



# exploring sex trafficking and prostitution demand during the Super Bowl 2014

ASU School of Social Work  
**Office of Sex Trafficking  
Intervention Research**

**ASU** School of  
Social Work  
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Full Research Report, March 2014**

“As sex trafficking awareness increases around the United States, it is critically important that we learn about it and explore it before we draw conclusions, instead of reacting to theories, myths or conjecture. How we decide to fight the issue must be informed by research that will ultimately support the investment in innovative strategies to combat what is undoubtedly a terrible human experience.” Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, 2014

“The McCain Institute is proud to invest in new research surrounding sex trafficking and large sporting events. A research based, greater understanding of how these networks are operating gives us all a better opportunity to combat human trafficking every day.”

Cindy Hensley McCain, Co-Chair, Arizona Governor’s Task Force on Human Trafficking

# exploring sex trafficking and prostitution demand during the Super Bowl

MARCH 2014

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The authors would like to thank Daniel V. Garcia, Chief of Police of the Phoenix Police Department and Chief Frank Milstead of the Mesa Police Department for their continued support of Scholar-Practitioner based research into sex trafficking. Their support of multi-disciplinary and collaborative community responses to sex trafficking has proven effective for the Phoenix metropolitan area and serves as a model for the rest of the nation.

Dear reader:

Much has been said about the impact of the Super Bowl on sex trafficking, most of which indicates it is a key variable leading to a dramatic increase in commercial sexual exploitation and victimization. Recent reports and dozens of news articles strongly point to the Super Bowl as the most prominent national event where sex trafficking flourishes, with estimates of as many as 10,000 victims flooding host cities to be offered to willing purchasers intent on buying sex. While this has attracted a great deal of attention in the media and has served as a key point in the national dialogue on sex trafficking, support for such assertions has been sparse. While some such inquiries have been conducted capably, evidence supported research on the influence of the Super Bowl on sex trafficking has been limited.

With the support of the McCain Institute, researchers from Arizona State University sought to investigate and understand the true impact of the Super Bowl on sex trafficking, to further the national discussion on sex trafficking and its local and national impact as well as to develop a baseline understanding of regional sex trafficking trends for the 2015 Super Bowl which is to be held in Phoenix. What follows is what we believe to be the first comprehensive and systematic review of the quagmire that is the Super Bowl and sex trafficking and the first attempt to add clarity to a complex, national epidemic.

The authors of this study, with the assistance of university researchers and local law enforcement, reviewed thousands of Internet based commercial sex ads in both the Northern New Jersey area where the 2014 Super Bowl was being held and in the Phoenix metropolitan area where the 2015 Super Bowl will be held. Building upon previous Arizona State University and Phoenix Police Department research on demand for commercial sex, the authors sought to quantify the net effect of the Super Bowl on local, regional and national sex trafficking in an empirical fashion using source data provided by a leading internet based adult services website. And what was found is sure to fuel future discussions about and add to the body of knowledge on sex trafficking.

In this study, the authors made a number of interesting discoveries about sex trafficking. The first is that the sheer volume of ads offering commercial sex will exceed the capacity of any one law enforcement agency to respond in such a way to discourage traffickers from coming to their jurisdiction. Next, it became apparent to the authors that sex trafficking is at once a national, regional and local issue that is highly profitable for the traffickers and is comprised largely of loosely affiliated networks of suspects and victims who feed a significant demand for commercial sex. The availability of potential victims of domestic minor sex trafficking exceeded

researcher expectations with no less than 38 distinct websites advertising victims who showed indications of being a juvenile sex trafficking victim with at least four websites providing customer feedback or soliciting recommendations on victims of sex trafficking.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the authors identified distinct victim movement and marketing trends that tend to correspond with the build up towards the Super Bowl. As expected, ad volume spiked in the days preceding the Super Bowl and dissipated quickly after the game commenced. What this implies is that in the case of the Super Bowl, or any large event for that matter, is that any concentration of people in a relatively confined urban area is a desirable location for a trafficker to bring their victims for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. The same can be said of virtually any other criminal offense – the propensity for a given offense to occur tends to increase with a similar increase in victim and suspect populations.

Which leads to the premise of this study, the influence of the Super Bowl on sex trafficking. The authors found no evidence indicating the 2014 Super Bowl was a causal factor for sex trafficking in the Northern New Jersey area in the days preceding the game. What is just as certain is that in anticipation of the suspected impact of the Super Bowl on sex trafficking, the coalition of law enforcement responsible for public safety took the necessary steps to be prepared for an increase in activity that exceeded their norm. Both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New Jersey State Police in New Jersey and the New York Police Department in New York City, the site of many Super Bowl related events, mounted significant investigations into sex trafficking before and during the Super Bowl resulting in the recovery of numerous victims and the arrest of numerous suspects.

It is the goal of this study to provide new information for the sex trafficking discussion with the clear understanding the culture of sex trafficking is subject to many influences, only one of which is large national events like the Super Bowl. It is important to note that perhaps the most significant takeaway from this study is that demand for commercial sex continues to be the driver of sex market conditions and is the factor most easily addressed in the sex trafficking paradigm. It is with that said that the authors offer this study for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James Gallagher, MAdmin  
Associate Director of Research Innovation,  
STIR

Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Ph.D  
Associate Professor, Arizona State University  
Director: STIR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH FINDINGS SUMMARY.....6

SEX TRAFFICKING AND THE SUPER BOWL.....6

AD VOLUME.....8

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ONLINE SEX ADS.....9

ABOUT THE SEX TRAFFICKING MATRIX.....9

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH.....13

RESEARCH METHODS FOR ONLINE AD ANALYSIS .....14

FLAGGED ADS.....14

    NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY.....15

        TIME OF DAY.....15

        AREA CODES.....16

        SIGNIFICANCE OF AREA CODES IN FLAGGED ADS.....19

    PHOENIX.....21

        TIME OF DAY.....21

        AREA CODES.....22

        SIGNIFICANCE OF AREA CODES IN FLAGGED ADS.....23

    NETWORK ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF PATTERNS.....24

        GANGS.....24

        NETWORK ANALYSES.....25

        NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY CIRCUITS.....26

        PHOENIX CIRCUITS.....31

DEMAND FOR ONLINE SEX.....33

    DECOY ADS.....33

    DEMAND FINDINGS .....34

IMPLICATIONS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....37

## RESEARCH FINDINGS SUMMARY



- 1). The sheer volume of ads offering commercial sex will likely exceed the capacity of any one law enforcement agency to respond in such a way to discourage traffickers from coming to their jurisdiction.
- 2). Sex trafficking is a national, regional and local issue that is highly profitable for the traffickers and is comprised largely of loosely affiliated networks of suspects and victims who feed a significant demand for commercial sex.
- 3). Research identified distinct victim movement and marketing trends that tend to correspond with the build up towards the Super Bowl.

The **conclusion of this study** is that the Super Bowl, or any large event which provides a significant concentration of people in a relatively confined urban area, becomes a desirable location for a trafficker to bring their victims for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.

### SEX TRAFFICKING AND THE SUPER BOWL

Sex trafficking is a crime in the United States that has received increased attention in recent years. As awareness has grown regarding the prevalence and violent nature of this crime, efforts have begun to better understand the contributing factors including victim situations and customer behaviors. Public awareness of the issue is at an all-time high. A Google search of the keywords “Superbowl” “Sex Trafficking” and “2014” yields over 10,000 news stories including such major carriers such as The New York Times, Huffington Post, Washington Post, Forbes, USA Today, CNN, Fox News, NBC News, AMC News, CBS News, Time Magazine, Christian Science Monitor, Politico, to name a few. Stories were printed, posted or shown on television in every major city reaching millions of viewers, which undoubtedly increases public consciousness about a topic where in recent times, most Americans would argue they had never knew it existed.

One factor that contributed to the media storm was when Forbes (2012) cited the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children as saying 10,000 prostitutes were brought to Miami during the 2010 Super Bowl. The possible reason behind the reported increase is a

phenomenon called the “demand effect” regarding the significant uptick of males and money in an area as cited by the Huffington Post (February 5, 2012) as part of why the Super Bowl and other major sporting events bring both customers and prostituted people to town. Prior to the 2013 Super Bowl, International Business News (February 2, 2013) reported, “as the Baltimore Ravens were making their way into NFL history, countless people were likely victims of the sex crimes associated with football’s big day.” Texas Attorney General Greg Abbot described the Super Bowl by saying it is “commonly known as the single largest human trafficking incident in the U.S.” (Greg Abott, Texas Attorney General, February 3, 2013).

Despite the assumptions made regarding the role that the annual Super Bowl events play in increasing sex trafficking, reliable data on the relationship between the Super Bowl and sex trafficking simply does not exist (New York Times, Mary Pilon, January 23, 2014). This lack of real information has brought about criticism by those who say that the attention surrounding the Super Bowl is political in nature and that the increase in trafficking for prostitution during large sporting events is ‘unlikely’ (Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, 2011). An article in the Dallas Observer (Peter Kotz, March 3, 2011) mocked the idea that girls and women would be kidnapped and forced into the sex trade for the 2011 Super Bowl.

Historically, the data about sex trafficking and the Super Bowl has been limited to a small number of reliable sources and is for the most part, anecdotal. Previous research by Forbes (Meghan Casserly, February 2, 2012) found in the 1000 sex ads posted on backpage.com during the week of the Super Bowl in Indianapolis, nearly a quarter of them mentioned the Super Bowl in the ad text; however, without any framework for comparison, it is difficult to know if this represents an actual increase in ad volume.

Though limited evidence is available, law enforcement departments, local to the Super Bowl venues, have continued to increase efforts to combat this problem around the time of the Super Bowl. On September 4, 2013 the FBI was said to have identified at least 10 initiatives underway for the 2014 Super Bowl to reduce or end human trafficking, which officials did believe increases when tens of thousands of tourists gather for such events as the Super Bowl (Asbury Park Press). The FBI also identified northern New Jersey and Atlantic City as hotspots for sex trafficking during the 2014 Super Bowl. Recent publications indicate that the Super Bowl was indeed a place where minors were being sexually exploited with the reported rescue of 16 youth ages 13 to 17 during a sting operation by the FBI targeting sex traffickers bringing victims to New Jersey for the Super Bowl weekend (FoxNews.com, February 4, 2014). In the same article the Assistant Director of the FBI’s Criminal Investigative Division, Ron Hosko, said “High-

profile special events which draw large crowds, have become lucrative opportunities for child prostitution criminal enterprises.'

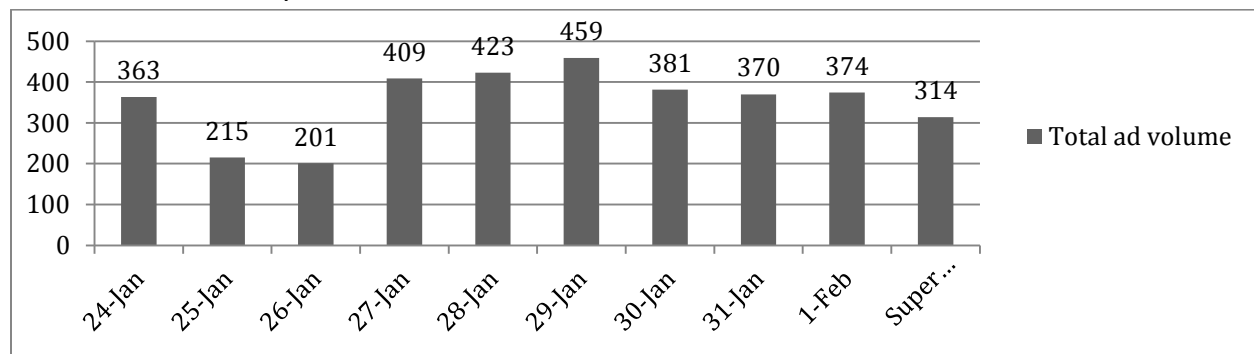
## SUPER BOWL STUDY

This study report will include research findings regarding research conducted in New York/New Jersey and a comparison city, Phoenix, Arizona during the nine days prior to and during the Super Bowl including: 1) the ad volume changes in each ad market; 2) describe the process of ad screening using the Sex Trafficking Matrix and the findings from ad screenings regarding prostitution ads, potential sex trafficked persons and potential minors; and 3) describe the demand research and results regarding volume and intensity of contacts from persons attempting to purchase sex.

