Texas Crime Victimization Survey Report

2004

Prepared for the Texas State Legislature by:

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Texas Crime Victims' Institute is
to examine the impact of crime on victims of all ages
to promote a better understanding of victimization, improve
victim services, assist victims of crime by giving
them a voice, and assist in victim-related policy making.

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Executive Summary

The Texas Crime Victimization Survey Report represents the first effort of the Crime Victims' Institute to examine victimization experiences within the state of Texas. This Report is intended to inform policy makers about property crime, person or violent crime, parental knowledge of children's Internet activity and Internet victimization, as well as Texas residents' perceptions of terrorism.

In General: (627 respondents)

- 79% of respondents believed crime in their neighborhood had stayed the same or decreased in the last 24 months.
- 37% of respondents believed that crime in the state of Texas had stayed the same or decreased in the last 24 months.
- Most crime victims were property crime victims.
- 92% of respondents felt safe walking alone in their neighborhood during the day.
- 74% of respondents felt safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night.
- 40% of respondents lived in a neighborhood with a Neighborhood Watch program.
- 48% of Texas residents surveyed owned a firearm.
- 10% of respondents carried a concealed firearm in the last 24 months.

Property Crime Victims: (125 victims in the last 24 mo.)

- Most (70%) were victimized at their current residence.
- Most victims (73%) reported the crime to the police.
- Most (82%) did not recover stolen property.
- 37% of victims invested in a home defense measure as a result of the crime.

Violent/Person Crime Victims: (33 victims in the last 24 mo.)

- Most (45%) were victimized at or near their own home.
- Most victims (67%) were either threatened or attacked during a face-to-face verbal confrontation, with physical force such as by grabbing, punching, or choking.
- Most victims (73%) reported the crime to the police.
- Most victims did not know about the Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights (61%), or about Texas Crime Victims' Compensation (76%).

Parental Knowledge of Children's Internet Activity: (113 respondents)

- Most respondents (87%) with young children had a computer in their home with Internet access.
- Most parents (91%) had rules about the type of web site that was "off limits" for their child.
- Most parents (92%) had looked at the computer screen to monitor their child's Internet activity; however, 40% reported that their child used the Internet when a parent was not at home in the last 24 months.
- 27% of parents reported that their child had been exposed through the Internet to pictures of naked people or of people having sex, while 31% reported that their child received an e-mail or Instant Message with advertisements for or links to X-rated web sites in the last 24 months.

Perceptions of Terrorism: (627 respondents)

- Most Texans (63%) believe that there will be more terrorist attacks in the future.
- Most Texans (51%) believe that a terrorist attack is likely to occur at a major public event, like a concert or sporting event.
- Most Texans (47%) think their community is well prepared to deal with the threat of terrorists armed with biological weapons.
- Overall, compared to the rest of the nation, Texas residents appeared to be less fearful about the general likelihood of a terrorist attack.

Introduction

The United States Census Bureau estimated in July 2003 the population to be 291,000,000 residents.[1] The United States, with its large and diverse population, is also a wealthy nation compared to others in the international community. The median household net worth increased from $49,000 in 1998 to $55,000 in 2000.[2] Household assets in the form of stocks, individual retirement accounts, and rental property also experienced significant growth between 1998 and 2000.

Advances in personal wealth and asset formation are ironically associated with crime. In 2000, the Federal Bureau of Investigation noted that 11,600,000 violent and property crimes were reported to the police. This same figure nudged upward towards 11.9 million in 2002.[3] Crimes reported to the police are but one way to measure the amount of crime in American society. Data from the National Crime Victimization Survey indicate, however, that almost 26 million criminal victimizations occurred in 2000, 24.2 million in 2001, and 23 million in 2002.[4] Criminal victimizations now stand at their lowest national level since the data were first collected in 1973.

In 2003, Texas, the Lone Star State, ranked as the second most populous state with nearly 22,000,000 residents. This estimate suggests that nearly one in 10 Americans reside within the state of Texas. In 2000, the median household income was nearly $45,800. As for crime, in 2000, there were roughly one million index offenses reported to the police and 1.1 million offenses reported in 2002. In general, Texas represents about 10 percent of the American population, and roughly 10 percent of all crimes reported to the police occur in Texas. Although the National Crime Victimization Survey lacks state-level estimates, we suggest the "ten percent rule" applies here as well. In short, 10 percent of all criminal victimizations occur in Texas.

Texas Crime Victimization Survey – 2003

In November and December 2003, the first Crime Victimization Survey was administered to 712 Texans. The Crime Victims' Institute (CVI) sponsored a survey of male and female Texas residents, aged 18 and over, in conjunction with Texas A&M University on the topic of crime victimization and subsequent experiences of victims. The objectives were:

- To assess the nature of Property and Person (Violent) Crime in Texas;
- To assess victims' satisfaction with the criminal justice system following a victimization incident;
- To assess Texas residents' perceptions of safety within their neighborhood and overall community; and
- To examine Texas residents' knowledge regarding Internet victimization and perceptions of terrorism.

The Crime Victims' Institute compiled a survey based on the National Crime Victimization Survey (U.S. Department of Justice) for Texas residents. Participants were chosen using random digit dialing technology and were contacted by trained interviewers at the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University. PPRI interviewers utilized the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system to conduct the poll. Each voluntary survey lasted approximately 20 minutes, and was conducted between 5:00 and 8:00 pm.

Interviews were conducted on the following dates:
- October 4-6, 2003, Pre-testing (English and Spanish)
- October 8, 2003, Interviewing began
- January 6, 2004, Interviewing concluded

The total number of completed interviews was 712. Of this total, 152 reportedly were the victims of a Property or Person Crime within the 24 month period prior to the interview.

The Texas Crime Victimization Survey (TCVS) was designed and implemented to enhance our knowledge of criminal victimization in Texas, as well as to provide information about type and level of criminal justice or other victim services. In short, data from the TCVS (and other complementary data bases) will assist our understanding of the consequences of crime for the lives of victims.

The CVI will sponsor and financially support this annual research activity. Intellectual support and guidance for the TCVS will come from two primary sources: current research in the discipline of victimology and insights from actual crime victims. A critical component of TCVS involves re-contacting Texans (with their approval) who indicated they have been a crime victim in the last two years. This report provides a review of the relevant literature on victimization and presents findings and analyses drawn from 2003 Texas Crime Victimization Survey (TCVS) data. It is our hope that these data and findings will inform our state and policy makers to better understand the extent and nature of victimization in Texas.

General Results from the Victimization Literature

In Texas, like other states, most of our knowledge about crime comes from police reports compiled by law enforcement agencies, and from media stories concerning these reports. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) collect and analyze these data under the auspices of the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). These reported crime figures are very helpful in providing some sense of the extent of crime in our society and the impact law enforcement activity has in response to it. Table 1 reports the number of crimes reported to the police in the United States between 1983 and 2002.

Table 1. Crimes Reported to the Police, United States, 1983-2002

Year	Crimes Reported to the Police	Rate per 100,000 Inhabitants
1983	12,108,630	5,179.2
1988	14,251,449	5,694.5
1993	14,144,794	5,487.1
1995	13,862,727	5,274.9
1998	12,485,714	4,620.1
2000	11,605,751	4,124.8
2002	11,877,218	4,118.8

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (www.fbi.gov)

In general, since 1983, the number of reported crimes has fallen. Most important, the rate of crime (which controls for population) has actually declined since 1983. It must be remembered that these data are compiled from or are based on crimes reported to law enforcement agencies.

For many crime victims, the event itself is an invasion of their mind and body. The criminal act is oftentimes a source of repugnance, anger, emotional withdrawal, rage, and hostility. The following statements from Texas crime victims illustrate the range of emotions and feelings generated by criminal victimization:

- I feel depressed because I keep thinking that one day he will be out and come and hurt me.
- My privacy has been violated, and I live constantly looking over my shoulder…I'm always wondering if I'll be a victim again…when a shotgun is pointed at you, it changes your life forever.
- My family will never be the same. I feel hate and want to be alone. I get flashbacks. I take anger out on people.
- I feel like people are watching me, and I watch other people I don't know.
- I have not been as emotionally available to my family as I used to. I feel this crime has destroyed my faith in people.
- Sometimes I'm happy and something in me triggers a memory, and my whole day is ruined. It's hard to show affection to those close to me. I feel uncomfortable in crowded places. Whenever I see or smell something familiar, I cry or scream. Mom and I don't talk because she blames past events on my personality and attire that day…I find it hard to trust anyone.

