CHILDSAFE.AI
PROTECTING KIDS ONLINE

NATIONAL JOHNS SUPPRESSION INITIATIVE

**OPERATION 18
SUMMER 2019**

Prepared by:
Marian Hatcher - Cook County Sheriff
Rob Spectre - childsafe.ai

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

CHILDSAFE.AI

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION

The National Johns Suppression Initiative (NJSI) - a nationwide counter human trafficking campaign focusing on reducing demand - ran from 23 June 2019 to 28 July 2019. Led by Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, the NJSI began in 2011 with this campaign serving as its 18th nationwide operation. With the NJSI providing collaboration with more than 140 law enforcement agencies making over 9,500 arrests across 26 states over its history, this summer's campaign conducted online and offline operations targeting buyers that supply the wealth to the United States trafficking economy.

Extending the campaign's enforcement reach was a buyer deterrence operation powered by childsafe.ai, the artificial intelligence platform protecting kids online. childsafe.ai's Demand Deterrence Platform provided participating agencies phone numbers for use in decoy commercial sex advertisements. Participating agencies post these advertisements in marketplaces known to produce human trafficking cases in their jurisdiction.
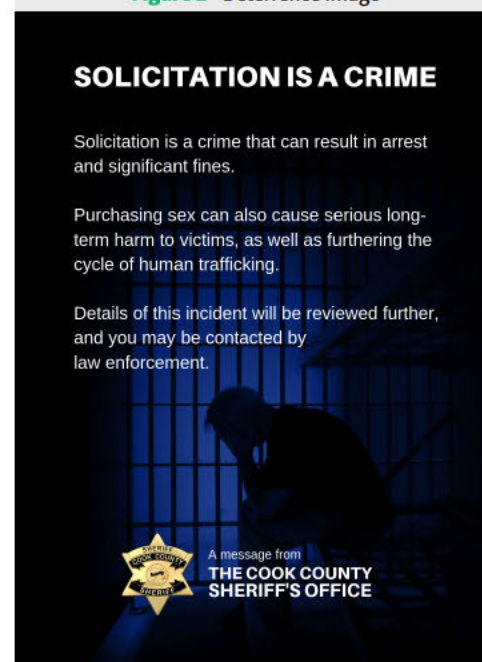
Buyers responding to those advertisements via SMS then engage with childsafe.ai's conversational intelligence, an automated chatbot posing as a provider of commercial sex. Some time after that conversation completes, a deterrence message (Figure 1) from the participating agency is delivered via MMS from a different phone number.

This report is an analysis of the results of buyer deterrence of the 18th NJSI campaign.

Participating agencies included:

- Cook County Sheriff
- New York Police Department
- Seattle Police Department
- Houston Police Department
- Tarrant County Sheriff
- Colorado Springs Police Department

Figure 1 - Deterrence Image

SOLICITATION IS A CRIME

Solicitation is a crime that can result in arrest and significant fines.

Purchasing sex can also cause serious long-term harm to victims, as well as furthering the cycle of human trafficking.

Details of this incident will be reviewed further, and you may be contacted by law enforcement.

A message from
THE COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CHILDSAFE.AI

KEY RESULTS

Buyer demand nationwide was deterred by the 18th campaign of the National Johns Suppression Initiative with **3,079** buyers reached in 46 states.

700%
Increase in Law Enforcement reach throughout the USA.

3079
Buyers demand deterred by the 18th nation wide campaign.

503
Overall increase in arrests made through NJSI 18 of 512%.

5
Number of buyers that asked for the age of the provider.

17 Traffickers Arrested

8 Indecent Solicitation of a Minor

3 Juvenile Victims Recovered

5 Outstanding Warrants

15 Weapons Possession

12 Drug Charges

NJSI 18 reached a record number of buyers since April 2018, besting the previous operation by 157% (Figure 2). This was achieved through a longer runtime than previous operations at five weeks as well as a sharper weekly pace with more law enforcement partners posting more ads on more days. Two agencies - New York Police Department and Cook County Sheriff - increased posting dramatically by 8x and 6x respectively in an effort to find the local ceiling for demand. Both had a linear increase in buyers reached without seeing diminishing returns.

Buyers drove **19,393** individual communications to the childsafe.ai Deterrence Platform. The majority of those contacts came via SMS at **88%**.

