

Beat: News

Canadian police arrest 21 on child porn charges

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USPA News - A coordinated investigation into people using the internet to download and distribute child pornography has resulted in the arrest of more than 20 people across Canada, police said on Wednesday. One teenage boy who suffered more than five years of abuse was rescued by authorities.

The investigation, dubbed Operation Snapshot, began in June and focused on identifying high-risk offenders who are in possession of and distributing images of child pornography across peer-to-peer file sharing networks. The suspects were arrested as a result of separate investigations, and none of them appear to have been part of a child porn ring. "The operation has resulted in 30 investigations and one child rescue to date," Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Insp. Pierre Leduc said during a news conference on Wednesday. "Over 100 computers and hard drives were seized along with hundreds of thousands of child sexual abuse images." As a result of the investigations, 21 people have so far been arrested and charged, but more searches and arrests are likely in the coming weeks. The charges include Indecent Exposure, Sexual Assault, Invitation to Sexual Touching, Accessing Child Pornography, Possession of Child Pornography, Distribution of Child Pornography, Making Child Pornography, Internet luring, and Breach of Court Order. "It is important to remember that for each high-risk offender we identify, dozens of potential future victims are prevented and we send a strong message to individuals still at-large today," Leduc said. "The success of this operation demonstrates the value of policing partnership at the national and international level in keeping our children safe and combating these serious crimes." One person arrested in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in June has already been convicted of sexually abusing his roommate's family member. The abuse began when the victim was eight or nine years old and spanned about five years, police said. The man has since been sentenced to 30 months in prison but is facing additional charges for the production of child pornography. "Our preliminary investigations are showing that some of these offenders had massive collections of child pornography and have been building these collections for years," said Regina Police Staff Sgt. Ron Weir. "During the searches, our units seized numerous computers and media devices that will be forensically analyzed for additional evidence and for court purposes." All of the individuals investigated were using peer-to-peer file sharing networks to access and distribute child pornography, but none of them were linked. "Obviously they're using common file-sharing networks, common technology, common programs to chat and look for kids or possibly network with other offenders," said Saskatoon Police Service Sgt. Darren Parisien. "But none of the individuals arrested were directly related as part of a ring of individuals taken down."

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