

The Role of the Private Sector, Particularly ISPs and Internet Café Owners, as Active Partners in Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in the Philippines

An on-going Case Study by UNICEF Philippines

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Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY

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- At least 3 researches on child pornography from 2004 to 2007
 - Child Pornography in the Philippines (Published 2005)
 - Risk and Protective Factors Related to Child Pornography and Possible Advocacy Strategies against Pornographic Victimization (Unpublished, 2007)
 - An Investigative Study on Child Pornography in the Philippines (Unpublished, 2007)
- 1st National Consultation on Child Pornography
- Three (3) Sub-national Conferences on Child Pornography
- Training of the Philippine National Police on computer-crime investigation (2006)
- Drafting and lobbying for the passage of the Anti-Child Pornography Bill
- Community-based and school-based awareness raising activities on safety on the internet and anti-child pornography with NGOs
- Networking with the private sector (i.e. I-café franchise, Microsoft, etc.)

Philippine context

- Travel and tourism industry is an important contributor to the Philippine economy.
- In 2007, tourist spending soared to unprecedented levels. For the first time ever, foreign arrivals breached the 3 million mark in 2007, and tourist expenditure posted an increase of 40.99 per cent to reach US\$4.885 billion.
- Top foreign markets in 2007 were Korea, USA, Japan, China, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada and UK. Arrivals from Korea continue to grow, and Chinese tourist traffic maintains a steady upswing. These include golfers, divers, students, honeymooners and families.

Rationale

- What does the travel and tourism industry have to do with ISPs and internet cafés?

Answer: With advances in information and communication technology (ICT), more and more industries, including the travel and tourism industry, are taking full advantage of the internet and cyberspace to advertise their facilities, services and commodities. It has replaced traditional modes of tri-media advertising.

Rationale

- Why should the information and telecommunication industry become private sector partners in combating the sexual exploitation of children?

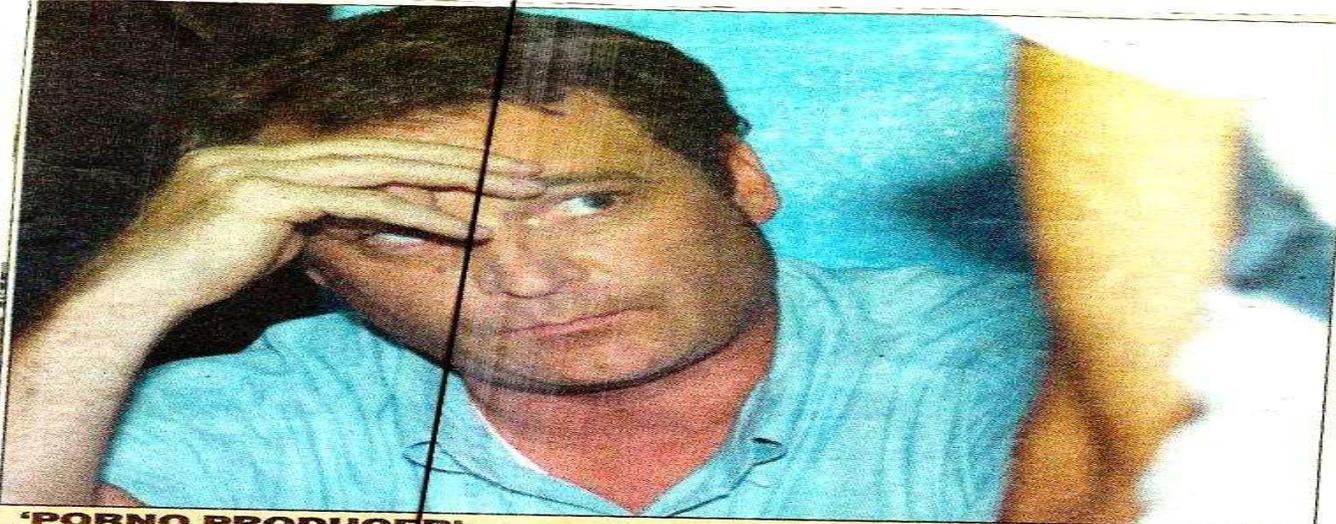
ANSWER: The same argument behind involving the hotels, travel and tour operators, etc. holds true for ICTs. The ICTs are not the perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation but their FACILITATE ARE BEING USED TO EXPLOIT CHILDREN.

