# Andrew Vachss

## and the project "Gå inn i din tid!"

Online chat 1st and 2nd October 2003, between third year Bachelor-students from the Department of Computer and Information Science, Campus Mo i Rana, Nesna University College and Andrew Vachss

Edited by

**Per A. Godejord**

**HØGSKOLEN I NESNA**

**Abstract**

October the 1st and 2nd 2003 the Department of Computer and Information Science, Nesna University College – Campus Mo i Rana, hosted an online discussion between our third year Bachelor students and Andrew Vachss. The topic was child abuse and Internet as a tool for abusers. The questions from the students to Andrew Vachss ranged from how they could use their education to battle child abuse, differences between paedophiles and predatory paedophiles, the society's reactions to predatory paedophiles and rules of engagement in the war against child abuse. The conclusion reached at the end of the second session is best summarized by Andrew Vachss himself: "We are all punching a wall. Whose fist finally breaks through does not matter. What matters is that our collective pounding finally weakened it to that point."

This pamphlet is a documentation of these two sessions as it appeared on the computer screens of the participants. The sessions was a part of a new angle on how to organize the course Social Informatics, and an experimental example on how to teach ethical topics to computer students.

**Contents**

**Prologue**


Since August 2003 the third-year Bachelor-students at Department of Computer and Information Science has been working with a project called "Gå inn i din tid!". The name of the project is taken from the anti-war poem "To the youth", written in 1936 by Nordahl Grieg. A direct translation would be "Go into your time!" meaning that you should be an active member of not only your own society, but also as a citizen of the world. The project is a part of the course Social Informatics II.

The project focuses on Child Pornography and the Internet. In March 2003 Nesna University College, as the only educational institution in Norway, signed an agreement with the Norwegian Save the Children to work closely with them on this issue.

The main focus of the project is to try and fight the constant abuse of children on the Internet with information and awareness projects directed both towards our own computer students and towards the local computer industry and local schools.

At the 24th of September 2003 our department hosted a small conference with speakers from the police, lawyers, Save the Children, University of Umeå and our third year Bachelor students. The title of the conference was "Internet – a hiding ground for paedophiles?" With this conference as a backdrop we hosted an online discussion between our students and Andrew Vachss.

Andrew Vachss has been a federal investigator, a social caseworker, a labour organizer, and has directed a maximum-security prison for youth offenders. A lawyer in private practice, Vachss represents children and youths exclusively. He is the author of several novels, short stories and numerous non-fiction works.

The discussion was organized as two sessions. This pamphlet is a transcript of these sessions as it appeared on the computer screens of the participants.


Per A. Godejord
Assistant Professor Social Informatics
Department of Computer and Information Science
Nesna University College

## Online chat with Andrew Vachss – Part I

**Welcome!**
by Per Godejord - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:01 PM

Welcome to Nesna University College here at Mo i Rana, and the Forum "Gå inn i din tid!"
This afternoon we have the honour to welcome Andrew Vachss, an attorney working exclusively with children, and the author of more than a dozen novels. He is here to discuss the topic of child abuse with our students and staff.
As a department working in the field of Computer Science, our focus is on Information Technology as a tool for the abusers. But is this a sensible approach or are we just milling around on the wrong part of the battlefield?
Welcome to this discussion Andrew Vachss!

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**Re: Welcome!**
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:03 PM

I am honored to be here with you, and grateful for the opportunity.

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**Question**
by Jann Ove Lillegård - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:05 PM

Mr Vachss. You have written that "The liberal seeks the"hearts and minds"
of the electorate, while the facists laughs behind his predator's masks,.." in a sense
this project("Gå inn i din tid!") seeks the hearts and minds of ordinary people,
both students and computer professionals alike, but how can we use our education,
this project, computer tools, etc. to stop the facist laughing?

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### Re: Question
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:10 PM

I was, in the passage you quoted, referring to the reality that political labels are meaningless. We know people only by their *behavior*. The task for the cyber-professional is to navigate the tricky waters between "privacy" and "protection." Because this is a war, and because the cyber-weapons are so varied, the first task is to define the mission. Only then can we select the correct tools for the job. So, first, we must focus, as narrowly as possible, on what we hope to accomplish. I have learned that, unless people are truly and deeply invested in their tasks, they will not perform them to the maximum.

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### MMS and childrens security
by JO-Andre Karlberg - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:15 PM

Dear Mr Vachss

Do you see any problems with the new MMS technology and childrens security?

How are the laws in the area of MMS and children security in the USA?

How can we as students of computer science make any difference in the battle against child abuse?

Alpha team

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### Re: MMS and childrens security

by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:22 PM

Technology is neutral. It can (and will be) exploited according to the motivator of the user. Many young people seem to believe that the Internet was the greatest single boon to, for example, child pornographers. And the media concurs in this ridiculous judgment. When I was a caseworker, the Polaroid camera was an invaluable tool. We could document injuries to a child right in the field, and preserve them as evidence. That *same* Polaroid camera enabled freaks to create their own kiddie porn without (as previously) being forced to rely on others to develop the film. My point is: as students, your task is to develop expertise so that, when you join the battle against child abuse, your skills become a significant contribution. The laws in the United States (and elsewhere) are always evolving. And, because of the very nature of technology, will always lag behind. We must fight on *both* fronts.

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### Question

by JO-Andre Karlberg - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:44 PM

Mr. Vachss

You have once said that it is a myth that the greatest danger to our children is from strangers. As students in Computer science we are naturally focused on technology as tools for child abusers, and ways we are naturally focused on technology as tool for child abusers, and ways we can combat that missuse of for instant the internet. And the thinking of the internet is naturally to assume the predators out there are strangers. But is that necessarily so, and is it wrong to focus on the use of thecnology when working to battle child abuse? (I use the word battle here as opposed to "stop", since depriving the abusers of thecnology hardly would stop them from abusing)

Alpha team

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### Chat
by Jann Ove Lillegård - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:16 PM

Mr Vachss:
More and more kids are now using the Internet to chat .
In your knowledge does there exist any
chat-rooms that are safe for children?
if not , do you have any thoughts about how make more
secure?

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### Re: Chat
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:28 PM

Your question is brilliant! As I have carefully explained ...

http://www.vachss.com/av_dispatches/testimony.html

... the danger of the Internet is not exposure of children to pornography (more on this later) but its capacity for direct access of victims by predators. This is back to the "privacy" vs. "protection" issue. There is no technology that can ever be created to perform magic -- you cannot "filter out" predators, you must watch them ... *closely*. Chat rooms can be made more secure by monitoring, targeting offenders who are clearly engaged in "grooming" practices, requiring registration and authentication (so that adults cannot pose as children) ... and many other techniques. But, note, all these require *human* presence. What computer professionals can (and should) do is develop tools to enhance the work of those humans.