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- Personally, I don't trust anyone that comes around me. I have dreams of being robbed and pushing the panic button that fails to work, then I am shot.

These emotions affect a victim's willingness and interest in reporting the crime to law enforcement. Feelings often remain intense in the hours, days, months, years, and even decades after the criminal act. Researchers have shown since the 1960s that many victims do not report crime to the police for a variety of reasons, which has been referred to as the "dark figure" of crime.[5]

As a means of addressing low levels of crime reporting, researchers and policy makers have turned to the use of victimization surveys. The Bureau of Justice Statistics first administered the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) in 1973.[6] The NCVS was implemented to create a more complete picture of criminal victimization in America, along with the need to collect better information about victims and their experiences. Over the last three decades, the NCVS has been redesigned, new questions have been added, and in 2002 (the most recent administration of the NCVS), 42,000 households across the nation were contacted with 76,000 persons ultimately interviewed. Overall, these respondents reported roughly 23 million criminal victimizations.

What are the most fundamental patterns of criminal victimization?[7] Data from the 2002 NCVS illustrate a steady decline in the rate of property and violent crime victimization rates (see Figures 1 and 2).
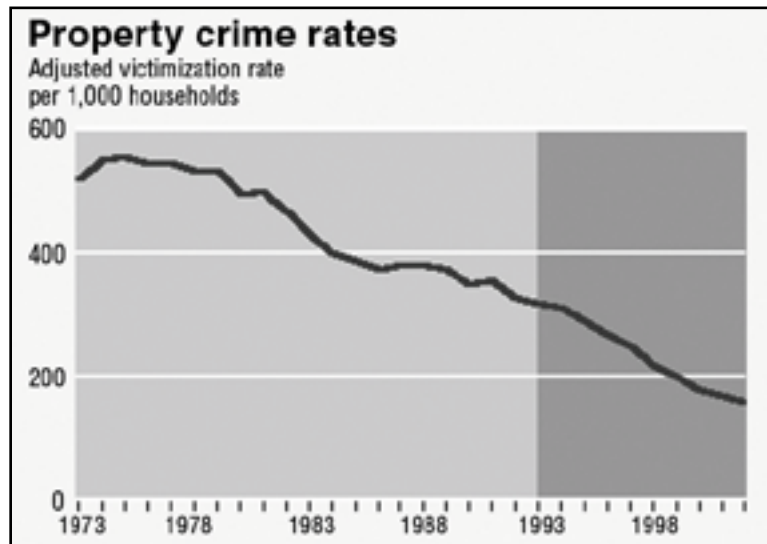
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Figure 1
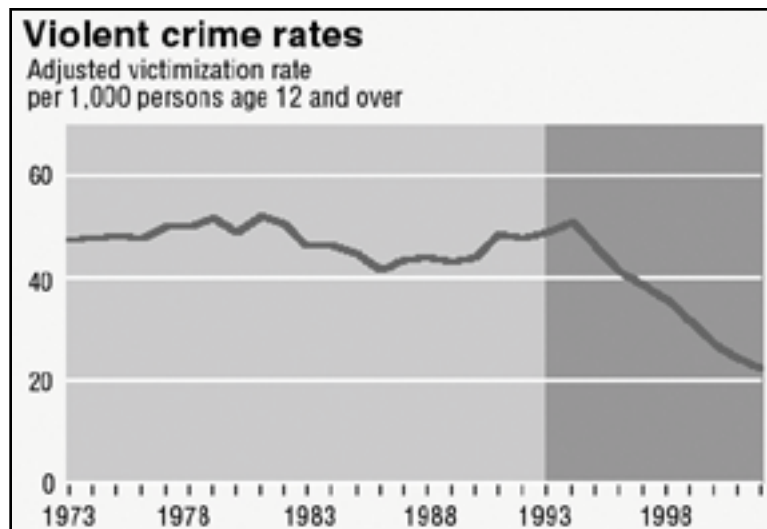
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Figure 2

The good news is that the level of serious crime victimization has been on the decline. In general, males are more likely to report being the victims of personal crimes. Young people (age 16-19) report the highest rates of victimization for person crimes. Further, African-Americans report or have the highest victimization rates for both property and person crimes. Finally, NCVS respondents reported 5.3 million crimes of violence, and roughly one-half involved strangers and the other half non-strangers. Yet, the NCVS data also points out that only 42 percent of victimizations are reported to the police (see Figure 3).

Reported to Police 42%

Unreported 58%

Source: BJS—Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2003

Figure 3

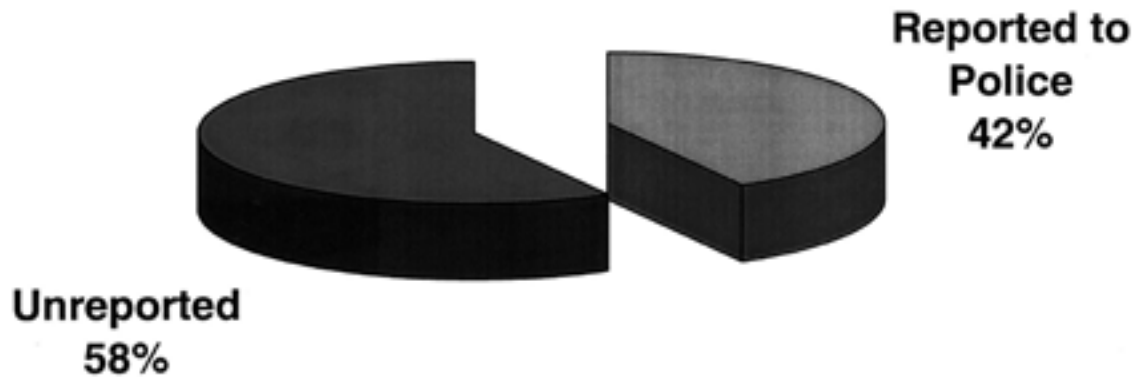Forty percent of property crimes and about one-half of all person crimes (48.4%) are reported to the police. Females are more likely to report a crime than males, and crimes perpetrated by strangers, rather than known offenders, are also more likely to be reported. The greater the value of the loss, the more likely a crime is to be reported. Age also increases reporting behavior as persons 65 and over (compared to younger age groups) are the most likely to report a criminal victimization. In general, African-Americans and Hispanics (compared to whites) are more likely to report crimes to the police.

The dynamics of criminal victimization (and patterns of reporting) are greatly affected by the victim's age, race and ethnicity, gender, and geographic residence. At the same time, there are a number of high-risk lifestyle activities that place some people at higher risk for victimization. For example, prostitutes and skid row alcoholics are at high risk for criminal victimization.[8] Just as crime in American society is not randomly distributed, neither is victimization. Despite a burgeoning body of research on victimization, many questions are left unanswered and issues left unresolved. The broad long-term goal of the Texas Crime Victimization Survey is to improve our understanding of the nature, process, and extent of criminal victimization in Texas.

Survey Findings and Analysis

Background Characteristics of Survey Respondents

As indicated in Table 2, the mean or average age of the survey respondents was 48 years, they had resided in Texas an average of 29 years, and most (56%) were females. In terms of race and ethnic background, over two-thirds (68%) were Caucasians, 18 percent were Hispanic, and nine percent were African-Americans.

