



Day 1 Plenary Sessions

Keynote Speech from a Youth

By Jillian Vestil

Social Cyberspace:

A revolutionary, perplexing, dangerous new world

By Horacio Severino

**Online Child Abuse and Exploitation: Global Threats, Challenges,
Data and Initiatives**

By Dorothy Rozga

Positively Social:

How Social Media can benefit the youth

By Regina Layug Rosero

AKO PARA SA BATA Conference: Keynote Speech from a Youth
By Jillian Vestil
December 1, 2015
Marco Polo Plaza Hotel, Cebu City

Esteemed conference organizers, honored members of the audience, ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

I just turned 20 and I'm fence-sitting between being a teen and being an adult.

Occasionally I find myself musing:

"Why is it such a big deal to post this swim suit photo of myself? I look great! Why shouldn't I post it? I'll probably get a ton of likes then I know that people like me -- likes equivalent to my popularity. Why can't I show it to everyone else? Everyone in my class does it! This is my opinion and I want to be heard. Freedom of speech! Why are you bullying me against what I believe in? My parents didn't scold me so I must be doing something right. If I did something wrong, they would have told me otherwise. They post family pictures or their own political rants too. I'm just following their example. Hala! Another update! I really am getting popular here in Facebook or in my Twitter account or even in my Instagram!"

Like me.

Tweet me.

Double tap me.

The world revolves around **ME!**

Or so I thought.

To be remembered in this world and be respected is my ultimate goal. Hashtag GOALS. Oh by the way, sorry if my terms are not familiar. It's my generation's language. It's THE lingo. I know my mom's generation had their "politically correct" terms. Mine has abbreviations and acronyms. Too many young girls and too many young boys believe that their self worth revolves around these "likes". If the picture only gets 20 likes then maybe you're not hitting the so-called standards that were set up in the cyber realm. It becomes somewhat like a game. Barefaced and simple background will get you about 10 likes. If you really want to win the jackpot you have to show some skin or cleavage with a face caked of make-up. DING DING DING 200 likes for you! Since when was this pressure put upon us? Did we need to keep this façade on the days when the only technology we had at home was a television?

When a friend of mine asked me to volunteer last October 17 & 18 for the Shift Control Delete: Cyber Teens Responsible Leaders, I didn't know what to expect. I didn't expect to learn something new, to meet new friends, to hear the different stories and most of all, to enjoy what I was doing.

It really affected me to hear stories from these teenagers who were bullied but didn't know what to do about it. There was no way for them to understand what was happening. To them, home was their safe place and school was the only place to be bullied, but with social media, there is no safe place anymore. You will be bullied anytime, anywhere and by anyone. Now not everyone had a "I was cyber bullied" story but what's even shocking is that some of them didn't even know they were already bullying. It warmed my heart when I saw them give testimonies like:

"I didn't know I was a bully and now I'm sorry."

"I thought what I was doing was harmless, hindi pala. Good thing I know now."

There were different talks and very many open sessions. The topic that struck me the most would have to be THE GREAT DIVIDE. The communication divide between the parents and their teenager (*put: parents vs teenagers). Our parents didn't communicate the way we did. Before, when our parents were still younger, if they wanted to send a cute text to their "lover", they would have to send an actual letter. What is this "text" you speak of?! There was never a problem before of not talking in the dinner table, insomnia before sleeping because of surfing around the net, family wars over technologies, violence of video games and so much more. Our parents were the outdoor

people while majority of the teenagers now would rather stay indoors and go vampire mode, social media in the dark. Very cool.

It's a running joke that it is easier to find smartphones than smart people. Isn't it ironic how these touch screens can make us lose touch? We sit at home measuring our self worth by our numbers of followers or likes. With the earth population reaching 7 billion, one would think that's a big bunch of people to be friends with over the Internet. While most of us have so many big friends lists, some of us are friend less. Smartphones were invented to help us learn better. Need to know information? A simple search in Google will instantly give you what you need. Want to hear the latest news? Tap on the Yahoo or CNN app. But that's the real challenge now. How can we balance our need for communication, information and entertainment with our need for acceptance?

Of course I want to be accepted. Who young person wouldn't want that? The only people who truly accept me are my parents, but even that is changing. Teenagers wish parents would get to know their world, their cyber world. They feel it will be cool to get to introduce them into things like memes, viral videos, ThoughtCatalog posts, BuzzFeed posts, 9GAG and so much more. At least this way, they could understand their angsty and curious teenagers. A few years back, I found it awkward to talk to my parents on topics like sex or relationships because I think they try to avoid the subject all together. That's probably why most of us really rely on the good ole Internet for information. It's easier and less complicated for us to do a quick Google search or chat with our friends. We are most definitely learning, not just the way they want us to.

In this modern day and age, there are two types of parents, the parents who don't care or don't get themselves involved in social media or the parents who are too involved in social media.

A friend once shared about her parents who were the first type, the parents who didn't get involved in social media. She told her parents about being bullied online –in facebook -- and you know what the reaction was?

