

Resolution 5.9.03

Sexual Solicitation of Youth on the Internet

Whereas, the number of cases the FBI opened dealing with online pedophilia (Internet sexual solicitation and posting child porn on the Internet) more than quadrupled from roughly 700 cases in FY 1998 to 2,856 cases in FY 2000.¹

Whereas, 19 percent of youth ages 10 to 17 received at least one sexual solicitation while using the Internet; 18 percent of such solicitations were classified as “aggressive” involving attempted or actual offline contact.¹

Whereas, 25 percent of youth ages 10 to 17 who were solicited reported high levels of distress after the solicitations.¹

Whereas, the Internet has dramatically increased the access of sex offenders to the population they seek.

Whereas, from 1996 to 2001, FBI-investigated cases of child pornography and sexual solicitation in chat rooms precipitously increased from 113 to 1,559 cases.²

Whereas, 75 percent of children are willing to share personal information online about themselves and their families in exchange for goods and foods.³

Whereas, research indicates that 69 percent of parents and 76 percent of youth do not know where or how to report incidents of sexual solicitation on the Internet.¹

Therefore, be it resolved, that PCA America supports:

Educating parents and children about the risks associated with online communication, and teaching parents how to protect their children from the covert techniques used by sexual solicitors on the Internet.

Teaching children to never give out personal information online or meet anyone in person who they have met online.

Educating the public on how and where to report cases of sexual solicitation.

Providing the public with information on the different technologies available for filtering and/or monitoring computers.

Providing mental health services, non-stigmatizing medical attention, and tools to help avoid future victimization to those who have suffered mentally and/or physically from sexual solicitation or abuse.

¹ “The Web’s Dark Secret.” Newsweek, March 19, 2001 issue taken from <http://www.nationalcoalition.org/stat.phtml?ID=53>.

² Mitchell, K., D. Finkelhor, & J. Wolak (2001). “Risk Factors for and Impact of Online Sexual Solicitation of Youth.” Journal of the American Medical Association.

³ Federal Bureau of Investigations. Innocent Images National Initiative. Available online at: <http://www.protectkids.com/dangers/stats.htm>.

⁴ eMarketer Available online at <http://www.protectkids.org/statistics.htm>.

⁵ Pew Study Report in Journal of American Medical Association 2001.