

Combating Internet Crimes Against Children:

Recommendations of the Online Child Exploitation and Victimization Focus Group



A Report to the President and the Vice President of the Agency for the Prevention of
Kidnapping and a Five Year Plan of
Priority Actions for
The Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program

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*Recommendations of the
Online Child Exploitation and Victimization Focus Group*

— Findings and Conclusions Documented by SEARCH —

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Contents

Introduction	7
Section I: Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program Background	8
Section II: Focus Group Meeting and Planning Process	13
Section III: Eight Priority Areas: Goals and Priority Actions	15
Priority Area #1: Capacity Building	18
Priority Area #2: Public Education, Prevention, and Victims Issues	20
Priority Area #3: Legislation	22
Priority Area #4: Prosecutor Guidelines	23
Priority Area #5: Data Capture and Reporting Guidelines	24
Priority Area #6: Child Victim Identification	25
Priority Area #7: Interagency and International Protocols and Standards	26
Priority Area #8: Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Grant Compliance	27
Conclusion	28
<u>APPENDIXES</u>	
A: Online Child Exploitation and Victimization Focus Group Participants	29
B: About the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics	30
<u>TABLES</u>	
1: Three Tiers of ICAC Task Force Grant Awards to Agencies	9
2: Priority Areas and Recommended Actions for the ICAC Task Force Program	16-17

Introduction

More than 28.5 million American children currently use the Internet, and as many as 77 million children under age 18 are expected to be online worldwide by 2005.¹ Sex offenders are also increasing their use of Internet technology — and taking advantage of the anonymity of cyberspace — to manipulate and exploit children. According to a recent study by the University of New Hampshire, of those children between the ages of 10 and 17 who use the Internet, one in five were the targets of online sexual solicitations in the last year. One in 33 was asked to meet someone; was telephoned; or was sent mail, money, or gifts.

Crimes involving the computer-facilitated sexual exploitation of children — including online solicitations, chat room stalking, and child pornography — present complex technical and investigative challenges for justice officials. For example, evidence collection techniques,

interviewing practices, and undercover operations must be carefully adapted to meet special technical and legal demands. Because few of these investigations begin and end in the same jurisdiction, establishing partnerships and ensuring close coordination among federal, state, local, and even international agencies is absolutely crucial to successfully investigate, prosecute, and prevent Internet crimes against children. Each jurisdiction has different resource challenges, including staffing, budget, and technology, as well as differing statutes and enforcement authority policies that determine how cases can be handled. The very nature of Internet crimes against children, therefore, *requires* collaborative partnerships on the part of the multiple justice agencies involved in combating them.

Faced with these myriad challenges, law enforcement officers and prosecutors must be prepared to skillfully battle sex offenders who have increased their use of the latest technology to victimize “an endless pool of targets.”

In response to this burgeoning area of crimes against children and to ensure the development of the necessary multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional partnerships, the Office of Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice, implemented the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program in 1998. Under the ICAC Task Force Program, states and local law enforcement agencies receive grants to help them implement regional task forces to address and combat Internet crimes against children. (The Program is described in greater detail in Section I.)

As part of its ongoing efforts to seek input and guidance in the ICAC Task Force Program area, OJJDP recently organized an Online Child Exploitation and Victimization Focus Group, which convened in Washington, D.C. on November 13-14, 2000. The Focus Group was comprised of members of various ICAC Task Force units nationwide, and other experts from information systems technology, law enforcement, prosecution, and advocacy disciplines with experience in efforts to investigate, prosecute, and prevent online crimes against children.²

¹ Statistics are from Grunwald Associates, Burlingame, CA, a research and consulting firm that has produced statistically sound surveys of children and family use of technology. Previous surveys include “The American Learning Household Survey,” produced in 1995 with FIND/SVP, and the “1997 Children on the Internet survey,” also produced with FIND/SVP. Both surveys are frequently cited in the Internet industry.

² A list of Focus Group participants and support staff is included as Appendix A.

The Focus Group convened to address the issue of the online exploitation and victimization of children by specifying areas of need, identifying promising responses, and providing OJJDP with recommended actions to help guide its strategic and comprehensive program development in this area, and to maximize program impact. The Focus Group effort initially focused on initiatives that could be undertaken within the next five years under the ICAC Task Force Program. However, it is recognized that given the volatile nature of events in this area, it may be necessary to revisit the ICAC Task Force Program development issue on an ongoing basis.

Overseeing the Focus Group's deliberations was Mr. Michael Medaris, Senior Program Manager, ICAC Task Force Program, OJJDP. SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, was asked by OJJDP to facilitate this planning session. SEARCH, under a cooperative agreement with OJJDP, provides training and technical assistance to ICAC Task Force agencies as well as to other jurisdictions responding to ICAC offenses. Mr. Fred Cotton, SEARCH Training Services Director, led the facilitation team at the Focus Group meeting.³

³ A description of OJJDP and SEARCH is included as Appendix B.

