



Traffickers leverage technology to exploit individuals for human trafficking.

Traffickers can...

Use social media to find and exploit individuals in vulnerable situations



Advertise fraudulent job opportunities



Use encrypted apps to communicate



Share sexually explicit digital content and livestream abuse



Use ride sharing apps to arrange travel and maintain control over someone's movements



Move criminal transactions through anonymized financial platforms



Use digital surveillance to monitor movements



Traffickers recruit **children** and **adults** into labor and sex trafficking through promises of:



employment



housing



transportation



friendship



love



other forms of support

The **National Human Trafficking Hotline**¹ monitors the intersection of online abuse and human trafficking.

The Hotline identified remote interactive sexual acts and sexually explicit digital content as

2 of 25

types of human trafficking experienced by individuals in the U.S.²

The Hotline has identified cases where individuals have been made to **create sexually explicit digital content or child sexual abuse material**.



Of the **616** cases reported to the Hotline between 2007 and 2016

61%

of individuals exploited were **minors**.

Recent analysis of hotline data shows a

22% ↑

increase in online recruitment in 2020³ as compared to the previous year.

Remote interactive sexual acts are **live commercial sex acts** simulated through **technologies** such as:



webcams



text-based chats



phones

Individuals may also be recruited by **intimate partners** or others who feign romantic interest in order to gain their trust.



Public health measures implemented in response to the **SARS-COV-2 pandemic** may have made it more difficult for traffickers to recruit in person. Recruitment in certain locations decreased in 2020.



Strip Clubs

46% ↓

compared to the previous year



Group Foster Homes

70% ↓

compared to the previous year



Schools

38% ↓

compared to the previous year

Traffickers turned to the **Internet**, resulting in online platforms being reported as the **top recruitment location for labor and sex trafficking** in 2020.



Facebook

125% ↑

compared to the previous year



Instagram

95% ↑

compared to the previous year



Chat Rooms

36% ↑

compared to the previous year



Other Mobile Apps

60% ↑

compared to the previous year

Child Eligibility Data

OTIP is also assessing technology-facilitated trafficking trends among **foreign national children** in the United States.

OTIP identified at least

257

trafficking cases involving **foreign national children** and **tech-facilitated exploitation**.⁴

These cases implicate social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as communication platforms like WhatsApp and online classifieds.



¹ The National Human Trafficking Hotline is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Trafficking in Persons.

² Based on an analysis of more than 32,000 cases of human trafficking documented by calls into the Hotline between December 2007 and December 2016. Remote interactive sexual acts, N=78; sexually explicit digital content, n=616.

³ Based on an analysis of Hotline data by Polaris <https://polarisproject.org/2020-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/>.

⁴ Preliminary analysis of child eligibility case data from FY 2001 to March 2022.