

Sexuality Online

Last updated: 20260406

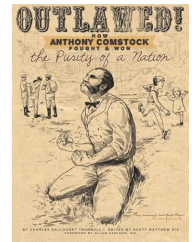
Covers a multiplicity of issues including educational, legal, psychological-psychiatric, including (in alphabetical order):

- Adult sexual solicitation of adolescents (“*ephebophilia*”) & children (“*pedophilia*”)
- Children & adolescents
 - Education about sexual issues
 - Exploitation as “models” in pornography
 - Exposure to pornography online & its impact on development
- Exchange of sexual texts & images by couples or others (“sexting”)
- Paraphilias and “deviant” sexuality
- Physical portrayal of gender: Stereotyping of females & males
- Pornography
 - Use of online pornography: demographics, reasons for
 - Addiction to sexual materials online?
 - General impact of porn upon adults & their relationships?
- Sexual Minorities/LGBTQ+: Education & socialization
- Solicitation for sexual meeting among adults

A Brief History of Sexually-Oriented Media in the United States in the 20th Century (Claude AI, 20260406)

Early 20th Century: Suppression and the Comstock Era

The century opened under the shadow of the **Comstock Laws** (1873), which banned the mailing of obscene materials and were vigorously enforced into the 1900s–1920s. Anthony Comstock and his New York Society for the Suppression of Vice prosecuted publishers, artists, and birth control advocates alike. Even medical literature on sexuality could be seized. “Stag films” — short, silent pornographic movies — existed underground as early as the 1910s, circulated privately among men's clubs and brothels, but were entirely illegal and clandestine.



1920s–1940s: The Code Era and Underground Culture

Hollywood's early talkies often featured suggestive content, but public backlash led to the **Hays Code** (formally adopted and enforced from 1934), which strictly regulated depictions of sexuality, nudity, and “immorality” in mainstream film. Some of the materials banned in movies by the Hays Code included:

- **Sex and Morality:** All scenes of passion, “perversion” (homosexuality), seduction, rape, and white slavery. Married couples were often required to be shown in separate beds.
- **Crimes & Violence:** Any depiction of detailed murder techniques, brutality, etc. Criminal could not be shown as sympathetic, and law enforcement officers could not be shown killed by criminals.
- **Language & Conduct:** Profanity (including words like “darn” and “cripes”) was banned. The sale of women, sexual relations between different races (miscegenation), and excessive drinking were prohibited.

Burlesque theater thrived in urban areas, offering a legal but risqué alternative.

1950s: The Kinsey Reports and Early Liberalization

Alfred Kinsey's landmark studies — *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953) — shocked the public by revealing how common various sexual behaviors actually were. **Playboy** launched in 1953, featuring nudity in a glossy, respectable package aimed at the mainstream. Legal challenges also began cracking the Comstock framework: in *Roth v. United States* (1957), the Supreme Court ruled that obscenity was not protected by the First Amendment, but simultaneously narrowed the definition of obscenity, making prosecution harder.



1960s: The Sexual Revolution

The 1960s brought a dramatic cultural shift. The Hays Code collapsed, replaced in 1968 by the **MPAA rating system** still used today. Courts issued landmark rulings protecting increasingly explicit material — *Grove Press v. Gerstein* (1964) helped legitimize serious erotic literature like *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Tropic of Cancer*. Nudist magazines, "roughie" exploitation films, and adult paperbacks proliferated. The decade closed with the **Stonewall Riots** (1969), which began reshaping how gay and lesbian sexuality was represented in media.

1970s: The "Porno Chic" Era

The 1970s saw the remarkable mainstreaming of explicit film. *Deep Throat* (1972) and *Behind the Green Door* (1972) played in mainstream theaters and were reviewed by major newspapers — a phenomenon dubbed "**porno chic**." The Supreme Court's *Miller v. California* (1973) established the three-part **Miller test** for obscenity (still the legal standard today; see below for greater detail), which gave more power to local communities to regulate content but did not stop the industry's growth. Adult bookstores and peep shows became fixtures of urban life. The **President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography** (1970) controversially recommended decriminalization, though President Nixon rejected its findings.



