

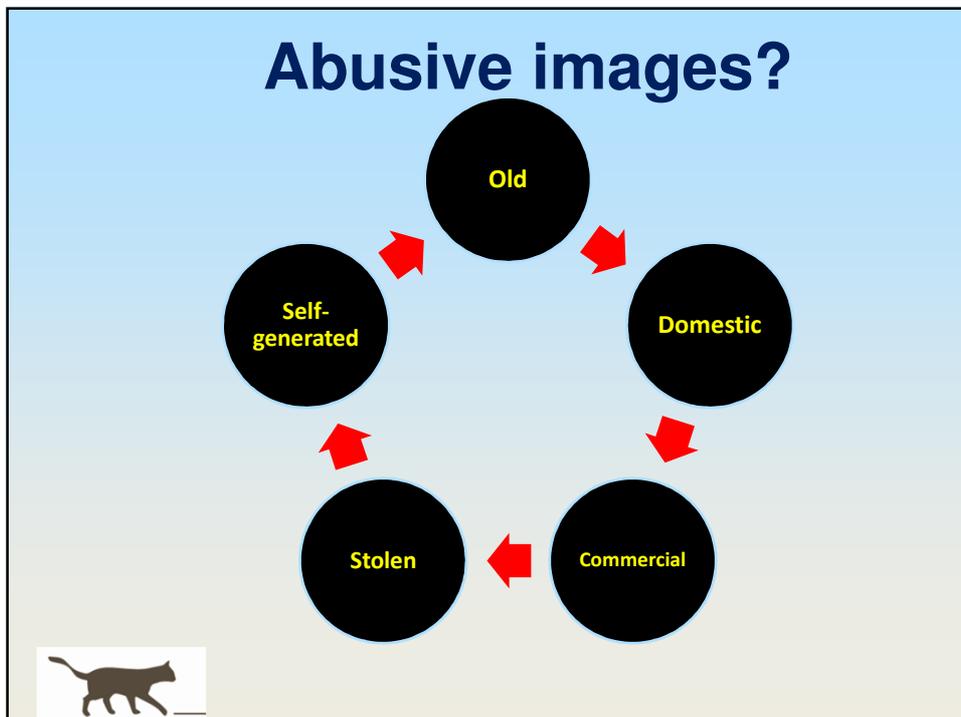


**The role of abusive images in online grooming.**

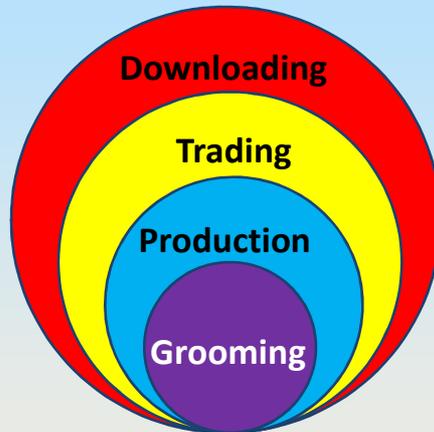
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ROBERT Berlin, 2012

COPINE Research



## Image-related offending.



## Revisiting Lanning (2001):

- Child pornography and erotica are used for the **sexual arousal** and gratification of pedophiles.
- A second use of child pornography and erotica is to **lower children's inhibitions**.
- A third major use of child pornography collections is **blackmail**.
- A fourth use of child pornography and erotica is as a **medium of exchange**.
- A fifth use of the collected material is **profit**.



## Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

- Article 23 of Council of Europe Convention introduces new offence of grooming or solicitation of children for sexual purposes
- Defines sexual solicitations as requests to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or give personal sexual information.