### AD VOLUME

The volume of ads posted in each ad market (New York/northern New Jersey and Phoenix) were analyzed with a steady buildup of ads leading to Super Bowl weekend in New York/northern New Jersey remaining high until Saturday with a notable decrease on Super Bowl Sunday. Ads in the Phoenix area slowly declined during the week before the Super Bowl and had peaks on the two weekends. Variables that influenced these changes are difficult to determine but the comprehensive Super Bowl-focused sex trafficking awareness campaign and enforcement activities in New York/New Jersey and during the study period there were over 100 prostitution arrests in Manhattan and the rescue of 16 minors being sex trafficked in the New York/New Jersey. These are possible influences on ad volume in the New York/New Jersey ad market.

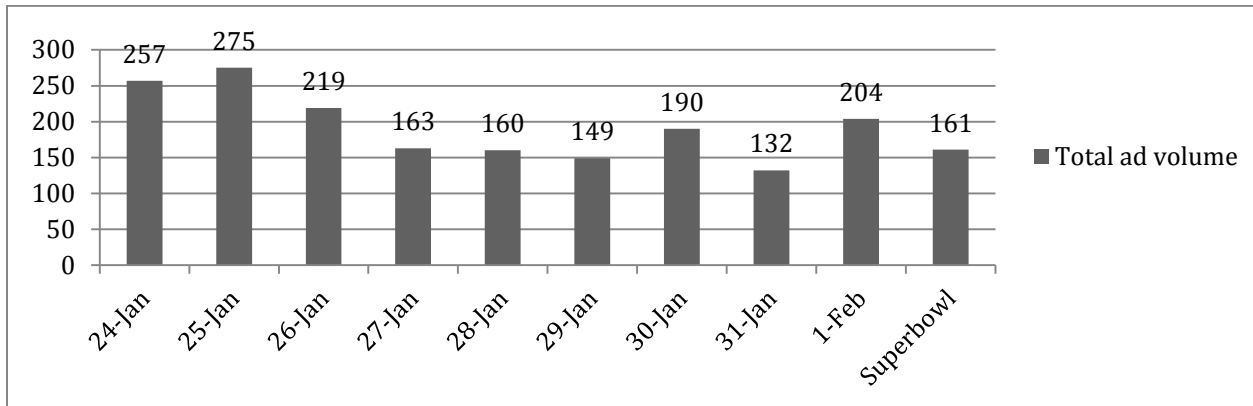
New York/New Jersey Ad Volume 1/24/14 to 2/2/14





## Phoenix

Phoenix Ad Volume 1/24/14 to 2/2/14



## PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ONLINE SEX ADS

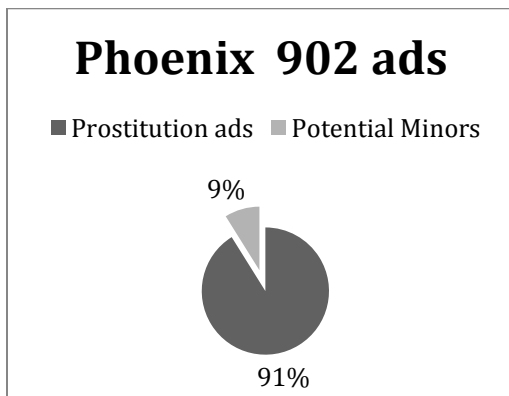
This study builds upon a number of other research endeavors by this research team regarding sex trafficking in the United States including the development of the Sex Trafficking Matrix. For this study, online sex ads posted on a popular adult services website *escorts* section were screened using the Sex Trafficking Matrix both manually and using a computer screening program by Praescient Analytics for the ten days leading up to Super Bowl Sunday, 2014. The ads reviewed included those in ad markets indicating the geographic areas closest to the football stadium in New Jersey including northern New Jersey, Manhattan, Staten Island and Brooklyn. Ads were also scanned in the Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area ad market to develop an understanding and a baseline of sex trafficking activity as the location of the 2015 Super Bowl.

## About the Sex Trafficking Matrix

The Sex Trafficking Matrix was developed to provide a tool for law enforcement to use as a filter or decision assistor when looking at online sex ads and entails the analysis of both the text and photographs/art in the ads. The matrix was created to detect high-risk sex trafficking ads and has additional questions pertaining specifically to minors. The Sex Trafficking Matrix requires the user to explore both the language of the ad and the content of the photos and other information collected from the ads including phone number, art, and ad placement time.

### Matrix Study 1 (May 2012)

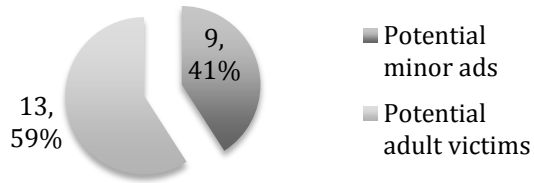
This study explored online sex ads on backpage.com, Adult entertainment section for 7 days in May 2012 in ad markets in Phoenix, Arizona and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A total of 2,048 ads were screened for potential trafficked minors and 1,551 (75.7%) of the screened ads were flagged as prostitution ads due to the language and images in the ad suggesting an exchange of money for sexual activity. Of the ads screened in the Phoenix market, 9.8% (88) were flagged as potential minors and 7.2% (47) of the ads in the Philadelphia market were flagged as potential minors. The study resulted in the rescue of two minors in Phoenix identified by researchers as 'flagged potential minor ads'.



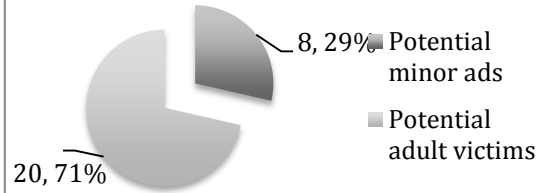
### Matrix Study 2 (November 2012)

Based on information collected from the Matrix Study 1, along with law enforcement partners from the Phoenix Police Department and the Minneapolis Police Department, the Sex Trafficking Matrix continued to be developed. A number of common elements were found in the confirmed minor ads and were applied to the Sex Trafficking matrix and field tested in partnership with the Police Departments in five cities San Diego, California, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Salt Lake City, Utah. A total of 1332 ads with 58.2% were found to be prostitution related. Of the prostitution related ads, 21.4% (166 sex ads) were flagged as potential trafficking victims. **Of the screened ads, 48 (6.2%) were identified as potential minors.** Phoenix reported one victim who had recently turned 18 and Minneapolis reported that four of the ads contained confirmed minors (one turned 18 the day before the study but had been trafficked for at least 2 years). Based on these findings, the matrix continued to be refined and 'truth set' of ads containing verified adult and minor sex trafficking victims began to form.

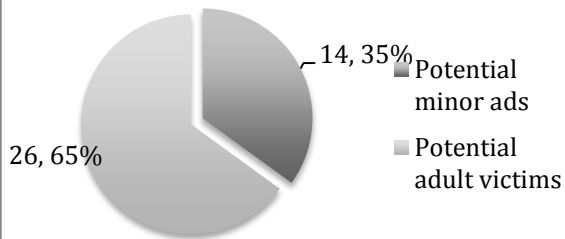
### Minneapolis 124 Prostitution ads



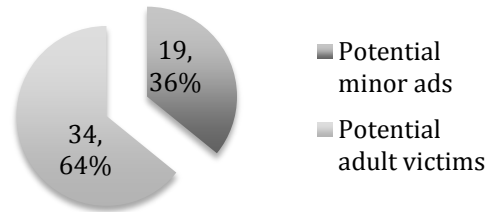
### Philadelphia 188 Prostitution ads



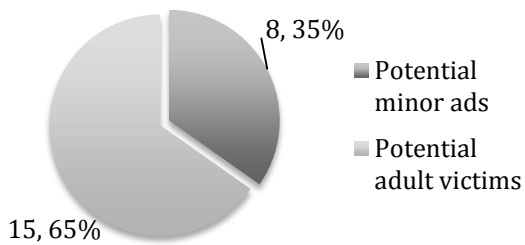
### Phoenix 181 Prostitution ads



### San Diego 211 Prostitution ads

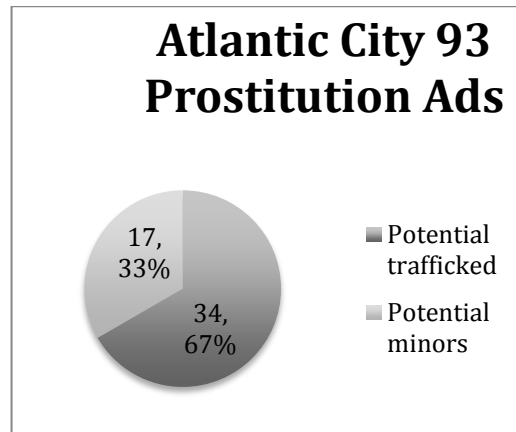
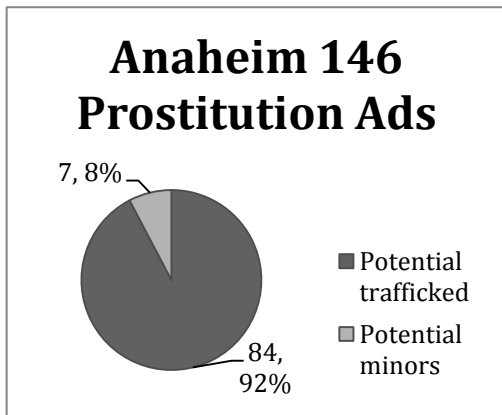


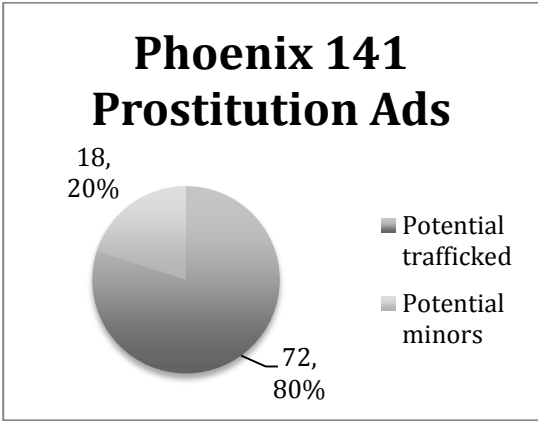
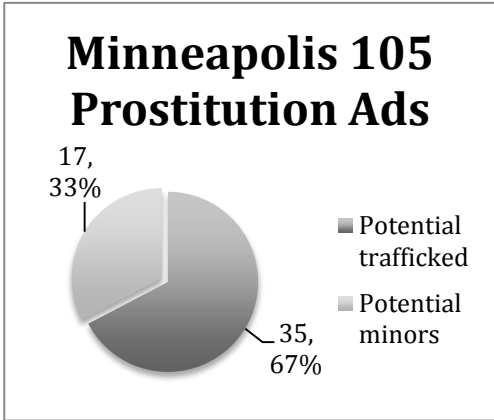
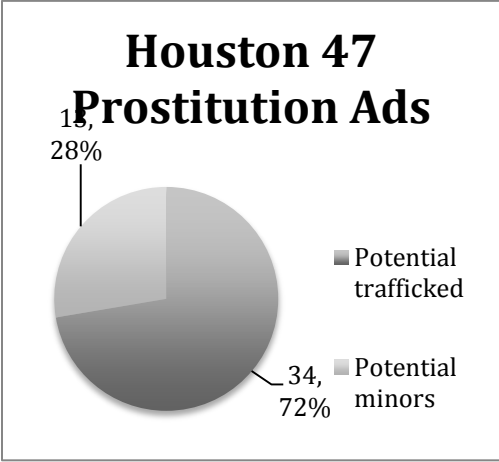
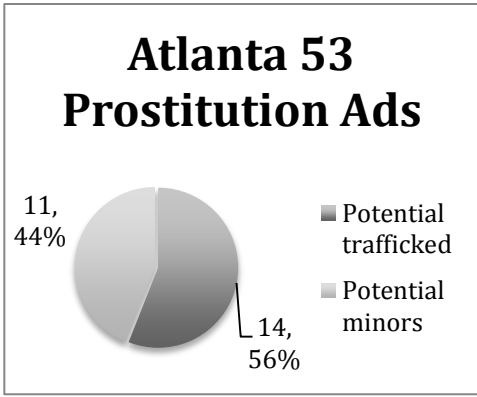
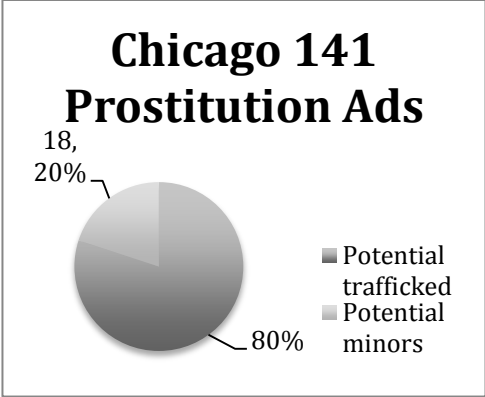
### Salt Lake City 71 Prostitution ads



Matrix Study 3 (October 2013)

A third study was a one day study over 12-hours with law enforcement partners from Atlanta, Anaheim, Atlantic City, Chicago, Houston, Minneapolis, and Phoenix participating in the validation of the Sex Trafficking Matrix along with analytic partner Thorn: Digital Defenders of Children. A total of 865 ads were screened with 88.5% (766) identified as prostitution ads with the others being spa/massage parlors and dating websites. Of the screened ads, 505 (58.2%) were flagged as potential trafficking and 87 (10%) were flagged as potential minors sex trafficking victims. Two flagged minors was rescued during this study.