Background

The ICT is being used to advertise the Philippines as a sex tourist destination.

Rationale

The ICT is also being used to gain access to children and adolescents for sexual exploitation. It is a venue for solicitation and “grooming” children and adolescents for sexual abuse and exploitation.



'PORNO PRODUCER'

American William Lewis Watts (above), alleged producer of porno films, is arrested for exploiting local girls. Left photo: Cebu City police chief Cecil Ezra Sandalo views one of Watt's x-rated videos. (Story on Page 8)

JUNJIE MENDOZA

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CCPO director Cecil Ezra Sandalo (left) introduces to reporters the two girls allegedly abused by William Lewis Watts.

JUNJIE MENDOZA

CDN / OCT 3, 2003 / p. 8

COPS RAID WEBCAM ROOMS

by Chito Aragon
CORRESPONDENT

Outside, the house looks like an ordinary two-floor apartment building in Lapu-Lapu City. But police and social workers who entered yesterday found rooms upstairs that were bare of furniture except for beds, sex toys and Internet-connected computers with web cameras pointed at

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CAPTION:
MARC Anthony Woolbright: "This are just my friends." At left, won lice, who found them upstairs cameras.

Women were paid P20,000 to 'chat'

Police say Woolbright's cyberporn business was run by local girlfriend

Chito O. Aragon
and Suzzane Salva-Alueta

Some of the eight women caught in Thursday's police raid of a suspected cybersex den in Lapu-Lapu City said they were "recruited" by a Cebuana girlfriend of accused American national Marc Anthony Woolbright.

In their affidavits, the women said they were paid P10,000 to P11,000 per half month by Woolbright to go online to a website that introduced them to male foreigners. There they would chat with the men online and sometimes pose in front of web cameras.

In a press conference, Senior Supt. Jose Jorge Corpuz, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG-7) said Woolbright's girlfriend Cherrybem "Beth" Bacus, would be included in criminal charges they plan to file.

Police said Woolbright appeared to be the financier of the business with Bacus operating it.

"Si Beth ang nag-recruit nang ibang babae. Nag-cooperate ang iba sa amin", Corpuz told reporters.

Corpuz said that when Woolbright was abroad, the on-line chat rooms were already established and being run by Bacus.

No charges were filed against the other women, who were invited for questioning and detained in the CIDG office.



SOME of the women who were found in the rented apartment of Marc Anthony Woolbright said they were paid P20,000 a month to chat online and sometimes "perform" for foreigners in front of a web camera.

CDN PHOTO/TONEE DESPOJO

Stopping Internet porn cafes

What can local governments do to stop Internet cafes from being used for pornography?

CDN asked Provincial Board Member and lawyer Victor Maambong for some ideas.

He noted that many cyberporn operators register as Internet cafes which are loosely monitored, if at all, by local government units and the police.

1. Tighten conditions for the issuance of a mayor's permit for Internet cafes with web cameras.

"A preventive approach is better than remedial actions where authorities have to run after violators."

2. Terms of the mayor's permit should be specific and strict in placing full responsibility on the operator or business owner for any violation of law.

3. Require an Internet café to become a member of an organization so operators can police their own ranks.

Rationale

- Widespread consumption, voluntarily or involuntarily, of pornographic materials by children and young people.
- Cases of “self-exploitation” where children and adults are reported to be using internet cafes and engaging in sexually explicit conduct in public. The existence of private cubicles in internet cafes where sexual abuse and pornography occur was confirmed.

PRIVATE ROOMS

Easy cash, webcams tempt young women to strip online in Internet cafe cubicles

by Nestor B. Ramirez
DAY DESK EDITOR

Part One

Easy money and public access to web cameras and pornography sites in Internet cafes in downtown Cebu City lure young women to engage in private striptease sessions or lewd chats with men they meet only in cyberspace.

"Private rooms" or enclosed "VIP rooms" make cybersex a dollar-earning pastime for local students and hard up women.

At least four Internet cafes with these extra features were visited by Cebu Daily News in Junquera St., about a block away from a Catholic university and walking distance to several other schools.

Some cafes have signboards advertising "private rooms" and offer student discounts for the use of web cameras in enclosed areas.

