56.5, 95% CI: 2.7, 15.3; girls nonviolent x-rated material aOR51.2, 95% CI: 0.5, 3.2; violent x-rated material aOR56.1, 95% CI: 2.5, 14.8).

Alexy, E. M., Burgess, A.W., & Prentky, R. A. (2009). Pornography use as a risk marker for an aggressive pattern of behaviour among sexually reactive children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 14(6), 442–453.
DOI:10.1177/1078390308327137

Sexually reactive children and adolescents (SRCAs), sometimes referred to as juvenile sexual offenders, may be more vulnerable and likely to experience damaging effects from pornography use because they are a high-risk group for a variety of aggressive behaviors. The purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics of those who use pornography and those who do not and to examine the associations between pornography use and aggressive behaviors among SRCAs. This secondary analysis used a descriptive, exploratory design to study 160 SRCAs. Chi-square and individual odds ratio analyses were employed to examine the associations between use of pornography and aggressive behaviors. SRCAs who used pornography were more likely to display aggressive behaviors than their non-using cohort. Recommendations for nurses and mental health professionals encountering these children and adolescents are offered.

Bryant, C. (2009). Adolescence, pornography and harm. *Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, 368, 1–6.

Flood, M. (2009). The harms of pornography exposure among children and young people. *Child Abuse Review*, 18(6), 384–400. DOI:10.1002/car.1092

Exposure to pornography is routine among children and young people, with a range of notable and often troubling effects. Particularly among younger children, exposure to pornography may be disturbing or upsetting. Exposure to pornography helps to sustain young people's adherence to sexist and unhealthy notions of sex and relationships. And, especially among boys and young men who are frequent consumers of pornography, including of more violent materials, consumption intensifies attitudes supportive of sexual coercion and increases their likelihood of perpetrating assault. While children and young people are sexual beings and

deserve age-appropriate materials on sex and sexuality, pornography is a poor, and indeed dangerous, sex educator. Copyright © 2009 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Sabina, C., Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (2008). The nature and dynamics of Internet pornography exposure for youth. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(6), 691-693.
DOI:10.1089/cpb.2007.0179

We examined exposure to Internet pornography before the age of 18, as reported by college students (n 563), via an online survey. Ninety-three percent of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to online pornography during adolescence. Exposure prior to age 13 was relatively uncommon. Boys were more likely to be exposed at an earlier age, to see more images, to see more extreme images (e.g., rape, child pornography), and to view pornography more often, while girls reported more involuntary exposure. If participants in this study are typical of young people, exposure to pornography on the Internet can be described as a normative experience, and more study of its impact is clearly warranted.

Flood, M. (2007). Exposure to pornography among youth in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 43(1), 45-60. DOI 10.1177/1440783307073934

Youth in Australia are routinely exposed to sexually explicit images. Among 16- and 17-year-olds, three-quarters of boys and one-tenth of girls have ever watched an X-rated movie. Three-quarters of 16- and 17-year-olds have been exposed accidentally to pornographic websites, while 38 percent of boys and 2 percent of girls have deliberately accessed them. Internet pornography is a particularly pervasive source of minors' exposure to pornography, both accidental and deliberate. Two features of children's exposure to pornography mirror those among adults. First, males are more likely to seek out, and are more frequent consumers of, both X-rated movies and pornographic websites. Second, Internet users of any age find it difficult to avoid unwanted encounters with sexually explicit materials.

Wolak, J., Mitchell, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2007). Unwanted and wanted exposure to online pornography in a national sample of youth Internet users. *Pediatrics*, 119(2), 247–257.
DOI:10.1542/peds.2006-1891

The goal was to assess the extent of unwanted and wanted exposure to online pornography among youth Internet users and associated risk factors. A telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 1500 youth Internet users aged 10 to 17 years was conducted between March and June 2005. Forty-two percent of youth Internet users had been exposed to online pornography in the past year. Of those, 66% reported only unwanted exposure. Multinomial logistic regression analysis was used to compare youth with unwanted exposure only or any wanted exposure with those with no exposure. Unwanted exposure was related to only 1 Internet activity, namely, using file-sharing programs to download images. Filtering and blocking software reduced the risk of unwanted exposure, as did attending an Internet safety presentation by law enforcement personnel. Unwanted exposure rates were higher for teens, youth who reported being harassed or sexually solicited online or interpersonally victimized offline, and youth who scored in the borderline or clinically significant range on the Child Behavior Checklist subscale for depression. Wanted exposure rates were higher for teens, boys, and youth who used file-sharing programs to download images, talked online to unknown persons about sex, used the Internet at friends' homes, or scored in the borderline or clinically significant range on the Child Behavior Checklist subscale for rule-breaking. Depression also could be a risk factor for some youth. Youth who used filtering and blocking software had lower odds of wanted exposure. More research concerning the potential impact of Internet pornography on youth is warranted, given the high rate of exposure, the fact that much exposure is unwanted, and the fact that youth with certain vulnerabilities, such as depression, interpersonal victimization, and delinquent tendencies, have more exposure.

Bonino, S., Ciairano, S., Rabaglietti, E., & Cattelino, E. (2006). Use of pornography and self reported engagement in sexual violence among adolescents. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 3(3), 265–288. DOI:10.1080/17405620600562359

This cross-sectional study examined 804 adolescents, boys and girls, aged from 14 to 19 years, attending different types of high schools in the northwest of Italy; the questionnaire “Me and My Health” (Bonino, 1996) was used to collect data. The main goals were: (i) to investigate the relationship between active and passive forms of sexual harassment and violence and the relationship between pornography (reading magazines and viewing films or videos) and unwanted sex among adolescents; (ii) to explore the differences in these relationships with respect to gender and age; and (iii) to investigate the factors (pornography, gender and age) that are most likely to promote unwanted sex. The findings showed that active and passive sexual violence and unwanted sex and pornography were correlated. However, reading pornographic material was more strongly linked to active sexual violence, while being a boy was found to be protective against passive sexual violence. Nevertheless, some effects of viewing pornographic films on passive unwanted sex were also found, especially among girls.

Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2006). Adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the internet. *Communication Research*, 33(2), 178–204. DOI:10.1177/0093650205285369

Drawing on a survey of 745 Dutch adolescents ages 13 to 18, the authors investigated (a) the occurrence and frequency of adolescents’ exposure to sexually explicit material on the Internet and (b) the correlates of this exposure. Seventy-one percent of the male adolescents and 40% of the female adolescents had been exposed to some kind of online sexually explicit material in the 6 months prior to the interview. Adolescents were more likely to be exposed to sexually explicit material online if they were male, were high sensation seekers, were less satisfied with their lives, were more sexually interested, used sexual content in other media more often, had a fast Internet connection, and had friends that were predominantly younger. Among male adolescents, a more advanced pubertal status was also associated with more frequent

exposure to online sexually explicit material. Among female adolescents, greater sexual experience decreased exposure to online sexually explicit material.

Lo, V. H., & Wei, R. (2005). Exposure to Internet pornography and Taiwanese adolescents' sexual attitudes and behavior. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 49(2), 221–237. DOI:10.1207/s15506878jobem4902_5

This study examines use of Internet pornography by adolescents in Taiwan and the relationships between exposure to Internet pornography and the sexual attitudes and behavior of surveyed teens. Results show that about 38% of the sample had some exposure to Internet pornography. Further, this exposure was associated with greater acceptance of sexual permissiveness and the greater likelihood of engaging in sexually permissive behavior. Most important, this exposure showed sustained relationships with sexually permissive attitudes and behavior when it was examined simultaneously with exposure to traditional pornography, general media use, and demographics.

Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2005). Exposure to Internet pornography among children and adolescents: A national survey. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 8(5), 473–486. DOI:10.1089/cpb.2005.8.473

Estimates suggest that up to 90% or more youth between 12 and 18 years have access to the Internet. Concern has been raised that this increased accessibility may lead to a rise in pornography seeking among children and adolescents, with potentially serious ramifications for child and adolescent sexual development. Using data from the Youth Internet Safety Survey, a nationally representative, cross-sectional telephone survey of 1501 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years), characteristics associated with self-reported pornography seeking behavior, both on the Internet and using traditional methods (e.g., magazines), are identified. Seekers of pornography, both online and offline, are significantly more likely to be male, with only 5% of self-identified seekers being female. The vast majority (87%) of youth who report

looking for sexual images online are 14 years of age or older, when it is developmentally appropriate to be sexually curious. Children under the age of 14 who have intentionally looked at pornography are more likely to report traditional exposures, such as magazines or movies. Concerns about a large group of young children exposing themselves to pornography on the Internet may be overstated. Those who report intentional exposure to pornography, irrespective of source, are significantly more likely to cross-sectionally report delinquent behavior and substance use in the previous year. Further, online seekers versus offline seekers are more likely to report clinical features associated with depression and lower levels of emotional bonding with their caregiver. Results of the current investigation raise important questions for further inquiry. Findings from these cross-sectional data provide justification for longitudinal studies aimed at parsing out temporal sequencing of psychosocial experiences.

Benedek, E. P., & Brown, C. F. (1999). No excuses: Televised pornography harms children. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 7(4), 236-240. DOI:10.3109/hrp.7.4.236

Becker, J., & Stein, R.M. (1991). Is sexual erotica associated with sexual deviance in adolescent males? *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 14(1), 85-95.
DOI:10.1016/0160-2527(91)90026-J

Within the last few years, there has been a tremendous increase in the availability of highly sexually explicit material, specifically with the introduction of adult videos. Many people feel that such easy access to sexually explicit material will mean an increase in sexually related crime, and a more cavalier attitude towards sex in general (Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, 1986). In addition, the AIDS epidemic has created an atmosphere in which anything suspected of promoting sexual promiscuity is frowned upon. As pointed out by other authors in this issue, there are many problems associated with conducting research on the effects of pornography and its relationship to sex crimes. First, sex crimes can never be

observed in a laboratory. One must rely on police statistics and retrospective reporting, both of which raise methodological issues. Second, it cannot be demonstrated experimentally that pornography causes sexual deviance unless a previously non-deviant subject is exposed to pornography under controlled conditions and then commits sexual crimes. Ethically this cannot be permitted. Third, the media tends to sensationalize sex crime cases, particularly when large amounts of pornography are found in possession of the offender. This creates a climate in which researchers may expect to find links between pornography and sexual violence which may in turn color the interpretation of research findings.