Figure 2 - Cumulative Weekly Contacts
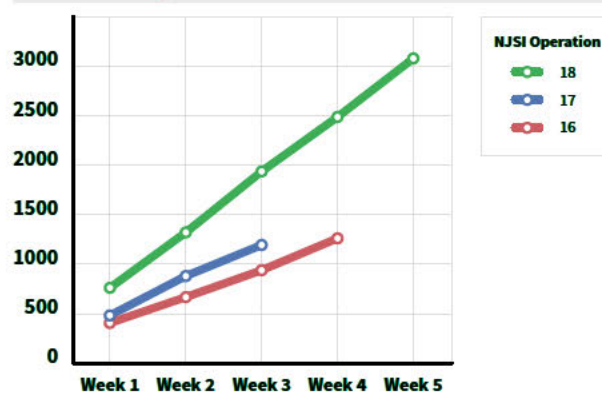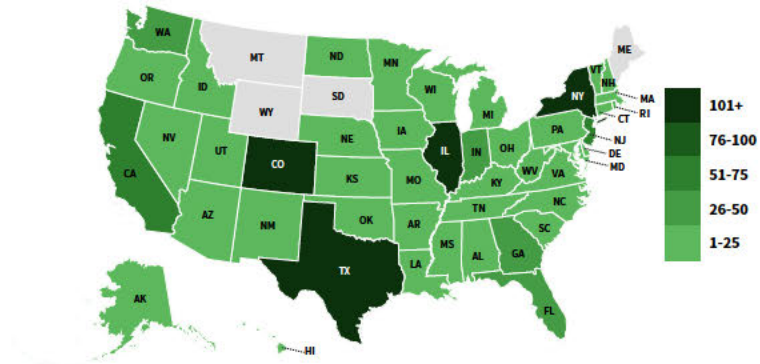
NJSI Operation
— 18
— 17
— 16

CHILDSAFE.AI

Figure 3 - Buyer Density

The choropleth (Figure 3) indicates the density of those buyers across the United States

With NJSI 18 being the third campaign powered by childsafe.ai, new comparative data can be observed (Figure 4).

Figure 4 - Repeat Buyers From Previous Operations

4% of buyers had attempted to purchase in previous NJSI operations.

**3.1%** of buyers observed in NJSI 18 tried to purchase 3 or more times.

CHILDSAFE.AI
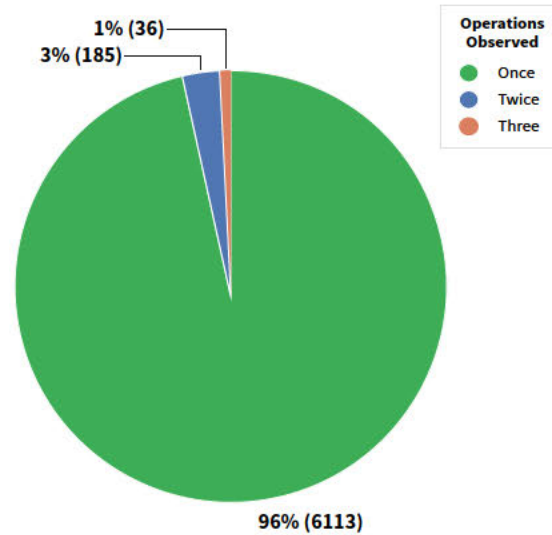
ANALYSIS

CONTEXT

The 18th campaign of the National Johns Suppression Initiative totaled 22 days running from 23 June 2019 to 28 July 2019. This campaign ran for one additional week longer than last summer's NJSI campaign and 13 more days than NJSI 17.

Six law enforcement agencies participated in buyer deterrence for NJSI 18: New York Police Department, Tarrant County Sheriff, Cook County Sheriff, Seattle Police Department, Houston Police Department and Colorado Springs Police Department.
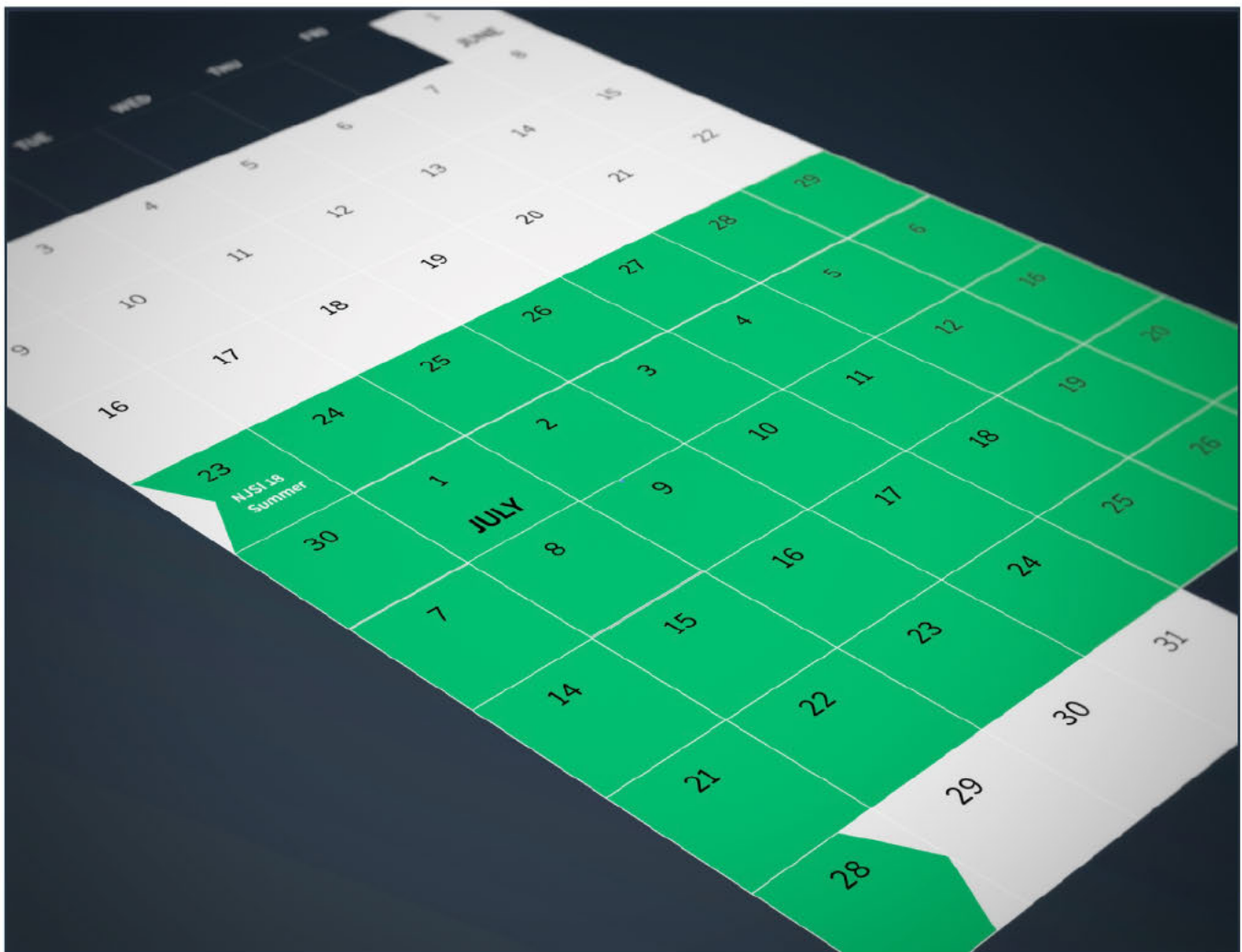
BUYERS