Table 2. Background Characteristics of Texas Sample (n=627)

Variable	
Mean age	48
Mean number of years respondents have resided in Texas	29
	Percent
Gender	
Female	56%
Male	44
Race/Ethnicity	
Caucasian	68
Hispanic	18
African-American	9
Other	4
Marital Status	
Married/Attached	67
Single/Unattached	33
Had children <18 years old living at home	45
Education	
High school graduate or less	34
Some college	32
College graduate/Graduate school	36
Currently employed	62
Household income between $30,000 and $99,000	45

Slightly more than two-thirds (67%) reported that they were married or attached at the time of the telephone interview. Nearly half (45%) indicated that they had children under the age of 18 living in their household. Interestingly, 68 percent of the respondents claimed that they had "some college," graduated from college, or had completed graduate work. Almost two-thirds (62%) were employed at the time of the telephone poll, and nearly one-half (45%) reported an annual household income between $30,000 and $99,000.

Table 3 shows data on household firearm ownership and other related firearm issues.

Table 3. Firearm Ownership Patterns (n=627)

Variable	Percent
Firearm owners	48%
Firearm owners who keep a loaded firearm in their house	31
Respondents who possess a concealed firearm permit	7
Those who agreed that if more people in their community owned guns, it would make them feel safer	18
Respondents who think people in their community should not be allowed to bring their guns into Hospitals	98
Respondents who think people in their community should not be allowed to bring their guns into Bars	96
Respondents who think people in their community should not be allowed to bring their guns into Sports stadiums	93
Respondents who think people in their community should not be allowed to bring their guns to a College campus	91
Respondents who think people in their community should not be allowed to bring their guns into Government buildings	90
Respondents who think people in their community should not be allowed to bring their guns into Restaurants	80
In the past 24 months, have you used, displayed, or brought out a gun in self-defense to protect yourself from a person or people? (% NO)	98
Have you carried a concealed firearm on your person in the past 24 months? (% NO)	90

Approximately one-half (48%) of the respondents reported that they owned a firearm. Within the firearm owner group, 31 percent noted that the firearm in their household was loaded. Only seven percent of those interviewed reported that they had a concealed firearm permit. Eighty-two percent stated that if more people in their community were to own guns they would not feel more safe. The interview guide also asked respondents a series of questions about guns in public places and personal usage patterns. Ninety-eight percent did not think people in their community should be allowed to bring guns into hospitals. The majority of respondents did not think that people in their community should be allowed to bring guns into bars (96%), sport stadiums (93%), college campuses (91%), government buildings (90%), or restaurants (80%). Only two percent reported actually having used a firearm as a means of self protection or self-defense. Finally, ten percent stated that they carried a concealed firearm on their person within the last 24 months.

Crime and victimization, as mentioned previously, are, for the most part, not randomly distributed in our society. The vast majority of crime occurs in metropolitan areas and is typically committed by young males. Coincidentally, the highest rates of victimization for person crimes are among young (19 or under) males.[9] Indeed, researchers have sought for over five decades to understand the relationship between the offender and the victim.[10] One critical finding from this research has been that the risk for victimization is higher for some individuals than for others. Specifically, individuals who have a higher risk for victimization include young people, males, single persons, those who live alone, those who consume alcohol or drugs, and those who frequently go out at night.[11]

In examining the context, situation, or "chemistry of crime," particular types of crimes occur in specific types of settings; for example, most residential burglaries occur in the daytime when residents

are not at home. There are "lifestyle" factors on the part of the victim that increase the chance or risk for criminal victimization. This stands to reason as lifestyle influences a wide variety of behaviors and health conditions (e.g., overall mortality,[12] coronary heart disease,[13] and obesity[14]) in human beings.[15] We are not suggesting that victims "asked for it" but rather such lifestyle factors as living in an area with no street lights, being away from home for extended periods during the week and on weekends, and living alone enhance the risk for victimization. In short, crime is an everyday feature of life that typically involves the chemistry of a motivated offender and absent or inattentive guardians.[16] Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics associated with the subjects' responses to various lifestyle questions. The data show that slightly more than two-thirds (69%) of the respondents left their home one to two times per day for work, school or leisure activities. Most (72%), however, indicated that someone was usually home in the daytime during the week. Few residences were totally unoccupied during the week. The data show that almost two-thirds (65%) of the respondents left their homes several times on weekends to shop or pursue other activities. Most (91%), however, indicated that someone was home during the day on weekends. In short, even though most of the respondents left their home during the week or on weekends, someone else remained; thus the residence was not left unattended.

Table 4. Lifestyle Factors (n=627)

Variable	Percent	Mean or Average
Someone is usually home during the day on weekdays at their residence	72%	
Someone is usually home during the day on weekends at their residence	91	
Leave home 1-2 times per day on weekdays to go to classes, job, shopping, or for recreation	69	
Leave home 1-2 times per day on weekends to go to classes, job, shopping, or for recreation	65	
Average number of times per month respondent goes for a walk/drive		11
Average number of times per month respondent engages in shopping		7
Average number of times per month respondent goes out to eat		7
Average number of times per month respondent engages in sports activities		3
Average number of times per month respondent goes to a bar/club		1
Average number of times per month respondent goes to a movie		1

The remaining items in Table 4 represent the average number of times per month the respondent took a walk or drive, shopped, dined out, engaged in sports activities, and went to a bar or movie. These activities give the reader a basis for comparing their own activities and gaining insight into the respondents' lifestyles. Personal lifestyle factors are important predictors of victimization as are community-level factors. Table 5 presents data on the respondents' view or perception of their neighborhood.

Table 5. Community-Level Attitudes (n=627)

Variable	Percent	Mean or Average*
How well do you know your neighbors?		6.7
Respondents who believe most people in neighborhood own their home	83%	
Respondents who believe their neighborhood is a high crime area	7	
Respondents who feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood during the daytime	92	
Respondents who feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night	74	
Respondents who live in neighborhood with a Neighborhood Watch program	40	
Respondents who believe crime in their neighborhood has stayed the same or decreased in the last 24 months	79	
Respondents who believe that crime in Texas has stayed the same or decreased in the last 24 months	37	
Respondents who know someone in their neighborhood who was a property crime victim in the last 24 months	26	
Respondents who know someone in their neighborhood who was a person crime victim in the last 24 months	8	

*Mean score based on 0=Not at all to 10=Very well

A majority of respondents (83%) believed that most people in their neighborhood owned their home, and they knew their neighbors "fairly well" (6.7 on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10=very well). Ninety-two percent felt safe walking alone in the daytime. This figure dropped to 74 percent when asked about walking alone at night. Less than half (40%) reported that their neighborhood had a Neighborhood Watch program. Nearly 80 percent (79%) believed that crime in their neighborhood had stayed the same or even decreased over the past two years. However, 37 percent believed that crime in Texas in the last 24 months had stayed the same or decreased. Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) of the respondents knew someone in their neighborhood who was a property crime victim, and 8 percent knew a victim of a person crime in their neighborhood.

Victimization Experiences of Survey Respondents

Read any newspaper or watch any nightly news program and you will see that crime occupies a central place in our everyday lives. Crime is an unpleasant feature of everyday life but it is news. Ordinary citizens want to know what happened and to whom. We want to know who committed the act, how it happened, and who was the victim. The desire to know the victim's identity is nothing new.[17] Take, for example, the following item from the Galveston Daily News in 1900:

Victim of an Assassin

Cuero, TX—June 29—Sergeant Alexander Blair's remains arrived here yesterday and were interred in Hillside Cemetery. Sergeant Blair met his death at the hands of an assassin in Manila, P.I. on the 28th of April last.

Three fascinating pieces of information can be gleaned from the article. First, crime was fairly well covered by the news media a century ago. Second, the news item contained interesting facts about the crime. Third, and most important, the word "victim" appeared prominently in the by-line. In other words, crime and victimization were everyday events over a century ago, and the same situation, unfortunately, remains true today.

In October–December 2003, over 700 Texas residents were polled about their perceptions of crime and their experiences with victimization. Although our initial calls netted 67 victims, subsequent calls by PPRI staff netted an additional 85 victims,[18] for a total of 152 crime victims.

Table 6 reports basic background data on the 152 respondents who indicated that they had been the victim of a crime within the last two years.