V. Investigation

Rimer, J. R., Brown, S., Martin, J., & Slane, A. (2025). "[Once you see it you can't unsee it": Law enforcement trauma and immersion in child sexual abuse material](#)". *Child Protection and Practice*, 4, 100085. DOI:10.1016/j.chipro.2024.100085

Police working with child sexual abuse material (CSAM) have a complex and significant job. Their experiences have potential to cause trauma, and so to inform better responses and supports, more must be understood about their work from their perspectives. This article focuses on internet child exploitation law enforcement (ICE LE) experiences and perspectives regarding the impacts of working with CSAM, trauma, and implications for professional practice. The sample encompassed 27 ICE LE investigators and supervisors in Ontario, Canada whose main job is investigations involving CSAM. Three focus groups were conducted with participants, followed by an inductive thematic analysis, whereby themes were developed through a multi-stage process of coding and clustering. Instead of simply viewing, seeing, hearing, being exposed to, or working with CSAM, participants described immersion in/with the material. Framed within a taxonomy of trauma focusing on events, experiences, and effects, participants described being warned about the depravity and difficulty of CSAM, continually seeing and hearing distressing content, working closely with CSAM, and being greatly impacted by audio. They reported effects including shock, never forgetting CSAM, feeling suspicious, and wanting distance. Events, experiences, and effects were recounted as experiential and detrimental. Therefore, it is more accurate to categorise participants' immersion in/with CSAM as a direct experience of primary trauma, not "secondary" or "vicarious" trauma. Implications for multiple sectors involved in child protection and practice are discussed.

Rughinis, R., Vulpe, S. N., Turcanu, D., & Rosner, D. (2025). [Balancing act: Europeans' privacy calculus and security concerns in online CSAM detection](#). *Frontiers in Big Data*, 8, 1477911. DOI:10.3389/fdata.2025.1477911

This study examines privacy calculus in online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) detection across Europe, using Flash Eurobarometer 532 data. Drawing on theories of structuration and risk society, we analyze how individual agency and institutional frameworks interact in shaping privacy attitudes in high-stakes digital scenarios. Multinomial regression reveals age as a significant individual-level predictor, with younger individuals prioritizing privacy more. Country-level analysis shows Central and Eastern European nations have higher privacy concerns, reflecting distinct institutional and cultural contexts. Notably, the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) shows a positive association with privacy concerns in regression models when controlling for Augmented Human Development Index (AHDi) components, contrasting its negative bivariate correlation. Life expectancy emerges as the strongest country-level predictor, negatively associated with privacy concerns, suggesting deep institutional mechanisms shape privacy attitudes beyond individual factors. This dual approach reveals that both individual factors and national contexts are shaping privacy calculus in CSAM detection. The study contributes to a better understanding of privacy calculus in high-stakes scenarios, with implications for policy development in online child protection.

Conway, P., Redmond, T., Lundrigan, S., Davy, D., Bailey, S., & Lee, P. (2024). [Protecting the protectors: Moral injury, coping styles, and mental health of UK police officers and staff investigating child sexual abuse material](#). *Depression and Anxiety*, 2024(1), 1854312. DOI:10.1155/da/1854312

Police officers and staff who investigate child sexual abuse material (CSAM) may be at elevated risk for mental health problems, which may be mitigated or exacerbated by institutional and interpersonal factors. The current work examined mental health in a large sample of UK CSAM investigators (N = 661). Results suggest substantially elevated rates of depression and anxiety but not posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Feeling successful and

supported powerfully buffered against negative outcomes, whereas moral injury—particularly feelings of institutional betrayal—predicted worse outcomes. Although exposure to CSAM and contact with victims predicted worse outcomes, these effects were much smaller. Regarding coping styles, self-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, withdrawal, ignoring, and negative religious coping predicted worse outcomes, whereas positive refocusing, seeking distraction, and social support were effective. These results held controlling for demographics. These results suggest that UK CSAM police officers and staff experience elevated depression and anxiety, but institutional and interpersonal support can buffer outcomes.

Gewirtz-Meydan, A., Mitchell, K. J., & O'Brien, J. E. (2024). Trauma behind the keyboard: Exploring disparities in child sexual abuse materials exposure and mental health factors among investigators and forensic examiners—A network analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 152, 106757. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.106757

Despite acknowledging the detrimental impact of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) exposure on the mental and physical well-being of investigators and forensic examiners, there is a need for comprehensive exploration into the complex relationship between CSAM exposure, its various dimensions, mental health (i.e., anxiety, depression, and PTSD), and burnout, as well as the presence of positive attitudes towards the job. The objective was to understand how CSAM exposure, mental health and burnout interconnect and cluster within distinct networks of police investigators and forensic examiners. Police investigators and forensic examiners from across the United States who were exposed to CSAM as part of their professions (N = 470). Participants, recruited through connections with the National Criminal Justice Training Center, completed an anonymous online survey. The network analysis revealed differences in centrality between investigators and forensic examiners, particularly in their associations with exposure factors and mental health variables. Edges invariance tests showed differences in the strength of these associations, with some factors being more strongly linked to PTSD avoidance symptoms among investigators and others among forensic examiners. Stability analyses suggested potentially greater heterogeneity among

investigators, while both groups displayed high stability in other centrality indices. This study contributes to our comprehension of the distinct experiences and challenges faced by CSAM investigators and forensic examiners, and specifically the nuanced disparities between CSAM investigators and forensic examiners in terms of their exposure to CSAM content and the associated mental health factors. These insights highlight the imperative need for tailored support mechanisms and interventions that can effectively address the unique challenges encountered by individuals working tirelessly in this critical field.

Gnielka, F. M., Reichel, R., Blokland, A., Daser, A., de Boer, M., Gannon, C., ... & Lehmann, R. J. (2024). [Missing the mark? Identifying child sexual abuse material forum structure and key-players based on public replies and private messaging networks](#). *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1-15. DOI:10.1057/s41599-024-03954-x

Darknet forums dedicated to child sexual abuse material (CSAM) attract thousands of users interacting with each other through online communications. Given finite resources, law enforcement agencies seek ways to effectively prioritise their investigative efforts by identifying key-players that are central to the forum community. For the identification of such users, law enforcement agencies typically rely on the communication network that can be derived from messages posted on the public part of the forum. Many forums, however, also allow for private communications between members, raising the question to what extent relying on only a single mode of communication biases key-player identification. Using data on both public and private communications on two large-scale darknet CSAM forums, two communication networks are derived and their structures analysed. Measures of centrality robustness are applied to ascertain the level of bias introduced when determining key-players on only one of the available networks. Findings show only a minority of members to participate in forum communication, and limited overlap between participants active in public and private communications. Key-players emerging from combining the public and private communications resemble those from the public network only, suggesting that police

prioritisation based on public postings only is still 'on mark'. Members who are central to the private communications network may nevertheless be of special law enforcement interest.

Nurmi, J., Paju, A., Brumley, B. B., Insoll, T., Ovaska, A. K., Soloveva, V., ... & Arroyo, D. (2024). [Investigating child sexual abuse material availability, searches, and users on the anonymous Tor network for a public health intervention strategy](#). *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 7849. DOI:10.1038/s41598-024-58346-7

Tor is widely used for staying anonymous online and accessing onion websites; unfortunately, Tor is popular for distributing and viewing illicit child sexual abuse material (CSAM). From 2018 to 2023, we analyse 176,683 onion domains and find that one-fifth share CSAM. We find that CSAM is easily available using 21 out of the 26 most-used Tor search engines. We analyse 110,133,715 search sessions from the Ahmia.fi search engine and discover that 11.1% seek CSAM. When searching CSAM by age, 40.5% search for 11-year-olds and younger; 11.0% for 12-year-olds; 8.2% for 13-year-olds; 11.6% for 14-year-olds; 10.9% for 15-year-olds; and 12.7% for 16-year-olds. We demonstrate accurate filtering for search engines, introduce intervention, show a questionnaire for CSAM users, and analyse 11,470 responses. 65.3% of CSAM users first saw the material when they were children themselves, and half of the respondents first saw the material accidentally, demonstrating the availability of CSAM. 48.1% want to stop using CSAM. Some seek help through Tor, and self-help websites are popular. Our survey finds commonalities between CSAM use and addiction. Help-seeking correlates with increasing viewing duration and frequency, depression, anxiety, self-harming thoughts, guilt, and shame. Yet, 73.9% of help seekers have not been able to receive it.

Singla, V., Yue, K., Paul, S., Shirkavand, R., Jayawardhana, M., Ganjdanesh, A., ... & Goldstein, T. (2024). [From pixels to prose: A large dataset of dense image captions](#). *arXiv preprint arXiv:2406.10328*. DOI:10.48550/arXiv.2406.10328

Training large vision-language models requires extensive, high-quality image-text pairs. Existing web-scraped datasets, however, are noisy and lack detailed image descriptions. To bridge this gap, we introduce PixelProse, a comprehensive dataset of over 16M (million) synthetically generated captions, leveraging cutting-edge vision-language models for detailed and accurate descriptions. To ensure data integrity, we rigorously analyze our dataset for problematic content, including child sexual abuse material (CSAM), personally identifiable information (PII), and toxicity. We also provide valuable metadata such as watermark presence and aesthetic scores, aiding in further dataset filtering. We hope PixelProse will be a valuable resource for future vision-language research.

