

Protecting Children in Cyberspace

CWIN Initiative

Sumnima Tuladhar
Executive Coordinator
CWIN-Nepal



ISSUES OF CONCERN

- Images of child sexual abuse, commonly known as child pornography
- Vulnerability of children towards paedophiles preying children online
- Grooming for harm
- Exposure to pornography and other harmful materials
- Cyber bullying and social influence of cyberspace
- Online games and game addiction
- Widespread downloading and distribution of porn movies

MAJOR FINDINGS

Research on Use of Internet By Children

(TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 1430)

- Out of the total respondent children 82% use the internet. Among the children using internet, 74% girls and 91% boys use the internet.
- 94.7% students from private schools and 58.3% from public schools use the internet. Of those, 59.5% spend 1-4 hours a week on the internet.
- 63% children use internet at cybercafés and 51% at home.
- 26.3% girls and 73.7% boys admitted giving out personal details to persons they don't know personally.
- 3.9% children mentioned adult sites as one of their five favorite websites

- 60.3% children reported meeting virtual friends in person of which 15.5% reported of having a bad experience on such a first meeting.
- 91.5% have heard of or had some bad experiences on the internet. Of these, 75.2% admitted seeing shocking images like nudity and pornography, 67% encountered abusive language, 67.8% experienced bullying and harassment and 62.2% reported other improper behavior on the internet.
- 11% children admitted talking about sex online with people they don't know.
- 36% children admitted watching sexual materials on purpose.
- 66.6% children reported seeing sexually explicit materials like pictures, films, MMS etc.

- 98.9% of the one third respondent children viewed sexually explicit materials on the internet.
- 18.9% of the one third respondent children admitted viewing sexually explicit materials regularly.
- When confronted with sexually explicit materials for the first time 39.45% children being shocked, 18.7% unaffected and 13.7% enjoyed it.
- 35.6% children admitted doing or saying things on the internet that they normally would not do.
- Of the one third respondent children, 5.4% admitted exposing themselves through the webcam.

GAPS IDENTIFIED

- Cyber law in Nepal exists in the form of Electronic Transaction Act 2006 but it is not all encompassing.
- Existing Nepali Children's Act also does not specifically mention protection of children from online harms.
- Lack of awareness among parents/guardians, teachers and different stakeholders is another issue of concern.
- Digital divide between the children and their parents prevent parents from protecting their children.

- Many children use cyber cafes to use the internet and the cyber cafes are firstly not registered with government authorities and secondly not aware about online harms for children.
- No specific measures have been taken so far from the government to protect online harms against children including availability and accessibility of pornography to minors.
- Cyber cell within the police system is not in full operation.
- Safety information is not given any importance in computer education for children.
- Children are not aware of the possible online risks which put them into high vulnerability.
- Last but not the least, there is a lack of healthy and useful content for Nepali kids in the Internet.

Objectives of CWIN Campaign:

Protecting Children Online

- Investigate the particularities of the online situation and online behaviour of Nepali children.
- Create awareness amongst children, parents and teachers concerning the possible online risks and provide information on safe internet behaviour.
- Make the internet a safer place for Nepali children by forming workgroups of government, IT industries and child rights organizations to create and implement measures to protect children online.
- Inform and sensitise public and policy makers on the alarming situation regarding pornographic movies and children.

FOCUS GROUPS

- Children
- Parents/Guardians
- Teachers
- National Stakeholders which includes- ICT (Information Communication and Technology) Industry, Ministries, Government Departments like; HLCIT High Level Commission for Information Technology), NPC (National Planning Commission), Parliamentarians and Child Rights Organisations.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

- Situation Analysis: Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur Districts)
- Awareness Centers: 10 urban centers, namely: Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Pokhara (Kaski), Narayanghat (Chitwan), Butwal (Rupandehi), Hetauda (Makwanpur), Birjung (Bara), Dharan (Sunsari), Biratnagar (Morang) and Nepalgunj (Banke).

Activities and Progress

(April 2008 – April 2009)

Situation Analysis

- Conducted FGDs with school children and out of school children, teachers and parents.
- Accomplished a first research- *A Study on the Internet Use by Children* with a sample size of 1430 in Kathmandu

□ **Advocacy and Lobbying**

- Integration of “Child Safety in Cyberspace” into CWIN’s advocacy on child rights and child protection work
- Organised First National Stakeholders Meeting. Carry out follow up of the national stakeholders meeting to evaluate the progress of the workgroups and ensure continuation of protection measures and initiatives.
- Lobbying with members of ICT community and telecom sector, both at micro (cyber cafes etc.) and macro (ISPs etc.) level. Received support and solidarity for the campaign from the government departments/officials like HLCIT, NPC and NITC.
- Delegation with concerned ministries. Submit memorandums with recommendations to the concerned Ministries of the new government of Nepal.

- Take initiative for integration of online safety information into the educational system e.g. including safety information in the computer training/curriculum at school and in training for teachers.
- Organize workshops with Parents' and Teachers' Associations. Inform and sensitize on the issue as well as give practical guidance for online child protection.
- Work with the law enforcing agencies, especially the Police Office in Kathmandu, which has started Cyber Cell by providing them with orientation and technical knowledge on the issue.
- Work towards establishment and implementation of a code of conduct for cyber cafés regarding child safety.