Table 6. Background Characteristics of Texas Victims (n=152)*

Variable	
Mean age	39
Mean number of years victims have resided in Texas	27
Percent Property Crime Victims (n=125)	82%
Person Crime Victims (n=33)	22
Gender	
Female	57%
Male	43
Race/Ethnicity	
Caucasian	70
Hispanic	16
African-American	9
Other	5
Marital Status	
Single/Unattached	54
Married/Attached	46
Have children <18 years old living at home	54
Education	
High school graduate or less	28
Some college	36
College graduate/Graduate school	36
Currently employed	74
Household income between $30,000 and $99,000	54

*Six respondents were victims of both property and person crime

The victims averaged 39 years of age and had resided in Texas an average of 27 years, and the majority (57%) were female. The vast majority (70%) were Caucasian, 16 percent Hispanic, and 9 percent African-American. Of the 152 victims, 125 were property crime victims, 33 were person crime victims, and six were victims of both types of crime. In terms of marital status, 54 percent were "unattached" at the time of the interview. Fifty-four percent also stated that they had children (<18 years old) living at home, and nearly three-quarters (72%) had attended or graduated from college. Most (74%) were currently employed, and over one-half (54%) reported an annual household income between $30,000 and $99,000.

Property Crimes

Data from the 2002 National Crime Victimization Survey strongly show that the bulk of crime committed in the United States consists of property crimes. As mentioned previously, out of slightly more than 23 million victimizations reported in 2002, 76 percent were property crimes and 24 percent were person crimes.[19] Results reported in Table 7 present information on the 125 Texas property crime victims. Overall, 81 percent of the victims were property crime victims, a finding comparable to the NCVS.

Table 7: Characteristics of Property Victims (n=125)

Variable (during the last 24 months)	Percent
Types of Property Crime:	
Someone broke into, attempted to break into, or otherwise gained illegal access to any building on your property	37%
Someone stole or attempted to steal something left inside your vehicle (packages, groceries, camera, cassette tapes, or compact discs)	36
Someone stole or attempted to steal something left outside your home, such as lawn furniture, bicycles, toys, or garden tools	33
Someone stole or attempted to steal something from inside your home, garage or other buildings such as a TV, stereo, or tools	32
Someone stole or attempted to steal parts attached to vehicles (hubcaps, battery, car stereo, or gasoline)	26
Someone took household vehicle without permission	15
Other Details of Property Crime:	
Incident occurred in town of current residence	84
Victim reported property crime to the police	73
Incident occurred at current residence	70
Invested in home defense measure as result of property crime	37
Was a victim of property crime prior to last 24 months (within Texas)	33
Victim recovered stolen property	18

In terms of the types of property crime victimization, 37 percent of the respondents noted that someone actually broke into or attempted to break into a building on their property. Thirty-six percent reported theft of items from their vehicle, and one-third reported a theft (or attempted theft) of items located outside their home. Almost one-third (32%) reported a theft which occurred inside their home, and 26 percent reported theft of auto parts. Fifteen percent responded that "someone took the household vehicle without permission."

The telephone interviewers inquired about other details of the property crime. Seventy-three percent of the property crime victims reported the crime to the police. Data from the 2002 NCVS indicate that 40 percent of property crime victims report the crime,[20] suggesting that Texas property crime victims exceeded the national average. Further, 84 percent reported that the incident occurred in the town of their current residence. Thirty-seven percent invested in home-defenses (or target hardening) to prevent additional theft, and only 18 percent recovered their stolen property. Interestingly, one

in three (33%) were repeat victims, or victimized prior to the incident in question. Research indicates that past victimization is a good predictor of future victimization.[21]

Violent/Person Crimes

Similar to findings from the 2002 National Crime Victimization Survey, our survey found that 33 victims reported having experienced a violent or person-related crime during the last two years. Results reported in Table 8 reveal the characteristics of person-related victimizations among 33 violent crime victims.

Table 8. Characteristics of Violent Crime Incidents (n=33)

Variable (during the last 24 months)	Percent
Types of Violent Crime:	
Threatened or attacked during a face-to-face verbal confrontation (22 out of 33 violent crime victims)	67%
Threatened or attacked with physical force such as by grabbing, punching, or choking (22 out of 33 violent crime victims)	67
Threatened or attacked with other weapon such as baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or a stick (10 out of 33 violent crime victims)	56
Threatened or attacked with a weapon such as a gun or knife (13 out of 33 violent crime victims)	39
Threatened or attacked by throwing something, such as a rock or bottle (6 out of 33 violent crime victims)	18
Used force or threat of force to steal something from your person (6 out of 33 violent crime victims)	18
Threatened with murder (6 out of 33 violent crime victims)	18
Attempted murder (5 out of 33 violent crime victims)	15
Any household members murdered (2 out of 33 violent crime victims)	6
Other Details of Violent Crime:	
Violent crime reported to police (24 out of 33 violent crime victims)	73
Violent victimization occurred in town of current residence (22 out of 33 violent crime victims)	67
Violent victimization occurred at or near home (15 out of 33 violent crime victims)	45
Was a victim of violent crime prior to last 24 months (within Texas) (10 out of 33 victims)	30

In terms of simple or aggravated assault, 67 percent reported having been threatened or attacked during face-to-face confrontations or experienced physical force such as grabbing, punching, or choking. Fifty-six percent were threatened or attacked with a weapon such as a baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or a stick, and 39 percent reported being threatened or attacked with a gun or knife. Eighteen percent were threatened or attacked by someone throwing an object such as a rock or bottle.

Eighteen percent of the respondents reported being victims of robbery, defined as "someone using force or threat of force to steal something from your person." Eighteen percent were also threatened

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with murder within the last 24 months, with 15 percent being victims of attempted murder during the same time period. Six percent reported that a family member had been murdered during the previous 24 months.

The 33 violent crime victims were asked additional questions concerning the violent victimization experience. Twenty-four (73%) reported the crime to the police, which is substantially higher than the 49 percent reported in the 2002 NCVS. Sixty-seven percent were victimized in the town where they were currently residing, and 45 percent reported that the violent victimization occurred in or near their homes. Similar to prior property victimization experiences, nearly one in three (30%) of the violent crime victims reported violent victimization prior to the last 24 months.

Post-Violent Victimization Experiences and Observations

The telephone interviewers additionally inquired about violent crime victims' feelings and activities following the episode (see Table 9). Fifty-eight percent reported taking personal safety precautions, such as securing a protective order, changing locks, taking self-defense classes, or purchasing a dog or firearm. Among the 19 victims who implemented safety precautions, the majority (84%) reported that this action prevented future violent victimizations. Slightly more than two-thirds (67%) reported that they were able to put the violent crime episode behind them.

Table 9. Post Violent Victimization Behavior (n=33)

Variable	Percent
Took personal safety precaution as a result of the violent victimization (19 out of 33)	58%
Personal safety precaution prevented any future victimization (16 out of 19 who took precautions)	84
Able to put violent victimization experience behind them (22 out of 33 victims)	67
Knew about the Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights prior to violent victimization (13 out of 33 victims)	39
Knew about Texas Crime Victims' Compensation prior to violent victimization (8 out of 33 victims)	24
Completed and mailed a Crime Victims' Compensation form to OAG after violent victimization (3 out of 33 victims)	9

To determine general knowledge about victim's rights, violent crime victims were asked if they were aware of the Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund prior to their victimization. Table 9 reveals that 39 percent had previous knowledge about the Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights, and 24 percent knew about the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund. Surprisingly, only three violent crime victims applied for assistance from the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund. These findings suggest that efforts should be made to raise public awareness about victims' rights and the services available.

Other Suggestions

The final section asked violent crime victims to identify the types of information, advice or support they felt were most important following an incident and whether or not they received such services. Table 10 presents the six most common responses.

Table 10. Services Wanted & Received (33 victims)

Information/Support Service	Wanted	Received
Information from the police (e.g., whether the offender had been identified)	16	12
Someone to talk to/moral support	11	9
Help in reporting to/dealing with the police	11	6
Information about security/crime prevention	10	5
Protection from further victimization/harassment	8	10
Help with insurance/compensation claim	7	6

The most frequently cited concern in the aftermath of victimization was getting information from the police regarding the status of the offender. Sixteen violent crime victims reported this as the most critical information they wanted, yet only 12 victims reported receiving such information. Eleven victims reported that having someone to talk to was an important need, but only nine reported receiving moral support services. Eleven suggested that getting assistance in reporting to and dealing with the police would be very beneficial, but only six received this assistance. Ten felt that security and crime prevention information would be useful, but only five reported getting such information. Protection from further victimization/harassment was the one area where ten victims received more than they felt they needed. Out of seven victims who reported wanting help with insurance/compensation claims, six received assistance.

