

NSPCC/Wiley Series in Safeguarding Children

Online Risk to Children

Impact, Protection and Prevention

Edited by Jon Brown



NSPCC

WILEY Blackwell

Online Risk to Children

THE NSPCC/WILEY SERIES
in
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The multi-professional approach

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Online Risk to Children

Impact, Protection and Prevention

FIRST EDITION

Edited by

JON BROWN

WILEY Blackwell

NSPCC

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John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is Available

9781118977583 (Hardback)

9781118977576 (Paperback)

9781118977569 (ePDF)

9781118977552 (epub)

Cover image: © Donald Iain Smith / Gettyimages

Cover design by Wiley

Set in 10/12pt Times Ten by SPi Global, Chennai, India

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Lindy, for your love, support, insight, encouragement,
wisdom and honest words

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Foreword

Few of us could have predicted just how much the Internet has become an integral part of our everyday lives. As a force for good, it has changed the way we interact with the world and brings almost endless possibilities for learning and sharing information. For older generations it has been a gradual adjustment, something which has perhaps brought a certain caution along with it. For today's children though, using apps, social media and online tools comes as second nature. They are digital natives who live in a the digital world. Indeed, 12-15 year olds now spend over 20 hours a week online - over half their leisure time.

As with all of us, children's 'digital' time is only likely to increase as the lines between our online and offline lives continue to blur. But it's clear from the evidence of my research, and through listening and talking to young people, that while most children have developed the skills to use modern technology from an early age, many do not possess the necessary skills they need to navigate safely through the digital world. Many are unsure about their online rights and their responsibilities, or the potential pitfalls that sit alongside the huge benefits of the internet and social media.

Our children are entitled to expect us to provide them with the skills they need. Just as it is second nature for us to teach them how to survive in the 'offline' world, we owe it to our children to help them understand and become resilient to the risks of the 'online' world.

None of us really know how our online lives will change and develop in the years to come. But we can be sure that they will be shaped in no small part by the interventions we make today. So making sure the right safeguards are in place is absolutely crucial.

The digital world opens up so many avenues for children to learn, to engage in culture, to meet new people and to live fulfilled lives. But we do need to turn the balance of power in their favour. When it was designed 25 years ago, the Internet was created with adults, not children, in mind. It is a space with limited regulation, controlled by a small number of powerful organisations. We have a duty to make sure children are protected in it by equipping them with the information, the power, and the resilience they need to make the most of the amazing opportunities the online world brings.

Anne Longfield, OBE

About the Contributors

John Carr, OBE, writes and consults about internet safety and security. He is one of the world's leading authorities on children's and young people's use of the Internet and associated new technologies. Based in London he works extensively across the UK and in many parts of the world. More recently he has also been working on issues of digital inclusion, particularly concerning older people's use of technology.

Mr Carr is or has been a Senior Expert Adviser to the United Nations (International Telecommunication Union) and an Expert Adviser to the European Union and the European Network and Information Security Agency.

Dr Catherine Hamilton-Giachritsis is a forensic and clinical psychologist with twenty years' experience in child protection and family violence. She worked as a Psychologist in Birmingham Social Services undertaking family risk assessments and later as the Assistant Director of the Centre for Forensic and Criminological Psychology at the University of Birmingham. Recently, her work has focused on victims of online sexual abuse and offenders who use technology to initiate, maintain or escalate their abuse. She is currently Reader in Clinical Psychology at the University of Bath and co-editor of the Wiley book "What Works in Child Maltreatment: An Evidence Based Approach to Assessment and Intervention in Child Protection" (2017).

Dr Elly Hanson is a clinical psychologist with experience and expertise in working with children and young people who have experienced abuse and trauma online and offline. Dr Hanson has developed interventions for children and young people with harmful sexual behaviour and currently works with the National Crime Agency CEOP Command with a particular focus on victim impact.

