

ETHI - Protection of Privacy and Reputation on Platforms such as Pornhub

My Name is Michelle Abel, I am writing you as a survivor of familial abuse and violence, that advocates for the exploited, marginalized, and oppressed.

At the age of 16, I started working and modelling. In modelling I was exposed to the exploitative side of the modelling industry ranging from unwanted advances in exchange for shooting opportunities, requests to attend private parties, explicit photo shoots and “promoters” from escort agencies. I eventually gave up modeling and pursued a career in education and banking.

Since the age of 19, I have been involved in women’s support and empowerment groups, charity work both in Canada and in the Caribbean.

Since 2013, I have been working with several Ontario NGO’s that provide direct support to victims and survivors of Human Trafficking, fundraising for major events, training and speaking at conferences on how to detect and respond to cases of human trafficking to frontline agencies, churches, and institutions.

I am committed to advocate for the exploited, marginalized, and oppressed. I have no plans to stop fighting for those who are trauma-bonded to traffickers and ending the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children.

Dear members of the Ethics Committee, ***you have an opportunity to act in the defense of the defenceless.***

The research on the impacts of commercial sexual exploitation and pornography to our society is incomprehensible and not properly documented. In addition, we have very limited research on the impacts of commercial sexual exploitation and pornography on the physiological development and behavior of the exploited, and its consumers. But according to the consensus in the scientific community, a [child brain is fully developed by the age of 25](#). And according to University of Montreal researcher Simon Lajeunesse PHD most boys seek pornography by [age 10](#).

So How does porn impact the brain and behavior’s? In Canada, I’m unable to find comprehensive Canadian research or statistics to reference and the only ones I found are from the United States

According to the [Intellectual takeout](#) website we can determine the following:

1. A [2014 study by the Max Planck Institute](#) found that men who frequently view pornography have decreased brain cells, specifically in the right caudate of the brain, making their brains smaller on average than those of men who do not view pornography.
2. According to the Huffington Post, [30 percent of the material streamed](#) on the internet is pornography.
3. Additionally, the Huffington Post also states that in 2013, the porn site YouPorn [streamed six times the bandwidth of Hulu](#).
4. Pornography has been shown to increase marital infidelity by 300 percent, according to [a 2004 study](#) in *Social Science Quarterly*.

5. Men who view pornography are [more likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction](#) than men who do not use pornography, according to researchers from the Naval Medical Center of San Diego.
6. Among men between the ages of 18 and 24, [70 percent visit internet porn sites](#) at least once per month as stated by United Families.
7. Though many people use porn to “relax” or “relieve stress,” it can cause more [mental health issues](#) in both men and women, according to a study published in 2013 by researchers in the University of New Orleans’ psychology department. These include [anxiety, depression, insecurity, and body image issues, to name a few](#).
8. Though many porn users begin using porn which aligns with their morals and sexual tastes, porn, over time, has the ability to [alter sexual tastes so that the users believe the acquired tastes are natural](#). Thus, porn essentially rewires the brain with frequent use, according to a study published in the Journal of Adolescent Health in 2000.
9. Porn users who are addicted to porn have damaged and shrunken frontal lobes, [according to this 2013 study](#) published on the National Institute of Health’s website. This can impede problem-solving abilities, researchers said.
10. Both the [Department of Justice](#) and the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) say that [pornography is a serious problem](#).
11. Studies report that people who use porn [feel less love for their spouse/partner](#) and are more dissatisfied with their spouse/partner than people who do not use porn, according to the psychology department at the University of Arkansas.
12. Despite the high numbers of people who use porn, [only 29 percent of Americans think that using porn is moral](#). Some 23 percent of women say that using porn is moral, compared to 35 percent of men. The numbers come from a study conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute.
13. It is estimated that between 66 percent and 99 percent of people in the porn industry have herpes, [as stated by this former porn star](#). In addition, she says the industry is rife with physical abuse.
14. [One in three women](#) use pornography at least once per week, according to a study conducted by Marie Claire.
15. The porn industry is [very profitable](#), as stated by List25. It makes more than the NFL, the NBA, and the MLB *combined*. From a news perspective, it makes more than NBC, CBS, and ABC combined.
16. Studies have shown, according to Focus on the Family, that the average age at which a child is exposed to pornography is [eight years old](#).
17. Every day, there are [116,000 searches](#) for child pornography, according to United Families.
18. The more people use pornography, the more likely they are to believe that violence against women is acceptable, research suggests. [The study which drew this conclusion](#) also noted an increase in overall aggression that came with pornography use.
19. Pornography websites receive more traffic and visitors every month than [Netflix, Twitter, and Amazon combined](#), the Huffington Post reported.

