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CHILD ENDANGERED BY SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract

Social networks are currently the most important means of communication for children and youth. Within social networks are entrusted with personal problems, establish virtual contacts and friendships. These social networks are also a means of blackmail, bullying and other pathological phenomena whose victims are often the children. This paper aims to map and assess the risk of pathological behavior on social networks. This will especially be the mapping of crimes against children through social networks. As the main research method was chosen interviews with experts. Was approached by an expert from the police, social worker and expert in the operation of social networks. The main question will be answered by analyzing the interviews with these experts. Using the evaluation interviews answering the research questions. These questions are aimed to assess the risk communication on social networks for children, features typical offenders against children through social networks and the most common type of crime in the virtual environment against children. The paper will focus on the modern phenomenon - moral crimes committed via the Internet. A partial aim of this paper is to define the role of social work in a multidisciplinary approach to child victims of crimes committed in cyberspace. At the end of the field will be determined by further research and recommendations for practice.

1. Introduction

Social networks are currently the most important means of communication for children and youth. They confide in others with personal problems, establish virtual contacts and friendships within social networks. These social networks are, unfortunately, also means to blackmail, bullying and other pathological phenomena whose victims are often the children.

This paper aims to map and assess the risk of pathological behavior on social networks. This will be especially the mapping of crimes against children through social networks. The paper will focus on the modern phenomenon - a vice crimes committed via the Internet. A partial aim of this paper is to define the role of social work in a multidisciplinary approach to child victims of crimes committed in cyberspace. In the end there will be identifying areas of further research and recommendations for practice.

2. Problem Statement

Social networks exist. They are neither positive nor negative, are what is communicating people create. This work deals with the risks of social networking in relation to children. We consider it important to tackle the looming dangers of social networks in relation to children. It is important to describe the risks, define and based on these findings to determine the possibilities of cooperation between various institutions. In this area you need to work in a network helping professionals for the benefit of endangered child.

In the preamble of the basic concepts related to communications in cyberspace. In another part of the following research questions, objective and methods used. The answers to research questions provides an assessment of semi-structured interviews with experts. The results are applied to the performance of social work practice.

2.1. Reasons of study

Social networks are specific web services, focused primarily on acquiring and maintaining social contacts with other Internet users. They can be targeted universally (Facebook, G +), or targeted eg. professionally (LinkedIn, ResearchGate), based on membership in a particular group (former classmates), or by other criteria. The term social networks often coincides with the term of community service servers. Social networks have a number of common characteristics:

a) the content of social networks is created by users themselves;

b) social networks allow you to create social bonds;

c) social networks contain large amounts of personal and sensitive information about themselves published and disseminated by users;

d) Social networks support a simple and effective information sharing (Kopecky, 2015).

For objective evaluation of the importance of social networks is by Kopecky (2015) should be understood that they have due to their use both positives and negatives.

The positive aspects of social networks:

▪ social networks allow you to build interpersonal relationships;

- social networks are a tool for overcoming social isolation;
- social networks allow to implement advertising with precision-targeted audience;
- social networks are a source of learning;
- social networks are a source of entertainment.

Negative social networks:

- social networks contain large amounts of disposable personal data;
- social networks allow you to quickly, easily and anonymously implement cyberbullying, sexual assault on children, cyberstalking, etc .;
- social networks enable the realization of Internet fraud;
- social networks are closely linked to crimes against property;
- for social networking needs are often created dangerous technologies (eg. the auto-tagging faces in the photos);
- social networks are becoming targets of Internet attacks leading to leakage of personal information (Kopecky, 2015).

