

OffenderWatch App Talking Points + Stats

What's the Problem?

- In 2019 there were more than **45 million images** of children being sexually abused online. ([The New York Times](#))
- **1 in 5 kids admit to being exposed to sexually explicit images online.** ([American Academy of Pediatrics](#))
 - *How many children don't admit it?*
- Reports to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the organization that receives cybertips in the United States, including from all of the Silicon Valley technology platforms, **have more than doubled**, from 983,734 reports in March 2019 to 2,027,520 reports March 2020.
- There are **over 1 million offenders in OffenderWatch's registry**, most of whom spent less than three years in jail.
- *The New York Times* reported in 2020 a case of a mother who was relieved her son was playing Minecraft and Fortnite instead of the more violent Grand Theft Auto. She later found a video of bestiality with a child in her son's online chats with other players.
- Giving a child a phone with no protection is like giving them a loaded gun and not telling them to shoot it.
 - Often kids are involved in situations like these and parents don't find out about it until years later.
- Even if a parent looks through their child's phone, they often aren't educated in the specifics of each app or the warning signs to look for.
 - The OffenderWatch App is the **only app** that can thoroughly protect a child from contact from known sexual offenders.
- Use the anecdotes involving the bus story and the kid with thousands of followers.
- A 2020 report from Europol noted there has been an increase in the digital activity of those seeking to sexually exploit children through the Internet.

About the OffenderWatch App

- Trusted law enforcement partner [OffenderWatch](#) created the OffenderWatch App, a new mobile app to help keep families safer from sex offenders.
- The app is free to download anywhere it is offered through law enforcement.
- Features of the free version of the app include:
 - Parents can see their child's location and the location of registered sex offenders.
 - Parents will receive notifications from law enforcement if a sex offender moves into their neighborhood.
 - Families can access free internet safety tips and tips for talking to children about sex offenders.
- Citizens can choose to upgrade the app to a paid "Protect Plus" version. The cost is \$9.99 per year to monitor an entire family's devices.
- Features of the Protect Plus version of the app also include:

- The app monitors the child's smartphone Snapchat activity, texts, emails, location and phone calls in the background, without storing the child's messages or interfering with its use.
- If a registered sex offender contacts the child, or if the child lingers near the address of a sex offender, the parent or guardian receives an instant notification.
- From there, parents should ask their children about their smartphone activity or contact law enforcement to investigate.
- Citizens can download the app from their local law enforcement website or from the Google Play and Apple app stores.

How Does the App Work?

- The OffenderWatch App is a free app for iPhone and Android devices.
- The app uses the device location to show the location of registered sex offenders.
- The OffenderWatch App also monitors a child's location and notifies a parent if the device is within close proximity of a sex offender's residence for an extended period.
- With the Protect Plus version of the app, it also analyzes certain messages or phone calls sent to the device against participating law enforcement databases of sex offender information.
 - If a registered sex offender account sends a child a message through text, email or Snapchat, or calls their phone, the app will send a notification to a parent or guardian.

App Store Availability

- The OffenderWatch app is available in both Google Play and Apple app stores.
- Presently, the OffenderWatch app can show where registered sex offenders are located near you or your family.
- The OffenderWatch App can monitor location tracking on Apple/iPhone devices. Apple does not currently allow outside applications to have access to phone activity. OffenderWatch is working on development of a way to provide monitoring for iPhone call activity that we hope to release soon.

How is the OffenderWatch App different from other parental control applications?

- The OffenderWatch App is the only app that alerts parents if a known sex offender has contacted their child. Sex offenders' phone numbers, emails or social media accounts are not publicly available and can only be obtained through law enforcement.
- The Offender App is currently the only application using sex offender information provided directly by law enforcement.

Questions Parents Should Ask

Is your child at risk online? Here are five questions for parents to reduce the risk that your child would become a victim of online exploitation, sextortion, or sex trafficking.

- What is your child's age and gender?
 - Teens and preteens (11-15) are most vulnerable as they are most curious about sex and most naïve about predators.
 - Girls are targeted and exploited 5 times more than boys.
 - Talk to her about making friends online and sharing photos.
- Have you reviewed the apps, messages, calls, and images on your child's phone?

- Look for unusually suggestive images or conversations. Talk about it with your child.
- Do her conversations include new slang, or her appearance become overly sexualized?
- Does your child not allow access to her device? Is she becoming isolated or hiding their device?
- Is your child meeting new ‘friends’ that they’ve only known through the Internet?
 - Does she know them in real life? Do they strive to get many followers or to become famous?
 - Does she have a new boyfriend —particularly an older one? Is she hiding a boyfriend or not willing to introduce family or friends to him?
 - Is she prone to run away, perhaps to meet her friend?
- Have you searched for dangerous apps on your child’s phone?
 - Predators know which apps parents screen and will move the conversation with your child to another account or a secret chat app.
 - Does your child have a second device and/or multiple accounts on social media?
 - Consider getting apps that detect dangerous apps, monitor app use, and do location tracking with alerts, like the OffenderWatch App.
- Have you had a conversation with your child on online safety, how they choose friends, and how to respond should anyone make them feel uncomfortable or suggest something inappropriate?
 - Is your Child at Risk Online? Consider checking for offenders nearby, and monitoring the movement and communication of your child with the OffenderWatch App.
 - If you suspect abuse, immediately contact local law enforcement office or dial 911 or contact the CyberTipline 1-800-THE LOST.