## Classifying Online Groomers (Webster et al 2011)

### Distorted Attachment

- Believe in mutual consent/love
- **No images** or group contact
- Longer contact process
- Uses own identity
- Physical meeting

### Adaptable Offender

- Own needs focus
- Believes YP mature/provocative
- **Minimal image collections**, if any
- Tailored contact /mirroring victim
- Own & tailored identity

### Hyper-Sexual

- Dehumanise YP
- **Extensive image collections**
- Contact with other offenders
- Tailored/sexual identity
- Fast, impersonal contact methods



## Online solicitation typology (Briggs et al., 2011)



- 51 people convicted of an Internet sex offence in the US in which attempted to entice an adolescent into a sexual relationship using an Internet chat room.
- 2 subgroups:
  - a contact driven group who were motivated to engage in offline sexual behaviour
  - fantasy driven group motivated to engage in cybersex, but without an express wish to meet young people offline.

## Online solicitation typology (Briggs et al., 2011)

“The contact-driven offender utilizes Internet chat rooms as a medium to connect with other people in the online community, with an intention to develop a sexual relationship with a teenage female (or male). Thus, the function of the Internet is as a medium for victim location, communication, relationship building (grooming), and coordination of a future meeting place. This offender will also transfer communication to telephone and text communication” (p. 87)



## Online Solicitation Offenders (Seto et al., 2011)

Solicitation offenders were more likely than contact offenders:

- **to have viewed child pornography,**
- to report hebephilic sexual interests,
- to have problems in capacity for relationship stability,
- to be better educated, and
- to be more likely to have unrelated and stranger victims.



## Victim gender differences?

- Grosskopf (2010) - Australian cases (15) differences noted by police in interactions between police adopting male personas and female ones.
- As boys were less sexually explicit and less aggressive or forceful, and more geared towards establishing mutual respect and trust.
- Suspects transferred pornography as a way of desensitising the 'boy'.
- Children also received requests for their sexual pictures online .



## Self-generated content?

Going online has become increasingly privatised, with children accessing the Internet either via a mobile or handheld device or via access in the child's bedroom, making it unrealistic for parents to literally watch over their child's shoulder in order to keep them safe.

– Livingstone et al. (2011)



## Sexting

- Practice of sending or posting sexually suggestive text messages and images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via cellular telephones or over the Internet (Levick & Moon, 2010)
- Mobile phone may be used to post the image to a social networking website like Facebook or MySpace (McBeth, 2010).



## Typology of sexting

- Based on 550 law enforcement cases, of two categories: 'Aggravated' and 'Experimental'.
- Aggravated involved criminal or abusive elements
- Experimental incidents involved 'romantic' contexts or were acts of attention seeking.  
– Wolak & Finkelhor (2011)