1980s: The VHS Revolution and the Meese Commission

The **home video cassette** (VHS/Betamax) transformed sexually-oriented media more than any court ruling. Pornography moved from theaters into homes, creating a massive, private market. The industry exploded in scale. In reaction, the **Meese Commission** (Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, 1986) took a far harder line than the 1970 commission, linking pornography to harm and spurring federal prosecutions. The decade also saw growing debate about pornography from feminist perspectives — figures like Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon arguing it was inherently harmful to women, while others like Gayle Rubin defended sexual expression.



1990s: The Internet Age Begins

Cable television brought sexually explicit content into homes through channels and pay-per-view. The **internet** began transforming everything by mid-decade — free and subscription-based adult content became accessible in ways never before imagined, making regulation increasingly difficult. Congress attempted to respond with the **Communications Decency Act** (1996), but the Supreme Court struck down its anti-indecency provisions in *Reno v. ACLU* (1997) as unconstitutional. The decade closed with the industry enormous, legal, and rapidly moving online.

Throughout the century, the history of sexually-oriented media was fundamentally a legal and cultural tug-of-war between expression and regulation, shaped by technology, shifting moral norms, court decisions, and political movements. Each decade's battles set the stage for the next.

“SEXTING”

= “electronically sending and receiving sexually suggestive and flirty messages or seminude or nude images and videos” (Beckmeyer, Herbenick, & Eastman-Mueller, 2022, p. 48).

- Prevalence: Different estimates in different studies, 2012 to 2026
 - **10-17 year olds**
 - 9.6% of **10-17 yo** (N > 1500) had appeared in or created nude or nearly nude images or received such

- images in past year (Mitchell et al., 2012)
- “Among 39 studies (with 110,380 participants [ages 10-17 years]) the mean prevalence for sending and receiving sexts were 14.8% and 27.4%, respectively, with prevalence rates increasing in recent years and as youth age. The prevalence of forwarding a sext without consent and having a sext forwarded without consent were 12.0% and 8.4%, respectively.” (Madigan et al., 2018)
- > 600 **high school students**: 9 to 27% had sent a sexually explicit cell phone picture; 24 to 65% had received such a picture (Strassberg et al., 2013).
- In a more recent study of 3,466 U.S. teens 13-17 years old (Patchin & Hinduja, 2026) the extent of sexting was larger than seen in earlier studies.

About **one-third of teens in the sample had participated in sexting by either sending (24%) or receiving (32%) explicit content, or both**. Among those, undesirable outcomes frequently occurred. Specifically, **about half of the teens who sent a sext had it shared with others without their permission or were subject to sextortion**. Differences were observed across different demographic groups. **Youth who sent a sext to someone who was not a current romantic partner were 13 times more likely to have their image shared without their permission and five times more likely to be the target of sextortion** compared to youth who only sent sexts to current romantic partners.
[Abstract, emphases added]

○ **US College Students**

- 413 American students at a Texas university (101 males, 312 females [Age: M = 20.7 (3.64) years]). (1) Had sent sexts (55.0% all; 51.5% M; 56.1% F); (2) Had received sexts (40.9% all; 46.6% M; 42.3% F); (3) Had been the victim of nonconsensual dissemination (15.0% all; 3.0% M; 18.9% F) (Gassó et al. 2021)
- “Using data from 2069 romantically involved, randomly sampled, college students (53.8% female; mean age = 20.29; 74.6% White non-Hispanic; 83.0% heterosexual) we examined the prevalence of sexting and sexting interest with current romantic partners. Most students sexted with their current partners (55.3%), 8.9% did not sext but wanted to, 1.9% did not sext but believed their partners wanted to, and 33.8% did not sext and did not want to. (Beckmeyer et al., 2022, Abstract)
- “Examined sexting [no sexting, sent only, received only, reciprocal) among 2,160 U.S. college students. 76.6% had engaged in sexting (primarily reciprocal). Participants who had engaged in sexting generally evidenced higher depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and compulsive sexual behaviors. Effect sizes were largest on compulsive sexual behavior indicators. Marijuana use was the only significant substance use predictor of reciprocal and “received only” sexting compared with no sexting. Compulsive sexual behavior remained a robust positive correlate of sexting compared with non-sexting participants regardless of sex and sexual identity. Most other mental health indicators became nonsignificant correlates of sexting in nonheterosexual participants and were weak positive correlates in heterosexual participants. Marijuana use remained the only significant substance use predictor of reciprocal and “received only” sexting when adjusted for sex and sexual identity. We conclude that sexting is only weakly associated with depression, anxiety, and sleep problems but robustly associated with compulsive sexuality and marijuana use” (Borgogna et al. 2023, Abstract)
- **Emerging adults in 2020**: “The prevalence of sexting behaviors worldwide among individuals 18 to 28 years old were **sending 38.3%, receiving 41.5%, and reciprocal sexting 47.7%**. The prevalence of **non-consensual forwarding of sexts** was also frequent in emerging adults at **15.0%**” (Mori et al., 2020)