Can Law Enforcement or Parents See a Child’s Data?

- The OffenderWatch App will keep a record of any data that involves sex offender contact and will store the information pertaining to sex offender contact for a period of time in case the child deletes the information.
- The data is private and cannot be shared unless given authorization.
- Law Enforcement will not have access to a child’s data unless the parent authorizes it.

What Happens when a Sex Offender Makes Contact?

- If a child receives a threatening or soliciting message from a registered sex offender, parents should contact their local law enforcement office immediately. The OffenderWatch App includes local law enforcement contact information.
- The OffenderWatch App does not directly contact or communicate with law enforcement.

Important Internet Safety Statistics

- Girls are targeted and exploited in the **overwhelming majority** of child sexual abuse material. ([NCMEC](#))
 - **78% of reports** regarding sextortion involved girls and **15% involved boys**.

- 89% of teens have a smart phone and 70% are on social media multiple times a day. ([Pew Research Center](#))
- Teens overwhelmingly choose Snapchat (41%) as their main social media site, followed by Instagram (22%) and Facebook (15%). ([Common Sense Media](#))
 - **54% of teens asked said that if parents knew what actually happens on social media, they'd be a lot more worried about it.** ([Common Sense Media](#))
- At least **27% of teens** have received sexually explicit texts and emails, and at least 14.8% are sending sexts. ([JAMA Network](#))
- **67% of all victims** of sexual assault reported to law enforcement **are under 18 years old.** ([Bureau of Justice Statistics](#))
 - 34% of all victims are under age 12.
 - **1 of every 7** victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies **were under age 6.**
- We estimate 80% of addresses have a registered sex offender within a 1-mile radius.
- In 2019, [NCMEC's CyberTipline](#) received more than **16.9 million reports**, most of which related to:
 - Apparent child sexual abuse images
 - Online enticement, including “sextortion”
 - Child sex trafficking
 - Child sexual molestation
- Reports from NCMEC'S CyberTipline included over **69.1 million** images, videos and other files related to child sexual exploitation. ([NCMEC](#))
- In fiscal year 2019, the number of children Homeland Security Investigations rescued and/or identified from instances of child exploitation grew to 1,069, compared to 859 the year prior. This fiscal year, as of March 2020, HSI has initiated more than 2,700 cases and have made more than 1,400 criminal arrests related to the exploitation of children. Since 2013, HSI has rescued and/or identified over 6,500 child victims, thanks in part to initiatives like Project iGuardian.

Increase in Online Predators Due to COVID-19

- In March 2020, the FBI issued a warning to parents about an increased threat from predators online during the Coronavirus pandemic.
 - “Due to school closings as a result of COVID-19, children will potentially have an increased online presence and/or be in a position that puts them at an inadvertent risk. Due to this newly developing environment, the FBI is seeking to warn parents, educators, caregivers and children about the dangers of online sexual exploitation and signs of child abuse,” an FBI press release stated.
- In May, a man was arrested in Salt Lake City for having more than 5,000 images and 200 videos of child pornography, including images of infants and other children. Federal prosecutors noted the coronavirus shutdown has not stopped child exploitation.

- [According to a 2020 Europol report](#), “**The global pandemic of COVID-19 is not only a serious health issue but also a cybersecurity risk.** Criminals swiftly took advantage of the virus proliferation and are abusing the demand people have for information and supplies.
- “**Information received from law enforcement partners strongly indicates increased online activity by those seeking child abuse material. This is consistent with postings in dedicated forums and boards by offenders welcoming opportunities to engage with children whom they expect to be more vulnerable due to isolation, less supervision and greater online exposure.**”
Source: 2020 Europol Report file:///C:/Users/crome/Downloads/pandemic_profiteering-how_criminals_exploit_the_covid-19_crisis.pdf
- According to [a report from Scientific American](#), “Predators make their way into chat rooms and video game sessions and often pose as minors, starting innocuous conversations. These interactions escalate into the adults pressuring children to send them sexually explicit photographs or videos (sometimes using financial bribes; other times exploiting vulnerabilities around self-esteem). The predators later use such images as blackmail to coerce their victims into sending them more sexually explicit material and keeping the abuse secret. They may threaten to send the pictures to children’s parents if they don’t provide increasingly graphic images.”
- “Because of shame around sex, which predators exploit, children often keep their interactions with abusers secret until they’ve escalated out of control.
- Parents should have candid talks with their children and take a non-judgmental stance.”
- Source: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-coronavirus-pandemic-puts-children-at-risk-of-online-sexual-exploitation/>

About OffenderWatch

- For over 20 years, OffenderWatch has worked with more than **3,000** local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in 38 states to monitor, report and collaborate on the offenders in their specific jurisdictions.
 - OffenderWatch invented the first email alert system to notify concerned parents when a registered sex offender moves into their neighborhood.
 - If you can be notified about a sex offender in your neighborhood, why not be notified of one talking to your child in your living room?

OffenderWatch Contact Information

- For more information, visit OffenderWatch’s website at OffenderWatch.com.
- Follow on Twitter ([@offenderwatch](https://twitter.com/offenderwatch)), Facebook ([@offenderwatch](https://facebook.com/offenderwatch)) or LinkedIn ([@offenderwatch](https://linkedin.com/company/offenderwatch)).