Social networks are also used by children. According to the results of Czech research (Kopecky, Szotkovski & Krejci, 2014) on the social network Facebook your account 92.29% of Czech children aged 11-17 years. According to an EU-wide survey in 2011 (Livingstone, et al., 2011) uses Facebook more than 70% of children between the ages U9 - 16 years old from European Union countries. According to US research (Purcell, 2012) uses Facebook in the US approximately 94% of children aged 12-17 years. According to the same research, with 39% of American parents their children added to the list of Facebook friends. Another British research (Knowthenet, 2013) points out that 52% of children aged 8-16 years age limit ignores use Facebook and 59% of children used social networks since the age of 10. In recent years, more and more research began to focus on the risks associated with the use of social networks. Researchers divided the risks into several areas (Kopecky, Szotkovski & Krejci, 2015; O'Keeffe, Clarke & Pearson, 2011):

- risks associated with peer-peer communications;
- risks associated with the dissemination of inappropriate, objectionable, illegal content;
- risks associated with the abuse of privacy;
- risks associated with overuse of Facebook;
- other risks (online fraud, spreading viruses).

For this reason, our country engaged in risk communication on social networks from the perspective of experts who are regularly confronted with this issue. Based on the evaluation of their informations will be set out recommendations for practice.

2.2. Definitions of terms

In the context with the misuse of cyberspace has leveled use of terms, which is good to define a common understanding of the text. These are terms that are related to the misuse of cyberspace for different purposes. These concepts are: bullying, cyberbullying, cybergrooming, sexting, cyberstalking,

trolling, and sextortion. Social network is an Internet service that allows its members to create public, closed or even company profiles, presentations, discussion forums, and provides a forum for sharing photos, videos, content, and other activities (Kožíšek & Písecký, 2016).

The term "bullying" is a long-term, repeated and intentional harm to gain dominance over the victim. For bullying is a typical power imbalances and vulnerability of the victim. Thus described bullying have moved into a virtual environment, a modern phenomenon became known as so-called cyberbullying. Hulanová (2012) describes cyberbullying, as a specific kind of bullying that uses the Internet, mobile phones and other tools of modern communication technologies to harm or ridicule another person. Happy Slapping is one of the manifestations of cyberbullying. It is an aggressive behavior, when the aggressor chooses a random victim and physically attacked her. The whole attack is filmed or photographed, and records are then placed on the Internet where you can see almost everyone. (Hulanová, 2012).

Kopecký (2015) define cybergrooming as psychological manipulation going through modern communication technologies, in order to gain the trust of victims, luring her to a personal meeting and usually sexually abused. Victims often become girls aged 11-17 years, suffering from lack of confidence or a feeling of loneliness. Kybergroomer is usually sexual attacker who often impersonates another person, than he actually is, through information and communication technologies. Major feature of attacker is patience, because he holds on communicate with the victim for several months to gain her trust.

The word sexting is a combination of the words "sex" and "texting" and it means sending text, photo, audio and video content with sexual overtones through information and communication technologies. The content, that is sent mainly in the context of sexual relationships, is misused to harm the other party by publishing or the threats of its publication. This happens especially after the end of sexual relationship (Kopecký, 2015).

According Hulanová (2012) we understand stalking such behavior including repeated and persistent attempts at unsolicited contacts or communication, which arouses concern or discomfort in victims. When it takes place on the Internet, we talk about so-called cyberstalking. Cyberstalking basically representing repeated harassment and threatening behavior via the Internet or other electronic means of communication. Troll means a deliberately provocative message board user and trolling is behavior of such users that is characterized by intrusive activity in discussions and chats, inappropriate comments and unfounded criticism (Kožíšek & Písecký, 2016).

Sextortion is online extortion, under which the perpetrator uses intimate material of victim to achieve his objective. Sextortion recorded a massive rise in all the countries of Europe, including the Czech Republic.

3. Research Questions

Determined the main research question, which correspond to the three partial objectives. Sub researche questions are to assess the risks of communication on the Internet, characterize offender and characterize the most common risky behaviour.

3.1. The central research question

At the beginning of our research, we have created a major research question. Our question (CRQ) is: What are the risks of social networks for children, particularly for children under the age of eighteen?

3.2. Sub research questions

The main research question was the basis for creation the specific research questions. For the purposes of our research, we have set up three sub research questions, which will be reflected in interviews with informants. These three questions are:

- Sub research question no. 1 (SRQ1): What is the risk in communication on social networks for children under eighteen years of age?
  This question is used to identify and describe the risks that communication on social networks brings to children.