Parental Knowledge of Children's On-line Activity

In 2002, nearly half of all United States residents owned a home computer, and over 71 percent of Americans used the Internet for an average of 11 hours per week.[22] The number of children who regularly access the Internet range from 20 to 30 million.[23] In its ideal form, the Internet is an unparalleled resource for education, entertainment, and commerce.[24] Most Americans use it for e-mail and Instant Messaging, web browsing, accessing news and entertainment information, and shopping online.[25] While the value of the Internet as an educational and communication tool cannot be ignored, "Cyberspace" can be a precarious place. The lack of restrictions and complete anonymity provided have created an ideal hunting ground for a new kind of predator who targets children online.[26] This section of the Report examines parental knowledge about the Internet and safety precautions utilized by parents to protect their children from unwanted adult-child Internet encounters.

Nationally, over 80 percent of children access the Internet from home computers, although a growing number use the Internet at school.[27] When a child uses the Internet at home, the parent may or may not be home to supervise online activity. It has been suggested, however, that parental supervision alone may not be sufficient to eliminate exposure to unwanted material on the Internet.[28] Internet blocking or filtering software is available, but is utilized by only 33 percent of parents surveyed nationwide.[29] Twenty-five percent of children surveyed nationwide had been exposed to sexual material while online. The majority were males (57%) who were using their home computer at the time (67%) to surf the Internet (71%). Over 90 percent of these children were exposed to pictures of naked people. Responses to this unwanted exposure included fear and distress for 25 percent of the children. This exposure was reported to a parent in 40 percent of the cases and to an authority in 3 percent of the cases.[30]

Internet victimization of children can take many forms, including Internet-related sexual assault, child pornography, unwanted sexual solicitation, harassment, and exposure to sexual material. Sexual solicitation may involve an adult asking a child to talk about sex, give personal information, or to have contact offline, such as meeting face-to-face to engage in sexual activity. Online harassment includes threats directed at the child or other offensive behavior. Unwanted exposure to sexual material may occur when the child is surfing the Internet or opening e-mail, and includes exposure to pictures

of naked people or people engaged in sexual activity.[31] There are an estimated 400,000 pornographic web sites on the Internet, and children surfing the Internet may inadvertently find themselves at these sites, or receive a link to such sites through their e-mail.[32]

A nationwide study of Internet victimization of children aged 10-17 revealed that approximately 20 percent had received a sexual solicitation while online. In some instances, an adult sent money or gifts to a child. The majority of the solicitors were males (67%), under the age of 18 (48%), and the majority of children were females (66%), using a home computer (70%) to access a chat room (65%). Twenty-five percent of these children reported the incident to a parent, but the incident was reported to an authority (e.g., law enforcement, Internet official) in less than 10 percent of the cases. Six percent of the children had been harassed online, while using a home computer (76%). Targeted children were slightly more likely to be males (51%) than females (48%), and the majority of harassers were males (54%), under the age of 18 (63%).[33]

Few parents know where they can report online victimization. Only 10 percent of parents surveyed nationwide could name a reporting authority, such as the FBI or the "Cybertipline."[34] The Cybertipline is a congressionally mandated reporting system in conjunction with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. The Cybertipline has been in operation since 1998 and, as of April 2004, has received over 235,000 leads, including 41 reports weekly of online enticement of children for sex acts.[35] The majority of reports are made online (www.cybertipline.com) and are investigated by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and task forces.[36] Between 2000 and 2001, law enforcement agencies nationwide made over 2,500 arrests for Internet sex crimes against minors. Twenty-five percent were made as a result of undercover operations where a law enforcement officer posed as a minor online and was solicited by an adult for sex. The majority of arrests (39%) stemmed from Internet-related sexual assault or the production of child pornography. In cases of sexual assault, the perpetrator was either a stranger who met the minor online, or someone known to the family or child who used the Internet to communicate with the victim.[37] Numerous guides and safety tips for parents and children are available online to protect children from victimization.[38]

Texas Internet Survey Findings

As previously mentioned, the Texas Crime Victimization Survey was administered via telephone to 712 Texas residents by the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University. Of the 712 completed interviews, 113 respondents reported that they had a child aged 10-16 who used the Internet.[39] The survey consisted of 30 questions, based on the national Youth Internet Safety Survey.[40] Questions were designed to assess how much experience parents had using the Internet, parental supervision and knowledge of children's online activity, and incidences of online victimization, including solicitation, harassment, and exposure to sexual material.

The majority of respondents to the Internet Safety Survey were white (71%) females (61%) with an average age of 40 (see Table 11). Most respondents (74%) were married or living with a partner and employed at the time of the survey (77%). Ten percent of respondents were currently a college or university student, and 74 percent of the sample had completed some form of college education.
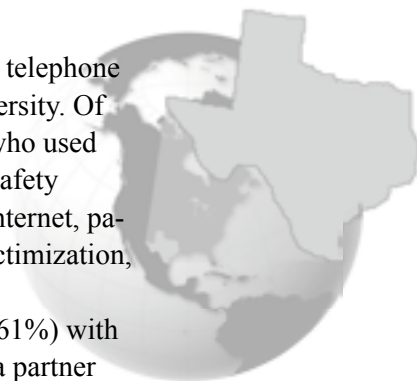
Table 11. Internet Survey Demographics (n=113)

Variable (within the last 24 months)	Percent	Mean or Average
Age		40
Gender		
Female	61%	
Male	39	
Race/Ethnicity		
White	71	
Hispanic	17	
African-American	8	
Other	4	
Married/Living with a partner	74	
Currently employed (not a student)	77	
Currently a college/University student	10	
Highest education level		
Less than high school	2	
High school	24	
Attended college/Graduated	74	
Income level		
Less than $10,000	1	
10,000-29,999	17	
30,000-49,999	31	
50,000+	51	

Eighty-seven percent of respondents had a home computer, the majority of which were located in a common room (39%), such as the living room or den (see Table 12).

Table 12. Internet Safety Survey (n=113)

Variable (within the last 24 months)	Percent	Mean or Average
Has a computer, laptop, or TV with Internet access (WebTV) in the home	87%	
Location of computer, laptop, or TV with Internet access in the home:[1]		
Common room (living room, den, playroom, etc.)	39	
Office/Computer room/Study	21	
Parent's bedroom	20	
Child's bedroom	14	
Other bedroom in the house	5	
Kitchen	6	
How much experience do YOU have using the Internet?[2]		3.3
Has heard on the news or elsewhere about cases where grown-ups use the Internet to meet kids and involve them in sexual things	98	
How concerned do you think adults should be about kids being exposed to sexual conversations or sexual pictures on the Internet?[3]		3.8
Age of child who uses the Internet most often: (range 10-16 only)		14
10	8	
11	6	
12	16	
13	14	
14	12	
15	27	
16	17	
Gender of child who uses the Internet most often		
Male	54	
Female	46	
Number of hours your child spends online per day		
1 hour or less	66	
1 to 2 hours	22	
More than 2 hours	12	
Compared to yourself, how much does your child know about the Internet?		
A lot more than you	25	
A little more than you	13	
About the same as you	21	
A little less than you	21	
A lot less than you	20	

1 Percentages do not add up to 100% because some respondents had more than one computer
2 Mean score based on 1=Beginner to 5=Expert
3 Mean score based on 1=Not concerned at all to 5=Extremely concerned

When asked about their experience using the Internet, most parents rated themselves somewhere between a "beginner" and an "expert," and said that their child knew "a lot more" about the Internet than they did. An overwhelming majority of parents were aware of the phenomenon of Internet victimization (98%) and felt very concerned about children being exposed to unwanted material. Fifty-four percent indicated that their son, aged 15 (27%) used the Internet most often in their household, for one hour or less per day (66%).