Section I: Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program Background

This document is a formal report of the Focus Group's deliberations and recommendations to OJJDP. It includes a background overview of the ICAC Task Force Program in Section I; a description of the Focus Group's meeting and planning process in Section II; and a description of the eight major priority goal areas containing recommended actions for ICAC Task Force Program development in Section III.

In 1998, the Congress directed OJJDP to create "State and local law enforcement cyber units to investigate child sexual exploitation." Congress continued the ICAC Task Force Program through the *Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1999*, Public Law 105-277, and *Fiscal Year 2000 Consolidated Appropriations Act*, Public Law 106-113. Congress has appropriated additional funds in H.R. 5548 for continuation of the ICAC Task Force Program in fiscal year 2001.⁴

⁴ The official title of H.R. 5548 is, *Making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes*. Source: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d106:H.R.5548>:

Due to the complex technical and investigative challenges presented by Internet crimes against children, the ICAC Task Force Program encourages communities to develop regional, multi-jurisdictional, and multi-agency responses to Internet crimes. Grant funds are used to ensure that investigators receive specialized training in Internet crimes, and are equipped with the most up-to-date computer technology. The task forces developed as part of the ICAC Task Force Program are also designed to provide prevention, education, forensic, and investigative assistance to parents, educators, law enforcement officials, and other professionals who work on child victimization issues.

At the end of fiscal year 2000, 30 task forces comprised of more than 125 law enforcement agencies participated in the ICAC Task Force Program (Table 1).⁵ An ICAC Task Force Board, which includes representatives from each of the 30 Task Force units, reviews undercover operation proposals, formulates policy recommendations for the national program, and coordinates the efforts of the 30

⁵ Source: OJJDP, November 21, 2000.

**Table 1:
Three Tiers of ICAC Task Force Grant Awards to Agencies**

**First Tier
(Awarded November 1998)**

1. **Bedford County, Virginia, Sheriff's Department**
2. **Broward County, Florida, Sheriff's Department**
3. **Colorado Springs, Colorado, Police Department**
4. **Dallas, Texas, Police Department**
5. **Illinois State Police**
6. **New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services**
7. **Northern New England Task Force**
(Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Police Department; Maine Computer Crimes Task Force; Chittendon, Vermont, Unit for Special Investigations)
8. **Sacramento County, California, Sheriff's Office**
9. **South Carolina Office of the Attorney General**
10. **Wisconsin Department of Justice**

**Second Tier*
(Awarded December 1999)**

11. **Delaware County, Pennsylvania, District Attorney**
12. **Michigan State Police**
13. **Seattle, Washington, Police Department**
14. **Utah Office of the Attorney General**
15. **Nebraska State Patrol**
16. **Connecticut State Police**
17. **Massachusetts Department of Public Safety**
18. **Las Vegas, Nevada, Metropolitan Police Department**
19. **Maryland State Police**
20. **Knoxville, Tennessee, Police Department**

* Under a cooperative agreement with OJJDP, SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, provides training, technical assistance, and staffing resources to Task Forces and the Task Force Board in the second tier of awards.

**Third Tier
(Awarded May 2000)**

21. **Alabama Department of Public Safety**
22. **Cuyahoga County, Ohio, District Attorney**
23. **Hawaii Office of the Attorney General**
24. **North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation**
25. **Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation**
26. **Phoenix, Arizona, Police Department**
27. **St. Paul, Minnesota, Police Department**
28. **San Diego, California, Police Department**
29. **Sedgwick County, Kansas, Sheriff's Office**
30. **Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation**

regional Task Force units. OJJDP collaborated with Task Force and federal agencies to create a common set of rules to enable interagency case referrals. These standards are designed to foster information-sharing, coordinate investigations, avoid duplication or disruption of ongoing investigations, ensure the probative quality of undercover operations, and facilitate interagency case referrals via the standardization of investigative practices.⁶ The type of national collaboration, coordination, and partnership evident in this standards-setting effort is the cornerstone to the success of the ICAC Task Force Program.

A number of federal agencies — while not separately funded grantees — are also involved in the ICAC Task Force Program through membership on various Task Force units, and through participation on the ICAC Task Force Board. These partners include: Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys; Federal Bureau of Investigation; National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; U.S. Customs Service; U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section; and U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

⁶ Source: OJJDP.

