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National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (N-JOV): Methodology Report.

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NATIONAL JUVENILE ONLINE VICTIMIZATION STUDY (N-JOV):

METHODOLOGY REPORT

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Section 1. Summary

The National Juvenile Online Victimization Study (N-JOV Study) was conducted by the Crimes against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, under grants from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. The N-JOV study collected information from a national sample of law enforcement agencies about the characteristics of Internet sex crimes against minors and the numbers of arrests for these crimes during a one-year period. The goals of our methodology were to 1) design a representative national sample of law enforcement agencies that would give us an overall picture of these crimes in the U.S., 2) understand how these cases emerged and were handled in a diverse group of agencies, and 3) get detailed data about the characteristics of these crimes from well-informed, reliable sources.

We used a two-phase process to collect data from a national sample of local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies. In Phase 1, we sent a mail survey to a national sample of law enforcement agencies asking if they had made arrests in Internet-related child pornography or sexual exploitation cases between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001. In Phase 2, we conducted telephone interviews with law enforcement investigators about a sample of the cases reported in the mail survey. The final data set, weighted to account for sampling procedures and other factors, includes data from 612 completed interviews.

Section 2. Sample Selection

Section 2.1. Phase 1 mail survey sample

The first phase mail survey was sent to a national sample of 2,574 state, county and local law enforcement agencies. We created a stratified sample, dividing law enforcement agencies into three sampling frames based on their specialization or training in investigating Internet sex crimes against minors, so we could get information from agencies that specialized in these crimes and still allow every agency a chance to be selected in the sample.

The first frame consisted of 79 specialized agencies mandated to investigate Internet sex crimes against minors, including four federal agencies with units that investigate Internet-related child exploitation crimes, 32 agencies that made up 30[*] federally funded Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces, and 43 ICAC satellites in operation when the sample was drawn. We did not sample this frame. Rather, we took a census of specialized agencies, starting in September 2001, when mail surveys were sent to the 75 agencies comprising the ICAC Task Forces and satellites. Federal agencies were invited to participate at later dates and reported their cases electronically rather than through mail surveys due to large caseloads. Two of the four

[*] There was one tri-state ICAC Task Force that included three agencies from three different states. We surveyed these three agencies individually. Also, some of the Task Forces and satellites were just beginning operations during the time frame of the study and may not have been operating under ICAC guidelines.

federal agencies invited to participate declined. One of these gave us the number of arrests they had made between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001, and we took this number into account in the final weighting of the data. The other federal agency that declined had just begun to do Internet-related investigations during the time frame of the N-JOV Study and had few cases to report that met our eligibility requirements. Of the 75 ICAC Task Force and satellite agencies that received mail surveys, 83% completed and returned surveys and 64% reported one or more cases involving Internet sex crimes against minors. See Figure 1 for a description of the disposition of the mail survey sample.

Figure 1. Description of N-JOV stratified national sample and disposition of mail survey

Sampling Frames	Agencies in Population N	Agencies In Sample n (% population)	Eligible Agencies n (% population)	Agencies that Responded n (% eligible agencies)	Agencies with Internet-related Cases n (% eligible agencies)
First frame: Specialized agencies	75	75 (100%)	75 (100%)	62 (83%)	48 (64%)
Second frame: Trained agencies	1668	833 (50%)	822 (49%)*	763 (93%)	226 (27%)
Third frame: Other Agencies	13,586	1666 (12%)	1612 (12%)**	1380 (86%)	109 (7%)
Total	**15,329**	**2574 (17%)**	**2509 (16%)**	**2205 (88%)**	**383 (15%)**

*11 agencies (1%) were ineligible because they lacked jurisdiction to investigate Internet sex crimes against minors. These were mostly small towns that relied on county or other agencies to conduct criminal investigations.
**54 agencies (< 1%) were ineligible because they lacked jurisdiction to investigate Internet sex crimes against minors.

The second frame consisted of law enforcement agencies that we considered more likely than other agencies to have investigated Internet sex crimes against minors because they had staff that had received training in these types of cases. We identified these trained agencies by using lists of agencies participating in weeklong training programs in the investigation of Internet sex crimes against minors. The lists were acquired from two training organizations, SEARCH and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. We identified 1,668 agencies in the second frame. Of these agencies about half, 832, were randomly selected to participate in the study. One additional agency in a large metropolitan area was included as a certainty jurisdiction, to make sure that agencies from all major metropolitan areas in the U.S. were included in the study, for a total of 833 agencies. Of the 833 trained agencies that responded to mail surveys, 1% was ineligible to participate because they lacked jurisdiction to investigate Internet sex crimes against minors. (These were mostly small towns that relied on county or other larger jurisdictions to conduct criminal investigations.) Of the 822 eligible trained agencies, 93% completed and returned mail surveys, and 27% (n = 226) reported one or more cases involving Internet sex crimes against minors.

