



“Technology, Our Kids and Human Trafficking”

*“Children do not have the developmental capability to handle what
WILL be thrown at them through the internet.”*

Teresa Davidson, ARNP, MSN, MA

Human Trafficking:

Human Trafficking: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. (22 U.S.C. § 7102(9)).

*If a minor (less than 18 years of age) is involved in a commercial sex exchange, this is considered human trafficking by Federal and Iowa Law (Iowa Code 710A.1) (and a mandatory child abuse report [Iowa Code 232.68]).

Some of the main ways traffickers recruit their victims are: exploiting vulnerabilities, promises of love and relationship, meeting physical and emotional needs, exploiting positions of authority, and promises of cash, luxury items or independence.

Why we are concerned:

With the pandemic accelerating human trafficking to unprecedented levels and our kids on digital devices and online more now than ever before, adults MUST learn about what children are up against and the protections we can offer.

- By 2001 more school aged children and adolescents were using computers and the internet than adults
 - DeBell, M., and Chapman, C. (2003). *Computer and Internet Use by Children and Adolescents in the United States, 2001* (NCES 2004–014). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
- In a study in 2003, 67% of nursery school children used computers and 23% of them accessed the internet, while the rate for kindergartners was 80 and 32%. These startling numbers are even higher today
 - <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005111.pdf> (US Dept of Education)
 - https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cch.pdf
- An estimated 76% of transactions for sex with underage girls start on the internet
 - <https://sharetogethernow.org/trafficking-stats>
- 83% of active sex trafficking cases in 2020 involved online solicitation
 - <https://www.traffickinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2020-Federal-Human-Trafficking-Report-Low-Res.pdf> (2020 Federal Human Trafficking Report)
- The FBI estimates there are over 750,000 predators online at any given moment, and this number just keeps rising
 - <https://www.gosanangelo.com/story/news/2018/02/24/exploited-fbi-says-750-k-child-predators-online-any-given-moment/370293002/>

Social Media and Chatrooms:

When you meet a person face to face, there are certain clues you get that alert you if someone is dangerous that you don't get through meeting online (facial expression, tone of voice, posture, dress, etc.). Traffickers can build a sense of trust with kids online they may not have been able to face to face.

- “Social Media is now the most common way in which traffickers make initial contact with victims.” Cindy Malott, Director of Advocacy Services for Crisis Aid International
- In looking at active sex trafficking cases in 2020, researchers found that 65% of kids were recruited through Facebook, 14% were recruited through Instagram and 8% through Snapchat
 - <https://www.traffickinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2020-Federal-Human-Trafficking-Report-Low-Res.pdf> (2020 Federal Human Trafficking Report)
- In 100% of the cases, teens that are victims of online sexual predators have gone willingly to meet them
 - https://www.puresight.com/case_studies/online-predators-statistics/
- 11% of children surveyed in grades 4-8 reported meeting a stranger in person they only knew from contact online
 - <https://isc2-center.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#G0000000iVSt/a/0f000000fyoc/TYQ9XvDATBA78rR00G.PGJ9fmaLm1vQfAW9HCpy3GWk> (Center for Cyber Safety and Education)
- 89% of all sexual advances toward our children take place in internet chat rooms and Instant messaging
 - <https://www.koaa.com/news/deep-dive/fbi-estimates-500-000-online-predators-are-a-daily-threat-to-kids-going-online>

Slippery Slope Websites:

Pornography: The porn industry only makes money if people watch it and they have been targeting our children for years. Pornography is directly linked to sex trafficking in numerous ways (training, selling, desensitizing, dehumanizing, forcing, etc.) If you view pornography, you cannot tell if the actors are there by consent – force, manipulation or threat. More people than you think have a secret addiction to pornography. This often leads to a sexual encounter with someone without a choice (trafficking victim).

- A simple search of innocent words (eat, sunny, big, the great outdoors, Inspector Gadget, nun, etc.) showed many pornographic results, even with the “Safe Search” on
 - https://www.cracked.com/article_16746_9-innocent-google-searches-that-get-porn-first-page.html
- By age 13, a majority of kids are exposed to porn – many much younger
 - <https://fightthenewdrug.org/average-age-first-exposure-to-porn-summit/>
- 84.4% of boys and 57% of girls aged 14-18 report being exposed to porn
 - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10810730.2021.1887980?journalCode=uhcm20&>
- Every second 28,258 users are watching pornography on the internet
- 25% of all searches and 35% of all downloads are related to pornography
 - <https://www.webroot.com/us/en/resources/tips-articles/internet-pornography-by-the-numbers>
- Pornography is directly linked with Human Trafficking
 - <https://exoduscry.com/blog/shiftingculture/how-pornhub-makes-trafficking-easy/>

Sugar Dating: This type of website is gaining in popularity as it tricks and manipulates naïve young people into thinking they can receive money and lavish gifts for providing simple companionship and nothing more. Many people have reported being sexually assaulted on these dates, and the imbalance in power dynamic can easily lead into a trafficking situation.