- Sub research question no. 2 (SRQ2): How does the typical perpetrator of crimes against children under eighteen years of age through social networks look like?
  This question will help us to describe the typical picture of the offender, which is important for the analysis of socio-pathological behavior on social networks. This issue also plays a big role in the prevention of pathological social phenomena on the Internet.

- Sub research question no. 3 (SRQ3): What is most often perpetrated by offenders in the context of crimes against children under eighteen years of age through social networks?
  This question is key point for defining the crimes against children under eighteen years of age through social networks. The answer to this question can tell us which crimes are most often committed against children in this context.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main objective is to monitor and evaluate the risk of pathological behavior on social networks, especially the mapping of crimes against children through social networks. The aim of the study is to determine the starting point for further research exploring the area. The purpose of the study is to find out what are the areas of preventive action, on which they can focus prevention specialists, teachers, social educators and social workers. The aim of the study was to determine:

- what are the informants experience with risk phenomena in cyberspace against children;
- how to characterize a group of informants of offenders of crimes against children in the online environment;
- what are the informants experience with offenses against children in the online environment.

4.1. Exploitation

The findings, which will be obtained from this study will be further elaborated in detail for purposes other bases of research solutions. The findings should lead to a further direction. It should identify the risk events in the environment of social networking endanger children and interconnect obtain qualitative findings with other studies using quantitative strategies.

Follow-up studies may focus on specific risks communication of children on social networks. They can also focus on the target groups of potential offenders and focusing on preventing unwanted behavior in cyberspace. Follow-up studies may also focus on the prevention of specific crimes, describe specific case studies and use them role models for preventing undesirable behavior towards children in a social networking environment.

The results of the study and other related studies can serve as administrators of social networks to steer concrete steps for the protection of children's social network users. The study may direct legislative protection of children's social network users. Follow-up studies may focus on determining whether legislative protection of children's social network users is sufficient.

5. Research Methods

The aim of the research is to evaluate the risk of pathological behavior on social networks and find out how to effectively protect children against abuse and damage through the Internet. As a research method were used interviews, because this method uncover monitored issues in the best way. We contacted three experts: policeman, expert for information technology, social network a communication and social worker practicing social and legal protection of children (viz Table 01). Experts answered three main questions concerning risks to children on social networks.

Table 01.   Marking informants

Informant	Profession	Age	Practice
I1	policeman	41 y.	5 y.
I2	social worker	38 y.	15 y.
I3	expert for IT	31 y.	6 y.

The findings from this study can not be obtained otherwise than by evaluating the responses of experts. Data can not be obtained by evaluating statistical data, because data monitoring only offenses committed against children through social networks in the Czech Republic are not registered.

5.1. Risk communication on social networks for children (SRQ1)

Informant I1 said: Communicating with people who actually have a different identity (girl may think that says a little girl, but in reality it is a forty year old man). After that follows extortion, sexual pressure, cyberbullying, or even persecution. We often face sexual oppression under a false identity. It may also lead to abuse via webcam, or even a personal contact. It worries us most at this moment. Informant I2 said: The risk is really great, because children due to their immaturity and gullibility don't reveal risk communication. Often either no one checks activity of children on the Internet, or checks it only minimally, that's why it is not possible to alert them to the initial inappropriate communication. Informant I3 said that communication on social networks and globally in the online environment brings risks, especially for children and adolescents. There is a lot of people on the Internet, who cheat, manipulate, or even abuse. Children are at risk of pathological behavior, such as social engineering, cyber bullying, cyber grooming, sexting, cyberstalking etc.

All informants agreed that free access as well as social networks and the ability not to come under his own identity facilitates the perpetrators of child abuse through social networks. Informant I1 said that the perpetrator usually issued for another person who is closer to the child, sympathetic, uses mirroring communication for gaining sympathy. Mirroring eg .: "... you like to dance? I also love to dance ... "," ... you sad today? I am also sad today ... "," ... have you been boy? I have not had a boyfriend ... ". Highlights the capability of handling the offenders use. Perpetrators also use "love bombing". Convince the child victim, they love it, and it is beautiful. After a short time turns road toward sex. Victim offender writes that he has nothing to be ashamed of. To assess requests for photos in her underwear. Victim suit and so gets into a spiral of blackmail, threats and gradually sexual coercion. This situation according to experience Informant I1 may take several years. Most often the victims are girls aged 12 to 18 years.