Age of Sexual Consent in the United States

Federal Law: 18 years of age

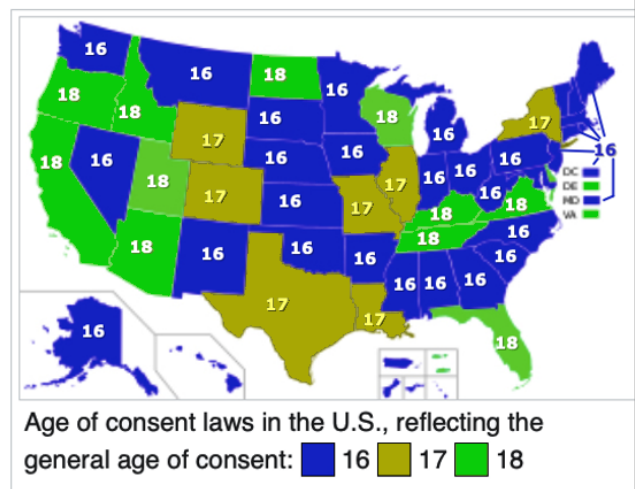
- Sexual acts involving interstate travel, international travel, or on federal property
- Any form of communication between states soliciting sex with an adult even if both are in the same state.

Individual States (as of 2026; data from {W} et al.)

18 years of age: AZ, CA, DE, FL, ID, ND, OR, TN, UT, VA, WI

17 years of age: CO, IL, LA, MO, NE, NY, TX, WY

16 years of age: Remaining states



Drouin et al. (2013) Study

- 253 college students (105 M; 148 F) Age = 19.47 (SD = 154); 79% Caucasian, 8 % Hispanic, 6% African-American, 3% Asian, & 4% biracial or other. For those in a relationship, 95% indicated they were heterosexual. Data collected online.
- “In terms of content, we found that sending sex texts (words only) was the most popular form of CMC-S. Fewer of our young adults reported sending sex pictures or videos or engaging in phone sex, and only a very small percentage had engaged in live (e.g., Skype) sex. That said, one third to one half of the sample had sent a sex picture or video message to a relationship partner. Overall, the content of these messages tended to be less explicit (e.g., nearly nude) than more explicit (e.g., nude or masturbating); however, a fair number of young adults had sent pictures of themselves nude (about one in five) or masturbating (about one in ten) to relationship partners. Although the prevalence rates are much higher than those found in youth samples (Mitchell et al., 2012), the trends are somewhat similar in that more people reported sending sexual content that was less explicit” (p. A29)

Delevi & Weisskirch (2013) Study

- 304 undergraduate students (126 M; 179 F); Age: M = 22.6 yo (Range: 18-30); 58.6% Latino, 16.4% Non-Hispanic Caucasian, 12.2% Asian; 6.9% African-American; 5.9% other; 2 public universities on the West Coast; data collected in online survey.
- “In this sample, 75.7% (N = 230) of the participants sent a sexting text message, and 67.4% (N = 205) sexted sexual propositions. 45.7% (N = 139) of the participants had sent a sexting a photo, 43.7% (N = 133) sexted a photo of their underwear, and 28.9% (N = 88) sexted a nude picture of themselves... the overall sexting scores suggest that 89.1% (N = 246) of the participants have engaged in at least one of the sexting behaviors” (p. 2590)
- “Results suggest that men and those in romantic relationships are more likely to sext, particularly through text messaging. Those in relationships and women indicate requiring greater commitment in a relationship in order to engage in sexting. Extraversion predicted sexting with text messaging, and neuroticism and low agreeableness predicted sexting—sending a sexually suggestive photo, a photo in underwear or lingerie, and a nude photo. Problematic cell phone use also predicted engagement in sexting with text messages. *Certain aspects of sexting may appeal as a risky behavior for those individuals with personality traits towards high-risk activities.*” (Abstract, emphasis added)