Gutfeter, W., Gajewska, J., & Pacut, A. (2023, September). [Detecting sexually explicit content in the context of the child sexual abuse materials \(CSAM\): End-to-end classifiers and region-based networks](#). In Joint European Conference on Machine Learning and Knowledge Discovery in Databases (pp. 154-168). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) pose a significant threat to the safety and well-being of children worldwide. Detecting and preventing the distribution of such materials is a critical task for law enforcement agencies and technology companies. As content moderation is often manual, developing an automated detection system can help reduce exposure of the human reviewers to potentially harmful images and accelerate the process of counteracting. This study presents methods for classifying sexually explicit content, which plays a crucial role in the automated CSAM detection system. Several approaches are explored to solve the task: an end-to-end classifier, a classifier with person detection and a private body parts detector. All proposed methods are tested on the images obtained from the online tool for reporting illicit content. Due to legal constraints, access to the data is limited, and all algorithms are executed remotely on the isolated server. The end-to-end classifier yields the most promising results,

with an accuracy of 90.17%, after augmenting the training set with the additional neutral samples and adult pornography. While the detection-based methods may not achieve higher accuracy rates and cannot serve as a final classifier on their own, their inclusion in the system can be beneficial. Human body oriented approaches generate results that are easier to interpret and obtaining more interpretable results is essential when analyzing models that are trained without direct access to data.

Hartel, P., & van Wegberg, R. (2023). [Going dark? Analysing the impact of end-to-end encryption on the outcome of Dutch criminal court cases](#). *Crime Science*, 12(1), 1-8.
DOI:10.1186/s40163-023-00185-4

Law enforcement agencies struggle with criminals using end-to-end encryption (E2EE). A recent policy paper states: “while encryption is vital and privacy and cyber security must be protected, that should not come at the expense of wholly precluding law enforcement”. The main argument is that E2EE hampers attribution and prosecution of criminals who rely on encrypted communication – ranging from drug syndicates to child sexual abuse material (CSAM) platforms. This statement – in policy circles dubbed ‘going dark’ – is not yet supported by empirical evidence. That is why, in our work, we analyse public court data from the Netherlands to show to what extent law enforcement agencies and the public prosecution service are impacted by the use of E2EE in bringing cases to court and their outcome. Our results show that in cases brought to court, the Dutch courts appear to be as successful in convicting offenders who rely on E2EE as those who do not. Our data do not permit us to draw conclusions on the effect of E2EE on criminal investigations.

Ilbiz, E., & Kaunert, C. (2023). Crowdsourcing to tackle online child sexual exploitation: Europol's 'Stop Child Abuse—Trace an Object' Platform. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 17, paad009. DOI:10.1093/police/paad009

This article examines how Europol's 'Stop Child Abuse—Trace an Object' (SCATO) platform uses crowdsourcing to collect tips from the public in order to tackle online child sexual exploitation. The article evaluates the platform's effectiveness based on three key factors: how easy it is for the public to access the platform, the transaction costs involved in gathering information from the public, and how trust is established between the public and law enforcement agencies. By analyzing Europol documents and conducting interviews with law enforcement officers and non-governmental organizations, the article argues that the SCATO platform is user-friendly and accessible to the public. However, in order to reduce the searching cost of intelligence gathering, the images shared on the platform should encourage high-value reporting without compromising victim anonymity. Additionally, the platform should also benefit from clear guidelines and feedback mechanisms to encourage more public participation.

Leclerc, B., Cale, J., Holt, T., & Drew, J. (2022). [Child sexual abuse material online: the perspective of online investigators on training and support](#). *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 16(4), 762–776. DOI:10.1093/police/paac017

The development of online technologies in recent decades has led to the proliferation of the distribution, consumption, and sale of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online. This trend has arguably also contributed to the sexual abuse of children offline. In this context, many organizations, including financial institutions and police agencies, have invested human, financial, and technological resources to address this problem. Combining statistics on recent crime trends with data collected from online police investigators suggests the critical need for this phenomenon to be taken more seriously on a global scale. Using data obtained from interviews conducted with online CSAM police investigators across several Australian police agencies, this study presents a detailed view of what is needed to best support police work in this domain. The most frequent responses obtained from investigators grouped around three

dimensions: (1) knowledge and skills related to the tools used during investigations, such as computers, information technology, the Internet, and legislations; (2) knowledge related to offenders, how they operate, and how investigators should interact with them virtually; and (3) mental health wellbeing of investigators.

Norja, R., Karlsson, L., Antfolk, J., Nyman, T., & Korkman, J. (2022). [How old was she? The accuracy of assessing the age of adolescents' based on photos](#). *Nordic Psychology*, 74(1), 70–85. DOI:10.1080/19012276.2021.1887752

Information on the degree to which individuals can make accurate estimations of someone's age can be of importance in different legal contexts, such as for example child sexual abuse cases in which the victim is an adolescent and asylum procedures. There is, however, a scarcity of studies concerning age estimations conducted with young target persons. Using facial photos of target persons aged 12–18 years, we investigated the effects of gender, age, and ethnicity of both targets (n = 240) and observers (n = 869) on the accuracy of age estimation. We also investigated the effects of targets' facial expressions (neutral or smiling), use of makeup, and photo quality. Participants overestimated the age of the adolescents by, on average, 3.51 years. Participants overestimated the age of young adolescent girls to a greater extent than that of younger boys. Men made larger overestimations than women. Participants also estimated smiling targets as being older than targets with neutral facial expression, and the age of girls with makeup to be older than girls without makeup. Because there was considerable variation in the accuracy of estimations, and overestimates were common, we conclude that the ability of individuals to estimate the age of adolescents is generally low. This might have important legal implications.

Parviainen, J. & Rajamäki, J. (2022). [Analysis of sexual abuse of children online and cam investigations in Europe](#). In Thaddeus Eze, Nabeel Khan and Cyril Onwubiko (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 21st European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security*. Reading: Academic Conferences International Limited, 411–418. DOI:10.34190/eccws.21.1.276

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

Rajamäki, J., Lahti, I., & Parviainen, J. (2022). [OSINT on the Dark Web: Child abuse material investigations](#). *Information & Security* 53(1), 21–32. DOI:10.11610/isij.5302

The Dark Web allows users to hide their identity while browsing or sending information, providing an ideal environment for transferring information, goods, and services with

potentially illegal intentions. Therefore, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) are interested in Open Source INTelligence (OSINT) on the Dark Web. LEAs need appropriate techniques to find darknet sites used by criminals. This article examines online child sexual exploitation and the various OSINT automation tools that can be exploited on the Dark Web. Additionally, we consider OSINT on the Dark Web, paying attention to the challenges LEAs face when investigating crimes related to child abuse material (CAM). The biggest challenges are related to data storage and the criminal investigation itself. CAM may not be recorded or examined except by an LEA officer specifically designated and trained for this purpose. The study examines how OSINT could be implemented without exposing researchers to the contents of CAM. The method could be to focus the inquiry on already known links and sites. This has challenges, but a bigger number of LEAs could carry out such an inquiry, and the storage of such data would not be illegal.

Westlake, B., Brewer, R., Swearingen, T., Ross, A., Patterson, S., Michalski, D., ... & Afana, E. (2022). [Developing automated methods to detect and match face and voice biometrics in child sexual abuse videos](#). *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* (648), 1–15.

The proliferation of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online is outpacing law enforcement's ability to manage the problem (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children 2020). These increasing workloads have significant and severe implications for investigators, with recent evidence tying this work to a range of serious psychological harms, including secondary traumatic stress disorder, emotional exhaustion, intrusive thoughts, burnout, and interpersonal and marital problems (Bourke & Craun 2014; Burns et al. 2008; Powell et al. 2015; Seigfried-Spellar 2018). To address these problems, investigators are increasingly integrating automated software tools into their investigatory workflows. These tools can be used to detect or locate files containing CSAM (eg using hash values), as well as extract information from within files (eg biometrics) that can be used to identify both victims and/or offenders (Canadian Centre for Child Protection 2021; Council of Europe 2021; Internet Watch Foundation 2021; Interpol 2022, 2018).

Eggins, E., Mazerolle, L., Higginson, A., Hine, L., Walsh, K., Sydes, M., McEwan, J., Hassall, G., Roetman, S., Wallis, R., & Williams, J. (2021). Criminal justice responses to child sexual abuse material offending: A systematic review and evidence and gap map. *Trends & Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice*, 623, 1–18.

This report provides the world's first systematic review of criminal justice responses to child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offending. The systematic search identified 20,820 records, yielding eight eligible impact evaluations. Six studies focused on policing and two on the judicial arm of the criminal justice system. No correctional impact evaluations met our inclusion criteria. We qualitatively synthesise the evidence and use an evidence and gap map to visualise the current state of the evaluation evidence. Future research needs to prospectively design and rigorously evaluate evidence-informed interventions that are specifically tailored to CSAM offending.

Edwards, G., Christensen, L. S., Rayment-McHugh, S., & Jones, C. (2021). Cyber strategies used to combat child sexual abuse material. *Trends & Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice*, 636, 1–16.

Cyber strategies play a role in combating child sexual abuse material (CSAM). These strategies aim to detect offenders and prevent them from accessing and producing CSAM, or to identify victims. This paper explores five cyber strategies: peer-to-peer network monitoring, automated multi-modal CSAM detection tools, using web crawlers to identify CSAM sites, pop-up warning messages, and facial recognition. This research synthesis captures the background of each strategy, how it works and the evaluative research, along with the benefits, limitations and implementation considerations, offering a practical overview for a broad audience.