## NJOV3 (Wolak, 2012)

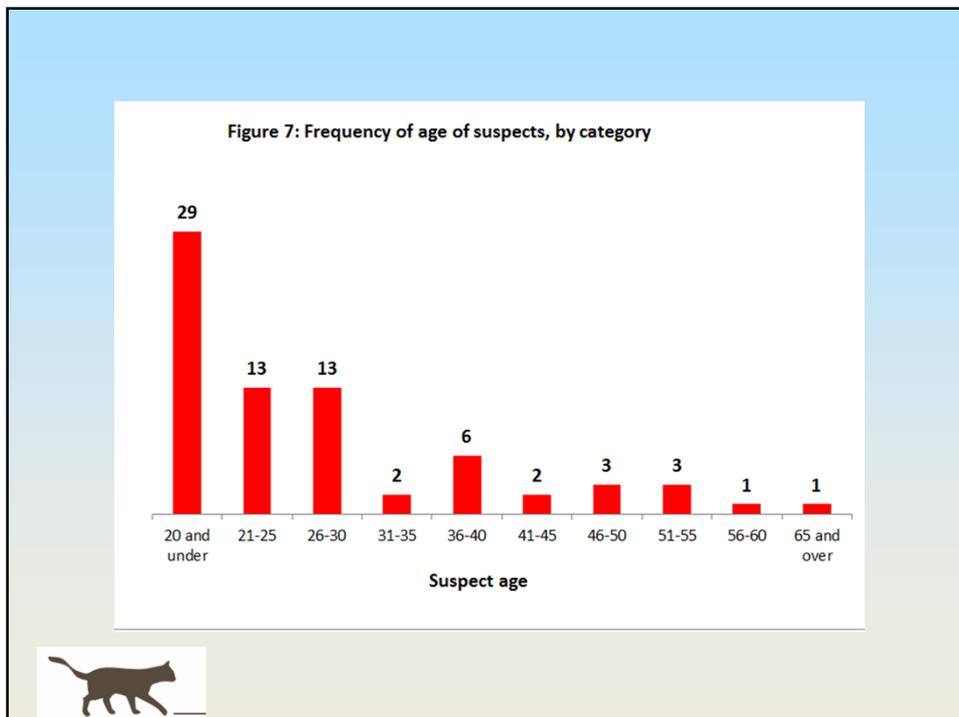
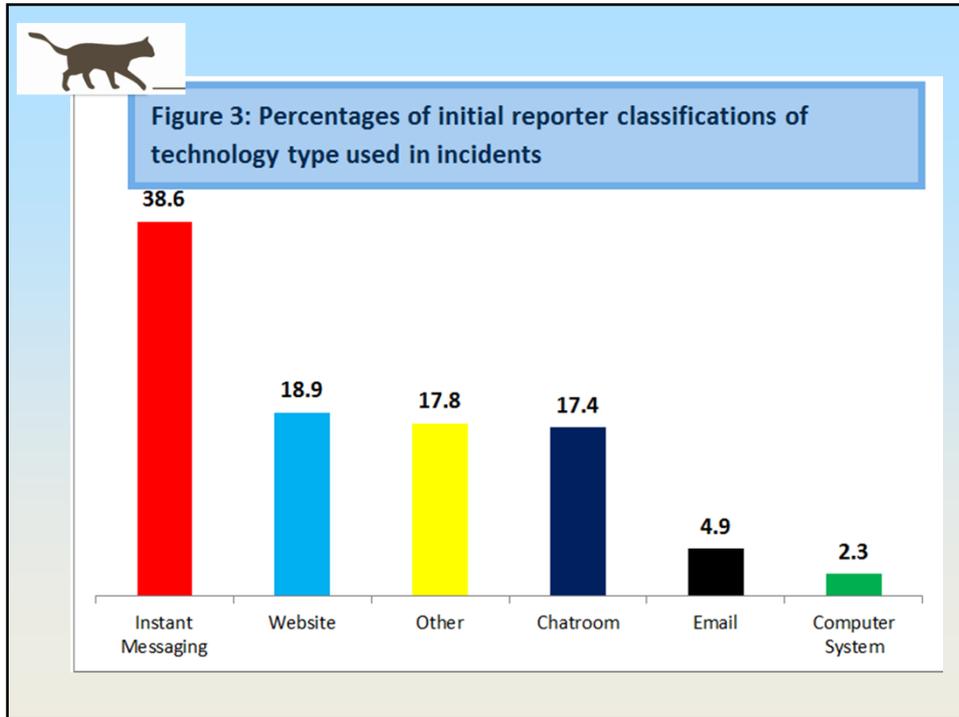
- Of arrested groomers who met their victims online:
  - 53% were aged 25 or less
  - Fewer possessed child pornography than in two previous surveys
  - About 1/3 of cases involved youth-produced sexual images

