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# Bridging the Gap:

## Best Practices and Policies to Address the Online High-Risk Activities of Youth in BC

**NOVEMBER 2007**

Prepared for:  
The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General  
of British Columbia



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# PART 1

## Executive Summary

### OVERVIEW

#### **Purpose**

The effects of technology on British Columbian children and youth can be characterized on a continuum from extremely positive and beneficial, to harmful and negative. Provincial Ministries are increasingly under pressure to build strategies emphasizing the growth and development of children that both highlight the potential of the Internet for education and communication while simultaneously providing assistance to mitigate the possible negative impacts of this technology. These include: sexual exploitation online, online child luring, posting of harmful material, gang recruitment, access to emotionally, psychologically, physically harmful material, child pornography and cyberbullying. As the reach and depth of the Internet expand, so too do the challenges for public policy.

#### **Summary**

This document, prepared for the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General for the Province of British Columbia, suggests that a provincial strategy to combat online sexual exploitation of youth should be based on a human service approach, favor cooperation and coordination amongst industry, government, NGOs and the public and have a strong focus on education, awareness, research and training.

#### **Current Status and Considerations**

In Canada, provincial strategies exist in only three provinces: Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. While addressed to some degree by Federal initiatives, British Columbia does not have a specifically tailored strategy to protect the children of British

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Columbia when they are online. In designing and implementing a Provincial strategy now, British Columbia can take advantage of other approaches taken internationally, regionally, nationally and provincially in order to form a strategy best suited to British Columbians.

Best practices in other jurisdictions suggest that a strategy that can deliver a series of graduated outcomes in the short, medium and longer term are most successful. This document recognizes that responses need to be delivered in recognition of the specific context and unique problems faced by individual youth; the diverse economical, social and environmental communities youth come from necessitate culturally sensitive awareness, education and outreach programs. An effective strategy must also strive to bridge the knowledge and experiential gap between young people and adults including parents and professionals. Lastly, while this document argues for an immediate upgrade to existing provincial strategies to increase the awareness of the current technological environment, it must be stressed that any updates and upgrades must be iterative, ongoing and built into a long-term strategy to address the constantly evolving technological climate.

## **Recommendations**

The prioritized plan adheres to the focus advocated for in the document for each stakeholder group and operates in three sequential phases.

### **Phase One:**

1. Take immediate steps to increase awareness of youth, parents and professionals by implementing public service announcements, and advertising campaigns;
2. Increase access to, funding for, and delivery of existing educational presentations to youth, parent and professional target groups including dissemination of educational resources;
3. Form public-private partnerships with the technology industry to elicit financial contributions and integrate their access and expertise in longer term partnerships;
4. Target rural communities including youth, parents and professionals with education-based presentations.

### Phase Two:

1. Continue to deliver Programs started in Phase One
2. Develop curricula and resources relevant to the specific professional areas that engage high-risk youth and deliver regional “Community Expert” training sessions;
3. Contract with a competent agency to create and maintain a web-based portal offering one-stop referral to reputable online resources for British Columbians;
4. Link with existing interdepartmental committees to ensure a coordinated set of responses.

### Phase Three:

1. Continue to deliver Programs started in Phase One and Two
2. Implement provincial-wide curriculum;
3. Engage private industry and retailers to distribute educational materials to target audiences through retail outlets, as mail-outs in bill statements, and on corporate websites;
4. Equip those who serve high-risk youth with information and competencies to deal with incidents of online exploitation in their communities.

## **Assumptions and Organization**

While this document provides policy suggestions based on a general overview of international, national and provincial responses to the issue of the online sexual exploitation of youth, a key assumption is that law enforcement, while an integral partner in the protection of youth, must always be combined with a human services approach focused on prevention, education and treatment for those affected. Protecting children requires the acknowledgement that numerous contributing factors complicate the issues. Through more holistic, collaborative and cooperative means children at risk can be better supported, assisted and protected while those who have suffered exploitation can be better served and rehabilitated.

The document is organized as follows; Part One provides an overview and executive summary of the findings of the document. In Part Two, the emergence of online sexual exploitation is explored and examined through a framework of five typologies. A particular focus is on the unique challenges faced in the province of British Columbia. In Part Three, the policy parameters in British Columbia are explored including theoretical frameworks and definitions of terms, geographic considerations, and existing initiatives. In Part Four, based on a detailed review with a focus on the Canadian experience, recommendations are advanced specifying the appropriate focuses and stakeholder groups in addition to a delineation of strategic responses. The strategy is based on international, regional, national and provincial best practices and relevant Canadian literature. Part Five provides a succinct conclusion and suggests that in order to remain current in areas of child protection, British Columbia needs to act swiftly in implementing an educated approach to the high-risk activities of youth online.

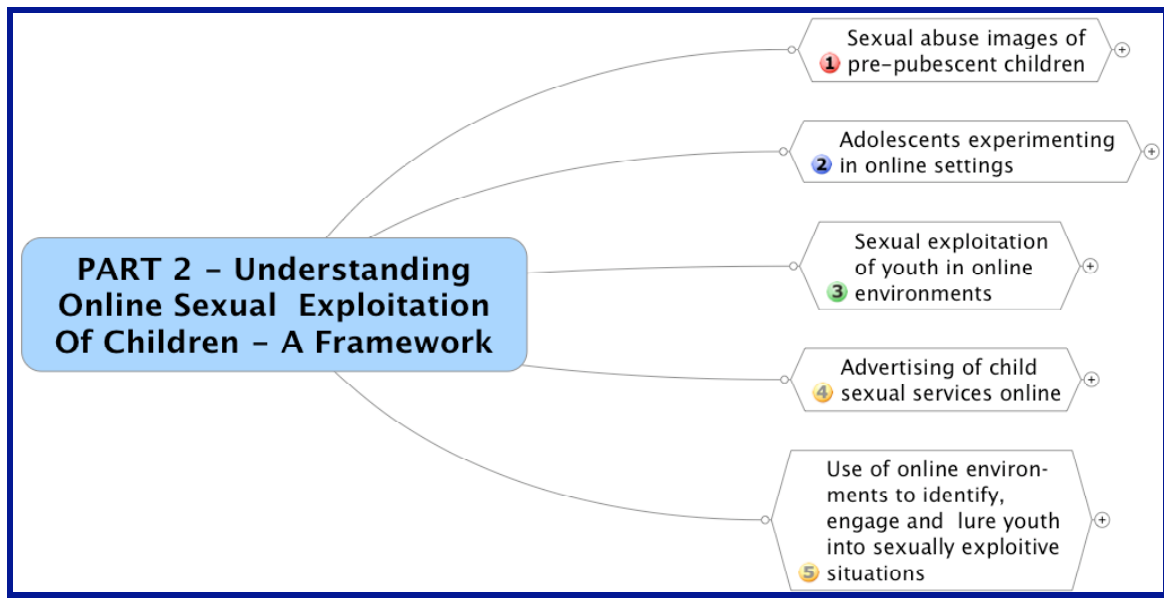
This document also includes a series of important Appendices. Appendix A includes a literature review and policy overview, beginning with the international perspective. It documents best practice strategies from the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Finally, the document provides a Canadian overview including sections on legislative developments, national policies and provincial strategies in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, as well as an analysis of best practices in Canada.

Additional resources included in the appendices are: examples of awareness and educational effort from European Union member states, and an excerpt from the “Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse” (2007). In order to provide the reader with easily accessible resources, in Appendix 4, each education and/or awareness website has been compiled into an alphabetized table.

# PART 2

## Understanding Online Sexual Exploitation of Children

### DEFINITIONS AND FRAMEWORK



The sexual exploitation of children has been the focus of many legislative responses in the last twenty years. Multiple bodies, including international and national governments are involved in creating and enforcing legislation regarding the sexual use of children for the pleasure or profit of adults.

These efforts have been hugely complicated by the introduction of the Internet. The online sexual exploitation of children creates an additional complexity in the definitions of sexual exploitation; now instead of sexual exploitation involving individuals generally physically identifiable, these crimes can be facilitated and complicated by a variety of electronic elements.

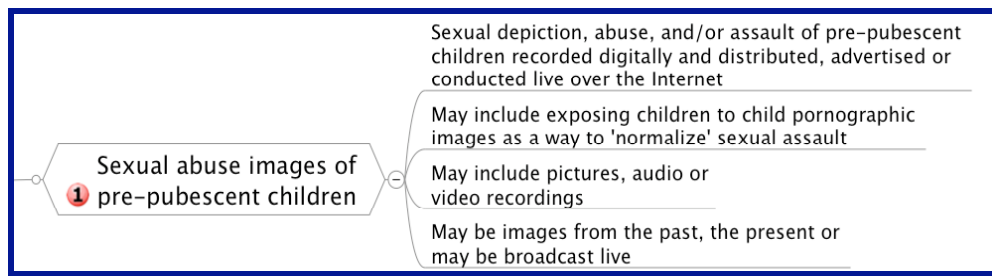
In Canada there are several different jurisdictional considerations when examining these issues; the legal age of majority in Canada is eighteen while the age in British Columbia is nineteen. This can mean that youth in British Columbia can be in the care of the government and considered minors, yet are considered as adults federally. This discrepancy can be illustrated by the hypothetical situation of a British Columbian youth who is aged nineteen and still in the care of the provincial government, but who can also legally be involved in the adult pornography industry in Canada.

Another consideration that adds to the contextual understanding of these issues is the legal age of (heterosexual) sexual consent in Canada. Here, youth aged fourteen can consent to sexual relations with anyone (as long as that person is not in a position of authority nor has any 'consideration' been provided in exchange for the sexual activity). Beyond the obvious concerns that this poses for youth, it is further complicated by the fact that the legal definition of child pornography covers the possession, creation and/or distribution of sexual images of anyone under the age of eighteen, thus images of youth ages 14 to 17 engaged in sexual activity are defined as child pornography and constitute illegal images.

This framework is offered as a way to understand the different groups affected and the dynamics involved in the sexual exploitation of children in online settings.

## Sexual Abuse Images of Pre-Pubescent Children

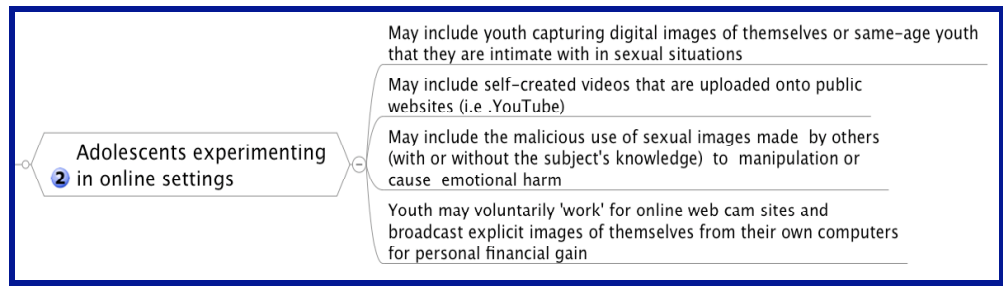
Sexual abuse images of pre-pubescent children include sexualized images or recordings of the sexual abuse, and/or assault of young children that are recorded digitally. They are often distributed, advertised or conducted live over the Internet as child pornography. The abuse of this population of children has unique dynamics and it should be recognized that the victims of these crimes have specific therapeutic requirements in addition to those victims of physical sexual abuse. Additionally investigative techniques employed to identify offenders against pre-pubescent children will generally be significantly different from investigations of older youth who are sexually exploited.



While the need to identify the alleged offenders is an obvious priority when sexual abuse images are discovered, the emotional needs of children victimized by abusive images should also be prioritized during all legal investigations. Law enforcement representatives should refer children victimized by sexually abusive images to appropriate child-focused services. These service providers, in turn must be aware of the unique needs of victims traumatized in this way; the enduring nature of the evidence captured digitally online, may affect their willingness to disclose, and the effects of the evidence on the victim may include trauma resulting from the fear that those around them have seen the images. From an investigative perspective, changes in techniques required to apprehend online predators require modifications. Modifications will also need to be made to traditional sexual abuse counseling, victim service provisions, and child protection practices when dealing with pre-pubescent children.

## Adolescents Experimenting Sexually Online

In some situations, no adult manipulation, seduction, threats and/or coercion are present. Here youth are engaging in (arguably) appropriate experimental adolescent behaviours in digital settings.

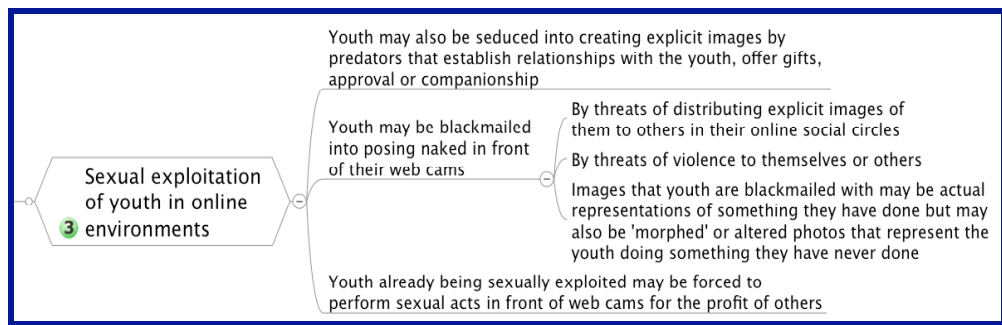


These behaviours can include individuation and separation from parents, social experimentation, sexual experimentation and negotiating sexual orientation. While these activities are part of normal behaviour in developing a sexual identity, the consequences of normal adolescent experimentation being acted out online introduces many potentially dangerous practices. These include posing for and posting online photos or videos, engaging in cybersex and/or engaging in sexual conversations in adult chatrooms. Youth may also voluntarily engage in online sex acts, for money or the approval of others, not realizing the long-term implications of the content they create. The occurrence of an online 'camgirl' has been reported in one small Okanagan community. A youth accumulated in excess of \$5000 by performing in front of a webcam in her bedroom while her parents were upstairs, believing that she was in her room doing 'homework'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horton, M. (2007). Personal Interview. Vernon, British Columbia.

## Sexual Exploitation of Youth in Online Environments

In other situations, sexual exploitation may occur even in the absence of any physical contact between youth and predator. While the concept of ‘virtual rape’ remains difficult to understand, instances where sexually explicit images of youth are created or distributed produce unique and disturbing dynamics.



This can occur when predators seduce youth into posing in front of their webcam or taking sexually explicit images of themselves and providing them to the predator. Predators who initially approach the youth as ‘friends’ and then escalate the relationship to sexual images can also blackmail youth. There have also been instances of predators threatening to harm youth and/or the families of youth who don’t comply with online requests for sexual images.<sup>2</sup>

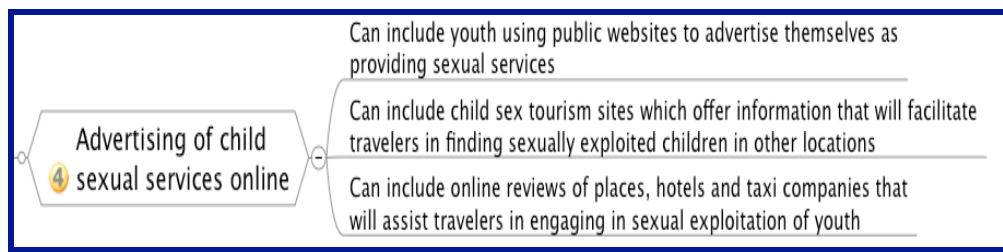
Reported cases also include predators taking a youth’s profile photo and digitally altering it to appear as though s/he has done something illegal or explicit. Predators then threaten to show the image to parents or peers unless the youth complies with specific requests. Also evolving are street level practices of forcing youth already being exploited in the street trade into performing sexually in front of webcams for the profit of others.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Horton, M. (2005). *Personal Interview*. Richmond: British Columbia.

<sup>3</sup> Horton, M. (2007). *Personal Interview*. Vancouver: British Columbia.

## Advertising of Child Sexual Services

Online environments can also be used to anonymously distribute information about child sexual exploitation.



Incidences of youth using online classified services to advertise themselves for sexual services have begun to emerge recently in Vancouver.<sup>4</sup> These youth have posted their legal names, pictures of their faces, their ‘rates’ and their contact information. In one instance the youth included a room number with the phone number. With the use of a reverse directory, readily available online, this youth could easily have been located right down to the specific room she was in exposing her to tremendous risk of physical harm.

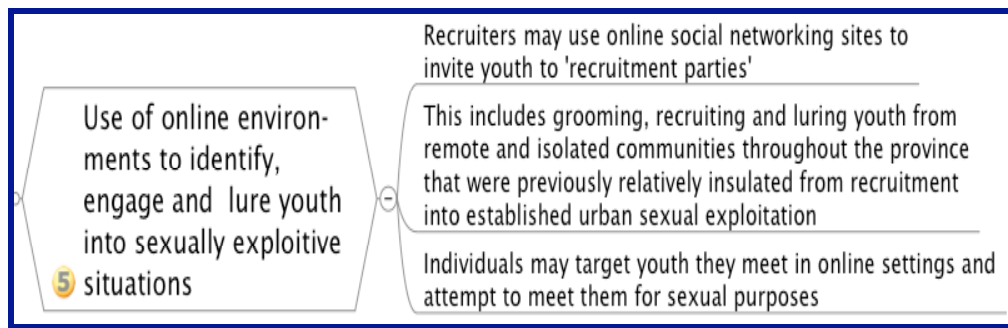
Other examples of this kind of exploitation include websites that offer suggestions on where to go in specific cities to gain access to under age children. Some sites include reviews of the quality of sexual services available.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Horton, M. (2007). *Online Research*. Vancouver: British Columbia.

<sup>5</sup> *International Sex Guide*. (2007). From: <http://www.internationalsexguide.info/>.

## Use of Online Environments to Identify, Engage and Lure Youth into Sexually Exploitive Situations

Online environments are also use to lure youth directly into street level sexual exploitation.



Strategies employed by groups to attract youth to gatherings where they can be groomed for street level sexual exploitation include the use of social networking sites. Youth workers in Surrey have identified one such incident where youth were approached on a popular social networking site, invited to clubs and provided with transportation, alcohol and drugs. The 'company' hosting the events had connections to various known pimps and recruiters.<sup>6</sup>

Within the Province of BC the luring of youth from isolated communities has been facilitated by online technologies and constitutes another realm of exploitation. Previously isolated rural communities are now accessible to online recruiters who can take advantage of youth who may not have the skills to recognize sexual recruitment.<sup>7</sup>

The youth are also unfamiliar with the harmful realities of the sex trade and may be easily lured due to a misplaced sense of adventure. Isolated youth may also be especially vulnerable to remote luring as they may wish to escape their home communities and experience urban life. For example, just six months after the introduction of broadband access to one aboriginal community in BC, youth counselors discovered a girl at the local airport trying to pick up a pre-paid ticket for

<sup>6</sup> Horton, M. (2007). Personal Interviews. Surrey, British Columbia.

Vancouver. A Vancouver-based recruiter, who had promised a modeling career and financial support, had contacted her and arranged for her transportation. The youth was completely unaware of the likelihood that she was on her way to becoming an exploited youth in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver.<sup>8</sup> This form of exploitation can also include predators who lure youth out for the sole purpose of one-time sexual assault.

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<sup>7</sup> These examples are based on interviews conducted by SOLOS with staff dealing directly with these communities.

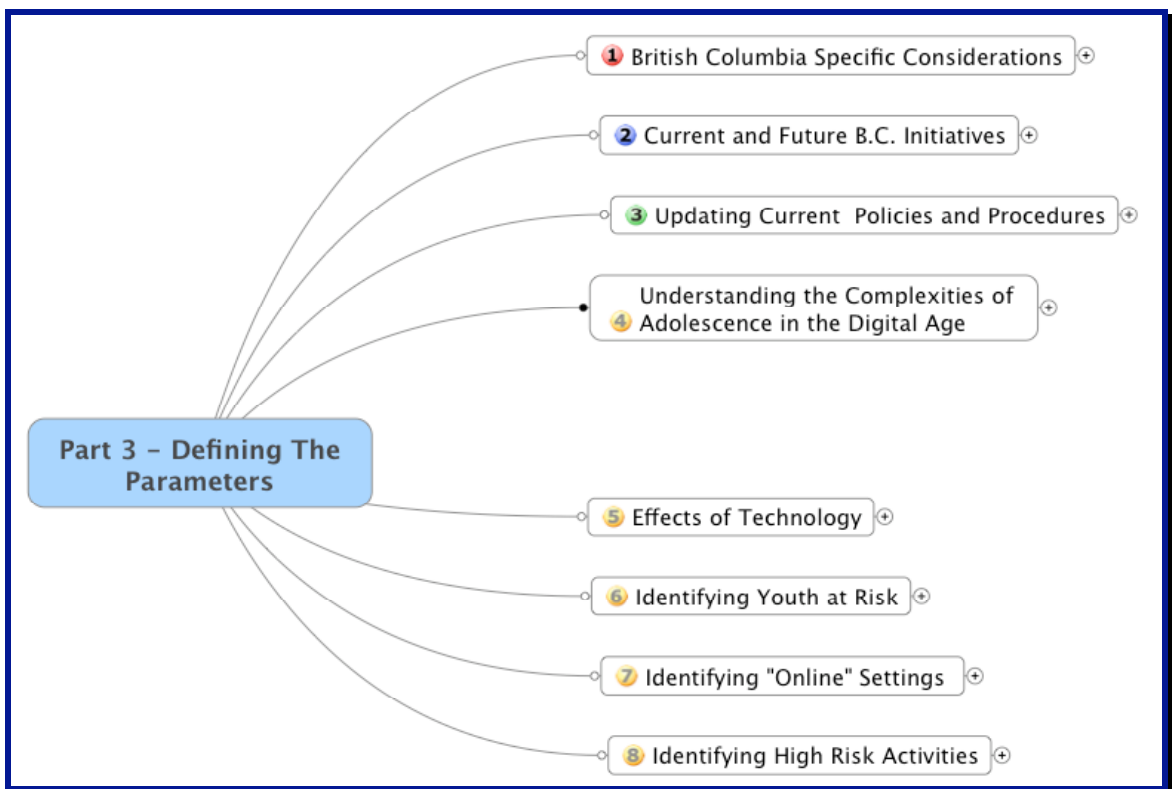
<sup>8</sup> Horton, M. (2007). Personal Interviews. Vancouver, British Columbia.

