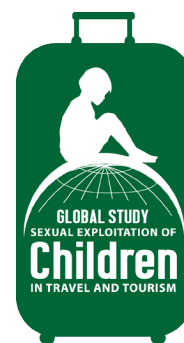


EXPERT PAPER



THE POWER OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN ERADICATING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago, the first World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children awakened the world to the depth and extent of the insidious problem of child sexual exploitation. Since then, progress has been remarkable. Through efforts led by a global network to End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes or ECPAT, more victims are being identified; more offenders are being prosecuted; new laws are being enacted; and public awareness has reached its highest level.

Yet child sexual exploitation is a bigger problem today than it was twenty years ago and it remains underreported and underappreciated. Further, with the advent of the internet, it has exploded to unprecedented levels.

Prior to the internet, people with sexual interest in children felt isolated, aberrant, and alone. Today, they are part of a global community, able to interact online with those with similar interests worldwide. They share images, fantasies, techniques, even real children. And they do it all with virtual anonymity.

In 2013, a man in Sweden was convicted of raping children even though it wasn't in the same country as his victims, when the assault took place. How is that possible? He hired men in the Philippines to obtain children as young as five and assault them while he directed the action and watched via webcam from the comfort of his home. Swedish authorities called it 'virtual trafficking.'



Last year, law enforcement in the United Kingdom arrested 29 people for the use of children in Asia as young as six for live streaming sex abuse. Users of this streaming ring spent more than \$60,000 for this 'service.'

This is the new face of the problem. Child sexual exploitation is morphing and becoming more difficult and insidious. It also illustrates a larger phenomenon. As technology evolves, so does its use for child exploitation.

There are limits to what governments and law enforcement can do alone. But there is no limit to what governments, law enforcement, civil society and committed private sector partners can do together.

Technology is a force for good. Yet, there is a dark side. Technology also facilitates the exploitation of children and creates enforcement gaps. We have to change that. We have to catch up. We have to innovate. Technology is a central part of the challenge, but I believe that within technology resides the solution.

There is power in public-private partnerships:

- Last year the UK brought together 67 engineers from 48 technology companies to develop new technology ideas to address child sexual exploitation online.
- Japan has mobilized mental health professionals to support victims and brought private sector companies together to filter content on mobile devices.
- Korea has provided support for victims and engaged information technology service providers to screen material and keep it from personal computers and mobile devices.
- Norway has initiated a voluntary ISP blocking system, including a 'STOP' page with a police logo. Norway also began a 'Red Button' initiative targeting child sexual exploitation sites.
- Poland has trained police, prosecutors, and judges, and is addressing anonymous internet services.

- The Netherlands has worked with social media including Twitter to remove child exploitation images quickly.

Many other countries are also taking action - but it is not enough. The problem is growing and changing; moving from peer-to-peer networks to mobile devices, from commercial to non-commercial and to the so-called 'Dark Web,' utilizing internet anonymizing tools.

Anonymizing tools were created for a noble purpose, protecting political dissidents and journalists from retaliation by repressive regimes. However, political dissidents and journalists are not the only ones using these tools. Today, there is a secret internet being used by drug dealers, traffickers, assassins, pedophiles, child exploiters and others. This 'Dark Web' poses particular challenges for law enforcement.

We are also in the midst of a global debate over privacy. It is important that the right to privacy is not violated without following appropriate legal process. Nonetheless, there are innovations today that make it virtually impossible for law enforcement to access data, even with probable cause and a warrant.

There is a difference between privacy and anonymity. Total internet anonymity would ensure safe havens for every form of criminality, including child exploitation. It would be a prescription for disaster. What is needed is a way to maximize individual privacy while balancing it against the rights of children to be free from abuse and exploitation.

Despite the progress that has been achieved there is much work to do. More than ever before, private sector leadership is needed.

Over the past thirty years, I have had the unique opportunity to work with many companies which have made a difference in the lives of children. I would like to highlight the following two examples:

Interdicting Online Child Exploitation Images and Identifying Victims

Arrest and prosecution of offenders is always the priority, but it is not enough. Even when an offender is brought to justice, the images of the victim stay online forever. The challenge is to identify and rescue the children, but it is also to locate the images and stop its redistribution.

That effort was failing. As images move across the internet, they change size or go through compression technologies. Each change alters that basic identifier of every digital image, its hash value. In 2009, Microsoft developed PhotoDNA, a highly successful technology for matching images that can be used by companies to remove child pornography from their servers.

Today, the likelihood of false positives using PhotoDNA is one in 10 billion. Microsoft provides PhotoDNA to companies worldwide at no cost and has now made it available on the Cloud to make it easier to access and use.

The first private company to implement PhotoDNA was Facebook, the world's largest photo-sharing site. In its first year of using PhotoDNA, Facebook made 80,000 reports.

The UK's 'Friend MTS', a company dedicated to content development and platform security, is providing video fingerprinting technology to help find and remove video images of child exploitation on the internet. Sweden's NetClean is the key partner in providing PhotoDNA to law enforcement worldwide and is using this and other technologies to stop the spread of child sexual exploitation material. There are many others.

