

INTERNET TRADERS OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND OTHER CENSORSHIP OFFENDERS IN NEW ZEALAND: UPDATED STATISTICS (NOVEMBER 2004)

Introduction

The Censorship Compliance Unit of the Department of Internal Affairs enforces the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993. Since its creation, the Unit has prosecuted and convicted 146 people for offences involving objectionable material, mainly child sex abuse images. There are approximately 25 court cases pending. The Unit carries out proactive investigations to identify New Zealanders who are exchanging child sex abuse images on the Internet. It also prosecutes those who distribute or possess objectionable video tapes, DVDs, photographs, magazines and text files.

Earlier in 2004 the Department published a report, written by Angela Carr, that profiled censorship offenders, titled *Internet Traders Of Child Pornography And Other Censorship Offenders In New Zealand*. The profiling research was based on a questionnaire that collected social, demographic and behavioural information about 106 people who had committed offences involving objectionable material between 1996 and 2001. Since completing the research, the Department has continued to gather data on offenders. In this first update since the publication of the original research report, key statistics on 185 offenders are recorded. The updated statistics includes the 106 offenders originally profiled plus 79 offenders detected since that time.

The Department will continue to gather data on offenders and will publish further updates from time to time. The data will be used to assist in detecting and prosecuting offenders and in formulating censorship policy.

Note that all percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF OFFENDERS

One hundred and eighty-four offenders were male and one was female. In the original report there were 105 male offenders and one female offender.

Seven-tenths (70.8%) of the offenders resided in cities. This figure is less than in the original research which found 76% of offenders living in cities.

Table 1: Offender Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of Offenders	Percentage of Offenders
NZ European	166	89.3
Maori	2	1.1
Pacific	0	0
Asian	12	6.5
Other	2	1.1
Unknown	4	2.1

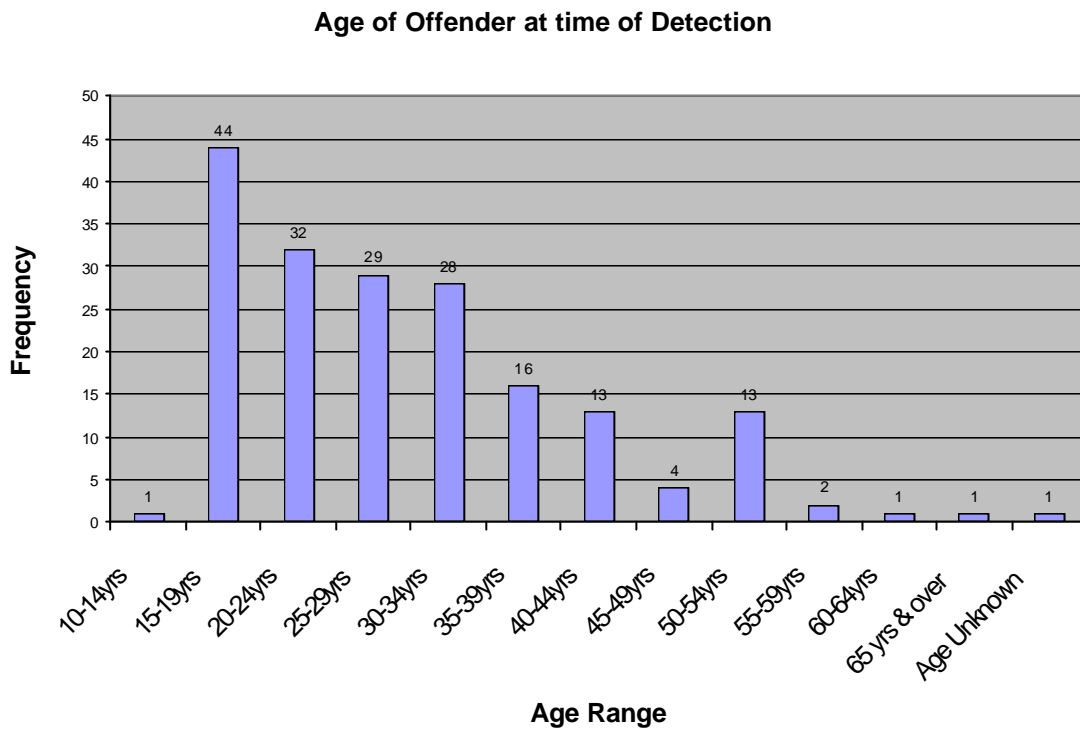
Offender ethnicity statistics have not changed significantly. The total in the table exceeds the total number of offenders because one offender identified himself with the different ethnic groups of both his parents.

