**The Fourth National Survey of Internet & Technology Facilitated Child Exploitation (N-JOV4)**

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**Background**

Technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation crimes are characterized by rapid growth and changing dynamics. For example, in 2000 there were an estimated 2,577 arrests for technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation crimes of all types.[1] By 2006, the number of arrests had almost tripled to 7,010, and increased to 8,144 in 2009.[1] The characteristics of arrests for child pornography production changed significantly during that time, with large increases in teenage victims and cases involving youth-produced sexual images. Police increasingly used proactive tactics to combat child pornography possession and distribution, and close to 10% of such cases in 2009 identified offline child molesters who probably would not have otherwise been detected. Such changes over a relatively short period of time are unusual in criminal justice and social science research, supporting the need for tracking a volatile environment and law enforcement efforts to respond. As technology continues to evolve, research is needed to help the criminal justice system deal with an environment whose dynamics are not always conspicuous or tracked by other criminal justice data collection systems.

**Goals of the study**

The overall goals of the proposed Fourth National Juvenile Online Victimization Survey (N-JOV4) is to protect children against online dangers by developing a better understanding of new threats, problems, and concerns encountered by law enforcement in its effort to protect children in the changing technological environment; tracking and monitoring new and continuing threats; and identifying which investigative strategies are associated with more favorable outcomes in protecting children.

Specific objectives of N-JOV4 are to:
- Develop a sampling plan and pilot test a proposed N-JOV4 methodology;
- Implement a national agency-level survey to produce accurate and reliable national estimates of the prevalence of arrests for technology-facilitated sex crimes against minors, and investigations involving youth-produced sexual images;

- Conduct in-depth case-level interviews with investigators to understand how these cases were disclosed and managed by law enforcement agencies; and
- Combine the N-JOV4 data with all three prior N-JOV datasets to analyze how the prevalence and characteristics of such crimes have changed over time.

## Methodology

The core methodology will consist of collecting 2019 data from a nationally representative sample of LEAs and interviewing investigators about these crimes and their investigation. The study takes advantage of the long-term collaboration between the CCRC and the National Criminal Justice Training and Technical Assistance Center (NCJTC), members of which will assist the researchers throughout the study. The study will replicate the highly successful design of the earlier N-JOV studies.[2-6] It will collect information from a nationally representative sample of LEAs (n=2,500) about specific technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation cases (n=2,000) through a mail survey followed by telephone interviews with investigators knowledgeable about the cases. It will include three main tasks (project design and implementation, survey development and implementation, and post survey administration) conducted over the 48 months of the research.

## Impact of the study

1. Findings will quantify national trends and assess overall progress in law enforcement investigative strategies targeting these offenders.
2. Results will help determine whether there are some new or growing technology-facilitated crime types that need greater attention.
3. Findings will identify whether there are important changes in offender demographics or methods.
4. The study will give examples of areas where there have been increases in arrests compared to previous N-JOVs related to new investigative strategies.
5. Study findings will identify whether law enforcement approaches have been improving due to training.
6. The study will provide valuable information about the impact of the federally-funded ICAC Task Forces and their training programs.
7. We will be able to identify the major barriers to greater law enforcement effectiveness in dealing with these crimes.

## References

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