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The Pornification of a Culture — What's Going on in the Office Next Door?

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The scourge of pornography is now so pervasive that it begins to define the culture at large. America is fast transforming itself from a society that allows and markets pornography into a culture that *is* pornographic. Boundary after boundary is being transgressed.

Adding insult to injury, courts have ruled that public libraries have no right to use filters that prevent viewing of pornography on public computers. Now, the marketers of pornography are looking to mobile devices and cell phones as the next frontier. There is no safe place in a society that embraces pornography as a major industry.

Just when you think you are past being shocked, *The Washington Times* now reports that pornography “is a major workplace problem in contemporary American society.” Just look at what the paper reports:

The porn-at-work phenomenon is pervasive enough, a 2007 survey by the American Management Association and The ePolicy Institute found, that 65 percent of American companies use porn-detecting software - a dramatic increase from 40 percent in 2001.

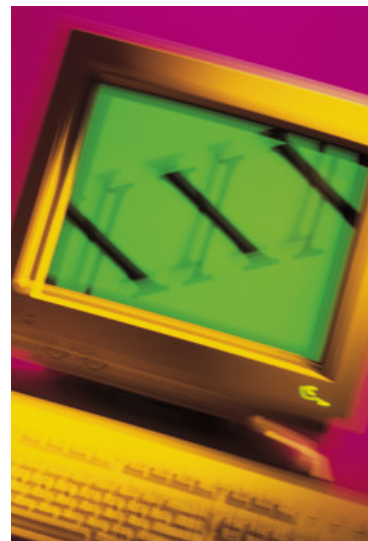
But the porn-detecting software is not preventing employees from viewing pornography. Look at this paragraph from the paper's editorial:

Employees circumvent this by using laptop computers, cell phones and other portable devices. Even with blocks and filters on employee computers, those who really want to spend part of the workday viewing pornography can do so largely undetected. Consider that Sex Tracker, an adult search engine, reports that 70 percent of pornography is viewed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. This gives a whole new meaning to the question: “What did you do at work today, honey?”

Just one salient fact within that paragraph is enough to arrest the attention. Seventy percent of all pornography is viewed during prime working hours — which means in the workplace.

The paper's editorial concern was directed, first of all, to an investigation undertaken by Sen. Charles Grassley, ranking Republican member of the Committee on Finance. Sen. Grassley has demanded that the National Science Foundation, an agency funded by the U.S. government, explain why its own report indicates that the use of government computers within the agency to view pornography is now a “systematic problem.”

According to the report, one employee used 20 percent of his time viewing pornography at work. Sen. Grassley seems most concerned about the involvement of government monies here. After all, as the paper argues, “Certainly Americans do not want their tax dollars being used to pay employees for indulging their sexual fantasies.”



The paper also cites the danger of litigation when porn use could become an issue among employees. As the editorial states, “the workplace has become a center of pornographic voyeurism among some segment of American society.”

The Washington Times offers considerable insights in this editorial, looking far beyond the legal concerns to the moral issues at stake. Pornography is indeed a “squalid and perverted industry,” and porn at work is surely “a virulent cancer” that demands to be confronted.

Pornography is not just about dirty magazines and movies, or even just about the Internet and one-click-away sexual fantasies. Pornography now threatens to redefine the way this society views sex itself. The real danger here is that pornography becomes so pervasive that it is no longer distinguishable from the other images and messages transmitted and received within the culture.

A society that embraces pornography as a constitutionally protected form of “speech” will have a hard time policing sexually explicit material. When courts rule that filtering pornography from public computers in a public library is unconstitutional, the public library is transformed into a pornographic playground. When employees spend company time (and government funds) viewing pornography at work, the moral character of the entire enterprise is at stake.

The real cost of pornography cannot be reduced to lost hours of labor. The far larger issue is the cost to the nation’s soul. When public libraries become places parents do not let their children go, something precious is lost.

The real cost of pornography is measured in broken lives, broken marriages, broken children, and broken dreams. In reality, the true cost is spiritual, for pornography destroys the soul.

This one fact is enough to prove just how immense this problem is — 70 percent of pornography on the Internet is viewed at work. That explains why so many employees are distracted. It also underlines the fact that pornography is truly a spreading cancer. It will not easily be forced into retreat.

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