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MADIGAN, 42 ATTORNEYS GENERAL AND NCMEC REACH AGREEMENT WITH CRAIGSLIST TO CRACK DOWN ON EROTIC SERVICES AD CONTENT

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced an agreement with craigslist and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in an effort to crack down on inappropriate content and illegal activity in its erotic services section.

"In the last week alone, our investigators identified over 9,000 Illinois postings for erotic services and prostitution on craigslist," Madigan said. "This agreement is intended to be a first step to make sure that craigslist begins to address the prostitution and exploitation of women that occurs online."

Under the agreement with Illinois and 42 other attorneys general, craigslist will require that posters of erotic services ads provide a working phone number and pay a fee with a valid credit card. The site will provide the resulting information in response to law enforcement subpoenas. Craigslist will donate the proceeds from erotic services ads to charity.

Craigslist also will take several steps to crack down on erotic services ad content, including:

- Attaching "tags" to the erotic services section that assist parental screening software;
- Employing "digital tagging" to identify and eliminate inappropriate content so that users can flag ads that violate craigslist's terms of service, which include prohibitions on pornography and criminal activity;
- Deploying search technology to assist NCMEC and law enforcement agencies in identifying missing persons, children and victims of human trafficking; and
- Exploring technology to block inappropriate image uploads and better filters for code words and euphemisms for illegal activity.

This agreement is part of Madigan's ongoing Internet safety initiatives. Madigan's office, through a grant from the Department of Justice, operates the Illinois Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force, one of 59 task forces nationwide designed to investigate child exploitation crimes and deliver Internet safety education. In 2007, the Illinois ICAC task force provided Internet safety training and education to more than 20,000 parents, children and professionals and responded to more than 575 cyber tips received from NCMEC.

Earlier this year, Madigan drafted and worked with the legislature to pass a new law that requires Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to coordinate with NCMEC. The Illinois Child Online Exploitation Act, sponsored by Senator A.J. Wilhelmi (D-Crest Hill) and Representative Maria Antonia Berrios (D-Chicago), requires lifetime supervision of child pornographers and requires Illinois-based Internet service providers (ISPs) to register with NCMEC to facilitate their reporting of child pornography traded on their service. Madigan crafted this law in an effort to make Illinois the first state to require that all ISPs facilitate compliance with the federal child pornography reporting requirement. The law also requires computer technicians to report child pornography to law enforcement if they find it while performing their job.

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