

Parallel 2B: Unheard voices – Red Room, SG

Deterrence of viewing child sexual abuse images online: a grounded theory study

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Child sexual abuse image (CSAI) offending is a severe problem for modern societies. In the UK and elsewhere, the number of individuals arrested for possession of CSAI is growing. Although there is a vast amount of literature regarding CSAI, little is known about how CSAI viewing could be earlier detected and deterred. This grounded theory study aimed at investigating how individuals who have viewed CSAI make sense of their online offending, how the offending process developed over time, what disrupted the viewing activity or what could have potentially disrupted it. Intensive interviews were conducted with individuals charged with CSAI possession (and in some cases convicted), which were analysed following a constructivist grounded theory approach. Findings suggest different pathways to CSAI viewing and various levels of engagement with the material. Rational thinking, affect, sexual arousal, as well as opportunities created by the Internet, all seemed to contribute to CSAI viewing. Despite disengagement from the material from time to time, participants would usually go back to viewing, until their arrest. The study was funded by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

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