



CSSD Chronicle



A regular publication of information and news about Court Support Services Division

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INTERNET PROBATION AND PAROLE CONTROL (IPPC) BRINGS HIGH TECH MONITORING OF SEX OFFENDER COMPUTERS

Successful supervision of sex offenders is a high priority for CSSD. These clients often have complicated needs and pose high risk factors that require specialized expertise and the use of innovative techniques. With the advent of computer technology and the internet, the use of these technologies by sex offenders has become ever more widespread.

Individuals can access inappropriate sites and even “meet” unsuspecting, potential “victims” in cyberspace that increase the danger of their re offending. In sentencing sex offenders, while trying to accommodate the need for computer technology in today’s society, courts have also tried to control and restrict access for these individuals while at the same time probation efforts have been aimed at ensuring compliance with these court conditions.

TECHNOLOGY OFFERS ASSISTANCE: Internet Probation and Parole Control (IPPC) is a new technology that assists probation officers in safely and effectively monitoring computer and internet use by sex offenders. The software can be installed by the client to minimize probation officer’s need to understand the client’s computer. The data captured is not overbroad and can be tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual case. Probation officers can also customize restrictions on the computer use. Examples include limiting hours on the computer, not allowing access to chat rooms or social network sites or blocking internet access all together. Officers who currently are using IPPC have reported positive results once the officer has had an opportunity to learn the software. As noted by Bill Carbone, CSSD Executive Director, “Technology has opened up a whole new world for everyone – but for sex offenders this poses a grave question of public safety. IPPS is one way in which CSSD is trying to provide innovative supervision to limit that.”

Through a cooperative effort between the State Police Computer Crimes Unit and CSSD, a staff person was hired by CSSD to do all the forensic searches on computers seized by probation staff when there is probably cause to believe violation activity has occurred. The additional staffing has allowed for timely information exchange back to probation on violations of probation.

FINDINGS: Currently CSSD has 40 clients being actively monitored by sixteen probation officers using IPPC software. In a recent meeting with staff, one officer remarked how he learned about travel plans and interests which have helped him in communicating with the client. Another officer reported having found that the client went to inappropriate sites. By early intervention, he was able to stop any further violation behavior. To date, thirty nine probation cases have been identified and referred for forensic review and twenty eight full forensic searches were conducted which uncovered the violations of court orders. In twenty cases, the client had adult pornography on the computer(s); in four cases child pornography was found; in another four cases, the client was found to have been actively using Social Networking Sites (SNS). These violations might very well have gone undetected without an ability to do timely forensic searches.

RESULTS OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY: While no violation behavior resulting in arrest has been reported, officers do see IPPC as an effective preventive tool. More training has been requested to enhance proficiency in using the IPPC software. Of the cases that have had VOP hearings, seven clients had their probation revoked. In three cases, extensive prison sentences were ordered, indicating the severity with which the court viewed the findings. While the number of child pornography images that have been found so far has been low as compared to what the State Police Computer Crimes Unit sees, the number of adult pornography images and movies is very high. In some cases, tens of thousands of adult images and up to one hundred movies have been found. In a case involving social networking sites, even when the computer was in probation custody, the client was still accessing the site(s) using other computers at a library and work. In another instance, at the same time that the forensic exam was being conducted on the computer, the client was been using the local library computer to access the Internet and his site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, please contact Celia Siefert, Manger, CSSD IT Unit at celia.siefert@jud.ct.gov

SUGGESTIONS? QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS? CONTACT US!

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