SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AS A TOOL FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

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Abstract - Social Networking Sites (SNS) had been part of people's daily lives as an entertainment, information source and communication means. However, SNS users are being targeted as potential victims of crimes committed online. Also, Philippines has been regarded as a haven of crime committed online for many years and identified as one of the common source of sexually exploited victims. Thus, the researcher had been motivated to conduct this study. The purpose of the study is to seek how social networking sites are being utilized as a medium in sexual exploitation. The researcher used documentary analysis as the research method in analyzing the data, provided by the Philippine National Police-Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division and Department of Justice-Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking. Through the strict monitoring of the concerned government agencies on cases of sexual exploitation, it leads to the discovery that most victims are teenagers whose age ranges from 14y/o and below, typically female, and commonly took place in National Capital Region. These victims were victimized because of the high demand of pedophiles. There are two general types of Social Networking Sites used in sexual exploitation, the Adult webcam sites, used for live sex cam shows, and Instant Messaging Applications, used for personal transaction between clients and victims. Traffickers enticed victims online or offline by befriending with them and getting their trust. Traffickers commonly target the emotional aspect of the victims by being an adviser, giving gifts and knowing things regarding the victim's family before sexualizing the victim.

Keywords - Grooming, Online Victims, Sexual Exploitation, Social Networking Sites, Trafficking