Role of the Internet in Child Pornography

The Internet is a fast communication vehicle providing a number of online services. This growing facility helps children learn. Yet, with the increase in access, there has been a rise in Internet crimes. The Internet plays an important role in child pornography cases.

Through the Internet, it is easy to access a huge quantity of pornographic material. The Internet provides complete anonymity and privacy. It reduces the cost of production and distribution of such material. The offender distributes the material easily with Web services such as e-mail, newsgroups, and Webcams. An offender can create his or her own Web site and upload the pornographic material, so that others can easily download it. Using an Internet facility such as a Webcam, he or she can send real-time pornographic pictures or video.

The most frequent source for distributing pornographic material is e-mail. Offenders can send images or videos as attachments. Offenders can also use e-mail for grooming or seduction purposes.

The Internet is the least-expensive method for transferring pornographic materials. The most advantageous factor about the Internet is that the offenders can access pornographic material anytime and anywhere. The Internet enables them to send the images or videos in any format. These files can be stored easily on any digital device, such as a mobile phone or a PDA.

Effects of Child Pornography on Children

Child pornography affects children physically, socially, and psychologically. Molestation can cause physical injuries such as genital bruising and lacerations. In many cases, teenagers may experience negative effects later in life due to inappropriate early sexual experiences. Child pornography also gives rise to sexually transmitted diseases.

Child pornographic victims also suffer from psychological trauma, such as depression, anger, and schizophrenia. Female victims may suffer from higher rates of nightmares, back pain, headaches, pelvic pain, and other similar symptoms in their adult age. Pornography may cause sexual addiction, which may further result in prostitution or teenage pregnancy. A victim may also lose his or her mental balance and become suicidal.

Measures to Prevent Dissemination of Child Pornography

Computer Industry Self-Regulation (Role of ISP)

An ISP (Internet service provider) plays an important role in reducing the problem of child pornography. It is necessary for an ISP to take some self-regulatory actions, including the following:

- **Block illegal sites**: It is important that various ISP associations come together and make a decision to block illegal sites.
- **Use browser filters and search engines for safe search**: ISPs can use browser filters to help block sites containing words related to pornography and use filters on search engines so that they will not search illegal sites or images.
- **Establish complaint sites**: ISPs should open sites that will help people complain about pornography hosted on the ISPs servers. The ISPs may deal directly with the police or any other authority.

Legislative Regulation

It should be mandatory for ISPs to inform the police about illegal sites. ISPs should have to verify the identities of people who access the Internet. ISPs should confirm the age of the account holder and restrict children from opening an account without adult supervision. Advertisers should not advertise illegal sites.

Citizens’ Committee

A citizens’ committee can help control child pornography. This is an organization that creates awareness among the public about such issues and provides community members with a forum in which to voice their complaints about such activities. The committee may provide information to parents and teachers through their sites or publications about the problem of child pornography and how to tackle the issue.