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### Re: Welcome!
by Torbjørn Nilsen - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:19 PM

Mr. Vachss, in Norway a study has shown that between 8-9 in the morning (during working hour), the most popular search words on the internet are "lolita", "pre teen", "teen" etc. Does this
indicate that there are more paedophiles out there than we could ever imagine, or are people
just curious?

Another question; Are there any constructive ways to make people understand that by clicking
on pictures of abused children, the abuse continues.

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### Re: Welcome!
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:36 PM

You raise two questions of great significance. I wish we were talking in person! First, you must distinguish between "pedophile" (a state of mind) and "predatory pedophile" (a conduct). The reason you have so many people using the search terms you describe have nothing to do with being "curious" in an academic sense. People are "curious" about what *already* interests them, is that not so? Pedophiles tend to be obsessive. One single pedophile could consume tons of child pornography on his own. Do not confuse numbers with activity. When you say that clicking on photos of abused children continues the abuse, you are 100% correct. Many of these photos are used to "test market" the "product." And, so long as there is a market, it will generate production. The only way to produce child pornography is to abuse a child. Therefore, there is no "harmless" viewing. Typically, cyber-folk view the Internet as sacred, and any "interference" with it as heresy. That can only change when members of that very community stand up and speak out.

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### The shortcomings of Burke
by Olaf Havnes - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:23 PM

My name is Olaf Havnes, and I believe none of the participants here - except Per will have heard of me, so an introduction is in order. I have written several fantasy novels for youths. I am also a programmer/designer. In Norway I have worked with many web projects for youths and children, both educational games and member sites. Some examples for those who are interested in doing background checks:

http://www.trafo.no/
Sponsored by the Norwegian Council for Cultural Affairs. A site for creative youths between 16 and 22 to apply for small grants and professional help regarding their creative projects (music, poetry, animations, images).

http://www.kharon4a.com/

Collaboration by Network for IT-Research and Competence in Education (ITU) - a game for 12-16 year old youths regarding biotechnological issues.

http://www.orgdot.com/abc

Web game for kids, where they can learn to draw the letters of the alphabet. Collaboration with Gyldendal Publishing House.

Apart from that, I have my own homepage:
http://www.havnes.com/
- and also the company where I am a partner:
http://www.orgdot.com/.

* * *


The reason I join this dicussion, is that I have worked with Andrew Vachss on several projects in the past. I am an admirer of his work, and I have interviewed him on two occations. So, since I am Norwegian, and know both our norwegian reality, and his work, I hope might be of use ... And thank you all for participating - let us hope this project will snowball!


* * *



The shortcomings of Burke

I know the books of Andrew Vachss pretty well, and I will first add a few comments for those who don't (I hope it is not beside the point for you IT-experts).

Maybe the most widely read of the novels are the Burke series. You might classify these novels as crime novels. At least there is no doubt that the novels are about crimes, that they are easy to read, and if so inclined, you can read them as "crime mysteries".

But there are some things that set Burke (the main character) apart from other crime "investigators" you will find in novels.

Burke is a hard man, and dangerous, but he will be described as impotent at times, and his shortcomings in relationships are not described as conquests, but as failures, as inability to love. It is not very often - in crime literature or other genres - that one finds in-depth portraits of a man that has been raped. But there was times when Burke knew nothing else. (Actually there are few novelists that will tackle such a psychological profile on the main character - such topics are invariably reserved for the sub-plots).

You all have to realize one thing: these novels start where most other novels about crime stop. In for instance a Hollywood movie, you might find the movie ending with a solution like this: the murder was committed by a person who has been severely abused as a child, and thus had developed a multiple personality disorder. And that would neatly explain the "locked room"-mystery etc.

Well, in the Burke novels, this is where the novel would start. And the abuse never serves to explain a clever crime puzzle. In fact, Andrew Vachss states that if he has one wish, it is that these novels were fiction.

Andrew Vachss describes these novels as "trojan horses": Information and messages deliberately packaged to enter places where that information would not normally reach. And he has repeatedly stated that if these novels do not provoke people enough to act "in real life", then they are failures. (And now it seems that this tactic is bearing fruits - if not, we would not have been gathered here at this forum ...)

Burke will take revenge, but he will not change the world. He is not a politician, a leader with a following. He only cares for that which touches upon his world, that which threatens the few people in his carefully chosen family. You can pay him to look into something. But his world is clearly defined. And his reach ends when it reaches the domain of the "good citizens".

My question to Andrew Vachss is this: Could you elaborate on the shortcomings of Burke? Where do his "methods" stop working? And do this point co-incide with the point where we should take over?

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### Re: The shortcomings of Burke
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:44 PM

As always, my brother Olaf unerringly touches the nerve-center of the issue. Burke's shortcomings are that he may fight child *abusers*, but he does nothing about child *abuse*. Revenge has its place, but it does not make *change*. Burke is reactive, not proactive. And this is absolutely the place where the cyber-professionals must take over. Whether it is the interdiction of attempts to access children, the detection of those who traffic in the "product," the dissemination of *truthful* information, technical assistance to those who do "hands-on" child protective work, developing a moral perspective that can be applied to the Internet ... the list is endless ... if we are to achieve actual progress (which Burke never does), it will come from the "next wave" ... the students who bring their skills and commitments to the only "holy war" worthy of the name.

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### Question

by Peter Östbergh - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:32 PM

These abusers seems to be connected in worldwide networks, technology is making it easier for them to swap "information". Do you think that "the tricky waters between "privacy" and "protection"" should be abandoned so those networks could be broken?
When is privacy more important then protection if ever?

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### Re: Question

by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:53 PM

The balancing act between privacy and protection is being sorely tested in America right now, as the government has acquired previously-unheard of investigative powers in the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. I feel that "probable cause" is needed to violate privacy, be it a search warrant or a wiretap. But for cyber-students, I think the burning issue is this: many people see the Internet in religious terms, holding it sacred. The pedophiles have been very good at the "first they came for the Jews" sophistry, and the public has, largely, accepted the lie. Bottom line: child pornography is not "speech," it is a photograph of a crime. There is no right to possess it, or to disseminate it. It cannot be "produced" without violating a child. So long as some countries hold that "private possession" of child pornography is not criminal, the market will continue to thrive. It all comes down to investigative techniques. As we improve our skills, we make the showing of "probably cause" easier for law enforcement. Because there is no right to "privately" commit a crime, especially against the most vulnerable beings on this planet.

