# **Internet Censorship Offending:**

A preliminary analysis of the social and behavioural patterns of offenders.

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This	thesis	is	submitte	ed to	Bond	University	in	fulfilment	of	the	requirem	ent	is	for
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This thesis represents my own work and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

Signature:	(Angela Carr)	Date:	

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### **Summary**

During the past decade, significant public concern has focused on the use of the Internet to access child pornography and other legally objectionable material. Media reference to individuals involved in such activity typically portrays them as socially isolated 'paedophiles', 'perverts' and 'sexual predators' whose offence behaviour is encouraged by on-line associations with others who share their interest in this material. Although academic literature does not tend to adhere to the sensationalism of these views, it too suggests that on-line networks may be important in understanding the behaviour of individuals who seek to gratify an interest in legally objectionable material.

A major aim of this thesis was to examine the relationship between involvement in Internet based social activity and involvement in accessing legally objectionable material via the Internet. As such, data collected during the investigation of a sample of 145 individuals identified as using the Internet to access legally objectionable material was subjected to a series of explorative analyses. These analyses revealed significant associations between individuals' use of Internet applications facilitating directed, two way communication (eg. Email and ICQ) during the process of accessing legally objectionable material and indicators of increased personal investment in offence related activities.

A second goal of this thesis was to identify variables associated with offenders' decisions to engage in on-line social interaction during the process of accessing legally objectionable material. In turn, criminological and communications theory and research

pertaining to the interpersonal behaviours that individuals engage in during criminal actions, and the characteristics of individuals who make use of socially facilitative Internet applications, was reviewed. Based on the findings of this review, it was hypothesised that offenders who engage in regular interaction with others outside of the Internet environment would be more likely than those who did not to seek out opportunities for interaction in the Internet environment. In line with this hypothesis, further systematic and detailed analysis of the data revealed an association between opportunities for interpersonal interaction in an offender's home or work environment and the likelihood that offenders would make use of Internet applications facilitating online social interaction.

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