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New Application To Combat 'Sexting'

Police Say Teens Text Explicit Photos

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- Danger is in the hands and on the ears of teenagers.

Take the case of 20-year-old Christopher Gallegos. He is the first in Bernalillo County to be indicted for sending a picture to a 15-year-old of his genitals.

The teenager's mother intercepted the picture message and turned him in.

Peter Ortiz, 23, is waiting for his trial. He was accused of texting a 10-year-old offering money for sex.

"It's a very serious crime. It's a very serious issue," said Albuquerque Police Department Deputy Chief Kevin McCabe.

McCabe said teenagers text explicit photos of themselves all the time each other and to adults.

"Oh yeah it happens all the time at our school," one teenager said.

A conversation with some Albuquerque teens was eye-opening.

Some teenagers said they think 80 percent of students send explicit photos.

"Whenever you create that image and you send it, you are now engaging in the distribution of child pornography," McCabe said.

The bigger problem happens when the wrong person sees the video or photo. It's been known to happen where a school or perhaps a whole community sees a video or photo that was intended for just one.

New software is being marketed to parents, giving them a controversial new tool. It's called My Mobile Watchdog.

For \$10 a month, parents can receive a copy of every text, picture, and video message their child sends and receives.

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A group of teenagers responded to the idea saying, "It's an invasion of privacy."

"I think it's actually more important to go into your kid's private space then let something bad happen to them," said parent Trish Nail.

"As soon as you said that I was like...big brother instantly came to my head," parent Rosa Cisneros.

McCabe said he thinks My Mobile Watchdog is useful to monitor cell phone activity.

"Personally I think having a good relationship with the kids where they will turn the phone over to you and let you read the text messages is a better idea," said parent Rosa Cisneros.

My Mobile Watchdog doesn't claim to be spyware.

According to the company's Web site, an alert is sent to the phone being tracked, informing the user, a copy of the messages will be revealed.

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