"Oh iha what did you do again this time? Baka naman you started it."

Ouch.

She's the one being bullied and now she's being blamed for it? I think this is when Civil Wars start. She was trying to reach out but instead she got shot down. So where does she turn to now?

Then there's the other end of the spectrum, the parents who are too into social media. These are the parents who are more updated in what their friends are eating in some up-scale restaurant than what their own teenager is doing in their many different social media accounts. Actually, even my lolo and lola are in the loop now. They too post, like and share everything they see in Facebook. My own grandfather uses it like his diary. He posts EVERYTHING, and I mean EVERYTHING. The cute reality is that our grandparents, and sometimes parents become our biggest fans. They'll be the first one to like and the first one to comment.

"Hay nako ang ganda ganda ng apo ko!"

"Kumusta na kayo diyan? Ok lang ba ang mama at papa mo?"

"Oy! What a beautiful girl you've become!"

"Proud mother and father right here! We made this lady!"

See what I mean? Fans.

In the next few years, it will become impossible to break the teens from the screens. But we have to ask a deeper question, is it really just teens? The way I see it, parents and adults, are facing the same challenges a teen has. The only difference is that parents have some sort of level of maturity but I think adults also get sucked in the fast-paced cyber world.

So you see? Where do we go from here? Do we continue to make the cyber world a divide in the communication between a teenager and a parent? The adult side in me says there is no reason to hide things from my parents, but what about the others? What about those who don't know how to talk with their parents or the parents who also don't know how to talk to their children? Like in every relationship, it takes two to tango. The parents and the teenagers have to work together to understand each other. Teenagers should be patient enough to teach their parents and parents should be open enough to learn.

Let us focus on the learning. Learning together can help teenagers and the parents set a compromise. Learning the finer things in life. Learning about travel, social issues, history, religion and so many more. This is what I see, but I cannot see everything. If our parents care enough for us, then they will do their part to guide us.

I would like to share a quote from a widely popular social media star, Prince Ea, *"I'm so tired of performing in the pageantry of vanity and conforming in to this accepted form of digital insanity. Call me crazy but I imagine a world where we smile when we have low batteries, cause that would mean we'll be one bar closer, to humanity."* In the next few days, you will realize that the issues now are not just cyber bullying. Things that harm young people are getting creative, they're getting more complicated – for you. I never thought I would be in a position to say this but I'm technically an adult so let me say, "if we need help, let us ask young people."

Almost, without exception, teenagers can access technology easier no matter what their status is. But kids do not always have the power of self-regulation. What is worse is, they are now more likely exposed to cyber porn, more likely to try online gambling and more likely to engage in adult chat rooms. You and I know that. That is the reason why we all are here. Because we know that they can easily become victims. And they don't see it coming.

Please don't just talk about how to use new technology in education or how to catch and punish predators. Talk about us – young people. **More importantly, resolve to talk to us.** In the end of this conference, may you find some time to reflect: How can I, as a parent, an educator, a law enforcer, a social worker, become a meaningful part of their planet – the cyber world?

We shall welcome you, if you come in peace.

Until then...

Thank you for listening and see you in Facebook!





Horacio Severino


***Social Cyberspace:
A revolutionary, perplexing, dangerous new world***

Child Protection Network with **ENERGEN** and **unicef** present

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THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN CEBU

Theme:
CYBERPROTECTION OF CHILDREN
 Cyber Safety of Children:
 Internet and Mobile Protection for Minors



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APSR2015

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Horacio Severino

***Social Cyberspace:
 A revolutionary, perplexing, dangerous new world***

Social Cyberspace: A revolutionary, perplexing,
 dangerous new world

By H Severino



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The **power** in
your hands

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A single person can
make an **impact**.



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SOCIAL MEDIA



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Remember the pager?



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Pager boo-boos

"What are our plans tonight?" became
"Water our plants tonight."

"I really enjoyed it last night! Wish you
were here!" *became...*

"I really enjoyed it last night! Wish you
were her!"



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You now have **power**
over your own
communications.



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You have the power to
communicate directly
to one person... **or to
many.**



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You may have only
100 followers...



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But what if **Bruno Mars** decides
to retweet you?



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Why should Bruno or
anyone retweet you?

Because you're
clever or funny...



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Or you produce
news... even
accidentally.



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Sohaib Athar
@ReallyVirtual



Follow

Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at
1AM (is a rare event).

Reply Retweet Favorite

3,431
RETWEETS

2,417
FAVORITES



3:55 AM - 2 May 11 - Embed this Tweet



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Live-tweeting the Osama bin Laden raid



Sohaib Athar
@ReallyVirtual



Follow

Uh oh, now I'm the guy who liveblogged the
Osama raid without knowing it.

Reply Retweet Favorite

1,237
RETWEETS

2,158
FAVORITES



12:41 PM - 2 May 11 - Embed this Tweet



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Digital devices + **social media** +
political freedom =

The most empowered
generation in
Philippine history



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But is it really that
empowered?