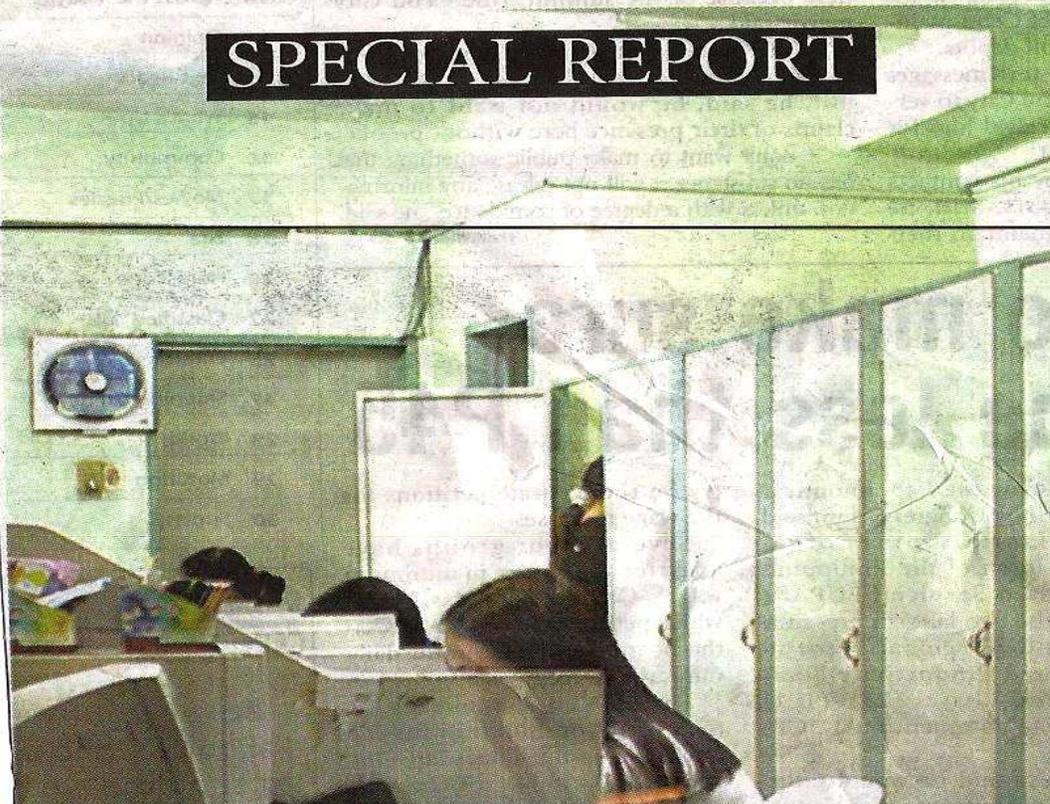
Luisa, a 19-year-old student, said she earns the equivalent of P 5,000 a week or more for showing her face and naked breasts on the Internet depending on what her chat mate requests to expose.

Luisa compared the gains with the inexpensive rate of a "private room" with a web camera rented for P25 to P50 for an hour in the university belt.

Dealing with male foreigners she meets by Internet chatting, she says she earns at least \$20 and, if she gets lucky, as much as \$100 dollars in a single visit

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SPECIAL REPORT



AT left, A girl enters one of seven cubicles of an Internet Cafe in Junquera St. located near several schools and universities. Below, posters in another downtown cybercafe advertise student discounts for VIP rooms with web cameras.

CDN PHOTO/RUDOLPH ALCAZAREN



UNICEF and ECPAT

- UNICEF and ECPAT, embarked on a program to make internet technology (IT) safe for children, by co-organizing the National Consultation among young people in December 2006 and the Make IT Safe Campaign.
- A major output is the children's Call to Action against child pornography where they planned to organize fora and trainings for awareness and self-regulation among internet café operators.

Make IT Safe Campaign in the Philippines

3 components:

- Reaching out to internet café operators. ECPAT held a series of roundtable discussions among this sector in 8 cities in the Philippines (1 in Luzon, 3 in Visayas and 4 in Mindanao) in late 2006;
- Advocacy among school children in four (4) pilot schools in District 2 of Quezon City;
- Awareness-raising among community leaders in District 2, Quezon City.

