

Westville Police Service

"Committed to building a safe, healthy, friendly, and engaged community through a high level of policing"

Westville Police Service members responded to 242 calls for service in the month of July 2022. Of the calls for the month, 43 criminal investigations, 16 other provincial statues, 10 municipal by-law enforcements, 39 are motor vehicles related and 134 are other calls to service.

Boys aggressively targeted on Instagram and Snapchat, analysis of Cybertip.ca data shows

Two distinct tactics used by sextortionists to hold boys/young men ransom

August 4, 2022
For Immediate Release

Winnipeg, Canada — Adolescent boys are being targeted primarily on social media giants Instagram® and Snapchat® as part of an ongoing sextortion crisis, an analysis of July Cybertip.ca data by the [Canadian Centre for Child Protection \(C3P\)](#) shows.

Over the past several weeks, law enforcement agencies across Canada, the U.S., and Australia have repeatedly issued warnings to the public about a massive spike in sextortion cases. Through the operation of [Cybertip.ca](#), C3P has been receiving an unprecedented volume of reports from youth and sometimes their concerned parents about falling prey to aggressive sextortion tactics.

For the month of July 2022, Cybertip.ca has opened case files for 322 victims of sextortion:

- When the gender victim was known, 92 per cent of cases involved boys or young men;
- Sixty-three per cent of victims reported they did not disclose the incident to trusted person;
- Fifty per cent of victims were under than 18 years of age, 37 were 18 years or older. In 13 per cent of cases, the victim's age was unknown;
- When the platform used to facilitate the harm was disclosed, Instagram (42 per cent) and Snapchat (38 per cent) were by far the most frequently used social media environments where victims were targeted. Whatsapp® (5.6 per cent), Facebook® (3.6 per cent), and Apple's iMessage® (1.2 per cent) were the next closest platforms in terms of frequency.

Harm mostly occurs on popular social media platforms, Cybertip.ca data suggests

"This analysis makes it clear that offenders seek out children where they are easily found: on the social platforms they engage with for hours each day," says Lianna McDonald, Executive Director for C3P. "This is an ongoing problem that is getting worse, and so it really does beg the question about what are these companies doing to keep children safe? It is incredulous that social media platforms allow total adult strangers to directly reach out and target our children without any consequence."

The analysis also revealed two distinct tactics used by sextortionists. Both begin when children are duped into believing they are interacting with someone their age, often in the context of a sexualized conversation. If the victim sends intimate images of themselves, the offender behind the

account will immediately make aggressive demands for money, while threatening to release the images to their family and friends.

The review also showed an emerging tactic where the victim is sent nude images of children from the person behind the fake account. The offender will then threaten to report the victim to police, claiming they are in possession of child sexual abuse material. Demands for money immediately follow.

“This continues to reinforce the need for the public to ask questions and for the government to step in and impose regulatory guardrails for the technology industry,” says McDonald.

Follow C3P’s Twitter account [@CdnChildProtect](https://twitter.com/CdnChildProtect) to keep up with the latest insights related to this ongoing public safety crisis.

Media relations contact:

[1 \(204\) 560-0723](tel:12045600723)

communications@protectchildren.ca

-30-

About the Canadian Centre for Child Protection: The [Canadian Centre for Child Protection \(C3P\)](https://www.protectchildren.ca/) is a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children. The organization’s goal is to reduce the sexual abuse and exploitation of children through programs, services, and resources for Canadian families, educators, child-serving organizations, law enforcement, and other parties. C3P also operates [Cybertip.ca](https://www.cybertip.ca/), Canada’s national tipline to report child sexual abuse and exploitation on the internet, and [Project Arachnid](https://www.projectarachnid.ca/), a web platform designed to detect known images of CSAM on the clear and dark web and issue removal notices to industry.

All third party trademarks and trade names used in this report are the property of their respective owners, and their inclusion is not meant to imply endorsement or affiliation of any kind.