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Child sexual abuse in the digital era : Rethinking legal frameworks and transnational law enforcement collaboration

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Citation

Witting, S. K. (2020, June 11). *Child sexual abuse in the digital era : Rethinking legal frameworks and transnational law enforcement collaboration*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/96242>

Version: Publisher's Version

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Issue Date: 2020-06-11

PROPOSITIONS BELONGING TO THE DISSERTATION ' CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE DIGITAL ERA: RETHINKING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND TRANSNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT COLLABORATION' BY SABINE KATHARINA WITTING

1. Virtual child sexual abuse material does not cause any direct harm to children and should therefore not be criminalised.
2. The consensual production and sharing of sexually explicit material between adolescents ('sexting') is inherently harmful for them. Therefore, in order to protect adolescents, 'sexting' should be criminalised.
3. The dissemination, downloading and accessing of child sexual abuse material on the Internet is a horrific offence. Law enforcement should therefore be equipped with broad investigation authority, even if this requires a more lenient interpretation of the rule of law.
4. International treaties such as the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography provide for a sufficient response mechanism for transnational law enforcement collaboration in online child sexual abuse cases.
5. International law offers minimal contributions to the global fight against cybercrime. In the digital era, the idea of international treaties as standard-setting tool is outdated.
6. Contact child sexual abuse is much more harmful for the victim than online child sexual abuse. In the interest of delivering justice for children, we should re-focus our efforts on contact offences, as they are still more prevalent in most countries.
7. Online and offline child sexual abuse are two sides of the same coin.
8. The ongoing debate over the correct terminology regarding 'child pornography', 'child sexual abuse material' or 'indecent images of minors' is overrated and is distracting from the actual problem.
9. It takes a village to raise a child. In the digital era, it additionally requires an IT expert and an ethics specialist.
10. Writing a PhD by publication is not comparable to a 'real' PhD by monograph.