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### Question

by Pål Bakkejord - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 05:59 PM

Mr. Vachss, understanding and knowledge are two keywords in our project "Gå inn i din Tid!". But has this any impact at all in the battle against child abuse? Our project will hardly convert any abusers, so does such a prosject have any importance at all?

### Re: Question
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:06 PM

When it comes to predatory pedophiles, the mission is not to "convert" them, something I maintain is an insane waste of resources and doomed to failure anyway ...

http://www.vachss.com/av_dispatches/disp_9301_a.html

... but to fight them, on every front. Knowledge and understanding are weapons in this battle. First, because they increase skills, and the skills will be needed in the fight. And, perhaps most importantly, because (genuine) knowledge and (actual) understanding are sorely lacking in much of the public ... the same public which sits on juries and elects politicians. The Internet is the greatest tool for dissemination of information yet invented, and its new warriors have a mighty task in teaching users how to distinguish content from context. Knowledge and understanding are critical, *especially* on the Internet, because of the phenomenon I call "cyber-chumps" ...

http://www.vachss.com/av_dispatches/disp_9701_a.html

...

We don't need to "convert" the enemy. What we need to do is make sure the truth is available, accessible, and powerful.

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### Vigilantes
by Peter Östbergh - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:10 PM

Mr Vacchss
We recently had a seminar where a reseacher told us about two young boys who started to "hunt" the "predators". They pretend to be a young girls in chat -rooms and set up meetings with predators.
They have become some kind of cyber-vigilantes. Now they plan to photograph and publish them on the web.
How do you feel about this kind of action?

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### Re: Vigilantes
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:18 PM

To be blunt, we receive an endless stream of emails at our websites from those who claim to be "patrolling" the Internet, and we wonder why, if the participants have so much time available, they don't volunteer to do *actual* child-protective work? This strikes me as a "hobby" for some people. They seem to be doing it as entertainment, because they cannot rationally believe they are actually capturing predators. The police are *already* in the chat rooms. They are far more skilled at impersonating "victims," and understand the legal procedures that must be followed in order to turn a conversation into a conviction. I doubt the vast majority of these "vigilantes" have the skills and the expertise to produce a viable effect, and this strikes me more as self-entertainment than a contribution to the cause.

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### Norwegian Vigilantes
by Olaf Havnes - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 01:21 PM

I will add a couple of comments here, Peter, as I strangely enough can shed a little light on this specific question.

You write:
"We recently had a seminar where a reseacher told us about two young boys who started to "hunt" the "predators". They pretend to be a young girls in chat -rooms and set up meetings with predators. They have become some kind of cyber-vigilantes. Now they plan to photograph and publish them on the web."

This might be a coincidence, but The Zero (Andrew Vachss's web site) did get a request from some Norwegian youths a couple of years ago.

Since I know Norwegian, I was asked to check up on them. I went to their web site, where they wrote about themselves and their methods. They had also published transcripts (in Norwegian) of chats where they had "captured" pedophiles. I read through most of the transcripts, and found that the "capturing" was little more than them pretending to be twelve year old girls looking for sex in chat rooms.

I did a little more research, and discovered that the identities and the pictures of the offenders (which they posted on their web site), in all likelihood NOT were pictures of pedophiles. A predatory pedophile would not post a profile with his own name and portrait in a chat room - he would of course falsify an identity and use a portrait of somebody else, maybe even somebody he wanted to hurt. I can promise you, Peter, that what these specific norwegian "vigilantes" did was at best useless, at worst a game they played for their own gratification.

There is one infamous site on the web, maintained by a self-proclaimed "child protector", who publish pages after pages of naked children. His alibi is that he is working to "identify" missing children, by patrolling kiddie porn sites and downloading pictures of children. Now, you decide if you want to buy that alibi ...

Individuals like these will of course fool many people. But this is where the true professional enters the picture.

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### Re: Norwegian Vigilantes
by Peter Östbergh - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 03:57 PM

It is a coincidence. This researcher was from Umeå, Sweden and is working on Youth Web Cultures. During interviewes with youngsters she met these guys who were 14 year old. They started, "just for fun", to impersonate a young girl and ........ They are now 18 and were talking about to publish photographs on the web. So this story is a completly different one.

And, no I don't buy that alibi!

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### mental abuse of child
by Jann Ove Lillegård - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:12 PM

Mr Vachss:
Mental abuse of children are also a problem,
but does not get as much attention as child porn and sexual abuse- perhaps because
it is not on the Internet ? is too much focus on the Internet and computer technology and
to little focus on child abuse as such?
The tools are more interesting than the crime to media and others?

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### Re: mental abuse of child
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:23 PM

You have touched something deep in my heart. I wrote a seminal article on emotion abuse in our widest-circulation magazine in America. You can find it here:

http://www.vachss.com/av_dispatches/disp_9408_a.html

... The article produced *thousands* of responses, from people who said that their pain was, for the first time in their lives, validated. Your point is especially well-taken: child pornography has been around for many, many years, but, as you so eloquently state: the tools are more interesting to the media than the crimes (!) Your question ties in with this entire discussion. If emotional abuse is (as I maintain) perhaps the most long-lasting of all forms of child maltreatment, if it causes horrible damage that is trivialized by others, why is this so? Perhaps you are correct. Perhaps this is because there is very little on this topic on the Internet. But this need not be so, not with the skills available. You see the path?

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### Families vs school
by Jann Ove Lillegård - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:26 PM

Mr Vachss:
When so many families fail in taking care of their children, should schools have a greater resposibility for guiding our children through childhood?

### Re: Families vs school
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:33 PM

Schools should play a *major* role in child development. And, for that matter, in child protection. Teachers are on the front lines. They see their pupils every day, for many hours. They are in the best position to observe, and, if necessary, to report. I believe teaching is one of the most noble professions, and it disgusts me that we pay so little to those from whom we demand so much. So, yes, teachers should have more responsibility. But we too have a responsibility: to support and defend those to whom we entrust those we hold most precious. If we want the best for our children, we must commit ourselves to *active* support of the teaching profession.

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### The end of session one.
by Per Godejord - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:28 PM

It's time to start thinking about ending this first session. I propose that we close the discussion at 1900 hours Norwegian time(in 30 minutes).

Tomorrow, same time and same place, we'll continue this discussion and perhaps even formulate some conclusions.

Thank you all for participating!