Dido Harding, Baroness Harding of Winscombe, joined the management consultancy McKinsey after her graduation. She left McKinsey to become marketing director at Thomas Cook Group, and was later appointed commercial director at Woolworths Group. She then joined Tesco within Sir Terry Leahy's office as international support director, before being appointed commercial director of added-value foods in 2001.

Resigning her position in October 2007, she joined the board of directors at Sainsbury's as convenience director. She was named CEO of TalkTalk in 2010, during the period when the group split its Carphone Warehouse retail operation from the group telecoms operation. She was appointed as a non-executive director on The Court of The Bank of England in July 2014. She has also served on the boards of British Land and Cheltenham Racecourse.

Dr Zoe Hilton is the Head of Safeguarding at the CEOP Command of the NCA and has worked for CEOP since 2009. She manages the specialist child protection teams within the centre and oversees the work on complex child abuse inquiries. She also leads the centre's 'Thinkuknow' Education programme, and a range of other services including the UK Missing Persons Bureau and Missing Children's Teams. Prior to this Dr Hilton worked for the NSPCC and was their lead on policy for child sexual abuse, child trafficking and online safety. She has a PhD in criminology and has published a number of articles about issues facing children and young people and practice responses.

Dr Sandy Jung joined MacEwan University in 2007 and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology. She regularly teaches abnormal psychology, forensic psychology, and senior courses in clinical and forensic psychology topics. She actively provides supervision of honours and advanced research students at MacEwan.

Prior to her current academic position, Dr Jung was a forensic psychologist at Forensic Assessment and Community Services in Edmonton. At MacEwan, she maintains an active research programme and has numerous peer-reviewed publications in the field of forensic psychology. She often co-authors papers with her students and collaborators from forensic mental health, law enforcement and other academic institutions. Her research focusses on the prevention of sexual, intimate partner and general violence.

Claire Lilley is Head of Child Safety Online at the NSPCC, where she is responsible for all policy and the charity's related programme of work in relation to child safety online. This includes issues such as child abuse images, online bullying, children's access to adult content online and sexting. Claire is responsible for working with a range of stakeholders to develop innovative ideas that have the potential to make a difference to increasing child safety online. Before joining the NSPCC Claire worked at the consumer charity Which? and prior to that was a secondary school teacher in east London, teaching English and media literacy.

Sonia Livingstone, OBE, is a Professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics and Political Science and has dedicated much of her

research to children, media and the Internet. She is the author of 18 books and many academic articles and chapters. She has been visiting professor at the universities of Bergen, Copenhagen, Harvard, Illinois, Milan, Paris II and Stockholm and is on the editorial board of several leading journals. She was awarded the title of OBE in 2014 for services to children and child internet safety.

Andy Phippen is Professor of Social Responsibility in IT at the University of Plymouth. He is a Fellow of the British Computer Society and a member of the BCS Accreditation Committee. He is currently researching issues in the use of technology in relationships and ethical and professional practices in the IT sector. Professor Phippen's recent publications include 'Impacting Methodological Innovation in a Local Government Context' and 'Preventative Actions for Enhancing Online Protection and Privacy.'

Stephen Smallbone is a Psychologist and Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Director of Griffith Youth Forensic Service, and an Australian Research Council 'Future' Fellow. His research focusses on understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse online and offline. His publications include the books *Situational Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse* (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006) and *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Evidence, Policy and Practice* (Smallbone, Marshall, & Wortley, 2008). He is Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Sexual Aggression* (since 2014) and a member of the editorial board of *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*.

Martin Waller is a full-time classroom teacher with an interest in creative learning and multiliteracies. He believes in learning through doing and advocates this approach through research and practice. He has shared his approaches and research findings at a range of events and conferences around the world. He has also authored book chapters about the use of social media and digital technologies in the classroom.

Martin is first and foremost a classroom teacher who has worked with classes from the early years to upper primary level. He currently works in a large primary school in the northeast of England and is part of the school's Senior Leadership and Management Team with the specific role as strategic Curriculum Leader for E-Learning and Computing as well as being the Key Stage 2 Phase Leader.