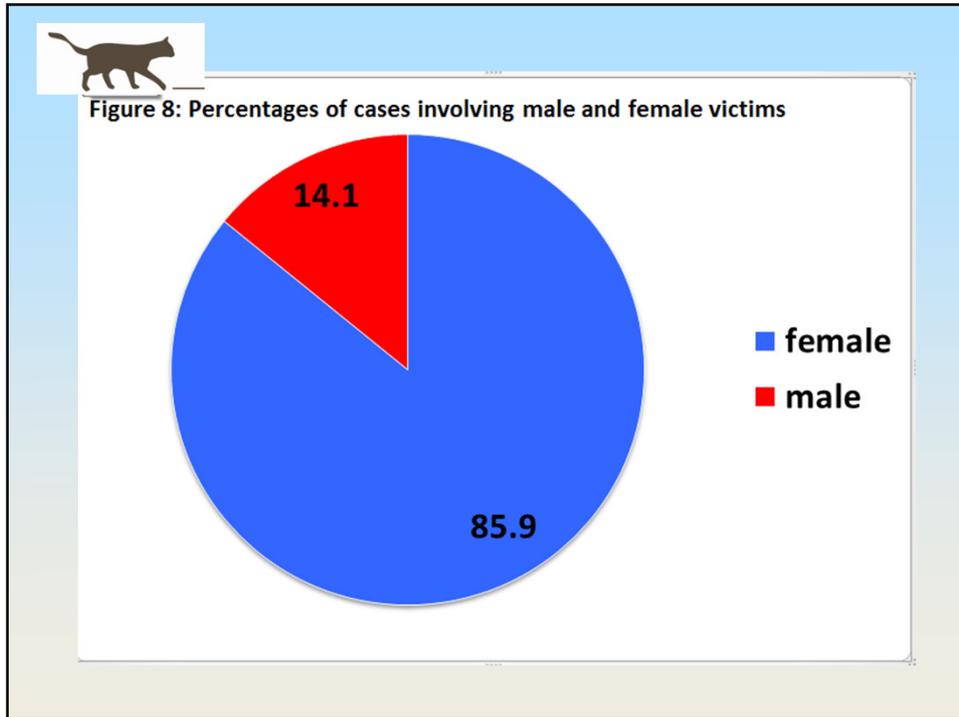


## An analysis of Luring Reports by Cybertip.ca.

- Reports from Canadian public submitted September 2007 - June 2011.
- 264 reports where analyst determined a luring offence (grooming)
- For 264 reports, 166 cases where additional text and chat log data were available.  
Analysed qualitatively, using content analysis of themes within the text.



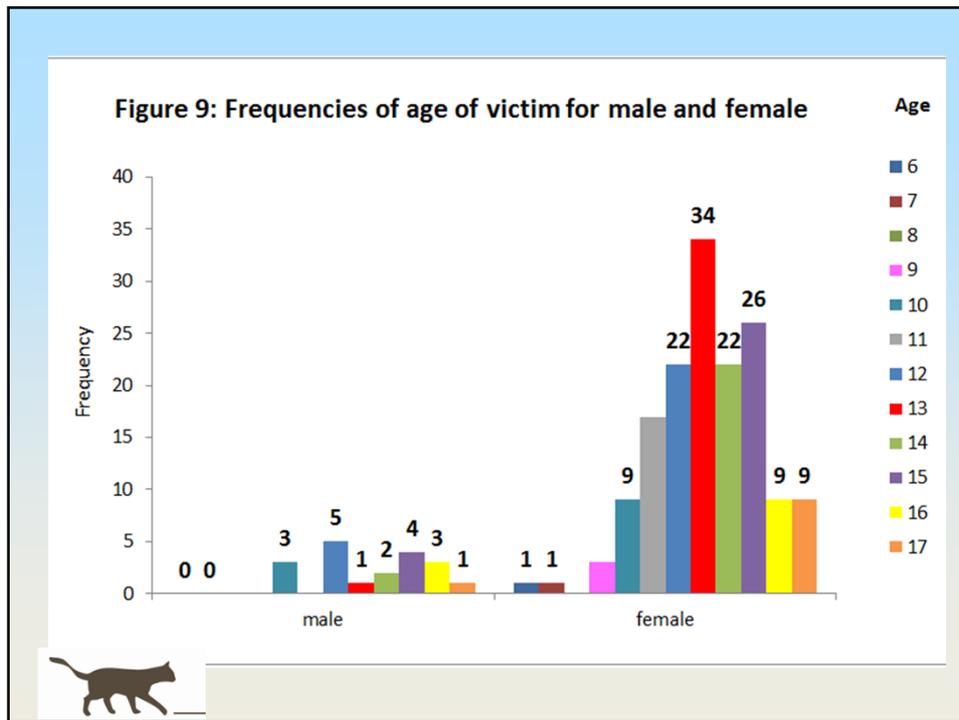




## A summary of some of the findings:

- Of 235 cases where the gender of the suspect was known, 9.7% were female, and in most cases (84.1%) the suspect and victim were of different genders.
- A total of 207 cases (85.9%) involved female victims, and the mean age of the victim (from 181 cases where age was determined) was 13.47 years, and there was no significant difference between genders.