Parents reported that they knew just about everything their child did on the Internet, and the majority of children used the Internet for school assignments (82%), followed by e-mail (45%), and playing games (45%). Sixty-one percent of parents reported that their child had to ask permission before logging on to the Internet, but that 40 percent of the children were "home alone" or used the computer when a parent was not at home (see Table 13).

Table 13. Parental Supervision of Internet Activity (n=113)

Variable (within the last 24 months)	Percent	Mean or Average
How much do you know about what your child does on the Internet?[1]		4.1
What does your child use the Internet for?[2]		
School assignments	82%	
E-mail	45	
Play games	45	
Go to web sites	42	
Instant Messages	36	
Entertainment (e.g., sites about movies, sports, or music)	24	
To buy or check prices for something	21	
Go to chat rooms (private or open)	15	
To download software or files	10	
To connect to America Online (AOL)	8	
To connect to a message board or newsgroup	2	
To create or maintain a web page	1	
Other	1	
Child has to ask permission before he/she can log on to the Internet	61	
Parents have rules about how many hours their child can spend on the Internet per day	46	
Parents have rules about things their child is not supposed to do on the Internet such as going to chat rooms or to X-rated sites	91	
Places the child is not supposed to go, or things he/she is not supposed to do on the Internet:[3]		
Go to X-rated web sites	85	
Go to chat rooms	56	
Download software or files	41	
Connect to a message board or newsgroup	35	
Create or maintain a web page	27	
Shopping	27	
Use Instant Messages	25	
Use e-mail	20	
Play games	18	
Other	5	
Have looked at the computer screen to see what their child was doing online	92	
Have checked the history function on their Internet browser program to see what sites their child has visited	79	
Child uses the Internet when a parent is not at home	40	

1 Mean score based on 1=Nothing they do to 5=Everything they do
2 Percentages exceed 100% because each respondent could give multiple responses
3 Percentages exceed 100% because each respondent could give multiple responses

Ninety-three percent of parents reported that they had discussed with their child the dangers of giving out personal information over the Internet, while 88 percent spoke to their child about the importance of being careful when dealing with strangers on the Internet, and 83 percent discussed visiting X-rated web sites (see Table 14).

Table 14. Online Victimization (n=113)

Variable (within the last 24 months)	Percent*
Have you and your child ever discussed:	
Giving their address, last name, or telephone number to people he/she meets online	93%
Being careful about chatting with or dealing with strangers on the Internet	88
Going to X-rated web sites or other X-rated places	83
Talking online about very personal things, like sex	78
Trying to meet people face-to-face he/she gets to know online	73
Responding to messages that are offensive, nasty or mean	72
Showing a parent any messages that made the child uncomfortable	58
Child has felt worried or threatened because someone was bothering or harassing him/her online	1
Child received an e-mail or Instant Message with advertisements for or links to X-rated web sites	31
While doing an online search or surfing the web, the child found him/herself in a web site that showed pictures of naked people, or of people having sex	27
Someone on the Internet asked the child for sexual information, such as very personal questions like what his/her body looks like, or sexual things he/she has done	3
Someone on the Internet asked or encouraged the child to run away from home	0
How many times in the last 24 months did the child experience problems with the Internet (e.g., exposure to unwanted material, online harassment or sexual propositions):	
Never in the past 24 months	65
One time	8
Two times or more	27
Internet problem was reported to the police or an Internet official	4
Parents would like to meet the person who harassed their child	11
If the child was harassed over the Internet, the parent learned the true identity of the perpetrator	1
*Percentages exceed 100% because each respondent could give multiple responses	

When asked about their knowledge of online victimization incidents within their own household, each respondent's child had experienced at least one form of victimization within the past 24 months, with the exception of being asked or encouraged to run away from home. According to the parents, 3 percent of children had experienced a sexual solicitation while online where they were asked such questions as what their body looked like, or sexual things he/she had done. One percent of the children felt worried or threatened due to online harassment within the last two years.

Thirty-one percent of the children had received an e-mail or Instant Message containing a link or advertisement for an X-rated web site, and 27 percent had been exposed to unwanted pictures of naked people or people having sex. While 62 percent of parents said that their child experienced some form of solicitation, harassment or unwanted exposure to sexual material on the Internet in the past 24 months, only 4 percent reported the problem to an authority (e.g., law enforcement, Internet official). While 11 percent of the parents would like to meet the person who victimized their child, a mere 1 percent learned the true identity of the perpetrator.

The Texas Internet Safety Survey examined parental knowledge regarding children's experiences with online victimization, as well as parental supervision and knowledge of children's online activities. From parental reports of their child's online activity, our data indicate that many children in Texas are actively using the Internet for school work, e-mail, and Instant Messages. Parents feel that their child knows a lot more about the Internet than they do, although the vast majority of parents are aware of how the Internet can be used to victimize children. The good news is that parents have rules regarding Internet use, and have discussed with their child various dangers of using the Internet, such as chatting with strangers or giving out personal information. The majority of the rules centered around not visiting X-rated web sites, and most parents reportedly monitored their child's Internet use by either checking the history function or watching the monitor while their child was online. While parental supervision appears strong, just under one-half of the parents believed that their child accessed the Internet when they were not at home to monitor their activity. The most common type of online victimization reported by parents was unwanted exposure to sexual material, that was most commonly encountered through e-mail or Instant Messages, or while the child was conducting an online search.[41] Less than 5 percent of parents reported episodes of online victimization to an authority, which raises the question: Do parents know how to report such incidents?

We compared reports of parental supervision of online activity utilizing Texas data and national data (see Table 15). Most children in both groups accessed the Internet from a home computer, and spent one hour or less online per day. It appears that parents nationwide actively attempt to monitor and supervise their child's online activity. Recent media attention regarding online victimization may account for this diligence. The data show that, overall, Texas parents are much like parents elsewhere regarding the monitoring of their children's on-line activities.

Table 15. Internet Safety: A National Comparison of Parental Supervision

Variable (within the last 24 months)	Texas (n=113)	USA* (n=1,501)
	Percent	Percent
Gender of child who uses the Internet		
Male	54%	53%
Female	46	47
Child used home computer for Internet access	87	74
Child spent one hour or less online per day	66	61
Child has to ask permission before logging on to the Internet	61	44
Parent has rules about how many hours child can use the Internet per day	46	39
Parent has rules about things child is not supposed to do on the Internet	91	80
Parents have looked at the computer screen to see what their child was doing online	92	97
Parents have checked the history function on their Internet browser program to see what sites their child has visited	79	63
Parent has talked to child about giving out his/her address, last name or phone number to people he/she meets online	93	83
Parent has talked to child about being careful chatting with or dealing with strangers on the Internet	88	85
Parent has talked to child about going to X-rated web sites or other X- rated places	83	83
Parent has spoken to child about talking online about very personal things, like sex	78	77
Parent has talked to child about trying to meet people face-to-face he/she gets to know online	73	73
Parent has talked to child about responding to online messages that are offensive, nasty or mean	72	72

*National data obtained from Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 11, 2004 from www.missingkids.com

As a valuable resource for children and adults alike, reports of online victimization do not diminish the value of the Internet as an educational and communication tool; they do, however, raise awareness regarding this growing and serious phenomenon. The Internet can be used as a tool by faceless child predators across the country.[42] The rape and strangulation death of a 13-year-old Connecticut girl at the hands of a 24-year-old man she met in an Internet chat room, and the rape and murder in March 2004 of a 15-year-old Washington girl by a 44-year-old man she also met in a chat room provide graphic examples.[43]

Fear and Perceptions of Terrorism

Many Americans, especially since "9/11," harbor fears about future terrorist attacks occurring in this country. In 2003, 75 percent of Americans viewed the world as a more "dangerous place than ten years ago," up from 53 percent in 2001.[44] According to the National Center for Disaster Preparedness, in 2003, 76 percent of Americans were concerned about the possible occurrence of additional terror attacks.[45] The threat of terrorism is now part of the fabric of American society. While other aspects

of life have returned to normal, the fear of attacks has not diminished.[46] This fear is bolstered by attacks elsewhere (i.e., Madrid, Khobar) and changes in the terrorism alert levels. Schultze and Jones revealed in a poll that the intense media coverage of the war on terrorism has also contributed to the heightened and continuing fears.[47] The recent graphic and front page pictures of the attack in Saudi Arabia are a case in point.[48] These types of stories serve as a reminder of what may lie ahead in our nation. In addition, another reason for the heightened fear could be the Iraqi war. One study showed that almost half (48%) of the people polled said the war increased the likelihood of attacks, while 40 percent said that it reduced the risk.[49]

Texans Compared to the Nation on Terrorism

The extent to which the threat of domestic terrorist attacks has affected the American lifestyle remains largely unknown. It is important, however, to monitor Americans' attitudes towards such issues as the general threat of terrorist attacks, personal preparedness, and governmental responses to terrorism. Data from such monitoring activities can help inform policy making. To this end, we included questions in the Texas Crime Victimization Survey to probe Texans' attitudes towards terrorism. Texans were asked about their own perceptions of terrorism and the threat of terrorism in their own state. Where possible, our respondents were compared to national-level poll data.