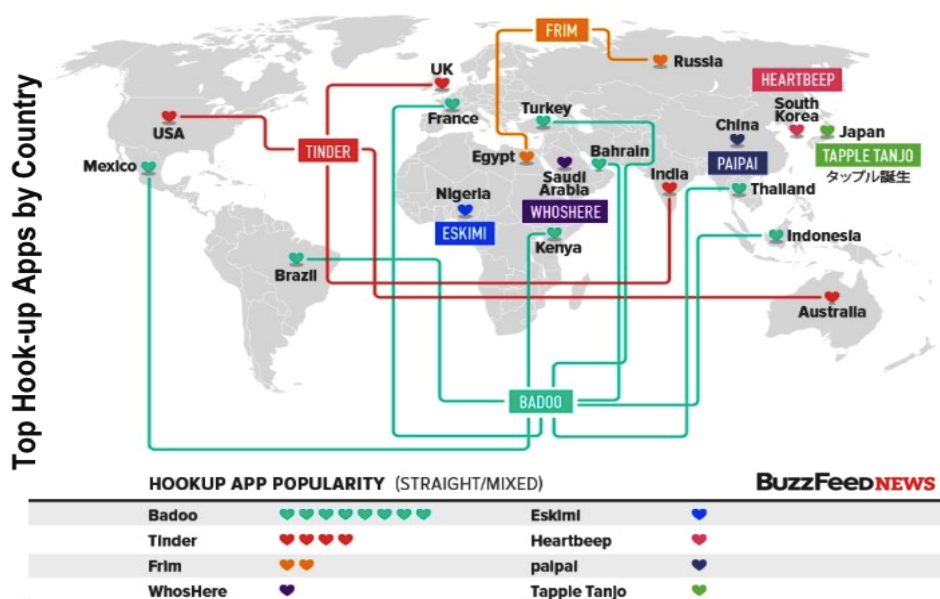
Some questions

- What are the relational issues raised by sexting? What is the nature of the relationship?
- Digital media tend to be “sticky,” that is, they tend to remain and it is hard to get rid of digital productions. What are the implications of sexting in this light?
- What legal questions are raised by sexting?
- What are the psychological questions raised by sexting?

Dating-Social Networking Services • “Hook-Up” Apps & Websites

The dating market is largely a duopoly between **Match Group** (Tinder, Hinge, OkCupid) and **Bumble Inc.** (Bumble, Badoo).

- **Tinder:** The "mega-star" of dating with **630 million lifetime downloads** and approximately **75 million monthly active users**. It remains the top-grossing dating app globally.
- **Badoo:** Often overlooked in the U.S., it is the largest dating network by registered users (**over 500 million**) and dominates markets in Europe and South America.
- **Bumble:** The primary rival to Tinder in North America, known for its "women-first" messaging model. It has surpassed **100 million total users**.
- **Hinge:** Marketed as "designed to be deleted," it has seen massive growth as users shift toward seeking long-term relationships. In 2026, it frequently ranks as the #2 top-grossing dating app, occasionally sliding past Bumble.
- **Grindr:** The leading platform for the LGBTQ+ community, maintaining over **27 million members** and a dominant position in the queer dating segment.



