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How Pornography Hurts You:

The Internet offers extensive knowledge, but it does not teach values; and when values are disregarded, our very humanity is demeaned and we easily lose sight of our transcendent dignity. (Evangelization! Deacon Bob Killoren, 2007)

Pornography once was found only in the shadows of society. Today it has made its way into the American mainstream. Of even greater concern is how it has made its way into our homes through cable television and the Internet and even cell phones. You may think this trend is harmless, think again.

The effects of pornography damages society. It desensitizes us as individuals. It breeds a culture of violence that comes from inappropriate sexual expression. It also creates an ever-escalating climate in which the guardians of popular culture, especially those in the entertainment industry, continuously push the boundaries of proper behavior. Pornography's effects have chipped away at the decency of our society in the past 30 years.

The following are just a few effects:

- Increased incidents of rape and other sexual assaults.
- Increased exploitation of children.
- Increase in the abortion rate.
- Increase in extra-marital affairs and divorces.
- Increased vulgarity on television, in magazines and in film.
- Increasing coarsening of American culture.

Consider this...

- **47%** of Christian families say pornography is a problem in their home.
(Focus on the Family Poll, October 1, 2003)
- **9** out of **10** children ages **8** to **16** have viewed pornography on the Internet, mostly unintentionally.
(London School of Economics January 2002)
- The average age of first Internet exposure to pornography is **11**-years-old.
(Internet-filter-review.com)
- The largest consumer of Internet pornography is **12-17** year olds.
(Various sources, as of 2007)

Most people think of Internet pornography as naked, airbrushed women or “pin-up girls.” This view is hopelessly naive. In addition to graphic sex between two adults, every imaginable sexual deviation is displayed, involving violence, animals, excrement and group sex, to name a few.

Parents may mistakenly believe that the “bad” or hard-core pornography requires a credit card to obtain, and thus children are not likely to view it. While porn sites do invite you to use a credit card to get deeper into the site, many of them have numerous free sample images. Innumerable free sites offer the same content found on the larger “play sites,” as well as countless homemade pornography galleries.

Parents often have a rose-colored view of what their kids may or may not do. In one sense, that's good--kids need to know their parents will error in the direction of trust rather than mistrust. But their parents must not let that trust lull them into complacency.

Archdiocese of Omaha
Anti-Pornography Task Force

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A teenager's hormone-fueled curiosity is an extremely powerful force; you should not underestimate its power to draw your "good kid" into the darker side of the Internet. Many parents never imagined this could be a problem in their home-- until it was. (Internet Guide for parents, By Stephen Sweet. Family Research Council, 2007)

Warning Signs of Inappropriate Internet Usage:

- Your child is hiding CDs, disks or flash drives and spending excessive amount of time on the Internet.
- Your child quickly changes/ turns off the computer when you enter the room.
- Your history files or "cookies" have been deleted (meaning someone is trying to remove traces of their accessed Web sites).
- Your child is often on the computer late at night and is more distant, withdrawn and secretive.
- Watch for behavioral changes, unusual language use, inappropriate sexual knowledge, or lost interest in areas of their life that previously had great meaning.

What We Can Do:

Set ground rules with your children and post them near the computer. The most effective way parents can shape their childrens' Internet behavior is to supervise their online activity. Model good behavior in your Internet usage.

- **Teach them to avoid sites that ask for personal information.** It may be shared publicly without your knowledge. Instruct your child to never give out his or her name, address or any other personal information on the Internet/social networks (facebook, myspace, etc.).
- **Put your computer in a common room** (family room, kitchen, etc. – NOT a bedroom) where the computer screen is clearly visible at all times and use a filtering device.
- **Be sure to ask your children about their online friends** just as you would their other friends.

- **Limit the time spent on the computer.** If you think your child is spending an inordinate amount of time at the computer, limit the time spent on Internet activities. If there is a concern about your child being on the computer after hours, consider "putting the keyboard to bed" with you when you retire at night.

Make it clear to your child what he/she should do if he comes across an inappropriate web site.

1. Instruct them to leave the computer and find their parent.
2. Remain calm. Observe the image yourself so you will know what your child has been exposed to.
3. Try to figure out what went wrong (how they fell into this particular site).
4. Exit out of the site and have a discussion with your child about what he/she saw and how to avoid a reoccurrence.
5. Let your child know he/she did the right thing in finding your help. Be aware that eliminating computer privileges may discourage your child from finding adult help.



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Be aware of other places your child may access pornography. Computers and cell phones at friends homes, the library, in school or after school care programs may not have appropriate Internet safeguards.

Remind your children not everything they read on the Internet is true. Internet chat rooms have become a stalking ground for sexual predators who give phony information about themselves in order to lure unsuspecting young people.

Take the checklist for a Spiritually Healthy Family. <http://archkck.org>

Ask Your Child the Following Questions:

1. Does the programming, dialogue, images, music videos, or lyrics contain values you hold true?
2. Does it encourage you to overstep your personal or sexual boundaries?
3. Has it influenced your values regarding sexual activity outside of marriage?
4. Does it reflect the values of your friends?
5. How do these values compare/contrast with what has been modeled and taught at home?

(www.nationalcoalition.org/talkingpoints.asp)



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