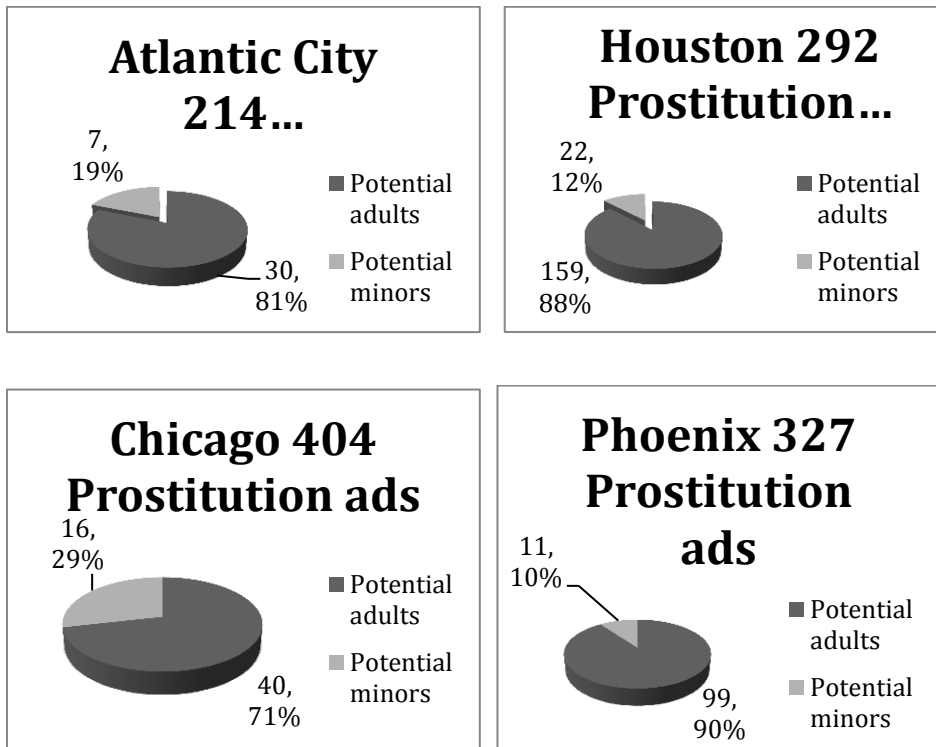




**Matrix Study 4 (January 2014)**

The fourth study completed in January 2014 with law enforcement partners from Phoenix, Houston, Atlantic City, Chicago, Cook County, Mesa and Scottsdale along with analytic partner Thorn: Digital Defenders of Children. A total of 1375 ads were screened, 1237 (90.1%) were identified as prostitution ads and 373 (27.2%) were flagged as trafficking ads. Of the total ads

screened, 56 (4.1%) of the ads were flagged as possible minors. One confirmed minor was rescued as a part of the fourth study.



### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON ONLINE ADS

Online prostitution was found to be pervasive through the four studies of sex ads posted on a popular national website with an average of 78.1% of the ads in *Adult Entertainment, escorts section* being flagged as prostitution-related. Of the ads screened with the Sex Trafficking Matrix, trafficking was identified in an average of 35.6% of the ads and in four studies, with an average of 8.1% of online sex ads to be flagged as potential minors. The Sex Trafficking Matrix continues to be refined and was used to screen the posted online sex ads in this study.

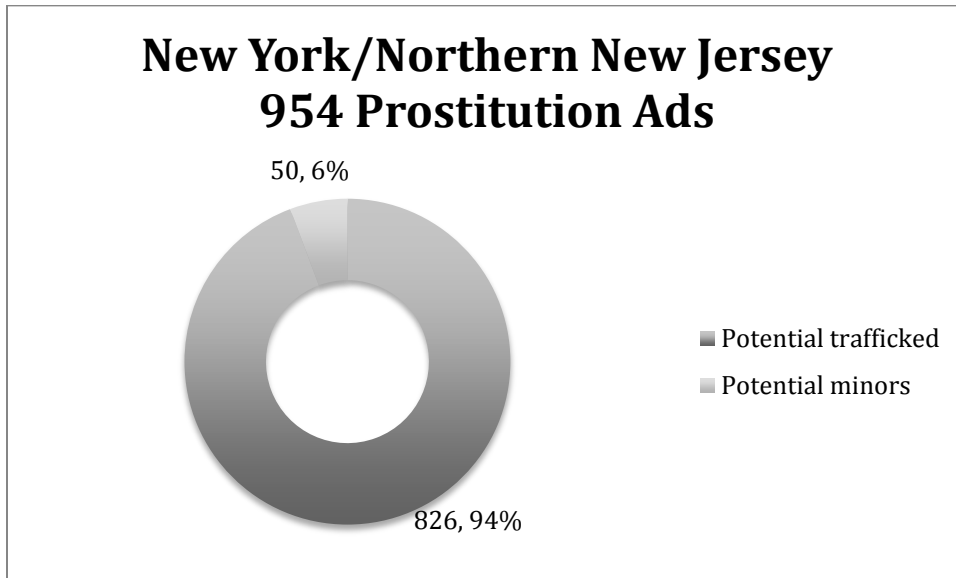
### Research Methods for Online Ad Analysis

This study only screened ads using the Sex Trafficking Matrix that were listed as ages 18-20 in northern New Jersey/NY ( $n = 987$ ) and under ages 18-24 in Phoenix ( $n = 1345$ ) due to the high volume of ads. The total number of ads screened during the 10-days of the study was 2,332. Prostitution ads were determined based on language and art that is for sexual services. For

example, “80 special” “arouse your desire” “pleasurable encounter” “In Call or Out Call” “Non-rushed for \$80”. We based our screening frame on data from the truth set ads in which all of the confirmed minor ads were all listed under age 24 ( $M = 19.2, SD = 1.57$ ).

## FLAGGED ADS

### New York/Northern New Jersey Flagged Ads



Of the ads in New York/northern New Jersey, 987 (96.8%) were flagged as prostitution ads, 826 (83.7%) were flagged as potential sex trafficking ads, and 50 ads (5.1%) were flagged to be potential sex trafficked minors and sent to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The ads flagged as potential minors were posted multiple times with a total of 95 ad postings.

### Time of Day

Flagged trafficking ads were primarily posted between the late evening/early morning hours of 9pm-2am ( $n=50$ ); the fewest number of ads were posted during the hours of 5-11am ( $n = 11$ ). Ads of suspected trafficking victims were also posted primarily during the evening and early morning hours of 8pm-4am ( $n=365$ ) and the fewest number of ads were posted between the hours of 5am-10am ( $n=80$ ). No trends were noted regarding days of the week in which the greatest number of suspected minor ads were flagged. On the weekend (Friday, Saturday, and

Sunday) prior to the Super Bowl, a total of 41 ads were flagged; during the weekend of the Super Bowl, 43 ads were flagged. No trends were noted in ads for suspected adult trafficking victims, with the greatest number of ads posted on Friday January 24th ( $n=130$ ), Sunday January 26<sup>th</sup> ( $n=85$ ), and Wednesday January 29<sup>th</sup> ( $n=89$ ).

A pattern was found from the screened northern New Jersey/New York ads that flagged minor ads were significantly more likely than any other ads searched (adult trafficking or others) to be placed on the Tuesday prior and the three days prior to and on the Super Bowl than during any other time during the 10 days prior ( $\chi^2 = 23.191, 9, .006, 854$ ). The largest percentage, 16.8 percent ( $n = 16$ ) of potential minor ads (including duplicates) were found on 2/1/14, the day before the Super Bowl. There were no significant findings regarding when the flagged adult ads were placed. Ads of suspected minors were more likely to be found in Brooklyn ads than ads placed in Manhattan, Staten Island or northern New Jersey ( $\chi^2 15.630, 3, .001, 855$ ) and ads of suspected adult trafficking victims were more like to be found in Manhattan and northern New Jersey than in Staten Island or Brooklyn ( $\chi^2 = 47.138, 3, .001, 855$ ).

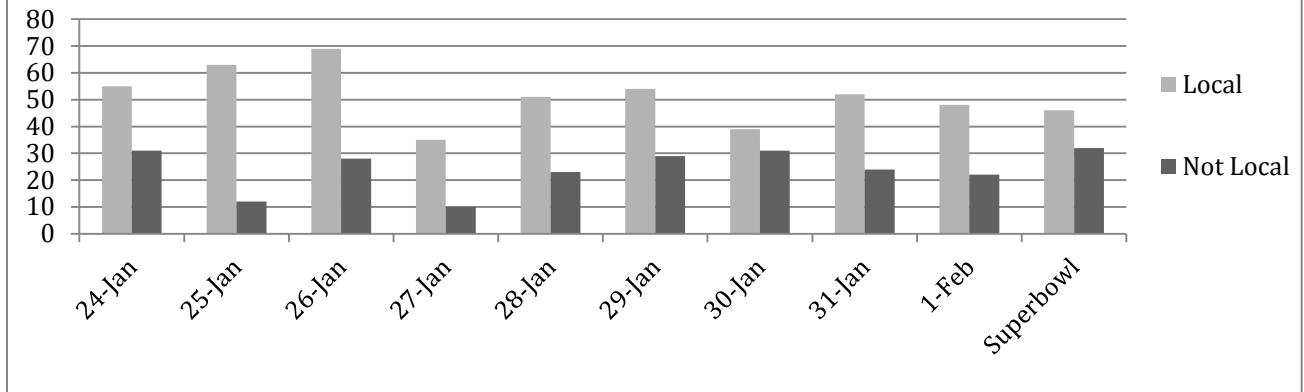
There were no significant findings for potential minor ads or potential adult ads regarding time of day (am or pm) when ads were placed, 52.6% (50 ads) of the 95 duplicated total ads flagged as potential minor victims (95 including repeated postings) were placed in the PM hours and potential trafficked adult ads were evenly split between AM and PM hours.

### **Area Codes**

The majority (66% of flagged, suspected minor ads and 61% of suspected adult trafficking ads) included phone numbers with local area codes. Chi square analysis revealed that suspected adult trafficking ads were significantly more likely to include a phone number with an out-of-town area code ( $\chi^2= 35.462, 2, .001, 790$ ) when compared to flagged (suspected minor) ads. Among flagged trafficking ads with out-of-town phone numbers, a Baltimore, MD area code was the most frequently listed area code ( $n=7$ ). Among adult ads with out-of-town phone numbers, the most frequently listed area codes included Miami, FL ( $n=13$ ) and Baltimore, MD ( $n=11$ ). Thirty-six ads (3.7%) of the screened ads in the northern New Jersey market referenced the Super Bowl.