# PART 3

## Defining the Policy Parameters

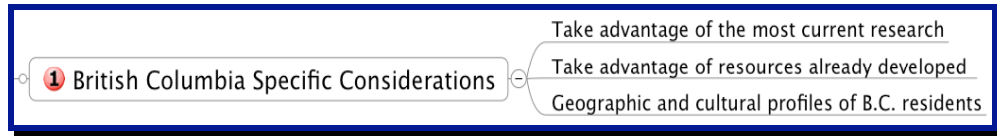
### RELEVANT ELEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The areas addressed by this document are diverse and represent many new dynamics for youth, parents and professionals. Therefore, before outlining the specific recommendations on how to respond to the high-risk activities of youth online, some geographic considerations, existing initiatives, theoretical frameworks and definitions of terms will be defined.



## British Columbia: Specific Considerations

While many of the issues surrounding online exploitation have similar implications in all geographic settings there are some considerations that are specific to British Columbia.



### Taking Advantage of Current Research

The Government of British Columbia has recognized the need to draft and implement a provincial strategy to address emergent issues related to online technologies and their effects on youth-focused professional practices. By considering valuable insights from the variety of international, regional, national and provincial education and awareness initiatives to date, there exists the potential to correct many of the assumptions upon which earlier strategies have been based.

One theme which has emerged from the exhaustive literature and environmental scan completed through this document, is that a sole focus on a law enforcement approach (enforcement, investigations, and criminal prosecutions) cannot address the multitude of issues for victims of online exploitation. The research suggests that jurisdictions which embrace preventive education, capacity building and service provision coordination delivered through a human services approach are better placed to address the long-term needs of youth. The public is also better served by engaging in long-term solutions based on increasing the resilience and capacity of Internet users rather than focusing on the apprehension of all those who offend against others online. The nature of the Internet and the difficulty governments face in controlling and regulating the content available to their citizens dictate that preventative education is the best long-term investment.

## Taking Advantage of Existing Resources

While the delay in responding provincially to the challenges of online exploitation offers advantages from a research perspective, it also offers advantages from a resource development point of view. Many excellent resources have been developed both nationally and internationally that can be utilized by British Columbia in addressing these issues.<sup>9</sup> Many of these resources are available at no cost. Other resources have been developed by non-profit organizations and may be available, for use in British Columbia, on a cost recovery basis.

## B.C.'s Culture and Geography

While much Internet safety information can be applied cross-culturally and in multiple jurisdictions, differences in culture, access, and community risk factors require information distributed in non-urban British Columbian communities to be tailored to suit specific community needs and complexities. In British Columbia this means:

- Addressing the challenge represented by the rapid introduction of broadband access to rural and First Nations youth in British Columbia. Individuals in these settings may have had limited exposure to sexual exploitation recruitment and luring. This increases their vulnerability to online solicitations. They may also be overwhelmed by the possibilities delivered to their communities in a short period of time by the rich broadband experience;
- Adults from a rural lifestyle may be less inclined to engage in online communications, thereby leaving youth in these communities with a limited number of adults to act as role models;
- First Nations communities still dealing with the residual effects of the residential school system and generational sexual abuse need education

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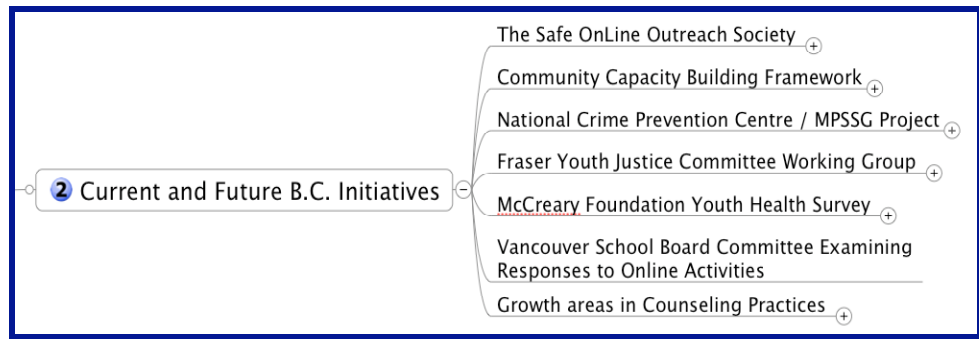
<sup>9</sup> Please see Appendix B – Educational Resources.

delivered in a way sensitive to their complex needs and varied community dynamics;

- Small communities often lack a diversity of service providers capable of recognizing, addressing and reporting high-risk activities of youth online. Since we are not in a position to increase the number of service providers in small communities, special attention needs to be paid to supplementing the skills and knowledge base of existing professionals.
- Small community culture dictates that information is best accepted and integrated when delivered by service providers/adults familiar to the local youth population. The delivery of standardized service and educational programs from *outside* experts has little long-lasting effect and relevance.

### Current and Future British Columbia Initiatives

Several programs and initiatives have already been established within British Columbia to address various issues related to youth, sexual exploitation and/or issues relating to online communications. It is recommended that representatives involved in these activities be involved in the analysis and implementation of any strategies coming out of the Provincial Working Group.



#### The Safe OnLine Outreach Society

The Safe OnLine Outreach Society (SOLOS), a non-profit society, has been actively delivering Internet safety, online child protection and youth-2-youth programs in British Columbia since 2002. Specifically SOLOS delivers in-person presentations to youth, parents, and the public. These presentations are supplemented with resources

developed by the Society, an in-depth website containing research, resource links and media coverage, supplemental published resources and with ongoing networking activities including mailing lists and newsletter distribution.

### Community Capacity Building Framework

Supported and sponsored by the British Columbia Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee to Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children, many First Nations and community-based groups throughout British Columbia have participated by implementing sexual exploitation awareness, prevention and education projects in their areas over the last ten years. These groups can be included in networking activities regarding these issues.

### Community Capacity Building Projects

In 2005-06, the Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee on Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth partnered with the National Crime Prevention Centre, to contribute nearly \$1.3 million toward building and sustaining community capacity in British Columbia over a three-year period. In 2005-06, fifteen organizations developed a multi-year community action plan and fifteen one-year community-based projects addressing prostitution and sexual exploitation of children and youth now receive support through the Assistant Deputy Ministers Community Capacity Building Fund.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See also: ADM's Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth. (2006, April). Community Capacity Building Project Grants. From: [http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/community\\_programs/exploitation/pdf/ADMcapacitybldg2006grants.pdf](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/community_programs/exploitation/pdf/ADMcapacitybldg2006grants.pdf)

### Fraser Youth Justice Committee Working Group

This group has only recently begun to discuss the possibilities for child protection, youth justice and youth mental health workers to access the Internet with the intention of communicating with youth in their care. Also on the agenda are questions about how Ministry professionals can supervise, observe or participate in any of the online environments where youth are at risk in order to better inform their practices concerning current youth realities.

### McCreary Foundation Youth Health Survey (2008/09)

This survey, scheduled to begin gathering information in 2008, will be asking several questions about online activities of its youth participants.

### Vancouver School Board Committee Examining Responses to Online Activities

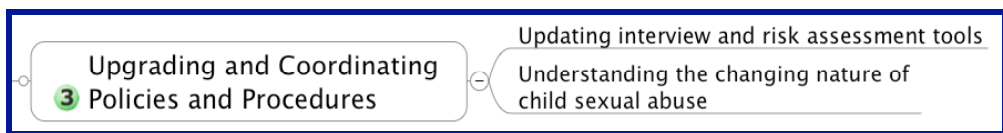
This committee is currently working on developing policy responses for the Vancouver School Board to respond to issues related to online technologies and their impact in their schools.

### Growth Areas in Counseling Practices

As the implications and professional applications of online technologies evolve, professionals in all youth serving sectors will need to receive upgraded training and information about new therapeutic uses of the Internet. These may include online outreach services offered to clients and youth in the care of the government, referrals to online resources/ forums and online support services for young people.

### Upgrading and Coordinating Polices and Procedures

The changing nature of technology and the social implications not only require a new strategy but also require support for government ministries, social service organizations, educational institutions and youth service groups to become more familiar with the issue and upgrade their operations in line with the new strategy.



Counseling and risk assessment practices must incorporate questions about the online activities and virtual lives of children to determine whether a specific child has been sexually exploited online or physically abused. Evidence of good practices in providing such services are beginning to emerge. At the present time, however, there is limited training of service providers regarding the specific needs of victims of Internet-facilitated sexual exploitation. Researchers are struggling to identify both the differences and the similarities in terms of service needs between non-Internet and Internet sexual abuse survivor care, and what specific types of support are required.”<sup>11</sup>

Another element related to the therapeutic needs of children abused in images, is widespread distribution of child abuse images and associated effects on children and their recovery: “The national centre for missing and exploited children found that a single graphic sexual image of a five year old girl was posted to over 800 000 separate pages on the Internet in the short span of six months.”<sup>12</sup>

“We need to rethink how we approach child victims of abusive images once they have been identified and their whereabouts discovered. ... the key to understanding the trauma to child victims when being informed that the images of them have been discovered lies with the fact that they have no control whatsoever of the disclosure process.”<sup>13</sup>

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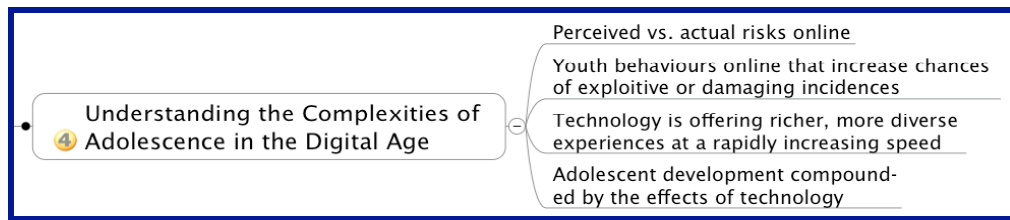
11 See Palmer, T. with Stacey, L. (2003). *Just One Click - Sexual Abuse of Children and Young People through the Internet and Mobile Phone Technology*. Ilford: Barnardo's, and Palmer, T. Behind the screen: Children who are the subjects of abusive images. In E. Quayle and M. Taylor (Eds.)(2005). *Understanding the Offence, Managing the Offender, Helping the Victims*. Russell House Publishing.

12 Zandberg, B. (2007, March). Digital child porn watchdog: Too big a bite? In: The Tyee. From: <http://thetyee.ca/Mediacheck/2007/03/07/Watchdog>.

13 See Palmer, T. Behind the screen: Children who are the subjects of abusive images. In E. Quayle and M. Taylor (Eds.)(2005). *Understanding the Offence, Managing the Offender, Helping the Victims*. Russell House Publishing.

## Understanding the Complexity of Adolescence in the Digital Age

When examining the issues of online exploitation the adolescent development plays an important role in contextualizing the dynamics of what occurs online.



### Perceived Risks Versus Actual Risks

Initial responses to the risks of online exploitation focused on the incidences of adult males contacting, deceiving and luring, children and youth into meeting for the purposes of sexual assault by using personal information about the child online and using it to hunt/stalk them. Prevention and educational messaging focused predominantly on instructions such as “don’t give out personal information” and depicted the ‘boogey man’ figure. In many jurisdictions this remains the base assumption from which all programming begins. This characterization of online predators, however, may not be completely accurate, and many educational programs miss the need to address the behaviours of youth online in their curricula and practices.

### Youth Online Behaviours Increasing Risk

These behaviours, according to David Finkelhor, Director of the U.S. Crimes Against Children Research Center, may include a pattern of multiple risky activities on the web like going to adult sites and chat rooms, meeting lots of people there, combined with a willingness to talk about sex online with strangers.

In 1999 and 2000 David Finkelhor, PhD; Kimberly J. Mitchell, PhD; and Janis Wolak, JD, at the Crimes against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire conducted the first Youth Internet Safety Survey (YISS-1). An analysis of the second Youth Internet Safety Survey in 2005 (YISS-2) was published as “Online

Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later”. Their findings are thought provoking when responding to online exploitation.

“We asked youth whether they engaged in several kinds of risky behaviours that could possibly increase the chances they would experience unwanted sexual solicitations, exposure to sexual material, or harassment. The behaviours were: posting personal information or pictures online or sending personal information or pictures to someone the youth knew only online; engaging in online sexual behaviours such as going to X-rated web sites on purpose, using a screen name with sexual connotations, sending sexual pictures online, or talking to people youth knew only online about sex; saying rude or nasty things online or using the Internet to harass or embarrass others.”<sup>14</sup>

### Technology Offering Richer Experiences

Experiences offered in online settings have developed with astounding speed. In the year 2000, the average user could expect to view text, via email and websites and to view images -- depending on speed of connection -- with some reliability. Seven years later video chat, website design and the distribution of home videos are well within the capacity of most home computers and within the skill set of most teenagers.

### Adolescent Behaviour Complicated by Technology

If the Internet is indeed changing not only youth culture, but how youth explore and experiment as part of adolescence, then messages which fail to present a realistic portrayal of a youth’s online experience may be useless. Angela Huebner describes the psychosocial development of teens as establishing identity, autonomy, intimacy, becoming comfortable with one’s sexuality, and achievement.<sup>15</sup> These stages of development have changed little over the generations. The difference is that before the Internet, people were unable to hear the conversations, see pictures of the settings or observe all the activities that went on during a teen’s night out. Now, these

14 Wolak, J., Mitchell, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2006). Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later. National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children Bulletin - #07-06-025. Alexandria, VA. From: [http://www.unh.edu/ccrc.second\\_youth\\_Internet\\_safety-publications.html](http://www.unh.edu/ccrc.second_youth_Internet_safety-publications.html).

15 Huebner, A. (2000). Adolescent Growth and Development. Virginia State University. From: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/family/350-850/350-850.html>.

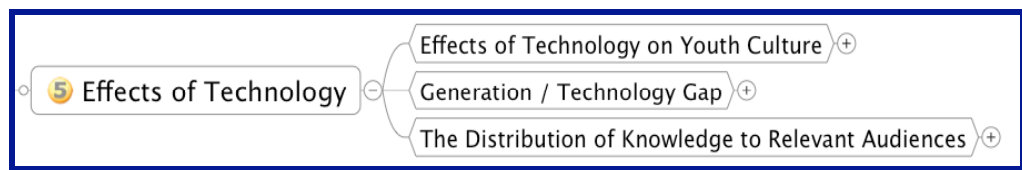
moments are captured digitally and can be viewed by others, reproduced, and posted online.

“The Internet is a complex virtual, social and physical world that children and adolescents participate in and co-construct, rather than something that is merely watched (TV) or merely used (PC). It becomes a complex virtual universe behind a small screen on which developmental issues play out in old and new ways, offering new views into the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of children and adolescents...children, adolescents and the Internet; a new field of inquiry in developmental psychology”<sup>16</sup>

Part of the process of transitioning into adolescence is the need to have privacy and personal space, moments, and thoughts. When parents overreact to the online activities of their teens and insist on monitoring, filtering or controlling their online communication, the youths’ struggle to emancipate from parents escalates. So while some of the behaviours observed may be alarming for caregivers of youth, there is also the need to guard against adults overreacting to what they view.

## Effects of Technology

In order to construct an informed and effective strategy to respond to the high-risk activities of youth online, youth-focused curricula, policies, education, engagement or interventions must acknowledge and accommodate the effects of technology on youth, culture, and communication.



<sup>16</sup> Greenfield, P. & Yan, Z. (2006). “Children, adolescents, and the Internet: A new field of inquiry in developmental psychology. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(3): 393.

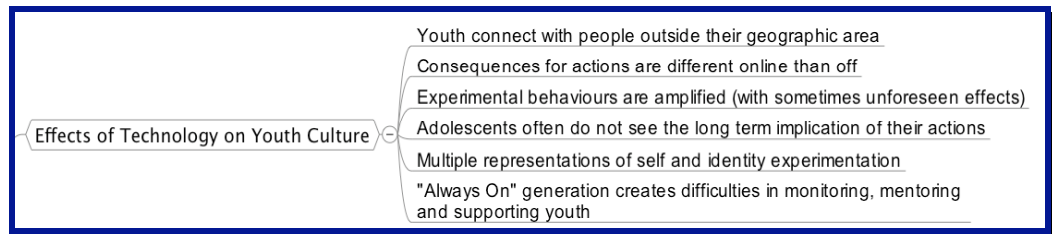
Specifically, best practices in the strategies examined identify the following as effects that require consideration:

- The recent and evolving effects of technology on youth culture;
- The traditional generation gap now compounded by a technological gap;
- The need to rapidly distribute current, relevant, research-based and empirically validated Internet safety messages;

Each of these three effects will be examined in detail below.

### Effects of Technology on Youth Culture

Technology has created diverse impacts on youth communication, interactions, and identity construction. These impacts have and will continue to have, many wide-ranging and powerful changes not just for youth but also for society in general, and their effects will continue for the foreseeable future. Many of these impacts, while perhaps troubling now, have a positive face as well.



- The rise of social networking and posting of personal information has opened opportunities for young people to **connect with people outside their geographic area**. This has allowed for previously isolated youth to connect with others with similar interests with both positive and negative consequences; healthy life affirming experiences from online support groups and communities, and also the ability of predators to locate youth geographically or lure them to other communities to meet. For example, youth have been recruited into sexual exploitation on Nexopia.com, and gang activity has been reported on Facebook.

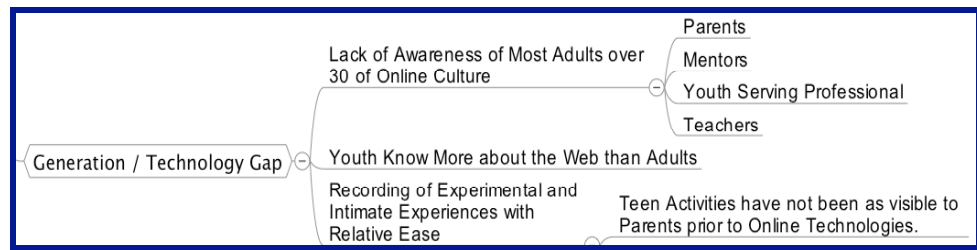
- Adolescent development dictates that youth experiment with their identity, peer group relationships and sexuality but **the effects of doing this online are different than for previous off-line generations**. Information posted online can be taken out of context and is permanently available regardless of whether youth remove it from their personal sites.
- Online communication **amplifies some adolescent experimental behaviour** with sometimes-unforeseen effects. Individuals online sometimes say and do things they would not otherwise say or do when they assume that they are anonymous (i.e. cyberbullying). They also may not appreciate the potential for sexual images they create to be added to global collections of child pornography. While youth may be unaware of it, the sexual images they create of themselves (photos, videos or audio recordings) are classified as child pornography and the distribution and even possession of these images constitutes a criminal offence. Many collectors of child pornography exist worldwide and disturbingly some recent estimates are that 10 percent of all child pornography images are created by youth themselves.
- Adolescents often do not see **the long-term implications** of their online communications. This information may affect their future professional prospects, scholarship opportunities and political aspirations. Not only do youth often fail to understand the permanence of digital information as well as the public nature of all information posted or sent over the Internet, they also often erroneously assume that information on their social networking profiles won't be seen by anyone but their friends. There also exists the potential for the information they post to be used in ways they did not intend nor imagine; for example the morphing of photos, the use of 'private' photos for malicious purposes and the distribution of online conversations in their schools.
- The ability of individuals online to assume **multiple representations of themselves** poses challenges to traditional ideas about identity construction,

‘truth’, and ‘knowing someone’. Youth will sometimes seek to investigate what others think of them as they portray various identities. The possibility of assuming a different identity, at a stage when their identity is just forming, creates many challenging circumstances for youth socially. The environment becomes increasingly complex with the recognition that adults who may wish to manipulate youth may also assume multiple identities.