The third frame consisted of 13,586 other local, county and state law enforcement agencies across the United States. The sample was drawn using a database available

through the National Directory of Criminal Justice Data (National Directory of Law Enforcement Administrators, 2001). This data set included an annually updated census of local, county, and state law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and was designed to provide geographic and other identifying information for each record included in either the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports files or the Bureau of Justice Statistic's Directory of Law Enforcement Agencies. The agencies in the first and second frames were cross-referenced in the database to avoid duplication among the three frames. Of these 13,586 other agencies, 12% (n = 1666) were randomly selected to participate in the study. Of these, less than 1% was ineligible to participate because they lacked jurisdiction to investigate Internet sex crimes against minors. Of the eligible other agencies (n = 1612), 86% completed and returned mail surveys, and 7% (n = 109) reported one or more cases involving Internet sex crimes against minors.

Section 2.2. Phase 2 telephone interview sample

The second phase consisted of follow-up telephone interviews with law enforcement investigators to gather information about case, offender and victim characteristics. The 2,205 agencies that responded to the mail survey, plus the two federal agencies that participated, reported a total of 1,723 cases involving Internet sex crimes against minors, with 50 first frame specialized agencies (consisting of ICAC Task Forces, ICAC satellites, and federal agencies) reporting 999 cases, 226 second frame trained agencies reporting 545 cases and 109 third frame other agencies reporting 179 cases.

We designed a sampling procedure that took into account the number of cases reported by an agency, so that we would not unduly burden respondents in agencies with many cases. If an agency reported between one and three Internet-related cases, we conducted follow-up interviews for every case. Eighty-five percent of the agencies that had cases fell within this group. For agencies that reported more than three cases, we conducted interviews for all cases that involved identified victims (victims who were located and contacted during the investigation), and sampled other cases. For agencies with between four and fifteen cases, half of the cases that did not have identified victims were randomly selected for follow-up interviews. In agencies that reported more than fifteen cases, cases with no identified victims were divided into two samples, using random selection, and then half of one sample was randomly selected for follow-up interviews. In some agencies, we could not find out which cases had identified victims, so we sampled from all cases, using the sampling procedure described above.

Section 3. Confidentiality

The National Juvenile Online Victimization Study was conducted with the approval of the University of New Hampshire Institutional Review Board and complied with confidentiality regulations mandated for research funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Section 4. Instrument design

Section 4.1. Phase 1 mail survey instrument

The mail survey was modeled after a survey developed by Westat Corporation for use in the Second National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART 2) Law Enforcement Study, which surveyed law enforcement agencies about the incidence and characteristics of stereotypical child abduction cases (Finkelhor, Hammer, & Sedlak, 2002; Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer, & Schultz, 2002). The survey instrument was a multi-page booklet, formatted so respondents could follow it easily. It included a "Frequently Asked Questions" section and a glossary, along with a toll free telephone number so that respondents could contact the researchers if they had questions. A focus group of state and local law enforcement investigators who were attending an Internet crime training program reviewed the survey and gave comments to the researchers. Also, to pre-test the instrument, we sent ten pilot surveys to agencies that were not selected in the sample.

The mail survey asked two primary questions:

1. "Between **July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001**, did your agency make ANY ARRESTS in cases involving the attempted or completed sexual exploitation of a minor, AND at least one the of the following occurred:
    - 1a. The offender and the victim first met on the Internet
    - 1b. The offender committed a sexual offense against the victim on the Internet, regardless of whether or not they first met online."

2. "Between **July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001**, did your agency make ANY ARRESTS in cases involving the possession, distribution or production of child pornography, and at least on the of the following occurred:
    - 2a. Illegal images were found on the hard drive of a computer or on removable media (e.g., CDs or disks) possessed by the offender
    - 2b. The offender used the Internet to order or sell child pornography
    - 2c. There was other evidence that illegal images were downloaded from the Internet or distributed by the offender over the Internet"

If respondents answered, "Yes" to either of these questions, we asked them to list the case number, or other reference, and the name of the key investigating officer or most knowledgeable person for each case they reported. Also, we emphasized that agencies should return surveys, even if they had no cases to report.