Dr Helen C. Whittle has a PhD in Forensic Psychology from the University of Birmingham. She worked at the Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre (CEOP) from 2006 to 2014. Originally involved in the creation and delivery of Thinkuknow education resources, Helen then worked operationally in the

Behavioural Analysis Unit (BAU), regularly supporting police forces across the UK during child sexual abuse investigations. Helen was also heavily involved in research, conducting debriefs with child sex offenders in prisons and interviewing young people who have been victimised. Currently, Helen is working therapeutically with young people exhibiting sexually harmful behaviour, as well as conducting research into the impact technology has on victims of child sexual abuse. Helen is a guest lecturer at a number of UK universities and the lead author on several peer reviewed articles.

Richard Wortley has a PhD in psychology and worked as a prison psychologist for 10 years before moving to academia. He was Head of the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University (Australia) for nine years and is a past national Chair of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Forensic Psychologists. His research interests centre on environmental criminology and situational crime prevention. In recent years his research has been particularly concerned with the role that immediate environments play in facilitating child sexual abuse. He has been a Chief Investigator on eight national competitive grants in Australia with total finding of around AU\$2 million.

Acknowledgements

Colleagues at the NSPCC have been as ever helpful and supportive in the provision of advice and information. I am also indebted to the contributing authors for their patience and understanding in the lengthy gestation of this project.

Introduction

Jon Brown

The Internet and its rapid development since the 1990s has fundamentally changed the way we communicate and live our lives. Internet-enabled devices are an indispensable part of the daily lives of many children and young people, who tell us that the first thing they interact with in the morning and the last thing they look at before going to sleep is their smartphone. For many adults this is also increasingly the case. The world for most young people and gradually children is no longer a distinction between online and offline.

This edited collection of chapters draws together contributions from a range of leading thinkers, researchers and practitioners in the field of online child abuse, protection and prevention. The book presents the current state of knowledge regarding practice, policy and research in relation to what must be the fastest developing and changing child protection challenge of our time. As John Carr observes in Chapter 1 the pace of change and the development of risks to children online since the mid- to late-1990s has been exponential and something that few predicted.

It is an often-quoted phrase but one that more than bears frequent repetition that the Internet has in many ways been a huge force for good for many many millions of people across the globe, including children and young people, as an educator, enabler and connector. It has fundamentally affected our lives and is doing so increasingly as we move to 10 years of children who have known nothing other than a permanently switched on and connected life, particularly within industrialised and post-industrial societies.

And yet as with every significant technological development or revolution there come risks as well as opportunities, and this is highlighted in many ways with the development of the Internet. As Stephen Fry (2009) has observed, the Internet can be understood as an (ever-expanding) city comprising places of great wonder as well as dark backstreets where danger lurks and the rule of law is weak or non-existent and where the vulnerable can be exploited and abused.

So whilst presenting and indeed delivering on many opportunities for children, the online environment also hosts a range of new risks and potential for harm to children. These include risks from adults, such as the demand for child abuse images and sexual grooming, and it also includes risks from peers, including bullying and peer-to-peer sexual abuse. And the scale of these risks should not be underestimated. The National Crime Agency (2014) estimates that there are 100,000 people (primarily men) in the UK viewing child abuse images; this estimate was made two years ago, and it would be a reasonable assumption that this figure is increasing. Senior police officers are recognising that we cannot arrest our way out of this global child infringement, and there is a growing consensus that to effectively make inroads into dealing with this challenge there needs to be international will and consensus built on three key foundations – deterrence, treatment of victims and offenders – and much more evaluated primary prevention activity as outlined by Stephen Smallbone and Richard Wortley in Chapter 8. All this needs to be driven by a focus on what works and by coordinated action by governments, industry and Non Governmental Organization (NGOs).

We are beginning to witness some of this taking shape, and it is encouraging to see the UK take a lead role in identifying the scale of the challenge and importantly how it can be addressed and prevented. These chapters examine where we are in understanding the scale and nature of the challenge of protecting children online, what we can do to treat its impacts and what we can do to disrupt and prevent it.