Millennials vs precariats
(the deprived)



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The digital divide

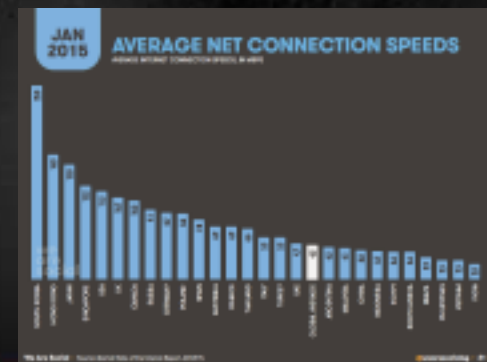
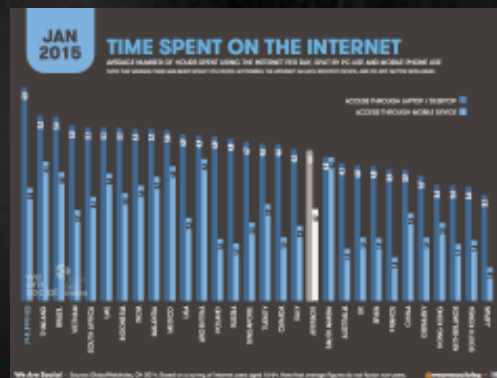
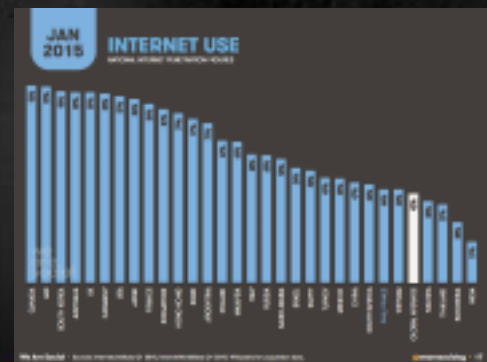


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Just how big is social?



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Calculus

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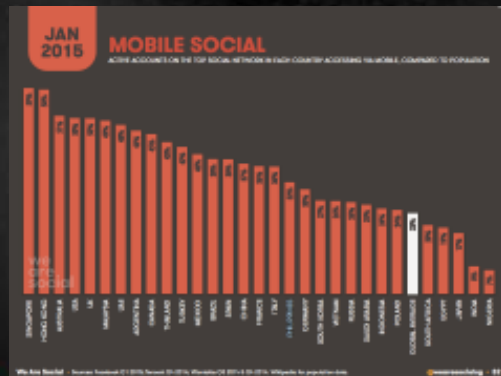
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If people are already spending several hours on the Internet, how can they spend more hours watching TV?

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They do it
simultaneously.

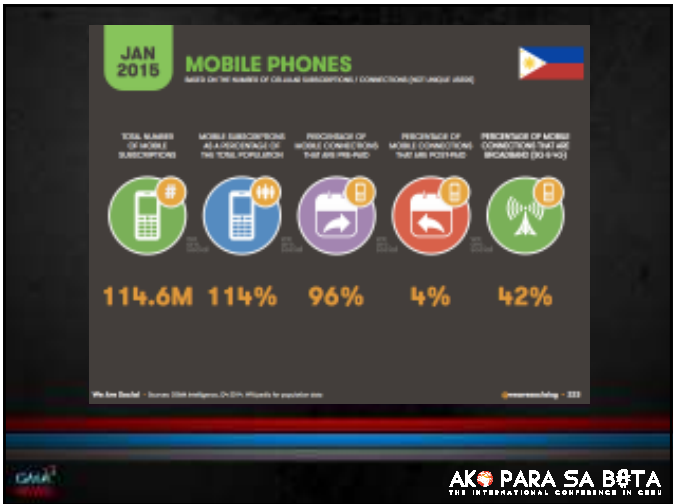
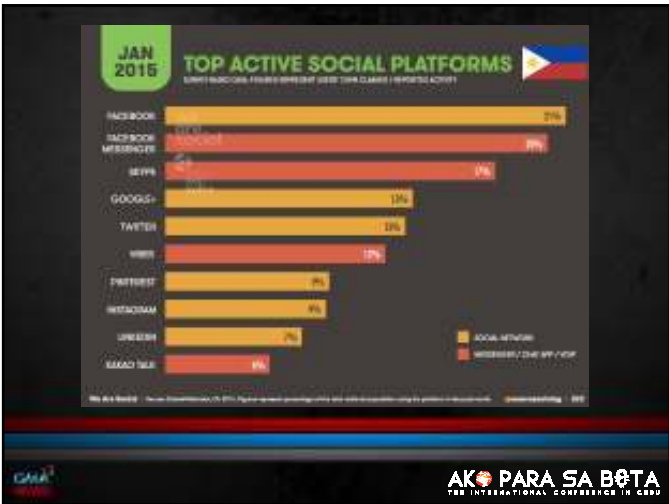
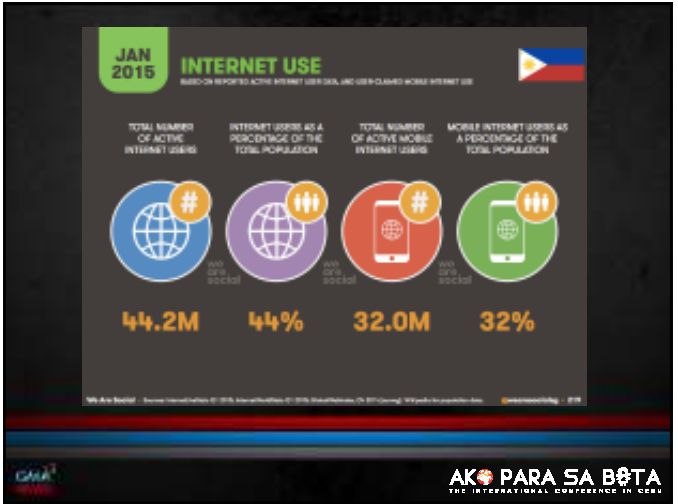
Multiple screen
behavior

