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Online Sexual Offenders

**Introduction**

When people manipulate someone into doing something sexual over the internet, they become online sexual offenders**.** These offenders can either gain trust and exploit it or just blackmail or threaten people to get them to do something for them. Technology has opened many doors for cyber stalking, bullying, blackmailing, hacking, unwanted surveillance, copyright infringement, identity theft, pornography and sextortion. Cybercrime branch received hundreds of complains in the past decade and most of them were related to illegal production and dissemination of pornography and online solicitation attempts leading to rape and sexual assaults. Over the last few years, a huge number of population indulged in online sexual offences. Laws have been made and enacted by federal legislatures to protect people from any tragic incidents. Public policy and laws on online sexual offences are constantly being reformed with the passage of time. Public fear, outrage and reaction again such crimes define the legislature and sanctions for sex offenders.

It’s hard to estimate and maintain a record of online sexual offences because laws vary from state to state. There is no basic education about prevention of tragic incidents related to cybercrime. With the invention of new technologies, sexual crimes are increasing day by day and it’s a huge challenge to deal with them and stop them. It is significant to press on these issues in order to bring awareness in public.

**Literature Review**

A research of the psychological literature was conducted and according to that, 587 registered sex offenders in the U.S. are impacted greatly by the aftermath of crime they committed. Their lives took a 180 degree turn and their families were affected as well. Babchishin and VanZuylen (2015) conducted a study and by looking at their criminal history and personality traits, they suggested that online sexual offenders were less antisocial than contact sex offenders and they had more access to internet. (Jorgensen, 2015)

A research study of Brian Westwood suggested that a young adult who has committed an online sexual offence is not very likely to do it again as he grows older. One of the reasons is the special conditions they are often subject to after serving their sentence. In 2016, federal law enforcement agencies in the United States conducted a survey. Findings stated that 503 arrests were for online sex crimes. Offenders use social media to communicate with the victim. There were a number of cases where the offenders attempted to contact victim’s peers to distribute the recorded videos during the assault. (Lenhart, 2015)

**Methodology**

State of Ohio was selected for this study to model the facts and figures of online sexual offenders, registration and notification on cyber related crimes and to examine judicial decision making on these cases.

The study included a sample of online offenders. Data was collected with the help of Cybercrime branch of Ohio State.

**Results**

Based on the 10 cybercrime cases selected for this study, it is revealed that the unlimited and easy access to internet has more negative than positive impacts on users. All the cases registered in crime branch that are reviewed for the study suggest that online sexual offenders are antisocial and have some specific common traits that could be identified and the crime could be prevented. Most of the offenders are from age 16-23, have no social life, friends or acquaintances so they prefer using internet to fill that void and exploit it. (Hanson, 2015)

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Online sex offences can be prevented by educating youth about its pros and cons. It is important for parents to keep an eye on their kids while they use internet because it’s very easy to lose the track and get involved in criminal activities. Keeping up to date about the latest software and security innovations is essential to avoid any tragic incident of cybercrime.

# References

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