See you all tomorrow.

PA

### Re: Welcome!
by Peter Östbergh - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:31 PM

Mr Vachss

It seems that many predators have been abused themself when they were young. Do you think that their sentence should reflect that?

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### Re: Welcome!
by Andrew Vachss - Wednesday, 1 October 2003, 06:38 PM

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to your question. This would depend, for example, on the age of the predator at the time he or she committed the crime, because experience has taught us that our chances to "rehabilitate" a predator drop off with age. Simply put: if we get them young enough, we still have a chance. However, in the larger sense, my answer must be an emphatic "No!" For every predator who can (truthfully) claim a childhood of horror, I can show you hundreds who were treated even worse, yet did not *chose* to walk the same road. Evil is not a destiny; it is a decision. Most abused children do not grow up to be abusers, and most of those who do abuse themselves, rather than others (see "emotional abuse," earlier). If we excuse the predator because he was abused as a child, we are degrading the heroism of those who were similarly abused, yet refused (remember, it is a choice) to imitate their oppressors.

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# Online chat with Andrew Vachss – Part II

**Welcome to part 2 of this discussion with Andrew Vachss**
by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 07:24 AM

Start: 1700 hours NT (0800 UST)/ 021003
_____

Welcome to the Department of Computer and Information Science at Nesna University College.

Before we start:

1. Start this session by clicking on "Discuss this topic" in this box. I.e. follow my tread instead of starting a new one.
2. Write a key word, or some sort of explanatory note in the Subject field before posting a question.

- - -

Mr. Vachss, once more welcome to our forum. We are deeply honoured to have you here.

I would like to start this discussion by quoting something you wrote to me: "I find it ironically interesting that we are questioning the use of cyber-technology to fight child abuse even as we employ it to discuss the issue."

So what, if any, are the strong points of cyber-technology as a tool to fight child abuse?

Could you perhaps elaborate on this Mr. Vachss? What does the other participants think of this?

PA

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### Re: Welcome to part 2 of this discussion with Andrew Vachss
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 04:31 PM

The Internet began as a grand experiment in the sharing of information. Today, it offers far more, because interactive communication allows more than mere exchanging of data; it opens the door to genuine gestalt. Global alliances shift constantly -- yesterday's mortal enemy is today's trading partner -- but soldiers in the war against child abuse are forever united. Take our website, for example: http://www.vachss.com/ ... we receive inquiries from all over the world, asking how we dealt with a particular issue. We discuss matters of strategy and tactics, we exchange investigative information, we work as comrades, unhindered by distance. The Zero is a collective effort. It was, in fact, designed in Norway. That same design was then adopted by our German comrades: http://www.vachss.de/ ... who offer the same services and the same opportunities. We should never forget that cyber-technology *is* technology. In war, the enemy will use whatever is available. Thus, even if cyber-tech had no *independent* value to our cause -- and it most certainly does -- it is our obligation to develop sufficient expertise to defend against its malicious use by those who would prey on children. So, in brief: we use cyber-tech to link (and I do not mean hyperlink) our efforts, we share strength, we develop strategies, we defend, we counter-attack, and, perhaps most important of all, we communicate what we have learned as broadly as possible, so that, one day, it will be political suicide to *not* support the protection of children.

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### If this is war, what are the rules of engagement?
by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 04:53 PM

Mr. Vachss,

You use the term "War" and those of us engaged in the work against child abuse for soldiers. What kind of war is this? And are there any rules of engagement?

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### Re: If this is war, what are the rules of engagement?
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:03 PM

(Please remember that all my responses are necessarily truncated by our format. I have written, without exaggeration, over a million words on this topic, and have not exhausted it.) "War" is conflict between opposing forces that is continuous, and with a specific objective. All over the world, humans prey on children. They use them as sexual toys, as slaves, as work animals, as soldiers ... they even harvest their organs for profit. While not (always) united, the predators have objectives in common. While we who oppose them are not always united, we too have objectives in common. The war is fought at the micro level (a caseworker who removes a child from an abusive home) all the way up to the international front (the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child). When I represent a child in court, if I am not successful, the victim must go back into the "care" of the abuser. That, too, is a war. As with all wars, there is direct conflict, guerilla activity, and covert operations. As with all wars, propaganda is of critical importance. The rules of engagement vary with the individual conflict, but "rules" only apply to the defenders. For the predators, the very concept would make them laugh.

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### Sexual abuse
by JO-Andre Karlberg - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:07 PM

Mr Vachss

To prevent some sexual abuse of children you maybe might have to understand

why these potential abusers want to do this, and make them aware of the seriousness of this crime. I once heard a comment from an abuser who did not think about this. He just wanted the sexual satisfaction and thought that this would have no extreme consequence to this child.

He just thought about the while this went on, and not that this would effect the child it's whole life. I do not defend his actions but I think making people aware of what this does to a child, and maybe making the potential abusers feel "guilty" of there thoughts, might help some to realize that this is not an accepted behavior.

What's your opinion on this Mr Vachss?

Alpha team

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## Re: Sexual abuse
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:18 PM

You have zeroed in on *the* significant distinction between the predators and the rest of the planet. The predator is characterized not by his (or her) conduct, which may vary considerably, but by a foundational, fundamental LACK OF EMPATHY. Such humans feel only their own pain; they are impervious to (or greatly) enjoy the pain of others. Their needs and desires are more important to them than anything else on earth. Yes, some offenders engage in what is called "cognitive distortion," by which they persuade themselves that the victim is not harmed (and, indeed, may even be benefitted) by sex with an adult. You see this attitude among serial offenders who use guile instead of force, thus adding to their rationale that they "did not hurt" the child. It is also common among incest offenders, who self-describe their conduct as "love." Indeed, a major pedophile organization, NAMBLA (North American Man-Boy Love Association) rejects any notion of "sickness" and blames a repressive society for denying children the wonderfulness of sex with adults. I have never met a predator against children who was not a sociopath. This is why we have *some* success working with young sex offenders ... because they are not yet calcified, and it is still possible (in some cases) to remedy that lack of empathy you noted.

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## Genuine knowledge?
by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:10 PM

Mr. Vachss,

In one of your postings yesterday you wrote: "...,because (genuine) knowledge and (actual) understanding are sorely lacking in much of the public ..."

What does in your opinion constitute genuine knowledge and actual understanding? And how to best achieve such an understanding and knowledge in the general public?

