

Research to Practice Summary Chris Newlin

ARTICLE:

Wolak, J., Liberatore, M., & Levine, B. N. (2013). Measuring a year of child pornography trafficking by U.S. computers on a peer-to-peer network. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 38*(2), 347-356.

SUMMARY:

Child pornography trafficking is not a victimless crime:

- Children and adolescents pictured are often victims of exploitation and abuse by the producers
- Victims who realize their images are trafficked online may suffer from knowing their images are being viewed for sexual purposes

The purpose of this study was to measure child pornography trafficking activity by U.S. computers located on one P2P network, Gnutella, and provide perspective about how U.S. activity contributes to CP trafficking worldwide.

Gnutella is just one of many file-sharing programs (e.g. BitTorrent, Ares, etc.) used for many reasons, both legal and illegal.

Subjects/Design:

RoundUp:

- specially developed software tool developed by computer scientists to detect CP in shared folders on Gnutella
- investigations have resulted in over 4,000 arrests for CP possession and distribution
- programmed to recognize the hash values of approximately 384,000 known CP images

Data obtained from all RoundUp observations of known CP files shared on Gnutella P2P from October 2010 to September 2011.

Findings:

1. Observed more than 775,000 computers located in more than 100 countries throughout the world sharing CP files on Gnutella
2. 32% of these computers were in United States (n=244,920)
3. There are almost 85 million U.S. households with computers
4. Including duplicates, on an average day, RoundUp observed 122,687 known CP files shared worldwide on Gnutella P2P network
5. U.S. computers – days sharing known CP files:
 - a. 1 day – 47% (115,397)
 - b. 2-9 days – 41% (101,593)
 - c. 10-99 days – 11% (27,347)

- d. 100+ days - <1% (583)
- 6. U.S. computers – known CP files shared during study year, per computer:
 - a. 1 known CP file – 41% (99,821)
 - b. 2-9 known CP files – 42% (102,295)
 - c. 10-99 known CP files – 16% (39,622)
 - d. 11+ known CP files – 1% (3,182)
- 7. Possible reasons why they found so much low level CP trafficking:
 - a. May be sharing other CP which is not among the 384,000 known files in RoundUp
 - b. May have been scared of detection on only downloaded one or a few files
 - c. May have unintentionally downloaded CP in an effort to download adult pornography

National Children’s Advocacy Center (2014). Measuring a year of child pornography trafficking by U.S. computers on a peer-to-peer network. Research to Practice Summary. Huntsville, AL: Author.

© 2014. National Children’s Advocacy Center.

This publication may be reproduced electronically or mechanically in its entirety and distributed without permission from the copyright holder.

Research to Practice Summaries was supported by Grant No. 2012-CI-FX-K006 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of views or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.