- Accommodating the need of youth who are part of an “*Always On Generation*” means understanding online activities of youth on the Internet, cell phones and other handheld devices. Youth live in a milieu in which they are always connected and interacting. This makes it more difficult for adults to **monitor, mentor and support youth in their day-to-day communications**. Conversely, online avenues of communication create the potential for therapeutic responses and interventions by adults who can use online avenues to engage in continuing contact with missing or AWOL youth.

### Generation/Technology Gap

In addition to the traditional generation gap experienced by parents and children, technology has introduced a factor that further complicates communication between the two groups.



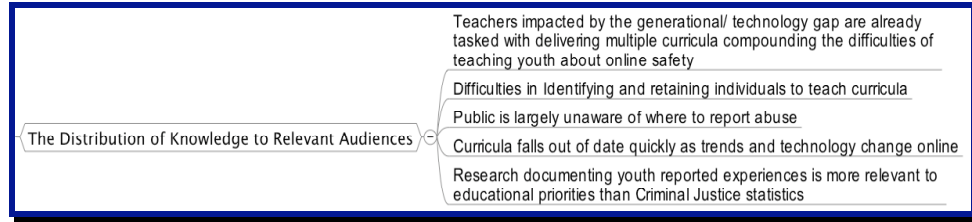
- One by-product of the technology/generation gap is a **lack of awareness of most adults over 30** about the primary elements of youth Internet communication, making it nearly impossible for adults to offer youth advice, relevant information, boundaries and expectations. While we can expect this technology/generation gap to be minimized as today’s youth become

professionals, we need to remain cognizant in the meantime of the needs for adults to be aware of youth activities online during this transitional phase. Specifically, service providers who deal with high-risk youth need to be equipped with the skills to address youth activities online.

- **Youth know more about the web than adults.** Youth need to be engaged in the teaching process and should be consulted in the development, administration, implementation and evaluation of any Internet-related educational initiatives. Youth are a currently under-accessed and vital resource owing to their indigenous status in cyberspace and their understanding of the evolving implications of online culture at a far deeper level than any late-adopters of the technology.
- One of the major differences for adolescents today is their ability to **easily record experimental and intimate experiences.** It is not that adolescents are undertaking vastly different activities, but rather that adults have never before had the opportunity to closely examine the recordings of adolescent activity. This also opens up some dilemmas about privacy and appropriate use of monitoring by parents. Parents might be overly protective or paranoid about what youth are doing online, and if they have the skills, may be tempted to cross privacy boundaries with their teens in this newfound environment.

### Distribution of Knowledge

The need for rapid introduction of a large body of new knowledge and skill-sets to accommodate the effects of new technologies challenges traditional methods of knowledge distribution. The medium of the web itself requires non-traditional modes of instruction, distribution, publishing and promotion – a new way of communicating altogether.

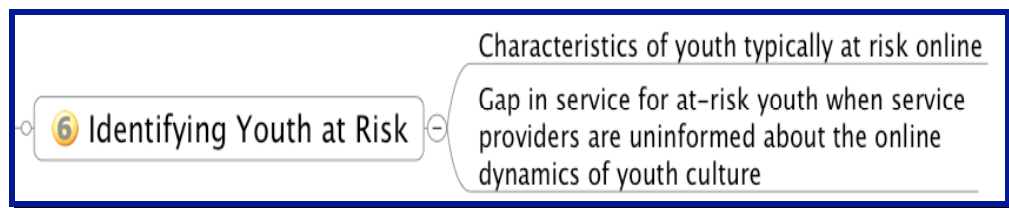


- One of the challenges faced when directing resources to teachers is that they are already **required to deliver multiple curricula and are impacted by the same generational/technology gap** referred to above. The need for up-to-date information is challenging for already over-burdened educators working in the education system.
- It remains challenging to **identify and retain individuals** to deliver current curricula and training materials for professionals because of specialization of the material and the time required to be consistently current on the issue. Additionally front-line staff in service agencies experience consistent turnover, further challenging the delivery of relevant information for clients and professionals alike.
- Much work is required to increase the public’s awareness of when to report abuse online, **where to report** incidences of abuse, bullying, gang recruitment, and how to access relevant information and advice about online safety.
- Publishing and distributing curricula for use in the educational and child protection fields is challenged by the fact that information about online exploitation and the high-risk activities of youth online **falls out of date relatively quickly**. In order to be relevant, curricula needs to reflect the current, constantly changing online environments used by youth. Additionally reality-based information about the prevalence of online luring, methods of recruitment and evolving high-risk behaviours of youth online require that research is constantly upgraded.

- Research documenting **youths' reported experiences** is largely absent from the available body of research. More prevalent is data gathered from crime statistics that reflect the activities of predators and offenders. In order to inform professional practices, increased efforts should be directed at gathering information about the experiences of youth online, since these are more useful for preventative and therapeutic practice development.

## Identifying Youth at Risk

When addressing the issues of online exploitation, it is important to remember that not all youth are equally at risk.



David Finkelhor states that youth experiencing exploitation online are often the same youth who are experiencing risk in other environments in their lives; youth from dysfunctional homes, youth engaged in substance abuse, youth disenfranchised from their families and communities, youth who have experienced sexual abuse or are questioning their sexuality. It would make sense, then, that youth-serving professionals in their lives will already have identified these youth.<sup>17</sup>

“It is a little bit concerning to me, however, that (the) people in the mental health fields, and the child protection and social work (fields) do not tend to be particularly computer Internet savvy. So it’s not a place that they automatically go or know about. If they were armed with more information to help them impart information to the kids and ask questions that might allow them to identify someone who’s at risk of getting into trouble online, I think that might help.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Finkelhor, D. (2007, May 3). Just the facts about online youth victimization: Researchers present the facts and debunk myths. Transcripts from The Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee Forum. Washington, DC. From <http://www.netcaucus.org/events/2007/youth/>.

<sup>18</sup> Finkelhor, D. (2007) Ibid.

Teen risks also include engaging in online communications regarding dysfunctional behaviours such as suicidal ideations, self-harm (slashing), anorexia (pro-anorexia websites), and drug abuse. Youth are also exposed to, or have access to extreme images such as gore sites that show victims of violent deaths, bestiality and/or pornography.

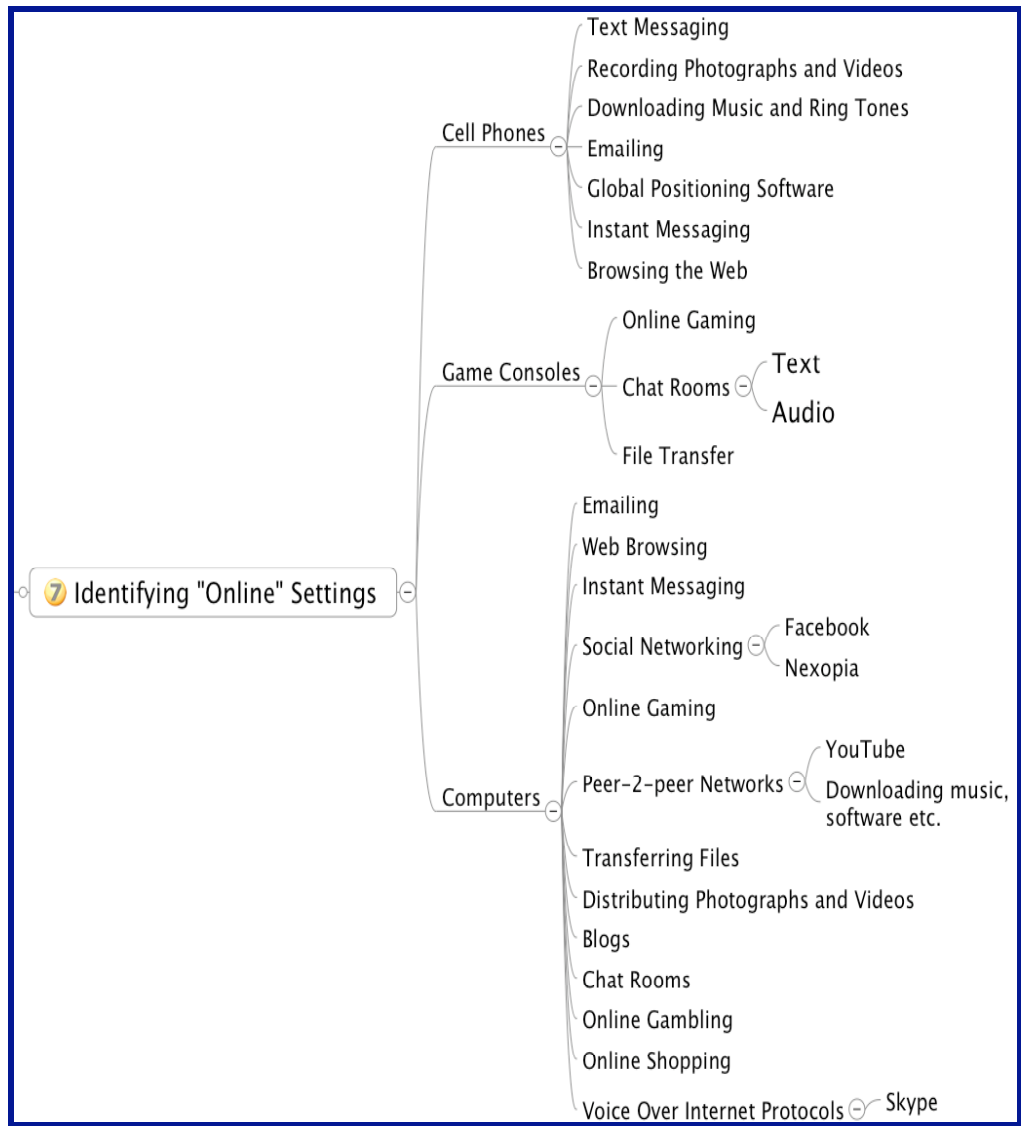
Thus, the population encountering significant risk online is generally the same population that is encountering significant risk offline. The maximization of training, public awareness, and education dollars will be accomplished by targeting professionals who work with at-risk youth. These professionals do not need to be re-trained, only to have their existing skills supplemented by new tools and knowledge-sets in order to accommodate technological changes and deal with the activities of high-risk youth that are also potential victims of online exploitation. A key element here is delivering services to youth encountering risk online in the medium that they are most comfortable with. By using online environments in their professional practices – “digital street outreach” -- professionals can support youth at risk in the same environment in which they encounter that risk.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Boyd, D. (2007, May 3). Just the facts about online youth victimization: Researchers present the facts and debunk myths. Transcripts from The Congressional Internet Caucus Advisory Committee Forum. Washington, DC. From <http://www.netcaucus.org/events/2007/youth/>.

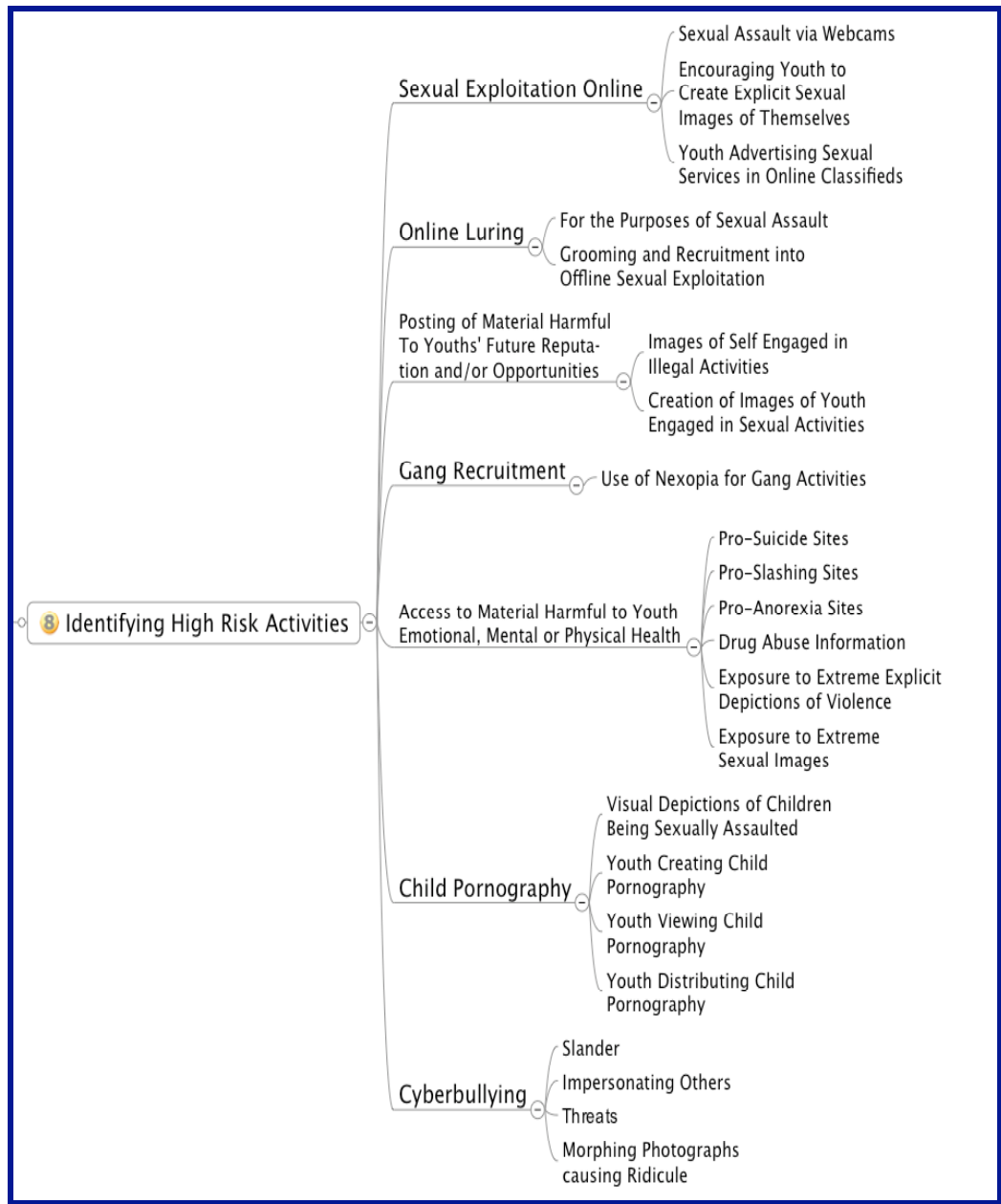
## Identifying Online Settings

When examining online activities it is important to have an understanding of the variety of technologies that youth use to connect technologically. Policies that restrict their definition to apply to only those activities conducted via a computer will be limited in their approach. There exist many other avenues to get online and the newer avenues, (cell phones and game consoles) are projected to become increasingly common within the youth demographic.



## Identifying High-Risk Activities

While much of the background research for these recommendations is based on the analysis of online activities involving sexual exploitation, this document recommends that a broader definition of high-risk activities to be addressed in a B.C. strategy. The reasons are twofold: it is often redundant to address two similar issues with two different approaches; and there is an over-lap among many exploitive activities such as, for example sexual exploitation and cyber bullying.

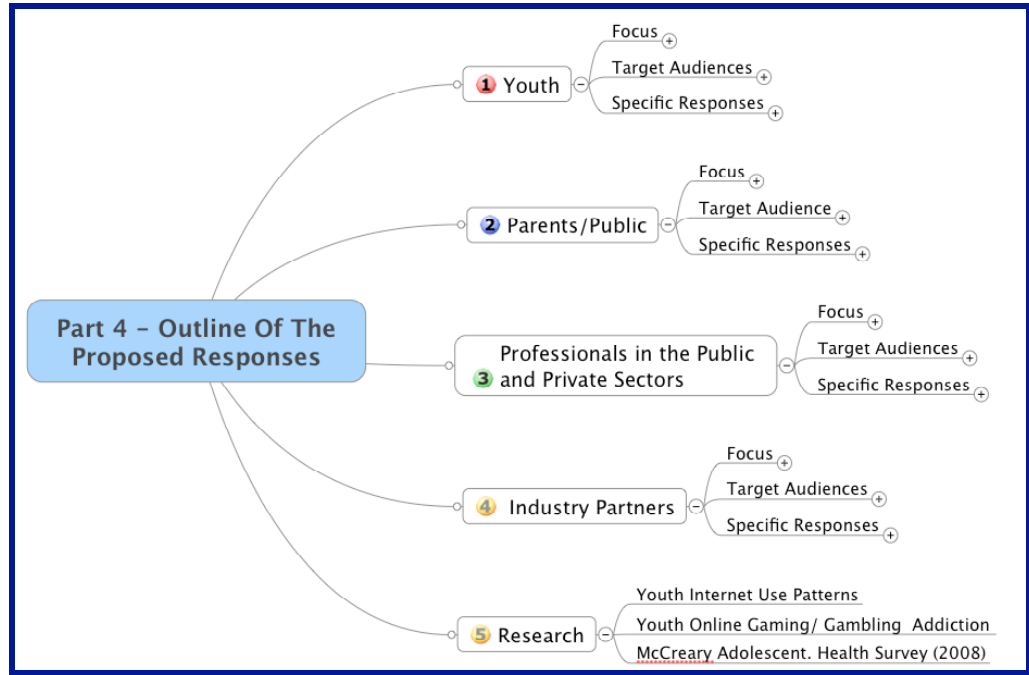


# PART 4

## Outline of the Proposed Responses

### COMPONENTS OF THE STRATEGIC RESPONSES

The responses proposed in this document are organized by stakeholder group. For each of these groups, a focus for the approach to be taken, the target audience and the specific initiative and activities recommended have been outlined.



## Youth

### Youth Focus

The focus recommended suggests prioritizing activities which utilize dialogue with youth about their online experiences and that acknowledge the positive elements of online communications, as well, as promoting critical thinking about their online experiences and the role that technology plays in their lives.

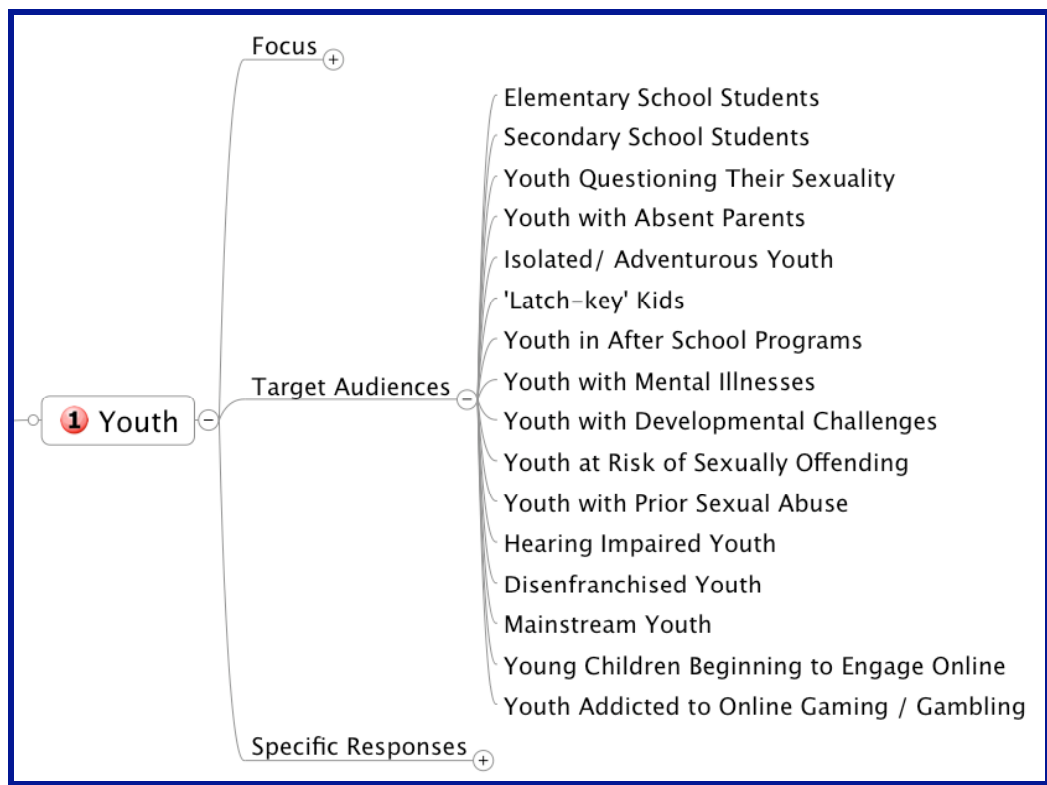


Education initiatives also need to be positive, have a skill development approach and not employ “scared straight” tactics. The use of law enforcement resources to implement education programs has proven to be ineffective for several reasons: having law enforcement officers deliver education is *not* cost effective since the annual cost of employing one police officer is approximately one hundred and twenty thousand dollars; some youth may react dismissively to messages delivered by law enforcement personnel that may tend toward overly emphasizing a simplified version of what risks exist while neglecting to acknowledge the positive aspects of online culture.