Program Success

The ICAC Task Force effort continues to meet with success. According to OJJDP, within the past two years, agencies involved in the ICAC Task Force effort have accomplished the following:

- Developed a national capability to deal with multi-jurisdictional challenges and issues
- Arrested more than 420 offenders
- Identified targets for further investigation through concerted, ongoing efforts
- Seized and examined over 825 computers
- Provided training to more than 10,000 law enforcement officers and prosecutors
- Reached thousands of children, teenagers, parents, and educators with prevention education material about safe Internet practices
- Developed a common set of rules and guidelines to facilitate interagency referrals

Other Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program Initiatives

In a presentation to the Focus Group, Senior Program Manager Michael Medaris, who oversees the ICAC Task Force Program for OJJDP, presented the following baseline overview

of ongoing initiatives being undertaken in the Program.

Investigative Satellite Initiative (ISI) — This initiative is designed to create investigative capacity in smaller law enforcement agencies nationwide. Limited to \$45,000 over a two-year project and budget period, ISI grants provide agencies an opportunity to acquire specialized training and equipment to investigate ICAC offenses, and to participate in the ICAC Task Force Program.

Protecting Children Online Training Program — Using OJJDP funds, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) offers three training courses to investigators, managers, and prosecutors. The 4½-day Protecting Children Online (PCO) course offers information about investigative strategies, forensic techniques, interview and interrogation practices, and other topics relevant to front-line investigative personnel. The 2½-day PCO unit commander course covers broader legal and managerial issues for managers developing ICAC response policies and procedures for their agencies. The 4½-day PCO prosecutor course offers an overview of the technical and legal issues for state and local attorneys prosecuting ICAC cases.⁷

⁷ The National Center's Website is <http://www.missingkids.com>.

CyberTipline — NCMEC also administers the CyberTipline and collects information from young people, parents, and citizens pertaining to suspicious online activity that threatens to sexually exploit children. The CyberTipline has been in operation for two years, and has resulted in 30,000 reports and multiple arrests.⁸

ICAC Task Force Training and Technical Assistance Program — Under a cooperative agreement with OJJDP, SEARCH provides training and technical assistance to ICAC Task Force agencies as well as to other jurisdictions responding to ICAC offenses. Using existing resources where practical, or its mobile computer laboratory, SEARCH offers a 4½-day hands-on investigative course designed to complement the PCO course. In 2001, a major focus of this program will be to build forensic capacity among agencies participating in the ICAC Task Force Program. The first effort will involve “triage” procedures, cloning techniques, and locally accepted rules of evidence to train investigators in digital media analysis techniques to pinpoint evidence for recovery by certified forensic

examiners. The second effort will focus on certifying additional examiners for positioning throughout the country. This course, which features classroom lectures and laboratory work, will require students to construct a functioning computer forensics workstation and conduct actual forensic examinations under the supervision of certified technicians from ICAC Task Forces. Upon course completion, students return to their agencies with a new forensics workstation and the ability to conduct examinations.⁹

National ICAC Task Force Training Conference — Advances in technology occur seemingly overnight and while law enforcement officers struggle to stay current, sex offenders eagerly use these technological advances to victimize children and to evade prosecution. Beginning in 2000, OJJDP began sponsoring an invitation-only, annual training conference for ICAC Task Force and ISI jurisdictions and federal agencies working on child pornography and cyber enticement cases. The annual conference is designed to demonstrate the relevance of

recent advances in technology to criminal enterprise, as well as investigative efforts, and to enhance the networking that is critical to successfully making interagency case referrals. The three-day annual conferences will offer plenary sessions and multi-track breakouts (investigative, managerial, and prosecutorial). The first such conference was held December 5-7, 2000, in Sacramento, California, and was organized by SEARCH. Conference topics included:

- Predator characteristics
- Mood of the courts toward online law enforcement investigative activities
- Media relations
- Interrogating suspects
- Virtual child pornography
- Civil liberties issues of policing the Internet
- International perspectives of cyberspace policing
- Prevention education
- Technology issues facing investigators
- Forensic capacity
- Investigative methodology and techniques countermeasures

⁸ The CyberTipline number is 1-800-843-5678, and its Website is <http://www.missingkids.com/cybertip/>.

⁹ The ICAC Task Force Training and Technical Assistance Website is <http://www.search.org/training/icac.asp>.

Current Program Obstacles

According to the Focus Group, “Although the ICAC Task Force Programs have been successful, a number of obstacles must be overcome in order to move forward.” For example, approximately 95 percent of cases involve more than one jurisdiction. An agency can target a suspect, make a case, and forward the investigative package to another jurisdiction, but if the other agency is not as technically advanced, the case can stall.

In small group breakout sessions, the Focus Group members discussed such problems as inadequate personnel to handle online exploitation cases due to extremely high demand, and the inadequate number of training facilities. Without trained personnel, seized computers can pile up in police storage. Current forensic capacity is out-matched by caseload. Up to a two-year backlog of cases can await trained personnel to handle them.