❑ Education and Awareness

Awareness Materials

- Produced and disseminated awareness materials- leaflets with safety information for parents and children (both in Nepali and English), brochure (English), poster (bilingual).
- Produce a training kit which includes training manual, flip chart, lesson plans, A/V materials, stickers etc. in order to empower children on the issue and make teachers, operators of telecenters and field officers capable of providing training at local and community levels.

Presentations/Orientation

- Made presentations at major ICT related conferences namely, CAN InfoTech, Mission Swabhimaan 2008/2009, South Asian Student and Youth Professional's ICT Conference 2008, National Conference on ICT and Education.
- Orientation to the police officers of Kathmandu District on "Demystifying Cyber Issues in Nepal"

Media Mobilisation

- Articles published in Bal Chautari (Nepali magazines on child rights issues) and The Kathmandu Post. News coverage of launch of the campaign in all national vernacular.
- Radio programs on the issue of online protection broadcasted in Radio Sagarmatha and Metro FM. Broadcasting of PSA (Public Service Announcement) in radio that went on air in different districts.
- Produced a TV Documentary on the issue and the magnitude of the problem in urban cities in Nepal. Save the Children Sweden has also produced a documentary entitled “Children Online in Nepal: Opportunities and Challenges”h
- News report on protecting children online in the Kantipur primetime news

Awareness of Students/Young People

- Established contacts with different schools and made presentations on the issue and the various safety measures, especially targeting children between age 12 to 18 years.
- Dissemination of safety information for young people during CANInfotech
- Form work group of students from different schools of Kathmandu to create peer led intervention. The students will use art and theatre as a medium of expression and awareness raising.
- Mobilise children from different child clubs/Child Rights Forum and schools across the nation to further strengthen the awareness raising campaign.

❑ **Networking and Alliance Building**

- Established a National Workgroup consisting of different stakeholders to take forward the campaign to protect children online – Facebook - Group
- Formed partnership with FIT Nepal (Forum for IT in Nepal), SAP I (South Asian Partnership International) and CAN (Computer Association of Nepal), and ISPAN (Internet Service Providers Association-Nepal).
- Established contact with rural telecenters in different districts.
- Obtained expertise and support from ECPAT (End Child Prostitution Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes)
- Established working relationships with government officials, IT professionals, ISPAN, and ICT representatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

❑ Awareness and Education

- Public awareness campaigns, targeting children, parents and teachers as well as cybercafés and telecenters, both offline and online.
- Children should be educated of the safety measures and made empowered to protect oneself from online risks.
- Integration of online safety information into the educational system e.g. including safety information in the computer training at school and in the education of teachers.
- Government should initiate and encourage child friendly contents for Nepali kids.

□ Advocacy and collaboration

- Raise concerns and build knowledge among concerned stakeholders through continuous information, advocacy and lobbying.
- Establishment of interrelation and collaboration bodies in order to initiate and facilitate (joint) child protection measures by IT industry, telecom sector and government
- Need to set up a body to list and govern content that is not suitable for minors.
- Advocacy for integration of safety information in computer education curriculum.

❑ Legal Measures

- An amendment introducing child protective measures within the cyber law and strong measures in the Children's Act are required to minimise the risks for children online.
- There should be criminalization of all aspects of (the use of) child pornography
- Extraterritorial law should be enforced in order to address the possibility of foreign paedophiles exploiting children online.
- A cyber cell in police system should have special unit for protecting children online.
- Training of criminal justice professionals, including law enforcement, prosecutors and judiciary is a needed precondition in order to execute the cyber law.

□ Role of ISPs/mobile phone operators

- Preventive measures should be taken through self regulation by ISP's, Cybercafés and Mobile Phone Operators.
- ISP's should take up initiatives of self-regulation such as reporting illegal content to the authorities.
- Regulations should be stipulated for cybercafés to ban cabins or cubicles and prevent children below the age of 18 from accessing pornography.
- Enforcement of data retention for ISPs and mobile phone operators.

- Instalment of filters to block known child abuse image websites, preferably on a national level of a backbone provider
- Filter spam and provide child safety filter devices free of cost.
- Providing education and awareness materials on Internet safety on the home page of the ISP and also when a client signs up.
- As children will reach into cyberspace by mobile phones in the near future it is recommended that mobile phone operators design and put into place safety devices that block pornography and other age inappropriate content for people under 18 years of age.

Conclusions

- Nepal has ratified not only the UN CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child), but also the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.
- Similarly, Nepal has ratified International Labour Organisation Convention no. 182 on 'Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour' which includes "the use, procuring, or offering of a child for...the production of pornography or pornographic performances".
- It is therefore, the responsibility of the government not only to acquire sufficient comprehension of the issue of child safety in cyberspace, but also take appropriate measures to protect children online, before the situation aggravates.

Protecting Children

Online

in Nepal



Thank You !

Research Information

- **TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 1430**
- **AGE GROUP: 12-18 years**
- **GENDER:**
 - **Girls: 700**
 - **Boys: 686**
 - **Unknown: 44**
 - **(Not mentioned)**
- **SCHOOL:**
 - **Public: 467**
 - **Private: 949**
 - **Unknown: 14**