In all education programs responsible cyber-citizenry should be promoted and “scared straight” models avoided. Youth should be encouraged to participate in the implementation, design and evaluation of the programs. Youth should also be acknowledged for their often-superior knowledge of online environments and culture.

## Youth Target Audiences

In accordance with previously cited research, responses aimed at preventing online exploitation have to pay particular attention to youth who, because of certain risk factors, are more at risk than others.



While Internet safety messages need to be aimed at secondary and elementary school aged children as a means of raising general awareness, youth with particular risk factors must be targeted specifically.

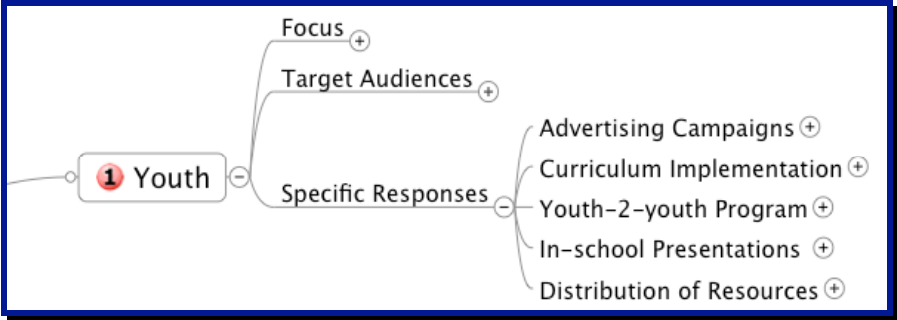
### Disenfranchised Youth

Youth who are experiencing disenfranchisement within their communities, their families or their peers may be more likely to engage on the Internet in an attempt to find like-minded individuals; youth in rural settings where homophobia may be present might seek out other gay or lesbian individuals online; youth left unattended in their homes after school or because their parents are emotionally unavailable may seek the attention and approval of an adult online; youth with mental illnesses,

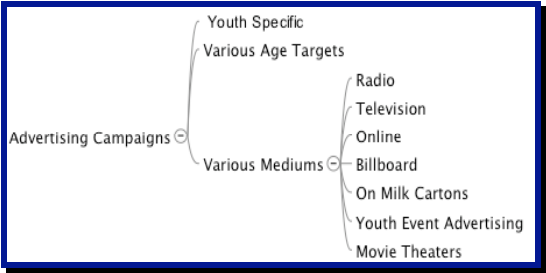
developmental challenges, or hearing loss may use the Internet to engage socially in an environment in which their disabilities are invisible to the audience; and youth who have experienced previous sexual abuse or have been sexually intrusive may find adult content and conversations online that they find validating.

Youth Specific Responses

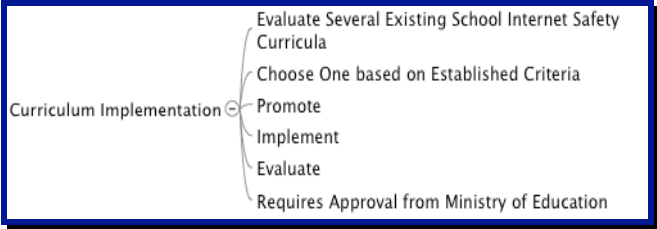
Components of specific responses to educate youth are:



Initiatives aimed at youth should include advertising campaigns:

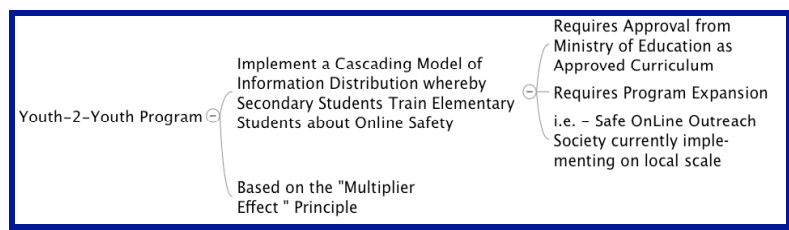


Curricula implementation for all grade levels is essential:

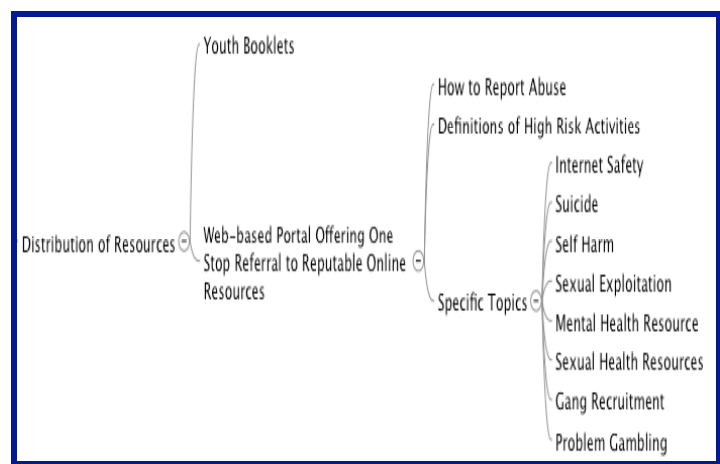


## Youth-2-Youth Programs

An under-explored but significant means with which to distribute educational material relies upon a cascading model of information dissemination. Originally applied as “train the trainer” programs and used for teachers, recent programming in British Columbia and elsewhere suggest; youth-to-youth programming may do more to engage young people through the use of role models and by expanding the understanding of adults working with and relying on youth to explain current and relevant online events.



In-school presentations will also be vital in delivering education in partnership with community-based NGOs holding relevant expertise (i.e.: The Safe OnLine Outreach Society). Distribution of resources will supplement all other responses aimed at youth.

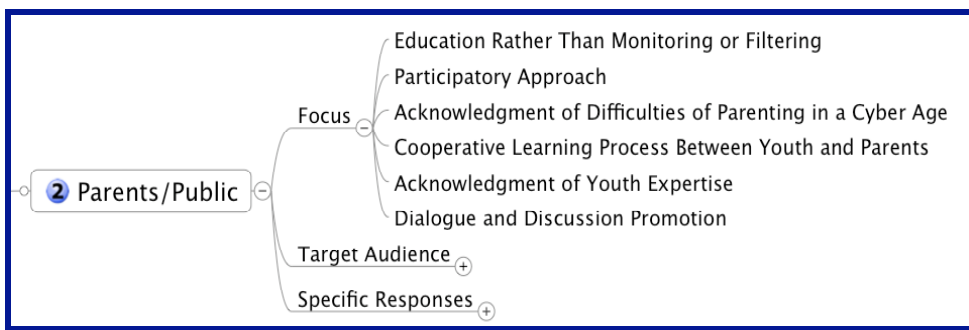


## Parents and the Public

Parents are an important target audience in the efforts to address online exploitation. They are also the hardest to reach, to motivate to attend educational events and to engage in dialogue about youth culture and youth activities online. Regardless, it is vitally important that they be targeted for educational material and engaged in responses to these issues.

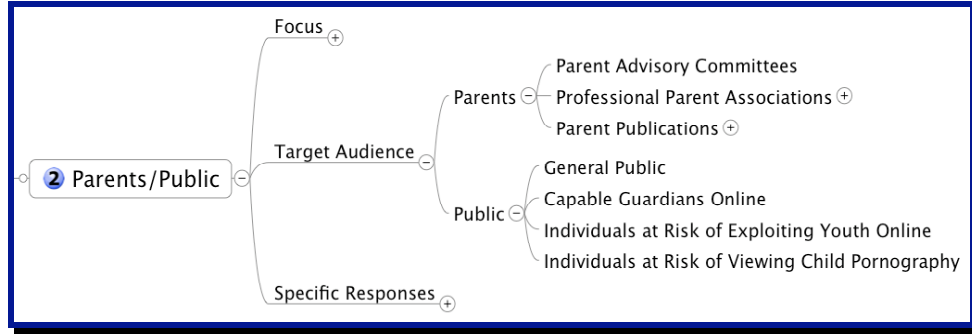
### Parent/Public Focus

Parents need first to be motivated to learn about the activities of their children online and then encouraged to embrace educational approaches rather than relying on monitoring or filtering software that do little to enhance or improve the capacity of young people to deal with online issues or address online activities carried outside of the home.



## Parent/Public Target Audiences

It is important that responses to the issues outlined include parents in both their capacity as parents and in the capacity of “watchful witnesses” who can be helpful in reporting abuse in their families or communities.

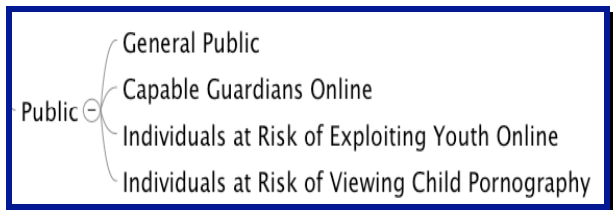


### Parents

The term ‘parents’ is broad and includes biological, adoptive, foster and professional individuals. This also includes Parent Advisory Committees attached to elementary and secondary schools throughout the province, professional parent associations such as foster parents, adoptive parents, Canadian Parents for French, parents of children with developmental delay and challenges, and regional, cultural and ethnic parent groups. Materials should be distributed through parenting magazines, bulletins, e-lists and other publications.

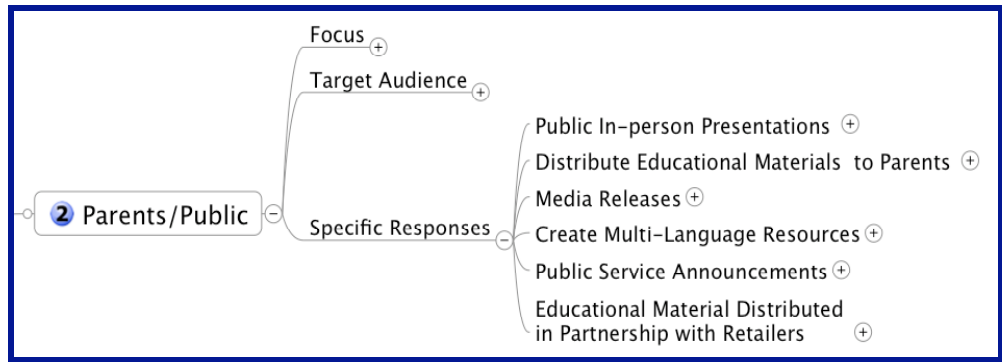
### Public

Engaging the public is important in expanding the awareness of individuals about the dynamics of online exploitation, and in reporting incidences, images and content of concern to the general community



## Parent/Public Specific Responses

A combination of approaches will be required to address the educational needs of these groups.



### Public In-person Presentations

For audiences already overwhelmed by online technologies, in-person presentations are an effective way to get individuals thinking about online technologies and the dynamics of the activities that occur there.

### Distribute Educational Material to Parents

Written material can also be distributed to individuals unwilling, unable or unlikely to show up for in-person presentations. Two of the most easily accessible routes of access include hardcopies of material distributed by schools and by offering a web-based portal, a one-stop referral to reputable online resources. Such portals should include directions on how to report abuse, definitions of high-risk abuse and special topics including: Internet safety, suicide, self-harm, sexual exploitation, mental health resources, sexual health resources, gang recruitment and problem gambling.

### Media Releases

The media has a vitally important role to play in helping to raise the awareness of the public regarding these issues. The media would be of assistance in supporting an

advertising campaign and targeting specific media outlets more likely to reach targeted audiences.

#### Multi-Language Resources

In order to include all parent/public audiences, particularly those in the Greater Vancouver area, materials distributed by schools and the community must be produced in a variety of languages in order to reach families led by recent immigrants and those whose first language is not English or French. Suggestions for languages to translate materials into include Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Hindi, Korean, and Vietnamese (based on regional demographics). This would also allow distribution to reach the multi-cultural media and other multi-cultural services.

#### Public Service Announcements

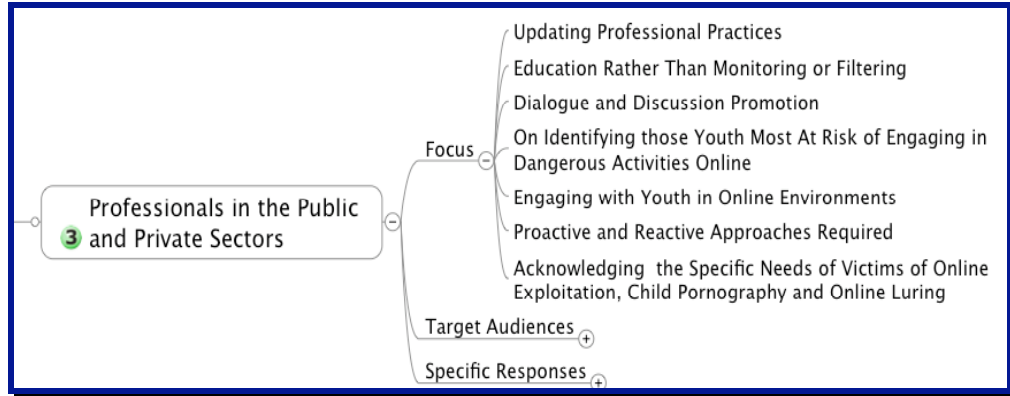
These messages could be broadcast with the assistance of industry partners to increase public awareness by reinforcing simple messages about awareness of online risks, how to report abuse, how to find the online portal and the importance of parental involvement in the activities of youth.

#### Educational Material Distributed in Partnership with Retailers

This component of the recommendations would see retailers distributing educational written material at the point of sale for technology related goods and services.

### **Professionals in the Public and Private Sectors**

As outlined in Part 3, section 3 “Upgrading Current Policies and Procedures” providing professionals with relevant information is vitally important. These individuals are more likely than the general public to come in contact with youth experimenting with, or affected by, high-risk activities online.



### Professional Focus

Human service professionals do not require to be retrained, only provided with information that supplements their existing skill sets.

#### Upgrading Policies and Procedures

This will include educational institutions, government ministries (especially those mandated to meet the needs of youth), community service organizations, victim services programs, mental health and counseling services, associations and regulating bodies to accommodate the new approaches and activities that professionals will engage in to address the issues.

#### Upgrading Professional Practices

This will include re-defining abuse, therapeutic interventions and client/professional interaction online.

#### Education-focused Development

Activities undertaken to strategically address the professional target audience of this strategy will be encouraged at all times to prioritize educational interventions rather than looking to technological innovations that restrict or monitor youth access to the Internet.

#### Promoting Dialogue and Discussion

In keeping with the previous point, professionals will be encouraged to promote activities that engage all youth impacted by high-risk activities online to engage in dialogue and encourage youth contributions to policy development.

#### Identifying Youth Most at Risk

As not all youth are equally impacted by exploitation online, priority will be given to developing the knowledge base of front line professionals who are directly involved with youth at risk. These groups of professionals will be equipped to recognize, understand, and respond effectively to incidences of exploitation within their client group.

#### Engaging Youth Online

The focus of strategies for professionals and government will encourage professional practices to develop ways to engage with their youth client base in online settings. Youth communicate, express themselves and socialize online; therefore responses to issues arising from these activities should take place in the same online environments.

#### Proactive and Reactive Responses

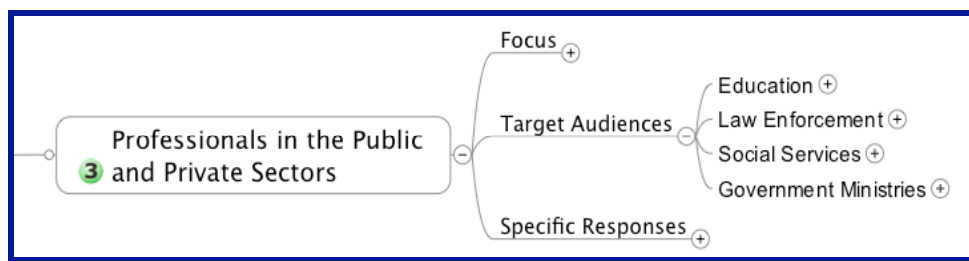
Strategies will include both educational prevention activities and responses to youth who have been exploited or are exploiting others online.

#### Acknowledging the Specific Needs of Victims of Online Sexual Exploitation

Educational responses and curricula will include research-based information regarding the unique needs of individuals abused in online settings and support the development of responses that address those needs.

## Professional Target Audiences

The targeted professions include those that meet the needs of youth in some way or another. These include many settings, institutions and government ministries.



### Educational Professionals

Teachers, school administrators and school-based youth counselors are often involved with youth who are engaging online. In the last few years, many school administrators have reported that the vast majority of disciplinary issues in the schools involve some element of online communications, including cyberbullying, the inappropriate use of cell phones in the schools or the use of online social networking sites to slander other students or staff. Educational professionals are a key target audience and include professional educators associations, teachers, school board and school trustees, school counselors, and educational specialists dealing with special needs students.

### Social Service and Community Agencies

Social service and child protection organizations also require upgraded training due to their contact with high-risk populations. Included in this target group are: community service agencies, counselors, transition house workers, youth workers, mental health professionals, outreach workers, child protection workers and after-school program workers.

### Provincial Government Ministries

The various impacts and collisions of online technologies and youth activities are having wide-ranging effects in most Provincial Ministries that are involved in the delivery of services to people. Such ministries include the Ministry of Child and

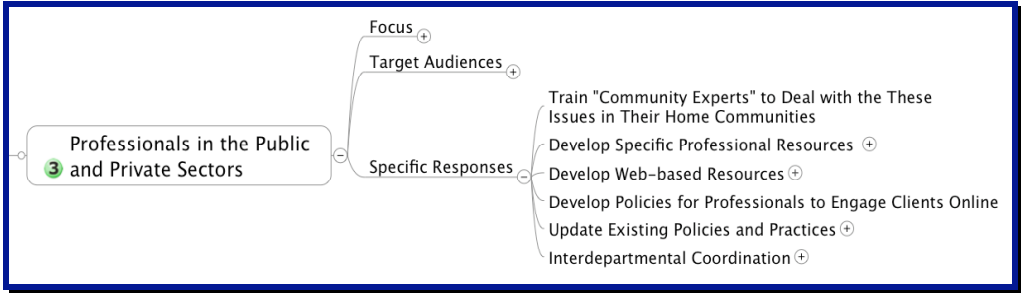
Family Development, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Ministry of Community Development, and the Ministry of Education.

**Law Enforcement**

Training for individuals in the law enforcement fields would be targeted at those services that primarily deal with the victims of online exploitation, child pornography and crimes complicated by online activities, including but not limited to crown prosecutor, victim assistance professionals and police.

**Professional Strategic Responses**

Recommended steps to improve the responses of professionals to victims of online crimes include the following:



**Train “Community Experts”**

Decentralizing expertise is going to be an important step in response to online exploitation. In every community in British Columbia, dedicated, skilled and well-connected front-line professionals exist. The recommendation of this document is to include a Program that develops and implements annual two-day trainings for professionals who work with you in geographically diverse areas of the province. These professionals could then become the “community experts”, who are equipped to deal with the local manifestations of incidences of online exploitation. These professionals will have the advantage of already being entrenched in the local culture and community and will have existing relationships with other professionals and youth populations. This Program would train the community experts and then

provide them with supplemental information and support through electronic upgrades and online contact with the organization that provides the training. This would mean that local experts would be constantly upgraded with new trends and concerns and would consequently be able to share that information with relevant parties in their communities, and respond more effectively to local incidents of online exploitation.

#### **Develop Specific Professional Resources**

The needs of victims of online exploitation require that some specific professional practices upgrade their practices and therapeutic responses. For example, professionals who serve victims of sexual assault will have to change some of their approaches when victims have not only been sexually assaulted but had that sexual assault recorded digitally (via pictures, videos or audio recordings), and then distributed online. These changes in response also apply to social workers, police officers, front-line outreach workers, and educational professionals.

#### **Develop Web-based Resources**

While many websites exist, it would be helpful to set up a centralized website for British Columbians offering research, references and resources that could inform updates to professional practices. The website would also facilitate the distribution of information about events, emerging research and youth trends to professional populations. The website will include easy access to reporting hotlines and links to articles of interest.

#### **Develop Policies for Professionals to Engage Clients Online**

As technological communications become more firmly entrenched, it is foreseeable that professionals will begin to utilize online avenues to communicate with their clients. In some cases, online contact with clients may be preferable to face-to-face contact when clients are unable to come to professionals for physical or mental health reasons (i.e. agoraphobia) or in circumstances in which online contact could facilitate better therapeutic results.

## Upgrade Existing Practices and Policies

Many existing tools employed by youth-serving professionals do not as yet acknowledge the occurrences of online exploitation. Risk assessment tools, professional parenting contracts and Plans of Care (used by MCFD personnel) do not have questions, clauses or accommodations for the issues related to online technologies.

## Interdepartmental Coordination

The institution of many of these recommendations will benefit from collaboration utilizing interdepartmental committees to ensure a coordinated professional response.

## Industry Partners

Internet, technology and retail businesses all have a role to play in ensuring that the use of their products and services are used in safe and productive ways.