NJSI 18 reached an average of **615** buyers per week, a **51%** increase from NJSI 17 (Figure 5). **3,079** buyers were reached during the campaign, representing a **157%** increase from NJSI 17.

Figure 5 - Cumulative Weekly Contacts
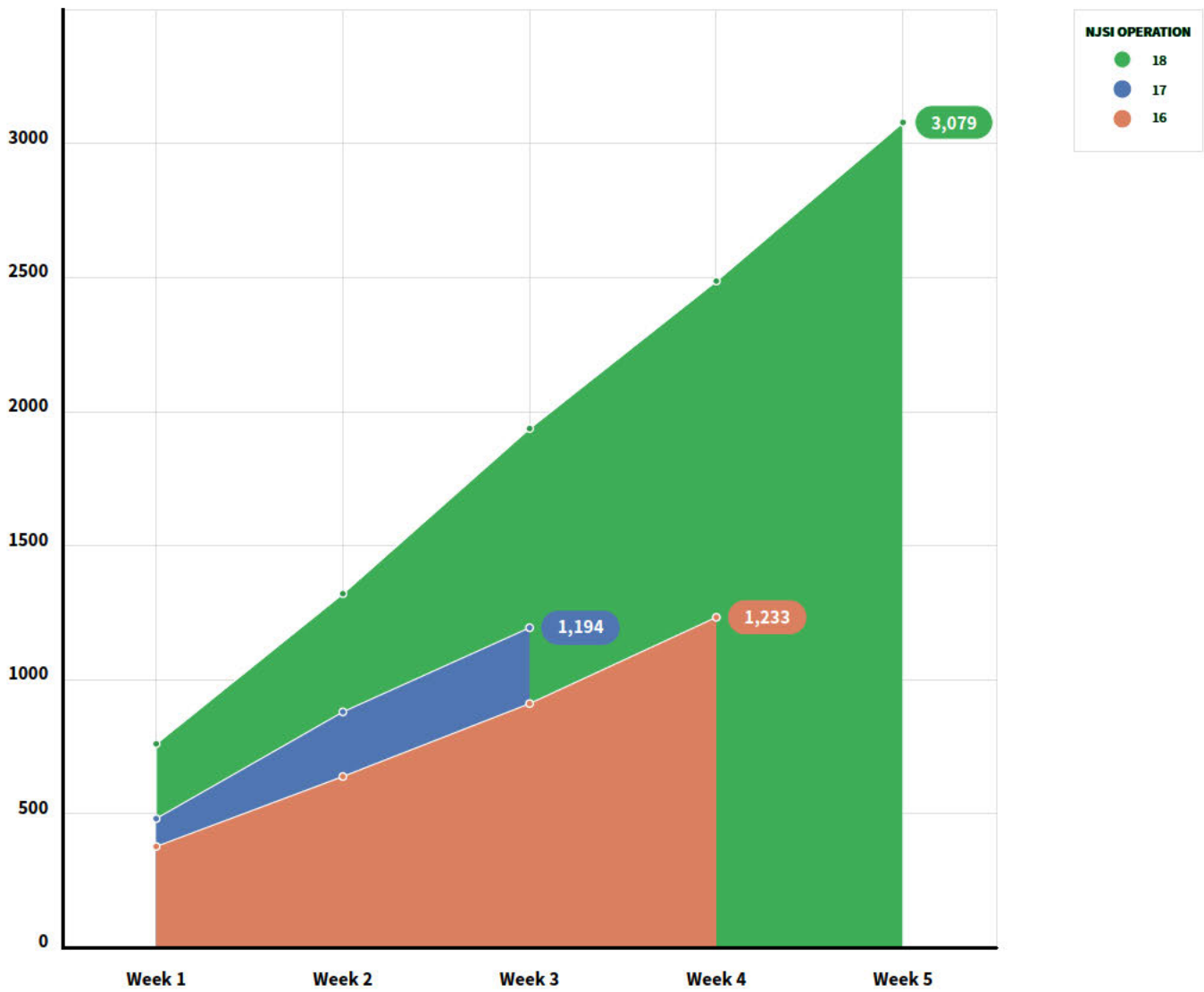
3,079
Buyers