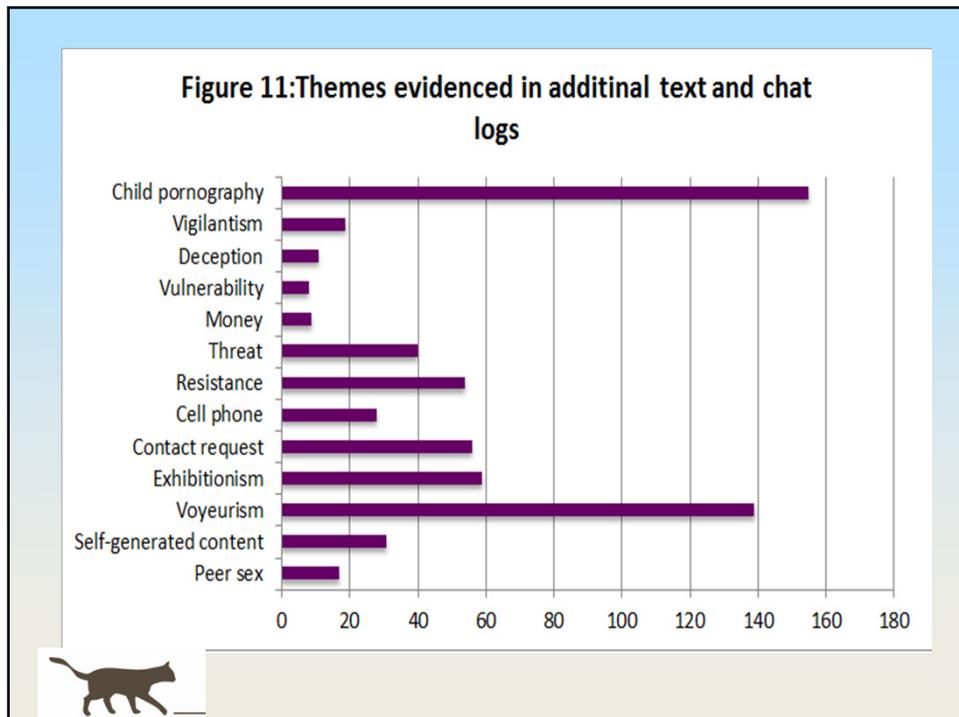




## Text analysis:

- Of the 166 cases where additional text and chatlog data were available the analysis identified 13 thematic categories which included: peer sex; voyeurism; exhibitionism; contact request; cell phone use; resistance; threat; money; deception; vigilantism; child pornography; self-generated content, and vulnerability.





## Abuse images?

- In 93.4% of these cases, there were specific requests for pictures (either still or moving), or discussion of pictures that had previously been uploaded, that could be classified under Canadian law as child pornography.
- In 30% of the cases it was indicated that the young person had sent images to the suspect, often in the context of the suspect being older than the young person or where threats were made.

## Abuse images:

- Only 3 cases indicated that child pornography had been sent to a young person or child to persuade them to engage in sexual activity.
- *“Suspect made contact with the victim on an Xbox game system and spoke about having sex with a 10 year old. The suspect also requested the victim to masturbate to an attached image. The image was described as displaying a naked man with his penis placed on a small vagina with no pubic hair, and although the girl's face was not visible, her body looked very young”.*

## Requests for abuse images:



- *“Beginning the previous week, the suspect posted 1 to 2 messages per night on her 11 year old female's Youtube.com profile. Suspect posted the comments "I want to see you naked" and "My penis in your bum”.*
- *“12 year old female met suspect on gaming site. Since then he has sent 200+ messages on a cell phone asking her to do sexual things and telling her sexual acts that he would like to do with her. Request that she exposed herself on Webcam which she did (waist up). Texts occurred all through the night”.*

## Decontextualized requests:

- *“The child victim received a message from a person she thought was her friend on MSN messenger. The person provided a URL and instructed the girl to login. Once the girl logged in, her Hotmail account was compromised. The suspect indicated that if the girl did not send naked photos of herself then they would post the images from the Hotmail account onto a sex website”.*



## Abuse images:

- In 24.1% of the cases the young person was threatened, and the largest number of threats involved the distribution of existing images.
- A percentage of the suspects seemed more interested in sending sexual images of themselves (35.5%), often following a request for the young person to open their webcam.



