



"America's crises are institutional and moral, not merely economic and strategic."

Howard Phillips, founder, the Constitution Party

VICTORY REPORT

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Painting Pornography by the Numbers

By Peter B. Gemma

Sex commerce is the largest and most profitable industry in the world, and includes some 4.2 million pornography websites. In America, sex-as-a-business (pornography, prostitution, strip clubs, phone sex, and even comic books and Play Station games) is estimated to be worth \$97 billion. U.S. sales of sex toys alone generate \$15 billion.

In 2016, the porn industry raked in \$13+ billion by producing 13,000 videos, while Hollywood grossed about \$12 billion in the movie business.

Gail Dines, Professor of Sociology at Boston's Wheelock College, has observed that, "A lot of people believe the Internet drives porn, but, in fact much of the research and development for today's technology is driven by the porn industry itself."

Mind Geek, who owns porn sites such as YouPorn, Brazzers, and Reality Kings, is the number three bandwidth-consuming company in the world: the other two being Google and Netflix. On its own, one website, XVideo, is bigger than the websites of CNN and the *New York Times* combined.

Pornhub, with a net worth of \$2.5 billion, sells its "premium gift card membership" on Amazon with the promise of "no ads, exclusive content, faster downloads, and 10,000+ full-length movies," [including "Who's Your Daddy," "Nineteen," and "Tortured."] Amazon ranks the Pornhub gift card at number 198, behind Starbucks and iTunes, but ahead of Applebee's, Nordstrom's, Taco Bell, and JC Penny.

Pornhub recorded 23 billion visits last year, and reports that "teen," "mom," and "step-sister" were among its top ten search terms. "Step-mom" was number two.

The porn business is almost a protected class. It thrives on the notion of being a no-one-gets-hurt activity that is protected by privacy rights as enshrined in the Constitution. Most Americans agree: a Pew Research Center found that by a 48-41% margin, Americans see a greater danger in the government's imposing undue restrictions on the sex entertainment industry than to just leave it as is. Porn star Mercedes Carrera summed up her defense of the porn industry by declaring it to be "the last truly free market."

However, some lawmakers, pro-family advocates, and sociologists are worried about the influence and impact of unregulated and unfettered pornography.

Gail Dines, who is also author of *Today's Pornography and the Crisis of Violence Against Women and Children*, observes: "We cannot speak about rape, child sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, teen dating violence, domestic violence, or college sexual assault without understanding porn as a driving force behind the normalization and legitimization of violence against women and children."

Stanford University Emeritus Professor Philip Zimbardo writes in *Psychology Today*: "Some people can watch porn occasionally and not suffer significant side effects; however, plenty of people, including teens and pre-teens with highly plastic brains, find they are compulsively using Internet porn, and their porn tastes are becoming out of sync with their real-life sexuality. Researchers found that the hours and years of porn use were correlated with decreased grey matter in regions of the brain associated with reward sensitivity. It may be no coincidence then that porn users report less satisfaction in their relationships and real-life intimacy and attachment problems."

That insensitivity and alienation is reflected in the results of an annual survey of 8th-12th graders published in September, 2017 issue of *The Atlantic*:

- In 1990, 80% of teens dated, but by 2015 that number had steadily gone down to 55%.
- In 1990, 23% of teens admitted to "often feeling lonely;" that figure jumped to 33% in 2015.
- Teens "hung out" with friends on the average of 3 days a week in 2000, but by 2015 the average dropped to 2 days a week.

According to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation, the Justice Department has not initiated any new enforcement actions against adult-obscenity cases since President Barack Obama took office in early 2009. In 2011, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder dismantled the Obscenity Prosecution Task Force that President George W. Bush created in 2005.

Candidate Donald Trump signed a pledge to

aggressively enforce “federal obscenity laws, child pornography laws, and the sex trafficking laws,” and to appoint “an Attorney General who will make the prosecution of such laws a top priority.” However, when Senator Orrin Hatch asked Attorney General Jeff Sessions about re-establishing the Obscenity Prosecution Task Force, Sessions said, “I didn’t know it was shut down – I’ll look into it.”