19,887
Communications

Over the course of the campaign. 88% of the communication was over SMS (figure 7). This trend appears to be consistent across jurisdictions and NJSI campaigns.

In addition to managing communication and deterrence with buyers, childsafe.ai also aggregates information from public consumer and telecommunications data sources on the contacts to the platform (Figure 8).

Aggregating the data from campaign to campaign provides new insight into how buyers are adapting following the market fragmentation from April 2018.

71% of the buyers observed used a mobile phone, slightly down from previous NJSI operations.

27% of buyers observed used a "Non-Fixed VoIP" phone number. These types of phone numbers are frequently issued by mobile SMS apps like Pinger, Google Voice or TextNow.
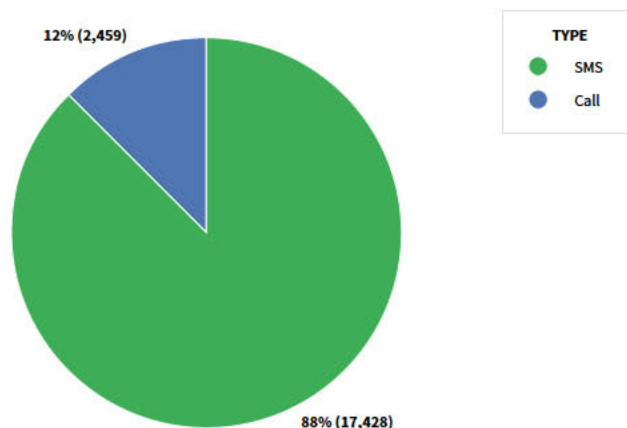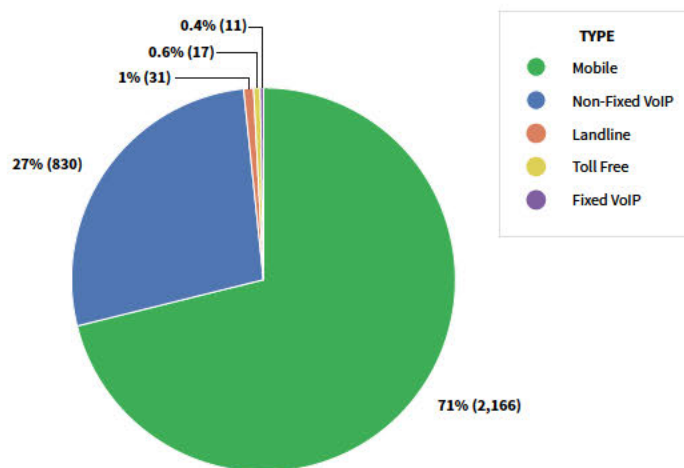
Figure 7 - Distribution of Communication by Type

12% (2,459)

TYPE
- SMS
- Call

88% (17,428)

Figure 8 - Distribution of Phone Type

0.4% (11)
0.6% (17)
1% (31)
27% (830)

TYPE
- Mobile
- Non-Fixed VoIP
- Landline
- Toll Free
- Fixed VoIP

71% (2,166)

CHILDSAFE.AI

Of the **2,166** buyers that used a mobile phone, **460** used a prepaid "burner" SIM card. This proportion is consistent with previous operations. T-Mobile continues to be the most popular carrier for buyers observed through NJSI (Figure 9). These proportions remain unchanged and appear to be reflective of the popularity of these carriers in the US.