The challenge of dealing with sexual apps in the 21st century: An example from Grindr

Among the multiple hook-up apps available today, one of them, called Grindr, is geared toward gay and bisexual men; it runs on iOS and Android, and “the app makes use of mobile devices’ geolocation, a feature of smart phones and other devices which allows users to locate other men who are nearby. This is accomplished through a user interface that displays a grid of representative photos of men, arranged from nearest to farthest away. Tapping on a picture will display a brief profile for that user, as well as the option to chat, send pictures, and share one’s location.” {W}

Taken from a *Psychobabble* podcast, hosted by Tyler Oakley and Korey Kuhl, episode 84, 4/19/2016, the following transcript consists of a message sent to the hosts which was read out loud in the episode. Please read it yourself and consider what you might be able to say to the writer:

“My friend, D, is only 14 and he recently downloaded Grindr and a couple of other hook-up apps. He is lying about his age and meeting men old enough to be his dad. He also has taken money to meet guys a couple of times. A close family friend saw him on the app and told his mom. I don’t think she understood the danger of it and doesn’t want to come across as homophobic and try to stop him. I’ve spoken to him and told him how dangerous this is but he doesn’t listen to me. I then asked my mom and their friends to speak to him as they probably know more than I do and have been on Grindr themselves. He still doesn’t listen and goes to men’s houses. Do you

have any advice about what to do? How to meet boys his own age rather than using hook-up apps? Thanks a lot. Michelle A.”

What sorts of question and concerns come to mind as you read this? How might you begin to respond to Michelle’s request for advice?

- What principles of either morality or psychological health might guide what you’d say (let us acknowledge that what this boy and his potential partners are doing is illegal and not debate that issue.)?
- How should the boy’s mother respond?
- What about the friends of the boy’s mother?

Disorders Related to Sexuality in the DSM-5-TR (APA, 2022)

Sexual Dysfunctions (p. 477 {[W](#)})

- Include (1) delayed ejaculation, (2) erectile disorder, (3) female orgasmic disorder, (4) female sexual interest/arousal disorder, (5) genito-pelvic pain/penetration disorder, (6) male hypoactive sexual desire disorder, (7) premature (early) ejaculation, (8) substance/medication-induced sexual dysfunction, (9) other specified sexual dysfunction, and (10) unspecified sexual dysfunction.

Gender Dysphoria (p. 511; previously “Gender Identity Disorder”: Transgender identity? {[W](#)}). The material below is taken from my 2023/2026 notes for BSC/PSY 340

The terms "sex/sexual" and "gender" have traditionally been closely related and even considered by many to be identical. However, over the last half-century, the very close identification of sex and gender has been challenged. Without attempting to survey the entire range of issues and concerns, the understanding adopted here in a biopsychological context reflects how the psychological and psychiatric disciplines (and, in particular, the most recent DSM-5-TR [APA, 2022]) approach these terms. Thus, as noted in APA (2022):

- "[S]ex and sexual refer to the biological indicators of male and female (understood in the context of reproductive capacity), such as in sex chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, and non-ambiguous internal and external genitalia" (p. 511, emphases added)
- "Disorders of sex development or differences of sex development (DSDs) included the historical terms hermaphroditism and pseudo hermaphroditism. DSDs include somatic intersex conditions such as congenital development of ambiguous genitalia (e.g., clitoromegaly, micropenis), congenital disjunction of internal and external sex anatomy (e.g., complete androgen insensitivity syndrome), incomplete development of sex anatomy (e.g., gonadal agenesis), sex chromosome anomalies (e.g., Turner syndrome; Klinefelter syndrome), or disorders of gonadal development (e.g., ovotestes)" (p. 511)
- "Gender is used to denote the public, sociocultural (and usually legally recognized) lived role as boy or girl, man or woman, or other gender. Biological factors are seen as contributing, in interaction with social and psychological factors, to gender development. Gender assignment refers to the assignment as male or female. This occurs usually at birth based on phenotypic sex and, thereby, yields the birth-assigned gender, historically referred to as “biological sex” or, more recently, “natal gender." (p. 511)
- "Transgender refers to the broad spectrum of individuals whose gender identity is different from their birth-assigned gender. Cisgender describes individuals whose gender expression is congruent with their birth-assigned gender (also nontransgender). Transsexual, a historic term, denotes an individual who seeks, is undergoing, or has undergone a social transition from male to female or female to male, which in many, but not all, cases also involves a somatic transition by gender-affirming hormone treatment and genital, breast, or other gender-affirming surgery (historically referred to as sex reassignment surgery)." (pp. 511-512)
- Individuals ranging in age from early childhood through adolescence into adulthood may experience significant incongruence between the gender they were assigned at birth and their currently experienced/expressed gender. Further, this incongruence may lead to significant distress in such individuals.

