

Internet pornography by the numbers

A significant threat to society

News media organizations often treat specific internet safety issues as fads – after being THE hot topic, issues fall out of favor becoming “old news” in spite of ongoing risks and threats. We’ve seen this with pornography, child predators, chat room risks, meeting strangers and, more recently, sexting. Today’s hot topic is cyberbullying, but given the nature of our media cycles, we should expect to see this join the ranks of “old news” by the end of the year. That isn’t to say these topics aren’t ongoing threats, just that they lose media attention.

Internet pornography was the first big internet safety topic to make news, and it has remained largely out of favor among the popular press ever since. But that doesn’t mean the issues and costs have vanished, or that “it’s just an issue among right-wing prudes.”

The societal costs of pornography are staggering. The financial cost to business productivity in the U.S. alone is estimated at \$16.9 Billion annually ; but the human toll, particularly among our youth and in our families, is far greater.

According to Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D, psychologist and former Deputy Assistant Health and Human Services Secretary, “two recent reports, one by the American Psychological Association on hyper-sexualized girls, and the other by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy on the pornographic content of phone texting among teenagers, make clear that the digital revolution is being used by younger and younger children to dismantle the barriers that channel sexuality into family life.

Pornography hurts adults, children, couples, families, and society. Among adolescents, pornography hinders the development of a healthy sexuality, and among adults, it distorts sexual attitudes and social realities. In families, pornography use leads to marital dissatisfaction, infidelity, separation, and divorce.”

Here are some of the most credible statistics available today on internet pornography. Note: at the end of this article there are links to three infographics that cover various aspects of the impact of pornography on families.

General pornography stats

- Every second 28,258 users are watching pornography on the internet
- Every second \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography on the internet
- Every second 372 people are typing the word "adult" into search engines
- 40 million American people regularly visit porn sites
- 35% of all internet downloads are related to pornography
- 25% of all search engine queries are related to pornography, or about 68 million search queries a day
- One third of porn viewers are women

Search engines get 116,000 queries every day related to child pornography
34% of internet users have experienced unwanted exposure to pornographic content through ads, pop up ads, misdirected links or emails
2.5 billion emails sent or received every day contain porn
Every 39 minutes a new pornography video is being created in the United States
About 200,000 Americans are “porn addicts”

Youth pornography stats

Teenagers with frequent exposure to sexual content on TV have a substantially greater likelihood of teenage pregnancy; and the likelihood of teen pregnancy was twice as high when the quantity of sexual content exposure within the viewing episodes was high.

Pornography viewing by teens disorients them during the developmental phase when they have to learn how to handle their sexuality and when they are most vulnerable to uncertainty about their sexual beliefs and moral values

A significant relationship also exists among teens between frequent pornography use and feelings of loneliness, including major depression

Adolescents exposed to high levels of pornography have lower levels of sexual self-esteem

Family/Marital pornography stats

According to National Coalition for the Protection of Children & Families, 2010, 47% of families in the United States reported that pornography is a problem in their home.

Pornography use increases the marital infidelity rate by more than 300%

40 percent of “sex addicts” lose their spouses, 58 percent suffer considerable financial losses, and about a third lose their jobs

68% of divorce cases involve one party meeting a new paramour over the internet while 56% involve one party having an “obsessive interest” in pornographic websites

In February 2010, the number of people using a work computer to visit sexually oriented website was as high as 28%, according to research conducted by The Nielsen Company. The average visit to a pornography site from a work computer was about 13 minutes, and the average worker spent one hour and 38 minutes on such sites during that month.

If we leverage data extracted on: March 30, 2012, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics we can use their average hourly earnings of \$23.23 multiplied by 1hr.38min = a loss of ~\$38/month per employee watching pornography at work. Multiplying the monthly total by 12 months shows a loss of \$456 dollars each year from every employee that views pornography

The number of U.S. employees reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as of March 30th, 2012 was 132 million. If we divide this to represent 28% of employees using a work computer to visit pornographic sites up to ~37million employees viewing pornography. (There are many ways to pare down this number, for example by excluding some labor categories, but for the sake of the exercise we’re keeping it simple).

Thus, if 37 million employees are viewing the average amount of pornography cited by the Nielsen Company, the annual productivity loss to companies is a staggering \$16.9 Billion dollars.

vii http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_pornography_statistics#cite_note-Internet_Pornography_Statistics_-_Internet_Filter_Review-3

viii Anita Chandra, Steven C. Martino, Rebecca L. Collins, Marc N. Elliott, Sandra H. Berry, David E. Kanouse, and Angela Miu, "Does Watching Sex on Television Predict Teen Pregnancy? Findings from a Longitudinal Survey of Youth," *Pediatrics* 122 (2008): 1047-1054 (1052).

ix Jochen Peter and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Adolescents' Exposure to Sexually Explicit Internet Material, Sexual Uncertainty, and Attitudes Toward Uncommitted Sexual Exploration: Is There a Link?" *Communication Research* 35 (2008): 579-601 (581)

x Michele L. Ybarra and Kimberly J. Mitchell, "Exposure to Internet Pornography among Children and Adolescents: A National Survey," *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 8 (2005): 473-86 (479).
10 Vincent Cyrus Yoder, Thomas B. Virden III, and Kiran Amin "Internet pornography and Loneliness: An Association?" *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity* 12 (2005): 19-44 (30). This was a study of 400 individual Internet pornography users.

xi Todd G. Morrison, Shannon R. Ellis, Melanie A. Morrison, Anomi Bearden, and Rebecca L. Harriman, "Exposure to Sexually Explicit Material and Variations in Body Esteem, Genital Attitudes, and Sexual Esteem Among a Sample of Canadian Men," *The Journal of Men's Studies* 14 (2006): 209-22 (216-7).

xii http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_pornography_statistics#cite_note-Internet_Usage_bsecure-4

xiii Steven Stack, Ira Wasserman, and Roger Kern, "Adult Social Bonds and Use of Internet Pornography," *Social Science Quarterly* 85 (2004): 75-88.

ii Mary Anne Layden, Ph.D. (Center for Cognitive Therapy, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania), Testimony for U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, November 18, 2004, 2.

ii "The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family and Community," by Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D, psychologist, and former Deputy Assistant Health and Human Services Secretary.