Figure 9 - Most Popular Carriers for Buyers
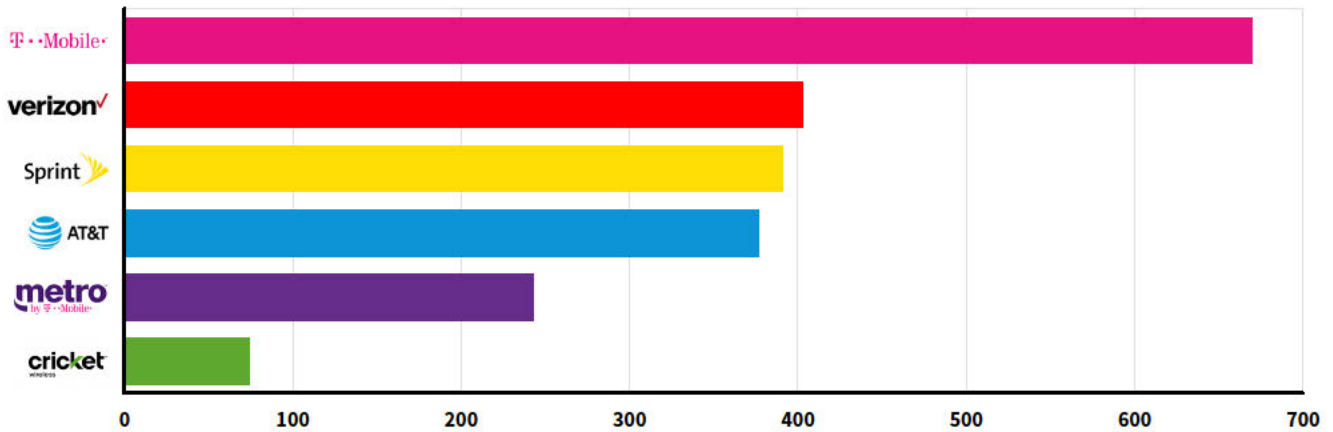
TextNow remained the most popular mobile SMS app used by buyers in NJSI 18, opening up a commanding lead among buyers over Pinger (Figure 10). Google Voice remains 3rd in the overall rankings. GoTextMe and TextPlus appear to have reached a floor in popularity hanging on to roughly the same share from NJSI 17.


Figure 10 - VoIP App Providers Used by Contacts
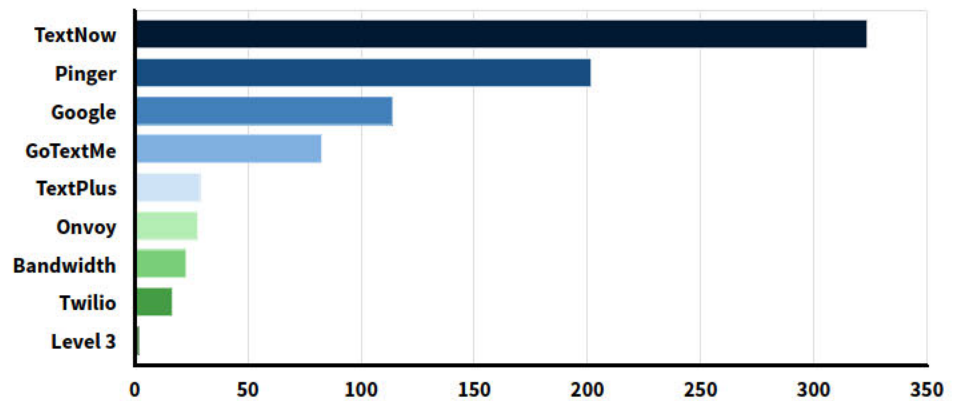
TextNow led in popularity in most of the markets participating in NJSI 18 (Figure 11). This is a shift from the regional popularity that Pinger enjoyed in NJSI 17.


Figure 11 - VoIP App Providers Used by Contacts Per Region

CHILDSAFE.AI
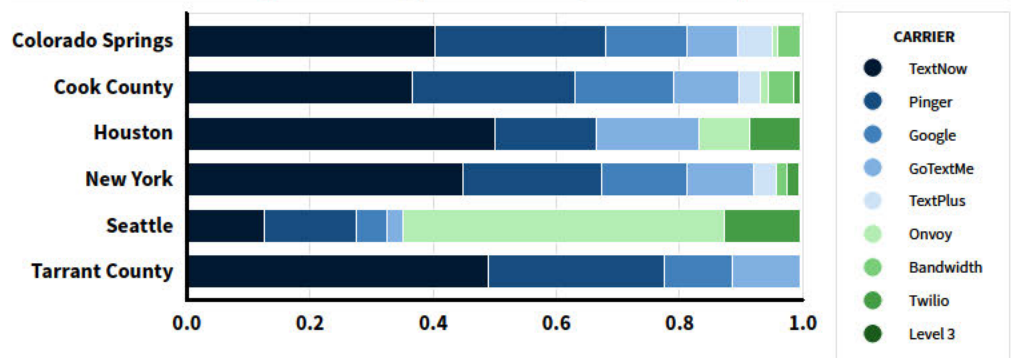
60% of buyers observed during NJSI 18 appear to reside in the metropolitan area in which they are attempting to purchase (Figure 12). This proportion remained unchanged through NJSI campaigns. No buyers were observed attempting to purchase in multiple jurisdictions.

