

Teens are sending nude photos via cell phone

Experts warn of a national trend with serious implications for students

**From eSchool News staff
and wire service reports**

When school officials in Santa Fe, Texas, recently confiscated dozens of student cell phones as they searched for nude photos of two junior high school girls that were forwarded to numerous students, the incident sparked national attention. But shocking as that incident was, school safety experts say it was merely part of a larger trend that has many parents and educators concerned.

Passing notes in study hall or getting your best friend to ask a boy if he likes you seems quaint by compari-



Nude cell-phone pics are landing teens in trouble.

son: Nowadays, teenagers nationwide are snapping naked pictures of themselves on their cell phones and sending them to their boyfriends and girlfriends.

Many of these pictures are falling into the wrong hands—or worse, everyone's hands—via the internet and are leading to criminal charges. Meanwhile, some parents are aghast.

"I just don't understand why kids would do a stupid thing like that," said Rochelle Hoins of Castle Rock, Colo., where 18 students in her twin sons' middle school sent around nude pictures of themselves last year. "We did dumb things when we were kids, but not like that."

Similar cases have been reported in Alabama, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah.

Psychologists say the phenomenon reflects typical teenage hormones and lack of judgment, with technology multiplying the potential for mischief. It also might reflect a teenage penchant for exhibitionism, as demonstrated on MySpace and countless other web sites and blogs.

In La Crosse, Wis., a 17-year-old boy was charged with child pornography, sexual exploitation of a child, and defamation for allegedly posting nude photos of his 16-year-old ex-girlfriend on his MySpace page. The girl had taken the pictures with her cell phone at her mother's home and eMailed them to the boyfriend.

In suburban Syracuse, N.Y., several teenage girls sent naked pictures on their phones to their boyfriends, only to learn that another boy had collected them from the web and was trying to sell a DVD of them.

The images are complicating the work of investigators whose job is to find exploited children. Authorities trying to identify youngsters in naked photos are increasingly discovering that the teens themselves took the shots, said John Shehan, a director at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children...

For full story, see:

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/safe-center>

Related resources

Title: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Location: <http://www.missingkids.com>

Description: This web site provides resources about protecting children from victimization.

Title: NetSmartz411

Location: <http://www.netsmartz411.org>

Description: NetSmartz411 is an online resource for answering questions about internet safety, computers, and the web.

Title: Understanding and Protecting Your Children From Child Molesters and Predators

Location: http://www.unitedforjustice.com/PDF/tows_20020426_abuse.pdf

Description: This packet provides information about child molesters and things parents, families, and communities can do to help keep children safe. It addresses different types of sex offenders, why and how people molest children, talking to children about sexual abuse, what to do if a child is abused, and more.

Title: Internet Crimes against Children (ICAC) Task Force

Location: <http://www.doj.state.or.us/oricac/index.shtml>

Description: This web-site provides information to kids, teachers, and parents to help them combat the threat of sexual crimes against children by online predators.