

“Internet Safety and Child Protection Act of 2005”

Internet pornography has become a large and lucrative online industry (~ 12 billion in annual U.S. sales), and one that is successfully reaching a child audience. **The largest group of viewers of Internet pornography is youth between 12 - 17 years of age.** The ease with which pornography is accessed online has made a mockery of the restrictions that society has traditionally placed on the access of minors to sexually explicit materials. Even though software now exists that gives website operators the ability to require proof of age before selling pornography, **only 3% of pornographic websites require age verification that goes beyond the honor system.** As a consequence, the Internet has radically eroded the capacity of parents to control what their children are exposed to and at what age they are exposed to it.

Parents are not the only ones who have their hands full coping with these challenges. Law enforcement is coming to terms with the implications of this unregulated world and struggling to combat a wave of Internet and pornography-related criminal activity. Due to its anonymous and relatively lawless nature, the Internet has become highly attractive to a wide array of individuals looking to prey on children – whether they are pedophiles soliciting children for sex or pornographers trying to exploit children for commercial gain.

The Internet Safety and Child Protection Act of 2005 seeks to assist parents and law enforcement officials by ensuring that pornographic websites adhere to the same standards as their brick and mortar counterparts in regard to age verification requirements. The Act will also guarantee that federal resources are allocated to address the various ways in which Internet and pornography related criminals exploit and rob children of their innocence.

The Internet Safety and Child Protection Act has three main functions:

Require Age Verification

Adult websites would be required to use software to verify the age of users attempting to access their websites. Online merchants, banks, and credit card companies could not process payment transactions that are not age verified. The FTC shall issue and enforce the regulations outlined in this section.

Establish an Internet Safety and Child Protection Trust Fund (ISCP Trust Fund)

This fund will centralize and coordinate the allocation of federal resources in support of efforts on the part of law enforcement and others to combat Internet and pornography-related crimes against children. Trust Fund resources will also support initiatives that help parents exercise greater supervision over their kids' online activities.

Force Pornographers to Pay the Costs of Child Protection

The Internet Safety and Child Protection Trust Fund will not be deficit-financed or financed from taxes paid by the average, working American. Rather, the Trust Fund will be financed by a 25% excise tax on Internet pornography transactions, which could result in up to \$3 billion in annual revenue.

QUICK STATS

The online pornography industry generates \$12 billion dollars in annual revenue – roughly equal to the annual revenues of ABC, NBC, and CBS combined.

There are 420 million individual pornographic web pages today, up from 14 million in 1998.

The largest group of viewers of Internet pornography is youth between 12 - 17 years of age.

The average age at which a child is first exposed to pornography is 11 years old.

Only 3 % of pornographic websites require age verification that goes beyond the honor system. Two third of sites do not even include an adult content warning. 74% of websites display free “teasers” of pornographic images on their homepages and within their websites that require no payment, credit cards, or adequate age verification.

60% of 15 to 24 year olds either know how to get around blocking software or know someone else who can show them how to get around it.

Consumer Reports recently reviewed eleven popular brands of blocking software, and none were found to be 100 percent effective. None received an “excellent” rating.

64% of teens say that they do things online that they wouldn't want their parents to know about.

Examples of Existing Federal Agencies and Programs Addressing the Exploitation of Children Online

Department of Justice

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Child Protection Division

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

CyberTip Line

NetSmartz

I-Safe America

Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces

SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics

Criminal Division

Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section

CyberEthics for Kids/Teachers

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Crimes Against Children Unit

Innocent Images

National Sex Offender Registry

Department of State

Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons

Victims of Trafficking

Department of Defense

Navy Criminal Investigative Service, Safe Kids

Department of Commerce

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Kids.us

Department of Education

Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI), Parents Guide to the Internet

Department of Agriculture

Technology 4-H Program

Department of Health and Human Services

Office of Women's Health, 4 Girls Health

Administration for Children and Families,

Family and Youth Services Bureau

grants to reduce sexual assault of runaways

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA Education

NASA Explores CyberSafety

Federal Trade Commission

Kidz Privacy