# Sextortion targeting teenagers on the rise due to AI advances



The Irish News (Belfast) reports on the troubling rise of sextortion facilitated by advances in artificial intelligence, particularly affecting teenagers across various regions. This form of blackmail involves malicious individuals superimposing a victim's facial image onto explicit content, creating fake photographs or videos that are intended to be used as leverage for financial gain.

The practice predominantly targets teenage boys, who receive these deceptive images and are subsequently threatened with the online dissemination of these created materials unless a sum of money is paid. Although the precise number of such scams in Northern Ireland is unclear due to many incidents going unreported, the safeguarding organisation Safer Schools NI has noted a significant increase in cases of this nature targeting young people.

While adults often face demands in the thousands, perpetrators of sextortion against youth generally request smaller amounts, typically around £100. This lower figure may discourage young victims from coming forward to report the crime, compelling criminals to cast a wider net and target numerous adolescents to achieve sufficient illicit income.

The complexities surrounding internet safety are heightened by the global nature of these crimes, which can originate from anywhere, making them difficult to combat at the source. Consequently, efforts must be concentrated on prevention and support at the community and family levels. The anonymity afforded to online criminals often empowers them, and it becomes imperative that attempts at sextortion are publicly exposed—encouraging the sharing of information to protect potential victims.

Schools are actively participating in the education of young people about online safety. The existing programs aim to stay current with the latest scams; however, the incorporation of artificial intelligence into these deceitful practices presents ongoing challenges. The responsibility for safeguarding young people ultimately lies with law enforcement, specifically the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), which provides guidance for victims of sextortion and stresses the importance of prompt reporting.

Despite these efforts, a report from the Criminal Justice Inspectorates has revealed staffing shortages within the PSNI’s child internet protection team, raising concerns regarding their capacity to adequately address the increasing volume of referrals received from the National Crime Agency. Without sufficient funding and resources allocated to combat sextortion, the prevalence of this issue is poised to escalate.

The article concludes with a call for accountability from the Chief Constable regarding measures that will be taken to address this pressing problem.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.iwf.org.uk/news-media/news/teenage-boys-targeted-as-hotline-sees-heartbreaking-increase-in-child-sextortion-reports/> - This URL supports the claim that teenage boys are predominantly targeted in sextortion cases, often for financial reasons. It also highlights the alarming increase in such incidents.
* <https://values.snap.com/news/new-sextortion-research-gen-z> - This research confirms that Gen Z remains a target for online sextortion, with a significant portion of teens having been victims or lured into risky situations. It underscores efforts to educate and prevent such crimes.
* <https://www.missingkids.org/blog/2024/ncmec-releases-new-sextortion-data> - This report reveals a significant rise in financial sextortion cases, particularly targeting teenage males. It emphasizes the global nature of sextortion and the importance of reporting.
* <https://www.missingkids.org/cybertiplinedata> - The data shows a rise in reports related to child sexual exploitation, including financial sextortion. It highlights challenges in combating these crimes due to the global nature and anonymity of perpetrators.
* <https://www.thorn.org/research/grooming-and-sextortion/> - This research provides insights into sextortion tactics, including the use of generative AI to produce fake images. It explains how financial sextortion often involves male teens and organized groups.
* <https://www.thorn.org/research/grooming-and-sextortion/> - Thorn's research highlights the impact of sextortion on victims, noting that many feel compelled to comply with demands. It also discusses the use of AI in producing fake images for blackmail.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/opinion/nothing-fake-about-the-harm-inflicted-by-evil-ai-sextortionists-on-our-teens-the-irish-news-view-7EW4FVK5JBHTLBQCLZCLZH4KSA/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data