In the current DSM-5-TR, these individuals may be diagnosed or described as having "gender dysphoria" (this term replaced the older term "gender identity disorder".)

- Note that gender dysphoria is not directly equal to transgender identity.
- The prevalence of gender dysphoria is very hard to estimate precisely. The DSM-5-TR proposes that “[s]elf-identification as transgender ranges from 0.5% to 0.6%; experiencing oneself as having an incongruent gender identity ranges from 0.6% to 1.1%; feeling that one is a person of a different sex ranges from 2.1% to 2.6%; and the desire to undergo medical treatment ranges from 0.2% to 0.6%.” (p. 515).
- Zucker (2017) notes, “Recent studies suggest that the prevalence of a self-reported transgender identity in children, adolescents and adults ranges from 0.5 to 1.3%, **markedly higher than prevalence rates based on clinic-referred samples**” (Emphasis added).

Paraphiliac Disorders (p. 779, Paraphilias {[W](#)})

- “The term *paraphilia* denotes any intense and persistent sexual interest other than sexual interest in genital stimulation or preparatory fondling with phenotypically normal, physically mature, consenting human partners” (p. 685). It is not rare for two or more paraphilias to be diagnosed in the same person. The paraphilia must cause distress or impairment for it to be diagnosed as a disorder.
- Types
 - Anomalous Activity Preferences
 - *Voyeuristic Disorder* (spying on others in private activities)
 - *Exhibitionistic Disorder* (exposing the genitals)
 - *Frotteuristic Disorder* (touching or rubbing against a nonconsenting individual)
 - *Sexual Masochism Disorder* (undergoing humiliation, bondage, or suffering)
 - *Sexual Sadism Disorder* (inflicting humiliation, bondage, or suffering)
 - Anomalous Target Preferences
 - *Pedophilic Disorder* (sexual focus on children)
 - Interest in and/or actions involving prepubescent child or children (generally < 13 years old)
 - Individual is him/herself ≥ 16 years old & at least 5 years older than the child or children (Note: a 16- or 17-year-old adolescent involved with a 12- or 13-year old is not included in this criterion)
 - ≠ “Ephebophilia” which is adult sexual interest in post-pubescent children/adolescents. Ephebophilia is not listed as a mental disorder in the DSM-5, but IS illegal when the adolescent is under the age of consent.
 - *Fetishistic Disorder* (using nonliving objects or having a highly focused specific focus on nongenital body parts)
 - *Transvestic Disorder* (engaging in sexually arousing cross-dressing)

Obscenity vs. Pornography

Public vs. Private Morality & Law

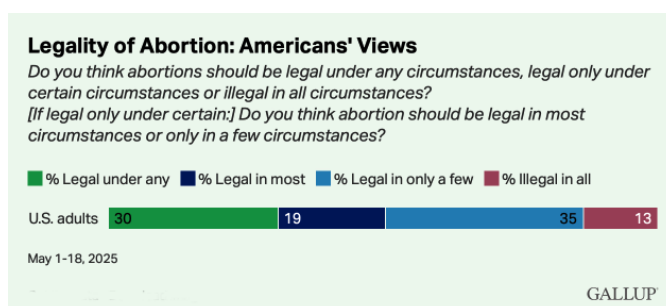
- Throughout history human societies have always functioned within commonly agreed-upon moral or ethical guidelines for what is permitted in public spaces (as well as in private). These guidelines can be grouped under the label of “public morality.” Often such guidelines have taken the form of specific laws, e.g., against public drunkenness, gambling, etc. These often deal with issues involving human sexuality and reproduction. So, too, even some behaviors that take place within the home or “in private” have been subject to public scrutiny or regulation (e.g., protection of children against sexual abuse by family members).
- Note, though, that there is a difference between public morality and the law. As Mooney (1983) argues, “not everything which is outside the strictures of the penal code is morally permissible; neither should everything that is morally wrong be made criminal” (p. 45). Indeed, where a community such as a nation has decided that

some form of behavior is morally tolerable, it may be detrimental to justice for laws to ban such behavior(s).