Figure 12 - In Market Buyers
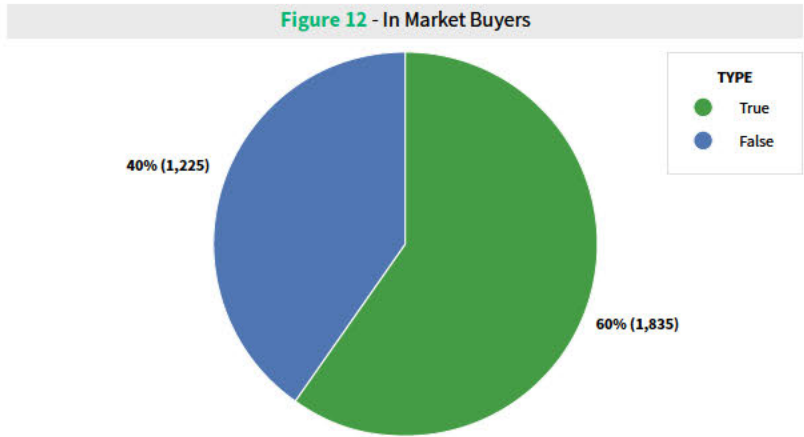
The proportion of In Market Buyers appeared to be highly variable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (Figure 13). New York and Cook County saw majority in market buyers while Tarrant County and Seattle saw majority out-of-market. It does appear that this proportion is dependent on the number of ads posted by the participating law enforcement partner. More ads appears to result in reaching more of the local demand.

Figure 13 - Distribution of In Market Buyers
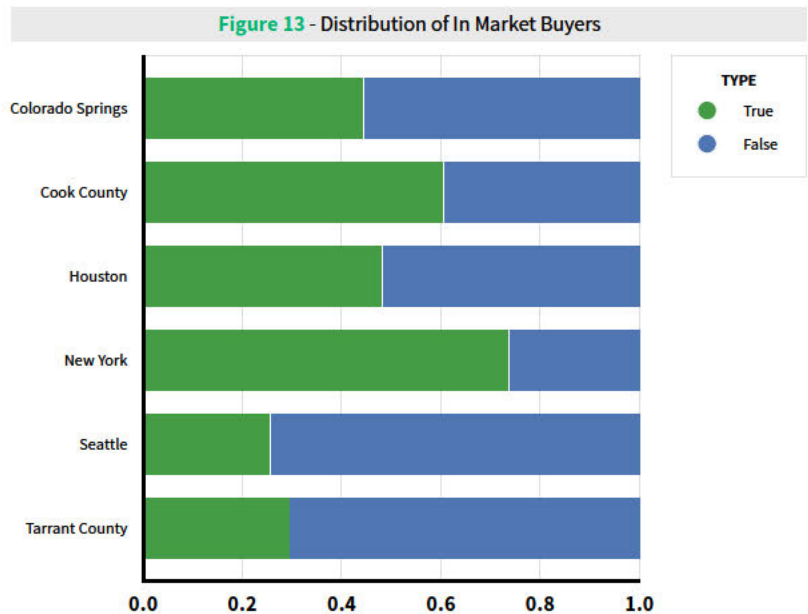
BEHAVIOR

From the content and frequency of messages sent in response to decoy advertising, childsafe.ai observes dynamics of behavior that buyers exhibit when they are attempting to purchase.

Jurisdictions focusing on demand-oriented "hobby boards" like Erotic Monkey produced more repeat buyers than jurisdictions that only posted on Backpage-like advertising websites.

162 (5.2%)
Attempted to purchase again after receiving a deterrence message.

647 (21%)
Responded to more than one phone number.

670 (21.8%)
Made an explicit offer of money.

269 (8.7%)
Asked for additional photos.

5 (0.16%)
Asked for the age of the provider.

1 (0.03%)
Asked if the provider was affiliated with law enforcement.

90 (2.9%)
Sent messages containing images or video.

47 (1.5%)
Sent what they claimed was a self-portrait.

34 (1.1%)
Sent a photo of a phallus.

2,817
91% of the buyers were not observed again after receiving a deterrence message.

CHILDSAFE.AI

MARKET RESPONSE

For agencies participating in the deterrence component of the 18th NJSI campaign, buyers who contacted decoy advertisements each received at least one deterrence message. Each time a buyer responds to an ad, he or she is added to the pending queue for deterrence. Buyers that contacted an ad again after receiving a deterrence message was queued for an additional message. One agency - New York Police Department - sent three deterrence messages over five days each time a buyer made a unique contact.

Deliverability is reported differently for the four major wireless carriers in the United States. Two carriers report that a message is "delivered" to confirm it was received by the subscriber's handset. The other two carriers report that a messages is "sent" to confirm it was sent to the handset, but do not confirm it was received by the handset. Messages are indicated as "undelivered" if it was not received by the handset or if the phone number does not support texting (e.g. if it is a landline or business voice-only line).

3,079
Buyers

7,574
Deterrence Messages

Following their conversation in response to a decoy advertisement, Buyers recieved a deterrence message through childsafe.ai. **96%** of those messages were "delivered" or "sent" (Figure 14).