AGE OF THE OFFENDER

As shown in Figure 1 the largest single group of offenders continues to be aged between 15 and 19 years. Those under 20 years at the time of detection comprise a quarter (24.3%) of all offenders. Over half (57.3%) of all offenders

are under the age of 30 at the time of detection. The age of the offender at the time of detection ranged from 14 years to 67 years.

Figure 1: Age of the Offender



The most notable change between the original research findings and these updated results is that the 30 to 34 years age group has fallen from being the 2nd most common age range to being the 4th most common. The three age ranges between 15 and 29 years are now the most common ages of offenders.

OCCUPATION

The largest occupational group amongst offenders was students (32.4% of all offenders). Of those students, two-thirds were studying at tertiary level.

The second most commonly identified profession was information technology (19.5% of all offenders).

Students and information technology workers have greater access to computers than average and could be expected to have more advanced computer skills.

Offenders come from a wide range of occupations, as shown in Table 2. The occupational data adds up to more than 185 because some offenders worked in more one occupation.

Table 2: Offender Occupation

Occupation	No. of Offenders	% of Offenders
Student	60	32.4
Information Technology	36	19.5
Professional/administrative	14	7.6
Trade	9	4.9
Unemployment beneficiary	14	7.6
Retail	9	4.9
Sickness beneficiary	15	8.1
Labour	6	3.2
Educational profession	11	6
Transport	5	2.7
Food and hospitality	5	2.7
Caregiver	2	1.6
Farm/agricultural worker	4	2.2
Medical profession	2	1.2
Retired/superannuitant	1	0.5
Security	1	0.5
Other	13	7

CRIMINAL HISTORY

The majority of offenders (76.2%) were found to have no criminal history. However, 30 (16.2%) of the individuals investigated had been convicted previously of a criminal offence. Of this number, 16 (53.3% of those with previous convictions) offenders had been convicted of a crime of a sexual nature, 12 of these being against children aged less than 16 years.

Table 3: Criminal Histories of Offenders

Criminal History	Frequency	Percent
No Criminal History	141	76.2
Censorship Conviction	5	2.7
Conviction for a non-violent, non-sexual crime	10	5.4
Minor offence of a sexual nature	3	1.6
Sexual offence against a female aged under 16 years	7	3.8
Sexual offence with a male aged under 16 years	5	2.7
Sexual offence against an adult	1	0.5
Drug related offence	3	1.6
Other Criminal offence	1	0.5
Criminal history unknown	10	5.4

The majority of offenders are not known to have committed sexual offences prior to committing censorship offences. However, the numbers who had committed sex offences is greater than in the general population. While it is not possible, based on this study, to draw a causal link between viewing child pornography and offending against children, an association between the two offences is suggested by the findings. The relationship between viewing objectionable material and committing physical offences requires further research before the nature of the association can be understood.