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### Re: Genuine knowledge?
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:26 PM

"Genuine knowledge" and "actual understanding" are not philosophical terms. They simply mean TRUTH. Demonstrated, scientific truth that meets the standard of both validity and reliability. Because child abuse is a crime that occurs in darkness, because it is a crime that often induces guilt in the victim, because much of it (see yesterday's discussion on "emotional abuse") is not recognized or trivialized, because "statistics" are thrown about (and made up) with great abandon, most people respond out of their own belief systems, not out of actual knowledge. Ask any group of people what they think about "false allegations," for example. You will get the total range: some believe there is an epidemic of false allegations, a real "witch hunt," while others believe that "children never lie about sexual abuse" and there are Satanic conspiracies responsible for all kinds of horrors. Child abuse is not an "issue" on which one can have an "opinion." People argue endlessly over topics such as abortion and capital punishment -- while, of course, some who oppose abortion express their opposition with homicide --and what you immediately notice is that no debate, no discussion, no statements will ever change the positions. But whether child abuse occurred is not a question of "belief," it is a question of fact. And we must pursue a system in which only wrongdoers will fear the results of any investigation.

Delete | Reply

### The Internet and basic truths
by Sven- Christian Valnes - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:20 PM

Mr. Vachss. You have written that the only way to protect our children is to understand some basic truths, and if I understood you correctly the Internet as such are not one of the truths we have to understand. Does that mean that trying to fight child pornography on the Internet is of no use to the battle against child abuse?

Delete | Reply

### Re: The Internet and basic truths
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:32 PM

The Internet is not truth, it is technology. As such it can be employed for whatever purpose the user intends. Fighting child pornography *on* the Internet is, in my opinion, futile unless we are going to successfully prosecute and punish the actual purveyors all the way down the chain to the producers of the material and the original offenders. So, for example, "taking down" a website which displays child pornography simply means the same material will surface on another site. However, using cyber tools to track down *all* those responsible (and, in some cases, to identify the victims so they may be rescued) is *invaluable*. "Patrolling" the Internet to "expose" predators in chat rooms may actually be counter-productive, as those same predators are being tracked by professional law enforcements, and may actually be warned off by seeing their names posted on some website. The Internet is a potentially superb weapon in our war, but, as with all weapons, competence and motivation must work together.

Delete| Reply

### Re: Welcome to part 2 of this discussion with Andrew Vachss
by Peter Östbergh - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:37 PM

Mr. Vachss, yesterday you answered my question about vigilantes and said leave it to the police. To me this sounds like a smart idea.

The police in Norway say that their resources are to small to cope with the workload, this includes the policemen and women, working with child abuse. On the seminar I referred to yesterday, we had invited a senior investigator from the police. He told us that when they were "under cover" in chat- rooms they were quickly "picked up" by predators. I suspect that it's the same in the US.

Do you think that increasing the funding to the police will make a big difference?

What do you mean is the best way to make use of that increased funding?

Delete| Reply

### Re: Welcome to part 2 of this discussion with Andrew Vachss
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:51 PM

Your question is a classic example of critical thinking, and I commend you for it. Instead of accepting the kneejerk answer given by *all* agencies -- if we had more money, we could accomplish more -- you ask the hard question: there is a finite amount of money. Money is a resource. How then can we best allocate our resources? I believe the answer lies more in politics than it does in policing. The protection of children -- while given lip service by politicians -- has never been a national priority in any country on earth. Any police officer will tell you that their best sources are informants, and the best source *of* informants is those who have been captured and are facing long prison terms unless they cooperate. You see the connection? If we raise the stakes -- increase the penalties for, say, sexual abuse of children -- we increase the chances for the police to make effective use of those predators they *do* capture, thus increasing their effectiveness without increasing their budget. The hard choices -- for example, do we hire more police, or invest in specialized training for existing staff -- should not even *be* questions, if the politicians felt the will of the public demanding that we finance this war as we would any other ... with every resource needed! BTW, note the value of *critical* questioning. If the police specialists acknowledge that they are quickly "picked up" by the predators in chat rooms, do you really think those "volunteer vigilantes" are fooling anyone? Or just entertaining themselves?

Delete| Reply

### A system that does not frighten the innocent?
by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:40 PM

Mr. Vachss,

When politicians, spurred on by the media, talk about stopping abuse, they usually ends up with either banning something or propose a regime of total surveillance. Is it possible to really find a system in which only wrongdoers will fear the results of any investigation? Or is this war so important – it is after all a question of protection of what you have called "Our endangered species" – that normal rules of privacy has to be abonded? After all the predators doesn't abide by rules.

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### Re: A system that does not frighten the innocent?
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:57 PM

Of course it is possible to have a system in which only wrongdoers fear the consequences. This is accomplished by: recruitment (how many of our "best and brightest" young people now consider child protective work a viable career?), support (we must subsidize the education of those who will commit to serve on the front lines of this war), training (we must cross-train in multiple disciplines; even the warmest and most empathetic social worker will not be enough unless there are also investigative skills available), supervision (without a check-and-balance system, mistakes will occur ... or be covered up), compensation (we cannot continue to pay those who protect our most precious natural resource pathetic wages -- it is counter-productive and disrespectful), transparency (while individual cases are entitled to privacy, the functioning of the system itself must be open to scrutiny at all times), and, finally, the development of a "single-issue" political constituency. Right now, more people would show up at a rally to save whales than to save children. Until that changes, we will continue to starve on the thin diet of rhetoric we are fed by the politicians. We don't need to abandon the rules. But we need the power to *enforce* them.

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### Prison and Capital punishment
by Tommy Solvoll - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 05:52 PM

Mr. Vachss.

You have "directed a maximum-security prison for youth offenders" (from your profile). How did you / the prison handle the youth offenders?

And yesterday you wrote "because experience has taught us that our chances to "rehabilitate" a predator drop off with age". What do you mean we should do with the "old" youth offenders, when you have no belief in capital punishment?  Put them in for life?

Delete| Reply

### Re: Prison and Capital punishment

by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:04 PM

Ah, of all the questions I have been asked, this one frustrates me the most. I actually wrote a massive textbook on this very subject ... http://www.vachss.com/av_books/lsvj.html ... and I am still working on the answers. We tried many revolutionary techniques in working with young offenders, and learned from every single one. We were not so concerned with "rehabiliation" (essentially, a medical term, meaning to return to a former state of functioning) as "socialization" (exchanging the feral values of the street for those of society). I can tell you this much: while I was in charge, we had not one single rape, stabbing, or suicide. This may not sound like much of an accomplishment, but just ask anyone who has run such an institution. When you consider the type of youth we were dealing with: http://www.vachss.com/av_books/lsvj_excerpt.html ... you will see why it took an enormous, united effort to achieve what we did. As to your other question: for the calcified, serial predator against children, yes, I have no hesitation in saying that such a beast should never be free to walk among us. I am opposing to capital punishment for many *pragmatic* reasons, just as I am opposed to castration. But I believe strongly in incapacitation of our enemies, and incarceration is the most humane way to achieve this.

