

# Technology Promotes Soaring Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

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The internet has provided the ideal environment for the unprecedented growth rate in the sex trafficking trade, making it now the world's fastest-growing criminal industry. The illegal use of web technology has changed the nature of the sex trafficking business. Governments and internet tech companies are being called on to work together, to build a system for driving back the incomprehensible growth of sex trafficking, which is destroying lives and futures of women and adolescent girls at absolutely staggering rates.

The internet has entirely transformed the nature of the sex trafficking trade, by rapidly increasing unregulated access to the female child commodity for eager buyers and sellers. The easy-to-use technology tools provided by the internet are just the kinds that are most helpful to sex traffickers. Highly popular resources for sex traffickers include classified ad sites, open ad sites, social platforms, chat rooms, adult websites, and the alternative dark-web now provides an over-abundance of opportunity for sex traffickers to engage with vast numbers of potential victims.

Naturally, as in any other modern business, sex traffickers must depend on online communications and marketing tools, to maintain a robust and steady supply line to meet the high demand. This growing dependence on the World Wide Web for conducting sex trafficking requires a comprehensive solution only possible through a collaborative global initiative.

## Some Current Sex Trafficking Statistics

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- 2 of every 3 children being sold for sex in the U.S. are trafficked on the internet.
- Over 8,500 ads for sex services are posted on the internet every month in Great Britain, making it easy for sex traffickers to post ads selling women and children.
- More than 3,000 reports per month are received In the Philippines Department of Justice, about children being sold on the internet and being sexually exploited through other means.
- The U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reports that 78% of child sex exploitation victims obtained online are girls.

## How to Solve the Rapidly Growing Global Problem of Sex Trafficking?

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A report from the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) examines the role of technology in sex trafficking. ICAT finds that a well-coordinated global, multidimensional solution is needed, in order to establish effective legal, governmental policy, and technological solutions. The agency emphasizes the need for support from societies, governments, the U.N., and internet technology companies, to take collaborative actions to realize agreed solutions.

The ICAT agency goes on to suggest research and analysis needed to make solutions more effective by better understanding, for example:

- The effective ways internet platforms are used to traffic and sexually exploit adolescent girls.
- What kinds of legal and technology solutions are effective and which are not.

## Tech Companies Called On to Help Protect Children from Sex Trafficking

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Selling people for sexual exploitation is the highest-volume enterprise in human trafficking. The majority of victims are women and girls. But, throughout all the numerous technology initiatives already started to combat human trafficking, just 18% of the tech tools are focused on trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Regarding adolescent girls, the gap in tech solutions is especially extreme.

Meanwhile, online platforms are being aggressively mined by sex traffickers who are grooming, buying, and selling child victims. The ICAT researchers conclude that technology companies need to play a larger and more effective role in deterring and preventing predators, and in discovering them.

ICAT challenges the tech companies to more than merely avoid the risk of liability, but to provide real solutions and make themselves a force for undermining the ability of sex traffickers to profit from their platforms.

## The Solution – International Collaboration

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The ICAT analysts suggest that current national legal frameworks of sexual exploitation laws are too diverse. They further assert that the structures are ill-prepared for the management of the transnational and continuously evolving web technologies employed for sex trafficking. ICAT asserts that reliance on disconnected national legal frameworks, with differing standards that do not protect everyone, are not sufficient to eradicate sex trafficking.

ICAT insists that effective solutions cannot be found in these siloed programs. They advise governments and tech companies to work together, to develop an international framework featuring global standards to address sex trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse via the web. The goal envisioned is a global collaboration to set up responsibilities, and establish accountability for passive enablement of actions along the chain of activities in the sex trafficking process.

## **Wasatch Defense Lawyers, Salt Lake City, Utah**

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Our team of criminal defense lawyers is rapidly responsive. We start immediately to get charges reduced or dropped entirely, and to keep you from going to jail and off the sex offender registry. (Fluent Spanish and German.) We offer military discounts and payment arrangements.

If you have been accused of a sex crime in Utah, contact Wasatch Defense Lawyers, Salt Lake City UT at (801)980-9965, to schedule a free legal consultation, or use our online request for contact.