Section II: Focus Group Meeting and Planning Process

The Online Child Exploitation and Victimization Focus Group held a 1½-day meeting in Washington, D.C., on November 13-14, 2000. The Focus Group — comprised of ICAC Task Force members representing local, state, and federal justice agencies, as well as children’s advocacy, justice technology, and training organizations — is a cadre of experts in the area of preventing, investigating, and prosecuting online crimes against children. The meeting was led by the OJJDP’s Senior Program Manager overseeing the ICAC Task Force Program and was moderated by staff from SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, which provides training for ICAC Task Force units.

This section describes the planning process the Focus Group undertook to develop its recommendations to OJJDP on the future direction of the ICAC Task Force Program. The three-step process, as outlined below, resulted in a set of goals and recommended “Priority Actions” presented in eight broad “Priority Areas.” The final Priority Areas are discussed in more detail in Section III.

After introductory remarks and a “baseline” discussion of

OJJDP’s efforts in the ICAC Task Force Program to date, the meeting process was organized according to the following three steps:

Step 1: Identifying Goals to Address Current Problems and Issues

Focus Group members divided into three “breakout groups” to discuss and identify current problems and issues they face in their respective fields, and to generate goals for OJJDP to undertake in the ICAC Task Force Program in the next five years to address those needs. The purpose was to solicit a broad range of ideas for programs that address the specific, current problems and issues in the field.

The Focus Group reconvened as a plenary, and each breakout group presented its ideas in turn. These were organized into a master list of nearly two dozen goals. Because many of the goals were similar, the group began developing major “categories” into which similar goals could fit.

Step 2: Categorizing and Prioritizing Goals

Focus Group members once again met in the three breakout groups in order to rank each activity/goal in priority order, with “1” as the top priority.

During this discussion, some goals were eliminated, some combined into other goals, and yet others refined.

The Focus Group then reconvened as a plenary, during which each breakout group shared how it ranked the goals in order of desired priority. After much discussion, the Focus Group reached a consensus on eight broad “Priority Areas” into which the recommended goals fit. Priority Area #1, for example, encompasses a variety of capacity-building goals, and is the Focus Group’s top recommended set of priorities for OJJDP to undertake in the ICAC Task Force Program.

Step 3: Identifying and Ranking Priority Actions

On Day 2, the Focus Group again divided into three breakout groups to discuss the “building block” actions that must take place in each Priority Area in order for OJJDP to be able to address or meet the goals within that area.

The Focus Group then reconvened, and each breakout group provided its list of recommended Priority Actions for each area. Finally, the Focus Group as a whole reached consensus regarding the actions needed in each Priority Area, and ranked each action in priority order, with “1” as the most important action to take.



Section III: Eight Priority Areas: Goals and Priority Actions

The Focus Group identified eight broad areas of needs involved in combating online child exploitation and victimization. Each area was placed in priority order to indicate to OJJDP the relative importance of each area. As such, Priority Area #1, Capacity Building, is considered the highest priority area for OJJDP to address with the ICAC Task Force Program. The eight priority areas cover the following:

1. Capacity Building
2. Public Education, Prevention, and Victims Issues
3. Legislation
4. Prosecutor Guidelines

5. Data Capture and Reporting Guidelines
6. Child Victim Identification
7. Interagency and International Protocols and Standards
8. ICAC Task Force Grant Compliance

This section documents each Priority Area, both in a matrix (Table 2) and in a detailed look at each Priority Area that includes a description of recommended goals pertinent to that area, along with supporting commentary; and a list of recommended actions ranked in priority order. The Priority Actions constitute the Focus

Group's consensus on specific actions *within each Priority Area* it recommends OJJDP to take in the ICAC Task Force Program in the coming five years. The ranking of these recommended Priority Actions is intended to communicate to OJJDP which actions are considered more critical or of more immediate concern. For example, the first Recommended Priority Action listed in Priority Area #1 should be considered the Focus Group's top recommendation for action.¹⁰

¹⁰ Some of the recommendations presented in this report are fairly brief with limited background context provided. This is because much of the discussion of context involved in some of the recommendations occurred in breakout groups and was not available during the plenary sessions, when the group as a whole reached consensus on these recommendations.

Priority Areas	General Goals
#1 Capacity Building	Developing an infrastructure upon which the ICAC
#2 Public Education, Prevention, and Victims Issues	Educating the public about online child crimes, pre issues
#3 Legislation	Providing model legislation that addresses online c
#4 Prosecutor Guidelines	Establishing recommended uniform guidelines for mended guidelines relating to sex offender reportin
#5 Data Capture and Reporting Guidelines	Standardizing the method of capture and reporting children
#6 Child Victim Identification	Developing the capacity to identify child victims us
#7 Interagency and International Protocols and Standards	Establishing interagency case referral standards a exploitation investigations
#8 ICAC Task Force Grant Compliance	Ensuring ICAC grantee compliance with ICAC goals