## Threats:

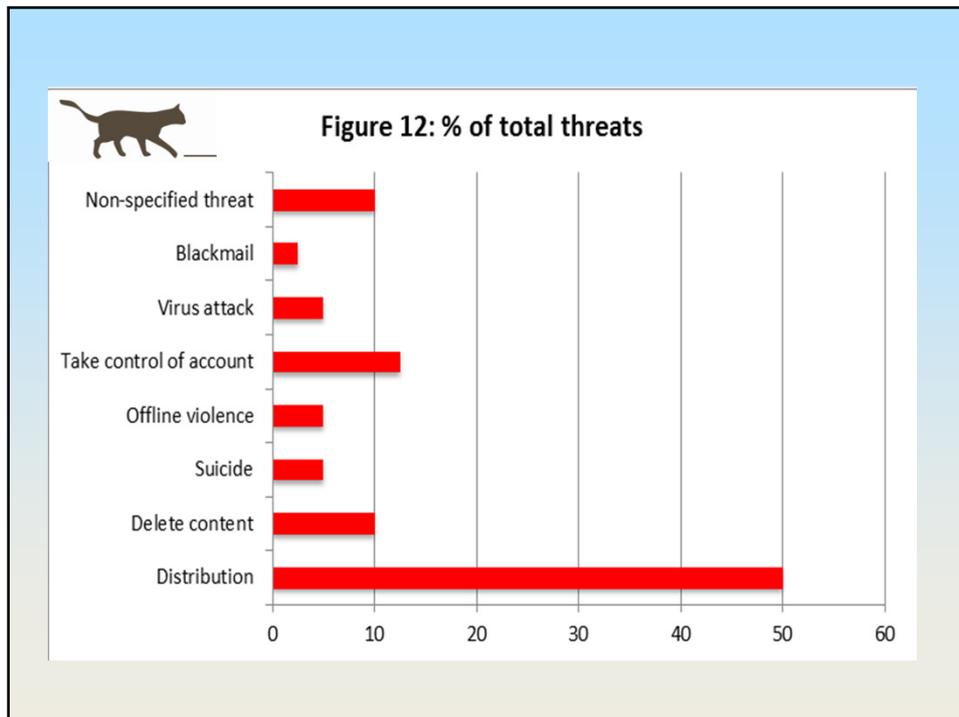
- 30% of cases young person sent images of themselves to the suspect. While this might be seen as 'self-generated content' or even interpreted as 'sexting', usually in the context of a suspect who was older than the young person, or where threats were made if the young person did not comply.
- In 24.1% of cases the young person received a threat from the suspect.



## Threats:

- *"When she refused he threatened to "fuck ur computer? "... She indicated that the suspect was able to turn her webcam and microphone off and on, as well the suspect has taken over her Messenger account and blocked her out".*
- *"The suspect then told the victim that if she didn't show him her breasts he would delete all her MSN contacts and would erase all the information on her computer. He also said that he would send her a bunch of viruses".*





## Sending images:

- 35.5% of cases the suspect sent a photograph or requested that the young person open their web cam, only to be presented with an image of the suspect's genitalia.
- Similar to Briggs et al. (2011) in their sample of 51 offenders. In addition to sexually explicit chat, 68.6% sent their victim nude photos of themselves (penis exposed).





## Deception in the Canadian data?

- Few cases (11) where deception was clearly indicated in the additional text.
- The deception largely involved the age of the suspect, with adult males (and in one case an adult female) pretending to be young adolescents (12-17 years of age).
- Other cases of deception involved claims of being the opposite gender.