## New York/New Jersey Flagged Trafficked Ad Area Codes



### Area Code Location Tables

Area code location	Number of <b>total ads</b> with phone numbers in each area code
Local	691
Baltimore, MD	18
Miami, FL	13
Upstate New York	11
Central New Jersey	11
Boston, MA	8

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of ads</b>
Northern New Jersey:	261
All/other	24
Elizabeth	17
Secaucus	20
Orange/East Orange	15
Newark	10
Parsippany	9
Wayne	9
Hackensack	8
Newark Airport	8
Route 46	8
1 & 9	6
Jersey Shore	6
Northern New Jersey	6
Bergen	5
Jersey City	5
Irvington	5
Little Ferry	4
Route 3	4
Clifton	4
Union County	4
Meadowlands	4
Route 23	4
Manhattan: All/other	161
Midtown West	136
Midtown East	82
West Side	33
East Side	22
Queens	29
Brooklyn	21
Downtown	20
Times Square	6
Upper West Side	5
Midtown	5

Penn Station	5
Upper East Side	4
Brooklyn: All/other	326
Crown Heights	32
Sunset Park	28
East Flatbush	28
McDonald Ave.	15
Queens	18
Canarsie	12
Bensonhurst	12
Manhattan	11
Coney Island	8
Bushwick	7
Williamsburg	7
Utica	6
Bedford Stuyvesant	5
Northern New Jersey	4
Conduit	4
Staten Island:	44

**\*only includes cities with 4 or more mentions**

### **Significance of Area Codes in Flagged Ads**

In New York/New Jersey, phone numbers from the prostitution ads with area codes that were not local to the area of study were used in 39% (n =235) of ads flagged as potential adult trafficking and in 43.7% (n =38) of the ads flagged as potential minors. Each out-of-town area code was searched via a basic Internet search to identify an approximate location for where the phone number originated.

In *Brooklyn*, 25 ads were flagged as potential minor trafficking victims. These ads were posted throughout the screening period, and at least one ad was flagged each day of the screening period. Twenty percent (n= 5) of the flagged ads were posted on the Sunday prior to the Super Bowl, and 24% (n= 6) of the flagged ads were posted on the day before the Super Bowl (Saturday, February 1). A majority (n= 22; 88%) of the phone numbers affiliated with flagged ads were local phone numbers; the four ads listing phone numbers with out-of-town area codes came from 1) Alabama, 2) Maryland, and 3) Virginia. On the day before the Super Bowl, all six

flagged ads had local area codes. On the day of the Super Bowl, both flagged ads listed phone numbers with out-of-town area codes. All ads identified Brooklyn as the area that they served; a majority mentioned a more specific location within the Brooklyn area, and the most commonly mentioned areas were Crownheights (n= 4; 29%), East Flatbush (n=3; 21%) and Canarsie (n= 3; 21%). The ads were spread out and there was not a significant increase noted as the Super Bowl approached and occurred.

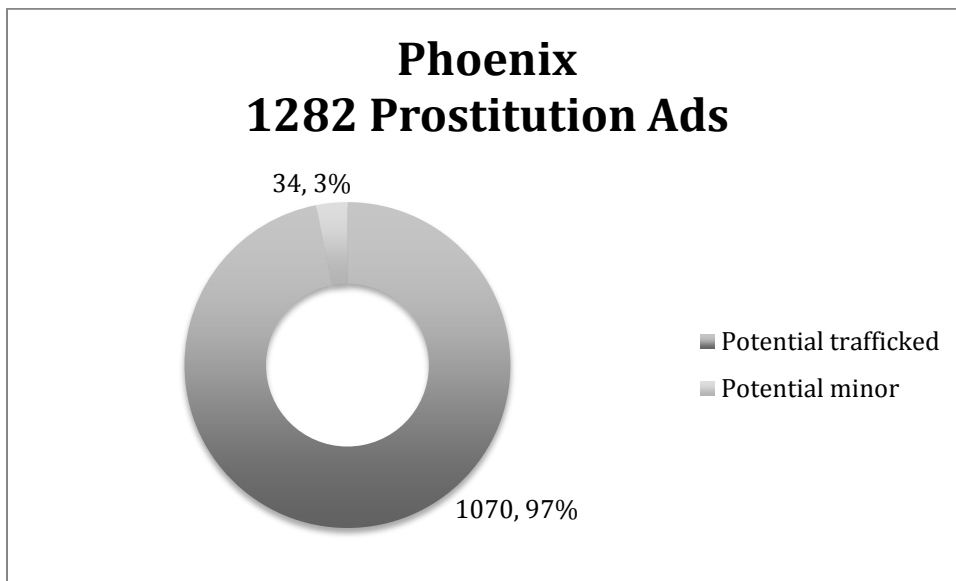
In *Manhattan*, 11 ads were flagged as potential minor trafficking victims throughout the 10 day period; 27% (n= 3) of flagged ads were posted on Friday January 24<sup>th</sup> and 18% (n= 2) of flagged ads were posted Thursday January 30<sup>th</sup>. No ads were flagged on the day before the Super Bowl, and on the day of the Super Bowl, only one ad was flagged. There did not appear to be any significant increase noted as the Super Bowl approached and occurred. Midtown West was the most frequently (n= 6; 55%) listed city mentioned in the flagged ads. A majority (n= 7; 64%) of phone numbers affiliated with flagged ads had local area codes; the four phone numbers with out-of-town area codes came from 1) Rhode Island, 2) Las Vegas, NV, 3) Miami, FL and 4) northern California.

In northern *New Jersey*, 12 ads were flagged as potential minor trafficking victims. At least one ad was flagged each day during the screening period, with the exception of two days (Monday 1/27/14 and Friday 1/31/14) when no ads were flagged. Interestingly, three flagged ads did not include phone numbers, including only the options reply directly to the ad or to click on a website (a link to the website was provided on the ad page). For the remaining 9 flagged ads, a majority (n=6; 67%) listed phone numbers with out-of-town area codes. The phone numbers with out-of-town area codes came from 1) Los Angeles, CA; 2) San Jose, CA; 3) Connecticut and 4) central New Jersey. A majority of ads (No increase in number of flagged ads was noted as the Super Bowl approached.

In *Staten Island*, only two ads were flagged. It is important to note that this was also the smallest geographical area searched by the research team. One flagged ad was posted on the Sunday before the Super Bowl, and one was posted on the Wednesday prior to the Super Bowl (1/29/14). Both ads listed phone numbers with local area codes, and no significant increase was noted as the Super Bowl approached.

## Phoenix Flagged Ads

Of the 1345 screened ads in Phoenix, 1282 (95.3%) were flagged as prostitution ads, 1070 (79.5%) were flagged as potential sex trafficking ads, and 34 ads (3.2%) were flagged to be potential sex trafficked minors and sent to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). NCMEC flagged all of the ads sent to them related to Phoenix metro area as Level 3 indicating they are actionable leads. These ads were posted multiple times with a total of 81 ads.

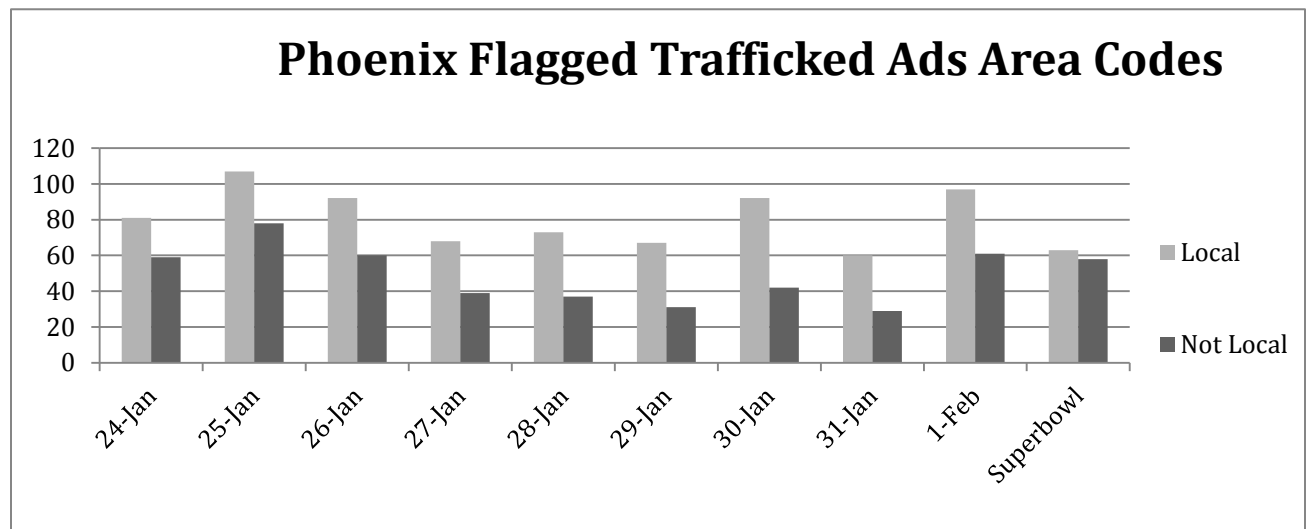


## Time of Day

An interesting trend was noted regarding days of the week in which the greatest number of suspected minor ads were flagged. On the weekend (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) prior to the Super Bowl a total of 18 ads were flagged and during the weekend of the Super Bowl nearly double that number (n=33) ads were flagged. This indicates a possible increase in potential minors posted during Super Bowl weekend. No difference was noted in ads for suspected adult trafficking victims, with 332 ads posted during the weekend prior to the Super Bowl and 339 ads posted during Super Bowl weekend.

## Area codes

The 34 flagged minor ads from the Phoenix escort ad market were significantly more likely to include a phone number with a local area code ( $\chi^2= 11.610, 1, .001, 1333$ ), compared to adult (suspected trafficking) ads, which were significantly more likely to include a phone number with an out-of-town area code ( $\chi^2= 34.590, 1, .001, 1333$ ). Among flagged ads with out-of-town phone numbers, a Las Vegas, NV area code was the most frequently listed area code (n=8). Among adult ads with out-of-town phone numbers, the most frequently listed area codes included Los Angeles, CA (n=67), Las Vegas, NV (n=49), Tucson, AZ (n=35), Seattle/Tacoma, WA (n=25), and San Diego, CA (n=25). Only one percent (n=12) of the total ads in Phoenix referenced the Super Bowl.



Area code location	Number of <b>total ads</b> with phone numbers in each area code
Local	837
Los Angeles, CA	82
Las Vegas, NV	63
Southeastern CA (San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino)	39
Tucson, AZ	38
Seattle/Tacoma, WA	26
San Francisco Bay area	22

Northwestern Missouri, Kansas City	18
Miami, FL	13

Ad postings included specific locations within the Phoenix area that they served, and many postings identified multiple locations. For example, one ad might identify “Easy Valley, Tempe, Scottsdale”. The number of times each location was mentioned across all (N=1348) ads is identified in the table below.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of ads</b>
Phoenix	415
Central Phoenix	280
South Phoenix	218
East Valley	514
Scottsdale	232*
Tempe	145
Mesa	82
Chandler	27
Gilbert	11
Apache Junction	1
West Valley	211
Glendale	69
Peoria	15
Avondale	3
Buckeye	2
Surprise	3
Sun City	1
North Phoenix	319
Paradise Valley	7
Deer Valley	6
Cave Creek	2

*\*A large event occurred in this city within the 10-day data collection period.*

### **Significance of Area Codes in Flagged Ads**

In *Phoenix*, at least one ad for a potentially trafficked minor was flagged each day; approximately 21% of the flagged ads (n=7) were posted on Sunday prior to the Super Bowl

(1/26/14), and another 17.6% of flagged ads (n=6) were posted two days later, on Tuesday (1/28/14). It is important to note that another large sporting event was held in the Phoenix area during this time, from January 27-February 2<sup>nd</sup>. A majority (n= 24; 71%) of phone numbers affiliated with flagged ads had local area codes; the 10 phone numbers with out-of-town area codes came from the following locations: Seattle (n=1); Los Angeles, CA (n=2); Las Vegas, NV (n=3); Chicago, IL (n=1); southern Michigan (n=1); and Tucson, AZ (n=2). On the day preceding the Super Bowl, all 4 flagged ads listed local phone numbers, and on the day of the Super Bowl, two ads were flagged; one listed a local phone number and the other listed an out-of-town phone number. A number of specific areas were listed in the flagged ads, with the most commonly mentioned areas identified as the East Valley (five ads mentioned Mesa, five ads mentioned Scottsdale, three ads mentioned Tempe, one ad mentioned Chandler, and one ad mentioned "East Valley"). In addition, three ads listed Central Phoenix, and eight ads listed South Phoenix as the areas that they served.

