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B.C. girl, 14, advertised sex on Craigslist, say police

Postmedia News November 18, 2010

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As Canada pushes online classified giant Craigslist to pull its erotic sex services section, police in B.C. are investigating the troubling case of a 14-year-old girl

accused of recruiting other young girls into the sex trade and advertising on the popular website.

CHILLIWACK, B.C. — As Canada pushes online classified giant Craigslist to pull its erotic sex services section, police in B.C. are investigating the troubling case of a 14-year-old girl accused of recruiting other young girls into the sex trade and advertising on the popular website.

Chilliwack RCMP said the girl, who can't be named because of her age, claimed in her online ad that she was 18 years old.

Police have since identified two girls who were recruited into the sex trade, and say there may be more victims. The 14-year-old has been charged with procuring persons under the age of 18 for prostitution.

Craigslist has co-operated in the investigation, said police. The girl's ad on the site has since been removed.

Police in Chilliwack are now urging parents to speak to their children about the dangers of the sex trade.

"Any time a parent can be the first person to talk to their kids about something . . . that empowers not only the parents but the kids to have a dialogue," said Dunlop. "The worst thing that could happen is that a potential recruiter is the first person who talks to your kid about this type of thing."

Federal Justice Minister Rob Nicholson has written to Craigslist CEO Jim Buckmaster, appealing to the free online advertiser to remove classifieds for erotic sex services. The section has already been axed in the U.S. following accusations that the ads promoted prostitution and human trafficking.

British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario have also lobbied Buckmaster to drop the sex ads in Canada.

Nicholson said he targeted Craigslist because the site, unlike newspapers and other advertisers, does not appear to take any precautions to ensure it is not getting into the business of child exploitation.

"It seems to me with Craigslist, there's no regulation at all as to what goes on," said Nicholson earlier this month. "Many of these ads can facilitate human trafficking, there is no policing, no editing of them, it's a considerable problem and I think it would be appropriate for Craigslist to remove them completely."

Meanwhile, Chilliwack resident David Thomas Hilpert, 51, is accused of procuring sex from the 14-year-old girl and has been charged with two counts of sexual assault. He has been released on bail.

With files from the Chilliwack Times

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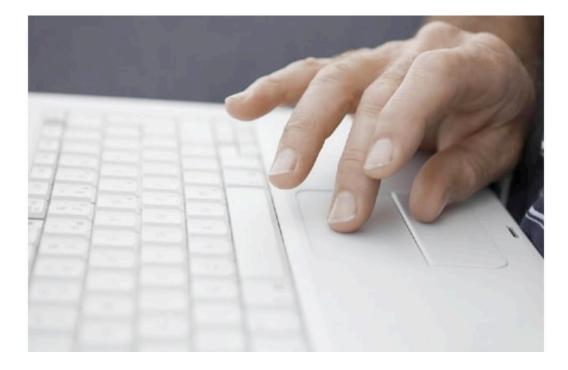
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