## ROBERT: Sexting – grooming?

- *“Yeah I did. I used to get quite a lot of messages about, oh you’re attractive and then I started to reveal a lot more in my pictures. And then certain, you’d chat to people and they’d asked, you know, have you got any cock pictures? No. They went, oh take some, I’ve got some here. So kind of well, over the time I’d reveal more, I’d put more on. And yeah, I was flattered”*



## ROBERT: Threats

- *“Yes. I said that I wasn’t going to send them. Because it was something – I didn’t want to show him my body that way. And that I didn’t want to expose myself in front of him and that kind of thing... He got angry and started to threaten my parents and me and so on. And my family and that kind of thing... It was really unpleasant. Because you didn’t know if this was going to happen. Whether he was going to be there when I came home from school. Or if he wasn’t there – whether he had contacted my parents or whether he hadn’t done so”.*



## ROBERT: Threats

- *“He starts to threaten me, asks where the hell I think I’m going. I also get pissed off and then he pulls out his mobile and shows me the little videos he’s made of us having sex and says something like, ‘so where the hell do you think you’re going? If you leave I’ll show these to everyone, I’ll put them on the Internet and people can spit on you”.*



## **ROBERT: Consequences for the young person?**

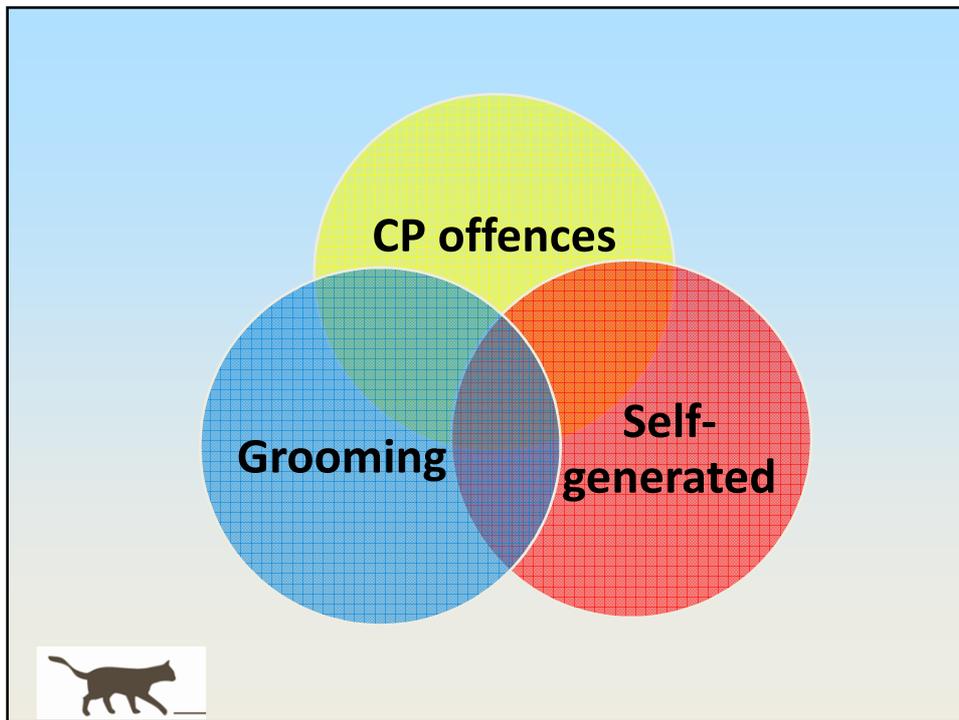
- *“I was seeing a boy and I sent him a few photos, which then shortly thereafter surfaced on the Internet, that is shortly after he broke up with me. They surfaced on a homepage, where I was completely levelled and made to look like a slut”.*
- *“It doesn’t feel... much fun knowing that someone can stumble across them. And neither do I know how much you can see... whether you can see that it’s me... ‘cause I don’t know how they are taken”.*



## **ROBERT: Being silenced**

*“I thought, ‘I can’t go to the police with a film where I’m smiling’. They will just say that I have myself to blame”.*





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