## NETWORK ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION OF PATTERNS



### Gangs

Sex trafficking is a profitable endeavor for individuals and groups willing to exploit others. As our awareness of this problem continues to grow, we are able to better understand the complexity of this crime and all of the unique players that contribute that facilitate trafficking situations including organized street gangs, major crime networks, money transfer organizations, and both hospitality and transportation industries. Through the use of multiple data collection sources and an in-depth network analysis of ads flagged as potential minor victims of sex trafficking, we were able to identify ways in which gang activity and money transfer organizations may play a role in facilitating trafficking.

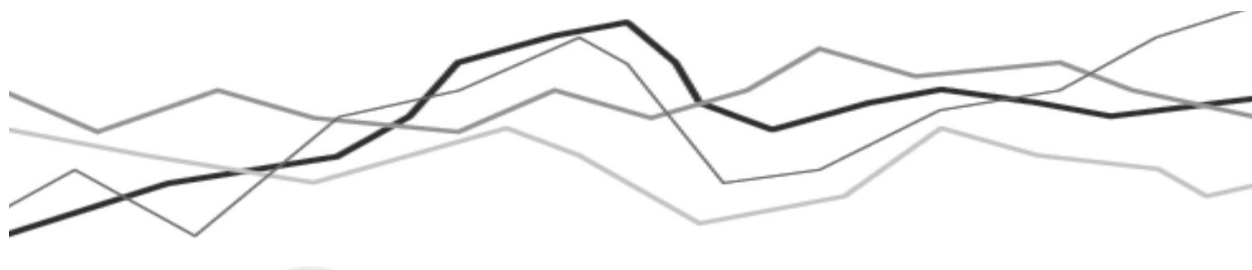
Prostitution has long been associated with gang activity (Fishman, 1999), though until recently, very little attention has been paid to gang involved, sex trafficking activity. The increasing gang



involvement in sex trafficking, primarily has been suggested to be because gangs recognize that there is a higher profit to be made in trafficking humans and a lower risk of being identified and punished for this crime relative to drug and weapons trafficking (National Gang Intelligence Center, 2011).

In recent research aimed at identifying indicators of trafficking online, we identified examples of gang affiliation and gang activities including tattoos (E.G. “Northside”) visible in photos posted with online sex ads and language used in the ads. For example, an ad flagged as a possible minor in Chicago during a recent study included the phrase “...who’s ready to bless me in?” echoing a phrase commonly used by a prominent gang in the Chicago area. The language in this ad indicates that the person advertising sex acts is either a current or former gang member or associate or being trafficked by a gang involved trafficker and thus represents one role that sex trafficking plays in gang activity.

## NETWORK ANALYSES



During the 10-day data collection period, an analysis of the networks associated with two flagged ads in Phoenix (further informed by NCMEC reports and law enforcement expertise) indicated gang affiliation through information gathered on the linked possible victim. One of the ads found to be related to gang activity (from information gathered during the network analysis) was linked to one other phone number and had traveled from Las Vegas and also been listed in Flagstaff, AZ prior to the Super Bowl week and returned to Flagstaff, AZ during the week after. The primary ad was linked to five adult services websites. Many of the linked ads for this potential minor had Super Bowl related material including “Don’t Miss the Pre-Game Show” and “I get a touchdown every time”. The second ad that was found to have some gang relationship used fake photos in the ad and was not linked to any other phone numbers or girls (possibly due to the use of fake photos which are difficult to trace).

When conducting a network analysis of the New York/New Jersey flagged potential minor ads through searches of the phone numbers and photos in the flagged ads, 86% ( $n = 43$ ) had been

used in an online sex ad prior to the study commencing (January 24, 2014). Ten (20%) of those phone numbers had been in ads that stated they were in other locations than New York/northern New Jersey either before or after the Super Bowl. This information supports the idea of minors being sex trafficked on a circuit (moving from city to city for the trafficker to find customers for the victim and perhaps to avoid attention from law enforcement) and the movement of sex trafficking victims is particularly important to better understand for enforcement activities.

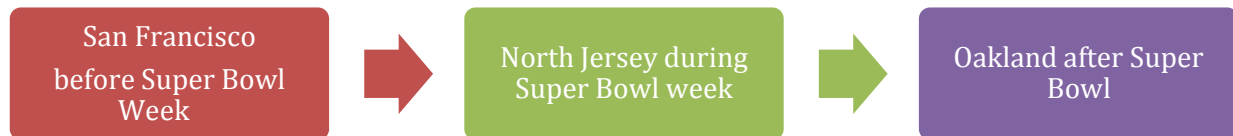
### NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY CIRCUITS

Four phone numbers from flagged potential minor ads (8%) were linked to sex ads posted online prior to the Super Bowl week in other cities and then found after the Super Bowl with in a different city.

Ad 1:



Ad 2:



Ad 3:



Ad 4:



The other six phone numbers found to have been used in sex ads placed prior to the Super Bowl week also demonstrated sex trafficking movement but were not found during the week after the Super Bowl. The phone numbers were linked to ads placed in other cities around the United States during the weeks before the Super Bowl. Ad number 2 (below) began posting in Manhattan on January 27, 2014 after a two-month gap with the last ad being posted in November 2013 in Los Angeles, CA.

One phone number/ad (#6 below) was posted in Worcester, MA for four months regularly until the week of the Super Bowl and was then posted in northern New Jersey, NJ.

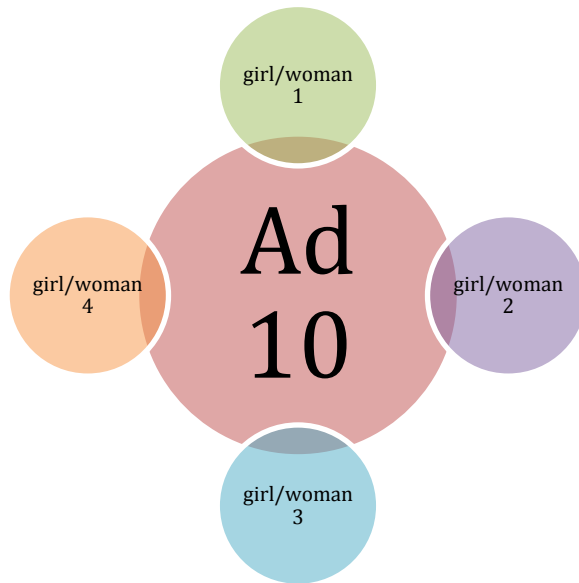
Prior locations

Bronx, NY, Long Island, NY, Baltimore, MD, Annapolis, MD, South Jersey, NJ, New York, NY, Atlanta, GA, New Haven, CT Then northern New Jersey, NJ.
Las Vegas, NV, Orange County, CA, Anaheim, CA, Los Angeles, CA. then Manhattan, NY.
Long Island, NY, New York, NY, Westchester, NY, and then Manhattan, NY
Watertown, NY then Brooklyn, NY
York, PA, New York, NY, Bronx, NY and then northern New Jersey, NJ.
Worcester, MA then Brooklyn, NY

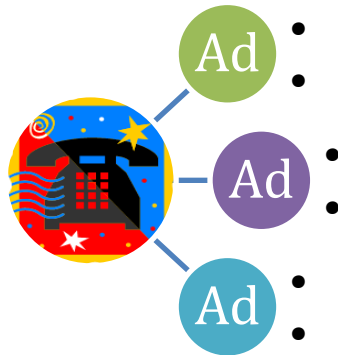
**Other phone numbers, ads and other girls/women**

Twenty-six (52%) of the 50 ads were linked to another phone number found on other sex advertising sites. The number of linked phone numbers ranged from one linked number to six linked numbers ( $M = 2.34$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ). The linked phone numbers were often on another ad with the flagged potential minor victim in the ad and then were traced to other ads with other girls/women in the photos. A number of the ads offered ‘doubles’ or sex with two girls/women and then ads for each girl/woman was separately. One phone number was linked to eleven other girls/women in hundreds of other ads while the average was a link to 3.5 other girls/women. The other phone numbers associated with the one found in the flagged potential minor ad were most often (53.8%,  $n = 14$ ) from other area codes than the one found in the original ad and 23.1% ( $n = 12$ ) had some new area codes and at least one linked number in the same area code.

For one potential minor ad, the phone number was linked to four other girls' ads. The photos of the four girls were all taken in the same location (the same pillowcase with a unique design was in each) from the same angle.

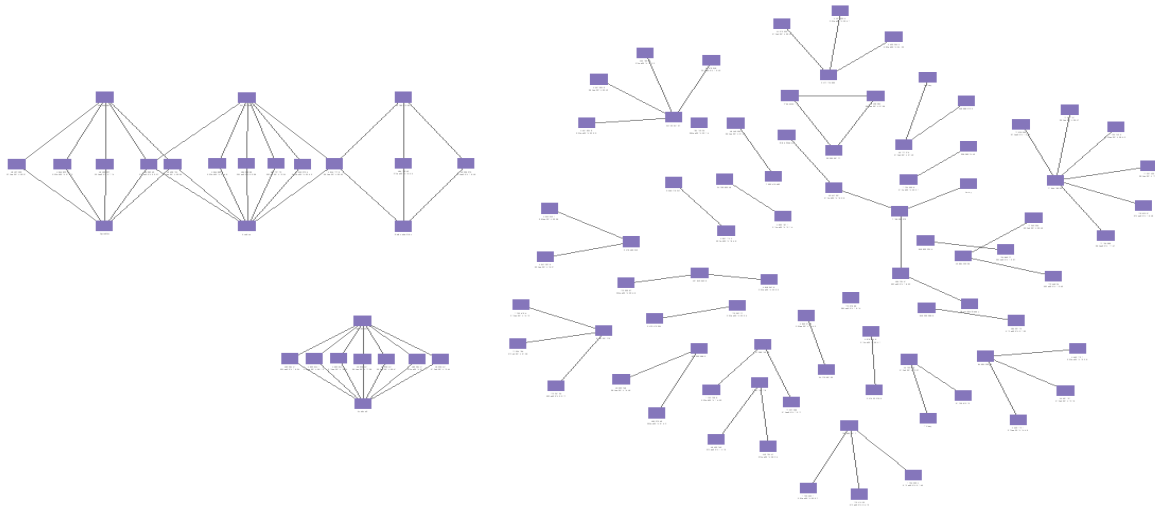


Another ad was traced back nine months (to June 2013) with all previous ads being in New York City and was linked to three other girls/women and six linked phone numbers. For one searched ad, three different girls/women with different ads were using the same phone number.