Guerra, E., & Westlake, B. G. (2021). [Detecting child sexual abuse images: Traits of child sexual exploitation hosting and displaying websites](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 122.
DOI:[10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105336](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105336)

Automated detection of child sexual abuse images (CSAI) often relies on image attributes, such as hash values. However, electronic service providers and others without access to hash

value databases are limited in their ability to detect CSAI. Additionally, the increasing amount of CSA content being distributed means that a large percentage of images are not yet cataloged in hash value databases. Therefore, additional detection criteria need to be determined to improve identification of non-hashed CSAI. We aim to identify patterns in the locations and folder/file naming practices of websites hosting and displaying CSAI, to use as additional detection criteria for non-hashed CSAI. Using a custom-designed web crawler and snowball sampling, we analyzed the locations and naming practices of 103 Surface Web websites hosting and/or displaying 8108 known CSAI hash values. Websites specialize in either hosting or displaying CSAI with only 20% doing both. Neither hosting nor displaying websites fear repercussions. Over 27% of CSAI were displayed in the home directory (i.e., main page) with only 6% located in at least 4th-level sub-folder. Websites focused more on organizing images than hiding them with 68% of hosted and 54% of displayed CSAI being found in folders formatted year/month. Qualitatively, hosting websites were likely to use alphanumeric or disguised folder and file names to conceal images, while displaying websites were more explicit. File and folder naming patterns can be combined with existing criteria to improve automated detection of websites and website locations likely hosting and/or displaying CSAI.

- Child sexual abuse image detection can be enhanced with structural-based criteria.
- File/folder naming and location patterns found on child sexual abuse websites.
- Websites specialize in hosting or displaying images, with little overlap.
- Websites focus more on organizing rather than concealing child sexual abuse images.
- Companies can use structural traits to identify non-hashed child sexual abuse images.

Hartley, R. D., Testa, A., & Martinez, E. (2021). Race, ethnicity, and punishment for federal sex offenses: Changing composition in child pornography and sex abuse cases and temporal disparity in sentencing over time. *Sexual Abuse*, 33(8), 891-922.
[DOI:10.1177/1079063220981062](https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063220981062)

In response to several high-profile violent offenses against children over the past two decades, Congress has enacted several pieces of legislation aimed at increasing punishment for those

convicted of federal sex offenses. Coinciding with these enhanced penalties was a demographic shift in the composition of those prosecuted for these offenses. In the federal criminal justice system, sex offenses fall into two main categories: child pornography and sexual abuse. The racial and ethnic makeup of individuals charged for federal sex offenses has significantly changed over the past 15 years. The current study utilizes federal sentencing data from the United States Sentencing Commission for the years 2006 to 2017 to explore the nature of punishment for these offenses over time. We also employ multivariate analyses to examine differences in punishment for the two types of offenses and employ disaggregated analyses by offense type to examine temporal change in racial/ethnic disparities in sentence length and departures from the federal sentencing guidelines. Findings demonstrate that convicted individuals who are Black and Hispanic are receiving harsher sentences over time net of controls for other key predictors such as age, sex, criminal history, and presumptive sentence length. Implications for how legislatively enhanced penalties and changing demographic makeup of those convicted for these offenses may have introduced extra-legal disparity into federal sentencing are further discussed.

Oliván-Gonzalvo, G., Sánchez-Quiroz, P. L., & de la Parte-Sernac, A. C. (2021). [Use of Tanner stages to estimate chronological age in alleged child pornography cases: A systematic review](#). *Andes Pediatría: Revista Chilena de Pediatría*, 92(3), 470–477. DOI:10.32641/andespediatr.v92i3.3374

The last two decades have seen an exponential growth in the distribution and availability of child pornographic material on the Internet and social networks. The medical community is involved in assisting the investigating authorities in relation to estimating the age and sexual maturity of the alleged victims. Objective: To determine the efficacy of using Tanner stages as a method for estimating chronological age in alleged child pornography cases based on published evidence. Systematic review study in PubMed and Scopus databases following PRISMA guidelines. Articles describing the outcome of using Tanner stages to estimate chronological age in alleged child pornography cases were identified. For screening, those

written in English or Spanish published from January 1, 2000, to April 30, 2020, were considered. The following data were extracted from the articles included: type of study; material and methods used; Tanner items examined; evaluators' characteristics; results; estimated chronological age versus real age; observer-dependent variations (bias); and conclusions. Seven studies were included. Three were literature reviews and four were case studies with expert testimony and observer bias. This method is ineffective when the alleged victim, in both sexes, shows sexual maturation in Tanner stages 3-5. In stages 1-2, it may be useful to state that the victim is under 18 years old, but not to determine their chronological age. Scientific evidence discourages the use of Tanner stages to estimate the chronological age of the victim from images in alleged child pornography cases. Pediatricians, and other medical professionals, should avoid making a testimony that is not scientifically based.

Davidson, J., Schimmenti, A., Caretti, V., Puccia, A., Corbari, E., Bogaerts, S., ... & DeMarco, J. N. (2020). Exploring policing and industry practice in the prevention of online child sexual abuse. In I. Bryce, & W. Petherick (Eds.), *Child sexual abuse* (pp. 657-677). Academic Press.

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

Lee, H. E., Ermakova, T., Ververis, V., & Fabian, B. (2020). Detecting child sexual abuse material: A comprehensive survey. *Forensic Science International: Digital Investigation*, 34. DOI:10.1016/j.fsidi.2020.301022

Victims of child sexual abuse suffer from physical, psychological, and emotional trauma. The detection and deletion of illicit online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) helps in reducing and even stopping the continuous re-victimization of children. Furthermore, automatic detection may also support legal authorities to search for and review the masses of suspected CSAM. Due to tech-savvy offenders and technological advances, continuous efforts in keeping up with current developments are crucial and need to be considered in the implementation of detection algorithms. The present research provides a comprehensive synthesis and an interpretation of the current research accomplishments and challenges in the CSAM detection domain, explicitly considering the dimensions of policy and legal framework, distribution channels, and detection applications and implementations. Among other aspects, it reveals and aggregates knowledge related to image hash database, keywords, web-crawler, detection based on filenames and metadata, and visual detection. The findings suggest that CSAM detection applications yield the best results if multiple approaches are used in combination, such as deep-learning algorithms with multi-modal image or video descriptors merged together. Deep-learning techniques were shown to outperform other detection methods for unknown CSAM.

Martellozzo, E., & DeMarco, J. (2020). Exploring the removal of online child sexual abuse material in the UK: Processes and practice. *Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, 22, 331–350. DOI:10.1057/s41300-020-00099-2

This paper explores the processes involved in the removal of online child sexual abuse material. It specifically focuses on the work of the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) in the UK who are partially responsible for the removal of this content. The empirical work was carried out between May 2017 and September 2017 and explored whether the IWFs processes at removing online child sexual abuse material were both useful and effective to the police and the wider

community. The research applied a mixed methods approach: Semi-structured interviews with employees (N = 10) and key stakeholders (N = 9), seeking to explore the strengths and challenges of both the task and the IWFs remit. Both employees and stakeholders saw the value in the original and innovative 'space' and 'approach' the IWF took in removing child sexual abuse material. This included the evolving nature of their tools, from the original URL list filter, to the more adaptable image hashing process. However, challenges around transparency, visibility and partnership were also raised. With online child sexual abuse ever evolving, it is important to consider novel ways in which intervention and prevention of victimization and offending can take place. Where a multi-disciplinary approach is needed in supporting victims, this research provides an insight into how one such organisation uses tools and techniques, different to traditional statutory services or law enforcement responses.

Phippen, A., & Bond, E. (2020). Image recognition in child sexual exploitation material—Capabilities, ethics and rights. *Policing in the Era of AI and Smart Societies*, 179–198.

Image recognition—the use of software to identify images for a specific task—has long been proposed as a solution to addressing some of the more laborious and technical complex tasks such as the triaging of child abuse and exploitation imagery. However, a lack of knowledge and understanding of the capabilities, and limits, of image recognition sometimes results in high levels of expectation that cannot be delivered technically. In tackling key challenges in the policing child abuse material in areas such as victim identification, image categorisation and the prevention of replication and communication of images, image recognition algorithms have been proposed as potential solutions. However, a case study approach highlights concerns around issues such as data bias, lack of training data, and data ethics, which highlight that the complexity of image recognition in this domain might not be as effective as one might wish.

Johansson, C. (2019). [Combating online child sexual abuse material. An explorative study of Swedish police investigations.](#) Malmö University.

Online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is a growing problem that transcends geographical borders. In order to improve cooperation between international law enforcement, knowledge concerning the jurisdiction, procedure and issues with investigations in different countries is needed. This study aims to provide information on the Swedish context by (a) exploring how the Swedish police work with investigations of online CSAM, and (b) identifying potential challenges. The research questions have been answered by qualitative interviews with law enforcement personnel. Systematic text condensation revealed that there is a significant difference in the procedure between the police regions and that four major problems face the police. First, the police are dependent upon digital forensic experts but have limited access to their expertise and other resources due to the crime not being prioritised. Second, Internet Service Providers are not required to save their users IP-addresses, which complicates identification of the suspect. Third, a holistic perspective within the police is required. Investigators should work with all sexual crimes against children and not just CSAM, in order to be able to see reoccurring elements in the identification process. Four, there is a lack of public knowledge concerning CSAM that affects the resources and number of cases the police receive. The Swedish police is currently creating regional cybercrime centres in an attempt to create a national strategy for computer-related investigations. The implications on the victim identification process and development of treatment for offenders are discussed, as well as future directions. Clearer guidelines are needed.

Kloess, J. A., Woodhams, J., Whittle, H., Grant, T., & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. E. (2019). [The challenges of identifying and classifying child sexual abuse material.](#) *Sexual Abuse*, 31(2), 173–196. DOI:10.1177/1079063217724768

The aim of the present study was to (a) assess the reliability with which indecent images of children (IIOC) are classified as being of an indecent versus nonindecent nature, and (b) examine in detail the decision-making process engaged in by law enforcement personnel who

undertake the difficult task of identifying and classifying IIOC as per the current legislative offense categories. One experienced researcher and four employees from a police force in the United Kingdom coded an extensive amount of IIOC (n = 1,212-2,233) to determine if they (a) were deemed to be of an indecent nature, and (b) depicted a child. Interrater reliability analyses revealed both considerable agreement and disagreement across coders, which were followed up with two focus groups involving the four employees. The first entailed a general discussion of the aspects that made such material more or less difficult to identify; the second focused around images where there had been either agreement (n = 20) or disagreement (n = 36) across coders that the images were of an indecent nature. Using thematic analysis, a number of factors apparent within IIOC were revealed to make the determination of youthfulness and indecency significantly more challenging for coders, with most relating to the developmental stage of the victim and the ambiguity of the context of an image. Findings are discussed in light of their implications for the identification of victims of ongoing sexual exploitation/abuse, the assessment and treatment of individuals in possession of IIOC, as well as the practice of policing and sentencing this type of offending behavior.

