



Pornography is Destructive to Individuals and Society

Family Watch International Position Statement -- Pornography is a leading cause of marital and family breakdown today and generates serious problems for individuals, families and societies. Although some claim that pornography is an art form or a protected form of free speech that should be legal and unregulated, the negative ramifications to individuals and society from pornography clearly justify its regulation if not its complete elimination from homes, communities and nations. Laws that criminalize the production, marketing and possession of pornography should be established and strictly enforced. Since the pornography industry is global in nature, global solutions should be developed to stop the spread of pornography, especially via the World Wide Web.

Pornography is Big Business -- Virtually every country in the world has been inundated by a steady increase in the availability of pornographic materials in the form of magazines, films and electronic images on the Internet. Worldwide pornography revenues in 2006 exceeded \$97 billion--more than the revenues of the top technology companies combined--Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo! and Apple; more than the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC.¹ The sex industry has an enormous interest in protecting pornography.

Pornography is Widespread -- Dr. Patrick Carnes, a leading researcher on pornography and sex addiction, estimates that three to six percent of Americans, as many as 20 million people, are sexually addicted.²

Pornography is Damaging to Children -- The potential for familial destruction and emotional damage is multiplied exponentially when children are exposed to pornography. It is estimated that nine out of 10 children between the ages of eight and 16 have been exposed to pornography on the Internet.³ Research indicates that 47 percent of school-age children receive pornographic email daily.⁴ Early exposure to pornography can have disastrous results. A 2001 report revealed that over half of all sex offenders in the state of Utah were adolescents, and some felony sexual assaults were being perpetrated by children as young as eight years-old. Many young sex offenders say they were acting out what they had seen being depicted in pornography.

Pornography Can Be as Addictive as Drugs -- Exposure to pornography has an actual physical effect on the brain. Addictive chemicals called erototoxins are produced by the body and released by the brain in response to erotic stimuli. Scientific research is now confirming what therapists have recognized for many years: "the repeated viewing of pornographic images creates a chemical addiction in the viewer. That addiction becomes so powerful that it overrides the cognitive functions of the brain that enable a human being to make judgments, to inhibit impulsive action, or to resist engaging in conduct that will bring harm to themselves or others. The addicts are enslaved to the chemical cocktail of endogenous drugs that are produced by the body and released by the brain when it stores pornographic images."⁵ Individuals are frequently consumed by the addiction without regard for the cost or the consequences to themselves or their loved ones.

Pornography Addictions Can Escalate Out of Control -- Dr. Victor Cline identified a consistent pattern in pornography addiction over 25 years ago which is even more evident today.

Much like drug addiction, the individual addicted to pornography requires “rougher, more explicit, more deviant”⁶ material to achieve the desired sexual stimulation and release. The availability of a spouse or a willing sexual partner does not eliminate the need for exposure to pornographic material. A pornography addict will often prefer to masturbate with pornography rather than have sexual relations with a spouse. Unlike drug addiction, however, pornographic images are stored in the brain and can be instantly recalled, making the addiction potentially even more difficult to overcome than drug addiction.

Pornography Desensitizes the User to Deviant Sexual Behavior -- Pornography can change one’s perception of what is normal and healthy. Pornographic material that was initially perceived as “shocking, taboo-breaking, illegal, repulsive, or immoral”⁷ can eventually become acceptable, regardless of how deviant it seemed in the beginning, even if it had previously been a violation of an individual’s own personal moral standards.

Pornography Addictions Can Lead to Violence Against Self and Others -- There is an increasing tendency to act out sexually the behaviors depicted in pornographic images including “promiscuity, exhibitionism, group sex, voyeurism, frequenting massage parlors, having sex with minor children, rape, and inflicting pain on themselves or a partner during sex.”⁸ Once an addict has reached the “acting out” stage of pornography addiction, individuals nearly always experience a serious erosion of personal relationships and are devoid of most values which results in devastating emotional pain and sorrow to their loved ones.

Many Rapists and Murderers Claim that Pornography Fueled Their Crimes -- There is an undeniable correlation between pornography addiction and the commission of sexual crimes and violence including rape and the sexual molestation of children. According to the United States FBI, the most common interest among serial killers is hardcore pornography. Another study found that 87 percent of child molesters were regularly involved in hardcore pornography.⁹

¹ Family Safe Media, http://www.familysafemedia.com/pornography_statistics.html.

² Sex Addiction Q&A,” SexHelp.com, http://www.sexhelp.com/sa_q_and_a.cfm (16 May 2005).

³ Prepared statement of Attorney General John Ashcroft at National Prosecutors' Symposium on Obscenity, 6 June 2002.

⁴ “Symantec survey reveals more than 80 percent of children using email receive inappropriate spam daily,” *Symantec News Release*, 9 June 2003.

⁵ John L. Harmer, *The Sex Industrial Complex*, The Lighted Candle Society, Salt Lake City, 2007, at 204.

⁶ Porn Addiction, Victor B. Cline, PhD., <http://www.askmaple.com/porn-addiction.html>.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ W. Marshall, “Report on the Use of Pornography by Sexual Offenders,” Report to the Federal Department of Justice, Ottawa, Canada, 1983.