



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of the Virgin Islands*

---

1108 King Street, Suite 201  
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands 00820-4951  
Voice: (340) 773-3920  
Fax: (340) 773-1407

December 10, 2008

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES NEW  
PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD CAMPAIGN**

Acting United States Attorney Paul A. Murphy announced today that the U.S. Department of Justice has launched a new Project Safe Childhood national public service announcement campaign. As part of the campaign, the Virgin Islands U.S. Attorney's Office will be making public service announcements available to the local media to educate the public about the dangers of posting personal information and pictures on the internet.

"One of the most important elements of PSC is the education of children and parents," Murphy said. "Parents should talk to their children about the dangers of responding to unknown emails, and should know the websites that their children visit."

Project Safe Childhood, launched in February 2006, is a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorney's Offices throughout the country, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identifying and rescuing victims.

As technology improves and the Internet becomes more vast and accessible, the number of computer-facilitated sexual crimes against children continues to grow. According to a recent

study, one in seven children, ages 10 to 17, who are regular Internet users, is sexually solicited online. “That translates to millions of children, and it suggests that there are thousands of offenders whom we have not yet identified and brought to justice,” Murphy said.

Popular social networking sites such as My Space, Facebook, and Sconex make it easier for teens to post and share personal information, pictures, and videos, which may make them more vulnerable to online predators. Teenage girls are particularly at risk of online sexual exploitation, according to a study conducted by University of New Hampshire researchers for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The study found that of the approximately one in seven youth who received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet, 70 percent were girls.

The PSC initiative works to coordinate federal, state and local law enforcement efforts in order to increase prosecutions and convictions of child predators, while also raising public awareness and educating teens/children on the dangers they face online. Investigations and prosecutions have been ramped up by partnerships with state and local law enforcement. Also, prevention efforts have broadened to include educating the American public about the dangers of online predators.

There are five core elements to Project Safe Childhood in each district, including the Virgin Islands District, Murphy said. The elements include (1) coordination of law enforcement efforts in the investigation and prosecution of online sexual predators; (2) localization of national leads; (3) increased involvement of the federal government in child pornography and enticement cases; (4) cooperative training of federal, state and local law enforcement officers, and (5) education of children and parents to the possible dangers when they are online.

Murphy thanked local and federal law enforcement agents for the progress that has been made with Project Safe Childhood in the Virgin Islands. For example, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, through its initiative, Operation Predator, has been instrumental in bringing Internet predators to justice. On St. Croix, an Estate Bugby Hole man was convicted in federal court in 2007 of receipt and possession of more than 100 images and three videos, which showed minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct. The images included sexually explicit photographs of the man's 2-year-old relative who was left in his care. The perpetrator was sentenced to 135 months in prison and lifetime supervised release.

The point of contact for PSC in the Virgin Islands is Assistant U.S. Attorney Denise Hinds. She can be reached at (340) 773-3920. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit [www.projectsafechildhood.gov/](http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov/).