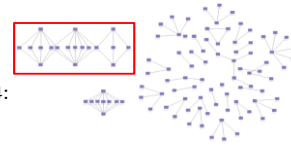
### Phone number networks

## Networks Associated with Suspicious Ads in the NY/NJ Area

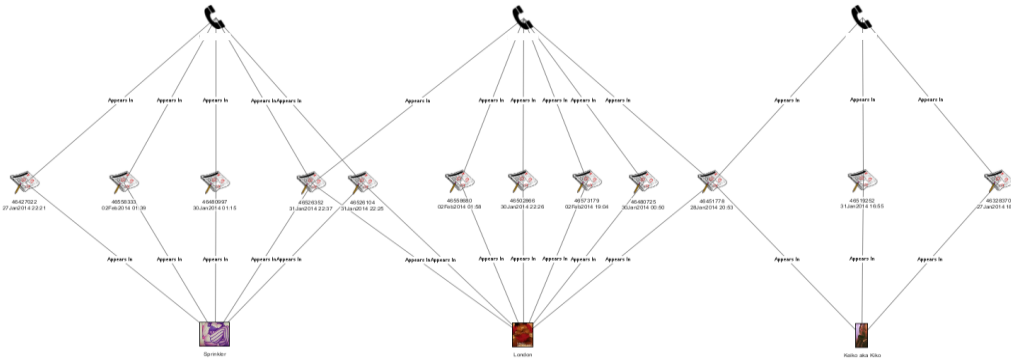


2014 Praescent Analytics.

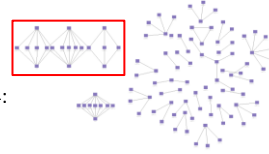
A Highly Connected Network in the NY/NJ Area



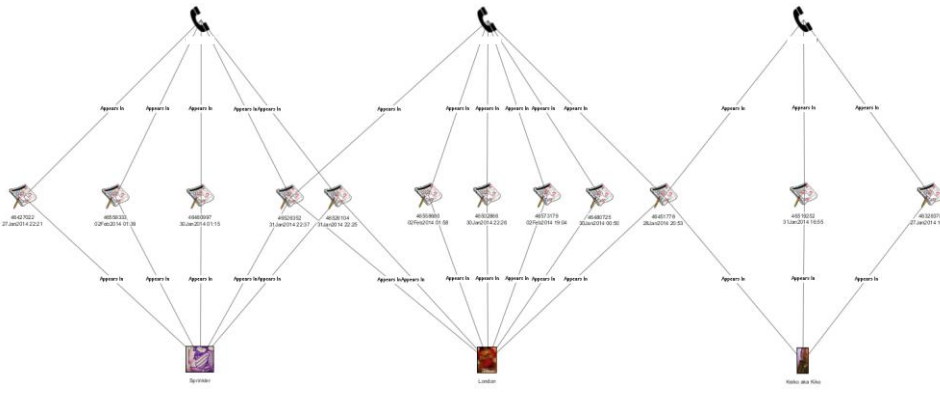
The most highly-connected network observed between 1/24/14 and 2/2/14: three phone numbers, used in 12 ads, linked to three high risk victims.



## A Highly Connected Network in the NY/NJ Area



The most highly-connected network observed between 1/24/14 and 2/2/14: three phone numbers, used in 12 ads, linked to three high risk victims.



**Thirty-seven (74%) of the phone numbers on the flagged potential minor ads were linked to ads with other girls/women in the online sex ads as identified by different people in the photos posted in the ads with linked phone numbers.** Nearly 60 percent ( $n = 15$ ) of them were linked to one other girl/woman, but the eleven others ranged from being linked to three other girls/women ( $n = 3$ ) to being linked to six other girls/women ( $n = 6$ ) with an average of 3.54.

### Flagged ads in other ad venues

The 50 flagged potential minor ads were linked to numerous other adult services websites. Three ads (6%) were linked other ads on the primary research website while the other 47 ads were linked to at least one other site up to ten other sites with an average of being linked to 4.5 other adult services websites. The New York/New Jersey ads were linked to 27 total adult services websites. At least four of those sites were customer 'review sites'.

## Network Analysis for Phoenix

A network analysis was conducted on the Phoenix flagged potential minor ads through searches of the phone numbers and photos in the ads resulting in finding that 85.3% (n =29) had been used in an online sex ad prior to the study commencing (January 24, 2014). Ten (29.4%) of those phone numbers had been in ads that stated they were in other locations than Phoenix either before or after the Super Bowl. Thirteen (38.2%) of the ads were used again in local ads in the Phoenix area but fifteen (44.1%) of the phone numbers were not found within the week after the Super Bowl in any online sex ads.

### Phoenix Circuits

Four phone numbers from flagged potential minor ads (11.8%) in Phoenix were linked to sex ads posted online prior to the Super Bowl week in other cities and then found after the Super Bowl with in a different city.

One ad showed the following movement: from Orlando, FL, Tampa, FL, Ft. Smith, AK, Ft. Lauderdale, Little Rock, AK, Phoenix, AZ, Las Vegas, Phoenix, AZ, and then to Las Vegas.



Another ad moved from Dallas, TX, San Antonio, TX, Memphis, TN, to Phoenix, AZ during Super Bowl week and then to Dallas, TX, to San Antonio, TX.



The third ad traveled from Tucson, AZ, Sierra Vista, AZ, to Phoenix, AZ and then to Tucson, AZ. And the final ad moved Las Vegas, NV, Flagstaff, AZ, to Phoenix, AZ, then to Flagstaff, AZ.

One ad was traced from Phoenix, AZ during the Super Bowl week to Grand Forks, ND the week after. The other six phone numbers that were used in sex ads placed prior to the Super Bowl week also demonstrated sex trafficking movement but were not found during the week after the Super Bowl. The phone numbers were linked to ads placed in other cities around the United States during the weeks before the Super Bowl.

*Prior locations*

<i>Previous locations in order</i>
<i>Tucson, AZ, Los Angeles, CA to Phoenix.</i>
<i>Chicago, IL, Tucson, AZ to Phoenix.</i>
<i>Los Angeles, CA, San Fernando to Phoenix.</i>
<i>Phoenix, AZ, Tucson, AZ, Santa Fe, NM, Albuquerque, NM, Salt Lake City, UT, Yuma, AZ, El Paso, TX, Flagstaff, AZ, San Bernardino, CA to Phoenix.</i>
<i>Tucson, AZ to Phoenix.</i>
<i>Tucson, AZ to Phoenix.</i>

**In Phoenix, eighteen (52.9%) of the 34 ads were linked to another phone number found on other sex advertising sites.** The number of linked phone numbers ranged from one linked number to seven linked numbers (M = 1.75, SD =1.6). One phone number was linked to four other girls/women while the average was 1.4 other girls/women. The other phone numbers associated with the one found in the flagged potential minor ad were not more likely to be from another area code (7, 43.8%) from other area codes than the one found in the original ad and 37.5% (n = 6) had some new area codes and at least one linked number in the same area code. In Phoenix the 34 flagged potential minor ads were linked to 32 other adult services websites. All of the ads were linked to at least one to thirteen other sites with an average of being linked to 5.3 other adult services websites.

At least three of those sites were from customer ‘review sites’ and one link regarding a flagged potential minor ad had comments about the person in the flagged that they had purchased sex from as “When she opened the door she looked younger than I expected but things turned out ok and I could maybe see myself repeating” and another gentleman wrote “Her pix are 100% accurate so the girl in the pix is what you are getting. She is super sexy and has a great body”. “She is very young but she knows herself and if you give her a chance she could surprise you. If you like flexible girls, she is the one for you”.



## Section 2: Demand for Online Sex

The demand for online sex ads has been a difficult problem to assess as the Internet allows for anonymous and hidden online sex buying and selling. A significant barrier to developing strategies to address and reduce sex-buying demand is the limited understanding of the scope of the population of sex buyers in our community. This study attempts to build upon previous research conducted by this research team with the goal of increasing awareness about the actual scope of demand for online sex ads to begin to develop strategies



for addressing the issue. The foundation of the Super Bowl study of prostitution demand was developed through a previous study entitled *Invisible Offenders* (2013). The *Invisible Offenders* study established estimates of online sex ad customers in fifteen US cities with potential customer populations ranging from 9,504 in San Francisco to 169,920 in Houston per day derived from placing decoy ads on one online sex ad website.

### Decoy Ads

Sex buying demand was evaluated for this study by posting two decoy ads in each online sex ad market, northern New Jersey and Phoenix, twice a day for eleven days. Contacts were made from potential customers through voicemail and text communication, which was then analyzed by the research team. There was no contact between the research team and the potential customers.

The research team placed 2 online sex ads in NY/NJ and the Phoenix, Arizona metro area from 1/24 -2/3 (Super Bowl 2014 was on 2/2). Potential customers made contact through a phone number on the ad and texted and left voice messages. Each ad, using a photograph provided by a law enforcement partner, was placed in the northern New Jersey and Phoenix Metro online sex ad markets twice a day. The ads were normative with the age listed as age 22 by using similar language as other ads at that age group with no attempt to draw attention or conceal if the photo or the person being sold was an adult or a minor.

## **Demand Findings**

Overall there were 1,276 unique contacts (voicemail/text). In New York/New Jersey there were a total of 1,457 contacts and in Phoenix a total of 978 contacts.

Contacts from potential customers in both ad markets ranged from a 'hi' text to a trafficker solicitation. Potential customers left many messages asking for prices, any 'restrictions', 'open minded', if a girl friend experience is offered, if anal sex is permitted, questions about seeing African American males, and if fetish friendly. There were a small number of requests for more pictures, including pictures of specific things including a 'nipple picture'. Specific statements about drugs include *"do you party and play I have G if you're interested give me a holler I send you a pic"* and *"do you party"* and *"Hey, what's up lady I wanna know if a chill times available to stop by me for a half hour um I got me two 10s and a chimney, Hit me up if out got available time. Peace"* was received. Offers of becoming a 'regular' or a 'monthly donation' were common. Numerous requests for unprotected sex "uncovered" "allergic to latex" and "bare back" and "full uncovered" were received.

### **New York/New Jersey Demand**

In New York/northern New Jersey, callers requested specific locations for outcalls including: Morristown, Pine Brook, Paterson, Parsippany/Morris Plains, Essex County, Bayonne, Belleville, Montclair, Westfield, Union, Hoboken, Lodi, Dunellen, Plainfield, Newark, Newport/Jersey City, Bloomfield, Hackensack, Northern New Bergen County, West New York, Northern New Arlington, Elizabeth, Secaucus, Edgewater, and Cliffside Park. Specific hotel information was sent regarding a hotel in Parsippany.

### **Phoenix Demand**

In Phoenix, of the 978 contacts included specific requests included invitations to visit them *"wanna come and have some fun while I am at work?"* and *"any chance for a quick visit (15-20 minutes) to my home in Ahwatukee near Ray Road/48<sup>th</sup> street very clean in shape respectful white male."*

In Phoenix, a potential trafficker made contact from a Chicago area code left a message *"Hi sexy, I hope you are being appreciated because you are worth it and deserve Come be apart of a team that will make sure all you goals are achieve well"* and a local Phoenix area code caller left a message *"I own a few clubs in Germany and a strip club in az. I need performers at the clubs if*

