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Fighting Internet Child Pornography

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This is a very difficult subject to read about, and although I have devoted my career to child protection, I find it a very hard subject to write about too. The seemingly unending impact on a child as their photos and videos are circulated around the world is devastating. Concerned parents and citizens must play a role in protecting children from these crimes.

Children are harmed by child pornography. These are illegal images of child sexual abuse. One of my past blogs on this subject painted the tragic broad picture of this crime against children. It can be found at this [link](#). All child pornography offenses, including possession, are extremely serious because they result in perpetual harm to the child and validate and normalize the sexual exploitation of children.

The impact on the children who were victimized can be significant and long-lasting. Many children do not tell of being photographed or videotaped due to the embarrassment, guilt and shame that comes with knowing these photos will be viewed by others. [Research](#) has found that these children experience higher levels of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem, when compared to children who were sexually abused and not photographed.

It's a huge undertaking to try to stop the victimization of these children. In 2011, law enforcement authorities in the United States turned over 22 million images and videos to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to try to identify the victims. A momentous task, but law enforcement is making inroads. The Research Center for Crimes against children reported on trends from the Third National Juvenile Online Victimization Study:

- Arrests for technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation crimes increased substantially between 2000 and 2009
- Arrests increased for crimes with identified victims and for downloading child pornography
- Proactive investigations of online child pornography trading generated more arrests in 2009
- Law enforcement are aggressively tackling online child pornography by posing online as traders, tracing suspects who transact business on commercial trading sites and monitor file sharing networks
- Federal charges were filed in more cases
- In federal cases, more offenders received sentences of five years or longer

You can access the full report [here](#).

And companies are joining the effort to thwart those trying to buy or sell child pornography. Last year, Google and Microsoft joined forces to stop online searches for child abuse images. The world's two largest search engine operators, said that as many as 100,000 search terms will now fail to produce results and trigger warnings that child abuse images are illegal. You can read the article [here](#).

There are resources for those who need more information about stopping child pornography. The [National](#) District Attorney's Association to combat child sexual abuse has resources, newsletters and trainings.

The Innocence Justice [Foundation](#), lists actions steps that one can take to stop child pornography.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited [Children](#) offers a wealth of information on child safety and operates the Cyber Tipline for reporting crimes against children.

Child pornography must be stopped. It's a very difficult battle, but as you can see, those investigating and prosecuting offenders are making inroads. If you know of anyone producing, promoting or possessing child pornography, please report them through the Cyber [Tipline](#)

For more information on keeping your child safe visit The New York Society for the [Prevention](#) of Cruelty to Children.