Through the use of these kinds of technology tools, offenders are being apprehended and more importantly, victims are being identified and rescued.

Disrupting the Business Model for Online Child Exploitation

A decade ago child exploitation sites were a multi-billion dollar industry and were accepting credit cards for payment even though it was an illegal use of the payment system. However, financial institutions did not know what the transactions were for and could not address the problem unless the merchant bank and location of the bank account were identified.

In 2006, 34 of the world's leading credit card companies, financial institutions, payment companies and internet companies formed a coalition to address the problem. The companies donated live accounts. Law enforcement used those accounts to make purchases on illegal sites. When the transactions went through, the payment companies were alerted, stopped the payments and shut down the accounts.

After an intensive seven-year effort, commercial child sexual exploitation material had been reduced to 'effectively zero', according to the U.S. Treasury Department. The success was attributed to the collaboration between law enforcement and the private sector which shut down distribution and payment mechanisms.

These are two of many examples that could be cited to demonstrate the power of public-private partnerships.

Despite the extraordinary progress, far more needs to be done. We must be innovative in the search for solutions. We must think globally because this problem is not one that any single country can solve on its own. And we must mobilize private sector leadership and engage in true public-private partnerships. Working together, we can rescue child victims and change the world.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ernie Allen

Ernie Allen is a world leader in the fight against child abduction, sexual exploitation, sexual violence and human trafficking. He is the Co-Founder of the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC), a private, non-profit organisation which is leading the global effort to protect children from sexual exploitation and abduction. He served as President and CEO of ICMEC for the past sixteen years.

Under his leadership, ICMEC has built a global network that includes 23 nations, trained law enforcement in 121 countries and worked with parliaments in 100 countries to enact new laws on child pornography. New centres on missing and exploited children have been created in Belgium, South Africa, Romania, Russia as well as a regional centre in South-eastern Europe. Mr. Allen has developed partnership agreements with Interpol, the Organisation of American States and the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

He created and chairs the Financial Coalition Against Child Pornography, which includes 34 of the world's leading banking and financial institutions working together to eradicate commercial child pornography. Mr. Allen also created the Global Health Coalition, which includes major pharmaceutical companies and health care institutions from around the world who are working to attack sexual abuse, sexual violence and exploitation as a public health crisis.

Previously, Mr. Allen was the Co-Founder and served as the first Chairman of the Board of the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). He became President and CEO in 1989 and served in that position for 23 years until he retired in 2012 to become Founding Chairman.

During his tenure at NCMEC, more than 180,000 missing children were recovered and the organisation's recovery rate increased from 62% in 1990 to 97% in 2012. He created the national 24-hour missing children hotline; brought age progression photos of long-term missing children, facial reconstruction and other forensic services and technology to local law enforcement; provided training for more than 300,000 law enforcement officers; created Team Adam and Project Alert which utilise retired law enforcement with special expertise to help with missing child cases; and created a Cold Case Unit which does not stop looking for a missing child until the case is resolved. He established the CyberTipline which serves as the national 9-1-1 for reporting suspected child sexual exploitation, created the Child Victim Identification Programme that reviewed and analysed tens of millions of child pornography images and videos in an attempt to identify and save child victims, and launched a programme to help the U.S. Marshals track down more than 100,000 fugitive sex offenders among other accomplishments.

Mr. Allen is the author of numerous articles and book chapters and is a frequent keynote speaker at major U.S. and international conferences. He also regularly appears on network and major cable news programmes on the BBC, NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX, HLN, CNN, CNN International, as well as numerous national and international newspapers.

Mr. Allen's work has been recognised by four U.S. Presidents; many individual members of the U.S. Congress; two U.S. Attorneys General; the U.S. Department of Justice; the FBI; the Secret Service; the U.S. Marshals Service; U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement; the Postal Inspection Service and Interpol. He is also the recipient of numerous awards including the Ellis Island Medal of Honor; the Mayo Clinic Amberg-Helmholz Professorship Award; the Henry Clay Distinguished Kentuckian Award and was honoured two times by the University of Louisville as Distinguished Alumnus of the Louis D. Brandeis School of Law and as Outstanding Alumnus of the College of Arts & Sciences. He was also named an I-Force Hero by Sun Microsystems for his pioneering use of the Internet for social good. Furthermore, Mr. Allen was the first recipient of Court TV's Keep America Safe Award and was named Executive of the Year by Non-Profit Times for his work in reuniting 5,192 missing children with their families in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He was named Hero for Youth by Southwest Airlines and National Safe Place, recognised as one of the Most Influential People in Security by Security Magazine and was honoured by the Australian Federal Police for his leadership in the fight against the exploitation of children. He has also been honoured by several leading corporations, non-profit organisations and others.

In 2013, Mr. Allen was the first male in the 18-year history of the Arizona Foundation for Women to receive the prestigious Sandra Day O'Connor Voice for Women Award, and he received Attorney General Eric Holder's Award for Meritorious Public Service, the top public service award granted by the U.S. Department of Justice. In 2014, he received the Award for Excellence in Public/Private Partnership from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of Inspector General