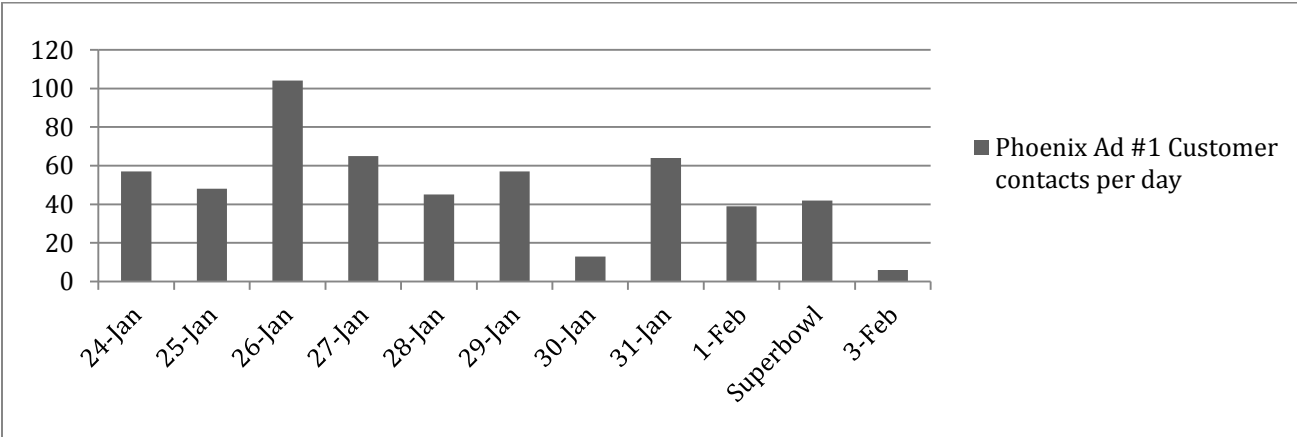
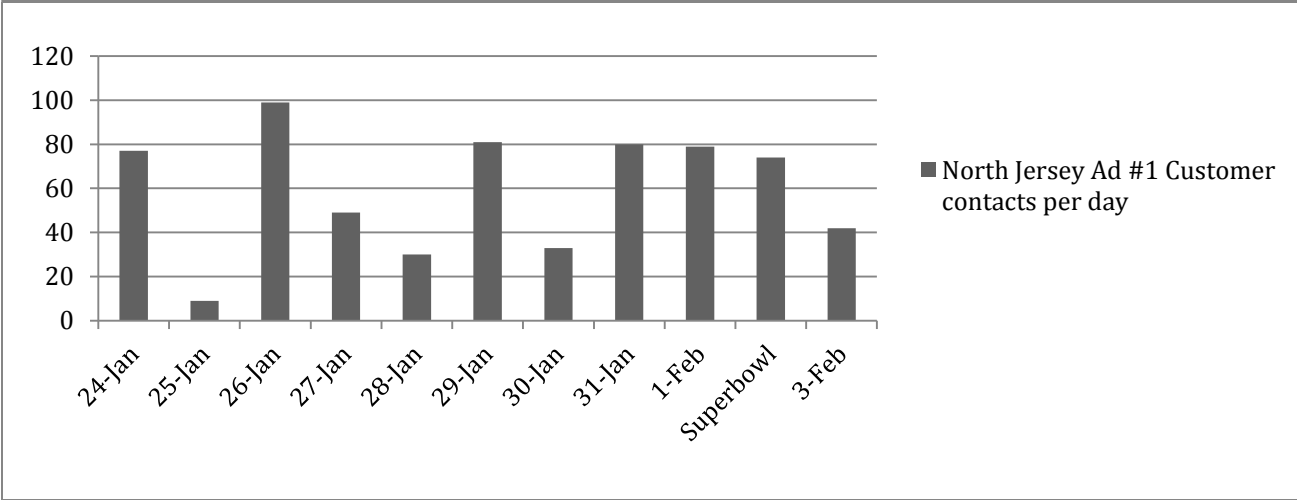
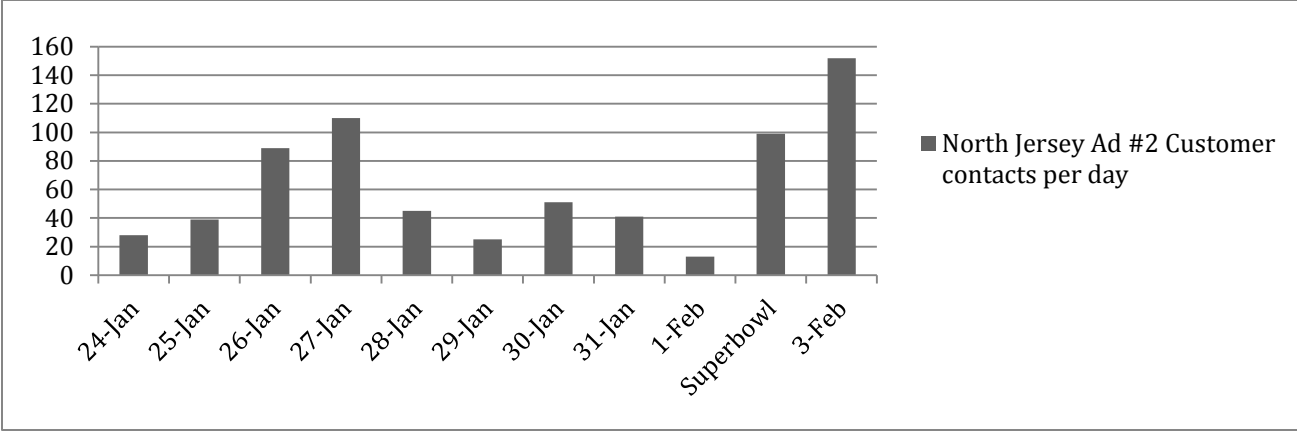
*interested. The escorting club in Germany is legal and many wealthy clients come in every night. Not a pimp just offering a job. Interested to know more ?”.*

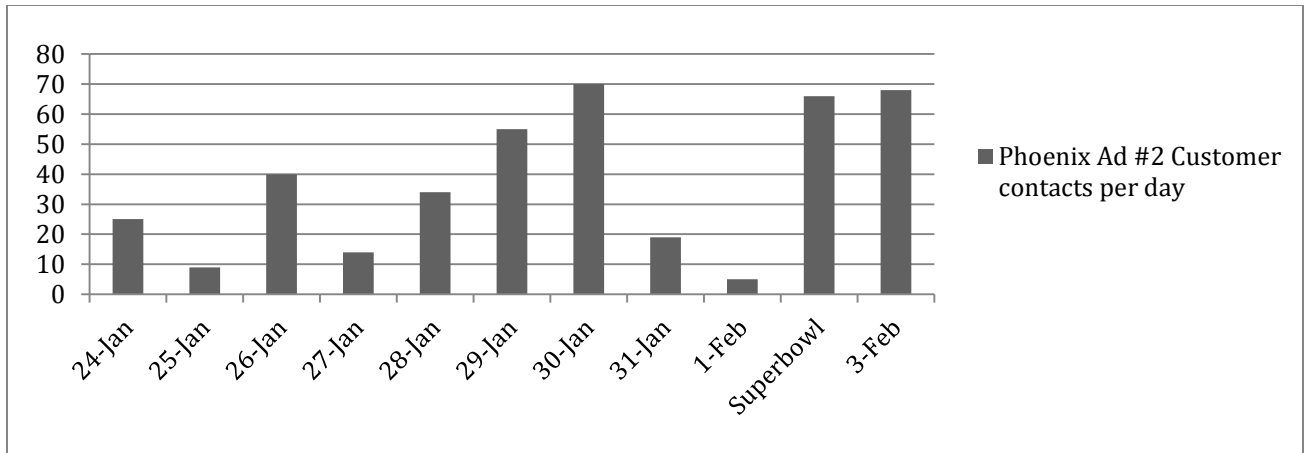
A solicitation was received by text from a worker at an international money exchange organization stating *“My name is Kxxxxx and I am an ex escort. I now work for XX and I flip money between 200 and 900 for example 200 is 2000 and 900 is 9000 if interested please HMU for details”* (identifying details were masked).

Callers named more than five Phoenix area hotels by name as places they were staying in cities including Scottsdale, Phoenix, and Mesa. Specific cities and areas stated in the text or voicemail for an outcall request include Litchfield Park, Avondale, Scottsdale, Queen Creek, Gilbert, Chandler, east valley and Phoenix.

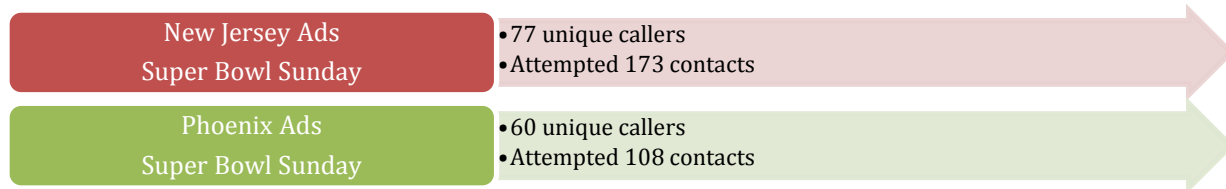
**Demand Contacts Call data**

	<b>NY/NJ #1 (Ad K)</b>	<b>Phoenix, AZ #1 (Ad K)</b>	<b>NY/NJ #2 (Ad S)</b>	<b>Phoenix, AZ #2 (ad S)</b>
Total contacts (voice and text)	727	543	730	435
Average daily contacts	<b>65.2</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>36.9</b>
Unique contacts	391	271	362	252
From local area codes	<b>267 (73.8%)</b>	<b>200 (73.8%)</b>	<b>302 (77.2%)</b>	<b>167 (66.5%)</b>
Range of repeat contacts	1-21 ( <i>M</i> =2.27, <i>SD</i> =2.5)	1-8 ( <i>M</i> =1.65, <i>SD</i> =1.11)	1-17 ( <i>M</i> =2.38, <i>SD</i> =2.3)	1-16 ( <i>M</i> =2.21, <i>SD</i> =2.3)
Voice contacts	492 (67.7%)	346 (63.7%)	494 (67.7%)	249 (57.2%)
Text contacts	235 (32.3%)	194 (36.3%)	236 (32.3%)	186 (42.8%)





On **Super Bowl Sunday 2014**, 77 different sex buyers tried to contact the northern New Jersey ads 173 times and in Phoenix, 60 callers tried to contact the ads 108 times.



## IMPLICATIONS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has far reaching implications for American law enforcement. What has long been suspected as significant influences on sex trafficking, both locally and nationally, have now been affirmatively established through the results of this study. The key takeaways for law enforcement include new empirical evidence on the impact of ad volume and ad content, the prevalence of networks involved in sex trafficking, the availability of juvenile victims of sex trafficking on the internet, and the trends of victim marketing relative to a large national event.

### AD VOLUME AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

As previous research has shown (Roe-Sepowitz et al, 2013) internet based, adult services websites often serve as venues for sex trafficking with the vast majority of ads offering sex for sale. This study, combined with four previous studies of internet based adult services ads shows, on average, 78.1% of all ads posted are an offer of prostitution with 35.6% of those ads having indicators of adult sex trafficking and 8.1% of all ads had indicators that the ad involved

minor victims. This study illustrates an alarming increase in this number with 96.8% of all adult services ads located in northern New Jersey and 95.3% of all adult services ads in Phoenix offering sex for sale.

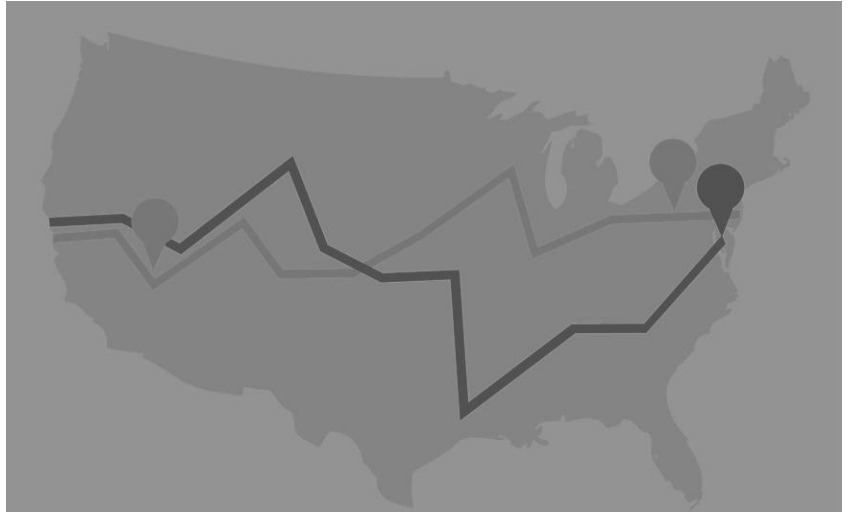
What this illustrates to law enforcement is that the issue of sex trafficking likely exceeds the organizational capacity of most law enforcement agencies to respond effectively in such a way as to prevent victimization, to quickly identify, locate and recover victims and to hold equally responsible the johns who create the demand and the traffickers who feed it. By their very nature, sex trafficking investigations are comprised of three parts. The first and most important is victim prevention and/or identification and recovery. The second is the identification, arrest and prosecution of the trafficker. And third, and no less important than the other two, is the identification, arrest and prosecution of the “demand” side of this trafficking triangle, the customer. Any of these components parts would test the most seasoned investigators on the most well-staffed investigative unit. Faced with these complex cases, units with limited training or experience in these types of investigations will soon find this task quickly becomes overwhelming.

In northern New Jersey alone during the week preceding the Super Bowl, 83.7% of all ads indicated the subjects of the ads were likely to be victims of commercial sexual exploitation, with 50 of those ads (5.1%) believed by the screeners to be minor victims. When a tip involving a minor victim is received there is a professional, some would say moral, obligation to immediately act. In virtually every case, this requires the investigating detective or agent to vet the tip to either confirm or refute the age of the alleged victim. As part of this investigative triage, a single investigator could spend hours running down leads before a positive identification is made leading to an escalated response.

It is typical in traditional sex trafficking investigations to mobilize an entire unit to respond to one tip of domestic minor sex trafficking once the victim’s age has been established or if it cannot be refuted. Most often these tips come in one at a time which allows for the strategic planning of the investigation where each of the three component parts of the sex trafficking triangle are given equal attention and maximum results are sought and many times achieved. When an additional 49 tips of domestic minor sex trafficking are received over a compressed time period it can be assumed that the department’s capacity to respond would be severely tested which will almost certainly impact investigative efficacy.