NATURE OF OBJECTIONABLE MATERIAL

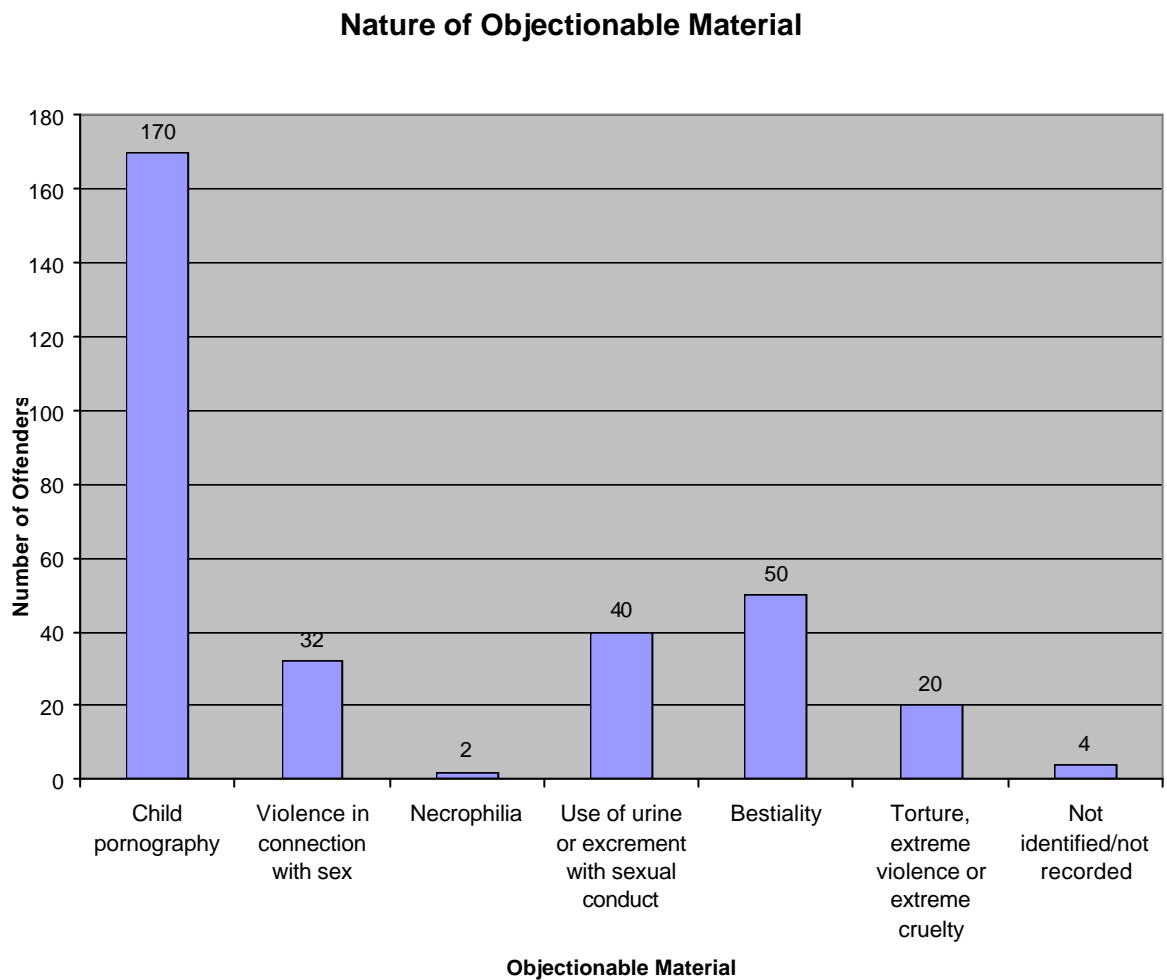
The majority of offenders were found in possession of child sex abuse material. Only 15 out of 185 offenders possessed objectionable material that was not of this type. This is partly due to the investigation of child sex abuse material being the Department's primary focus. Images of bestiality and material containing the use of urine or excrement were the 2nd and 3rd most commonly found sorts of objectionable images. Text files describing explicit sex acts on children and non-objectionable images of partially clothed children were also found in the possession of many offenders.

As in the original research, offenders were found to favour three distinct types of objectionable material:

- violent images of all manner of subjects
- degrading and dehumanising images of all manner of subjects or
- solely paedophilic images.

It was rare for offenders to collect more than one type of material.

Figure 2: Nature of Objectionable Material



ACCESS TO SUBJECTS OF OBJECTIONABLE MATERIAL

Given that the majority of the objectionable material involve child sex abuse images, it was considered particularly important to measure the degree to which the offenders had access to children through occupation or lifestyle.

Seventy-six offenders (41.08%) were identified as having some form of regular contact with children or young people.

Table 4: Access to Subjects

Offenders access to children, animals and other subjects	Number of Offenders
Works or has frequent contact with the general public	44
Works or has frequent contact with children	42
Other access to children	16
Works primarily with computers	27
Is mobile in job (job involves frequent travel of any type)	12
Frequently sole caregiver of children/dependants	18
Access to other subjects	4
Works or has frequent contact with animals	2
Not specified	36

Including those identified as being employed in teaching professions, a total of 17 offenders (9.19%) were found to work in positions that involved frequent, direct contact with children.