20. People who view porn regularly are [less likely to get married](#) than those who do not. This is because users see porn as a substitute for marital sexual gratification, according to a 2016 study published in the Eastern Economic Journal.

The only comprehensive research on the impacts of pornography on the brain of adults and children was done by Gary Wilson, a former anatomy and physiology teacher, who is an expert in the neurochemistry of addiction, mating, and bonding. Gary has an informational website, [Your Brain On Porn](#) (YBOP). He also has a famous TEDx talk titled, [“The great porn experiment.”](#) The video has been viewed more than 10 million times because of its fascinating and well-researched breakdown on how porn is changing our generation.

The second reference is from [Fight the New Drug](#), they focus more on the behavior and societal impacts of porn. In the following YouTube Video [“Porn Fuels The Demand For Sex Trafficking — Truth About Porn”](#). The researchers found links between Pornography and Human Trafficking. They also done a three-part breaking down the science and detailing personal accounts of how porn impacts the brain, the heart, and the world. You can watch it for free in their [website](#).

The third reference is from the 2008 inquiry done by the Senate committee of the Australian Parliament on the [“Sexualization of children in the contemporary media”](#) in Chapter 3 “Effects of premature sexualisation on child development” they concluded “TV, Internet, radio, music videos, music lyrics, movies, magazines, sports media, video-games and advertising increasingly portray sexualised images which promote narrow and unrealistic ‘standards’ of physical beauty and sexual interest...Females are more often than males portrayed in a sexual manner and objectified...Males are raised in a society that glorifies sexually aggressive masculinity and considers as the norm the degradation of women.

3.4 Much of the evidence relevant to term of reference (b) thus did not distinguish between advertising and content produced for/directed at children and that which is produced for/directed at adults. Indeed, the majority was concerned with the latter. Narrow or stereotypical portrayals of body type, beauty and women were commonly identified as the major source of sexualisation of children.” [\[0\]](#)

In their report they concluded the following: “The Committee found significant community concern about the sexualisation of children. From parents, through to community groups, non-government organisations and expert bodies, there was agreement, backed by thorough research and evidence, that sexualisation of children is excessive, harmful, and must be addressed.” [\[1\]](#)

This report done by the Senate committee of the Australian Parliament can be used by Parliament as a framework to address the Sexualization of Children in the contemporary media, and study the impacts on the physiological development and behavior of the exploited, and its consumers.

Additional Steps to address Online Pornography, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission could study the British example of blocking by Default Access to Online Pornography unless the Internet Customer explicitly opts-in [\[2\]](#). In the Article I reference Mr. Tom Copeland, chairman of the Canadian Association of Internet Providers states that “And then every once in a while, somebody decides, 'Well, we need to take this further, it needs to include general pornography sites' —which aren't illegal — 'it needs to include hate sites.' It needs to include any number of sites that somebody all of a sudden has a burr in their britches about. [\[2\]](#).

We should remind ourselves that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission already apply standards that broadcasters must comply regarding Sexually explicit content. In the 2014 National Post article, the CRTC issued a broadcast notice saying “AOV Adult Movie Channel, XXX Action Clips and the gay-oriented Maleflicxx were all failing to reach the required 35% threshold for Canadian content” [\[3\]](#). If the CRTC is capable to enforce Threshold Standards for Canadian Pornography Content then the same agency will be capable to enforce and monitor the Internet Service Providers Default Blocking of Pornographic Content.