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They do it
simultaneously.

Multiple screen
behavior

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Power has a
flipside.

The dark side of **social media:**

- Cyberbullying/Cyberharassment
- Identity theft
- Fraud
- Violation of intellectual property
- Misinformation

New online dangers

Online recruitment of
terrorists

Nov. 23 firefight: Ansar Khlaifa vs. AFP

Middle-class youths, college-educated
Possibly recruited online

Casual, anonymous sex

HIV epidemic among young males

Dating apps

Tinder: The Online Dating App Everyone's STILL Talking About

Early News11
10/31 / 12 Nov 2012



Tinder is the dating app that came out of nowhere to completely dominate the UK dating scene. Now even celebrities are joining up...

So what's the big deal with Tinder? If you're single, you're probably on there. If you're happily coupled up, you've probably helped your single girlfriends swipe through the ranks of desirable, and not so desirable, potential dates. You cannot escape it.

Newsradar shows that there are 50 million active users on Tinder, who check their accounts 33

The age of disruption

Disrupting media and many other industries

It's disrupting traditional family relationships.





Social media tips for families

- Balance
- Privacy vs public
- Be aware
- Ground rules

The bottom of the slide features the GMA News logo and the text 'AKO PARA SA BETA THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN Cebu'.

Social media guidelines of GMA News

The bottom of the slide features the GMA News logo and the text 'AKO PARA SA BETA THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN Cebu'.

Be truthful, accurate and fair.

The bottom of the slide features the GMA News logo and the text 'AKO PARA SA BETA THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN Cebu'.

Verify facts before posting or retweeting.



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Don't do or say anything in social media that you would not do in public.



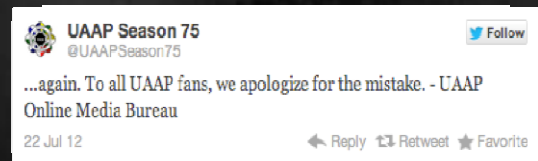
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Remember: Anything you upload can be shared by others.



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Acknowledge, delete and/or correct errors and apologize if necessary.



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Don't do
anything
stupid.



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ONLINE **PERSONAL
SAFETY**
can be summed up in two words:

BE CAREFUL!



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Protect yourself

- Use secure passwords.
- Log out.
- Don't post your IDs online.
- Don't post incriminating stuff you might regret later. Exercise restraint.
- Keep it clean.



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What does
THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK
want to promote?



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cyberbayanihan

Mutual help and
cooperation



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Today's generation is
empowered to **share**,
create, **collaborate**, and
mobilize like never before.



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**CITIZEN
JOURNALISM**



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What do we call this generation?

The me generation?



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How about the
“WE Generation?”

The most interconnected,
collaborative generation
in history



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Common citizens now
have the power to
spread joy, uplift the
public.



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With this kind of
power, the **WE**
Generation needs to
be asked:



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Will you just be part of
a **selfie culture**,
pointing your cameras
at yourselves?



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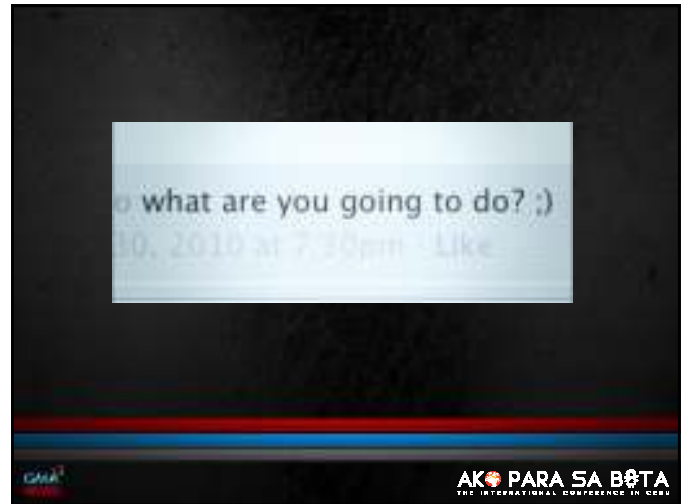
Or will you be the **greatest**
generation, using your
immense power for the
common good?