According to the informant I3 is a risk for children during communication on the Internet: inexperience, gullibility, immaturity. Children in social networking sites to communicate normally, and often lose the ability to communicate in real life. This is another risk. When intimate communication, children are convinced that the perpetrator picture clears. Children are quickly torn down to conduct uninhibited, they believe that their photos are not tangible and therefore not real. According to the Informant I2 experience for a child most threatening cyberbullying, which are published intimate photos of a child and sexual pressure, which is threatened by publishing intimate photos. This is damaging to child most. All of these situations should deal with the police.

5.2. Characteristics typical perpetrator of crimes against children through social networks (SQR2)

Informant I1 said, the most frequent perpetrators are men. It is mostly a younger person at age 18 or 19 years, for example. We could say that it ranges from 15 years to 40 years. For those younger perpetrators it is more about the hormones. For those older it may be dysfunctional relationships or mental health problems. Informant I2 could not answer this question because it works with victims, not the perpetrators. From his own experience he could say that they are always men, but rather a large age difference compared to abused children – i.e. age about 35 years old and over.

Informant I3 stated that in the cases of social engineering, we found the offenders in age from 18 years to 58 years. Mostly men aged 30 - 40 years, with primary or secondary education, unmarried or divorced. They often try to simulate speech of children. Those, who demand for sex on the webcam they are mostly men around 19 years of age. In one sample of reported cases of cyber grooming attacker was mostly aged 17 to 34 years, with secondary education, and employment. These offenders have the opportunity to be online throughout the day. These offenders stated on social networks most their age around 16 years, the average time creating a profile was 3 months. It is interesting that people who use impersonation frequently report a fraudulent profiles or defective communication.

Informants agreed that most threatens the child person under unknown identities and that in most cases the child has no connection. I1 said that while most offenders addressing hundreds of unknown children, but only a few dozen children respond to communication. The perpetrators usually use a random selection of girls, picking, for example, according to the attractiveness of the profile photo. Informant met in practice with the offender, which apart from unidentified girls, also addressed the girls he knew.

Sometimes under changed and sometimes under real-life identity. His impunity secured a possession intimate photos of girls and threats to their publication on Facebook.

5.3. Characteristics of offenses in the context of crimes against children through social networks (SQR3)

Informant I1 said that most often leads to possession of child pornography, production of child pornography, sexual pressure, sometimes even rape. There are even cases where it appears prostitution, zoophilia, etc. According to the informant I2 most offenders often asks for photographs, it usually starts with a photograph of the face, later in bathing suits or underwear, and later completely naked - ie. the offense of sexual abuse, sometimes even sent nude photos. Another common crime is a threatening.

Informant I3 said that risk of communication on social networks for children have already been mentioned. Offenders with their pathological behaviour committed several crimes. The most common include fraud, damage to foreign laws, unauthorized handling of personal data, the spread of pornography, production and handling of child pornography, abuse of a child to produce pornography and participation in pornographic performances, seducing to sexual intercourse, making unauthorized contact with a child, sexual abuse, extortion, or stalking, for example.

6. Findings

Thanks to our interviews with experts we could answer research questions that we posed at the beginning. Based on the evaluation interviews, we can say the following findings:

In response to research questions dealing with risks communication on social networks for children (SRQ1) can be stated that the main risks of virtual communication on social networks is child abuse by offenders under a changed identity. Most often, the perpetrators of attacks on the intimacy of a child when it wants the intimate photos. Perpetrators use manipulation in communication with the child, which gives the impression of a relationship of trust or under other pretexts. As the risks were evaluated: inexperience, gullibility and immaturity of children, hidden identity of the perpetrator, uncontrolled access to the Internet for children. Children can not estimate the risk communication at the beginning. There is also a general control of risk communication children. Children are not able to evaluate the risks associated with sending intimate pictures even if these pictures take pictures and send to an unknown person on a voluntary basis initially. Children, particularly girls aged 12-18 years, are most at risk and vulnerable group at risk communication through social networks.

