

Determining the Need for Internet Monitoring of Contact Sex Offenders

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Several factors should be considered in deciding how to monitor internet and contact sex offenders.

Krone (2004) has developed a typology describing 9 categories of offenders which differ according to the degree to which they actively seek pornography, obtain the material secretly, groom a child on line for sex, and produce child pornography.

Other factors may also be important. For example, one may wish to consider measures of sexual deviancy such as the presence or absence of deviant sexual interests in children as identified by an objective measure (penile plethysmography or viewing time measures like the Abel Assessment for Sexual Interests). Sexual deviance can also be assessed by examining the offender's history of sexual boundary crossing behaviors – that is, how many different types of paraphilias are exhibited by the offender and how frequently he engages in them.

In addition, factors that predict general antisocial acting out behavior may also be important. These factors include such things as the offender's age and marital status, the severity and nature of his overall criminal offending, whether he possesses antisocial personality traits, whether he is likely to be a substance abuser or emotionally unstable, and whether he has poor social supports. Instruments commonly used to estimate risk among adult sex offenders include such factors and may be useful (although it should be noted that such instruments are validated primarily on contact sex offenders). These instruments include the RRASOR (Hanson, 1997), MnSOST-R (Epperson, Kaul, Huot, Hesselton, Alexander, and Goldman, 1999), and the combination of the STATIC-99 or STATIC-2002 (Hanson and Thornton, 2003; Harris, Phenix, Hanson, and Thornton, 2003) and the STABLE/ACUTE (Hanson and Harris, 2001; Harris and Hanson, 2003).

In an attempt to guide decisions about how to monitor an offender's use of the internet, we devised a two factor risk grid which incorporates both the offender's history of internet behavior and his overall risk for sexual acting out. It is suggested that the factors interact to determine the level internet monitoring a *contact* sex offender might need. (Please note that use of *formal risk assessment guidelines* to estimate overall risk for sexual acting out may be validly employed for *hands-on or contact sex offenders*; no instruments are currently validated for use with internet or child pornography offenders.)

It is reasonable to suggest that offenders identified as Low Need require little internet monitoring, offenders identified as Moderate Need require "passive" monitoring, and offenders identified as High Need require active monitoring. Passive monitoring can be accomplished through random system examinations using tools like Field Search or on-going monitoring with system resident applications like Spector®, E-Blaster®, or CyberSentinel®.

Active monitoring may be achieved with forced gateway applications like CSWeb® or ImpulseControl®.

The level and type of monitoring is perhaps less important than making the decision to monitor. Offenders rated as “Moderate” or higher in the grid should have their computer activity monitored. The particular type of monitoring employed may be driven by risk but also by technical issues, accessibility, and case-specific elements.

**DETERMINING NEED FOR INTERNET MONITORING FOR CONTACT
SEX OFFENDERS:**

INTERNET BEHAVIOR AND RISK FOR CONTACT OFFENSES

Need For Computer Monitoring While Under Supervision

B e h a v i o r	VERY-HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	MOD-HIGH	MOD/HIGH	MOD/HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE	MOD/HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	LOW-MOD	LOW/MOD	LOW/MOD	MODERATE	MOD/HIGH	HIGH
	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW/MOD	MODERATE	MOD/HIGH
	LOW	LOW/MOD	MODERATE	MOD/HIGH	HIGH	

Estimated Risk of Contact Sex Offending

Y-Axis – “Behavior”

Historical Internet Styles Related to Child Pornographic Images

LOW: Reactive type of user: Incidental use, downloads small amounts of pornography when prompted, OR, less than 1 hour per month spent viewing pornography.

LOW-MODERATE: Active user of pornography: Actively seeks images via web pages, OR, more than 1 hour per month but less than 10 hours a month spent viewing pornography.

MODERATE: Collector behavior: Actively seeks pornography through file sharing or catalogues material, OR, more than 10 hours a month but less than 30 hours a month viewing pornography.

MODERATE-HIGH: Engager behavior: Solicits or grooms children on-line.

HIGH: Abuser behavior: Engages in sex with child met on-line, OR, more than 30 hours per month viewing pornography.

VERY HIGH: Promoter of commercial behavior: Produces or distributes child pornography.

X-Axis – “Estimated Risk of Contact Sex Offending”

Risk for Contact Offense Derived from Risk Assessment Instruments
(e.g. RRASOR, MnSOST-R, STATIC/STABLE/ACUTE)

LOW
LOW/MODERATE
MODERATE
MODERATE/HIGH
HIGH

References

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