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Report to LEPSG on the
“Global Symposium for Examining the
Relationship Between Online and Offline Offenses
and Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of
Children”

May 2009

By

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1 The following report provides a synopsis of what transpired at the G8 sponsored “Global
2 Symposium for Examining the Relationship Between Online and Offline Offenses and
3 Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children.” The symposium took place between
4 April 5-7, 2009, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, United States. As
5 described in further detail below, the symposium originated from a project proposal to the
6 Law Enforcement Projects Subgroup from the U.S. delegation, specifically Andrew
7 Oosterbaan, Section Chief of the U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Child
8 Exploitation and Obscenity Section, together with Anitha Ibrahim.

9
10 The specific findings contained within the report reflect the findings of the experts that
11 attended and participated in the symposium. These findings were developed through
12 plenary presentations and subsequent small group discussions on a limited number of
13 pertinent topics, as detailed more fully below. The most critical findings of the
14 symposium were incorporated into a draft Ministerial Declaration at Appendix D.

15
16 The findings contained within the draft Ministerial Declaration were chosen and drafted
17 by a core group of experts from the “Executive Working Group,” (EWG). The EWG
18 essentially served as the planning committee for the symposium and consisted of subject
19 matter experts, including Dr. Ethel Quayle and Dr. Roberta Sinclair, as well as a
20 professor from the University of North Carolina, Dr. Kurt Ribisl. Drs. Quayle, Sinclair
21 and Ribisl gathered together with the author of this report the day after the symposium
22 ended for the purpose of advising the development of the report and the attached
23 Ministerial Declaration. With respect to the Ministerial Declaration, the three EWG
24 experts culled the most critical findings from the points of consensus reached by the
25 entire body of experts at the symposium and refined these points to make them suitable
26 for the Declaration. In selecting and drafting these points, the EWG experts laboriously
27 and carefully ensured that each point properly reflected the discussions, agreements and
28 research underlying the point.

29
30 A draft version of this report as well as the draft Ministerial Declaration were provided to
31 the G8 sponsored experts that participated in the symposium as well as members of
32 LEPSG for review and comment. Any comments submitted were considered by the
33 author of this report, and based on these comments certain changes were made to some of
34 the points in the findings portion of this report. This was done to ensure accuracy and
35 reach agreement between the G8 countries on the points of consensus and specific
36 findings. The specific changes that were made as a result of comments at the G8 level
37 are noted in a separate document entitled “G8 Comments on the Report to LEPSG,”
38 attached at Appendix E. Any significant opinions or comments that were not directly
39 incorporated into the body of the report, as well as an explanation for why the comment
40 was not incorporated into the report, have been noted in the document at Appendix E as
41 well. Any changes that were made to the findings noted in the draft Ministerial
42 Declaration were reviewed and approved by the EWG experts to ensure that the revisions
43 truly reflected the findings of the symposium experts.

44 45 46 **I. Background on the Symposium**

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a. **History**

In November 2007, the U.S. delegation put forth a project proposal to the Law Enforcement Projects Subgroup with the goal of organizing and sponsoring a symposium of experts, from G8 countries and beyond, who have examined child pornography offenses and offenders through psychology, social science and analytical research. The proposal suggested hosting the symposium through a university or similar independent institution to help ensure credibility of the findings.

The purpose of the symposium was to provide an opportunity for these experts to share their individual findings and develop international consensus on the risks to children associated with child pornography and effective approaches to combating child pornography offenses. While there had been much research done in the scientific community, there had been no international forum for these psychologists and/or social scientists to share their findings and reach some consensus on various aspects of child pornography offenses.

The project was formally approved by the Heads of Delegation in February 2008. After two foundational planning meetings held among generalized experts selected by the Roma/Lyon delegations, LEPSG representatives agreed to give ultimate planning authority to the EWG, consisting of Ms. Maggie Brennan, Mr. Drew Oosterbaan, Dr. Ethel Quayle, and Dr. Roberta Sinclair. As planning for the symposium progressed, individuals from the University of North Carolina in the United States, where the symposium was held, became an integral part of the EWG.

b. **Objectives**

The main objectives of this symposium were to:

- Examine the risk factors associated with child pornography offenders,
- Develop findings on the role of the Internet and child pornography in child sexual abuse offenses,
- Develop findings on the broader context in which child pornography offenses occur, and
- Develop areas for further research.

