

[IZA News](#)[About IZA](#)[Organization Chart](#)[People](#)[Research](#)[Labor Policy](#)[Publications](#)[Discussion Papers](#)[Policy Papers](#)[Standpunkte](#)[Books](#)[Research Reports](#)[IZA Compact](#)[IZA in the Press](#)[Publication Record](#)[Journals](#)[Events](#)[IZA Prize / YLE Award](#)[Teaching](#)[Links / Resources](#)[Press](#)

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Broadband Internet: An Information Superhighway to Sex Crime?

by Manudeep Bhuller, Tarjei Havnes, Edwin Leuven, Magne Mogstad
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Abstract:

Does internet use trigger sex crime? We use unique Norwegian data on crime and internet adoption to shed light on this question. A public program with limited funding rolled out broadband access points in 2000-2008, and provides plausibly exogenous variation in internet use. Our instrumental variables and fixed effect estimates show that internet use is associated with a substantial increase in reported incidences of rape and other sex crimes. We present a theoretical framework that highlights three mechanisms for how internet use may affect reported sex crime, namely a reporting effect, a matching effect on potential offenders and victims, and a direct effect on crime propensity. Our results indicate that the direct effect is non-negligible and positive, plausibly as a result of increased consumption of pornography.

Text: See [Discussion Paper No. 5675](#)



[Back](#)