On sub-question no. 2 (SRQ2), dealing with the characteristics of perpetrators of crimes against children through social networks may be noted that in most cases it is the man who can randomly search for victims among the girls. It is mostly men aged 15-40 years. The perpetrator is usually a primary or secondary education, are unmarried or divorced, does not have functional relationships or have problems in mental health. For their victims usually have no relationship with the perpetrator, often they do not know personally. In some cases the offender knows the victim personally. Perpetrators of sexual coercion choose their victims at random, by example. Facebookových profiles. Perpetrators have full-time access to the Internet. Younger offenders (around 20 years) require their victims frequently shoot at the web camera. Perpetrators are experienced at communicating on social networks.

Offenses committed against children through social networks (SRQ3) can be based on an evaluation of interviews to define the following way: the perpetrators are usually in communication with one child commits several crimes. Most often leads to possession of child pornography, production and management of child pornography, abuse of a child to produce pornography, seducing to sexual intercourse, making unauthorized contact with a child, extortion, harassment, sexual pressure, sometimes even sexual abuse and rape. These crimes lie in the fact that the perpetrators most requested facial image, later in bathing suits or underwear, and later fully naked. First, acquire pictures voluntarily, later used blackmail and coercion.

On the key question investigating the risks of social networks for children (CRQ) answer is that most perpetrators of attacks on girls aged 12 to 18 years when handling them from gaining an intimate pictures, which in a second step to use coercion and blackmail victims. A typical offender is men aged 15-40 years who have basic or secondary education, has an all-day access to the Internet and knows very well the environment of social networks. Most often leads to possession of child pornography, production and management of child pornography, abuse of a child to produce pornography, seducing to sexual intercourse, making unauthorized contact with a child, extortion, harassment, sexual pressure, sometimes even sexual abuse and rape.

The evaluation interviews that child victims are not able to recognize the risk of inappropriate communication in a virtual environment, and therefore it is necessary to focus attention on the protection of those child victims. It is important to prevent criminal acts committed through social networks. If a child is affected by the crime is a task for professionals, to prevent further traumatizing the child during criminal proceedings. This area consider the domain of social workers. In this regard, this work could be followed by other studies dealing with the protection of interests of the child-victims during criminal proceedings.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to find out how to effectively protect children against abuse and damage through the Internet. Does it make sense to forbid children internet communication and participation in social networks? Surely not. There is no need to protect children from the Internet, but from people who are abusing it to harm another person, in this case the child. Therefore, it is important to set the child rules for Internet communication, be interested in the life of a child in its virtual form and especially to talk to him about the risks and difficulties of communication in social networks, as well as the risks of disclosures in these networks. Important areas preventive measures can be determined as follows:

- to teach children to communicate in cyberspace safely and protect your sensitive information;
- to teach parents to recognize the risks of communication on social networks;
- to teach professionals working with children to recognize the risks of communication on social networks.

These set rules and recommendations are ostensibly simple. However, if they were followed, there would be no abuse of photos of children through the Internet network and thereby harming the children, where the consequences can be devastating. Let's remember the stories of children from abroad, who

committed suicide thanks to the publication of their intimate shots on social networks or thanks to the other forms of cyberbullying.

Specific recommendations for practice on the basis of the findings are as follows:

- prevention targeted at girls aged 12 to 18 years;
- prevention targeted at preventing criminal behavior targeted at men aged 18 to 30 years;
- education targeted at parents, prevention specialist, teachers, social educators and social workers in order to be able to identify risk communication on social networks.

Prevention of the use of the Internet and social networks should not be underestimated, its importance is growing with the increasing interest of children and adults about the forms of virtual communication. It's about learning to communicate in a virtual environment safely.

Acknowledgments

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