Tasks for the ICAC Task Force Program

	Recommended Priority Actions
Force Program can build and grow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to promulgate the ICAC Task Force guidelines 2. Conduct forensic capability survey 3. Train the trainers 4. Develop national ICAC Task Force listserv 5. Expand training opportunities for investigators 6. Fund existing ICAC Task Forces 7. Fund new ICAC Task Forces 8. Establish joint federal/state/local/tribal training partnerships 9. Identify certification programs
Crimes, and addressing victims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase child/parental awareness of Internet safety and education 2. Increase awareness in the educational community of Internet safety and information 3. Seek presidential proclamation for an "Internet Safety Week" 4. Increase general public awareness of Internet safety and education 5. Work with Office for Victims of Children to identify "best practices" or "promising approaches" to provide victims services and parent/teacher education programs 6. Mandate states to place sex offender registration/community notification data online, and increase legislative awareness of this information
Legislation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a catalog of model legislation
Prosecutors at all levels, including recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote communication between task forces and prosecutor agencies/organizations to establish recommended uniform prosecutor guidelines 2. Collaborate with prosecutor advocacy organizations to suggest that recommended prosecutor and reporting guidelines be implemented
Reporting procedures relating to online crimes against children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standardize data collection of online crimes against children 2. Promote standardized data, and modify Uniform Crime Reports procedures to specifically include online crimes against children data
Technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a database of child pornography images for analysis 2. Create an analytical capacity to analyze images
Protocols for international online child exploitation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish interagency and international protocols and standards to address online child exploitation issues
	None required

PRIORITY AREA #1

Capacity Building

...it does not make sense to call for more training for investigators if the capability to provide that training (such as adequate numbers of knowledgeable trainers, the existence of training standards, etc.) does not exist.

Commentary

The goals in the Capacity Building Priority Area deal broadly with such issues as forensic capability and capacity, training and technical assistance capability, media analysis capability, and maintaining expertise in the state-of-the-art in technology. “Capacity Building” refers to creating the critical infrastructure components upon which the ICAC Task Force Program can build and grow. As the Focus Group members agreed, it does not make sense to call for more training for investigators if the *capability* to provide that training (such as adequate numbers of knowledgeable trainers, the existence of training standards, etc.) does not exist. These goals, as stated by the Focus Group, and listed in no particular order, are:

- Address forensic capability by identifying all existing capability, investigating ways to expand capacity, and establishing guidelines for uniform handling of evidence.
- Develop guidelines for media analysis training, and establish media analysis training programs for investigators.
- Provide training and technical capability to make initial image copies of media for the investigator.
- Establish broad training guidelines and standards for child exploitation law enforcement and prosecution efforts.
- Involve other disciplines and the national organizations that represent them in Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program standards and training.
- Establish a mechanism to stay current with technological changes.
- Establish joint training initiatives among federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement.
- Provide training courses in all phases of a child exploitation investigation, particularly sexual assault and child abuse offenses.

- Increase capability to provide technical assistance to investigative agencies (points of contact, etc.).
- Address issue of increasing training capability for online child exploitation.

Recommended Priority Actions

The following recommended Priority Actions for Capacity Building are listed in order of importance, according to the consensus of the Focus Group.

- 1. Investigative guidelines** — Continue to promulgate investigative guidelines (modify investigative guidelines as necessary and continue to disseminate to agencies outside the ICAC Task Force Program).
- 2. Survey** — Conduct a survey of law enforcement agencies in the field to determine present forensic capability.
- 3. Train the trainers** —The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, SEARCH, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Fox Valley Technical College, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and other related organizations should partner in an effort to “train the trainers” to increase the training personnel pool.
- 4. National listserv** — Develop a national “listserv” to provide current technical and legal update material, and expand other mechanisms to improve currency.
- 5. Training opportunities** — As per training and technical capability and media analysis guidelines: Develop expanded training for investigators and leverage existing training programs.
- 6. ICAC funding for existing task forces** — Continue funding existing ICAC Task Force units at a consistent level.
- 7. ICAC funding for new state task forces** — Provide a major ICAC Task Force grant to every state.
- 8. Federal/State/Local/Tribal training** — Bring federal, state, local, and tribal agencies together for joint training to overcome mutual problems.
- 9. Certification programs** — Identify available certification programs.

...evidence collection techniques, interviewing practices, and undercover operations must be carefully adapted to meet special technical and legal demands. Because few of these investigations begin and end in the same jurisdiction, establishing partnerships and ensuring close coordination among federal, state, local, and even international agencies is absolutely crucial to successfully investigate, prosecute, and prevent Internet crimes against children.

PRIORITY AREA #2

Public Education, Prevention, and Victims Issues

...the public at large still does not understand fully the prevalence of online child victimization and exploitation, and also does not fully understand how to protect children from these crimes.