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

For those investigating cases of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), there is the potential harm of experiencing trauma after illicit content exposure over a period of time. Research has shown that those working on such cases can experience psychological distress. As a result, there has been a greater effort to create and implement technologies that reduce exposure to CSAM. However, not much work has explored gathering insight regarding the functionality, effectiveness, accuracy, and importance of digital forensic tools and data science technologies from practitioners who use them. This study focused specifically on examining the value practitioners give to the tools and technologies they utilize to investigate CSAM cases. General findings indicated that implementing filtering technologies is more important than

safe-viewing technologies; false positives are a greater concern than false negatives; resources such as time, personnel, and money continue to be a concern; and an improved workflow is highly desirable. Results also showed that practitioners are not well-versed in data science and Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is alarming given that tools already implement these techniques and that practitioners face large amounts of data during investigations. Finally, the data exemplified that practitioners are generally not taking advantage of tools that implement data science techniques, and that the biggest need for them is in automated child nudity detection, age estimation and skin tone detection.

Seigfried-Spellar, K. C. (2018). [Assessing the psychological well-being and coping mechanisms of law enforcement investigators vs. digital forensic examiners of child pornography investigations](#). *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 33(3), 215–226. DOI:10.1007/s11896-017-9248-7

Previous research indicates law enforcement investigators and digital forensic examiners working child exploitation cases are at an increased risk for experiencing psychological distress; however, the roles of digital forensic examiners and investigators often overlap substantially when working child pornography cases. Thus, the current study was the first to compare the psychological well-being, job satisfaction, coping mechanisms, and attitudes toward mental health services for individuals working as either digital forensic examiners and/or investigators of child pornography cases. Law enforcement officers were solicited from the Internet Crimes Against Children task force listserv, and based on their current self-reported duties, 20 were classified as digital forensic examiners-only, 71 as investigators-only, and 38 as both digital forensic examiners and investigators of cases involving Internet child pornography. Results showed significant differences between groups; individuals performing both duties scored significantly higher on secondary traumatic stress, higher on feelings of worthlessness, and lower on concentration compared to digital forensic examiners-only. Individuals performing both duties also reported significantly lower scores on job satisfaction compared to investigators-only. Finally, individuals working both duties were significantly more

likely to know someone who sought counseling as a result of work-related stress. The study's mental health implications and future research suggestions are discussed.

Steinberg, S. (2018). [Changing faces: Morphed child pornography images and the First Amendment](#). *Emory Law Journal*, 68, 909.

Part I of this Article will explore the historical underpinnings of First Amendment jurisprudence as it pertains to actual child pornography from its inception as a criminal offense, to the morphed images depicting child pornography of today. Part II of this Article will discuss the harms morphed images cause. It will also explore the harm that circulation of other private material that is sexual in nature causes and discuss how this harm has been balanced against a defendant's right to free speech. This nuanced approach allows us to better understand how courts might balance the harm that circulation of a morphed image causes with the First Amendment. Lastly, Part III of this Article lays out a cogent path forward. It proposes a workable solution that balances a defendant's First Amendment right to free speech against the harm that circulation of morphed images causes.

Witting, S. K. (2018, November). Do ut des: Disseminating online child sexual abuse material for investigative purposes?. In *Proceedings of the Central European Cybersecurity Conference 2018* (pp. 1-6). DOI:10.1145/3277570.3277585

The infiltration of child sexual abuse fora on the dark web is a key investigation strategy in combating online child sexual abuse worldwide, aiming to identify perpetrators and rescue children from ongoing abuse and exploitation. The dissemination of child sexual abuse material is hereby the currency required to gain access to these fora. As the dissemination of such material constitutes a criminal offence, police are prohibited from engaging in such interventions in most countries. Germany is currently discussing whether police should be legally authorised to disseminate child sexual abuse material in such cases. Even though this contributes to the continuous traumatising of the depicted child, police might eventually be

able to save more children from abuse and exploitation. Whether and under which circumstances such interventions 'for the greater good' justify the damage caused to the depicted child, and whether such interventions can be brought in line with the rule of law, is discussed in this article.

Seigfried-Spellar, K. C. (2014). Distinguishing the viewers, downloaders, and exchangers of Internet child pornography by individual differences: Preliminary findings. *Digital Investigation*, 11(4), 252–260. DOI:10.1016/j.diin.2014.07.003

The current study assessed the relationship between personality and cognitive differences and the respondents' level of engagement in child pornography (searching for/viewing, downloading, or exchanging). 273 respondents completed the anonymous online survey; 257 respondents (94%) were classified as non-child pornography consumers, and 16 respondents (6%) were classified as Internet child pornography consumers. When only considering the child pornography users, 63% (n = 10) were categorized as searchers/viewers, 18.5% (n = 3) were categorized as downloaders, and 18.5% (n = 3) were categorized as exchangers. When discriminating between child pornography consumers, those individuals who only searched for and viewed child pornography were less extraverted than those individuals who reported exchanging Internet child pornography. Higher scores on extraversion may reflect the offender's ability to socially network on the Internet in order to gain access to child pornography (i.e., exchanging/sharing). Significant correlations also suggested a relationship between child pornography behaviors, conscientiousness, and excitement-seeking. Future research suggestions and limitations are discussed.

Rosenbloom, A. L. (2013). Inaccuracy of age assessment from images of postpubescent subjects in cases of alleged child pornography. *International Journal of Legal Medicine*, 127(2), 467–471. [DOI:10.1007/s00414-012-0765-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00414-012-0765-8)

Despite frequent medical expert testimony authoritatively stating that images of individuals who are postpubescent indicate age less than 18 and therefore, child pornography,

developmental experts have noted that a scientific basis for such estimation is lacking. In fact, recent studies have demonstrated a high degree of inaccuracy in such estimates, and that the stage of breast development often used as indicative of age under 18 years is present in a substantial percentage of adult women. Ten images of adult women from legitimate pornographic sites promoting youthful images were shown to 16 pediatric endocrinologists expert in evaluating maturation, who determined whether or not the individuals represented were under 18 years of age. They also provided information about what features were most important in their evaluations. Sixty-nine percent of the 160 estimates were that the images represented females under 18 years of age. There was wide variability in the designation of importance of the various features of maturation in reaching conclusions, with breast development and facial appearance considered most important. This study confirms that medical testimony, even by experts in adolescent development, can deem images of adult women selected for their youthful appearance to be under age 18 two thirds of the time. Thus, important as prosecuting users of child pornographic material may be, justice requires the avoidance of testimony that is not scientifically based.

Westlake, B., Bouchard, M., & Frank, R. (2012, August). [Comparing methods for detecting child exploitation content online](#). In 2012 European intelligence and security informatics conference (pp. 156-163). IEEE.

The sexual exploitation of children online is seen as a global issue and has been addressed by both governments and private organizations. Efforts thus far have focused primarily on the use of image hash value databases to find content. However, recently researchers have begun to use keywords as a way to detect child exploitation content. Within the current study we explore both of these methodologies. Using a custom designed web-crawler, we create three networks using the hash value method, keywords method, and a hybrid method combining the first two. Results first show that the three million images found in our hash value database were not common enough on public websites for the hash value method to produce meaningful result. Second, the small sample of websites that were found to contain those images had little to no

videos posted, suggesting a need for different criteria for finding each type of material. Third, websites with code words commonly known to be used by child pornographers to identify or discuss exploitative content, were found to be much larger than others, with extensive visual and textual content. Finally, boy-centered keywords were more commonly found on child exploitation websites than girl-centered keywords; though not at a statistically significant level. Applications for law enforcement and areas for future research are discussed.

VI. Self-generated content

Meggyesfalvi, B. (2024). [Challenges in investigating self-generated online child sexual abuse material](#). *Belügyi Szemle/Academic Journal of Internal Affairs: A Belügyminisztérium Szakmai Tudományos Folyóirata*, 72(2), 329–339. DOI:10.38146/BSZ.2024.2.8

The overall aim of this paper is to offer a greater understanding of the context of children's online sexual behaviour through exploring what are some of the main challenges the police encounter when investigating digital content of a sexual nature produced by young people, such as photographs, videos and chat messages. The research is primarily reviewing and analysing academic literature, policy papers, legal sources and statistical data. The main areas examined include the increasing prevalence of self-generated child sexual abuse material (CSAM), how contemporary peer-to-peer relations amongst children impact the self-production of sexual material, and how creating sexual content online for commercial reasons and the development of digital technologies add to the complexity and ambiguities of investigations. Findings in this paper highlight that law enforcement alone will not be able to manage all the challenges that online child sexual abuse crimes imply on society and children in particular. They will need clear guidelines to differentiate between children's harmful and healthy online sexual behaviour and up-to-date knowledge on how to avoid the unnecessary victimisation of children. This paper promotes a more nuanced understanding of the complex phenomenon of children self-generating explicit content, which is often embedded within wider societal issues of peer-to-peer relations, financial deprivation and technological advancement. As a result, we will be able to better protect young people, distinguishing between adolescents' healthy and harmful online sexual behaviours, so resources can be prioritised and interventions carried out when authority is needed, avoiding the unnecessary criminalisation of children.

Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., Colburn, D., Mitchell, K., & Mathews, B. (2023). [Child sexual abuse images and youth produced images: The varieties of image-based sexual exploitation and abuse of children](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 143. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106269

This paper presents a categorization of sexual image crimes and abuse that occur against children, and it compares their frequency, dynamics, and emotional impact. A national sample of 2639 respondents aged 18-to-28 disclosed 369 childhood episodes involving a variety of image abuse. Online self-administered questionnaire. The analysis classified the cases into five incident types: 1) adult made images (child sexual abuse images), 2) images non-consensually made by other youth, 3) voluntarily provided self-made images that were non-consensually shared by other youth, 4) voluntarily provided self-made images non-consensually shared by adults, and 5) voluntarily provided self-made images to adults that entailed an illegal age difference or were part of a commercial transaction. We propose to refer to this aggregation of types as Image Based Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (IBSEAC). Only 12 % of the image episodes qualified as adult produced, child sexual abuse images. Such adult produced image experiences were also not higher in negative emotional impact than the youth produced images. Only 10 % of the episodes involved images of children under age 13. The study highlights the predominance of youth made sexual images among the image exploitation and abuse affecting youth according to self-report. It also highlights the difference between what victim surveys reveal about the problem and what is inferred from police record studies.

Maxwell, F. (2022). [Children's rights, the optional protocol and child sexual abuse material in the digital Age: Moving from criminalisation to prevention](#). *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 31(1), 61-88. DOI:10.1163/15718182-30040004

Around the time of the drafting of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, few could have predicted the monumental impact of camera, phone, computer and social media technologies on people's lives. While these technologies have aided the realisation of many children's rights, evidence suggests that child sexual abuse

material (csam) is more available and in larger quantities than it has ever been in human history. New technologies have made major contributions to this horrifying development. Are the terms of the Optional Protocol able to meet this urgent and rising problem in a way that best ensures children's rights? Does it ensure that the international community combats this problem without encroaching on the opportunities that digital technologies offer to children today? This article explores both of these questions with reference to the Optional Protocol's terms, as well as the recent guidelines and General Comment No. 25 issued by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. It concludes that the Optional Protocol is deficient in prioritising law enforcement responses to csam and failing to ensure prevention initiatives receive adequate attention and resources. Moreover, it finds that the few prevention initiatives for which it does provide are in tension with other aims of the children's rights project. It argues that the Committee needs to alter its approach in engaging with the reports of States parties so that there can be greater prioritisation of child-centric prevention initiatives.

Quayle, E. (2022, October). [Self-produced images, sexting, coercion and children's rights](#). In *ERA Forum*, 23(2), 237-251. DOI:10.1007/s12027-022-00714-9

Converging sources of data would suggest that the volume of images and videos which involve minors is increasing and places a burden on law enforcement in terms of victim identification as well as prosecution. The terminology used in relation to these activities is problematic, as reference to self-produced sexual images would seem to result in victim-blaming. While there is an acknowledgement that there are diverse motives in the creating and sharing of this content, in many jurisdictions these images are seen as meeting the criteria for illegality and may result in prosecutions under child pornography legislation. This potentially criminalises (or at least problematises) the consensual creation and sharing of sexually explicit content between minors. Concerns regarding this sit alongside growing disquiet that this disregards children's rights to sexual autonomy and decision making.

Moritz, D., & Christensen, L. S. (2020). [When sexting conflicts with child sexual abuse material: The legal and social consequences for children](#). *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 27(5), 815–830. DOI:10.1080/13218719.2020.1742242

When children participate in online sexual behaviour, such as ‘sexting’, there can be a range of legal and social consequences. Criminal law in Australia does not consistently address sexting, which means that in some jurisdictions, children who participate in sexting can be liable for offences related to child sexual abuse material (CSAM). Children who are 16 or 17 years old have reached the age to consent to sexual activity, yet the law, in many jurisdictions, does not allow them to participate in sexting. This paper seeks to reconceptualise sexting among older children as a separate practice to possessing and/or distributing CSAM. It explores the socio-legal considerations which arise when older children possess and share intimate online material, including how the age of consent to sexual activity is relevant to their participation in sexting.

Westlake, B. G. (2018). [Delineating victims from perpetrators: Prosecuting self-produced child pornography in youth criminal justice systems](#). *International Journal of Cyber Criminology*, 12(1), 255–268. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1467907

Video recording technology advancements and accessibility has been paralleled by a growth in self-produced child pornography (SPCP). Although social and judicial attention has been given to instances of teenage sexting, Internet-based forms of SPCP, such as webcam/website sex tourism, have almost been ignored. While some of the proposed legislation reform has referenced video-based SPCP, the majority has focused on SPCP distributed through cellular phones; excluding that which is manifested online or through entrepreneurial efforts. The purpose of this article is to introduce non-sexting SPCP, using the case study of Justin Berry (in the United States), and to propose a broad punishment, education, and counseling response from youth criminal justice systems (YCJS). Recommendations are meant as a starting point, framed with multiple YCJS structures, the duality of victim and perpetrator, the justice and

welfare approaches to juvenile justice, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in mind.

Atabekova, A., & Filippov, V. (2018). [Legislation response to use of minors' self-generated sexual content for their ICT-facilitated sexual coercion](#). *European Research Studies*, 21(4), 763–772.

The third Millennium has brought to life new digital contexts of human activities that include positive, negative and even alarming phenomena with regard to human development and safety. Among other things minors' self-generated content has become a tool for their ICT-facilitated sexual coercion and extortion. Therefore, the national legislations should implement adequate measures to withstand such activities. The paper follows the authors' report made at the 21st session (June 2018) of the Council of Europe Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention). The report focused on the reference in national legislations to ICT-facilitated sexual coercion and/or extortion of children due to use of their self-generated sexually explicit visual content. The paper aims to explore the legal instruments which Member States use to respond to the mentioned challenge, to systematize the above tools and to evaluate them in terms of their compliance with internationally binding legislation. The materials included officially submitted information by 42 Lanzarote Committee Member States. The methodology integrated comparative, descriptive, conceptual, evaluative approaches to the subject matter study. The analysis made it possible to identify typical ways that Lanzarote Committee Member States use to withstand the issue under study. The research relevance stems from the revealed promising national practices regarding the criminalization of minors' ICT-facilitated sexual coercion that uses their self-generated sexual content.

Fovargue, S., & Ost, S. (2013). Does the theoretical framework change the legal end result for mature minors refusing medical treatment or creating self-generated pornography?. *Medical Law International*, 13(1), 6–31. DOI:10.1177/0968533213486541

The status that is and should be afforded to decisions made by those under 18 has been much debated, particularly in the context of health care. Ideas of rights, autonomy and the concept of best interests have been explored, and there appears to be an underlying concern that if minors are recognised as ‘fully’ autonomous individuals with legally enforceable rights, then this would conflict with the best interests (welfare) principle as espoused in the Children Act 1989. Similar concerns are identifiable with regards to provisions designed to protect children from sexual exploitation, which are largely framed around protection rather than rights. Concepts of vulnerability and exploitation are predominant in this context, making it easier to perceive minors as being in need of protection rather than as individuals with autonomy deserving of respect. In this article, we consider some of the concerns raised and expose the tensions that surround the decision-making (cap)ability of mature minors (those aged 16 and 17), and the implications for these adolescents. We explore whether the dominant paradigms of best interests and protectionism limit English law’s recognition of mature minors’ autonomy in two situations; refusing treatment and creating self-generated pornography. We thus test whether a ‘liberal’ position of recognising mature minors’ autonomy can be maintained in the face of potential harm to them.

VII. Virtual (AI) CSAM

Krishna, S., Dubrosa, F., & Milanaik, R. (2024). [Rising threats of AI-driven child sexual abuse material](#). *Pediatrics*, e2023063954. DOI:10.1542/peds.2023-063954

The widespread availability of artificial intelligence (AI) has not only introduced extensive benefits to society, but also new dangers. One disturbing consequence of AI usage is the production and dissemination of virtual child sexual abuse material (VCSAM), which poses imminent risks to pediatric and adolescent populations. This discussion aims to shed light on the dangers and implications of VCSAM for pediatric populations, along with the cautionary measures needed to combat them.

Parti, K., & Szabó, J. (2024). [The legal challenges of realistic and AI-driven child sexual abuse material: Regulatory and enforcement perspectives in Europe](#). *Laws*, 13(6), 67.
DOI: 10.3390/laws13060067

Although the escalation in online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is not a novel problem, recent digital proliferation has brought about new alarming challenges in addressing the issue. CSAM poses significant risks to children and society in general, the most serious being the long-lasting harmful effects on depicted victims. The already distressing problem is exacerbated by the worldwide appearance and spread of AI-driven or virtual CSAM, as AI offers a fast and increasingly profitable means for the sexual exploitation of children. The paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of current legislative measures focusing the European Union for combating online CSAM. With a particular focus on AI-driven CSAM, we will systematically evaluate the effectiveness and applicability of these regulations in addressing virtual CSAM. The paper will conclude with policy recommendations to address identified gaps in the European legislative framework concerning virtual CSAM.

Trivison, A. (2024). [Understanding the line between art and abuse: How Generative AI changes the landscape of child sexual abuse materials](#). *Catholic University Journal of Law and Technology*, 33(1), 87-114.

Christensen, L. S., & Vickery, N. (2023). [The characteristics of virtual child sexual abuse material offenders and the harms of offending: A qualitative content analysis of print media](#). *Sexuality & Culture*, 1-15. DOI:10.1007/s12119-023-10091-1

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) has become a global problem. With technological advancements, a sub-type of material has emerged: virtual child sexual abuse material (VCSAM). Despite the far-reaching harms of this material, little is known about VCSAM offenders. Research has found some disconnect between the perceived harmfulness of VCSAM and legislative definitions, compared with CSAM. Given the media's influential ability to shape public perceptions, this exploratory study aimed to: (1) identify the characteristics of VCSAM offenders and (2) explore whether the harms of VCSAM are represented in this reporting. For the most up-to-date data, the search spanned 1 January 2019 to 23 September 2022. Of the 160 newspaper articles that appeared, 25 met the inclusion criteria. Four themes emerged from the qualitative content analysis: (1) VCSAM is a form of CSAM, (2) potential for escalation in offending from viewing VCSAM, (3) offenders have preferences in specific types of VCSAM (with the sub-theme: written stories and documents are VCSAM too), and (4) offenders "didn't know" the material was illegal. Overall, these findings were positive; how cases were reported may broadly educate the public about VCSAM offending, with articles signifying the harms of this offending. The current findings have the potential to contribute to prevention and intervention efforts, with utility in policymaking, criminal justice, media, and psychology disciplines.