On the state level, legislators are establishing new parameters on the porn industry, most recently in Utah and Alabama. A bill in South Carolina would make it illegal for anyone in the state to sell a computer, tablet, or smartphone without a porn filter, which companies would update via dedicated 24/7 support centers. Consumers would have to submit a written request and a payment of \$20 to get the filter removed and money from these fees would go toward anti-trafficking efforts.

Mark Stabile of the porn industry’s Free Speech Coalition believes these filter laws will soon be moving through the legislature in up to 24 states.

In the private sector, there is encouraging news, some from surprising sources. Porn film star James Deen is campaigning for a mandatory paywall: “I want all adult websites to be behind an age-verification wall. You can’t just say, ‘Yes, I’m 18,’ you actually have to input a credit card, or something, to create an 18-and-older environment.”

Starbucks and McDonald will block X-rated websites on their complimentary Wi-Fi services. Combined, Starbucks and McDonald’s have more than 21,000 venues offering Wi-Fi. Marriott Hotels announced that, “Adult content will be off the video menu for virtually all of our newly built hotels. Over the next few years, this will be the policy across our system.”

Efforts to put porn in its place have experienced push back. Diane Duke, CEO of Free Speech Coalition (the porn industry’s lobbying operation) insists: “Our industry now employs hundreds of thousands of people all over the country [in San Fernando Valley alone, the industry employs 20,000 people.] It would be a mistake for politicians not to listen to a large part of their constituency.”

However, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation cites a series of wins: Google has stopped running pornography in Google Play and on their advertising platform, and the U.S. Air Force and Army banned the sale of pornography in military exchanges. Recently, Hilton Hotels announced that their cable offerings would no longer include the pornography channels.

On the legal front, anti-pornography leader and Utah State Senator Todd Weiler notes that, “Seventy years ago the tobacco industry denied that its product was addictive and they denied that their products were harmful. The first 30 or so people that sued them lost, but eventually that tide turned.”

Porn: the Statistics are Scary

- As scored by the List25 Internet Service, the porn industry makes more money than the National Football League, the NBA, and Major League Baseball *combined*. Porn sites attract more visitors each month than Amazon, Netflix, and Twitter *combined*.
- From a University of Montreal study: most men are exposed to porn for the first time at age ten. According to *Psychology Today*, 90% of boys and 60% of girls are exposed to Internet porn by age 18.
- A North Carolina State University poll (38% of respondents were female): “How often did you view pornography?” 30% of students responded at least once, maybe a few times a month ... 20% said several times each week ... 10% admitted they watch porn daily.
- Britain’s Internet Watch Foundation reports that behind otherwise legal-seeming adult pornography sites, they found 743 websites – more than double the number from just 18 months earlier – “providing a secret route to child sexual abuse content,” by showing only legal content when accessed via a browser but “hosting illegal materials out of sight behind a maze of links.”
- According to a study of 3,000 adults and teenagers, 432 pastors and 338 youth pastors commissioned by Josh McDowell Ministries, 14% of pastors and 21% of youth pastors admit they struggle with using porn ... 12% of youth pastors concede they are addicted ... 26% of self-identified Christian teenagers ages 13 to 17 watch porn at least once a week ... the vast majority of faith leaders who struggle with porn say it has significantly affected their ministry in a negative manner.
- A Public Religion Research Institute study revealed that 29 percent of Americans think watching porn is morally acceptable – 23% of women and 35% of men do not consider porn as immoral.
- One famous porn star, Hillary Scott, has a \$250,000 per anum contract – twice the salary of an Apple corporate employee, four times the salary of an average nurse, and six times the earning potential of a 25-year-old woman with a Master’s degree. Many porn stars make more money outside of acting such as dancing in strip clubs, live webcams, and product endorsements.



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