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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 18, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN

Minneapolis man pleads guilty to distributing child pornography

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court, a 55-year-old Minneapolis man pleaded guilty to distributing child pornography. Robert Joseph Olson pleaded guilty to one count of transportation of child pornography. Olson, who was indicted on February 15, 2011, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge John R. Tunheim.

In his plea agreement, Olson admitted that on May 17, 2009, he distributing via his computer a visual depiction of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct. In addition, Olson admitted that he possessed approximately 1,400 similar images, some of which portrays sadistic or masochistic conduct or other depictions of violence.

For his crime, Olson faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum penalty of five years. Judge Tunheim will determine his sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled.

This case is the result of an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly A. Svendsen.

Presently, the Justice Department is funding a study concerning the correlation between the involvement in child pornography and the hands-on sexual abuse of children. A 2008 study (The Butner Study) published in the Journal of Family Violence found that up to 80 percent of federal inmates incarcerated for possession, receipt, or distribution of child pornography also admitted to hands-on sexual abuse of children, ranging from touching to rape.

The U.S. Department of Justice is committed to combating the sexual exploitation of children, particularly via the Internet. In Fiscal Year 2010, 2,235 defendants pleaded guilty to

federal child pornography charges, 2,222 of whom were sentenced to prison. In Fiscal Year 2009, 2,083 defendants were sentenced to prison on child pornography charges. For more information about these efforts, please visit the Department's Project Safe Childhood website, at www.projectsafchildhood.gov.

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