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### Biological families - somewhere on Chat?

by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:05 PM

Mr. Vachss, in "Our Search For Love" you wrote that when our biological families no longer function, the only option is to create a family of choice." How do we, as a society, prevent children from using the Chat rooms of the Net in their search for love and perhaps even a new family and thereby making themselves vulnerable to predators lurking in the same Chat rooms?

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### Re: Chat Room "families"
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:11 PM

(Note: I was not able to Reply directly to Per's post concerning the vulnerability of children in chat rooms, so I will try this addendum). You are completely correct: wounded children will desperately seek a bonding opportunity ... it is no accident that many street gangs see themselves as a "family" ... and that experienced predators can spot vulnerability the way a vulture can spot a potential meal. This is my challenge to all those who claim they want to fight child abuse by pretending to be victims and visiting chat rooms. Why not, instead of pretending, be *real* ... a real resource? Why not offer that opportunity to bond? Why not offer full disclosure of your own identities, thus challenging predators to do the same? This could be done. And it *should* be.

Delete | Reply

### A worldwide war
by Peter Östbergh - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:11 PM

If the answer lies in the hands of the politicians who are funding the armed forces around the world, I'm not optimistic at all.

This war is a worldwide war, which seems to harvest more and more victims in the third world. These countries have already been violated by "the civilized" world a number of times. Do you think there is any way to stop this "sickness" from spreading?

Delete | Reply

### Re: A worldwide war
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:18 PM

If the answer would lie in the hands of politicians, I would agree with you ... there is no reason to be optimistic. But, ultimately, the answer lies in *our* hands. We are not helpless pawns, or chips of wood tossed by a hurricane ... we are people who, when we act collectively, can make the politicians perform to *our* specifications. The problem is not politicians ... they are reactive organisms with no actual minds of their own -- their sole raison d'etre is re-election -- the problem is that there has been no "lobby" for children, as there is, for example, for animals. Such an effort has just begun in America ... http://www.protect.org/ ... and it needs to be replicated in every "democratic" country on the planet. As for third world exploitation, of course you are right. But every seller must find a buyer, and, (for example), Norway's extra-territorial law against those Norwegian citizens who practice "child sex tourism" is an example of what *can* be done. We just need more of it ... not these occasional raindrops, a tsunami.

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### Three wishes for the world
by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:25 PM

Mr. Vachss,

http://www.protect.org/ is a excellent example of what happens when people bond together in a common cause. If you were forced to mention just three activities that would have an important impact in fighting, and perhaps remove(?), child abuse from this planet, what would they be?

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### Re: Three wishes for the world
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:30 PM

This is where the Internet can play its rightful role. (1) International self-identification of all those who proclaim that child protection is *their* cause, the cause they will place above all others; (2) Joining together in cyber-space to thoroughly discuss (and agree upon) achieveable objectives, so that when (3) Action is taken, it will be concerted, collective, and powerful, not degraded or derailed by more "discussions." The real task is to separate the pontificators from those willing to actually *work*, and to bring together those who will "take the pledge."

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### Conclusions?

by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:32 PM

Dear all participants,

Personally I do not want to stop this discussion at all. And if I could chose I would have placed myself, my fellow teachers and students on a plane to New York, pick up Andrew, found some intimate blues bar, ordered a couple of beers and continued this discussion through the night.

But perhaps we shall release Andrew to other tasks, and try to sum up this discussion.

I am somewhat at a loss to find a sensible (or scientific/ academic?) conclusion at this stage, but perhaps the best conclusion after these two sessions is that any involvement in this battle really makes an impact?

What do you say Andrew? Peter? Students?

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### Re: Conclusions?

by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:46 PM

If I did not agree 100% that *any* involvement in this war counts for something, my own life would now count for nothing. I am swimming at the horizon, and I know I will slip beneath the waves without reaching it. But I also know it *will* be reached, some day, by those who have made the commitment. We are all punching a wall. Whose fist finally breaks through does not matter. What matters is that our collective pounding finally weakened it to that point. Some contribute by working directly in the field: law enforcement, the legal system, social work ... others by bringing their skills to aid such professions ... others by using their skills to amass sufficient money so that they can help fund the volunteer efforts, others by political organizing, others by ... the list is endless. The important thing is to contribute. Because *every* contribution counts. And when we get enough of them ... the world will change. And it must. I thank you for the opportunity to engage in this dialogue. It gives me renewed hope to see such intelligence and focus in young people, especially those who are learning the communication skills that will serve us for the next century. Someday, perhaps, we can have this conversation in person. Thank you for listening, and for teaching me as well.

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### Conclusions!
by Peter Östbergh - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:37 PM

A couple of beers?

As in any fight, you have to be on the battlefield first. I hope this can be a beginning.

Than you Mr. Vachss

Delete | Reply

### Thank you
by Per Godejord - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:51 PM

Thank you Andrew for being here with us these two sessions. If you so wish, this Forum and this E-system (Moodle of Social Informatics II) is forever open to you if you want to communicate with us - anytime, anywhere, anything.

And a heartfelt thanks to those students and staff who participated.

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### A comment to your answer to peter østbergh
by Torbjørn Nilsen - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 06:59 PM

Hi mr. Wachss

In reference to Peter Østbergh's question, you said one should ".. increase the penalties for sexual abuse of children .." because it will increase the chanses for the police to make effective use of the "predators". I'm abit puzzled here because most people who do research on these matters claim that increasing the penality has no effect at all because the fall back rate for paedofiles are the same. What they speak of is various kinds of treatment instead, and ultimately it would cause shorter sentences because the a treatment is seldom as long as a plain prison sentence. You see the paradox here? Should we forfeit treatments and the possible positive results from it and go for long sentences or have long sentences with treatment, even though the person might be "cured"?