Commentary

The goals in the Public Education, Prevention, and Victims Issues Priority Area focus on approaches to quickly “getting the word out” to children, parents, and the general public in order to increase the awareness of Internet crimes against children, the potential for victimization, Internet safety techniques, and the existence of sex offender registration/community notification databases. The other component of this Priority Area is to focus on supporting child victims of online crimes. The public education, awareness, and prevention area was seen as a critical priority because the Focus Group felt the public at large still does not understand fully the prevalence of online child victimization and exploitation, and also does not fully understand how to protect children from these crimes. Also, the Focus Group felt that public and parental awareness efforts could be quickly undertaken with immediate results. In addition, the Focus Group felt that more support for victims of online child crimes was needed, given the explosive growth in these types of crimes. The goals within Priority Area #2, as stated by the Focus Group, and listed in no particular order, are:

- Provide online access to sex offender registration and community notification data in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories, and increase public awareness of these sex offender databases.
- Improve education/awareness/messaging to parents regarding the potential for online victimization and where to report these crimes.
- Work with the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice, to establish “best practices” for victim support.
- Take a mass media approach: Establish a nationally recognized “Internet Awareness” day focusing on child protection on the Internet.

Recommended Priority Actions

The following recommended Priority Actions for Public Education, Prevention, and Victims Issues are listed in order of importance, according to the consensus of the Focus Group.

- 1. Child/parental awareness** — Establish school outreach efforts to promote child and parental awareness and education of online safety.
- 2. Department of Education efforts** — Work with the U.S. Department of Education to provide computer safety training material and information to educators nationwide.
- 3. Presidential action** — Seek a presidential proclamation action for an “Internet Safety and Awareness Week.”
- 4. Mass media** — Seek public service announcements via the mass media for Internet safety awareness and educational purposes.
- 5. Work with OVC** — Work with the Office for Victims of Crime to ensure available victims services and parent/teacher education programs.
- 6. Federal mandates/legislative awareness** — Seek federal mandates to states to put sex offender registration and community notification data online and tie it to federal funding, and promote legislative awareness of online sex offender registration.

...According to a recent study by the University of New Hampshire, of those children between the ages of 10 and 17 who use the Internet, one in five were the targets of online sexual solicitations in the last year. One in 33 was asked to meet someone; was telephoned; or was sent mail, money, or gifts.



PRIORITY AREA #3

Legislation

...model legislation in this area could assist with cross-jurisdictional investigations, as well as prosecution issues such as extradition and determining misdemeanor/felony status.

...members stressed the importance of ensuring that the model legislation specifically addresses online exploitation/victimization of children, not just crimes against children in general.

Commentary

The goal developed by the Focus Group for this Priority Area, “Provide model legislation to the states that addresses online child crimes,” is considered to be a high-priority issue for OJJDP to address. The Focus Group discussed how model legislation in this area could assist with cross-jurisdictional investigations, as well as prosecution issues such as extradition and determining misdemeanor/felony status. Focus Group members stressed the importance of ensuring that the model legislation specifically addresses *online* exploitation/victimization of children, not just crimes against children in general. It was the Focus Group’s hope that the model legislation could provide jurisdictions with verbiage they could use if they were considering this type of legislation.

Recommended Priority Action

The Focus Group offered one recommended Priority Action related to the Legislation Priority Area:

- 1. Model legislation** — Partner with legal sections of advocacy organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to create a catalog of model legislation concerning online child exploitation and safety.

PRIORITY AREA #4

Prosecutor Guidelines

Commentary

The goals within Priority Area #4, and listed here in no particular order, are:

- Establish recidivists guidelines as per the *Pam Lychner Act*.
- Establish recommendations for uniform guidelines for adherence by local, state, and federal prosecutors.

The establishment of uniform prosecutor guidelines was seen as a mid-level priority for OJJDP to undertake in the ICAC Task Force Program, and one that, while important, could take time to implement. One goal specifically addresses the need to establish guidelines that deal with the sex offender registration and community notification mandates of federal law. The other goal deals generally with making recommendations on uniform guidelines in the online child crime area to which local, state, or federal prosecutors could adhere.

Recommended Priority Actions

The following recommended Priority Actions for Prosecutor Guidelines are listed in order of importance, according to the consensus of the Focus Group.

1. **Communication** — Promote open communication between the local task forces and federal, state, and local prosecutorial agencies and organizations to establish recommended uniform guidelines for prosecutors at all levels.
2. **Collaboration** — Work with prosecutor advocacy organizations to suggest that recommended prosecutor and reporting guidelines be implemented.