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Share, create,
collaborate, mobilize...

change the world for
the better.



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**Maraming
salamat po!**

@howieseverino
facebook.com/howie.severino

@gmanews
GMA News



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with



and



present

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Theme:

CYBERPROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Cyber Safety of Children:

Internet and Mobile Protection for Minors

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APSR2015



Online Child Abuse and Exploitation: Global Threats, Challenges, Data and Initiatives

Dorothy Rozga
ECPAT International

7th Ako Para Sa Bata Conference
1-2 December 2015
Cebu, Philippines

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1-2 December 2015
Cebu, Philippines



ECPAT

International Civil Society Network
Committed to ending the Sexual Exploitation of Children



Manifestations

- Child trafficking for sexual purposes
- Child sexual exploitation through prostitution
- Child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism
- Sexual exploitation of children online

Global Overview Child Sexual Exploitation Online

Global Overview Child Sexual Exploitation Online

1. Overview of the Situation –
2. Data
3. Anonymity Online as a Driver of Demand
4. Child Victims
5. Obligation, Promises and Initiatives
6. Way Forward – Call for a National Response



Staggering Numbers of Child Sexual Abuse Images Online



OF 1.8 billion images are uploaded everyday - **270,000** are images of child sexual abuse
(Director of Technology Policy Group in Microsoft)

One Child Pornography Network – 1.2 petabytes of data

Number of Child Victims Unknown



Challenge of Identification



“What Gets Measured Gets Done”

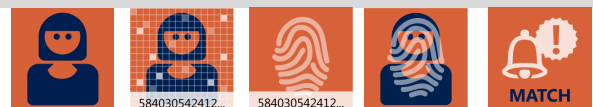
Global Data Gathering Initiatives

Interpol – International Child Sexual Exploitation Database (ICSE Database)

Interpol/ECPAT/EU – Global Imperative Indicator

ICMEC – Project Vic

What are Hashes and PhotoDNA?



1. Starts with an image of child abuse.
2. PhotoDNA divides the image into squares and assigns a numerical value to each unique shading found inside the square. These values compose the hash for that image.
3. The hash is a unique digital signature for each image.
4. If an image has been categorised as illegal content or child sexual abuse material, it is included on a list or in a database.
5. This database is then used as a reference to determine whether or not an image is (already known to be) child sexual abuse material.

Drivers of Child Sexual Exploitation Online

Poverty

Social and Gender Norms

Structural/Institutional

Power imbalance

Sense of Impunity

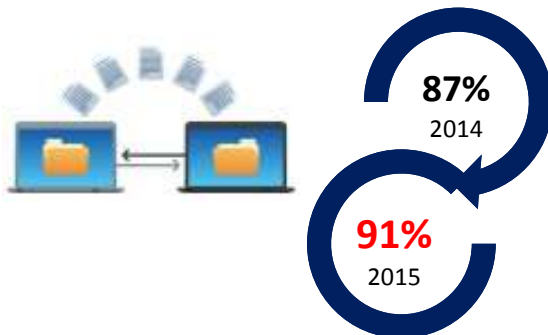
Sense of Anonymity



ONLINE ANONYMITY



Online Anonymity Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Networks



Online Anonymity Cloud-Based Services



Online Anonymity Deep/Dark Web

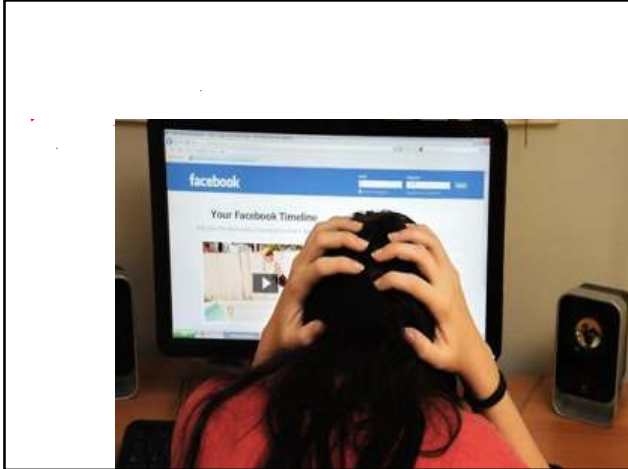


Online Anonymity Crypto currencies



Child Victims





Age of Victims Portrayed Online



Source: INHOPE <http://www.inhope.org/tns/resources/statistics-and-infographics/statistics-and-infographics-2014.aspx>