Our survey found that 63 percent of Texas citizens believed that an attack will be carried out compared to the rest of the nation (55%) (see Table 16).

Table 16. Texans Compared to National-Level Attitudes on Terrorism

Variable	Texans (n=627)	Nation* (n=3,378)
	Percent	Percent
Believe that a terrorist attack will be carried out in the future	63%	55%
Think their community is well prepared to deal with the threat of terrorists armed with biological weapons	47	35
Expect terrorist acts like the ones experienced in New York and Washington, DC will be common in this country	46	39
Worried about the chances of a terrorist attack using nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons	37	40
Worried that you or someone you know will be a victim of terrorism	31	35

*National data obtained from Taylor, H. (2004). The Harris Poll. Retrieved January 11, 2004 from http://www.harrisinteractive.com/

Forty-seven percent of Texans polled, however, thought their community was well-prepared to deal with the threat of terrorists armed with biological weapons, which is higher than the national finding of 35 percent. When asked how likely future terrorist attacks would be in this country, almost half (46%) of Texans felt like the events in New York and Washington, DC had a good chance of re-occurring in this country compared to the rest of the nation's response (39%). Texans were less worried (37%) than the rest of the nation (40%) about an attack involving chemical, nuclear, or biological weapons. Overall, Texans were less worried (31%) than national respondents (35%) that they or someone they know would become a victim of terrorism. Texas residents were also asked about the possibilities of specific kinds of terrorist attacks (see Table 17).

Table 17. Comparison of Attitudes about Kinds of Attacks

Variable	Texas (n=627)	Nation* (n=1,044)
	Percent	Percent
Believed that each of the following is likely to occur:		
Terrorist attack at a major public event, like a concert/athletic event	51%	67%
Terrorist attack using a bomb carried in a car or truck	45	83
Terrorist attack on some part of the water supply	43	64
Terrorist attack using a chemical or biological weapon	38	70
Terrorist attack at a nuclear power plant	34	58

*National data obtained from Time/CNN Poll by Harris Interactive (2001). Public Expects More Terrorist Attacks. Retrieved January 12, 2004 from http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=382

Over half (51%) of Texans as well as the nation (67%) perceived that it was likely an attack could occur at a major public event. Forty-five percent of the Texas sample believed that it was likely a terrorist attack could occur involving a bomb carried in a vehicle compared to a national poll of 83 percent. Forty-three percent of Texans believed that there was a chance of an attack on the water supply, and roughly one-third (34%) believed that there was a chance of an attack at a nuclear power plant, compared to the rest of the nation at 64 percent and 58 percent respectively. Texans also felt that the likelihood of an attack involving chemical or biological weapons was less likely to happen (38%) than the rest of the nation (70%). The results in Table 17 may be due to the immediacy of the poll taken only days following September 11, 2001. Feelings of uncertainty may have been heightened due to these tragic events.

In conclusion, Texas residents appeared to be less fearful in general compared to the nation about the likelihood of a terrorist attack. Importantly, Texans were more confident in their preparedness than the rest of the nation. The threat of terrorism has changed some fundamental aspects of our lives. We have expressed willingness to exhibit patience, for example, waiting in longer lines and more thorough searches in airports and public gatherings, despite inconveniences. However, Americans do have limits as to how far they will allow the threat of terrorism to overwhelm their lives. Indeed, recent research suggests that 82 percent stated that they had not, and would not let the terrorist acts change their lifestyles in any permanent or significant way.[50]

Examining the attitudes, concerns and reactions of individuals and families towards terrorism is essential to developing policy on terrorism. Whether people avoid large public gatherings or landmarks, the threat of terrorism will always be present. A balance between safety and freedom is needed to live comfortably in our society. We must continue to monitor American's attitudes toward a wide slate of issues to ensure that our government continuously reacts to the threat of terrorism.

Conclusions

The findings presented in this Report represent the first effort in the history of the Crime Victims' Institute to examine the victimization experiences of Texas crime victims. First efforts whether in space exploration, oil and gas discovery or cattle ranching are burdened with mistakes and thoughts such as "we should have done it another way." Polling individuals about their personal experiences with crime and victimization is intrusive and very personal.[51] However, with time and measured refinements in the data collection instrument, the CVI will fulfill its mandate—understanding the consequences of criminal victimization to inform and enhance the policy making process.

This being said, we found that most Texans feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood (in the daytime and nighttime). Most Texans also believe that crime in their area has either stayed the same or decreased. At the same time, most of the respondents to our survey believed that crime in Texas has increased underscoring the common belief that "things are OK where I live, but worse elsewhere."

Comparable to national data, the majority of our crime victims suffered a property crime and not a violent or person crime. We found that most property crime victims reported the crime to police and that the incident occurred at their current residence. Roughly a third of the property crime victims invested in home defense measures. At the same time, most of the violent crime victims reported the crime to the police and almost half of these victims were victimized in or near their own homes. Slightly more than half of the violent crime victims took personal safety precautions to prevent or deter future victimizations. Most important, less than half of the violent crime victims (39%) in our research knew about the Texas Crime Victims' Bill of Rights prior to their victimization, and only 24 percent knew about Crime Victims' Compensation prior to their victimization. A critical finding from this research was that less than one-third of the victims in both crime groups were repeat victims.

Our collection of information about parental knowledge of their children's Internet activity proved insightful. The vast majority of respondents with young children indicated that they had a computer in their home with Internet access. The majority noted that their children knew as much or more than they did about the Internet. Most of these parents stated that their child had to have permission to access the Internet, and most parents had rules about the type of web sites that were "off limits." The vast majority of these parents also stated that they looked at the computer screen to view their child's on-line activity. We found that 40 percent of respondents indicated that their child used the Internet when a parent was not at home. Despite rules and supervision, several parents reported that their child had experienced some form of solicitation or unwanted exposure to sexual material online. Finally, Texas respondents compared equally to national level data on a variety of Internet issues.

We asked our respondents about their thoughts and attitudes towards terrorism. Most Texans reported that more terrorist attacks will occur in this century. Half believed that an attack was more likely to occur at a major public event than at a water supply installation or nuclear power plant. Nearly half of the Texas respondents believed that their community was well-prepared to deal with the threat of terrorists armed with biological weapons.

In future victimization polls, we will continue to monitor Texans' attitudes toward crime, personal safety, and their experiences with victimization. We will also explore such topics as identity theft, workplace violence and harassment, stalking, family violence, and child abuse. Our goal is to improve upon and expand the analysis so that our understanding and response to crime and victimization among Texans might be most effectively enhanced.

Endnotes

1   http://eire.census.gov/popest/data/states/tables/NST-EST2003-01.php

2   http://www.factfinder.census.gov/

3   www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm. While the actual number of crimes increased, the rate of crime (which controls for population) actually decreased. Preliminary data for 2003 show a decrease in violent and property crime from 2002 to 2003.

