



### **D71 The Issue of Computer Generated Images in Child Pornography Cases**

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After attending this presentation, participants will have an understanding of the legal basis for the need to demonstrate that children depicted in pornographic images are real victims and not computer-generated, or virtual, children. Also, participants will be made aware of a recent ruling which expressed the opinion that an expert is not always necessary to demonstrate the reality of victims. Certain often misused terms will be discussed relevant to this issue. The participant will be given an overview of several techniques employed by CG artists to render a virtual person, including a discussion of the difficulties and the shortcomings of these techniques. Lastly, methods of investigation will be discussed. These include the need for identifying any known victims and the evaluation of the image properties. Examples of properties that can be evaluated are photographic properties, such as lighting and shadows, and human properties, such as skin texture and details of the hair. Students will also learn the advantage of having videos or image series, multiple images depicting the same objects, people, or settings, as evidence when the reality of the images and scenes is questioned.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by educating the audience as to the relevant issues surrounding the prosecution of child pornography in the post-Ashcroft v. Free Speech era. The issue of showing that the individuals depicted represent real children, as opposed to computer-generated children, potentially impacts every case involving child pornography in the United States. While it is not a point of contention in every case, investigators and prosecutors need to understand the state-of-the-art and be prepared with general knowledge and case citations if the issue is challenged. A correct understanding of the issues leads to better case preparation.

This lecture will begin with a description of the impact of the 2002 ruling of Ashcroft v. Free Speech on child pornography cases in the United States. The lecture will address the question, "How easy is it to create a virtual child?" The state-of-the-art in CG (computer-generated or computer graphics) technology will be discussed, as well as the feasibility of rendering a virtual child. With the state of the current technology in mind, characteristics will be discussed that would allow one to distinguish between the real and the virtual.

**Virtual, Pornography, Computer Generated**