Emerging Trends: Increase in More Severe Forms of Abuse Inflicted on Children

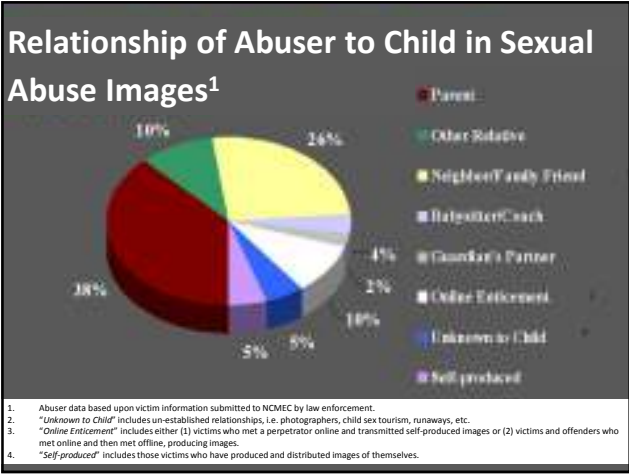
125%

Increase in the category of images depicting severe sexual activity (including torture, rape and violent sexual abuse)

Source: http://ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/CEOP_TACSEA2013_240613%20FINAL.pdf

Emerging Trend Livestreaming Child Sex Abuse Materials





Child Victims

1. Difficult to identify and rescue
2. Never ending victimisation
3. Little access to justice
4. Compensation question

Compensation Question



Obligations, Promises and Initiatives

Human Rights Obligations

- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol
- Regional Conventions

Global Initiatives

- **Virtual Global Task Force**
- **Global Alliance**
- **#WePROTECT**

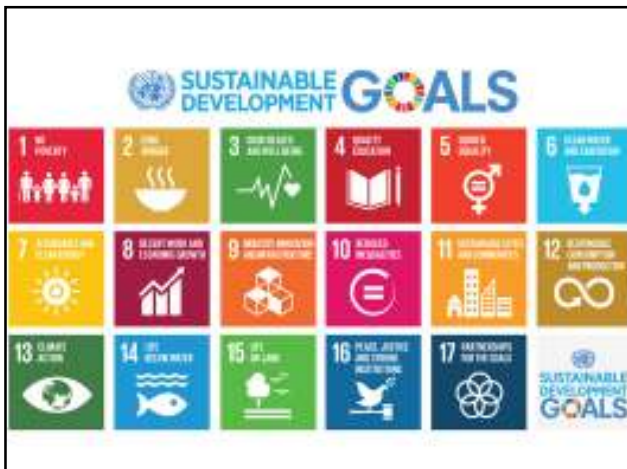
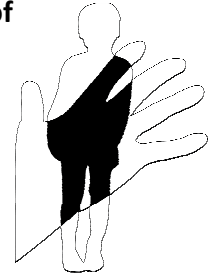




Promises

Three World Congresses against the Sexual Exploitation of Children

Stockholm 1996
Yokohama 2002
Rio 2008



SDGs: Goals and VAC Targets



Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.2: End all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation



Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, eradicate forced labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms including recruitment and use of child soldiers



Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture against children

Way Forward Need for National Response

#WePROTECT
Children Online
Preventing and Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA)
A Model National Response

Domains	Responsibilities	Outcomes
1. Policy and Governance	Leadership: An accountable National Governance and Oversight Committee	Clear national policy and governance framework for CSEA response
2. Research, Analysis and Monitoring	Research, Analysis and Monitoring: National situational analysis of CSEA risk and response; measurement/indicators	Understanding of CSEA risk and response; measurement/indicators
3. Legislation	Legislation: Comprehensive and effective legal framework to investigate offenders and ensure protection for victims	Clear legal framework for CSEA response
4. Dedicated Law Enforcement	Dedicated Law Enforcement: National unit, trained officers, proactive and reactive investigations, victim-focused, international cooperation	Proactive and reactive investigations; victim-focused; international cooperation
5. Judiciary and Prosecutors	Judiciary and Prosecutors: Trained, victim-focused	Trained, victim-focused
6. Offender Management Process	Offender Management Process: Prevent re-offending of those in the criminal justice system nationally and internationally	Prevent re-offending of those in the criminal justice system nationally and internationally
7. Access to Image Databases	Access to Image Databases: National database; link to Interpol database (ICSE)	National database; link to Interpol database (ICSE)


National Response Model: Policy and Governance

Policy and Governance 	1	Leadership: An accountable National Governance and Oversight Committee
	2	Research, Analysis and Monitoring: National situational analysis of CSEA risk and response; measurement/indicators
	3	Legislation: Comprehensive and effective legal framework to investigate offenders and ensure protection for victims

National Response Model: Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice 	4	Dedicated Law Enforcement: National unit, trained officers, proactive and reactive investigations, victim-focused, international cooperation
	5	Judiciary and Prosecutors: Trained, victim-focused
	6	Offender Management Process: Prevent re-offending of those in the criminal justice system nationally and internationally
	7	Access to Image Databases: National database; link to Interpol database (ICSE)

