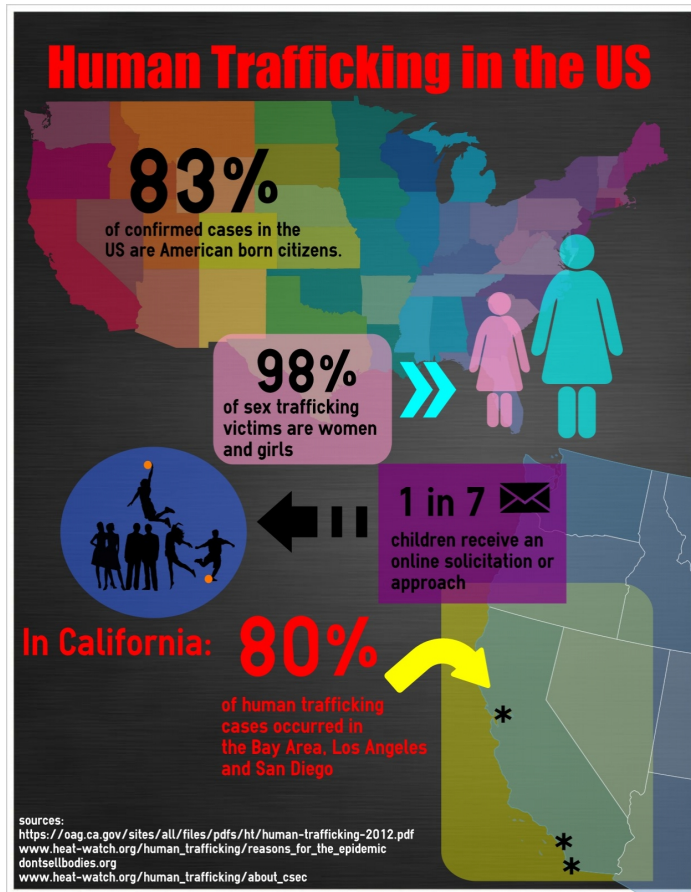


Human trafficking, cell phones and social medias

Within a month and half the [FBI](#) and the [United States Department of Justice](#) released news of two California men in relation to crimes of prostitution and “child exploitation,” in both cases technology was a key component in either establishing a connection with the victim or promoting the services. The [2000 Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act](#) is intended to combat human trafficking “especially into the sex trade.” According to the act, “trafficking in persons is a modern form of slavery.” As a result of the act organizations and coalitions such as [The South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking](#), [HEAT Watch](#), [Don’t Sell Bodies](#), [BAWAR](#) and [Community Solutions](#) were created or began offering services to human trafficking victims. According to Perla Flores, who oversees [Solutions to Violence Department](#) through [Community Solutions](#) in the County of Santa Clara, “anybody, who under the age of 18 is prostituted, they are by definition of the Trafficking Victim Protection Act, a victim of human trafficking.”

Kristina Molina, the Latina Outreach Coordinator of Bay Area Women Against Rape ([BAWAR](#)) says, “America is under the impression that trafficking a child only happens if the child comes from Mexico or China but the reality is that the majority of trafficked children are American children.” In fact, according to [Don’t Sell Bodies](#), 83% of confirmed cases in the United States “are American born citizens.”



Statistics from varying reports and anti human trafficking organizations. Infographic created using easel.ly by Natalie Rodriguez.

In April 2013, the FBI released the news that a man from California had pled “guilty to transporting an individual to engage in prostitution.” According to the press release, Marcus Edward Michael Todd Moore of Santa Rosa, Calif., admitted to buying a ticket for a 17-year-old girl to travel from the state of New Mexico “to Oakland for the purpose of engaging in prostitution.” Moore met the girl through a social network site. The 17-year-old who Moore was attempting to transport was working with the FBI. The Las Cruces office of the FBI in New Mexico investigated the case.

Molina says “[children are] being taken from state to state and being exploited. So, a lot of children are being brought into Oakland so they can be sexually

exploited.” According to [HEAT Watch](#), one in seven children receive an online sexual solicitation or approach. Flores states, “social media are used to recruit and to befriend potential victims, and now they’re also used to advertise the victims that are recruited.”

On Thursday, March 28th, the [United States Department of Justice](#) released the news that 20-year-old, Jamir Imari Tatum of Oakland, Calif., was “sentenced for child exploitation crimes.” According to the [detention order](#) from February 2012, there was probable cause to believe that Tatum had “committed an offense under 18 U.S.C § 1591” and “2251”, which are the crimes of [sex trafficking of children](#) and [sexual exploitation of children](#).

Tatum used his phone to promote the girl’s services and distribute “sexually explicit pictures.” In the [preliminary order of forfeiture](#) that was filed November 21, 2012, the court listed a cell phone and a micro SD card that were confiscated from Tatum in February 2012 as property that was “used or intended to be used to commit or to promote” the [sexual exploitation of children](#) and “[certain activities relating to material involving the sexual exploitation of minors](#).” The press release states that Tatum was sentenced to seven years in prison for the crimes of exploitation of a 14-year-old Sacramento girl. The [judgment](#) filed April 17, 2013 found Tatum guilty of three counts of distribution of child pornography.

Flores believes, "Social media has really opened up so many new avenues for kids to connect [with] people that they would never have met before, so their world has become a lot larger, and they are put out there with predators essentially that know how to entice youth."