4   A useful source for national level victimization statistics and data is the Bureau of Justice Statistics: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/

5   Ennis, P. (1967). Criminal victimization in the United States: A report of a national survey. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center; Wallace, H. (1998). Victimology. Boston: Allyn and Bacon; Doerner, W., & Lab, S. (1998). Victimology. Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing; Steffensmeler, D. (1983). Flawed arrest rates and overlooked reliability problems in UCR arrest statistics: A comment on Wilson's 'The masculinity of violent crime—Some second thoughts.' The Journal of Criminal Justice, 11, 167-171; Biderman, A., & Reiss, A. (1967). On exploring the 'dark figure' of crime. Annals of the American Academy of

Political and Social Sciences, 374, 1-13. See also Ditton, J., & Farrall, S. (Eds.). (2000). The fear of crime. Vermont: Ashgate.

6 For a complete statistical summary, see Criminal victimization in the United States, 2002 statistical tables (NCJ 200561). (2003). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

7 Sgarzi, J., & McDevitt, J. (2003). Victimology: A study of crime victims and their roles. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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13 Vestfold Heartcare Study Group. (2003). Influence on lifestyle measures and five-year coronary risk by a comprehensive lifestyle intervention program in patients with coronary heart disease. Journal of Cardiovascular Risk, 10, 429-437.

14 Jacoby, E., Goldstein, J., Lopez, A., Nunez, E., & Lopez, T. (2003). Social class, family, and lifestyle factors associated with overweight and obesity among adults in Peruvian cities. Preventive Medicine, 37, 396-405.

15 A critical factor affecting a person's health condition is education. Adults with higher levels of education were less likely than those with fewer years of education "to be current smokers, to be physically inactive in their leisure time, and to be obese." See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2004). Health behaviors of adults: United States, 1999-2001, 19(219), 63.

16 Felson, M. (1998). Crime and everyday life. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

17 According to the Official English Dictionary, the word victim can be traced to the Latin word "victima." Rhemish (or French) translations of the Bible used the word "victime" and dates back to the late 15th and 16th centuries and meant "a living creature killed and offered as a sacrifice to some deity or supernatural power." The common word "victim" gained currency in usage in the 1700s.

18 Our initial screener question in the telephone poll restricted victimization to "the previous 12 months." This narrow time produced or netted 67 victims. We expanded the screener question to "24 months" in December 2003, which netted 85 additional victims. We realize that there were methodological problems with our design. However, our goal in this research is not to estimate the "true" incidence of victimization in Texas. Rather our focus is on dynamics of victimization. The unit of analysis is the victimization experience, not necessarily the victim.

19 Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2002 Statistical Tables (NCJ 200561). (2003). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

20 Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2002 Statistical Tables (NCJ 200561). (2003). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, see Table 91.

21 Research on repeat victimization is growing, and a critical finding suggests that "crime is disproportionately suffered by repeat victims. The probability of being a victim again increases as the number of prior victimizations increase." See Shaw, M., & Pease, K. (2000). Research on repeat victimization in Scotland: Final report. Applied Criminology Group: University of Huddersfield; Pease, K., & Laycock, G. (1996). Revictimization: Reducing the heat on hot victims. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Crime prevention efforts must target repeat victims – any reduction in the incidence in repeat victimization will result in real reductions in crime.

22 The UCLA Internet report: Surveying the digital future, year three. (2003). UCLA Center for Communication Policy. Retrieved May 4, 2004 from http://ccp.ucla.edu/pages/Internetstudy.asp

23 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids.

com/missingkids/servlet/; see also Medaris, M., & Girouard, C. (2002). Protecting children in Cyberspace: The ICAC Task Force Program (NCJ 191213). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

24 Office for Victims of Crime. (2002). Internet crimes against children (NCJ 184931). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

25 The UCLA Internet report: Surveying the digital future, year three. (2003). UCLA Center for Communication Policy. Retrieved May 4, 2004 from http://ccp.ucla.edu/pages/Internetstudy.asp

26 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (2003). Child safety on the information highway. Retrieved April 21, 2004 from http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/

27 The UCLA Internet report: Surveying the digital future, year three. (2003). UCLA Center for Communication Policy. Retrieved May 4, 2004 from http://ccp.ucla.edu/pages/Internetstudy.asp

28 Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2003). The exposure of youth to unwanted sexual material on the Internet: A national survey of risk, impact, and prevention. Youth & Society, 34(3), 330-358.

29 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids. com/missingkids/servlet/

30 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids. com/missingkids/servlet/; see also Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2003). The exposure of youth to unwanted sexual material on the Internet: A national survey of risk, impact, and prevention. Youth & Society, 34(3), 330-358.

31 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids. com/missingkids/servlet/; see also Wolak, J., Mitchell, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2003). Internet sex crimes against minors: The response of law enforcement. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 11, 2004 from http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/NJOV_info_page.htm

32 Schabner, D. (2002). Danger zone? No hard data, but plenty of concern about how kids react to Internet porn. Retrieved April 14, 2004 from http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/internetporn_ kids020626.html.

33 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids. com/missingkids/servlet/

34 Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids. com/missingkids/servlet/

35 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (2004). Cybertipline report leads to three-year national child pornography investigation. Retrieved April 28, 2004 from http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/ servlet/NewsEventServlet

36 Medaris, M., & Girouard, C. (2002). Protecting children in Cyberspace: The ICAC Task Force Program (NCJ 191213). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

37 Wolak, J., Mitchell, K., & Finkelhor, D. (2003). Internet sex crimes against minors: The response of law enforcement. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 11, 2004 from http://www. unh.edu/ccrc/NJOV_info_page.htm

38 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (2003). Child safety on the information highway. Retrieved April 21, 2004 from http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/; see also Federal Bureau of Investigation. A parent's guide to Internet safety. Retrieved April 14, 2004 from http:///www.fbi.gov/pub-lications/pguidee.htm; and www.NetSmartz.org

39 If there were multiple children within this age range who used the Internet, parents were asked to report on the child who used the Internet most frequently.

40   Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 29, 2003 from http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/New_Releases_pubs.html

41   It has been suggested that children may not report all incidents to their parents due to embarrassment or fear that the parent will restrict future Internet access, see Finkelhor, D., Mitchell, K. J., & Wolak, J. (2000). Online victimization: A report on the nation's youth. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/

42   For a listing of individuals arrested in Texas for using the Internet to commit crimes against children, see the Texas Attorney General's web site, especially the Cyber Crimes Unit, at www.oag.state.tx.us/

43   Schabner, D. (2002). Danger zone? No hard data, but plenty of concern about how kids react to Internet porn. Retrieved April 14, 2004 from http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/internetporn_kids020626.html; see also Soliman, R. (2004). Prosecutors detail e-mail link to suspect in teenager's death. The Olympian. Retrieved May 12, 2004 from http://www.theolympian.com/home/news/20040325/topstories/11531.shtml

44   The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2001). Retrieved March 6, 2004 from http://people-press.org/

45   National Center for Disaster Preparedness. (2003). How Americans feel about terrorism and security: Two years after 9/11. Retrieved June 1, 2004 from www.ncdp.mailman.columbia.edu

46   Doherty, C. (2003). Pew report. Retrieved May 6, 2004 from http://people-press.org/

47   Jones, M., & Schultze, S. (2003). Many Americans fear another terror attack, poll finds. Retrieved May 1, 2004 from http://jsonline.com/news/gen/sep03/167391.asp

48   Althaus, D. (2004, May 31). Terrorist rampage jolts oil workers: Westerners considering leaving Saudi Arabia. The Houston Chronicle, p. A1; see also Murphy, B. (2004, May 4). Top managers appeared to be targeted in Saudi attack. The Houston Chronicle, p. A1.

49   The Associated Press/IPSOS poll: Public has shifted towards problems of terrorism and war since last summer. (2004). Retrieved May 1, 2004 from http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm

50   Stephens, G. (2003). Can we be safe and free? The dilemma terrorism creates. Retrieved May 1, 2004 from http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1272/is_2692_131/ai_96268288

51   The National Crime Victimization Survey is based on interviews with over 70,000 individuals, and the response rates have been over 85 percent. With time the TCVS will approximate the NCVS.

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