Section 4.2. Phase 2 telephone interview instrument

The Phase 2 telephone interview instrument consisted of the following sections, some of which were used in each interview and others depending on the facts of the case.

- **Preliminary Information.** The Preliminary Information section served as a screening device to establish whether a case was eligible for the study. It was used in all interviews. It asked respondents to describe the case and then queried them about whether and when an arrest was made, whether the case was related to the Internet and whether there was an identified victim who was younger than 18.
    - If a case involved more than one offender, this section identified a primary offender. Later questions about the characteristics of the crime, and

offender referred to the primary offender. Primary offenders were chosen based on the following hierarchy: 1) *the offender who directly used the Internet*; *if more than one offender directly used the Internet, then* 2) *the offender who committed the most serious crime*; *if the crimes were equally serious, then* 3) *the offender who was the youngest*.

- If a case involved more than one victim of an Internet-related crime, this section identified a primary victim. Later questions about the characteristics of the crime and victim referred to the primary victim. Primary victims were chosen based on the following hierarchy: 1) *the victim who directly used the Internet*; *if more than one victim directly used the Internet, then* 2) *the victim who was most seriously victimized*; *if the crimes were equally serious, then* 3) *the victim who was the youngest*.
- The Preliminary Section also gathered information about the gender and age of any identified victim of a *non-Internet-related sex crime* who was identified in the investigation. However, we gathered more detailed victim information only for victims of Internet-related crimes.

- **Sexual Exploitation: Online Meeting.** The Sexual Exploitation: Online Meeting section was used in cases with identified victims where the victim first met the offender on the Internet. (We also refer to these as "Internet-initiated" cases.) This section collected specific information about the offender-victim relationship, including where online they met and corresponded, what they did online, whether they met in person, the details of any sexual assault and other information.
- **Sexual Exploitation: Prior Face-to-Face Relationship.** The Sexual Exploitation: Prior Face-to-Face Relationship section was used in cases with identified victims where the offender and victim did <u>not</u> meet on the Internet, but knew each other in some other capacity. (We also refer to these as "family and prior acquaintance" cases. This section collected specific information about the offender-victim relationship, including how they met and communicated, the details of any sexual assault and other information about what transpired between the offender and the victim. Either this section or the above Sexual Exploitation: Online Meeting section (but never both) was used for all cases involving identified victims of Internet-related crimes.
- **Production of Child Pornography.** The Production of Child Pornography section was used in cases where there was an identified victim of an Internet-related crime who was also a victim of child pornography production. Cases qualified for this section if an offender photographed an identified victim in a pose that the respondent described as sexually suggestive or explicit. This section collected information about the format, number, content and distribution of the produced child pornography.
- **Possession of Child Pornography.** The Possession of Child Pornography section was used if the respondent said that the offender possessed child pornography. This section collected information about the format, number, content and distribution of the possessed child pornography.
- **Undercover Investigation.** The Undercover Investigation section was used in cases that involved online undercover operations in which law enforcement investigators 1) posed online as minors or adults with access to minors, 2) took over the identities of

identified victims, or 3) posed as distributors or consumers of child pornography. This section included questions about how the offender and undercover investigator corresponded online, the extent and nature of their online interactions, and information about face-to-face meetings between offenders and investigators, when applicable.

- **Offender.** The Offender section collected information about the demographic, family, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of the offender in each case. For cases with multiple offenders, information was collected about the primary offender. (See the description of the Preliminary Section for how we picked the primary offender.) This section also captured information about arrests, charges and outcomes of criminal cases.
- **Victim.** The Victim section was used if the case involved an identified victim of an Internet-related crime. It collected information about the demographic, family, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of the victim. For cases with multiple victims, information was collected about the primary victim. (See the description of the Preliminary Section for how we picked the primary victim.)
- **Interview Conclusion.** The Interview Conclusion was used in all cases and served to finalize the interview, collect information about respondents' training and to capture any other important information about the case that was not covered in the survey.

Section 5. Criteria for eligibility

To be included in the N-JOV Study, cases had to be Internet-related, involve victims younger than 18, and end in arrests that occurred between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001.

1. Internet related. A case was Internet-related if 1) an offender-victim relationship was initiated online; 2) an offender who was a family member or acquaintance of a victim used the Internet to communicate with a victim to further a sexual victimization, or otherwise exploit the victim; 3) a case involved an Internet-related undercover investigation; 4) child pornography was received or distributed online, or arrangements for receiving or distributing were made online; 5) child pornography was found on a computer, on removable media (disks, CDs, etc.), as computer printouts or in a digital format. We chose broad criteria so we would not exclude any cases that law enforcement treated as Internet related.