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### Re: A comment to your answer to peter østbergh
by Andrew Vachss - Thursday, 2 October 2003, 07:28 PM

Thank you for providing the perfect coda to our exchange. Your question illustrates the vital necessity of critical thinking in this war. I don't know who the "most people" you refer to are, but, assuming the truth of their concluon -- that longer sentences do not deter predatory pedophiles -- what should our response be? Surrender? Should we agree that such predators are "sick," and should be given "treatment" rather than punishment? Should be continue to conduct these "experiments" when innocent children are the laboratory? My paradigm is as follows: (1) The goal is not to "cure" predators, it is to incapacitate them; (2) I am in favor of "treatment" for youthful sex offenders, but, once the offender has shown a *pattern* of conduct, any "treatment" they receive should be behind bars. There is no "paradox," unless you can show that "treatment" actually works ... and there is no such evidence. Indeed, many predators have learned new "skills" *during* treatment (for example, they learn how to present the mask of empathy, to hide their sociopathy). Let us assume that long sentences do not deter. Fine. Then the answer is simple: an incarcerated predator may not be cured ... but he also cannot prey. I do not see those who advocate a "cure" hiring those discharged from "treatment" as caretakers for *their* children. Long sentences, in my opinion, *do* deter. In a society where an offender will do more prison time for shoplifting than he will for incest, in a nation where a pocketful of cocaine will draw a long sentence, while a truckload of child pornography will not, what do you expect? If we do not raise the stakes, the profit motive alone will keep many criminals in the game. Remember, just as the head of a drug cartel is probably not an addict, the head of child pornography ring is not necessarily a pedophile. Finally, criminal penalties express society's position on the crime itself. If those who prey upon children are not considered the worst offenders of all, what do we say about ourselves? And, for those not deterred, we have another answer: a lifetime behind bars.

http://www.vachss.com/av_dispatches/disp_9301_a.html

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The End

# CHILD PORNOGRAPHY IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

By Elizabeth Skogrand
*Project leader Child Pornography on the Internet*
*Save the Children Norway (Redd Barna)*

Save the Children, an international movement for children's rights, currently comprises 30 organisations, spanning the five continents and operating in over 100 countries. Save the Children has been active for many years in raising awareness and provides direct help to children who have suffered sexual abuse through therapeutic program activities in many parts of the world.

Save the Children recommends three main strategies in the fight against child pornography and Internet-related sexual abuse of children:

1. Facilitate international multi agency co-operation to combat the problem of child sexual exploitation on the Internet at international, national and local level
2. Improve international and national law and national child protection systems in respect to the complex multi jurisdictional nature of Internet crime and abuse against children.
3. Challenge societal denial, minimisation and myths about child sexual abuse and exploitation of children

Since the mid- 1990s six Save the Children organisations have been engaged in combating digital distribution of child pornography and raising awareness about sexual abuse and exploitation via the Internet. The work against child pornography is part of Save the Children's broader strategy in promoting the rights of the child in the context of protection from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Save the Children Norway (Redd Barna) has been a pioneer in the work against child pornography on the Internet. In the aftermath of the 1996 World Congress against Sexual exploitation of Children in Stockholm, Redd Barna established the first hotline where Internet users could report if they came across illegal images of child pornography on the Internet. Within its two first years of operation, the hotline received more than 6000 reports. Redd Barna's hotline has been a model for other hotlines and five other Save the Children organisations today run similar hotlines.

Redd Barna's hotline is today operated in close co-operation with the National Criminal Investigation Service (Kripos). All reports are forwarded to the police and Save the Children does not undertake any active operations, infiltrations or closing of sites. The information from the reports, from co-operation with the police in addition to Redd Barna's extensive national and international network is used in awareness campaigns, advocacy work and lobbyism.

Redd Barna holds the position of the national competence centre on issues related to sexual abuse of children on the Internet and how children can use the Internet safely. Redd Barna's knowledge and information material is in demand with politicians, bureaucrats, media, business enterprises, educational institutions and a wide variety of organisations.

Redd Barna perceives child pornography as a visual recording of a crime being committed and the children who appear in such images are subjected to degrading, abusive and humiliating acts of a criminal nature. In some of the imagery, children are beaten, burnt or subjected to torturous sexual depravities. When made to pose in offensively sexual situations with others, including other children, they are subjected to psychologically distressing manipulation and abuse.

From Redd Barna's point of view, the term child pornography is by no means adequate. To the child this is not about pornography or about sexual preferences, but about humiliation and abuse. No actual child pornographic image can be produced without the sexual abuse of a child and for Redd Barna we need to focus more on these children in the fight to combat digital production and distribution of child pornography.

The amount of images of child abuse and violence towards human beings in general on the Internet normalises abusive and violent behaviour. It lowers the threshold for taking part in illegal transactions and abuse. Redd Barna is increasingly worried about children meeting predators in Internet chat rooms and will within the next six months conduct a new pioneer study of court cases where children have been sexually abused after meeting a "friend" from a chat room.

However, Redd Barna does not want to scare anyone, and particularly not children, off using the Internet. On the contrary, Redd Barna believes in a positive response to the enormous communication and information sources Internet provides from authorities, organisations, schools and parents. Nevertheless, we see the need for information on how children can be safe and not be exposed to indecent material when being online. With this in mind, Redd Barna launched a safe chat campaign around Easter and a line of publications based on interviews with young teenagers about their life in cyberspace.

Redd Barna is very proud to be part of the fruitful and creative cooperation with Nesna University College (HiNe) , Department of Computer and Information Science, in the fight to combat images of child sexual abuse on the Internet. We thoroughly appreciate the initiative from students and staff to increase their knowledge about internet related sexual abuse of children. Redd Barna is impressed by the responsible attitude future computer and information leaders show in order to do what lies in their hands to secure the Internet for children and stop the dehumanisation and abuse child pornography implies. One could only wish that other parts of the Internet industry and other occupations would take the same responsibility.

For Redd Barna the co-operation with HiNe is a fantastic opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences with a field with which we normally do not get to cooperate. We are particularly impressed by the whole hearted support we have got for our child rights perspective and our strategy to protect children online. From a Redd Barna perspective the technological expertise and innovative solutions which the co-operation brings are tremendously beneficial. Input from student work groups and discussions online and during lectures gives us a fresh outlook on how to work even more effectively against digital production and distribution of child pornography and also on how to communicate with children and adults alike about safe use of Internet.

The cooperation between HiNe and Redd Barna is unique, innovative and the first of its kind in Norway. The online discussions with Mr. Andrew Wachss illustrate the positive and creative approach from students and staff at HiNe. Unfortunately Redd Barna was not able to participate in either of the two sessions this time, but found the discussions extremely thought provoking and at the same time encouraging. As far as we are concerned the questions from the students proved their enthusiasm for how they can use their education and knowledge in the war against sexual exploitation of children.