II. Symposium

The symposium was hosted by the University of North Carolina (UNC), Injury Prevention Research Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States, between April 5, 2009 – April 7, 2009.

The symposium consisted of 45 substantive experts from the fields of psychology, social science, and analytical research, with expertise in child pornography crimes, offenders and/or victims. A list of all the participants and their biographies is included herewith at

1 Appendix A. The expert participants sponsored by the G8, Roma/Lyon delegations were
2 as follows:

- 3
- 4 • Canada: Dr. Roberta Sinclair
- 5 • France: Dr. Bernard Cordier and Dr. Roland Countanceau
- 6 • Germany: Dr. Peer Briken
- 7 • Italy: Mr. Sergio Staro
- 8 • Japan: Dr. Juichi Kobayashi and Takayuki Miyadera
- 9 • Russia: Dr. Elena Mizulina (Duma Representative), Marina Mukabenova (Duma
10 Representative), Dr. Eugeny Makushkin, Maria Yanshina, Alexandra Ochirova,
11 Alexander Iogan, Elena Vakhitova, and Olga Levina
- 12 • United Kingdom: Ms. Ruth Allen and Mr. Graham Hill
- 13 • United States: Dr. Sharon Cooper
- 14

15 G8 countries were also represented by experts who were invited by the executive
16 planning committee based on their specific relevant work and expertise. These experts,
17 whose participation was funded by the United States, were as follows:

- 18
- 19 • Canada: Dr. Michael Seto and Dr. Karl Hanson
- 20 • Germany: Dr. Klaus Beier
- 21 • United Kingdom: Dr. Anthony Beech, Alisdair Gillespie, Dr. Ethel Quayle, Dr.
22 Julia Davidson, Dr. David Glasgow, Terry Jones, Dr. David Middleton, Tink
23 Palmer, Dr. Joseph Sullivan, Dr. David Wall, and Dr. Heather Wood
- 24 • United States: Dr. Andres Hernandez, Michelle Collins, Linda Criddle, Dr.
25 Herbert Lin, Dr. Robert Prentky, and Janis Wolak
- 26

27 Countries beyond the G8 were represented as follows:

- 28
- 29 • Australia: Dr. Angela Carr, Dr. Richard Wortley, and Debra Baartz
- 30 • Taiwan: Dr. Bernard Y. Kao
- 31 • Sweden and Baltic States: Dr. Lars Loof
- 32

33 a. **Format**

34

35 The substantive portions of the symposium were divided into three theme sessions,
36 spanned over two days. The three themes were:

- 37
- 38 1) The Broader Context
- 39 2) Conceptualizing Risk
- 40 3) The relationship between online and offline sexual offenses against children.
- 41

42 Within each thematic session, three experts chosen on the basis of their research and
43 analytical work in the thematic area gave plenary presentations on that work. Each
44 symposium participant was provided an abstract of the presentations before the
45 symposium and also received position papers to assist in preparing for the symposium.

1 After the presentations, all symposium participants were divided into small discussion
2 groups, generally consisting of seven participants, one facilitator and one non-expert
3 reporter for note taking purposes. Within these discussion groups, facilitators led
4 participants in a critical examination of the presentations, a synthesis of current
5 knowledge, gaps in knowledge in the subject area, and an analysis of future research
6 needs. In all parts of the discussion, facilitators sought to find points of consensus and
7 divergence. As discussions ensued, the reporters transcribed the topics, themes, and
8 issues discussed in each group. These notes were reviewed by the facilitator at the end of
9 the breakout group, to ensure that all the major points and issues discussed were captured
10 in the notes. Facilitators and reporters worked with members of the EWG to synthesize
11 the points and issues discussed in each thematic session to construct a final synthesis on
12 all themes. This final synthesis was delivered to all participants in a fourth plenary
13 session. During this final plenary session, short presentations were made by three of the
14 facilitators on the various points of consensus and divergence, and the recommendations
15 for future research that arose from the various breakout groups. After each of these
16 presentations, participants engaged in a general discussion, among the entire group of
17 experts, on the points of consensus and divergence and recommendations. In this way,
18 the group ensured that there was indeed consensus on the points and recommendations.

