

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND U.S. ATTORNEY KAREN P. HEWITT UNVEIL NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS TO COMBAT ONLINE EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Campaign Educates Parents, Targets Potential Online Predators

SAN DIEGO – The Department of Justice and U.S. Attorney Karen P. Hewitt today unveiled an innovative national public service announcement (PSA) campaign to educate parents about the potential dangers that their children face online and, for the first time, warns potential online predators that exploiting a child online is a serious federal offense.

The four new PSAs were developed jointly by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and Project Safe Childhood partners INOBTR (“I Know Better”), iKeepSafe and the Hispanic Communications Network.

“One of our highest priorities at the Department of Justice is combating the sexual exploitation of children,” said OJJDP Administrator J. Robert Flores. “Our message to parents is--know where your kids go on the Internet, and to would-be predators we say--your illegal activity will have lifelong consequences.”

“Every time children log on to the Internet, they are at risk from predators intent on sexually exploiting them. These public service announcements will help raise the awareness of children and their parents about the real dangers lurking online. The announcements also provide a clear message to those who would exploit our children: possession of child pornography is a federal felony. If you download and distribute child pornography, you will be prosecuted, and your life will be ruined,” said United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt.

iKeepSafe developed one of the PSAs, entitled “Know Where They Go,” to highlight the risks children face on the Internet. The PSA, illustrates how, in the digital world, children can travel anywhere, and why it is important that parents monitor what sites their children visit and who they are talking to. Elements of this campaign include television, print, radio and Web advertisements. For more on this PSA, please go to www.KnowWhereTheyGo.org

INOBTBTR created a PSA entitled “Exploiting a Minor Is a Major Offense.” This cutting-edge campaign is designed to warn potential online predators that exploiting a child online is a serious federal offense. Elements of this campaign include television, movie theaters, print, radio and Web banners. For more on this PSA, please go to www.stopanonlinepredator.org

The Hispanic Communications Network (HCN) produced two separate series of Spanish-language PSAs for television, radio, print and the Web. The first targets parents, while the second targets potential predators. The potential predator PSA seeks to inform low-level offenders or individuals looking for child pornography images online or attempting communication with minors that law enforcement is actively pursuing them, and that their illegal activity could have lifetime consequences. Like the INOBTR ad, it gives a compelling message to stop and think about the consequences of this serious federal crime. The Spanish-language information can be found on www.ProtegelosAhora.org for the parent campaign and www.NoTeArruines.org for the potential predator campaign. In addition, HCN produced an English-language short video for online distribution. The video, or Webisode, illustrates the dangers children face online and urges parents to become informed and involved, and to supervise their children’s Internet and mobile phone activity.

Launched in May 2006, Project Safe Childhood is a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Department’s Criminal Division, and Internet Crimes Against Children task forces, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood and the public service announcements, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov

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