## SEX TRAFFICKING NETWORKS

It was long believed that prostituted persons worked alone on street corners and were making a choice to engage in a behavior society deemed criminal. In recent years, this false perception has changed with an enhanced understanding of victimization, risk factors and other socio-economic influences that compel one to fall prey to the “life.”



As law enforcement has come to understand prostitution is very often not the choice of the victim but rather the compulsion of the victimizer, so too must it realize sex trafficking is not simply a local issue. Rather, because of the profit potential due to the rate of demand, sex trafficking must be considered as a national and global issue. And with this consideration must come the understanding that maximizing profit and limiting suspect or victim exposure requires a network of collaborators to assist with moving operations from one city to another, to recruit and retain victims, to manage marketing and solicit customers and to protect the criminal enterprise for continued growth and profitability.

The study of social networks in crime is not a new field (see Browning et al, 2004; Coles, 2001; McIlwain, 1999). It has long been understood that so called ‘criminal hierarchies’ (Cressey, 1969) operate within and across organized crime to allow criminal organizations fluidity in their illicit operations and flexibility to move into new or previously unrecognized criminal ventures. This point is becoming clearer in the study of human trafficking as Fishman (1999) and Lederer (2011) have found with the increasing involvement of criminal street gangs in sex trafficking which was supported by this study.

This study traces a clear path of sex trafficking that moves from state to state. During this most recent Super Bowl, what was found numerous times was that a single ad for prostitution could be followed back to its point of origin via an analysis of its phone number, photo and a review of ad content. In fact, over 74% of all ads reviewed in New York/New Jersey in the week leading up to the Super Bowl were found to be connected to at least one other individual, with one ad tied to and eleven others. Each of these ads was followed from point of origin (another state) online towards the ultimate destination of the Super Bowl. This paints a clear picture of sex trafficking as a national problem for law enforcement that requires more effective

partnerships and regular collaboration in order to identify, disrupt and dismantle that criminal networks.

The tracing of the potential minor ads from coast to coast in the U.S. also exemplifies the need for a national method for law enforcement to communicate about cases that appear to be local but in a day can move to another city or state. If there is no way to share the collected information on the trafficker, the time is wasted and the opportunity to protect the current and future victims is lost.

This study also shows a clear regional influence over sex trafficking that responds to or, in some cases, drives market conditions. One ad found in northern New Jersey during the week preceding the Super Bowl originated in Boston and followed a path that took the victim to Worcester (MA), northern New Jersey, Southern New Jersey, Richmond (VA), and Manhattan before returning to Boston on Super Bowl Sunday. During the same week in Phoenix a distinct western circuit was identified in which ten (29.4%) of the flagged potential minor ads were posted in a different city's online sex selling ad market before moving to Phoenix. Regional "circuits" have long been identified by law enforcement as local markets in which sex trafficking occurs. The value to traffickers of these regional circuits lay in their ability to facilitate their illicit operations. For example, traffickers working the western United States can count on numerous factors such as generally mild weather, a propensity towards large, national events being hosted there regularly, a concentration of major cities in a relatively close area, and ease of travel between or within states as key components in their operations.

These points illustrate the complexities of sex trafficking investigations in which both state and federal violations routinely overlap. It also illustrates a need for an improved method of investigative deconfliction in which multiple jurisdictions can leverage each other's investigations to assure maximum suspect accountability and minimize adult or minor victimization to the greatest extent possible. Regionally based, sex trafficking networks are becoming viewed as franchise operations for larger criminal organizations.

In order to impact these organizations, law enforcement must recognize what the traffickers recognized long ago: jurisdiction doesn't matter when there is as great a profit potential as there is in sex trafficking.

#### **AVAILABILITY OF MINOR VICTIMS**

While it was anticipated minor victims would be located among the reviewed ads, what was not anticipated was the extent with which they were advertised. In northern New Jersey, during



the ten days of ad screening, 50 ads were identified as possibly depicting minor victims. By sheer volume, this number would likely prove to be overwhelming to the coalition of local, state and federal law enforcement, especially when it is considered many of these ads were posted repeatedly for a total of 95 distinct tips. An aggressive response of more than 50 law enforcement agencies led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New Jersey State Police resulted in the recovery of 16 juvenile victims during the Super Bowl, indicating both the scope of victimization and the amount of resources necessary to address it.

Similarly, in Phoenix, a large metropolitan city with a full time Vice Unit and the host of next year's Super Bowl, during the 10 days of ad screening, 34 ads were identified as possibly depicting minor victims with duplicate ads resulting in 81 distinct tips of domestic minor sex trafficking. Of the 34 ads identified and shared with surrounding law enforcement agencies, two were confirmed to be minors with one case resulting in the recovery of a juvenile victim. Significantly more of the flagged potential minor ads had local phone numbers than the flagged adult ads suggesting that the minors were being trafficked more often by local traffickers while adults were being brought from other areas to be sold in Phoenix. Local law enforcement and social service providers in the Phoenix area have also anecdotally identified this as true of the local sex trafficking culture. Admittedly, that the ads are not confirmed minors is a weakness of this study. Making contact and identifying the potential victims is generally difficult for law enforcement due to a number of factors designed to prevent victim recovery including selective screening processes aimed at weeding out undercover law enforcement contacts, demand volume exceeding the victim's capacity to respond (law enforcement contacts included) and the tendency to move minor victims frequently to prevent discovery.

What was interesting to note was that in addition to the primary adult services website studied during this research, an additional 38 websites were found to contain ads depicting juvenile victims both in New Jersey and Phoenix. Four of these websites were rating websites where Johns could leave reviews of the trafficking victims, with one such ad posting specifically "she is very young." For law enforcement, these rating websites are a ready-made database of demand that bears further and deeper review of their involvement in sexual exploitation. As sex trafficking becomes increasingly lucrative and the associated penalties continue to increase, web servers have moved to offshore locations outside the jurisdiction the American courts and their judicial orders. Investigators must continue to review these websites and explore open source information readily available through other "hobbyist" websites and ad content. As a means to close this technological gap, investigators would benefit as well from exploring human intelligence sources, victims, Johns, hotel staff, etc. who can provide information about

criminal activity that may serve to support investigations in the absence of computer or Internet Service Provider (ISP) evidence.

### **VICTIM MARKETING TRENDS**

The presence of non-local area codes in the scanned ads peaked in New York/New Jersey at 41% on Super Bowl Sunday from 28.9% the Sunday prior. The movement of sex trafficking victims related to the Super Bowl was clear as we found that 20% of the potential minor ads had been placed in other cities before and/or after the Super Bowl. A significant increase in non-local area codes was seen on Super Bowl Sunday in New York/New Jersey and during the weekend of the Super Bowl in Phoenix. This suggests that the movement of potential sex trafficking victims will coincide with the income potential of a large event; in this case the Super Bowl.

This would appear to lend credence to the idea that the presence of the Super Bowl or other large national event is a key factor in attracting an increased amount sex trafficking activity. It is important to note, however, for law enforcement and for general discussion that the Super Bowl itself does not create the conditions in which trafficking flourishes. Rather, it is the traffickers who seek to exploit and increased concentration of people in a relatively limited geographic area that tends towards an atmosphere where recreation and self-satisfaction are common and the availability of discretionary income is increased. While the decline in income potential is likely a key factor in victim migration, another strong consideration must be given to trafficker insulation.

Seasoned vice investigators have learned the longer a victim stays in one place, the more likely they are to be discovered, escape or get arrested. This provides an opportunity for cities experiencing a large event such as the Super Bowl. Near relentless pressure on suspected trafficking activity is likely to generate leads that may result in the identification of a trafficking victim or network. A key component of this is a deployment of well-trained officers with a clear understanding of trafficking indicators and a targeted deployment of experienced undercover investigators with a focus on identifying the networks that engage in commercial sexual exploitation.

While investigative pressure is crucial, a central premise of this research is that increased awareness of sex trafficking and its indicators is just as likely to lead to a victim recovery. Police departments are encouraged to work with hotels/motels/resorts, clubs, bars, entertainment venues and any other location where these conditions may occur or be witnessed. Trend

analysis is currently en vogue in law enforcement, but when dealing with the fluid environment in which sex trafficking occurs real time intelligence is critical to successful investigations.

## **DEMAND**

The high volume of contacts by sex buying customers received for the ads placed in the New York/New Jersey and Phoenix markets, 753 unique customer contacts in New York/New Jersey and 523 unique customer contacts in Phoenix, confirms that the customer base of sex trafficking presents an imposing amount of work for law enforcement to address. The volume indicates that there are large customer bases for sex services in both cities, which will require significant effort to pursue.

From this study, recommendations for the future include:

1. Create a national training for law enforcement specific to the complexities of detecting and investigating sex trafficking.
2. Support the hiring and specialization of new law enforcement units around the country to focus on sex trafficking networks.
3. Create a national tool that assists law enforcement in the tracking of traffickers and allows intelligence from one community to transfer to another.
4. Continue to invest in research on better understanding the influence of trafficking networks on sex trafficked minors in the United States.
5. Continue to invest in research on demand for commercial sex.
6. Develop innovative methods to prevent sex trafficking through public awareness, education and dispelling myths.
7. Enforce existing laws against prostitution and strategies that will deter the buying and selling of commercial sex.



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Table 1: Ads Screened online from January 24 (12:01am) to February 2 (11:59pm), 2014.

<b>Northern New Jersey</b>	<b>24-Jan</b>	<b>25-Jan</b>	<b>26-Jan</b>	<b>27-Jan</b>	<b>28-Jan</b>	<b>29-Jan</b>	<b>30-Jan</b>	<b>31-Jan</b>	<b>1-Feb</b>	<b>2-Feb</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Ads Screened	65	33	25	19	17	19	17	19	22	23	259
Total Adult Trafficking Ads	62	28	22	16	12	15	14	14	17	18	231
Total Minor Ads	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	3	4	13
<b>Staten Island</b>	<b>24-Jan</b>	<b>25-Jan</b>	<b>26-Jan</b>	<b>27-Jan</b>	<b>28-Jan</b>	<b>29-Jan</b>	<b>30-Jan</b>	<b>31-Jan</b>	<b>1-Feb</b>	<b>2-Feb</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Ads Screened	3	6	6	6	5	9	1	6	4	1	44
Total Adult Trafficking Ads	2	3	3	3	3	7	1	3	1	1	30
Total Minor Ads	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3
<b>Brooklyn</b>	<b>24-Jan</b>	<b>25-Jan</b>	<b>26-Jan</b>	<b>27-Jan</b>	<b>28-Jan</b>	<b>29-Jan</b>	<b>30-Jan</b>	<b>31-Jan</b>	<b>1-Feb</b>	<b>2-Feb</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Ads Screened	34	35	38	25	23	46	29	39	31	33	333
Total Adult Trafficking Ads	25	23	28	22	17	37	24	29	21	26	305
Total Minor Ads	5	3	7	1	4	7	4	6	9	7	53
<b>Manhattan</b>	<b>24-Jan</b>	<b>25-Jan</b>	<b>26-Jan</b>	<b>27-Jan</b>	<b>28-Jan</b>	<b>29-Jan</b>	<b>30-Jan</b>	<b>31-Jan</b>	<b>1-Feb</b>	<b>2-Feb</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Ads Screened	44	35	54	23	45	33	30	27	28	30	349
Total Adult Trafficking Ads	41	13	32	22	15	30	22	22	17	21	260
Total Minor Ads	3	1	2	2	4	1	4	3	3	2	25
<b>Phoenix</b>	<b>24-Jan</b>	<b>25-Jan</b>	<b>26-Jan</b>	<b>27-Jan</b>	<b>28-Jan</b>	<b>29-Jan</b>	<b>30-Jan</b>	<b>31-Jan</b>	<b>1-Feb</b>	<b>2-Feb</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Ads Screened	146	190	161	110	114	107	115	114	162	126	1345
Total Trafficking Ads	124	130	124	95	97	86	92	98	129	95	1070
Total Minor Ads	4	4	9	7	9	8	7	9	8	16	81