The committee should mandate that Internet Service Providers provide their customers with easy to configure and "family friendly filters" in their internet services so Parents or Legal Guardians can determine what their children have access to or not. [4]

We also should mandate that "adult content providers" have an age verification mechanism on their platforms, in order to restrict the access to minors. [4]

I am well aware that a by "**Default Blocking of access to pornography**", "**Family Friendly Filters**" and "**Age Verification Mechanism**" are not the magic solutions but it will reduce the Minor's access to Online Pornographic content, as it already happens with our Cable television providers, where you have to Opt-In to have access to pornographic content.

Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, every individual in Canada enjoys the "Freedom of Expression" and "Freedom of the press and of other media of communication". These rights should not be encroached upon but, we also need to establish a reasonable limit to the unchecked abuse of these rights by individuals or corporations that disregard the harms caused by their actions or inactions.

The approach by the Canadian Supreme Court on free expression has been that in deciding whether a restriction on freedom of expression is justified, the harms done by the particular form of expression must be weighed against the harm that would be done by the restriction itself. [5]

Even with "Freedom of Expression" and "Freedom of the press and of other media of communication", no individual in Canada enjoys the unqualified right to facilitate or distribute pornography or facilitate the exploitation of women and children. [6]

Currently, we have a legal doctrine that can be applied to Internet Service Providers and Internet content creators and distributors, it is called "**Attractive Nuisance Doctrine**" - A legal tort doctrine which holds that person who has or creates any condition upon his own premises, or who creates such condition on the premise of another, or in a public place, which may reasonably be considered to be a source of danger to children, is under a duty to take such precautions as a reasonably prudent man should take to prevent injury to young children whom he knows visits there or who may come there to play. [7]

The Committee could mandate the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission with all necessary powers to ensure that Internet Service Providers and Internet adult content creators and distributors, take all necessary steps to ensure that their content abides by the above legal doctrine, because the services and content they provide is their property so therefor, they are responsible to ensure that the "**Dangers to Children**" is mitigate.

In order to create effective legislation, we need concrete science-based research done by independent bodies to understand the societal, physiological development and behavioral impacts of Pornography and Sexualization of children in the contemporary media, and it's impacts on Women, Children, Men and Families.

The issue at hand of balancing the Freedoms, Obligations and Rights that every Canadian enjoys is the job of Parliament. What I am advocating is that their right of viewership can not infringe on the rights of minors and trafficked individuals.

I would like to thank members of the Ethics Committee for the opportunity to present my thoughts and opinions.

Michelle Abel

Web Sources

[At What Age Is the Brain Fully Developed?](#)

[The internet porn 'epidemic': By the numbers](#)

[Pornography Facts: 20 that will shock you](#)

["The Scope of Child Sexual Abuse Definition and Fact Sheet"](#)

[Fight the New Drug](#)

[Pornography has its place, and it's a surprising one](#)

[Your Brain on Porn](#)

[Brain Heart World Presented by Fight the New Drug](#)

[Parliament of Australia Report on Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media](#)

[Predators and a pandemic: parents urged to protect children as online exploitation projected to rise](#)

[Why opt-in porn filters haven't arrived in Canada](#)

[ISPs to monitor child porn under proposed bill](#)

[ISPs must help police snoop on internet under new bill](#)

[The Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, to which was referred Bill C-22, An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service](#)

[Toughen ISP rules on child porn, advocate says](#)

[Internet Filtering Laws in the UK to Give ISPs Internet Blocking Powers](#)

[All porn sites to be blocked in Israel under new law that requires people to publicly ask for access](#)

[Your porn is not Canadian enough, CRTC warns erotica channels](#)

[Even with free speech, there's no unqualified right to distribute pornography](#)

Video Sources

[The great porn experiment | Gary Wilson | TEDxGlasgow](#)

[Porn Fuels The Demand For Sex Trafficking — Truth About Porn](#)

[Domestic Sex Trafficking - A Survivor's Perspective | Karly Church | TEDxOshawaED](#)

[I was sex trafficked for years. Brothels are hidden in plain sight. | Casandra Diamond | TEDxToronto](#)