19
20 A full agenda of the symposium is available at Appendix B. A chart of which experts
21 participated in each breakout group is included at Appendix C.
22

23 **b. Findings**

24 **i. Session 1 Findings – The Broader Context**

25
26
27 All participants heard the following presentations:
28

- 29 • Sharon Cooper: *How Many Ways Can You Hurt Me?*
- 30 • Alisdair Gillespie: *Defining Child Pornography*
- 31 • Ethel Quayle: *Identifying Gaps in Our Knowledge*

32 **1. Consensus**

33
34
35 Symposium participants agreed that sexually abusive and exploitative practices that occur
36 on the Internet and other new technologies do not occur within a vacuum. The
37 surrounding social, legal and family environments often enable the conduct. Participants
38 agreed that given the rapidly advancing nature of technology and its pervasiveness in the
39 world, psychologists, social scientists, policy makers, law enforcement, and parents must
40 all work together to proactively protect children in the technology environment. All
41 participants agreed that the entire problem must be approached with more victim focus
42 which recognizes the many types of harm inflicted upon victims as a result of technology
43 enabled child sexual exploitation. Participants also agreed that development of
44 international standards for identifying, protecting and helping victims is critical to
45 implementing this approach.
46

1 Participants discussed the difficulty in defining child pornography. There was consensus
2 among experts that there is a need for common, international definitions and terms and
3 that the definition of child pornography should include all representations, including
4 fictional depictions, audio recordings, and text stories, of the sexual abuse and
5 exploitation of children because such materials normalize the sexualization of children
6 and sexually exploitative practices towards children. It was suggested by many experts
7 that it might be better to use different terms and definitions based on the purpose of the
8 term or definition. For example, the legal definition and term for child pornography may
9 be different than the definition and term that child protective services individuals utilize.
10 Participants also agreed that 18 as an age of consent is fairly arbitrary because each
11 individual develops maturity at different ages, however, there did not seem to be any
12 better way of determining a uniform age of consent.

13
14 Participants also agreed that the Internet and other technologies have created a global
15 forum fueling the production and rapid dissemination of new materials depicting the
16 exploitation and sexual abuse of children. Participants noted that these new materials
17 add to the permanent and public stockpile of child sexual exploitation materials endlessly
18 revictimizing the children depicted. Participants agreed that certain technological
19 advances, such as miniaturization of digital recording devices and greater resolution of
20 images, coupled with the proliferation of mobile phone cameras and built-in webcams
21 have reduced the barriers to production of child pornography images and accelerated the
22 sharing of content. Participants agreed that this greater availability of child sexual
23 exploitation materials has stimulated the demand and production of even more extreme,
24 sadistic, and violent images of children and infants.

26 27 **2. Gaps in Knowledge**

28
29 Participants agreed that the following areas of research and action need to be pursued:

- 30
- 31 • Evaluation of laws across nations to ensure that the problem of child pornography
32 is being properly addressed and managed legislatively
 - 33 • Creative solutions to addressing the issue of child pornography may be found by
34 analogizing to other issues in society, such as drinking and driving, or dealing
35 with the tobacco industry
 - 36 • There is a need to engage with the information technology industry
 - 37 • There is a need to prepare for future technological challenges such as data
38 encryption and virtual storage
 - 39 • There is a need to study the effects on law enforcement of having to repeatedly
40 view child pornography images
 - 41 • The following empirical research questions should be pursued:
 - 42 ○ What is the incidence of pedophilic fantasies and behaviors in the general
43 population?
 - 44 ○ What do the characteristics of an offender's collection (i.e. content,
45 structure) tell us about that individual?

- 1 ○ Do current law enforcement techniques detect the most dangerous
2 offenders?
3 ○ How much of the existing child pornography material is “highly
4 problematic”?
5

6 **ii. Session 2 Findings – Conceptualizing Risk** 7

8 All participants heard the following presentations:
9

- 10 • Richard Wortley – *Situational Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse in the New*
11 *Technologies*
12 • Anthony Beech – *Understanding the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children:*
13 *How Useful are Theories of Contact Sexual Offending in Understanding Risk?*
14 • Karl Hanson – *How Should We Advance our Knowledge of Risk Assessment for*
15 *Internet Sexual Offenders?*
16

17 **1. Consensus** 18

19 Symposium participants agreed that both situational factors and criminogenic approaches
20 help in conceptualizing risk. However, participants agreed that before a method of risk
21 assessment is applied, the questions of risk to whom and risk of what must be
22 determined.
23