After receiving a deterrence message, **17%** of buyers responded to the deterrence with a call or SMS (Figure 15). Response rates to the deterrence were similar across jurisdictions.

54.7% of buyers responded via SMS

45.3% of buyers responded via phone call.

The top quartile of buyers responding via phone called 3 or more times. 12 buyers responded via phone 9 or more times. One buyer called 92 times.
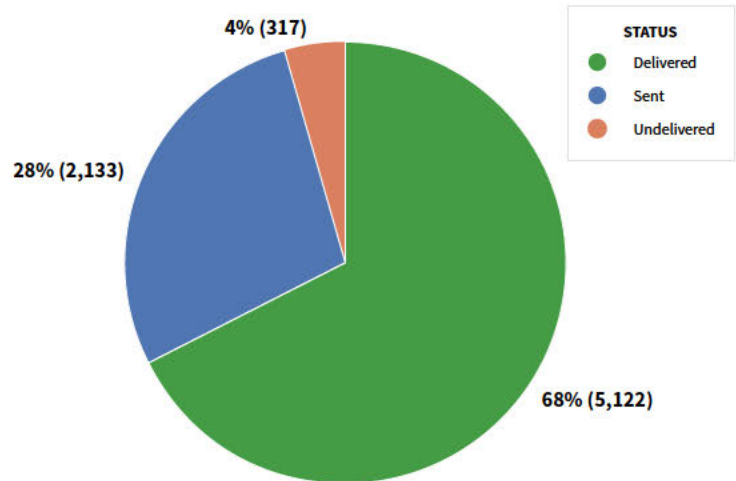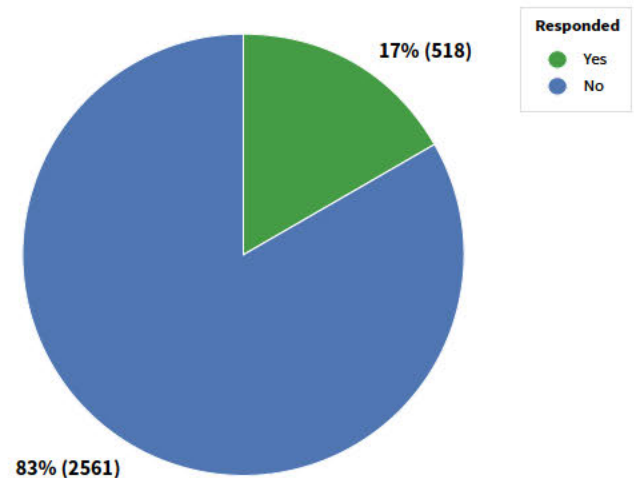
Figure 14 - Deliverability of Deterrence Message

4% (317)
28% (2,133)
68% (5,122)

STATUS: Delivered, Sent, Undelivered

Figure 15 - Contacts Responding to Deterrence Message

17% (518)
83% (2561)

Responded: Yes, No

CHILDSAFE.AI

Moments after sending a deterrence campaign, Colorado Springs Police Department observed activity on the most popular local hobby board - an online community where buyers congregate. The thread remains popular with buyers offering advice on verifying the source of the message. (Figure 16).

Figure 16 - Communication within The Other Board

photo by Stefan Stefančík for unsplash.com

In the **644** text message sent in response to deterrence, buyers expressed a wide array of sentiments.

Some were penitent:

Ok-- I m out ty

that s all you had to show me I m never getting on here again
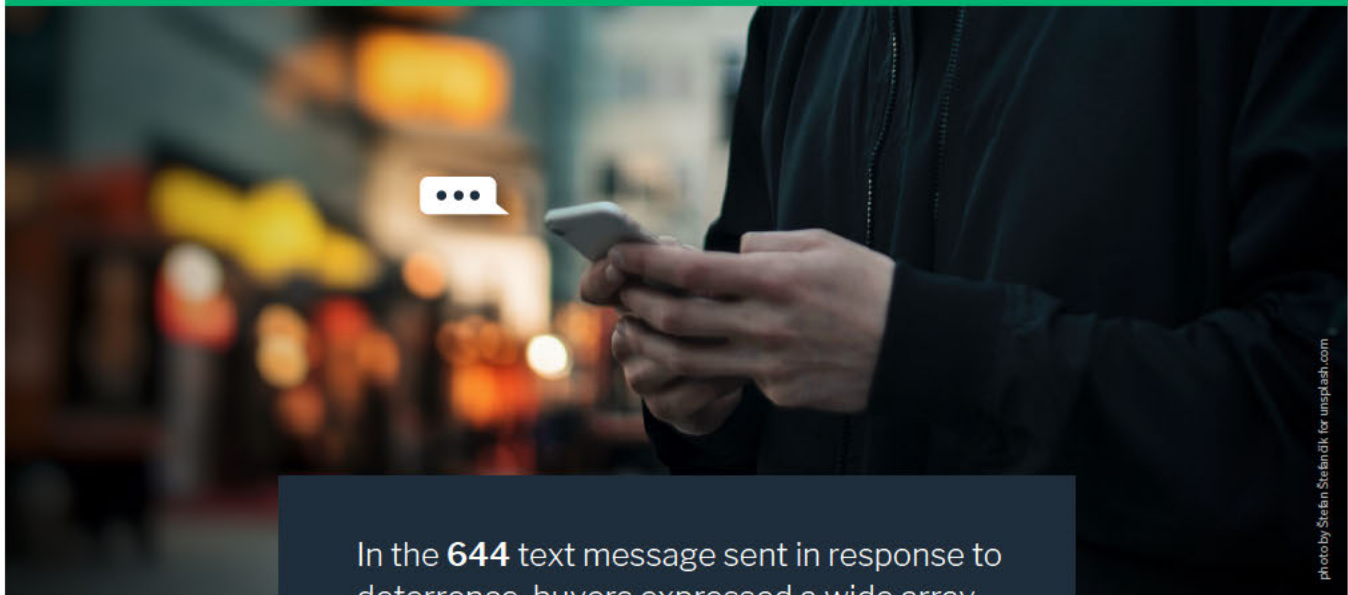
I m sorry Sir that was not my intention it ll never happen again.

