Pursuing Offenders of Digital Exploitation on the Dark Web

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DIGITAL EXPLOITATION

The use of telecommunications technology to engage with others for nefarious and illicit benefit.

Online Human Trafficking

The exploitation of people through online, internet-based technologies for the purposes of sexual and labor trafficking.

Prevalence of Online Human Trafficking

Number of Child Sexual Abuse Files reviewed by the

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

2004: 450,000   2019: 70 million files

Thorn notes that 63% of encountered

child victims have been advertised online

Locations for Exploitation

Surface or Light Web

Deep Web

Dark Web

Methods for Exploitation

Light Web

Location and Targeting of Victims

Grooming

Advertising

Sharing of Information

Dark Web

Anonymity is Key

Monetary Transactions

Communication on Private Forums

Advertising

Online v. Offline Perpetrators

- Grooming patterns are similar
- Online patterns tend to focus on friendship creation
- Use of social media to target victims

Penn State Dark Web Research Initiative

- Use of Human guided data capture and scraping for collecting suspected trafficking activity
- Connection to Surface Web Investigations
- Guided by Advisory Board of Victim Services Agencies and Criminal Justice Organizations

Resources for Addressing Digital Exploitation

- Thorn: Spotlight, Safer – thorn.org
- Marinus Analytics: Traffic Jam - marinusanalytics.com
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children – missingkids.org
- National Human Trafficking Hotline – humantraffickinghonline.org
- The Polaris Project - polarisproject.org

Interested in Connecting?

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