2. Victims younger than 18. We chose this definition of minors because 18 is the age of majority for most purposes in most jurisdictions. We did not want to rely on state or federal statutes that define "age of consent," because these statutes vary. Eighteen is the upper age limit for any statutes defining age of consent. Also, federal and many state statutes define child pornography as images of minors younger than 18. We considered cases to have victims under 18 in three situations. 1) There was an "identified victim," defined as a victim who was identified and contacted by the police in the course of the investigation, who was under 18. 2) A law enforcement investigator impersonated a youth under 18, so that the offender believed he was interacting with a minor. 3) A case

involved child pornography, which by definition depicts the sexual assault or exploitation of a minor under 18.

3. End in arrest. We limited the study to cases ending in arrests, rather than crime reports or open investigations because cases ending in arrests 1) were more likely to involve actual crimes 2) had more complete information about the crimes, offenders and victims 3) gave us a clear standard for counting cases and 4) helped us avoid interviewing multiple agencies about the same case.

4. Between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2003. We chose a discrete one-year period so that we could estimate the number of annual arrests.

Section 6. Data Collection

Section 6.1. Phase 1 mail survey data collection procedures

To maximize response rates to the Phase 1 mail survey, we followed an adapted version of the "total design" mail survey methodology (Dillman, 1978), similar to that used in the NISMART 2 Law Enforcement Survey cited above.

- We used first class mail to send surveys, personalized cover letters, and business reply envelopes to the heads of the local, county and state law enforcement agencies in the sample.
- Approximately two weeks after the initial mailing, we sent reminder postcards to the agency heads, asking them to complete and return the survey if they had not done so, and thanking them if they had.
- Approximately five weeks after the initial mailing, we sent copies of the survey, personalized cover letters stamped "Second Notice", and business reply envelopes to the heads of agencies that had not responded.
- Approximately eight weeks after the initial mailing, we sent third copies of the survey, personalized cover letters stamped "Third Notice", and business reply envelopes to agency heads that still had not responded. This phase of the mail survey took place between September 2001 and December 2001.
- Finally, telephone interviewers called the agencies that had not responded and, when possible, filled out the survey instrument over the telephone. This occurred between December 2002 and February 2002.
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The overall response rate to the mail survey was 88% of eligible agencies. (Table 1, displayed above in the Sample Selection section of this report, describes the disposition of the mail survey sample.)

Section 6.2. Phase 2 telephone survey data collection procedures

We interviewed law enforcement investigators, because investigators have been in the forefront of identifying and combating Internet sex crimes against minors and are the best sources of accessible, in-depth information about their nature. Six trained interviewers conducted the telephone interviews, recording the answers on paper copies of the instrument. We chose to use pencil and paper rather than a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview system because this method allowed the interviewers to make

decisions quickly about which sections of the instrument to use and gave interviewers more flexibility about the order of the questions. This pencil and paper method was also used in the NISMART 2 Law Enforcement Study. The interviewers attended a two-day training session led by the researchers that provided extensive details about the background, purpose and instrumentation of the study, and they participated in a series of practice and pilot interviews. The telephone interviews were conducted between mid-October 2001 and the end of July 2002.

Table 2 depicts the final disposition of the Phase 2 telephone surveys. The 383 agencies reporting cases in the mail survey and the two participating federal agencies reported a total of 1,723 cases. Of these, 37% were not selected for the sample due to the sampling procedures mentioned above. An additional 16% were ineligible based on the criteria for eligibility described above. Of the 796 cases in the sample, we completed interviews for 79% (n = 630), 13% involved agencies that did not respond to requests for interviews, 3% respondents who refused to be interviewed and 5% duplicate cases or cases that could not be identified. Sampled cases that were ineligible were not replaced in the sample.