24 Participants discussed ways to lower the opportunities for individuals to commit child
25 pornography offenses. Participants agreed that reducing the opportunities for individuals
26 to commit online child pornography offenses requires making the activity more risky,
27 more difficult, less rewarding, and less acceptable.
28

29 Situational prevention, which can be achieved by controlling an individual’s
30 environment, might be achieved through:

- 31 • Reducing the perception of anonymity (i.e. advertising sting operations) which
32 might drive demand by opportunistic offenders
33 • Increasing the perception of vulnerability by creating uncertainty about police
34 operations and asking the information technology industry to report identified
35 hash values for images
36 • Increasing the perceptions of the punishment and costs associated with being
37 caught
38 • Controlling illegal piggy-backing on unsecured wireless networks by disallowing
39 unsecured networks
40

41 Offender focused prevention might be achieved through:

- 42 • Offering early support to offending or potentially offending populations, which
43 might also include non-offending family members
44 • Considering alternative intervention approaches, including pharmacological
45 therapy (for example, experts from France provided information on chemical
46 intervention)

- 1 • Better management of offenders during intervention and increasing the duration
2 of intervention
- 3 • Including registration requirements, but acknowledging the limitations of this
4 approach

5
6 Participants noted that pedophilia is not always a characteristic of contact offenders or
7 child pornography offenders, and noted that there is a possibility that child related
8 fantasies might be statistically more common than is appreciated. While acknowledging
9 a relationship, there was a feeling of uncertainty among participants about which
10 individuals who commit child pornography offenses will go on to commit a contact
11 offense against a child.

12
13 Participants again discussed the role of the Internet in increasing the consumption of
14 child sexual exploitation materials. Participants agreed that the Internet facilitates
15 harmful and exploitive practices against children by combining ready access to a large
16 repository of child sexual exploitation materials that can be viewed and exchanged
17 privately, with a sense of anonymity that encourages individuals to act without inhibition
18 and in a more sexually deviant manner.

19
20 Participants agreed that there is a disturbing trend where young people are creating and
21 sharing sexualized and pornographic images of themselves and their peers and there is
22 serious concern that law enforcement is treating such behavior the same as adult
23 offending. Participants felt that such an approach from law enforcement could have a
24 huge negative impact on the public's perception of child pornography offenses. At the
25 same time, participants agreed that there is a need to acknowledge that much of adult
26 offending behavior begins in adolescence and childhood.

27
28 Participants agreed that effectively combating the issue of child pornography requires
29 collaboration among all stakeholders, which includes the information technology and
30 financial industry, child protective services, criminal justice agencies, educators, health
31 care providers, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

32 **2. Gaps in Knowledge**

33
34
35 Participants agreed that the following areas of research and action need to be pursued:

- 36
37 • Determination of risk factors that might leave some children more vulnerable than
38 others to be exploited by child pornography offenders; determining these risk
39 factors requires better coordination between child protection services and those
40 tasked with risk assessment
- 41 • There is a need for greater discrimination between different kinds of online
42 offending behaviors and an acknowledgment that offenders may move between
43 categories of offending behaviors
- 44 • There is a need for more empirical research and a need to defragment current data
45 sets

- 1 • There is a need to develop a risk assessment for law enforcement which will help
2 them determine who to focus resources on in order to further a child protection
3 response to this issue
- 4 • There is a need to understand the relationship between an individual's level of
5 isolation or socialization offline and whether it correlates to their behaviors online
- 6 • There is a need to consider when risk assessment should be conducted --- at the
7 point of sentencing or when an individual is released from jail (or both) because
8 the risk assessment models for each of these purposes may be different

10 11 **iii. Session 3 Findings – The Relationship Between Online and** 12 **Offline Sexual Offences Against Children**

13
14 All participants heard the following presentations:

- 15
- 16 • Michael Seto: *Assessing the Risk Posed by Child Pornography Offenders*
- 17 • Andres Hernandez: *Psychological and Behavioral Characteristics of Child*
18 *Pornography Offenders in Treatment*
- 19 • Angela Carr: *The Social Dimension of the Online Trade of Child Sexual*
20 *Exploitation Materials*

21 22 **1. Consensus**

23
24 Symposium participants stated that this was a very important session and agreed that
25 there is sufficient evidence of a relationship between possession of child pornography and
26 the commission of contact offenses against children to make this a cause of acute
27 concern. Participants did not see this necessarily as a linear relationship, but considered
28 it a relationship that must be assessed in determining treatment and criminal justice
29 options because, based on research using samples of individuals convicted of child
30 pornography offenses, a significant portion of those who possess child pornography have
31 committed a contact sexual offense against a child. Further quantitative research is
32 needed as a matter of urgency to shed further light on the extent of the connection
33 between possession of child pornography and the commission of contact offenses against
34 children.

