**Child Pornography**

**Case Narrative**

Jim and Mary live in a Philadelphia suburb. They have three kids. Their marriage has its ups and downs but is stable. Jim’s job allows him to work from home using his computer and high speed internet setup. Like many people who spend lots of time on line, Jim came across pornography. At first it was a bit of a shock but then he became curious and started spending time on some of the more popular sites. It wasn’t that his sex life with Mary was bad, but he found it kind of exciting getting stimulated by the porn and eventually started to masturbate using the online images. The links were always easy to click and one site led to another. One day as he was clicking on links looking for something new video popped up with a girl that he guessed must be just 10 or 11. Jim was not a pedophile and did not find the image of someone that young stimulating. But he’d never seen anything like that before and before he really thought about it, Jim clicked the play button and was viewing this girl having sex with an older man. He closed the window after a few seconds and went on to do some work. About a week later, the FBI came to Jim’s home and confiscated his computer and arrested Jim on possession of child pornography. Mary was shocked. She did not know that Jim was viewing any pornography, let alone child pornography.

**Questions**

1. “Porn” is the most queried word on search engines. In 1996 Congress passed the Communications Decency Act in an attempt to regulate the use of the internet in distributing pornography. The Supreme Court struck down this Act in 1997. Since then the online pornography business has had a growth rate of 40%. About 3K per second changes hands to acquire access to internet porn. Discuss in general terms what you think the social and psychological impact is of this massive easy to access material showing explicit sex of every sort.
2. Now on to Jim. Do you think Jim committed a crime?
3. Did the site “hosting” the video commit a crime?
4. One argument against child pornography is that becomes an incentive for exploiting children. There was a real child being harmed in the video Jim saw. What if the video turned out to be an excellent, truly believable animation? Would that make a difference?
5. WHERE are the images we come across on the internet? Let’s say Jim clicked on a site whose server is in Denmark. Who POSESSES the child porn? Has Jim implicitly requested that a child porn video be sent to his home? The internet seems erase normal concepts of ‘location.’
6. Think now of true pedophiles who exploit children sexually and use the internet to buy and sell their pics and videos as well as find children to exploit. How do we find and stop them from doing this? Does this affect your thinking about “encryption,” for example? The NSA and FBI want a “back door” to all encryption software so they can find, among other criminals, child pornographers. Should we allow truly encrypted communication on the internet; communication that cannot be understood except by the two people or group with the passkey?