- The last century has seen a broad change in the nation's understanding of what constitutes **public** morality. This does not mean that everyone in the United States agrees with these changes. Certainly, a large proportion of the adult population of the country disagrees with some behaviors that are now understood as either moral and/or legal. Consider the following contrasts

Illegal or Morally Unacceptable in 1930	Legal or Morally Acceptable in 2026
Abortion	√ Abortion [Significant challenge; see below*]
Sale or purchase of alcohol	√ Sale or purchase of alcohol
Same sex behavior in private	√ Same sex behavior in private
Mixed race marriage	√ Mixed race marriage
Same sex marriage	√ Same sex marriage
Suicide	√ Suicide (for medical reasons in some states)
Pornography	√ Pornography
Consensual sex between related persons (incest)	still not acceptable
Sexual relations between children & adults	still not acceptable
Obscenity	still not acceptable

- * In June 2022 in the case of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the US Supreme Court overturned the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which had made abortion a constitutional right, a decision upheld in 1992 in the case of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. The *Dobbs* decision leaves the right for abortion up to the individual states. Although 62% of American adults did not approve of the *Dobbs* decision to overturn *Roe* in June 2022, there remain deep divisions across political, religious, and generational groupings about the morality and the legality of abortion (Pew Research Center, 2022)



- Amidst these multiple changes (and a few continuing moral prohibitions) lies not only a changing sense of what is proper behavior, but, equally, what is the nature of public vs. private itself. Over the past century, the legal scope of privacy and the right to privacy has expanded enormously.

Obscenity ≠ Pornography in US Law

An overview of past decisions of the United States Supreme Court in regard to obscenity and pornography (up to 2002) can be found online at this PBS site:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/porn/prosecuting/overview.html>

- 1st Amendment to the US Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or **abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press**; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances”.
- OED* Definition: “1. The character or quality of being offensively indecent, lewdness; an instance of this, *esp.* an obscene expression. 2. The character or quality of being horrible, offensive, or morally repugnant, etc. Also (as a count noun): an extremely offensive or objectionable gesture, statement, event, etc.

- Obscenity is a category of speech that is not protected by the 1st Amendment to the Constitution according to the ruling in *Roth v. United States* 354 U.S. 476 (1957)
- The prohibition against the production, distribution, or sale of sexual materials in media form comes under the laws of obscenity (not pornography). Federal obscenity laws are specified in the United States Code: 18 USC § 1460-1470 & 2252B&C. Note that Federal law does not make the possession of obscene materials (except for the depiction of minors) illegal *per se*.

Two famous examples of obscene materials eventually ruled legal by the US judicial system.

- “*Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (popularly known as *Fanny Hill*) is an erotic novel by English novelist John Cleland first published in London in 1748. Written while the author was in debtors' prison in London, it is considered "the first original English prose pornography, and the first pornography to use the form of the novel".{W}
- “*Ulysses* is a modernist novel by Irish writer James Joyce. It was first serialised in parts in the American journal *The Little Review* from March 1918 to December 1920 and then published in its entirety by Sylvia Beach in February 1922, in Paris. It is considered to be one of the most important works of modernist literature...In *United States v. One Book Called Ulysses*, U.S. District Judge John M. Woolsey ruled on 6 December 1933 that the book was not pornographic and therefore could not be obscene, a decision that was called "epoch-making" by Stuart Gilbert. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the ruling in 1934. {W}
- **The U.S. Supreme Court established the test that judges and juries use to determine whether matter is obscene in three major cases: *Miller v. California*, 413 U.S. 15, 24-25 (1973); *Smith v. United States*, 431 U.S. 291, 300-02, 309 (1977); and *Pope v. Illinois*, 481 U.S. 497, 500-01 (1987). The three-pronged *Miller* test is as follows:**
 - [**Prurient Interest Test:**] Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests (*i.e.*, an erotic, lascivious, abnormal, unhealthy, degrading, shameful, or morbid interest in nudity, sex, or excretion);
 - [**Patently Offensive Test:**] Whether the average person, applying contemporary adult community standards, finds that the matter depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way (*i.e.*, ultimate sexual acts, normal or perverted, actual or simulated, masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sado-masochistic sexual abuse); and
 - [**Lacking Serious Value Test:**] Whether a reasonable person finds that the matter, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
- Any material that satisfies this three-pronged test may be found obscene. (CEOS, n.d.)
- Note that the Supreme Court has issued some further rulings on obscenity and pornography, primarily focusing on digital content, child safety, and age verification. A major recent ruling is *Free Speech Coalition, Inc. v. Paxton* (2025), which upheld a Texas law requiring websites with sexually explicit content to verify the ages of their users.
- Outside the United States, significant efforts to verify internet age include strict, mandatory, document-based ID checks, facial biometric scans (age estimation), and credit card verification. The UK and European countries are leading these moves through, for instance, the Online Safety Act and Digital Services Act, targeting social media access, adult content, and online gaming.