35
36 Participants agreed that the Internet can act an amplifier of latent tendencies. They
37 agreed that the extent of child sexual exploitation materials available on the Internet and
38 social networks trading such materials provide validation and reinforcement of beliefs
39 that legitimize and normalize the sexualization of children. The emergence of social
40 networking technologies, multi-player games, and other online communities has
41 expanded access to children and amplified their potential risk of victimization because
42 these technologies allow individuals to sexually abuse a child without direct physical
43 contact, such as by coercing or directing a child to undress or perform sexual acts through
44 a webcam, or witness sexual activity by adults.

1 Participants agreed that all nations must reiterate that the very possession of images is the
2 result of the sexual abuse of children and increases the demand for such images. There
3 was a feeling among participants that many countries fail to recognize that the demand
4 for new and never before seen images may push an offender to produce those images.

5
6 Participants felt that the use of polygraphs among offender populations is important in
7 order to prevent over-reporting. Experts from Germany shared that they have obtained
8 great value in evaluating individuals who turn to voluntary treatment not associated with
9 incarceration because there are no mandatory reporting laws in Germany, so offenders
10 feel free to be honest. Participants also discussed the sex offender registration policies
11 from country to country.

12
13 Participants agreed that the increase in youth self-exploitation cases begs for more intense
14 prevention strategies because participants felt that incarceration is not the best strategy.

15
16 There was also concern that child sexual abuse images are not counted in the numbers of
17 child sexual abuse cases, which are generally determined through victim disclosure or
18 eye witness reporting. If these images were also counted as “reports” of child sexual
19 abuse, the numbers would dramatically increase.

20 21 **2. Gaps in Knowledge**

22
23 Participants agreed that the following areas of research and action need to be pursued:

- 24
25 • There should be a conference dedicated to discussing best practices in treatment,
26 and many symposium participants were disappointed that such discussions were
27 not included as part of this symposium
- 28 • There is a need to develop and fully implement an international, multi-
29 disciplinary research programme that builds upon the research presented and
30 discussed by the experts at the symposium
- 31 • Further social science research needs to be conducted on what protective factors
32 can assist in determining the appropriateness of judicially imposed incarceration
33 and probationary treatment
- 34 • Law enforcement needs more training on working with abused children to ensure
35 that the children are able to obtain the services they need and also ensure that law
36 enforcement properly evaluates children who are in the home of a child
37 pornography “collector only” to determine if any contact sexual abuse crimes
38 have occurred
- 39 • Further research should be pursued in determining whether there are more contact
40 offenders than online offenders numerically and also why the conviction rate is
41 higher for Internet crimes against children when compared to contact sexual
42 crimes against children
- 43 • There needs to be further research on the best means of monitoring offenders if
44 registration is part of a national strategy
- 45 • There is a need to understand why the suicide rates are so high for this population
46 of offenders

- 1 • Internationally, there should be recommendations regarding laws that take into
2 account harm measures to victims as well as risk
3 • There needs to be further research on whether online enticers are also more likely
4 to be child pornography collectors
5 • There needs to be, perhaps online, a journal devoted specifically to discussing this
6 type of child sexual abuse and offender treatment
7

8 **III. Conclusions**
9

10 The findings of the symposium, as well as potential areas for further research will be
11 formally published in a professional journal and book.
12

13 As discussed above, the day following the symposium, members of the EWG, including
14 Drs. Ethel Quayle, Kurt Ribisl and Roberta Sinclair, collaborated to draft specific
15 symposium findings which reflect the most significant points of consensus reached
16 during the symposium. These findings were then reviewed and edited by members of
17 LEPSG as well as G8 sponsored experts that participated at the symposium. These
18 findings were incorporated into a draft ministerial declaration, which is attached at
19 Appendix D.
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Appendix List

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- 3 **Appendix A – Participant Biographies**
- 4 **Appendix B – Agenda**
- 5 **Appendix C – Breakout Groups**
- 6 **Appendix D – Ministerial Declaration**
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