Paedophiles and Online Grooming

What is a Paedophile?

An adult who is sexually attracted to a child or children.

Why do Paedophiles find the Internet so attractive?

Paedophiles find the Internet attractive because they can remain virtually anonymous whilst participating in a range of paedophilic activity, such as making contact with children. They pretend to be people other than themselves and find a sense of security by operating from the confines of their own homes. They often set up bogus “email accounts” and “chat handles” which protect their identity online. Paedophiles can also erase the history of what they have done online from their personal computers, making it a lengthy task for authorities to charge them with an offence.

What do Paedophiles do on the Internet?

There is a range of activities that paedophiles conduct online including:

- swapping child porn pictures in “chat rooms” or through “email”;
- swapping personal information of children that they have collected;
- participating in online communities such as “chat rooms” with the intention to groom children up for personal sexual gratification or to meet them in person;
- forming networks with other paedophiles; and
- trading techniques on how to avoid the authorities.

What is Online Grooming?

“Online Grooming” is:

‘A course of conduct enacted by a suspected paedophile, which would give a reasonable person cause for concern that any meeting with a child arising from the conduct would be for unlawful purposes.’

Normally paedophiles will search for children who are isolated from society in some way and then engage in a range of grooming activities, including:

- friendship forming stage – where the paedophile gets to know the child;
- relationship forming stage – where the paedophile forms a sense of trust with the child;
- risk assessment stage – information gathering stage by the paedophile to calculate the risk of forming a closer relationship with the child;
- exclusivity stage – where the paedophile forms an exclusive “best friend” bond with the child; and
- sexual stage – where the paedophile moves the conversation to sex and tries to entice the child in some kind of online sexual activity.

As the definition of grooming implies, it is often the intention of paedophiles to meet children in person. Any number of the grooming stages identified may be used to achieve this.
Who can I contact for help?

If you feel that your child has been contacted online in an inappropriate manner, either contact the Australian High Tech Crime Centre:

AHTCC – Australian High Tech Crime Centre:

- Web: [www.ahtcc.gov.au](http://www.ahtcc.gov.au)
- Email: onlinereport@ahtcc.gov.au
- Phone: (02) 6246 2101

Or the Australian Federal Police Office in your state:

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP National Headquarters</td>
<td>68 Northbourne Avenue CANBERRA ACT 2601</td>
<td>02 6256 7777</td>
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<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>110 Goulburn Street SYDNEY NSW 2000</td>
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<td>203 Wharf Street SPRING HILL QLD 4004</td>
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<td>47 Liverpool Street HOBART TAS 7000</td>
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<td>619 Murray Street WEST PERTH WA 6005</td>
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<td>Cnr Unwin Place &amp; Streeton Drive WESTON ACT 2601</td>
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For Further Information – Read the following study by the Cyber Research Unit:

*A typology of Cybersexploitation and Online Grooming practices*

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