



Fewer kids are exposed to unwanted sexual content online

By Shari Roan, Los Angeles Times / For the Booster Shots blog

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Kids are not being exposed as much to unwanted sexual solicitations or porn on the Internet these days, according to a study released Thursday. While the problem still occurs, it seems that greater public awareness and social pressures have improved youth Internet safety in recent years.

The **study**, published online in the Journal of **Adolescent Health**, was based on nationwide surveys of youths ages 10 to 17 conducted in 2000, 2005 and 2010. Researchers found that the proportion of kids receiving unwanted sexual requests (from either adults, strangers or peers) declined from 13% in 2005 to 9% in 2010 and have fallen by half since 2000.

Kids who experienced unwanted exposure to pornography online fell from 34% in 2005 to 23% last year.

However, while 9% of kids said they were harassed online in 2005, that number rose to 11% last year.

"The online environment may be improving," the lead author of the study, Lisa Jones of the **University of New Hampshire**, said in a news release.

Arrests of online predators, education and public awareness may have cleaned up the online world for kids to some extent, the authors said. Newer computer technology that screens content has also helped. But more effort may be needed to stop harassment of youth online, they wrote, particularly for girls.