Dines, G., & Sanchez, M. (2023). [Hentai and the pornification of childhood: How the porn industry just made the case for regulation](#). *Dignity: A Journal of Analysis of Exploitation and Violence*, 8(1), 3. DOI:10.23860/dignity.2023.08.01.03

One of the most popular genres of online pornography today is hentai, sexualized animation, and cartoons in the style of Japanese anime. Data from Pornhub, the world's best-known pornography website, as well as a recent report from a British regulatory agency and our research, show that much of hentai appeals to children and depicts child-like characters engaged in sexual violence. In almost every instance, this violence targets female characters. Hentai, we show, encourages adults to see minors, especially girls, as legitimate targets of sexual violence. Until the day when these depictions of sexual violence are eradicated, we call for three ameliorative steps: age verification legislation; civil lawsuits; and sex education through a porn-critical lens.

Christensen, L. S., Moritz, D., & Pearson, A. (2021). Psychological perspectives of virtual child sexual abuse material. *Sexuality & Culture*, 25(4), 1353–1365.
[DOI:10.1007/s12119-021-09820-1](#)

Virtual child sexual abuse material (VCSAM) has become a growing global concern amongst policy and practice professionals. This theoretical paper aimed to provide a discussion on the landscape for the types of virtual material and apply psychological perspectives to further our limited understanding of these offenders. When considering the landscape, the types of morphing were explored along with the issues that have resulted due to the advances in 3D software and hardware rendering, including difficulties distinguishing VCSAM from child sexual abuse material involving real children. Throughout the paper, logic is drawn from the strong theoretical basis of child sexual abuse material offenders, allowing for the application of theoretical perspectives, such as schemas, cognitive distortions, the person-situation interaction, and rational choice theory. This paper offers some preliminary foundations and insights in an attempt to better understand VCSAM offenders, while providing avenues for

further research. Overall, this paper offers a valuable and timely resource for psychology and law enforcement disciplines, along with policy makers, at an international level.

Jung, K. H. (2021). [Freedom to Morph?: An analysis of Morphed Imagery, Child Pornography, and the First Amendment](#). *Catholic University Journal of Law and Technology*, 30, 33.

This article will begin with a legal analysis of the development of child pornography law as it relates to traditional child pornography, virtual child pornography, and morphed imagery. First, there will be discussion regarding the background of the First Amendment, highlighting *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire*. The analysis focuses on Congress' approach to regulating child pornography and the Supreme Court's attempt to remedy it with the First Amendment and will delve into *Miller v. California* and *New York v. Ferber*, two of the early cases establishing the regulations on child pornography. The article will then chronologically discuss the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996, much of which was subsequently rejected by *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition* and the subsequent passage of the PROTECT Act by Congress. There is a discussion of the current circuit split regarding whether morphed imagery falls within protected First Amendment speech. Additionally, the current statutory laws relating to child pornography and morphed imagery's place within those laws will be analyzed. Finally, the discussion will conclude with a legal analysis of the history of child pornography regulation and its emphasis on a child's wellbeing. That section will put particular emphasis on the inability of the Supreme Court to have known the rapid nature of technological growth and their reticence in applying any standards to the issue of morphed imagery, only that these types of images may fall closer to those traditional child pornography images because they include photographs of real children.¹³ This section will end with a comparison to another realm of pornography regulation, revenge pornography, which is criminalized in 46 states.

Esposito, L. (2018). Sexual ageplay in virtual reality: Practicing free speech or producing child pornography. *Cardozo Law Review*, 40, 1913.

This Note will discuss the constitutionality of graphic, sexually explicit adult VR games. Part I will begin with a background of virtual reality and the future of VR porn. Technology studios are developing software that makes the virtual world not only look realistic, but feel realistic through sensory feedback. VR software will soon allow avatars to mimic and track the facial expression and body position of its users. Although photorealistic VR platforms are not yet on the market, the technology exists and is in testing at VR studios." One day soon, the difference between interacting in real life and interacting with people virtually will not be so clear-cut. This is especially true with VR porn. Part I ends with a background on obscenity and child pornography jurisprudence. Part II of this Note will focus on adult VR games (games that are pornographic) and the resurgence of federal obscenity law proscribing obscenity on the internet. The difference between adult VR games and VR porn is that most adult VR games depict avatars that look computer-generated. However, there is certainly a demand for better graphics in adult VR games, and the technology already exists. Part II concludes with an exploration of how one of the definitions of child pornography might apply to images produced in adult VR games involving photorealistic childlike avatars.

Holmes, O., Banks, M. S., & Farid, H. (2016). [Assessing and improving the identification of computer-generated portraits](#). *ACM Transactions on Applied Perception (TAP)*, 13(2), 1-12. DOI:10.1145/2871714

Modern computer graphics are capable of generating highly photorealistic images. Although this can be considered a success for the computer graphics community, it has given rise to complex forensic and legal issues. A compelling example comes from the need to distinguish between computer-generated and photographic images as it pertains to the legality and prosecution of child pornography in the United States. We performed psychophysical experiments to determine the accuracy with which observers are capable of distinguishing

computer-generated from photographic images. We find that observers have considerable difficulty performing this task—more difficulty than we observed 5 years ago when computer-generated imagery was not as photorealistic. We also find that observers are more likely to report that an image is photographic rather than computer generated, and that resolution has surprisingly little effect on performance. Finally, we find that a small amount of training greatly improves accuracy.

Byberg, J. (2012). [Childless child porn—a ‘victimless’ crime? A comparative analysis of the validity of the current restrictions in the United Kingdom and united states on virtual child pornography in relation to the right to free speech.](#) (July 20, 2012).

This paper will comment on the current prohibition of the (arguably) victimless crime of virtual child pornography (VCP) in both the US and UK and it's interaction with the right to free speech. This paper is limited in it's scope and will only discuss in passing the offence of prohibited images of a child, nor will it consider in anyway images that are a product of computer morphing, in which a physical element of a child is 'morphed' into an indecent image. The forthcoming discourse will contend that the current prohibition of VCP is an unjustifiable violation of the right to free speech, through the consideration of the practical and theoretical validity of the justifications for this prohibition. Furthermore, it will consider the possible advantages of restricting rather than prohibiting VCP. In order to achieve this the first chapter will briefly examine the development of the law regulating actual child pornography and the current legislation governing VCP in both the US and UK.

Coaker, V., Hanson, D., & Jamieson, C. (2009). [Consultation on possession of non-photographic visual depictions of child sexual abuse.](#) UK: Northern Ireland Office.

Malamuth, N., & Huppel, M. (2006). Drawing the line on virtual child pornography: Bringing the law in line with the research evidence. *NYU Review of Law & Social Change*, 31, 773-827.

Levy, N. (2002). Virtual child pornography: The eroticization of inequality. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 4(4), 319-323. DOI:10.1023/A:1021372601566

The United States Supreme Court has recently ruled that virtual child pornography is protected free speech, partly on the grounds that virtual pornography does not harm actual children. I review the evidence for the contention that virtual pornography might harm children, and find that it is, at best, inconclusive. Saying that virtual child pornography does not harm actual children is not to say that it is completely harmless, however. Child pornography, actual or virtual, necessarily eroticizes inequality; in a sexist society it therefore contributes to the subordination of women.

VIII. Other

O'Brien, J. E., Kahn, G. Z., Gast, L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2025). [“They are not victimless crimes... that's frustrating to hear”: Qualitative insights from prosecutors working on cases related to technology facilitated child sexual abuse material](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 159, 107169. DOI:10.1016/j.chiabu.2024.107169

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) are any videos or images of individuals under the age of 18 engaging in sexually explicit activities or positions. The incidence and scope of CSAM has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic; however, the prosecution of such crimes has not risen at the same rate. This study presents exploratory qualitative findings regarding prosecutors' challenges prosecuting CSAM cases from the perspectives of experienced CSAM prosecutors. A total of 24 prosecutors from 16 different states across the United States who affirmed working on prosecuting CSAM cases participated in a recorded, 1-h, semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview guide questions focused on participant's professional experiences prosecuting cases, including things that contributed and detracted from the successful prosecution of CSAM cases. Digital recordings of all interviews were transcribed verbatim and subsequently reviewed for accuracy by research team members. Interviews were coded independently by two members of the research team using a grounded theory approach. Methods to enhance the rigor of the research included regular debriefing, and the use of detailed case notes capturing nonverbal participant cues. Qualitative analysis revealed three main challenges related to prosecution including CSAM awareness, resource allocation, and legal response. Subcategories within themes as well as regional differences are captured and shared. Findings from the current study provide a context for understanding the role of prosecutors in criminal justice response to CSAM, but also point to directions for systemic improvements that would aid in prosecuting these crimes.

Krishna, S., Dubrosa, F., & Milanaik, R. (2024). [Rising threats of AI-driven child sexual abuse material](#). *Pediatrics*, e2023063954. DOI:10.1542/peds.2023-063954

McGookin, N. K. (2024). [‘KNOCK NOC’—Non-offending carers experiences with social work in the aftermath of Internet-based child sexual abuse](#). *The British Journal of Social Work*, bcae165. DOI:10.1093/bjsw/bcae165

Children of individuals under investigation for the possession of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) in the UK are referred to social work to assess the risk of potential sexual harm. As a result of their co-parent's offences, the non-offending carer finds themselves thrown into the centre of child protection investigations and parenting assessments, which is underpinned by the new reality they must face: Their partner is no longer considered safe to be left alone with children. This study was undertaken over the course of two years as part of my participatory action research doctoral thesis in which I worked in collaboration with four women with lived experience of social work intervention. This article focuses specifically on four themes identified that spoke to the women's experiences with social workers. The themes are presented as messages that participants wished to communicate to child protection practitioners and were titled by the participants as follows: 'we are terrified', 'we are not the perpetrator', 'we are on our knees' and 'we want to work together to protect our children'. Following a summary of themes, this article goes on to discuss how social workers might better respond to families impacted by CSAM.