“Child-friendly Internet Café”

- While contemplating on the image of a child-friendly internet café, ECPAT decided to open its own facility which would be operated by its volunteers among the young people.
- Since they were not familiar with the operations and management of an internet café, it sought assistance from Everything Online Inc. (EOL), a local internet franchisor.
- ECPAT opened its internet café named ECPAT I-Café Plus on August 29, 2007. The café promotes guidelines that will protect children from harmful material in the Internet and against unscrupulous individuals they may meet in computer shops or online.

Everything Online Inc. (EOL)

- From this simple technical assistance, the relationship between ECPAT and EOL has turned into an active partnership for continuing advocacy for child-friendly internet cafes in the Philippines.
- Everything Online Inc. (EOL) started its operations in early 2006 as an internet franchisor. EOL is a Filipino corporation involved mainly in the franchising of Internet Cafés in the country. Currently the company has close to 600 franchisees covering 49 provinces of the country servicing the needs of micro, small and medium entrepreneurs nationwide and customers mainly from the young people.

UNICEF-ECPAT-EOL Partnership

- In August of 2007, ECPAT and EOL signed a Memorandum of Agreement to protect children against child pornography by keeping internet technology safe
- ECPAT raised its concerns regarding IT café owners who lacked enthusiasm in attending the round table discussions organized in late 2006. The latter had the misconception that the Make-IT-Safe campaign is anti-technology and therefore is also anti-business. There was also a general lack of concern on issues such as child pornography.
- To overcome this bottleneck, EOL, ECPAT and UNICEF agreed to sponsor the ALL EOL ICafe Owners Conference, conducted December 6–8, 2008 at the Grand Boulevard Hotel in Manila.

Resources Used

- UNICEF contributed financial support for the conduct of the Conference
- EOL also had their share for the conference expenses, such as the conference backdrop, lights and sound, PC for the main control, wi-fi connection, video coverage, desktops and printers and stickers.
- EOL also invited other sponsors such as Globe and online companies which set up exhibit booths and gave out some freebies to the participants.
- Staff support came from both ECPAT and EOL.

Conference Objectives

- Improve the knowledge and understanding of EOL franchise holders regarding both the benefits and risks that online technology bring to children and young people;
- Come up with a set of IT Safe Standards / Code of conduct for EOL I-café shop franchise holders and owners;
- Come up with recommendations on how to use technology in developing and disseminating Online Safety Reminders, Games, Web Streams, etc that help protect children against child pornography and promote online safety;
- Facilitate positive relations with the private sector and support and encourage their initiatives.

Major Conference Output

- The participants of the conference agreed to have a Code of Conduct which they can follow to make the internet industry more safe, humane, developmental and value-based.
- 58 I-café owners signed the Code of Conduct

Results for EOL

- EOL adopted the promotion and advocacy of ‘child-friendly internet café’ as their ‘corporate social responsibility’. They believe that this will contribute, no matter if it is just a small drop in the bucket, into decreasing demand for pornographic materials.
- As part of this CSR, they include the ‘child-friendly internet café’ logos in each workstation of their new franchisees
- They have also included a new clause in its contract which prohibits their franchisees from accessing pornographic materials
- EOL also encouraged other partners, like online gaming companies, to pursue the advocacy as well and develop programs which are more child-friendly

Results for I-café owners

- They learned more about the dangers and risks that children face when confronted with pornographic materials.
- They resolved to continue with the advocacy, by prohibiting access to pornographic websites, even if it means lesser income for them. They have installed blocker software (i.e.K9) and keywords in their router which will block access to pornography
- It was also a venue share techniques on how to address problems they faced in their shops (i.e. sexually explicit conduct inside the café)
- They have also expressed their desire to share the information with other internet owners, specially those who are members of internet associations in their locality, e.g. Internet Café Association of Marikina

Lesson learned

- If the campaign had positive results with one franchisor, it can be duplicated with other sectors in the IT industry, such as other franchisors, online gaming companies, and ISPs.
- During the 1st National Consultation on Child Pornography in the Philippines in 2005, efforts to involve the private sector were in vane
- Three years later, the partnership between UNICEF-ECPAT-EOL has proven that the ICT businesses can and will install protection mechanisms for children once they become more aware of the harmful effects that their businesses can bring.

Future direction

- For this year, UNICEF-ECPAT-EOL will host a series of sub-national conferences to reach out to franchise holders in the country and to non-franchise i-café owners as well.
- This is still in the planning stages but it will come in the next few months.
- YOU'RE ALL INVITED TO COME!

THANK YOU

Help. Care. Protect.

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