The *Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996* (42 U.S.C. § 14072), enacted in October 1996, sets out new responsibilities for federal, state, and local governments to enhance public safety. The *Lychner Act* has three principal requirements: 1) it obligates the U.S. Department of Justice to establish a national database at the FBI to track the whereabouts and movements of convicted sex offenders (including child molesters and other sexually violent offenders); 2) it requires the FBI to handle sex offender registration in states lacking a minimally sufficient sex offender registration program, as defined in the Act; 3) it amends the *Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act* to prescribe more stringent registration requirements, such as requiring certain offenders, including aggravated offenders and recidivists, to register with the state for life. The *Lychner Act* encourages states to communicate with the FBI about sex offenders living in their jurisdictions, and contains other relevant provisions, such as those related to determining what constitutes a sexually violent offender.

PRIORITY AREA #5

Data Capture and Reporting Guidelines

...it is important to ensure that online crimes against children are not overlooked or separated from other crimes in crime reporting statistics programs.

Commentary

The Focus Group agreed that it is important to ensure that online crimes against children are not overlooked or separated from other crimes in crime reporting statistics programs. They also discussed the importance of ensuring that in cases of child exploitation or pornography, there be a standard way to capture data on the numbers of child victims and child molesters involved. The goals in Priority Area #5, as stated by the Focus Group and listed in no particular order, are:

- Provide or reclarify federal guidelines to standardize uniform crime reporting/incident-based crime reporting relevant to online crimes against children.
- Establish standardized guidelines for capturing data on numbers of child victims/child molesters identified through child exploitation/child pornography cases.

Recommended Priority Actions

The following recommended Priority Actions for Data Capture and Reporting Guidelines are listed in order of importance, according to the consensus of the Focus Group.

1. **Standardize capture** — Standardize the method of capturing online crimes against children information nationwide, starting with ICAC Task Forces and satellite programs.
2. **Modify UCR** — To promote standardized data, modify Uniform Crime Reports to include online crimes against children not currently captured due to the way statutes are presently written.

PRIORITY AREA #6

Child Victim Identification

Commentary

The Child Victim Identification goal, as developed by the Focus Group, was to “Establish standards or guidelines to develop the capacity to identify child victims through technology.” This was considered to be a crucial need because numerous child victims are discovered through such means as child pornography, and the Focus Group felt that justice officials need new ways to be able to identify those victims for investigative, prosecutorial, and victim remediation purposes.

Recommended Priority Actions

The following recommended Priority Actions in the Child Victim Identification area are listed in order of importance, according to the consensus of the Focus Group.

1. **Create database** — Fund a federal agency to create a secure, centralized digital database to perform link, cluster, and identification analysis of victim images.
2. **Examination** — Create an examination unit to analyze images.

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victims for investigative,
prosecutorial, and victim
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PRIORITY AREA #7

Interagency and International Protocols and Standards

...standards-setting in this area could solve the problem of one agency performing a lot of legwork on a case, only to see the case languish once it is referred to another agency for further investigation or prosecution.

Commentary

The Focus Group felt better methods were needed to refer child pornography and online victimization cases between agencies. This is often a necessary task, given the multi-jurisdictional characteristic of many online crimes against children. The Focus Group wanted to know if standards-setting in this area could solve the problem of one agency performing a lot of legwork on a case, only to see the case languish once it is referred to another agency for further investigation or prosecution. The international nature of many child pornography and victimization cases also presents a unique challenge to the efforts of law enforcement and prosecutors to combat these crimes. The Focus Group felt that developing referral standards and international protocols for these investigations was a necessary step. These goals, stated by the Focus Group, and listed in no particular order, are:

- Establish interagency referral standards, including tracking follow-through of referred cases.
- Establish standards, methodology, or point-of-contact protocol for international child exploitation investigations.

Recommended Priority Action

The Focus Group offers one recommended Priority Action related to the Interagency and International Standards and Protocols Priority Area:

- 1. Interagency/international protocols** — Leverage existing efforts to establish interagency and international protocols and standards to address online child exploitation issues.

PRIORITY AREA #8

Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Grant Compliance

Commentary

The goal developed by the Focus Group was “OJJDP should establish grant-monitoring guidelines for task forces/satellite programs to ensure their compliance with ICAC goals and objectives.” The Focus Group’s concern was that as new task forces and satellite programs receive grants from OJJDP, they need to focus their grant-funded efforts on online child crimes, not just child crimes in general. The Focus Group felt that OJJDP could establish grant-monitoring guidelines internally to ensure that all existing and new grantees actually do comply with ICAC goals and objectives.

Recommended Priority Actions

None required.

...as new task forces and satellite programs receive grants from OJJDP, they need to focus their grant-funded efforts on online child crimes, not just child crimes in general.

Conclusion

The November 2000 Focus Group meeting in Washington, D.C. reached consensus on a five-year ICAC Task Force Program plan to offer as guidance to OJJDP to combat online exploitation of children. The Focus Group members determined that capacity building; public education, prevention, and victims issues; legislation; prosecutor guidelines; data capture and reporting guidelines; child victim identification; interagency and international protocols and standards; and ICAC grant compliance were Priority Areas. Within each Priority Area, the Focus Group issued specific Priority Actions for OJJDP to undertake.