From Redd Barna's point of view, we totally agree with those of the students and Mr. Wachss who conclude that child pornography on the Internet is not actually about the Internet, but rather about child sexual abuse. However, it is important to see what possibilities lie in the technology itself for reporting, intelligence and investigation of illegal material. Redd Barna works to allocate more police resources to police hotlines and Internet related intelligence and investigation methods. As the only organisation in Norway that co-operates with the police about reports from the public about child pornography, we also appreciate Mr. Wachss' warning about vigilante patrolling on the net.

Child pornography is always an image of a criminal offence towards a child and criminal offences should only be handled by the police. In addition, Redd Barna would like to point to the fact that by down loading child pornography, even if it is just by curiosity or because you are trying to help, one is signalling an interest for this kind of material.

An interest in "the market" implies that more (or the same) children have to be abused to produce new material. To the child, every new down loading of an abusive image repeats the victimisation. The concept of abuse is hard enough to handle for the child without having to know that every day people are looking at the images again and again.

To Redd Barna the fight against child pornography on the Internet really is a war, as Mr. Wachss also agreed. If we can have a "War on Terror", we certainly need a war against child sexual abuse. With such co-operating partners as HiNe, and now Mr. Wachss, this war is of course still impossible to win, but nevertheless more inspiring to fight and for each individual child one is able to save from sexual abuse, the war is most certainly won.

## Epilogue

By Per A. Godejord
*Assistant Professor Social Informatics*

This online chat had several aims.

1. Give the students an opportunity to discuss using English and forum technology
2. Give them training in formulating their own statements as computer professionals
3. Heighten their awareness of the issue of child abuse

But most important, this chat with Andrew Vachss was a part of a new fist banging on the wall of child abuse. A fist consisting of third year Bachelor students in computer science and Save the Children of Norway and others who wanted to contribute to this particular project.

But what has this to do with computers and computer students?

Information and computer technology has traditionally been conceived as a course closely connected with the natural and logical-mathematical sciences. Social informatics deviates from this point of view, and can be explained as a modern study of information technology from the point of view of the social and cultural sciences. A more formal definition is that: "Social Informatics is the interdisciplinary study of the design, uses and consequences of information technologies that takes into account their interaction with institutional and cultural contexts".

At Nesna University College we have two courses in Social Informatics, SI I that is a course at the first year of the Bachelor study in Computer and Information Science and SI II who are taught at the third year level.

Many third year computer students dread the course in Social Informatics, and in the words of one of them: "This is just Marx. No practical computer stuff." So what to do?

If the students felt the course unimportant and uninspiring - would they learn anything? My answer was to rebuild the course and make it more practical, and with one topic as the main ethical theme. The topic I chose was child porn on the Internet. I believed that this would be a much more inspiring and interesting topic for the students, instead of the usual stuff about software piracy and "What is ethics?" and "How to behave as a computer administrator".

Social Informatics II at Nesna University College consists of the following main themes:

1. Computers and Law
2. Computers and Organizations
3. Technological change

Student's works with different cases ranging from Computer Forensic to problems concerning the introduction of ICT in an organization, and the different tasks belonging to the Administrative Computer Unit in an organization.

The course does not only focus on the "technical" questions, but also on the broader ethical subjects. And it is here the project "Gå inn i din tid!" and the issue of child abuse has its rightful place.

As computer technology spreads to every corner of our society, it is of vital importance that we educate computer professionals capable of viewing not only the technical aspects but also the human side. Cases of computer administrators intruding on the privacy of other employees by invading their private files and folders, and the hectic use of key words like "Lolita", "pre teen" etc. on the Internet between 0800 and 0900 on normal work days, tells us the importance of not focusing on technical aspects only.

The importance of Social Informatics in today's computer courses cannot be overestimated. Just as the belief that a process is more important than the people who execute it will cause a software project to fail, a failure to focus on the misuse of technology will lead to a greater failure for the whole of our society.

But this does not imply that technology as such is "evil". Technology is nothing but a tool and as such completely neutral. It's the different ways we chose to use this tool that decides if it's good or bad.

Choosing between right and wrong is deeply rooted in knowledge. The project "Gå inn i din tid!" is a tool to acquire knowledge. But it's also meant to be a torch illuminating the fact that while this is just a theoretical topic to most of us, it's a dark reality to many children all over the world.

**Appendix**

**A. The course:**

**Social Informatics II  (3de year ICT, Bachelor)**

**Course title**: Social Informatics 2
**Level**: Undergraduate
**Duration**: 1 semester. Autumn
**ECTS-credits**: 12
**Aim**: To give the students professional insight into design, uses and consequences of information technologies in interaction with institutional and cultural contexts.
**Content**: Practical and theoretical problem solving. Use of software for computer forensic and computer privacy/security. Theories of Organisations, Planning and implementation of ICT strategies, Norwegian Law and Software licensing, etc
**Course format**: Discussions, Lectures, practical work, projects
**Assessment**: Essay.
**Course language:** Norwegian
**Teaching:** Some lectures, but mostly discussions (Constructivism).
**Description:**
Information and computer technology has traditionally been conceived as a course closely connected with the natural and logical-mathematical sciences. Social informatics deviates from this point of view, and can be explained as a modern study of information technology from the point of view of the social and cultural sciences. A more formal definition is that: "Social Informatics is the interdisciplinary study of the design, uses and consequences of information technologies that takes into account their interaction with institutional and cultural contexts".
Social Informatics II at Nesna University College consists of the following main themes:
1. Computers and Law
2. Computers and Organizations
3. Technological change

**Courses by topics:**

| ICT and Law | Technology change | ICT and organizations |
|---|---|---|
| • ICT and Norwegian Law<br>• Computer Crime and Fraud<br>• Computer Forensic<br>• Child Pornography and the Internet (Project)<br>• Child Pornography and Privacy issues<br>• Ethics and Law - Complete opposites? | • Information Warfare<br>• US Army Land warrior System<br>• ICT - The past<br>• ICT - The future | • Natural System Rational System<br>• Theory X and Theory Y<br>• Motivation Theory<br>• How to organize and lead an Administrative Computer unite<br>• ICT Strategy<br>• Computer Security Awareness in the organization<br>• Software licensing and Software Piracy - Ethics and Law |

**B. Links**

Andrew Vachss:http://www.vachss.com

Save the Children Norway: http://www.reddbarna.no

The Project: http://ithuset.hinesna.no/index3.html

The Course: http://ithuset.hinesna.no/engelsk.html

The Department: http://it-mo.hinesna.no

The College: http://www.hinesna.no