appreciate the reminder of potential liability and potential victims

Ok thank you must have wrong number this is a construction comp 12 employees use this number I wil let them know to stop thank you

Sorry going thru a difficult time never done this before but your right is not right

I have no intention to do so and will not do so again. I thank you for the warning

You can stop sending them now. I ve learned my lesson!

Some deflected blame:

I don t solicit. I call with my friends there just to check and see if it works that s all.

Send it to your president

Sorry somebody use my phone officer

I m broke as shit so, nobody will ever believe I spent paper on some hoes.

im not texting or talking to no one im in the wedding whit my mother

Ok stop texting its my bissnes phone I think my costumer play with my phone I have family wife and 4 kids I dont need the problem thanks

Listen assholes I didn t show up or contact anyone my phone was lost in the gym so don t contact my number again and it was returned to me today so do your job & leave me the fck alone or I will take this as a form of harassment & file a complaint go do something more important instead contact my number you Fckg pricks

Some were dismissive:

U shud go after the females

Fuck you i was bored never serious on catching descease or any std so go fuck yourself cuz the cops are the numver customers for prostitution so fuck off

We are animals and eating breathing and fuck is what drives us. Men and women have been trading sex for things since adam and eve. Husband and wife still do it after marriage. Wife: you want sex take out the garbage Husband :ok dear. Legalization of it should happen and regulate it. You have stop drugs in jails or violence. Want makes you think you can stop it in a free Societie.

Do you think I care? Nope! Why not go after those assholes who run Snapchat. Telling our kids it s ok to sell their ass? No. But you ll break my fucking balls!

???????????? I m watching the yankee game with my daughter you assholes

CONCLUSION

The 18th campaign of the National Johns Suppression Initiative will likely remain the largest counter demand operation that the United States for 2019. With **503** arrests and **3,079** buyers deterred, the expansion of enforcement reach through the application of artificial intelligence continues to be profound.

Delivering deterrence to increase the buyer's perception of risk continues to produce quantitative and qualitative results. **91%** of buyers were not observed again after receiving deterrence in this campaign and only **5%** of buyers were observed from previous campaigns. Those buyers in new jurisdictions immediately share their deterrence messages with each other in hobby boards and buyers in jurisdictions that have participated for some time send warnings to each other around the time the previous year's campaign ran.

For those buyers ignoring deterrence, a wealth of intelligence on their demographics and psychographics continues to be collected. This provides law enforcement partners the clearest picture yet of the wealth flowing into their local human trafficking economies.

This campaign also saw two partners - the Cook County Sheri and NYPD - push to find the upper bounds of their local markets. Increasing ad volume by **6x** and **8x** respectively, both partners saw similarly linear increases in the total number of buyers they reached. That data, along with the steady cumulative increase in buyer reach across the past three NJSI campaigns suggests that the ceiling for a local buyer market has yet to be reached. More ads will produce more buyers at a regular, sustained interval, but how many ads are necessary to reach the majority of the demand in a given market remains unknown. We have yet to observe a jurisdiction reach diminishing returns with dramatic increases in advertising.

Finally, major trends predicted in early 2018 for changes in buyer behavior continue to remain confounded. Online marketplaces used by buyers continue to be fragmented across dozens of websites - no single ecosystem has emerged with Backpage's level of marketshare. Buyers continue to rely on mobile phones to set up transactions - a mass migration to smartphone apps has not yet happened. Buyers also appear to continue to rely on surface web marketplaces and eschew anonymous cryptocurrency as a method of payment either for their transactions or for marketplace subscriptions.

While the online ecosystem remains volatile a year and a half after the seizure of Backpage, the National Johns Suppression Initiative continues to deliver new insight into buyer behavior. That insight gives law enforcement partners new visibility into the demand economics that fuels human trafficking both nationwide and in their local communities.