Table 2. Responses to JOVIS telephone interviews in all LEAs

Number of …	**1st frame*: Specialized agencies**	**2nd frame: Trained agencies**	**3rd frame: Other agencies**	**Total**
Cases reported in mail surveys	999 (100%)	545 (100%)	179 (100%)	1,723 (100%)
Not selected for sample	564 (56%)	58 (11%)	24 (13%)	646 (37%)
Ineligible cases***	73 (7%)	147 (27%)	61 (34%)	281 (16%)
Number of cases in sample	362	340	94	796
Non-responders**	42 (12%)	50 (15%)	9 (9%)	101 (13%)
Refusals	13 (3%)	10 (3%)	2 (2%)	25 (3%)
Other (duplicate# & invalid cases)	21 (6%)	14 (4%)	5 (5%)	40 (5%)
Completed interviews	**286 (79%)**	**266 (78%)**	**78 (83%)**	**630 (79%)**
Duplicate cases deleted##	11	6	1	18
Final number	**275**	**260**	**77**	**612**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.
*Includes cases from federal agencies.
**Could not schedule interviews for various reasons
***Case did not meet eligibility requirements of study. (In most cases, the arrest did not occur in the timeframe of the study.)
#Interviewers realized these were duplicate cases and did not conduct interviews.
##Cases were determined to be duplicates after interviews were completed.

Section 6.3. Prosecutor Interviews

We also conducted interviews with prosecutors for 207 of the 486 cases that were handled at the local, county or state level to determine what happened when cases entered the criminal court system. (Federal prosecutors handled the remaining 126 cases but we were unable to resolve our request for permission from the U.S. Attorney Executive Office to interview federal prosecutors before the end of the field period of the study.) Table 3 depicts the dispositions of the 486 state and local cases. Seventeen percent (n = 82) were ineligible for prosecutors' interviews because they could not be identified sufficiently by prosecutors and 17% (n = 81) were not selected for interviews in situations where one prosecutor had handled multiple cases in the sample. When one prosecutor had handled multiple cases, we used the following criteria for selecting a case for an interview: First, we selected the case with an actual victim. If more than one case had an actual victim or there was no case with an actual victim, we asked prosecutors to select the case with the most interesting or novel legal issues. If that did not distinguish one case, we asked them to pick a case where the defense prevailed, followed by the case the respondent had the most information about, followed by the most recent case. Of the 323 cases that remained in the sample for prosecutor interviews after accounting for selection and ineligibility, we completed interviews for 64% (n = 207). Twenty-eight percent (n = 90) of the prosecutors did not respond to our requests for interviews and 8% (n = 26) refused to be interviewed. See Table 3, below.

Table 3. Dispositions of interviews with state and local prosecutors

Number of …	**Prosecutor Interviews**
State and local N-JOV interviews	486 (100%)
Not selected for sample	81 (17%)
Ineligible cases*	82 (17%)
Number of cases in sample	323
Non-responders**	90 (26%)
Refusals	26 (8%)
Completed interviews	**207 (64%)**

*Could not be sufficiently identified by prosecutor to conduct interview.
**Could not schedule interviews for various reasons

Section 6.4. Case Duplication

We expected that some cases in our sample would be duplicate cases, reported by more than one agency. When we discovered a duplicate case prior to conducting the interviews, we coded that case as ineligible. We also screened completed interviews for duplicate cases by sorting cases based on several variables, including offenders' birth dates and the last four digits of offenders' Social Security Numbers, when available, and by state, offender and victim age, arrest date and other characteristics. We identified 18 pairs of duplicated cases through these methods and deleted 18 of the duplicate interviews from the sample, leaving a total of 612 completed interviews in the data set.

Section 7. Data entry and coding

Section 7.1. Data entry of case descriptions

Interviewers wrote brief summaries of the facts of each case. These summaries were imported into a software program created for qualitative research (N'Vivo Version

1.1, 1999), which allows researchers to access case descriptions easily and provides a system for coding.

Section 7.2. Data entry and coding of quantitative data

The data from the mail survey and telephone interview instruments were double-entered into a SPSS data set using the SPSS Data Entry Builder 3.0 program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Inc., 2001). This program is designed for use with SPSS statistical software and incorporates reliability checks for double entry of data. After data entry was completed, the two primary researchers devised lists of codes for each open-ended response, coded the open-ended ended responses, compared the coded responses for discrepancies and reviewed and resolved the discrepancies.

Section 8. Weighting and Variance Estimates

Four weights were constructed to reflect the complex sample design.

- First, each case was given a sampling weight to account for the probability of selection to both the mail survey and telephone interview samples. The sampling weights were adjusted for agency non-response, case level non-response, duplication of cases among agencies and for arrests by one federal agency that did not participate in case level interviews.

- Second, primary sampling unit weights were created to account for clustering within each of the three sampling frames.

- Third, stratification weights were computed based on the different sampling strategies for each frame.

- Finally, finite population correction factors accounted for the sampling being conducted without replacing ineligible cases.

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