### Industry Partners Focus

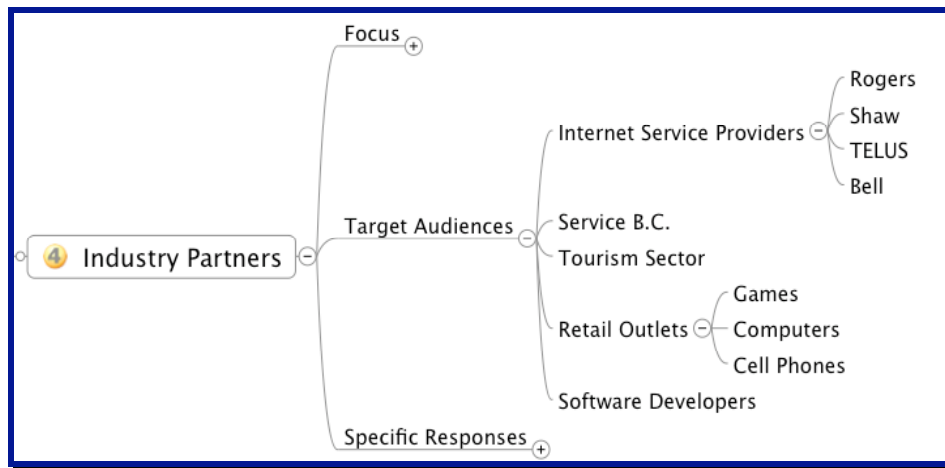
Industry has a role to play, not only as responsible corporate entities, but because they possess many resources that can assist in responding to the issues of the high-risk activities of youth online.



Some corporate partners are very interested in contributing to families safely integrating online technologies into their daily lives and industry experts have an important role to play. Their technical expertise about the potential of online environments to deliver youth services will facilitate more effective responses if they can be meaningfully included in strategic responses.

## Industry Partners Target Audiences

Multiple sectors of the technological industries have a role to play:



Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are important players to include, as are government agencies such as Service BC and the tourism sector. For example, since many British Columbian youth have been reported to use Greyhound Bus Services when lured from their home communities by predators, Greyhound could be invited to post information in their depots offering outreach information for youth who are in transit to possibly exploitive situations should they be reconsidering their choice while in the bus depot.

Retail outlets for games, computers and cell phones might also be encouraged to distribute Internet safety information when they sell products or services to consumers. They could also assist in the promotion of a British Columbia based web-portal offering support and information.

Software developers have already contributed to Internet safety initiatives through the “Missing” CD/game that was produced by LiveWires here in British Columbia. Additional resources could be pioneered in partnership with software developers or technical colleges that have students capable of developing products.

## Industry Partners Strategic Responses

It is important to include industry partners as proactive members of strategic responses.



The inclusion of industry partners could provide a new perspective on responses to issues of online exploitation. Below are some examples of the ways that industry could contribute to strategic responses.

### Form Public/Private Partnerships with Technology Industry

Involvement by representatives of the technology sector should be gathered through promotion of corporate responsibility and invitations to targeted representatives to sit on a working group.

### Engage Technology Sector in Distribution

The technology sector should also be utilized in order to increase distribution and reach a wider net of people. By distributing information through retail outlets where hardware is purchased, as mail-outs to be included in customer bill statements and by hosting strategic content on corporate websites, the technology industry can be an important asset and partner.

### Financial Contributions

In order to promote the strategy outlined, the technology sector should be encouraged to contribute a percentage of their profits to education and awareness programs. This is particularly relevant in the case of remote, isolated First Nations communities who are newly hooked up to high-speed Internet services. Additionally,

by providing space and time to promotion of safer Internet use through their services, Canadians will have a higher exposure to positive messaging.

#### Contributions of Technological Expertise

Through consultations between those who develop policy and technical experts, technical guidance will allow policy development to be more relevant.

#### Promotion of Strategies through Media Resources of Industry

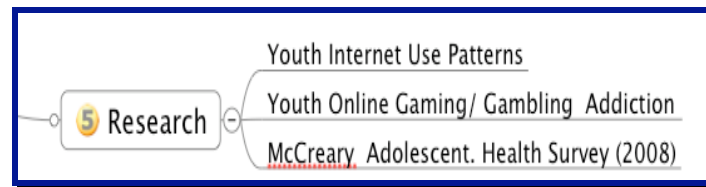
In addition to collaboration, a further rewarding avenue would be to encourage the technology sector to promote strategy components through their media resources in order to decrease cost and increase access to target audiences.

#### Support for Web-based Portal

The web-based portal, discussed earlier, can also be improved utilizing support from the technology industry.

## Research

The need for current, youth-focused research cannot be over emphasized. Trends in youth online use, exploitation techniques, emerging technologies and the speed at which each of these elements evolve means that research falls out of date rapidly.



In order to respond to what is happening now, as opposed to two years ago, research partners need to be included in an ongoing strategy. The McCreary Adolescent Health Survey is going to be conducted in 2008 and based on past surveys relevant and up to date information will likely assist policy developments. Additionally, students at both Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia should be encouraged to explore the areas of online exploitation in their Masters and PhD degree dissertations.

# PART 5

## Conclusion

The three-phase, four-year plan suggested here has the potential to define British Columbia as a leader in the field of Internet safety in Canada and abroad. In order to remain current in areas of child protection, British Columbia needs to act swiftly in implementing an education approach to the high-risk activities of youth online. The recommended responses in this document will immediately improve the response to high-risk online activities of children and youth in British Columbia and move us toward the establishment of a comprehensive, implemented plan by 2011. British Columbia's commitment to a healthy sector of young people will be evident in both the short and long term -- by increasing access to online education and awareness resources and in-person educational presentations in the short-term, and by delivering province-wide curricula for youth and professionals, and establishing partnerships with the technology industry in the long term.

The responses proposed in this document are based on Canadian and international best practices that suggest youth online need to be approached from a human services perspective. By documenting the particular intricacies of this phenomenon in British Columbia, the recommended responses recognise B.C.'s multicultural landscape and take seriously the need to streamline information while remaining aware that youth come from a variety of diverse backgrounds. A strategy based on these recommendations should be implemented in a graduated fashion, building upon immediate action while simultaneously recognizing that the changing nature of the technological environment requires a longer-term approach.

Canadian provinces such as Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario have been quick to identify the online exploitation of youth. British Columbia also needs to act swiftly in implementing an educated approach to high-risk activities of youth online.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: GLOBAL LITERATURE REVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

The recommendations in this document are presented based on the findings of an in-depth global literature review; data collected on provincial, federal and international approaches including those of the United States, Australia, the European Union and the United Nations. As the issue of high-risk online activities is web-based, a central tool in this data collection was online data gathering techniques. Where possible and relevant the actual language from official online sources has been reproduced within the text and elsewhere. Information was validated where necessary through interviews with key agency staff. In addition, various legal documents, media sources, government and program reports, non-governmental materials as well as academic articles were consulted, and form the basis of the information collected here. Information is provided in the text, references to specific websites are contained in the endnotes.

While this document provides a general overview of international, national and provincial responses to the issue of the online sexual exploitation of youth, a key assumption of this document is that a law enforcement approach must strike a balance with a human services approach which focuses on prevention, education and treatment for those affected. Protecting children requires the acknowledgement that numerous contributing factors complicate the issues. Through more holistic, collaborative and cooperative means, children at risk can be better supported, assisted and protected, while those who have suffered exploitation can be better served and rehabilitated.

## UNITED NATIONS

This section outlines the broad strategies and measures taken internationally by the United Nations and provides a detailed analysis of the conventions related to children and sexual exploitation, focusing in particular on best practices. While many international and national strategies designed to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children were drafted to address prior to the widespread use of the Internet, subsequent strategies have included responses to Internet exploitation, luring, child pornography, prostitution and trafficking.

### Collaborative Responses

As an international collaborative organization, the United Nations has addressed the issue of online sexual exploitation in a number of ways:

#### *Policy Responses*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)<sup>20</sup>

The United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2000)<sup>21</sup>

#### *Additional Documents*

UN Programme of Action on the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography - 1992<sup>22</sup>

Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action – 1996<sup>23</sup>

Out of the Shadows – Declaration for Action - 1998<sup>24</sup>

ILO – Convention #182 on the Worst forms of Child Labour - 1999<sup>25</sup>

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20 UN General Assembly. (1989; entered into force 1990). Convention on the Rights of the Child. From: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc/htm>.

21 UN General Assembly. (2002). The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. From: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cresale.htm>.

22 UN Secretary General. (1997, May 16). Contemporary Forms of Slavery. (Report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography). From: <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord1997/documentation/subcommission/ecn4-sub2-1997-11.htm>.

24 Out of the Shadows: A Declaration for Action. (1998). Full Reference unavailable.

Yokohama Global Agreement – 2001<sup>26</sup>

A World Fit for Children – 2002<sup>27</sup>

*Education and Awareness Programs*

INHOPE

UNICEF<sup>28</sup>

ECPAT<sup>29</sup>

## Policy Responses

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – 1989

In 1989, the most eagerly ratified human rights convention in history, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, was introduced at the United Nations General Assembly. The document stated that:

The essential needs of children should be a high priority when international, national, community and familial resources are allocated. Within this principle is the direct implication that children are full citizens of their countries and are entitled to consideration by governments, and that governments are obligated to prioritize children's needs when making decisions about national resource allocations and agendas.<sup>30</sup>

The CRC is the first international accord expressly for the purpose of preventing sexual abuse and exploitation of children. It is the only international human rights treaty to include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and sets out in detail what every child needs to have a safe,

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25 International Labour Organization. (1999). Convention 182: Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. From: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C182>. The Convention, applies to all persons under the age of 18 and calls for “immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency”.

26 2nd World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. (2001). Yokohama Conference Proceedings. From: <http://www.csecworldcongress.org/en/yokohama/index.htm>.

27 United Nations Special Session on Children. (2002). A World Fit for Children: An Agenda Both Visionary and Concrete. From: <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/wffc.html>.

28 UNICEF website. (n.d.). From: <http://www.unicef.org/>.

29 End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes International website. (n.d.). From: <http://www.ecpat.net>.

30 Horton, M. (2002). An Overview of Relevant Legislation, Policy and Research Concerning the Victimization of Children in Cyberspace. The Alliance for the Rights of Children: New Westminster.

happy and fulfilled childhood.<sup>31</sup>  
(<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/uncrc/background/>).

Although the CRC addresses many elements and areas in which children deserve special protection owing to recognition of their increased level of vulnerability, the Articles that pertain to sexual exploitation are of particular relevance here. The Articles setting out States Parties' Obligations are 19, 32, 34, 35 and 39.

#### **Article 19**

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

#### **Article 34**

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

#### **Article 35**

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<sup>31</sup> From: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/uncrc/background/>.

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

**Article 39**

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment, which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Additionally, a series of Articles of the *CRC* have particular relevance to the use of the Internet:

**Article 13**

Children's right to freedom of expression;

**Article 16**

The obligation to protect children's privacy and to protect them from attacks on their honour and reputation;

**Article 17**

The responsibility placed on the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child;

**Article 36**

The commitments of member states to protect children from all forms of exploitation, including pornography.

Essentially, the *CRC* established that children as a vulnerable population require special protection within the global community. The *CRC* recognizes that children "should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding", adding that international cooperation is one of the most important factors to help fulfill this goal, particularly in developing countries.

The United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child -2002

The next major international document to place demands on individual states was the 2002 Optional Protocol to the CRC (*OP-CRC*). The preamble to the *OP-CRC* expresses deep concern over the “growing availability of child pornography on the Internet and other evolving technologies,” and a belief that an elimination of the many forms of child exploitation can be achieved through

“...adopting a holistic approach, addressing the contributing factors including underdevelopment, poverty, economic disparities, inequitable socio-economic structure, dysfunctioning families, lack of education, urban-rural migration, gender discrimination, irresponsible adult sexual behaviour, harmful traditional practices, armed conflicts and trafficking in children.”<sup>32</sup>

The *OP-CRC* is especially related to the issue of Internet exploitation and even more explicitly states that “worldwide criminalization of the production, distribution, exportation, transmission, importation, intentional possession and advertising of child pornography” is needed. Additionally, the holistic approach advocated for is accompanied by the need for cooperation of the Internet industry and governments.

The *OP-CRC* calls attention to the “growing availability of child pornography on the Internet and other evolving technologies,” and sets out specific guidelines for states to respond. It is crucial to point out that such agreements are not legally binding, but rather only influential toward the behaviour of states.

By becoming signatories on the *OP-CRC*, countries demonstrate that they are willing to be a part of the reduction of harm to these vulnerable populations; signatory states are obliged to operate bilaterally and multilaterally in order to protect children anywhere in the world. The national responses to be discussed later are based on these international agreements.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> UN General Assembly. (2002). The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. From: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/cresale.htm>.

## Additional Documents and Congresses

UN Programme of Action on the prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (1992)

The Commission on Human Rights adopted the Programme of Action in its resolution 1992/74, and requested the Sub-Commission to submit to it every two years a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action by all States.

The Programme called for a multidisciplinary plan of action, which included:

- Information and education;
- Social measures and development assistance
- International co-operation.<sup>34</sup>

Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action (1996)

Subsequent to a the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children during August of 1996 in Stockholm, a meeting attended by representatives of 122 governments as well as hundreds of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), inter-governmental agencies, researchers and academics, law enforcement sectors and young people, the Draft Declaration and Agenda for Action was written. The result marked revitalized international commitments, new potential and a surge of energy to take the efforts forward.

The Declaration reaffirmed the principles of the CRC and sets out a series of recommendations to fulfill promises made to protect children. Among the recommendations are that states should: prioritize action against child exploitation setting aside specific resources to instigate action; find cooperation in all sectors of society; strengthen laws and enforcement practices; compile education and awareness

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<sup>34</sup> UN Secretary General. (1997, May 16). Contemporary Forms of Slavery. (Report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Prevention of the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography). From: <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord1997/documentation/subcommission/ecn4-sub2-1997-11.htm>.

strategies targeting those who care for children in order to educate them on how to protect children; and increase participation (particularly among children) in coming to ways to fight child exploitation.<sup>35</sup>

#### Out of the Shadows – Declaration for Action (1998)

In 1998, Canada sponsored a Youth Summit in Victoria as a follow-up to the World Congress, co-chaired by Senator Landon Pearson in her capacity as Special Advisor on Children’s Rights. The Summit, “Out From the Shadows: International Summit of Sexually Exploited Youth”, brought together 55 delegates including sexually exploited youth, experts, NGOs, politicians and government representatives from the Americas. Youth participants developed a Declaration for Action and presented it to government representatives, making it an international success as the first meeting of its kind to provide a real opportunity for youth participation and action.

#### ILO Convention No.182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999)

The Convention applies to all persons under the age of 18 and calls for “immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor as a matter of urgency”.

#### Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Yokohama (2001)

The 2nd World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation and of Children was hosted by the Japanese Government in association with the Prefecture of Yokohama. It took place in Yokohama in December 2001. The Japanese government, ECPAT International, UNICEF and the NGO Group on the Rights of the Child were the organizing partners, echoing the partnership format of the 1st World Congress. The main objective of the Congress was to review progress on the implementation by states of the Stockholm Agenda for Action. The Congress also identified the main problem areas in implementation of the Agenda, red-flagged new manifestations of the issue, and shared good practices in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> World Congress Against CSEC. (1996, August 27-31). Declaration and Agenda for Action. Stockholm. From: <http://www.hri.ca/children/reports/weacsec.shtml>.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.hri.ca/children/CSEIndex.shtml#ConferencesList>

#### A World Fit for Children (2002)

During the UN Special Session on Children in May of 2002, the document “A World Fit for Children” was created. The document was based on a series of child-specific acknowledgements, and most important to the issue of exploitation, stated that “children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence” and that we should strive to protect children from a variety of dangerous and exploitative practices and to improve their living conditions. The document, which gathers a series of recommendations to be put in place within the following ten years, makes reference to sexual exploitation on the Internet stating in paragraph 47 that States should:

“Take necessary measures, including through enhanced cooperation between Governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations to combat the criminal use of information technologies, including the Internet, for purposes of the sale of children, for child prostitution, child pornography, child sex tourism, pedophilia and other forms of violence and abuse against children and adolescents.”

By reclaiming the agenda of the World Summit for Children, the document declares action to be taken in the form of fulfilling specific goals in a timely fashion so that measurements of success can be more easily gathered.

“We have learned from previous meetings that setting goals is a crucial step. With goals, we have something to strive for. Without them, we have no way of measuring our successes and failures.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Patricia Durrant, Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session.

## Best Practice

The United Nations has made a series of steps that can be considered best practice. The network coordination demonstrated by ECPAT, the international cooperation and the coordination to maintain an international tip-line are among them.

### Network Coordination

The coordination and expansive resources provided by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT) is one successful initiative taken by the United Nations. ECPAT is an international network involved in promoting child safety and holds Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). ECPAT has also developed a “safety for children” online program to be administered to various countries. ECPAT’s actions have included the production of educational and awareness material, the support of an international reporting hotline, and activities in cooperation with national organizations.

Two ECPAT documents instrumental to children and the Internet have been published: “Violence Against Children in Cyberspace”, suggesting that violence against children through new technologies is pervasive, causes deep and lasting physical and psychological damage to the child victims, and is outstripping the resources of law enforcement agencies<sup>38</sup> and “Protecting Children Online: An ECPAT Guide”.<sup>39</sup> The latter is a widely available publication produced first in 2000 and then again in 2002 and in 2005.

The Spanish ECPAT affiliate Accion Contra la Pornographia Infantil (ACPI) has launched a campaign where an eight-page comic book for youth will be introduced. The comic book provides Internet safety rules for children and supplements the guide with products containing reminders (i.e.: mouse pads). A brochure for parents is produced in conjunction with this document. In an effort to transfer the product

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38 From: End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes International website. (n.d). From: <http://www.ecpat.net>.

39 Livingston, C. (2002). Protecting Children Online: An ECPAT Guide. (2nd ed). From:

[http://www.ecpat.net/eng/ecpat\\_inter/publication/other/english/html\\_page/ecpat\\_prot\\_child\\_online/files/index.htm](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/ecpat_inter/publication/other/english/html_page/ecpat_prot_child_online/files/index.htm).

to other areas, the material has been provided to ECPAT making it easy to reproduce the comic in other languages for quick distribution to other areas.

Additionally, ECPAT promotes awareness through “NetSmart Rules”. The rules instruct children not to give out personal information over the Internet such as their name and address in addition to financial information. Children are also warned against arranging meetings with strangers and are instructed to tell an adult if they come across threatening information or information that makes them uncomfortable online.

#### International Cooperation

The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) represents the benefits from cooperation between non-governmental and governmental bodies as well as industry partners on an international level. Striving to forward goals of child rights, protection and participation, UNICEF acts as a lobby group with an extremely high public profile, and also produces relevant, timely research on the plight of children. By establishing diverse cooperation, UNICEF has been able to extend its reach and expand associated benefits.

In an endeavour to support the UN Study on Violence Against Children, Protection in Cyberspace, the Microsoft Corporation and UNICEF created an Internet Safety Toolkit to raise public awareness of computing security and Internet safety. The Toolkit is part of a broader initiative to help governments, policy makers, industry leaders, parents, teachers, and social organizations empower children (and adults) to better protect their computers, their families, and themselves when using the Internet. This Toolkit also includes recommendations for national policy development, and demonstrates the benefits of encouraging industry partnerships.

The MAGIC network<sup>40</sup> is a further positive example of a European initiative that arose from a fusion of UNICEF and a European country, in this case Norway. Based on a consultation on the topic of children and the media inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a working group was formed designed to

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<sup>40</sup> UNICEF Magic Network Website. (n.d.). From: <http://www.unicef.org/magic/>.

look at and develop positive connections between children and the media. In recognition of the many diverse areas of the community involved as stakeholders, resource-sharing links were made in order to identify and share best practices and to promote cooperative progress in the area.

The Oslo Challenge Network was a result of a 1999 conference on the topic of media and children's rights held in Norway involving participants from numerous backgrounds such as youth, media professionals and those specializing in child rights. The resulting Oslo Challenge Network, now known as the MAGIC network operates by connecting professionals and organizations through an email network about children and the media.<sup>41</sup>

#### Tip Line Coordination

ECPAT supports the use of a hotline in order to report child exploitation and other dangerous material online, and makes an example of the International network INHOPE suggesting that hotlines can transmit information across countries in a timely fashion and can thus “have great success in fighting child pornography and child abusers”.<sup>42</sup> With this framework in mind, ECPAT makes suggestions to future hotlines noting that effective operation of an international hotline network involves minimum standards in identifying dangerous material, and a system whereby the country from which the material originates initiates action against it. Additionally, an effective network will be “transparent in their workings, and report in an open manner on their operations.” ECPAT also lists a series of ways by which issues involving Internet and child sexual exploitation can be improved. Their seven recommendations are:

- Creating better laws – relating to zero tolerance policies;
- Harmonization of laws – laws created at the international level;

41 Muir, D., Hecht, M. E., & Naebklang, M. (2005). Violence Against Children in Cyberspace. ECPAT International Contribution to the UN Study on Violence Against Children. From: [http://www.unicef.org/magic/http://www.unicef.org/magic/resources/ECPAT\\_Cyberspace\\_2005-ENG.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/magic/http://www.unicef.org/magic/resources/ECPAT_Cyberspace_2005-ENG.pdf).