Reichel, R., Daser, A., Gnielka, F. M., Schmidt, A. F., Blokland, A., & Lehmann, R. J. (2024). A review of risk factors for online and mixed child sexual abuse material offending: What is being researched?. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 1-44. DOI:10.1080/13552600.2024.2418100

Possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is a serious criminal offence facilitated by online technologies. To prevent, investigate, and treat online CSAM offending, comprehensive knowledge of potential risk factors for these crimes is required. Given the large

body of relevant research, a systematic overview of the risk factors typically considered in research and their link to (testable) theories is lacking. We present a review of 43 quantitative studies (sample sizes ranging from N = 60 to N = 14,804) identified from 56 meta-analyses, reviews, and book chapters on online CSAM offending. Risk factors were extracted and grouped into 12 categories and 75 subcategories via qualitative clustering. The most frequent categories were Criminal History, Socio-Demographics, and Social Relations, whereas genuine psychological constructs were rare. Comparing risk factors for online CSAM offending to those for general (sexual) offending, the need for more specific theories of online CSAM offending is discussed along with implications for future research.

Turner, H. A., Finkelhor, D., & Colburn, D. (2024). Contexts and characteristics of imaged-based sexual exploitation and abuse of children: Incident dynamics in a national sample. *Child Maltreatment*. DOI:10.1177/10775595241233970

This paper describes incident characteristics and dynamics associated with six specific forms of image-based sexual exploitation and abuse of children (IBSEAC). Data were collected on a national sample of 2639 individuals aged 18-to-28 from a probability-based online panel. Respondents completed a self-administered survey questionnaire, providing detailed follow-up information on their experiences of image-based sexual victimization before the age of 18. A total of 607 incidents of IBSEAC were included in the analyses. Findings show substantial diversity in incident characteristics within and across the six forms of IBSEAC (nonconsensual sharing of sexual images, nonconsensual taking or making of images, forced image recruitment, threatened sharing, voluntary image sharing with an older adult, and commercial sexual exploitation involving images). Some notable patterns include frequent involvement of perpetrators who are other youth or young adults, who are known in-person to the victim, and who are intimate partners. The diversity and complexity of dynamics revealed in this study underscores the need for careful design and evaluation of prevention programs and the core messages directed at youth.

Brown, R. (2023). *Eliminating Online Child Sexual Abuse Material*. New York: Rutledge.

This book uses a crime science approach to explore the ways in which child sexual abuse material (CSAM) can be tackled. It describes the CSAM ecosystem, focusing on the ways in which it is produced, distributed and consumed and explores different interventions that can be used to tackle each issue.

Dorotic, M., & Johnsen, J. W. (2023). [Child Sexual Abuse on the Internet: Report on the analysis of technological factors that affect the creation and sharing of child sexual abuse material](#) on the Internet. Forskningsrapport, BI.

International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children. (2023). [Child sexual abuse material: Model legislation and global review](#).

This groundbreaking report, often referred to as ICMEC's Rule of Law project, analyzes child sexual abuse material (CSAM) legislation in 196 countries around the world, and offers a "menu" of concepts to be considered when drafting anti-CSAM legislation. First released in April 2006, the report is currently in its 9th edition. The latest edition's findings show that since inception 150 countries have refined or implemented new anti-CSAM legislation, 140 countries criminalize simple CSAM possession, 125 countries define CSAM, and only 32 countries require ISP reporting of suspected CSAM.

Zhou, S. (2023). [The regulation of child pornography in China and the United States: A comparative review of laws](#). *Child Abuse Review*, e2828. DOI:10.1002/car.2828

Grounded in comparative law research, this paper compares differences in the regulation of online child pornography in China and the United States. The United States began regulating child pornography through criminal law in the 1970s, gradually refining the laws to distinguish

between child pornography and obscenity and prohibit the possession of child pornography and virtual child pornography. In contrast, China treats child pornography on an equal footing with adult pornography, but imposes more lenient penalties on disseminating child pornography, which has led to the proliferation of child pornography. By comparing the two countries' policies and laws on child pornography, this review makes four recommendations for other countries: (i) define child pornography in criminal law; (ii) distinguish between obscenity and child pornography; (iii) prohibit virtual child pornography on the internet; and (iv) increase criminal penalties for child pornography.

Salter, M., & Whitten, T. (2022). A comparative content analysis of pre-internet and contemporary child sexual abuse material. *Deviant Behavior*, 43(9), 1120–1134.
DOI:10.1080/01639625.2021.1967707

Child sexual abuse material is now recognized as a major social problem, however prior to the internet, disclosures of victimization in abuse material were the subject of skeptical scholarly commentary. The veracity of this skeptical position has been subject to limited empirical scrutiny. The aim of this study is to analyze the content of a sample of 1004 images of pre-internet abuse material. The pre-internet sample was analyzed according to the characteristics of victim/s, perpetrator/s and severity and setting of abuse, which were then compared to a preexisting dataset of 34,561 contemporary abuse images. The findings of the study underscore the severity of pre-internet abuse material. The comparison between the pre-internet and contemporary sample found that the average age of girls abused in abuse material has decreased, and the severity of the material has increased. The study highlights the significant abuse experienced by abuse material victims prior to the internet, and suggests the popularization of the internet is linked to a trend toward more serious offending against children in abuse material. The consistent role of the home as the major site of abuse material production poses significant challenges to prevention, early intervention, and prosecution.

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

We are experiencing a period full of physical and virtual uncertainty and insecurity, the Covid-19 period being a milestone regarding the increase of the phenomenon of sexual abuse and online exploitation of children. The wide accessibility of technology creates the opportunity for offenders to commit such crimes on children. Protection of children against any form of violence or abuse is a key priority at the European Union level, aiming at fighting the online and offline abuse on children, including production and diffusion of materials showing abuses on children, such as online sexual exploitation of children. In this regard, the European Union efforts aim at creating a specific legal framework in order to make easier for the Member States to detect and report the cases of online sexual abuse, to prevent such situations, and to support the victims. Thus, the Commission wants to clarify the role that the online service providers should have in order to protect the children.

Dąbrowska, M. (2021). [The unclear picture of child sexual abuse material \(CSAM\) online volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). *Białostockie Studia Prawnicze*, 6(26), 109–125. DOI:10.15290/bsp.2021.26.06.07

The COVID-19 global pandemic altered the social lives of people around the globe and centred our activities around the internet and new technologies even more than before. As countries around the world responded with lockdowns and social restrictions in order to prevent spreading the virus, concerns about the effects of those measures on child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) volumes on the internet and CSAM related off ending online arose. While it is impossible to measure the entire volume of CSAM available online and CSAM related off ending, there are some indicators that can be used to assess the scale of online CSAM and whether there was an upward or downward trend in CSAM related activity online and reporting over the pandemic time. Such indicators include the number of reports to hotlines combating CSAM, the number of criminal investigations and cases, and the measurements of the

offenders' online activity monitored by law enforcement and other entities. The aim of this paper is to analyse the data available in these areas and see how they picture the CSAM online problem during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Witting, S. K. (2021). [Transnational by default: Online child sexual abuse respects no borders.](#) *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 29(3), 731–764.
DOI:10.1163/15718182-29030010

Combating child sexual abuse on the internet requires a high level of harmonisation of both substantive and procedural laws, as online child sexual abuse is transnational by default: while the transnational nature of child sexual abuse material used to be the exception before the advent of the internet, it is now the rule. In order to prosecute and investigate online child sexual abuse across country borders, states rely heavily on extraterritorial jurisdiction clauses as well as informal and formal law enforcement collaboration channels. This paper analyses existing channels in the opsc, Budapest Convention and Lanzarote Convention, particularly against the background of the recently published crc Committee Guidelines regarding the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (crc/c/156), and provides for concrete guidance on how to ensure that the best interests of the child in the prosecution and investigation of transnational crimes such as online child sexual abuse is the primary consideration.

Dushi, D. (2020). Combating the live-streaming of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation: A need for new legislation. In J. Hunsinger, M. M. Allen, & L. Klasturp (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Internet Research* (pp. 201–223). Dordrecht: Springer.

This chapter focuses on the phenomenon of online live-streaming of child sexual abuse (CSA) as the newest form of child sexual exploitation created as a result of technological developments and the least studied phenomenon created from the wide opportunities that Internet offers to malicious users. It is argued that the current existing legislation is not sufficient

to tackle the phenomenon of live-streaming of child abuse. Additional legislation is required, especially in national laws, which would specifically address the offence of live-streaming of child abuse.

Krone, T., Spiranovic, C., Prichard, J., Watters, P., Wortley, R., Gelb, K., & Hunn, C. (2020). [Child sexual abuse material in child-centred institutions: Situational crime prevention approaches](#). *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 26(1), 91–110.
DOI:10.1080/13552600.2019.1705925

This paper focuses on the potential for child-centred institutions to use situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies to prevent or reduce child sexual abuse material (CSAM) offending as a distinct form of child sexual abuse (CSA). We discuss the failure of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia to address the potential for CSAM offending to occur in child-centred institutions. Our premise is that CSAM offending is markedly shaped by the situation in which it occurs, rather than by any pre-existing preparedness to offend sexually against children. In this context, SCP for CSAM offending must be considered as part of overall strategies to combat CSA in institutional settings. However, we acknowledge that effective implementation of SCP in this area is not straightforward. We consider some of the challenges in implementing SCP at an institutional level.

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



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