OJJDP's current plans call for maintaining the regional task forces and increasing ISI agencies to 120 over the next four years. A strong emphasis will be placed on training and technical assistance, building forensic and investigative capacity, maintaining the national network, developing a virtual private network as necessary, and sponsoring an annual national training conference.¹¹ Those efforts, along with the Focus Group's guidance on Priority Actions, are expected to help carry this program forward for the next five years and mitigate the escalating online exploitation of children.

¹¹ Source: OJJDP.

Appendix A:

Online Child Exploitation and Victimization Focus Group Participants

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Appendix B: About the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Congress created it in 1974 to help communities and states prevent and control delinquency and improve their juvenile justice systems. OJJDP is the primary federal agency responsible for addressing the issues of juvenile crime and delinquency and the problem of missing and exploited children, which Congress added to OJJDP's legislative mandate in 1984. OJJDP sponsors a broad array of research, program, and training initiatives to improve the juvenile justice system as a whole, as well as to benefit individual youth-serving agencies. These initiatives are carried out by seven components within OJJDP, described below.

Research and Program Development Division develops knowledge on national trends in juvenile delinquency; supports a program for data collection and information sharing that incorporates elements of statistical and systems development; identifies how delinquency develops and the best methods for its prevention, intervention,

and treatment; and analyzes practices and trends in the juvenile justice system.

Training and Technical Assistance Division provides juvenile justice training and technical assistance to federal, state, and local governments; law enforcement, judiciary, and corrections personnel; and private agencies, educational institutions, and community organizations.

Special Emphasis Division provides discretionary funds to public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals to replicate tested approaches to delinquency prevention, treatment, and control in such pertinent areas as chronic juvenile offenders, community-based sanctions, and the disproportionate representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

State Relations and Assistance Division supports collaborative efforts by states to carry out the mandates of the JJDP Act by providing formula grant funds to states; furnishing technical assistance to states, local governments, and private agencies; and monitoring state compliance with the JJDP Act.

Information Dissemination Unit produces and distributes information resources on juvenile justice research, training, and programs and coordinates the Office's program planning and competitive award activities. Information that meets the needs of juvenile justice professionals and policymakers is provided through print and online publications, videotapes, CD-ROMs, electronic listservs, and the Office's Web site. As part of the program planning and award process, IDU develops priorities, publishes solicitations and application kits for funding opportunities, and facilitates the peer review process for discretionary funding awards.

Concentration of Federal Efforts Program promotes interagency cooperation and coordination among federal agencies with responsibilities in the area of juvenile justice. The program primarily carries out this responsibility through the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, an independent body within the executive branch that was established by Congress through the JJDP Act.

Child Protection Division

administers programs related to crimes against children and children's exposure to violence. The Division provides leadership and funding to promote effective policies and procedures to address the problems of missing and exploited children, children who have been abused or neglected, and children exposed to domestic or community violence. CPD program activities include conducting research; providing information, training, and technical assistance on programs to prevent and respond to child victims, witnesses, and their families; developing and demonstrating effective child protection initiatives; and supporting the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The mission of OJJDP is to provide national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile offending and child victimization. OJJDP accomplishes its mission by supporting states, local communities, and tribal jurisdictions in their efforts to develop and implement effective, multidisciplinary prevention and intervention programs and improve the capacity of the juvenile justice system to protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and provide treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to the needs of individual juveniles and their families.

SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, is a nonprofit membership organization, created by and for the states, dedicated to improving the criminal justice system through better information management and the effective application of information and identification technology.

SEARCH's primary objective is to identify and help solve the information management problems of state and local justice agencies confronted with the need to automate and integrate their information systems and to exchange information with other local agencies, state agencies, agencies in other states, or with the federal government.

SEARCH is governed by a Membership Group comprised of one gubernatorial appointee from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A staff of professionals works from SEARCH headquarters in Sacramento, California, to provide justice agencies at the local, regional, state, and federal level with diverse products, services, and resources, including:

- No-cost, expert technical assistance for agencies in the process of acquiring, developing, upgrading, or

integrating their computer systems.

- Hands-on training designed to teach criminal justice investigators and support staff how to investigate high-technology theft and computer-related crime.
- National conferences and symposia on a range of justice information management technology and policy issues.
- Information management policy assistance programs to help states expand the utility of their criminal history records.
- Nationally disseminated publications that document legal, policy, and statistical research on a range of relevant issues affecting operational justice agencies, and development of national information models and standards, including security and privacy standards and a model rap sheet format.
- A wide variety of online resources through SEARCH's Web site at www.search.org, including information on justice information systems, related technologies, standards, research, and technology acquisition; profiles of state justice integration and incident-based reporting activity; and access to criminal justice policy research.

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