Chapter 1 opens with John Carr providing an historic sweep of developments in the field since the 1990s in the UK and internationally.

Drawing on her EU Kids Online work Sonia Livingstone reviews in Chapter 2 recent findings from Europe and offers an evidence-rich insight into children's lives online and the implications of this for their wellbeing and protection. Of particular note is the similarity of children and young people's experiences and concerns across Europe; there are some specific and distinctive national and cultural differences, but the globalised nature of the Internet and its development since the mid-1990s has undoubtedly had some homogenising effects.

In Chapter 3 Andy Phippen examines the risk to children and young people from other children and young people, the phenomenon of peer-to-peer abuse. Phippen makes the point that when we think of risk to and the protection of children we tend to think of the young person as victim and the adult as the perpetrator; in the chapter he challenges us to consider some of the complexities and potential contradictions of the risk that children and young people may or may not pose to each other.

In Chapter 4 Helen C. Whittle and Catherine E. Hamilton-Giachritsis discuss what we know about the source of the challenge, online offender's behaviour, and in Chapter 5 Sandy Jung from Canada then gives an overview of interventions with those who have offended online.

In Chapters 6 and 7 Elly Hanson discusses the impact of online abuse on children and promising treatment approaches for victims and survivors of this form of abuse.

Prevention is of course better than cure, and in Chapter 8 Stephen Smallbone and Richard Wortley offer an analysis of how prevention approaches can be applied to abuse online. In Chapter 9, the book then turns to law enforcement with a contribution from Zoe Hilton from the UK National Crime Agency CEOP Command.

Industry has a key role to play in preventing and responding to the abuse of children online, and in Chapter 10, Dido Harding, CEO of TalkTalk, discusses the responsibilities of industry as innovator and protector.

In Chapter 11, Claire Lilley from the NSPCC discusses UK policy responses and rightly highlights the leading role that the UK has played in responding to this challenge. In Chapter 12, Martin Waller examines how schools can play a creative and critical role in the safety and wellbeing of children online. I end the collection with my epilogues of thoughts about a road map for the future of an online world in which children and young people can thrive in an environment that encourages curiosity and enables enjoyment, learning and promotes a sense of wonder, and where risks and dangers can be understood, monitored and when possible eliminated.

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1 A Brief History of Child Safety Online: Child Abuse Images on the Internet

John Carr

Foreign holidays used to be a rare treat enjoyed by better-off families, but otherwise, until the Internet arrived, the great majority of the world's children and young people spent pretty much their entire day-to-day lives exposed to and governed by the mores, sights, sounds and laws of one country, usually the one where they were born and lived. The opportunities open to children and young people, as well as any threats or dangers they might encounter on their pathway to adulthood, were generally well understood by their parents and their communities, because more or less everyone had lived through similar situations themselves. The Internet¹ changed that. A great many parents and the social institutions charged with safeguarding children were overtaken by events, and it is still by no means clear when or even if a new equilibrium will be established.

UNINTENDED, UNFORESEEN AND UNWANTED CONSEQUENCES

None of the scientists and technologists involved in the early development of the Internet had any idea it would turn out the way it did. Thus in many ways what the world is now having to grapple with in relation to online child abuse images as well as several other areas of crime is an example of the doctrine of unintended, unforeseen and definitely unwanted consequences being played out on an epic scale.

Without computers there could be no Internet. It is therefore tempting to begin a discussion of the history of the Internet by looking first at the history of computing and tracing the journey from there. However, according to the

Online Risk to Children: Impact, Protection and Prevention, First Edition.

Edited by Jon Brown.

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Internet Society² the real Internet story does not begin until the 1960s with the development of packet switching and later the ARPANET.

In February 2013, in a famous TED Talk,³ Internet pioneer Danny Hillis describes the Internet as it was in 1982: ‘... it was a very small community. We didn’t all know each other but we all kinda trusted each other . . .’

For many years, almost by definition, every Internet user was a highly educated adult. There was a great deal of reciprocity involved in running the network – everybody had a more or less equal stake in its continuing success. Users would behave responsibly within a framework of commonly accepted if typically unstated norms.