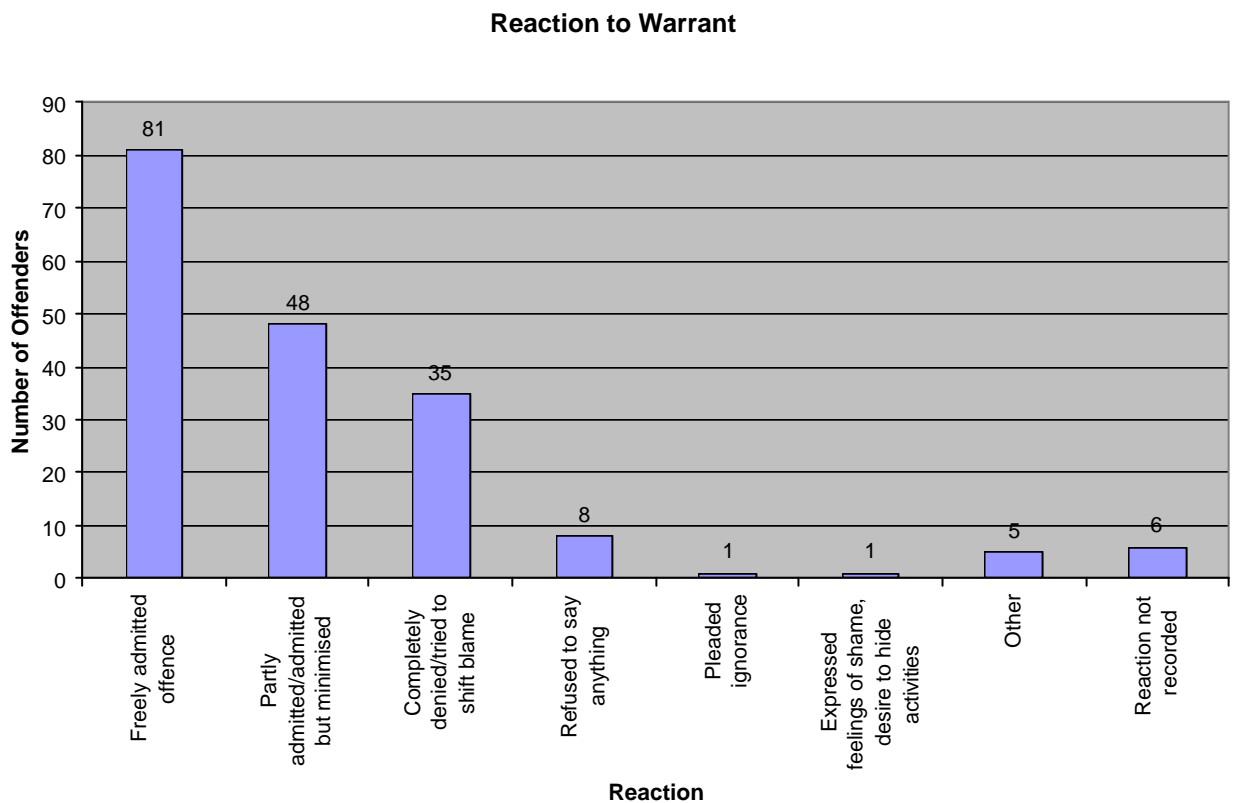
In addition, 18 offenders (9.7%) were identified as frequently being the sole caregiver of children and/or young people. Sixteen (8.6%) were found to have some other type of regular contact with children or young people.

The Department is concerned at the number of offenders who have placed themselves in situations where they have access to the subjects of the objectionable material they collect. This type of behaviour appears common amongst those with a sexual interest in children.

REACTION TO SEARCH WARRANT

As indicated in Figure 3, when initially confronted by the Department's inspectors, 81 of the offenders profiled freely admitted their involvement with the distribution and/or possession of objectionable material. However, a quarter of offenders tried to minimise or downplay the nature of their offending and a fifth completely denied the offence and/or tried to shift blame for the offence to another party.

Figure 3: Offender Reaction to Warrant



Offenders who tried to minimise the nature of their offending commonly did so by under-estimating the number of objectionable images in their possession and/or extent of their involvement in the trade of objectionable images, over-estimating the ages of the children and young people portrayed in material or

by attempting to justify the offending by challenging the concept of “objectionable”.

CONCLUSIONS

The profiling of offenders continues to uncover a great deal of information about offenders and their offending habits. It has raised particular concerns about the age of some offenders, the relationship between viewing child pornography and sexual offending, and the number of offenders who have access to the subjects of their collections of objectionable material. This research is ongoing and constantly being updated. This will increase our knowledge and understanding of these types of offenders and their associated behaviour.

David Wilson
Senior Policy Analyst

Carol Andrews
Information Officer