42 Livingston, C. (2002). Protecting Children Online: An ECPAT Guide. (2nd ed.). From: [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/ecpat\\_inter/publication/other/english/html\\_page/ecpat\\_prot\\_child\\_online/files/index.htm](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/ecpat_inter/publication/other/english/html_page/ecpat_prot_child_online/files/index.htm).

- Law enforcement – creation of specialized police forces and exchange of specialized information;
- Creation of codes of conduct for ISPs;
- Support, build and encourage networking of hotlines;
- Take responsibility as a parent – learn how to use the Internet
- Educate schools – and provide a copy of “netsmart” to students

## EUROPEAN UNION

The strategy across the European Union, while complex, neatly addresses the inter-related issues of child safety online, child sexual exploitation online, pornography and electronic commerce in an awareness-raising manner paired with re-active resources. In addition to the EU-wide approach taken at the regional level, countries within the EU have adopted specific strategies to combat online sexual exploitation such as Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Sweden and Iceland.<sup>43</sup>

### Policy Responses

#### Community Action Plan on Promoting Safer Use of the Internet by Combating Illegal and Harmful Content on Global Networks (1999)

On January 25, 1999 the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Multi-annual Community Action Plan on Promoting Safer Use of the Internet by Combating Illegal and Harmful Content on Global Networks<sup>44</sup>. The Safer Internet Action Plan and its action lines were built up in conjunction with the Recommendation on Protection of Minors and Human Dignity, as a means of implementing a European approach to a safer use of the Internet. These action lines were based primarily on supporting hotlines, industry self-regulation, filtering and rating and awareness-raising. The resulting InSafe Cooperation Network will be discussed later as the primary mechanism for coordination in the EU.<sup>45</sup>

#### Council Framework Decision on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (2003)

The Convention is the first international treaty on crimes committed via the Internet and other computer networks, dealing particularly with infringements of copyright,

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43 See European Parliament and Council. (2005, May 11). Decision no 854/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council Establishing a Multiannual Community Programme on Promoting Safer Use of the Internet and New Online Technologies. Office Journal of the European Union. From: [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/docs/prog\\_decision\\_2005/sip\\_decision\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/prog_decision_2005/sip_decision_2005_en.pdf) and European Commission. (2007). Safer Internet Plus: A Multiannual Community Programme on Promoting Safer Use of the Internet and New Online Technologies. Work Programme. From: [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/docs/call\\_2007/sip\\_work\\_programme\\_2007\\_draft.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/call_2007/sip_work_programme_2007_draft.pdf).

44 The upgraded version known as decision no. 854/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of May 11, 2005 establishing a multiannual Community Programme on promoting safer use of the Internet and new online technologies

45 InSafe Website. (2005). From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/about.htm>.

computer-related fraud, child pornography and violations of network security. It also contains a series of powers and procedures such as the search of computer networks and interception. Its main objective, set out in the preamble, is to pursue a common criminal policy aimed at the protection of society against cybercrime, especially by adopting appropriate legislation and fostering international co-operation.

The purpose of this framework, accepted in 2003 and entered into force in 2004 is to produce legislative and regulatory synchronicity among member states when dealing with issues of child exploitation. While Article 1 of the framework considers particular linguistic definitions related to child exploitation, Article 2 sets out the specific offences existing beneath the umbrella of child exploitation, and asserts that members states must punish behaviours such as coercing a child into sexual activity and conduct relating to child pornography through measures which are “effective, proportionate and dissuasive”. Specific sentence minimums are set out for particular crimes and Article 5 provides a set of aggravating circumstances designed to be adopted by each member state, and to instigate a harsher penalty in response.

Additionally, the Framework provides information on jurisdiction relating to sexual exploitation of children as follows:

A State will have jurisdiction where:

- The offence is committed within its territory (the principle of territoriality);
- The offender is one of its nationals (the active personality principle);
- The offence is committed for the benefit of a legal person established in the territory of the Member State.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Council of Europe. (2003). Council Framework Decision on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography. From: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33138.htm>.

Thus, in relation to the Internet-based offences, these jurisdictional considerations allow states to prosecute more liberally.

### Convention on Cyber-Crime drafted by the Council of Europe (2004)

The Council of Europe's Convention implements some of the specific recommendations of the *CRC* by suggesting that at the national level, criminal law should deal with the content of the Internet, particularly child pornography. The Convention is the first international treaty on crimes committed via the Internet and other computer networks, dealing particularly with infringements of copyright, computer-related fraud, child pornography and violations of network security. It also contains a series of powers and procedures such as the search of computer networks and interception.

Its main objective, set out in the preamble, is to pursue a common criminal policy aimed at the protection of society against cybercrime, especially by adopting appropriate legislation and fostering international co-operation. The Convention is the product of four years of work by Council of Europe experts, but also by the United States, Canada, Japan and other countries, which are not members of the organization. It has also been supplemented by an Additional Protocol making any publication of racist and xenophobic propaganda via computer networks, a criminal offence.<sup>47</sup>

The Convention on Cybercrime is the only binding international document on cybercrime, serving as basis for legislation on cybercrime worldwide. In an upgrade to the Convention, during a meeting in France, the Committee members decided to expand the definition of computer system in the Convention to include mobile phones and personal digital assistants, commonly known as PDAs. These devices can also be used to access the Internet, send emails and pictures and upload documents.

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<sup>47</sup> Council of Europe. (2007). Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse. From: <https://wed.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Del/Dec%282007%291002/10.1&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=annexe13&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>.

During the meeting in the city of Strasbourg, the Cybercrime Convention Committee also discussed:

Methods designed to increase cooperation between states, international organizations, academic institutions and industry when drafting cybercrime laws, addressing investigative measures and increasing the capacity of computer forensics.

Cyber-terrorism, including racism and xenophobic behaviour and distribution of material.

### [Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse \(2007\)](#)

As part of a three-year plan to “Build a Europe for and with Children” by the Council of Europe, the newest Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse was adopted. The document expands on traditional areas of concern such as sexual abuse to include grooming of children for sexual purposes and sex tourism. Article 1 states the purposes of this convention to:

#### Article 1 – Purposes:

- Prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children;
- Protect the rights of child victims of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;
- Promote national and international co-operation against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.

Chapter II of the Convention focuses on preventative measures to be taken by states such as: raising awareness among those who work with children; administering education to children designed to provide them with the tools to protect themselves from exploitation; preventative intervention to those who may be at risk for offending; public awareness-raising efforts; cooperative participation from children, the private sector, media and civil society. Additionally, these efforts should be coordinated on all levels so as to promote the best care for children possible. Assistance to victims should, among other ways, take the form of nationally

supported help-lines available on and off line. The human services responses advocated for in this document are flanked by additional provisions for more effective law enforcement and investigative techniques as well as substantive law reform in Chapters VI through VII. In sum, the new Convention is designed to complement and enhance the existing international documents.

### Evaluating Best Practices

One means by which the European Union has approached the issue of child exploitation is through the creation of funding frameworks to evaluate policies and practices and develop best practice guidelines throughout Europe. The two funding frameworks at present are: AGIS (formerly the STOP program) dealing with police and judicial cooperation and DAPHNE II, designed to address violence against women and children. The funding frameworks are intended to support the activities of NGOs in dealing with specific sexual exploitation activities and fund a number of proposals each year. At the second World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, in Yokohama in December 2001, the Daphne programme implemented by the European Commission was acknowledged as a very useful tool.

One Daphne-funded project (in cooperation with Save the Children Denmark) is Child Net International<sup>48</sup> which launched Chatdanger<sup>49</sup> in October 2000, a website devoted to education and proactive behaviour regarding the Internet, chat sites, IM and cell phones. The aim of the site is to “inform and empower users of these (Internet) services so that they can use these services safely, and not at all to discourage people from using these services”. These interactive sites use true stories, participatory games and quizzes, facts and safety tips about chatting on the Internet, using IM, and playing online games. The site provides potential hazardous situations that might result and suggests appropriate ways in which to resolve problems.

### Awareness and Education Programs

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<sup>48</sup> Childnet International Website. (2004). From: [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

<sup>49</sup> Childnet International (2004). Chatdanger Website. From: [www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com).

Throughout Europe, various awareness and education programs are present consisting of promotion of safer Internet use such as EU Kids Online project; Safer Internet plus programme; Europe's Internet safety portal, Insafe; and the Safer Internet Programme. Additionally, hotline nodes are International Association of Internet Hotlines (INHOPE) and Childnet International.

In order to raise awareness, the EU has concentrated on an audience of children, parents and teachers, providing mass-produced informational guidelines. They have also taken advantage of the positive aspects of the Internet and disseminated information electronically. InSafe is the network of national nodes that serves to coordinate awareness responses among member countries within the EU.

**Insafe Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Insafe cooperation network is to empower citizens to use the Internet, as well as other information and communication technologies, safely and effectively.

Insafe promotes positive, ethical use of online information and communication technologies. The network calls for shared responsibility for the protection of the rights and needs of citizens, in particular children and youths, by government, educators, parents, media, industry and all other relevant actors.

Insafe partners work closely together to share best practice, information and resources. The network will interact with industry, schools and families with the aim of empowering people to bridge the digital divide between home and school and between generations.

Insafe partners will monitor and address emerging trends, while seeking to reinforce the image of the Internet as a place to learn. It will raise awareness on reporting harmful or illegal content and services.

Through close cooperation between partners and other actors, Insafe aims to raise Internet safety-awareness standards and support the development of information literacy for all.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Council of Europe. (2003). Council Framework Decision on Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography. From: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33138.htm>.

Accordingly, twenty-three national awareness-raising nodes exist under the umbrella of a coordination branch that shares best practices across Europe. The Safe Internet Forum operates throughout Europe, facilitating knowledge and information-transfer based on best practices via an online format, and is open to industry, child welfare and policy-makers. Some of their programs are discussed below.

Hotlines also provide assistance when combating exploitation online. By providing a venue to report the presence of dangerous material, hotlines serve an important role. In Europe, the INHOPE Association (an international body) provides cooperation between the hotline services in various countries. Twenty-three countries internationally are involved in INHOPE at time of writing.

In a document produced by the European Commission, the EU's present coherent approach to safer use of the Internet, particularly by children, is outlined. The Safer Internet plus program fact-sheet outlines four areas, which constitute the European Commission's mandated main areas and delineate a focus on methods other than legal measures as a response. These are: (1) fighting against illegal content; (2) tackling unwanted and harmful content; (3) promoting a safer environment and; (4) awareness-raising. To address the mandated areas, Safer Internet with funding from the EU has created a hotline, which acts as an intermediary between the public and police. The rationale is that while people are reluctant to report illegal online activities directly to the police, they may more frequently report to a civilian hotline.

Within the space of ten years, the European Council has published two editions of an Internet literacy guide. The Council of Europe's Internet literacy fact sheets are intended as an aid and a guide in using this remarkable network of information and communication.<sup>51</sup> The aim is to:

- Offer teachers and parents sufficient technical know-how to allow them to share young people's and children's voyages of discovery through communication technology;

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<sup>51</sup> Richardson, J. (ed.). Milwood Hargrave, A., Moratille, B., Vahtivouri, S., Venter, D., & de Vries, R. (n.d.). The Internet Literacy Handbook. (2nd ed). Council of Europe. From: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/media/links/Events/Internet%20Literacy%20Handbook\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/media/links/Events/Internet%20Literacy%20Handbook_en.asp).

- Highlight ethical issues and give insight into added-value in education;
- Provide ideas for constructive, practical activities in class or at home to draw benefits from the Internet and mobile technology;
- Share best practice in widely varying domains of Internet use;
- Provide links that will give further information or practical examples.

The Literary Guide recognizes the educational advantages of the Internet while simultaneously providing for ethical and safe practices. Additionally, practical uses for the Internet such as creating websites, searching for information, and “how to” information about blogging etc., are paired with safe online practices.

## Research

Although a detailed analysis of associated research conducted throughout Europe is beyond the scope of this document, it is important to note that studies have been conducted in the form of: the Eurobarometer Survey on Safer Internet 2005<sup>52</sup>; SAFT Survey 2006<sup>53</sup>; MEDIAPPRO: A European Research for New Media Appropriation by Youth<sup>54</sup>; Educaunet: Critical Educational Approach to Internet Risks<sup>55</sup>; SafeBorders Project<sup>56</sup>; World Internet Project<sup>57</sup> and the Pew Internet & American Life Project<sup>58</sup>,

## Regular Regional and International Meetings

Within the EU, there have also been a series of meetings within the past ten years exclusively aimed at child protection on the Internet. Regional meetings in 1997 culminated with the ECPAT International/Interpol, Child Pornography on the

52 For more, see: European Commission. Eurobarometer: Overall Report, National Reports, Press Release. From: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/activities/sip/eurobarometer/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/eurobarometer/index_en.htm).

53 For more on the SAFT Survey, see: The European Commission. (2006). Summary: The SAFT Survey, 2006. SAFT Press Release. From: <http://www.saftonline.no/PressReleases/2881>.

54 Mediappro Final Report. (2006). A European Research for New Media Appropriation by Youth. From: <http://www.mediappro.org/>.

55 For more see: Educaunet Website. (2004). Critical Educational Approach to Internet Risks. From: <http://www.educaunet.org/eng>.

56 SafeBorders Project. Source: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/activities/sip/projects/awareness/safeborders/index\\_en.htm#results](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/projects/awareness/safeborders/index_en.htm#results)

57 The World Internet Project Website. (2007). Featured Reports. From: <http://www.worldInternetproject.net>.

58 Pew Internet & American Life Project. (2000-2007). Featured Reports. From: <http://www.pewInternet.org/>.

Internet Experts Meeting in May 1998. Following that, September 1999 saw a conference on Combating Child Pornography on the Internet, Governmental Conference in Vienna as part of the EU-USA transatlantic dialogue. The UNESCO Expert's Meeting on the Sexual Abuse of Children, Child Pornography and Pedophilia on the Internet: An International Challenge.

## European Union Member State Exemplars

### Germany

The German awareness node, [klicksafe.de](http://www.klicksafe.de) operates its awareness node by fusing four overarching areas of concentration:

- Marketing in order to raise public awareness in target groups through media cooperation;
- Creating and maintaining a network to facilitate resource and best practice sharing and current material development;
- A national website to present the platform and related useful information, and to raise awareness about filters and the national hotline;
- Measures for specific target groups upon the recognition that specialized information must be provided to parents, various ages of youth and to prepare training programs and concepts for teachers and educators.<sup>59</sup>

### Greece

The Greek awareness node [saferInternet.gr](http://www.saferInternet.gr) contains a platform of three themes in order to raise awareness. These are: awareness through the media; to educate parents, teachers and youth through various education events; and to expand knowledge through a *multiplier-effect network*. The *multiplier-effect network* involves teachers becoming experts in the field and transferring this knowledge to peers and students, and the media transferring key messages broadly. Interestingly, the effect transports awareness material beyond the border of Greece due to a satellite network. The

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<sup>59</sup> InSafe Website. (2005). Germany: Klicksafe.de. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/focus/germany.htm>.

awareness portal has been dubbed a “one-stop-shop” and allows electronic and print materials related to awareness for various target groups.<sup>60</sup>

## Hungary

Upon recognition of the European Union’s best practices and an imbedded social challenge of a lack of trusted information about the Internet in Hungary, the Hungarian consortium bases its platform on:

- Creating confidence by providing solutions and guidelines for safe Internet usage for parents, teachers and grandparents.
- Develop(ing) a more careful behaviour in children in connection with the dangers.

The consortium represents a public-private-partnership where the main content providers are linked with Hungary’s largest Internet provider in order to ensure quick, widespread dissemination of material. Of the many benefits of this strategy, providing a “hard-hitting and targeted awareness campaign”, providing information on the national hotline service, providing a pool of expertise and cooperation with other awareness nodes are key.<sup>61</sup>

## Italy

In contrast to many of the other countries involved in the Safer Internet Plan, Italy has two awareness nodes that work in cooperation with each other, one which is a true awareness node: Enhancing Awareness on ICT Safety for Young People (EASY) and the other which works primarily toward enhancing education: Educazione Didattica per la E-Navigation (EDEN). EASY operates a highly visible national tour involving youth, parents, educators, NGOs and schools, and is designed to achieve high visibility by media representation while also distributing material and delivering seminars. With recognition of the efficacy of the multiplier-effect, materials are also

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<sup>60</sup> InSafe Website. (2005). Greece: SafeNetHomePlus. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/focus/greece.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> InSafe Website. (2005). Hungary: SIC. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/focus/hungary.htm>.

distributed to local organizations willing to replicate the program at the micro-level with the support of tools provided by EASY.

EDEN, in cooperation with EASY, provides educational tools to schools relying on the principle that new and exciting material will attract the attention of children and will thus better facilitate learning about the Internet. EDEN uses video-seminars and a wiki-community based system to this end.<sup>62</sup>

## Sweden

The Swedish node, operated by the Swedish Media Council in partnership with the BRIS-Children's Right in Society (who operate the helpline) has made significant progress within the past few years. The Swedish Media Council operates under the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture while the BRIS is an NGO focused on providing distressed children a link to the community.

The recent "the Young Internet" campaign in 2005-2006 resulted in a series of successes and the development of a helpline operated by BRIS, concentrating on education in schools with various age groups. "Sniff the Net", an educational tool for preschoolers and first-graders, was produced to target younger students in order to "lay the foundations for a curious and critical stance to the Internet". The aim with the short story (created in the form of a fairy tale with an accompanying teaching manual) is to allow teachers and students to read the story together and to follow-up with discussion, games and activities.

The Swedish node has also developed an educational manual for older teenagers intending to demonstrate what can happen when you are using the Internet unaware. "Lifetime" proceeds not with pre-formed answers to questions about Internet safety, but with scenarios that spark dialogue between teachers and students.

Additionally, in order to address national awareness, in 1995 Sweden ran a campaign resulting in twelve regional training sessions reaching educators, child professionals and parents. The agendas for the training seminars concentrated on children's use

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<sup>62</sup> InSafe Website. (2005). Italy: Enhancing Awareness on ICT Safety for Young People. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/focus/italy.htm>.

and attitudes towards the Internet, net cultures, a youth panel and seminars by leading professionals. The training seminars also provided an opportunity to distribute the “Internet tool kit” developed by the Swedish node.<sup>63</sup>

## Iceland

In conjunction with Iceland’s awareness raising node, participation in the nation’s Safer Internet Day in 2005 saw the launch of a specific Internet education guide designed for youth grades 4-6. In teaching children across Iceland to surf the Internet safely, and coinciding with the awareness node’s mandate of “empower(ing) children and parents to enjoy the Internet and new media in a safe and positive way,”<sup>64</sup> the document focuses on sending positive messages rather than negative ones and is also effective on raising awareness in parents.<sup>65</sup>

The two new educational modules are being launched in elementary schools across Iceland. Net-ethics and source criticism can be described as follows:

The *net-ethics* material focuses on positive behaviour and awareness on how language, symbols and pictures can be used. It covers the main areas of Internet and new media use by children and teenagers, such as blogs, chat, e-mails and mobile phones.

The *source criticism* module is designed to increase awareness on the need to critically look at all online information and can be a tool for teachers that ask their students to do research on the Internet or write essays using Internet sources.<sup>66</sup>

The material is designed for 9-16 year olds with enough flexibility that teachers can adapt the material for specific delivery. Additionally, the material can be taught in different contexts and can be used by both history and language teachers. Unfortunately, at this time, neither resource is available in English.

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63 InSafe Website. (2005, December). New Awareness Tools From the Swedish Node. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/articles/1205/sc3.htm>.

64 InSafe Website. (2005). Iceland: SAFT. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/focus/iceland.htm>.

65 InSafe Website. (modified 2007, August 7). SAFT Iceland Launches New Educational Material. From: <http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/articles/0906/is.htm>.

## **EU Best Practices and Policy**

A number of best practices are apparent by examining the EU-wide approach to this issue. In a public consultation undertaken by the Safer Internet between June and April of 2007, over eighty organizations and individuals including industry and NGO representatives deemed to be experts in the field, contributed feedback on the most effective ways to make the Internet safer, especially concerning children's online use. The information gathered supports a series of best practices used within Europe, and also sets out guidelines for further strategic development.<sup>67</sup> They concluded that effective strategy should have these components:

### **Central Coordination**

Coordination provided by the awareness nodes has been highlighted as one of the most effective aspects of the EU's overall strategy. The awareness nodes provide advantages by ensuring and aiding information sharing, thus improving consistency across jurisdictions, and also by increasing the public profile of related educational and awareness strategies. The structure of the awareness nodes simultaneously acknowledges that specific issues in each geographical area also exist, where direct information sharing and transfers of strategies may not be appropriate. The public consultation administered by Safer Internet also indicates that awareness nodes should increase their role by compiling campaigns and websites into resources for schools, law enforcement, harm reduction and industry. The coordination ensured by awareness nodes has made for an approach with sustainable long terms effects.