National Response Model: Victim

	16	First Aid and Support: Integrated services provided during investigation, prosecution and after care
	17	Child Protection Mechanism: Trained, coordinated and available to provide crisis support
	18	Compensation, Remedies and Complaints Arrangements: Accessible procedures
	19	Child Helpline: Victim reporting and support, referrals to services for ongoing assistance


National Response Model: Societal

	12	CSGA Helpline: Public and industry reporting to CSGA offices – online and offline, link to law enforcement and child protection systems
	13	Education Programmes: For children/young people, professionals, teachers, practitioners, faith representatives
	14	Child Participation: Children and young people have a voice in the development of policy and practice
	15	Offender Support Systems: Medical, psychological, voluntary, awareness

National Response Model: Industry

	16	Notice and Takedown Procedures: Local removal and blocking of online CSGA content
	17	CSGA Reporting: Statutory protections that would allow industry to fully and effectively report CSGA, including the transmission of content, to law enforcement or another designated agency
	18	Innovative Solution Development: Industry engagement to help address local CSGA issues
	19	Corporate Social Responsibility: Effective child-focused programme

National Response Model: Media and Communications

	20	Direct and Indirect media reporting: Enable awareness and accurate understanding of problem
	21	Universal terminology: Guidelines and application



Salamat!
Thank you for your attention!

Positively Social: How Social Media can benefit the youth

Regina Layug Rosero
Mulat Pinoy-Kabataan News Network
December 1, 2015
Lunch Symposium, Ako Para Sa Bata Conference

POSITIVELY SOCIAL: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BENEFIT THE YOUTH

REGINA LAYUG-ROSENO
MULAT PINOY-KABATAAN NEWS NETWORK
DECEMBER 1, 2015
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WHO WE ARE WHAT WE DO



Founded in 2009, MP-KNN is primarily a youth initiative.

HOW WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA

- Live social media coverage
- Social media for advocacy
- Talking to youth audiences
- Teaching youth to use social media responsibly
- Disseminating stories by our youth reporters

HOW WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Live social media coverage



HOW WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Talking to youth audiences



HOW WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Teaching youth to use social media responsibly

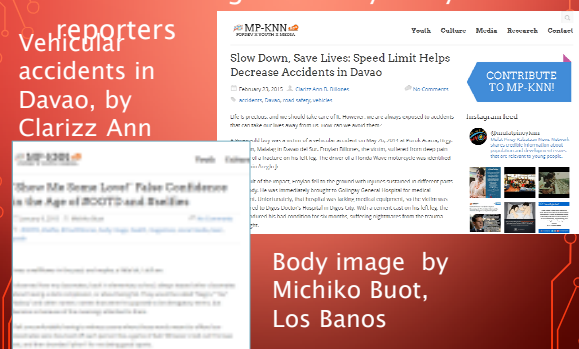
1. Google it first!
2. Attribute!
3. Empower!
4. Criticize constructively!
5. Exchange ideas!
6. Be respectful!



HOW WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Disseminating stories by our youth

reporters
vehicular
accidents in
Davao, by
Clarizz Ann



Body image by
Michiko Buot,
Los Banos

MP-KNN REPORTERS SPEAK: POSITIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Communication with relatives and friends in far-away places
2. Good source of information
3. Social media creates opportunities
4. Coordination
5. Transmitting youth messages to a broader audience

MP-KNN REPORTERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Coordination

MP-KNN team in Metro Manila, youth reporters all over the country:

- Metro Manila • Dumaguete
- Antipolo • Laoag
- Los Banos • Davao

MP-KNN REPORTERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Transmitting their messages to a broader audience

Johan Joshua Principio:
"Social media serves as an avenue for transitioning messages and advocacies from the youth to a broader audience."



MP-KNN REPORTERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Transmitting their messages to a broader audience

Michiko Karisa Buot:
"Wala silang fear to discuss online because they feel they are anonymous."



STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS



STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

One in four Filipino youth has sent or received sex videos through cellphones or over the internet.

In urban regions, 30-35 youth own a cell phone, while around 50% surf the Internet. Demographic data are among the frequently cited statistics. This lends support to an online survey by Lito Gallardo in 2013, which revealed that 93% of boys and 82% of girls are required to have sex before the age of 18 worldwide. With all the evidence, it's not surprising that the internet has become a hotbed for pornography.

Four in 100 Filipino youth have had sex with someone they just met online or through text messages.

Eighty-four percent of youth respondents in a 2013 survey by Lito Gallardo in 2013, which revealed that 93% of boys and 82% of girls are required to have sex before the age of 18 worldwide. With all the evidence, it's not surprising that the internet has become a hotbed for pornography.

One in 500 Filipino youth has recorded himself/herself having sex.

Eighty-four percent of youth respondents in a 2013 survey by Lito Gallardo in 2013, which revealed that 93% of boys and 82% of girls are required to have sex before the age of 18 worldwide. With all the evidence, it's not surprising that the internet has become a hotbed for pornography.

STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS



STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

The #PacMay fight is a reflection of the society we live in, and it's time to stop accepting such behavior. The fight is a reflection of the society we live in, and it's time to stop accepting such behavior.

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STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS



STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

Thompson, who had more than 200,000 followers on the video-sharing website, then decided to ask his (male) gay friend to do a video about being gay. Thompson then decided to ask his (male) gay friend to do a video about being gay. Thompson then decided to ask his (male) gay friend to do a video about being gay.

The straight YouTube filmmaker of this response, and he was eventually reduced to tears when one follower who asked to stay anonymous said: "Some times, I ask myself, is there any possibility to become straight? It seems impossible because I've never felt attracted to a woman before. It's pretty confusing. If I were straight, I think I'd somehow be a little happier."

The video was a hit. It got almost 3 million views on YouTube and was featured in the media-sharing website Upworthy—where it was shared more than 200,000 times—and the gay & LGBTQ news website *The Gayle Guide*.

We were so excited to see a straight person asking the video's LGBTQ allies to respond if they had decided to bring it down to our frontpage (LGBTQ friends, have I asked them to yet).

STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

Rush: "Definitely not. Who wants to be a third-rate citizen?"

David Rush is a 17-year-old Pittsburgh resident of Allegheny University, has been a member of the LGBTQ community since he was 13.



Gab: "Nope. Also, I wouldn't be gay if I had the choice."

Colleen "Gab" Gaber, 21, has been openly lesbian since she was 16 years old. She says that when she was 16, she was a member of the LGBTQ community and she was a member of the LGBTQ community.



With respect to the LGBTQ community, David Rush, though, who was 16 at the time he was 16, he was a member of the LGBTQ community and he was a member of the LGBTQ community.

STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

New Media and the New Normal

December 1 / October 18, 2014 / #NewMediaAndTheNewNormal / #NewMediaAndTheNewNormal / #NewMediaAndTheNewNormal

The digital landscape is full of new tools, and for those who are comfortable with it, it's a new world. The new 'normal' is a world where we can share our stories and our lives in a way that was never before possible. It's a world where we can share our stories and our lives in a way that was never before possible.



STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

Media as watchdogs

As for how media institutions can play in covering disasters, Rick Darman of [Tsinghua University](#) and the [International Center for Journalists](#) cited best case to watch case scenario in place and the importance of crowd sourcing. Darman acknowledged too that social media has changed the way we communicate.

Information can be generated now from different social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. A journalist has the responsibility to filter which among the information gathered from the World Wide Web is true and factual.

"[Media] should be a trusted, authoritative source that can inform the public of facts rather than social media rumors," Darman reiterated.

STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

'Show Me Some Love!' False Confidence in the Age of #OOTD and #selfies

Makiba Bunt. / January 9, 2015 / [#WeRtalking, #You@Reporters, The Changing Youth /](#)
[Leave a Comment](#)

I was a wallflower in the past, and maybe, a little bit, I still am.

I observed how my classmates, back in elementary school, always teased other classmates about having a dark complexion, or about being fat. They would be called "Negro," "lita," "baby" and other names; names that weren't supposed to be derogatory terms, but became so because of the meanings attached to them.

STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

One gives us the illusion that we are fat or thin by comparing it to the things we see. We start by yet picking up a magazine that you think that can make you feel good about your body. Stop watching shows that will make you think "I hate my complexion, I hope to have that fair skin" and such. There is nothing wrong with wanting a fit body, but there is a line between being stressed and depressed about not having that fit body, and being motivated with a good body as an extension of your ideal body.

Honestly, I want my body to become the perfect one, so when I feel like I am gaining or about to gain a couple of pounds, I wonder how quick I can lose it. I wonder how quick I can lose it. There is nothing wrong with wanting something, really. We should, however, not ready to accept that nobody is perfect.

The pressure of being "perfect" that is set by media and society through the socialization process puts pressure not only on girls, but also on guys. Even think that being smart requires muscles, therefore those without are considered devoid of masculinity and excluded by the society of men. It is okay to want to be more muscular, but it is also okay to have a lean body.

STORIES BY OUR YOUTH REPORTERS

Sometimes, when I look in the mirror, posing for an #OOTD selfie, I think that if I have a thigh gap, my whole life will be better. This thinking is so wrong on many levels.

The first level is that I am convinced being thinner is better. Who do I have this line of thinking? Why do we think that being thin is better? I blame the media. They have these rules dictating how a fit woman should look. Magazines feature tall and thin girls, all planned up; television on TV have main characters that are muscular men and mesomorphic women.

Even if it isn't deliberate, media has set standards of its own and the masses are somehow forced into this mentality that thin is beauty, white is beauty and so on. This is called the socialization process, or the assigning of signs and symbols to an object as a means to connect with the masses or a variety of people.

So, How do we want to look good for our #OOTDs and selfies? For me, it's all about the positivity. It's all about our outlook in life. Seriously, when you feel good inside, it shows. It is not just a saying. Smile a little inside, feel better, feel loved.