Dating Sites: One of the main ways traffickers recruit victims is through a fake romantic relationship. What better place to find victims than sites where over 30 million Americans (in 2019) are *actively searching* for a love connection.

Devices:

Cell Phones:

- In 2019, 42% of kids aged 4-14 spent 30 or more hours per week on their cell phones
- 12% of children first used a cell phone between the ages of 1 and 2
- 65% of kiddos under the age of 13 own their own phone
 - <https://www.sellcell.com/blog/kids-cell-phone-use-survey-2019/>

- Traffickers often ask those they are recruiting to install hidden apps on their phones
 - <https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/investigations/11-lesser-known-apps-that-experts-say-could-expose-your-child-to-sex-trafficking/2382725/>

Gaming Devices:

Another main tool a trafficker uses to recruit victims is by befriending them through something they have in common.

- Recruiting into trafficking through online gaming is a fast-growing trend
 - <https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/young-boy-was-groomed-for-sex-trafficking-via-an-online-video-game/>
- 57% of kids' main use for their cell phone was gaming
 - <https://www.sellcell.com/blog/kids-cell-phone-use-survey-2019/>

Webcams:

- Cybercriminals can gain control of your webcams to spy on you

Video Resources:

- Coby Persins: The Dangers of Social Media (Child Predator Experiment)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jMhMVEjEQg&list=PLeyZ6MEYOERHnF-w5NquOV9jDjczGncYg&index=9&t=1s>
- Netsmartz: Your Photo Fate (Sexting)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUqIGNNdp7E&list=PLeyZ6MEYOERHnF-w5NquOV9jDjczGncYg&index=10&t=8s>
- Tracking Teresa: The ease of finding someone through info online
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toXEdisa6hI&list=PLeyZ6MEYOERHnF-w5NquOV9jDjczGncYg&index=11&t=146s>
- The Science of Porn Addiction
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ya67aLaaCc>

More Resources for Parents:

- <https://protectyoungeyes.com> (Internet Safety help for Parents)
- <https://www.enough.org> (Enough is Enough)
- <https://www.iwf.org.uk> (Internet Watch Foundation)
- <https://fightthenewdrug.org> (Info on Pornography)
- <https://www.thorn.org> (Ashton Kucher's organization)
- <https://parentology.com> (Parenting in the Digital Age)
- <https://endsexualexploitation.org/> (National Center on Sexual Exploitation)
- <https://www.missingkids.org> (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)

What Can Parents Do? (Questions on this section? Contact Tish@ChainsInterrupted.com)

1. Nothing replaces relationship.
 - Keep talking to them...even when you think they're not listening.
 - "More is caught than taught". Overtly model good social media and tech behavior. Make sure they see you making hard choices. Talk about what you've seen on the internet, how it made you feel (literally) and what you did about it.
 - Ask hard questions with love, not condemnation. Listen to learn and empathize.
 - Consistently remind them they are safe in every way with you. You will love them no matter what.
 - Have a safety/get-out plan.
 - Arm yourself with what IS going on, so you can empower them against it.

2. Kid Safe Browsers – many come with ad and popup blockers, in-app purchase restrictors (some examples: Kiddie, Pikluk, Kidoz, KidzSearch)
 - Cons: only works if that browser is used, not hacker/predator proof, parents have to block/approve websites
3. Content/Web Filtering Software: Restricts or controls internet content coming into your home i.e. texts, photos/videos, notes, voice memos, apps, social media platforms and browsing. There is a cost. Some also include geolocation services. Most cover all devices when on or off your network if installed on individual devices (some examples include Bark, Circle, Covenant Eyes, Family Link, Firewalla, Net Nanny). Most are controlled through an app and can be monitored from anywhere.
 - Consider ease-of-use and cost – as you won't use a difficult program.
 - Basic features in: screen time, blocking, filtering, monitor social media, monitor text messages, alerts for potential dangers, and YouTube restrictions.
4. Social Media dangers: there are no “safe” social media apps. At minimum turn off location services. All apps are self-rated with no accountability. There are no age-based industry standards.
5. Parental Controls:
 - Consider monitoring screen time by content (i.e. educational, recreational, research, hobby based, gaming, etc.)
 - Consider blocking chat rooms, group chats that are not face known friends, downloads without approval, all cash/money apps
 - Turn ‘safe search’ is on.
 - Maintain updates to firewalls, operating systems, antivirus and anti-spyware options
 - Turn off metadata on pictures
6. Additional Resources:
 - DefendYoungMinds.com
 - ProtectYoungEyes.com
 - NCMEC NetSmartz
 - TheExodusRoad.com
 - SharedHope.org