### **Preventative Education Approach**

The underlying philosophy of the EU's approach highlights increasing Internet safety through preventative measures designed to inform and empower users and is an additional strength of the strategy. By advocating for the use of the Internet as a positive tool, educational support is provided to work with, rather than against, the technology.

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<sup>66</sup> InSafe Website. (2005, February 8). Iceland Launches New Educational Package on Safer Internet Day. From: [http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/articles/iceland\\_launches.htm](http://www.saferInternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/articles/iceland_launches.htm).

## Research

The notion that changing technological developments have impacted youth behaviour and led to a new net culture that many adults do not adequately understand, has been integral to research in the EU. The belief in targeting messages to specialized populations including young youth and the use of the ‘multiplier effect’ in schools has provided new opportunities for research to guide future policy developments.

## Cooperation with Service Providers

The EU has consciously expanded from a law enforcement-only approach to this issue and now favours a collaborative human services approach. This involves cooperative ventures with various EU NGOs, and coordination among member states to focus on education-based approaches and prevention. Importantly public-private-partnerships have also supported linking schools, Internet providers and technology companies with community groups and government to better coordinate services and maximize resources.

## Specific Strategies

Sweden’s approach (including the educational manuals “Sniff the Net”, and “Lifetime”) represents a campaign that focuses on acknowledging the need for dialogue between teachers and students on the topic of Internet safety. The strategy recognizes different learning outcomes for various age groups and also recognizes the importance of increased access to the materials (via cooperation with Microsoft who post it on their website).

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<sup>67</sup> European Commission. (2007). Safer Internet and Online Technologies for Children: Results, Background and Replies. From: [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/sip/public\\_consultation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/public_consultation/index_en.htm).

## UNITED STATES

### Best Practices

The United States also demonstrates a series of best practices. For instance, the coordination demonstrated by NCMEC, the strengths of the networked enforcement approach, and the particular attention paid to updating and producing new research in the area.

### Coordination

The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children

The governmental/nongovernmental cooperation represented by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)<sup>68</sup> is one of the most promising initiatives in the United States. NCMEC, established in 1984, acts as the national clearinghouse for missing and exploited children, with an aim to locate and recover lost and abducted children. They also aim to reduce incidents of abduction, molestation, sexual exploitation and child victimization. Enhancing NCMEC's services is a toll-free hotline<sup>69</sup> to report the location of a missing child and a CyberTipline<sup>70</sup> to report cases of child sexual exploitation and child pornography. Other activities include training of law-enforcement and social-service professionals, and coordination with the private sector.

### Awareness and Education

While governmental efforts in the U.S.'s regarding education and awareness are largely uncoordinated, the OnGuardOnline.gov website is a notable exception, which “provides practical tips from the federal government and the technology industry to help you be on guard against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect your personal information”.<sup>71</sup> The website represents coordination between the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Commerce, the Securities and Exchange

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68 National Centre For Missing and Exploited Children Website. (2007). [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).

69 NCMEC hotline 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)

70 National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children. (2007). The CyberTipline. From: [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).

71 OnGuard Online Website. From: <http://onguardonline.gov/index.html>.

Commission, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Office of Justice Programs and the Department of Homeland Security.

### Enforcement/ Reporting

The United States also hosts strengths in its enforcement practices. The Innocent Images National Initiative (IINI) represents enforcement coordination by combining resources of the FBI with local law enforcement as well as the Crimes Against Children Unit. In order to provide multi-disciplinary support CAC Resource Teams assist in investigating incidents that cover diverse geographical territory. These teams include social and human service professionals, as well as health professionals and NGO support. This cooperation is also matched in community outreach provided by the multi-disciplinary teams.

### Research

Finally, with respect to research, the United States can be looked to for their positive approach in tailoring research to reflect youth activities in online environments. Some examples are the National Advocacy Center in South Carolina, and The Missing and Exploited Children's Training and Technical Assistance Program, which provides up-to-date education and training to the social and human services sector including NGOs<sup>72</sup>. Another good practice involves the efforts by the DOJ to host national and regional meetings in collaboration with nongovernmental agencies and offering offer training at the local, state and federal level to social service providers and community groups.

## AUSTRALIA

### Best Practices

The Australian national response to online sexual exploitation is concise, comprehensive and well coordinated; taken as an entire system, Australia offers best practices. The main elements contributing to the success so evident in Australia are:

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<sup>72</sup> Fox Valley Technical College Website. (2002). From: [www.foxvalley.tec.wi.us/ojdp](http://www.foxvalley.tec.wi.us/ojdp)

the presence of a clear strategy at the federal level; dedication of funding to online-safety specific programs; ability to reach target groups due to creative use of resources; adoption of positive underlying philosophies and partnerships with the technology sector to increase reach and resources.

### A Clear Strategy

Led by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the Commonwealth of Australia is governed by a document entitled “the Strategic Framework for the Information Economy 2004-2006: Opportunities and Challenges for the Information Age”. The document is intended to mark Australia’s position as a global technology innovator and thus proceeds by analyzing the developments that need to be incorporated into the country as “technology and business developments have pulled ahead of the industry structures and regulatory arrangements that we have inherited from the 20<sup>th</sup> century”...such as “Internet content regulation, intellectual property protection, electronic privacy protection, critical infrastructure security and government service delivery”.<sup>73</sup> It assists in providing a clear and unified national response.

The keys the document identifies in meeting the challenges of the information age include increased education responses and collaboration and cooperation among national forces and nongovernmental organizations. While the document is designed to provide a strategic response to increased information technology, it is relevant to the document at hand in that it sets the tone for the highly progressive environment that characterizes the Australian approach.

### Funding

In 2006, the Australian Federal government produced a comprehensive national scheme entitled “Protecting Families Online”. \$116.5 million dollars were dedicated to this initiative, which encompasses a National Filter Scheme, information and advice to educate children and parents about safe online use (including web-ready

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<sup>73</sup> Australian Government. (2004, July). Opportunities and Challenges for the Information Age. Australia’s Strategic Framework for the Information Economy 2004-2006.

From: [http://www.dcit.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/20457/New\\_SFIE\\_July\\_2004\\_final.pdf](http://www.dcit.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/20457/New_SFIE_July_2004_final.pdf).

information booklets for parents, librarians and teachers) as well as a national reporting service.

Not only does this National Scheme provide examples of good practice in terms of dedicating a substantial budget to the project signifying intense national support for reducing child exploitation, but the specific awareness approach advocated for in the scheme is also advantageous due to its multi-faceted approach. The initiative is said to work well in “... combining services and education, regulation and policing to ensure that Australian families can get the best of the Internet, whilst minimizing potential harm”.<sup>74</sup> NetAlert has a series of inter-related components: the National Filtering Scheme; The Australian Federal Police’s *Online Child Sex Exploitation Team*, a public awareness and education component; information hotline; a consultative working group; the Online Content Scheme (continued management and improvement of this program established in 1999); and a partnership with the OECD and UN-based Government Forum in order to assist in establishing an international framework for the administration of better Internet content.

The Government’s Internet advisory body, NetAlert, will receive five million (Australian) dollars in additional funding over three years to restructure and improve its effectiveness. One step in improving NetAlert will be to coordinate with the Australian Communication and Media Authority’s (ACMA) Melbourne office. This cooperation will allow NetAlert to expand its reach regarding educational activities and promote its website and hotline.

### Positive Underlying Philosophies

The educational targets of NetAlert are guided by a series of underlying philosophies including a focus on the educational and communication benefits of positive Internet use; noting that although there are a variety of technological measures that can be adopted in order to minimize risks to children online, one essential strategy comprises educating and providing children with tools to promote responsible use; and that the issues experienced by primary students and by secondary students are distinct and

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<sup>74</sup> Australian Government. (n.d.). Protecting Australian Families Online: Message From Senator the Hon Helen Coonan, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. NetAlert Website. From: [http://www.netalert.gov.au/news\\_and\\_events.html](http://www.netalert.gov.au/news_and_events.html).

must be treated accordingly, with age-specific responses. The preventative and educational messaging provided by NetAlert are examples of best practices because they arise in recognition that the Internet and online technologies are not going away and that any effective strategy must work within the online environment rather than against it.

Such educational and awareness-based endeavours include targeted approaches such as: the NetAlert Sponsors Library and Information Week 2007 and The NetAlert Expo. Visiting every State and Territory during the Expo, parents are instructed about Internet safety and gain valuable advice on how to keep children safe on the Internet. A host of practical take-home resources (e.g. CD-ROMs, an Internet Safety Manual, Fact Sheets) are available free of charge to use back in the home. Parents starting out on the Internet with little knowledge of online dangers are warmly invited to attend. Other adults with responsibility over children (such as teachers and librarians) are also most welcome. The NetAlert Expo is for anyone who wants to learn about keeping children safe online.

### Industry Partnerships

In recognition that industry partnerships are necessary for a successful national strategy, a joint initiative between NetAlert, the Virtual Global Task-force and Microsoft, “ThinkUKnow” delivers training programs to Australian primary and secondary schools through a network of professional ThinkUKnow-accredited trainers.<sup>75</sup>

As part of the Australian Communications and Media Authority’s mandate to provide advice and information to the community about Internet use and about harmful material on the Internet, *Cybersmart Kids Online* offers a community awareness project to help provide safe productive Internet experiences for children by providing relevant educational and age appropriate resources. Additionally, adults can take advantage of the online teaching resources to help kids be cyber-smart.

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<sup>75</sup> Australian Government. (n.d.). Think U Know Website. NetAlert. From: <http://www.thinkuknow.com.au/>.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Best Practices

In the United Kingdom, best practices are: the collaboration found in the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, the widespread promotion and access to relevant material and reporting services for youth and their communities, and the drive to produce current research.

### Partner Collaboration

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), -- the Internet awareness node in the United Kingdom -- opened in 2006 and exemplifies a service embodying a series of best practices. Foremost is the established partnerships between the social services sector, government and non-governmental community groups and industry, particularly in the creation and review of the website and material offered by CEOP.

### Access to Information and Reporting

CEOP reports that there is currently a “report abuse” function on over 9000 websites to encourage children to report of occurrences of abusive and/or dangerous nature to authorities.<sup>76</sup> The websites that often host this function are those that youth are most familiar with, in including access on MSN, an instant messaging site of interest to many youth. The “thinkuknow” (not affiliated with the Australian website of the same name) website co-funded by the European Union displays the awareness and educational material provided by CEOP in the United Kingdom. This format of dissemination is particularly effective because it represents a coordinated national approach (which is then further coordinated with all of the European Union) to provide consistent messaging to children and their caregivers.

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<sup>76</sup> Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. (n.d.). Strategic Overview 2006-2007. From: <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/pdfs/CEOPStrategicOverview2007.pdf>.

## Training

The United Kingdom also has access to the intensive training and education programs offered by CEOP nationally. Training for professionals includes cooperation among criminal justice and child protection agencies to provide ongoing and upgraded training, in addition to the development of one-day conferences which allow front-line workers to benefit from the perspectives of key specialists in the area of child exploitation.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre Website. (2006). Making Every Child Matter...Everywhere. From: <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>.

## CANADA

### Federal Response

In Canada, the investigation and prosecution of child sexual exploitation is within provincial jurisdiction.<sup>78</sup> However in response to the growing problem of child sexual exploitation on the Internet, the federal government developed Canada's National Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet (2004).

This strategy builds explicitly on a new emphasis of strengthening Federal legislation aimed at combating child pornography and child victimization and increasing sentencing provisions, which began in 1992.<sup>79</sup> Working through the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group, various collaborations occurred to better define mechanisms to combat child prostitution and child sex tourism.

While national meetings have been held including justice and child welfare officials and noted experts from various jurisdictions, integrated approaches have been centered on prevention, child participation and protection, the physical and emotional recovery of the child and his/her reintegration into society, as well as information collection and dissemination.

Through an examination of best practice based on institutional and operational commonalities between the Federal and Provincial government, this section discusses important areas to consider in the development of a strategy for the Province of British Columbia.

### National Policy Response

Canada's National Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet was developed and is delivered through Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada and provides 43 million (Canadian) dollars over five years to

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<sup>78</sup> Except in the territories, where the federal government has jurisdiction.

<sup>79</sup> Compiled based on information as follows: Department of Justice Canada. (2001). Government Initiatives Protecting Children Against Exploitation. From: [http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/news/nr/2001/doc\\_25853.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/news/nr/2001/doc_25853.html). and Department of Justice Canada. (modified 2007, June). Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Youth: A Fact Sheet from the Department of Justice Canada. From: [http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/sexual\\_abuse\\_fs.pdf](http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/sexual_abuse_fs.pdf).

ensure a comprehensive, coordinated approach to protecting children on the Internet, and pursuing those who use technology to prey on them.<sup>80</sup>

The National Strategy is delivered in partnership with three federal organizations: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC), Industry Canada (SchoolNet) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) with PSEPC as the lead department for the National Strategy.

The National Strategy has three main objectives: (1) enhancing enforcement capacity; (2) providing for public reporting and education to prevent victimization and; (3) developing partnerships with the e-learning industry, the private sector and other levels of government to foster effective public awareness, education and crime prevention strategies.

#### Enhancing Law Enforcement

Under this objective, funding has been provided:

- 1) To expand the RCMP-based National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC) allowing it to work in an integrated fashion with local police forces across Canada;
- 2) To lead Canada's work to develop a national database of child pornography images, in coordination with and linking to the G8 database project;
- 3) To develop and implement enhanced investigational tools, including a child pornography image database; the Child Exploitation Tracking System (CETS), designed to give investigators access to a secure method of communication for users to share information and intelligence; and a Records Management System, which includes a tracking and tasking system.

#### Provide for Public Education and Reporting

This objective is based on the recognition that information available on the Internet is growing exponentially every year. Canadians are taking advantage of this resource; studies show that we are among the most connected citizens in the world and our

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<sup>80</sup> Public Safety Canada. (modified 2007, September). Online Child Exploitation. From: <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/le/occe-en.asp>.

young are early adopters of this new technology. Research suggests this “always on” generation faces new challenges.

This objective provided funding for the Federal government to work with Child Find Manitoba for the expansion and continued operation of cybertip.ca as the national public reporting center. Cybertip.ca provides the public with an anonymous reporting mechanism and triages reports, thus reducing the number of complaints received by law enforcement.

Cybertip.ca’s mandate is to protect children from online sexual exploitation by receiving and analyzing tips from the public about potentially illegal material and activities regarding the online sexual exploitation of children, and referring leads to the appropriate law enforcement agency. In addition, Cybertip.ca provides the public with information and other resources, as well as support and referral services to help individuals and families stay safe while on the Internet. Initially piloted in September 2002 it has since been permanently funded to be Canada’s national hotline. Although the majority of Cybertip.ca’s reports are made online, the public is also able to contact the tipline by phone or fax.

#### Forging Partnerships with Industry and NGOs

Key to the Government’s approach within this objective is: supporting initiatives that educate and empower users; promoting effective industry self-regulation; and industry-law enforcement cooperation. Integral to its efforts are: dialogue and consultations with the public and private sectors; international collaboration with other governments; and research and analysis to better understand the scope of the issues and the range of available solutions.

Through this objective, funding was provided to Industry Canada’s SchoolNet program, re-launched as CyberWise.ca ([www.cyberWise.ca](http://www.cyberWise.ca)), allowing it to search for, reference, and identify gaps in existing educational materials, produce and translate

learning material; seek partners, and enhance the web site.<sup>81</sup> Cyberwise.ca is a comprehensive website that provides useful information for parents, teachers and young Canadians as well as key partnerships with Industry, non-governmental organizations and other organizations.

Another avenue of specific cooperation has been between Cybertip.ca and the R.C.M.P.'s National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC). The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC), is another integral part of Canada's National Police Services, was created to help protect children from online sexual exploitation.<sup>82</sup> One of the objectives of the NCECC is to strengthen international partnerships and the expedient sharing of information between Canadian law enforcement agencies and those in other countries. The NCECC is a one-stop access for international partners to liaise or provide time sensitive intelligence or information pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.

The NCECC is also part of the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) established in December 2003 and comprised of law enforcement agencies from across three continents including the Europe, North America and Australasia. The VGT promotes unified efforts among global law enforcement agencies in relation to prevention and awareness on the Internet. An official VGT web site was launched in 2005. ([www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com](http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com)). A core goal is to work with Internet Service Providers to identify solutions to some of the more offensive information on the Internet.

A recent development is Safe Canada, (produced by Public Safety Canada) a site that provides safety and security information and services in Canada and includes information on bullying and online safety. It is a Government online initiative which is part of the [canada.gc.ca](http://canada.gc.ca) website.

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81 See for example Government of Canada: SchoolNet. (2005). Do They Look Both Ways Before Crossing the Information Highway? From: [http://www.cyberaverti.ca/epic/site/cybkybe.nsf/vwapj/brochure\\_en.PDF/\\$FILE/brochure\\_en.PDF](http://www.cyberaverti.ca/epic/site/cybkybe.nsf/vwapj/brochure_en.PDF/$FILE/brochure_en.PDF).

82 National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre. (n.d.). From: [http://ncecc.ca/index\\_e.htm](http://ncecc.ca/index_e.htm).

Another collaborative effort, formed in June 2004, is the Canadian Coalition Against Internet Child Exploitation (CCAICE) is an unofficial, voluntary, multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary group that seeks to protect children from sexual exploitation on the Internet through collaboration. This committee is comprised of industry, government and NGO representatives. Members include: Cybertip.ca, SOLOS, the R.C.M.P., The National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre, Department of Justice, Industry Canada, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, Canadian Association of Internet Providers (CAIP), Canadian Cable Telecommunications Association (CCTA), Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC), AOL Canada, Bell Canada, Cogeco Cable, Microsoft Canada, Rogers, Shaw, TELUS, and Yahoo!Canada.

1. To establish a comprehensive and common understanding of all key issues;
2. To identify key areas of focus for the working group;
3. To establish working sub-groups and map out specific work plans.

### Awareness and Education Programs

In addition, community-based organizations have begun to emerge as important partners in this field. While numerous resources in Canada and abroad are included in Appendix 3, two of immediate relevance include KINSA and SOLOS.

The Ontario-based Kids' Internet Safety Alliance (KINSA) was incorporated in 2005 as an aggressive and proactive response to the negative aspects of the Internet that harm young people. Utilizing expertise in law enforcement, prosecution, business and technology, KINSA works with government, industry and other partners to promote advocacy efforts as well as our training, research, and awareness initiatives.

The Safe OnLine Outreach Society (SOLOS) was established in 2002 as an education-based community organization located in British Columbia. Through

research, training materials and the delivery of presentations and workshops to youth, schools, parents, community groups and criminal justice practitioners, SOLOS raises awareness about the Internet, its uses and dangers. It also trains youth, professionals and parents on how to recognize and respond to online sexual exploitation and assist children and youth affected by this issue.

## **Provincial Strategies To Combat Online Sexual Exploitation**

On a provincial level, various police units are dedicated specifically to combating child pornography and exploitation. These include the Ontario Provincial Police's Project P, Manitoba's Identifying Child Exploitation (ICE) team, a recently established unit in Quebec, and an ICE team of British Columbia. In addition other units have been created but are in various stages of implementation such as those in Winnipeg, Brandon and in the Atlantic Region.

This section will focus on the provincial strategies developed in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. At the outset, it is readily apparent that many strategies dealing with sexual exploitation of children are not mindful of the impact the online setting has on the population of at-risk children; strategies were often created before the Internet had reached the levels of ubiquity we see today, and therefore focus attention more toward exploitation on the street-level. Additionally most of the strategies dominated by law enforcement concerns and responses. While all have various strengths and weaknesses, they are the most highly developed and detailed within Canada.

### **Ontario**

In January 2003, the Province of Ontario created the National Steering Committee on Internet-Based Child Sexual Exploitation, which includes the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police, and federal Government officials. This committee provides strategic direction and leadership to law enforcement across Canada, particularly in the development of investigative standards and information and intelligence sharing.

One of the Committee's first recommendations was that a central, coordinated unit be created to advance law enforcement strategies and provide for enhanced law

enforcement capacity to deal with these types of crimes. In addition to the committee, a provincial team of municipal, regional and OPP police officers, Crown attorneys and victim service providers worked to develop a comprehensive, five-part, multi-million dollar strategy to combat Internet child pornography and luring.<sup>83</sup> The five million dollar strategy includes aspects of enforcement, education and reporting, after care, and training and resources.<sup>84</sup>

Education and reporting measures include the introduction of CYBERCOPS software for Grade 7 and Grade 8 students in Ontario schools, which helps cyber-proof children against cyber-stalking, Internet luring, ID theft and cyber-bullying.

### Manitoba

The province of Manitoba has benefited from close cooperation and funding from the Federal government through the Cybertip.ca program operated by Child Find Manitoba. Federal support was provided to Child Find Manitoba to launch and maintain cybertip.ca as a provincial pilot. Cybertip.ca accepts reports from the public concerning suspicious content and activities on the Internet. After an initial assessment, these reports are forwarded as required to the appropriate police services. Cybertip.ca also provides educational information and referral services to the public. Cybertip.ca's records and statistics inform the policy process by providing insight on the scope and extent of the problem, and will contribute to the mid- and full-term evaluations of Canada's National Strategy to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet.