During his TED Talk Hillis brandishes in his hands a slender volume that contained the names, email addresses and telephone numbers of everyone who had an Internet account in 1982. He suggested that today a similar volume, if it could be constructed at all, would be about 25 miles high.

In short the early developers of the Internet, although they had a good idea about its potential to do good in the world by facilitating rapid communications between researchers and later businesses, they had no idea that what they were building would end up being exploited on a large scale by criminals to make or distribute child abuse images or to engage in any other type of felonious activity. If they had there seems little doubt they would have built in more security protocols to inhibit such antisocial behaviour.

SEXUAL IMAGES OF CHILDREN

Today child abuse images are very heavily identified with the Internet, but nobody would ever seriously argue the Internet is truly a *cause* of children being abused or of images of that abuse being made and distributed. The Internet has certainly opened up pathways that, for practical purposes, never previously existed, but that is a different point albeit one of some importance.

The development of photography and printing techniques in the 19th century first allowed for the larger-scale production and distribution of pornography of every type, including some depicting child sex abuse. However, as far as we can tell, since time immemorial there seems always to have been a small but still numerous minority of people,⁴ mainly but by no means exclusively men, who have had an interest in children as objects of sexual desire or in depictions of children engaged in sexual acts.

In the UK in 1986, before the mass Internet emerged, one of the world’s top paediatric specialists, Professor Oliver Brooke, was sent to prison after admitting dealing in and collecting child pornography. When police searched his office at St George’s Hospital in London, they found more than 300 photographs of children in explicit sexual poses, 22 albums of cuttings from child pornography magazines and a dozen Danish magazines specialising in child pornography. Professor Brooke, who was later barred by the British General

Medical Council from ever practising again as a doctor, was at the time considered to be one of the five top specialists in the world in his field.

Also in 1986 a British local government surveyor, Charles Norris, was sent to prison for sexually abusing young boys and making indecent images of children. Police discovered 5,500 colour slides, 3,500 photographs, 29 photograph albums, 100 videos and 200 books and magazines – mainly featuring young boys – at his home in Kent. Again, Brooke had no connection to the Internet.

Nevertheless, with a limited number of exceptions⁵ in modern times any sort of sexual interest in children and depictions of it have been the subject of severe societal disapproval based on an appreciation of the harm done to children by early sexual encounters with adults or by other forms of premature involvement with sex.

The law has intervened to underpin, reinforce and reflect these societal values. For example in all major jurisdictions around the world the possession, production and distribution of images of children engaged in sexual acts is now a criminal offence⁶ and the age at which it becomes lawful for someone to be depicted in a published sexual image is not necessarily the same as the age of consent to sex.⁷

In 1995, on the eve of the Internet explosion in the UK, the police in Greater Manchester recorded the seizure of only 12 child abuse images in the entire year. In 1995 UK police as a whole were said to have known of the existence of only 7,000 unique child abuse images. INTERPOL then had records of only 4,000 known unique images.

In ‘People Like Us,’ commissioned in 1996 and published in 1997, Sir William Utting described the production and distribution of child abuse images as being a ‘cottage industry.’ That was probably about the last moment a statement like that could have been made.

What Sir William meant was that, traditionally, people who wanted to get hold of child abuse materials had to find or know a person who already had some. Alternatively they would need to take considerable personal risks to locate a stranger who could and would oblige or risk asking someone to send them material through the post. With the Internet, a few mouse clicks could put them in touch with a supplier who could deliver in an instant and on a completely unprecedented scale.

THE WORLD WIDE WEB EXPLOSION

At the end of 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s the Internet was still nothing like it is today. The World Wide Web and the web browsers that would provide easy access to it were just around the corner.

Web browsers did for the Internet what Windows has done for personal computing: made it accessible to the non-technical masses. As with Windows, browsers deployed a ‘graphical user interface,’ using *intuitive* icons. These enabled people who did not have a degree in computer science or perhaps a