The Province of Manitoba has developed the "Strategy Responding to Children and Youth at Risk of, or Survivors of Sexual Exploitation". The strategy was launched in December 2002 and focuses on prevention and education by increasing the general

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83 For more see Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. (2004, October 13). Press Release: Strategy to Tackle Online Child Pornography and Internet Luring. From: <http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/news/2004/20041013-Internet-nr.asp>.

84 For details see Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. (2005, August 3). Provincial Strategy Launched to Fight Internet Crimes Against Kids. From: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/August2006/03/c3400.html>.

awareness about the issue and providing preventive programming for at-risk youth.<sup>85</sup> The strategy relies upon the development and extension of after-care programs that are developmentally and culturally appropriate and based on research suggesting at-risk or sexually exploited children respond most favorably to non-judgmental, child-centered, creative programming which is responsive to individual needs.

An implementation committee led by Manitoba Family Services and Housing has been established. Government department partners taking the lead on specific initiatives of the strategy include: Justice; Family Services and Housing; Health; Healthy Living; Education, Citizenship and Youth; Manitoba Labour and Immigration/Women's Directorate; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; and Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Partner non-profit agencies involved are: New Directions' TERF Program; Child Find Manitoba; RESOLVE; the University of Manitoba; and Ma Mawi Wí Chi Itata. The Province of Manitoba has pursued a "neighborhood approach" to this issue and provides information for communities can work together on this issue.<sup>86</sup>

In general, the Manitoba Strategy was developed to complement existing work underway by community groups who are active in this area, and to fill in the gaps in service and research on child sexual exploitation that were identified by community agencies.

Community-based programs and government-led initiatives, created by, or complementing the Manitoba Strategy can be categorized as Institutional/Administrative, Education/Outreach, After Care and Transition, and Training and Resources.

Institutional and Administrative: Manitoba Justice has a prosecutions policy confirming that children involved in prostitution are victims of a particularly serious form of sexual exploitation and are in need of assistance. The policy directs

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85 For more see Manitoba Family Services and Housing. (n.d.). Manitoba Strategy Responding to Children and Youth, at Risk of, or Survivors of Sexual Exploitation. From: [http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/strategy\\_on\\_sexual\\_exploitation.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/strategy_on_sexual_exploitation.html)

86 For more on the neighborhood approach see Government of Manitoba. (2006, March). Neighbourhood Solutions: Working Together to Address Sexual Exploitation on Our Streets. From: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/safe/neighbourhoodsolutions.pdf>.

prosecutors to divert sexually exploited children from the formal court processes to supportive programs that will help them deal with the circumstances that make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The policy also denies offenders access to alternative measures, such as John School, and directs prosecutors to oppose bail and to seek a sentence of incarceration for most offenders.

Administratively a provincial coordinator was hired in 2003 to manage the implementation of the Manitoba Strategy that relies on partnership building and coordination with existing community services. Through a multi-jurisdictional implementation team, led by Family Services and Housing, the Manitoba Strategy is being implemented province wide.<sup>87</sup>

Education and outreach initiatives include the expansion of the Outreach Project which aims to reduce the number of runaway youth by supporting two additional outreach positions; The Student Buddy Support Project developed by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and Manitoba Education (to address the needs of Aboriginal youth coming from the North to live in Winnipeg), and Transition, Education and Resources for Females (TERF) – which offers transition assistance for female and trans-gendered youth and adults who are sexually exploited. In addition, child sexual exploitation awareness resources have been developed for province-wide distribution including an informational CD. Two community groups have developed new school learning resources: Child Find Manitoba (personal safety strategies) and TERF (culturally based prevention strategies).

Aftercare and transition programming for victims of sexual exploitation include funding for a six-bed, safe transition home in Winnipeg for female and trans-gendered youth who are victims of past or potential sexual exploitation. It also includes specialized treatment services for young women who have been sexually exploited.

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<sup>87</sup> For more on current initiatives see: Manitoba Family Services and Housing. (n.d). Manitoba Strategy Responding to Children and Youth, at Risk of, or Survivors of Sexual Exploitation: Current Initiatives. From: [http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/strategy\\_on\\_sexual\\_exploitation\\_initiatives.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/strategy_on_sexual_exploitation_initiatives.html).

Training and resources programming in Manitoba include multi-sector frontline worker training for those caring for children and youth who have been sexually exploited. In addition, a Manitoba Strategy Research and Evaluation Sub-committee, led by the Women's Directorate and RESOLVE - University of Manitoba, has been established. This committee will help develop and implement an evaluation plan for the strategy and its components, as well as identify the research needs of the strategy.

## Alberta

The Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Child and Youth Sexual Exploitation was prepared in January 2004.

This document identifies key factors that make children vulnerable to sexual exploitation and attempts to make the case for integrating the prevention of child and youth sexual exploitation strategies under one broad cross ministry initiative. The document is introduced with the following statement: "There are many factors that make children vulnerable to sexual exploitation including domestic violence, history of abuse, poverty, leaving school early, addictions and fetal alcohol syndrome disorder"<sup>88</sup>

The Alberta strategy focuses on 4 components: Education/Awareness, Prevention, Enforcement, and Research and Training.

The education and awareness component focuses on providing awareness about the problem, how to solve it and how important it is to involve everyone in eliminating the sexual exploitation of children and youth. One goal is the development of "clear, consistent messages" to effectively communicate the issue under the umbrella of the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative. This will be achieved through a common strategy, including consistent messages delivered via tip sheets, television advertising campaigns, Internet service providers and portable display boards (in partnership with the telecommunications industry). In addition the strategy would include the development of a speaker's bureau.

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88 Ibid.

The prevention and protection component is based on the coordination of police, government, the telecommunications industry and the public. This component is focused on preventing the number of children and youth are at risk of being sexually exploited through child pornography, Internet luring and child sexual assault from increasing as well as providing care for those that *do* become victims. Specific measures include promoting Cybertip.ca as a place to report inappropriate content and expanding services for those abused as a result of Internet luring. This component includes services under the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Initiative (PCHIP). Associated resources include a “Prostitution Awareness Manual” for various stakeholders to help children end their involvement by recommending them to Protective Safe Houses.

The Alberta enforcement focus is on; integrating policing services that investigate child and youth sexual exploitation, combating jurisdictional boundaries and acknowledging that offenders are extremely sophisticated in their use of technology. While this focus acknowledges that new technology have increased the online victimization of children and youth, it remains focused on enforcement efforts with respect to street prostitution, pedophiles and the cross border transport of sexually exploited children and youth.

Research and training efforts in Alberta focus on remaining current on developments in other jurisdictions and provide training to professionals working with children and youth such as social workers, health care professionals, child care workers. Information provided assists workers in identifying the signs of exploitation and taking the necessary actions to appropriately intervene. The Province has also updated its’ “Responding to Child Abuse Handbook”. Specific strategies include; participation in federal, provincial and territorial working groups to develop a national approach to the prevention of sexual exploitation of children and youth; coordinating with the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research to advance research on child and youth sexual exploitation, evaluate the impacts of emergent technological developments, existing strategies and training and to determine their effectiveness in combating child and youth sexual exploitation.

In addition to this strategy, the Province of Alberta has supported web resources such as “getwebwise” a resource for parents and “weron2u” a resource for teens that includes public service announcements.<sup>89</sup>

### **Canadian Best Practices**

In recent years, legislative developments have provided clear criminal sanctions for sexual exploitation and included online elements in their definitions. Through greater coordination regional, provincial and national enforcement efforts have been supported in Canada. Yet, there has been a strong recognition that waiting until exploitation has occurred to respond is, at most, a second best strategy. Some recent policy developments by the federal, and various provincial governments, recognize the need for outreach and aftercare services for youth, resources, professional training and education for youth-serving professional, and the need for current research to create relevant resources for all groups affected.

### **Enforcement and Service Coordination**

Some Provincial and National efforts to create new mechanisms for enforcement and service-provider cooperation have been evident. Alberta’s Policy specifies the need to coordinate police, government, the telecommunications industry and the public. In Ontario’s coordination efforts, victim services are the only non-law enforcement group mentioned. In Manitoba, the new strategy complements existing work underway by including community groups who are active in this area, and by attempting to fill the gaps in services and relevant research that are identified by the agencies involved.

Some provincial strategies include establishing an integrated child and youth sexual exploitation unit, standardizing reporting mechanisms and using the Amber Alert program. While enforcement and service coordination is imperative, as the Manitoba government strategy suggests, provincial efforts ought to complement existing initiatives, provide funding for programs to deliver direct services to those affected and

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89 See: Government of Alberta. (2005). Get Webwise Website. From: <http://www.getwebwise.ca> and Government of Alberta. (n.d.). Weron2u Website. From: <http://www.weron2u.ca/> a resource for teens that includes public service announcements.

support the creation of centralized coordinated committees to cooperate with other provincial and national initiatives.

### Education and Outreach

Alberta's education and awareness focuses on a clear and consistent message is a good one. One improvement on the Alberta message, which shows children and youth identifying online predators and defiantly resisting their advances, could be to provide more nuanced messages. The Alberta message assumes that youth will be able to recognize a predator and that online exploitation will happen when an adult is involved. Alberta's distribution of key messages through various venues, including handouts, tips sheets, television-advertising campaigns, public advertising boards and through ISP's is comprehensive however.

Manitoba's education and outreach initiatives include the expansion of existing projects that address the needs of high-risk youth and target those most in need of protection. Their child sexual exploitation awareness and new school resources also represent some best practices.

The Ontario Education component is also worth mentioning as a best practice. The introduction of CYBERCOPS software for Grade 7 and Grade 8 students in Ontario schools represents an effort to provide education to youth before they encounter difficulties online.

### Resources and Training

In Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario this component refers to the need to remain current on developments in other jurisdictions and provide training to professionals working with children and youth. While variance between provinces exists, all identify frontline workers, social workers, health care professionals, childcare workers, as well the police, crown prosecutors and judiciary as targets for education and professional training.

Another issue relevant to all aspects of training, services, and programs is the need for relevant and reliable research on this phenomenon, including quantitative and qualitative studies in partnership with youth and youth-serving organizations. While noted by Sinclair (2005) and identified in Alberta and Ontario, only Manitoba provides a specific research program model. By partnering with the University of Manitoba, their research and evaluation plan represents a key element in creating an effective provincial strategy.

### Institutional and Operational Concerns

Another issue area of significance includes institutional structure and operational implementation. This refers to the means and mechanisms of the development and implementation of any Provincial strategy. There are a few points to be made:


All provinces considered have consulted widely in the development of their strategies. This has meant working with social services agencies to develop a strategy that is inclusive and comprehensive. Manitoba has gone the further step and ensured that its strategy builds on the expertise and complements rather than usurps the work of existing programs and services.

All provinces have recognized the need to coordinate information, training, service delivery and resources. While sometimes this coordination is limited to law enforcement, the best of the provincial strategies create coordination councils including human service professional to assist in the early phases of strategic implementation.

While Manitoba and to a lesser extent Alberta provide comprehensively developed strategies, only Ontario has put dollar amounts into the various components of its strategy. Providing costing and a budget to a strategy is the best way to ensure that the implementation of the strategy is sustainable, provides security to partner agencies providing the services and signifies the political will to achieve the identified objectives.

Key to the successful implementation of a provincial strategy is administrative coordination. Manitoba developed a multi-jurisdictional implementation team and the

hired of a provincial coordinator to manage the partnership-building and required cooperation with community services around the issue of child and youth sexual exploitation province wide.



## **Appendix 2: Excerpts from *Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007)***

[\(http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal\\_affairs/legal\\_co-operation/Fight\\_against\\_sexual\\_exploitation\\_of\\_children/\)](http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_co-operation/Fight_against_sexual_exploitation_of_children/)

Excerpts including Chapters II, III, IV and V

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 12 July 2007 at the 1002nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

### **Preamble**

The member states of the Council of Europe and the other signatories hereto;

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members;

Considering that every child has the right to such measures of protection as are required by his or her status as a minor, on the part of his or her family, society and the state;

Observing that the sexual exploitation of children, in particular child pornography and prostitution, and all forms of sexual abuse of children, including acts which are committed abroad, are destructive to children's health and psycho-social development;

Observing that the sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children have grown to worrying proportions at both national and international level, in particular as regards the increased use by both children and perpetrators of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and that preventing and combating such sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children require international co-operation;

Considering that the well-being and best interests of children are fundamental values shared by all member states and must be promoted without any discrimination;

Recalling the Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Governments of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), calling for the elaboration of measures to stop sexual exploitation of children;

Recalling in particular Committee of Ministers' Recommendation No. R (91) 11 concerning sexual exploitation, pornography and prostitution of, and trafficking in, children and young adults, Recommendation [Rec\(2001\)16](#) on the protection of children against sexual exploitation, and the Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185), especially Article 9 thereof, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ETS No. 197);

Bearing in mind the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950, ETS No. 5), the revised European Social Charter (1996, ETS No. 163), and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (1996, ETS No. 160);

Also bearing in mind the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 34 thereof, the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, as well as the International Labour Organisation Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour;

Bearing in mind the Council of the European Union Framework Decision on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (2004/68/JHA), the Council of the European Union Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings (2001/220/JHA), and the Council of the European Union Framework Decision on combating trafficking in human beings (2002/629/JHA);

Taking due account of other relevant international instruments and programmes in this field, in particular the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action, adopted at the 1st World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (27-31 August 1996), the Yokohama Global Commitment adopted at the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (17-20 December 2001), the Budapest Commitment and Plan of Action, adopted at the preparatory Conference for the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (20-21 November 2001), the United Nations General Assembly Resolution S-27/2 "A world fit for children" and the three-year programme "Building a Europe for and with children", adopted following the Third Summit and launched by the Monaco Conference (4-5 April 2006);

Determined to contribute effectively to the common goal of protecting children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, whoever the perpetrator may be, and of providing assistance to victims;

Taking into account the need to prepare a comprehensive international instrument focusing on the preventive, protective and criminal law aspects of the fight against all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and setting up a specific monitoring mechanism,

Have agreed as follows:

## **Chapter II – Preventive measures**

### **Article 4 – Principles**

Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and to protect children.

## **Article 5 – Recruitment, training and awareness rising of persons working in contact with children**

1. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage awareness of the protection and rights of children among persons who have regular contacts with children in the education, health, social protection, judicial and law-enforcement sectors and in areas relating to sport, culture and leisure activities.
2. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the persons referred to in paragraph 1 have an adequate knowledge of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, of the means to identify them and of the possibility mentioned in Article 12, paragraph 1.
3. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures, in conformity with its internal law, to ensure that the conditions to accede those professions whose exercise implies regular contacts with children ensure that the candidates to these professions have not been convicted of acts of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of children.

## **Article 6 – Education for children**

Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that children, during primary and secondary education, receive information on the risks of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as well as on the means to protect themselves, adapted to their evolving capacity. This information, provided in collaboration with parents, where appropriate, shall be given within a more general context of information on sexuality and shall pay special attention to situations of risk, especially those involving the use of new information and communication technologies.

## **Article 7 – Preventive intervention programmes or measures**

Each Party shall ensure that persons who fear that they might commit any of the offences established in accordance with this Convention may have access, where appropriate, to effective intervention programmes or measures designed to evaluate and prevent the risk of offences being committed.

## **Article 8 – Measures for the general public**

1. Each Party shall promote or conduct awareness raising campaigns addressed to the general public providing information on the phenomenon of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and on the preventive measures which can be taken.
2. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to prevent or prohibit the dissemination of materials advertising the offences established in accordance with this Convention.

## **Article 9 – Participation of children, the private sector, the media and civil society**

1. Each Party shall encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and the implementation of state policies, programmes or others initiatives concerning the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.
2. Each Party shall encourage the private sector, in particular the information and communication technology sector, the tourism and travel industry and the banking and finance sectors, as well as civil society, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies to prevent sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and to implement internal norms through self-regulation or co-regulation.
3. Each Party shall encourage the media to provide appropriate information concerning all aspects of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, with due respect for the independence of the media and freedom of the press.
4. Each Party shall encourage the financing, including, where appropriate, by the creation of funds, of the projects and programmes carried out by civil society aiming at preventing and protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

## **Chapter III – Specialized authorities and co-coordinating bodies**

### **Article 10 – National measures of co-ordination and collaboration**

1. Each Party shall take the necessary measures to ensure the co-ordination on a national or local level between the different agencies in charge of the protection from, the prevention of and the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, notably the education sector, the health sector, the social services and the law-enforcement and judicial authorities.
2. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or designate:
  - a.* independent competent national or local institutions for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, ensuring that they are provided with specific resources and responsibilities;
  - b.* mechanisms for data collection or focal points, at the national or local levels and in collaboration with civil society, for the purpose of observing and evaluating the phenomenon of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children, with due respect for the requirements of personal data protection.
3. Each Party shall encourage co-operation between the competent state authorities, civil society and the private sector, in order to better prevent and combat sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.

## **Chapter IV – Protective measures and assistance to victims**

### **Article 11 – Principles**

1. Each Party shall establish effective social programmes and set up multidisciplinary structures to provide the necessary support for victims, their close relatives and for any person who is responsible for their care.
2. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that when the age of the victim is uncertain and there are reasons to believe that the victim is a child, the protection and assistance measures provided for children shall be accorded to him or her pending verification of his or her age.

### **Article 12 – Reporting suspicion of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse**

1. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the confidentiality rules imposed by internal law on certain professionals called upon to work in contact with children do not constitute an obstacle to the possibility, for those professionals, of their reporting to the services responsible for child protection any situation where they have reasonable grounds for believing that a child is the victim of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.
2. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage any person who knows about or suspects, in good faith, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse of children to report these facts to the competent services.

### **Article 13 – Helplines**

Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage and support the setting up of information services, such as telephone or Internet helplines, to provide advice to callers, even confidentially or with due regard for their anonymity.

### **Article 14 – Assistance to victims**

1. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to assist victims, in the short and long term, in their physical and psycho-social recovery. Measures taken pursuant to this paragraph shall take due account of the child's views, needs and concerns.
2. Each Party shall take measures, under the conditions provided for by its internal law, to co-operate with non-governmental organisations, other relevant organisations or other elements of civil society engaged in assistance to victims.
3. When the parents or persons who have care of the child are involved in his or her sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, the intervention procedures taken in application of Article 11, paragraph 1, shall include:

- the possibility of removing the alleged perpetrator;
  - the possibility of removing the victim from his or her family environment. The conditions and duration of such removal shall be determined in accordance with the best interests of the child.
4. Each Party shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the persons who are close to the victim may benefit, where appropriate, from therapeutic assistance, notably emergency psychological care.

## **Chapter V – Intervention programmes or measures**

### **Article 15 – General principles**

1. Each Party shall ensure or promote, in accordance with its internal law, effective intervention programmes or measures for the persons referred to in Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, with a view to preventing and minimising the risks of repeated offences of a sexual nature against children. Such programmes or measures shall be accessible at any time during the proceedings, inside and outside prison, according to the conditions laid down in internal law.
2. Each Party shall ensure or promote, in accordance with its internal law, the development of partnerships or other forms of co-operation between the competent authorities, in particular health-care services and the social services, and the judicial authorities and other bodies responsible for the follow-up of the persons referred to in Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2.
3. Each Party shall provide, in accordance with its internal law, for an assessment of the dangerousness and possible risks of repetition of the offences established in accordance with this Convention, by the persons referred to in Article 16, paragraphs 1 and 2, with the aim of identifying appropriate programmes or measures.
4. Each Party shall, in accordance with its internal law, provide for assessing the effectiveness of the programmes and measures implemented.

### **Article 16 – Recipients of intervention programmes and measures**

1. Each Party shall ensure, in accordance with its internal law, that persons subject to criminal proceedings for any of the offences established in accordance with this Convention may have access to the programmes or measures mentioned in Article 15, paragraph 1, under conditions which are neither detrimental nor contrary to the rights of the defence and to the requirements of a fair and impartial trial, and particularly with due respect for the rules governing the principle of the presumption of innocence.
2. Each Party shall ensure, in accordance with its internal law, that persons convicted of any of the offences established in accordance with this Convention may have access to the programmes or measures mentioned in Article 15, paragraph 1.

3. Each Party shall ensure, in accordance with its internal law, that intervention programmes or measures are developed or adapted to meet the developmental needs of children who sexually offend, including those who are below the age of criminal responsibility, with the aim of addressing their sexual behavioural problems.

#### **Article 17 – Information and consent**

1. Each Party shall ensure, in accordance with its internal law, that the persons referred to in Article 16 to whom intervention programmes or measures have been proposed are fully informed of the reasons for the proposal and consent to the programme or measure with full knowledge of the facts.

2. Each Party shall ensure, in accordance with its internal law, that persons to whom intervention programmes or measures have been proposed may refuse them and, in the case of convicted persons, that they are made aware of the possible consequences a refusal might have.

## Appendix 3: References

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