Pornography

- Pornography “is the explicit portrayal of sexual subject matter for the purpose of sexual arousal. Pornography may be presented in a variety of media, including books, magazines, postcards, photographs, sculpture, drawing, painting, animation, sound recording, film, video, and video games. The term applies to the

depiction of the act rather than the act itself, and so does not include live exhibitions like sex shows and striptease.” {W}

- Child pornography ([US Dept. of Justice Citizen’s Guide to Federal Law](#), accessed 20140429) is, by definition, obscene at the federal and state levels.
 - Images of child pornography are not protected under First Amendment rights and are illegal contraband under federal law.
 - Additionally, “*New York v. Ferber*, 458 U.S. 747 (1982), was a landmark decision of the US Supreme Court, unanimously ruling that the First Amendment right to free speech did not forbid states from banning the sale of material depicting children engaged in sexual activity, even if the material was not obscene” [Wikipedia, 20220503]
 - Section 2256 of Title 18, United States Code, defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct *involving a minor (someone under 18 years of age)*. Visual depictions include photographs, videos, digital or computer generated images indistinguishable from an actual minor, and images created, adapted, or modified, but appear to depict an identifiable, actual minor. Undeveloped film, undeveloped videotape, and electronically stored data that can be converted into a visual image of child pornography are also deemed illegal visual depictions under federal law.
 - Notably, the legal definition of sexually explicit conduct does not require that an image depict a child engaging in sexual activity. A picture of a naked child may constitute illegal child pornography if it is sufficiently sexually suggestive.
 - *Additionally, the age of consent for sexual activity in each state is irrelevant; any depiction of a minor under 18 years of age engaging in sexually explicit conduct is illegal.*
 - Federal law prohibits the production, distribution, reception, and possession of an image of child pornography using or affecting any means or facility of interstate or foreign commerce (See 18 U.S.C. § 2251; 18 U.S.C. § 2252; 18 U.S.C. § 2252A).
 - Specifically, Section 2251 makes it illegal to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct for purposes of producing visual depictions of that conduct. Any individual who attempts or conspires to commit a child pornography offense is also subject to prosecution under federal law.
 - “Although involvement with child pornography long pre-dates the advent of the Internet, the mass communication capabilities afforded by the Internet have exponentially increased the availability and accessibility of this material...resulting in an increase in child pornography offending over the last two decades” (Henshaw et al., 2015, p. 2).
 - Compared to those who have had direct physical sexual contact with under-age children, *child pornography online offenders* are more likely to be: younger, Caucasian, higher levels of education & employment, fewer romantic relationships, less likely to have been sexually or physically abused as children or have a substance abuse problem or have a criminal or sexual offense history; show somewhat more empathy for victims, have higher levels of emotional loneliness, passivity, and self-esteem as well as higher levels of sexual pre-occupation, sexual attraction to children, pedophilic fantasy, and use of sexual activity as a coping strategy. Evidence on overall mental health differences are mixed. (Henshaw et al., 2015).

Online Pornography: Heterosexual Male Consumers (Mikorski et al., 2017)

- Highest use among young adult men, 18-26 years old. 50% of these men view porn weekly and another 20% daily or every other day.
- Women are portrayed in heterosexual online pornography as sexually objectified images (props for male sexual pleasure, used for the male’s pleasure or involved in gang rape).

- Adolescent boys who consume higher levels of porn tend to view women as sex objects, hold to more traditional ideals of masculine pursuit of women, pay more attention to physical than personality traits.
- Some evidence that greater pornography use is associated with endorsement of the Playboy role, males holding power over women, and males acting in violent ways.

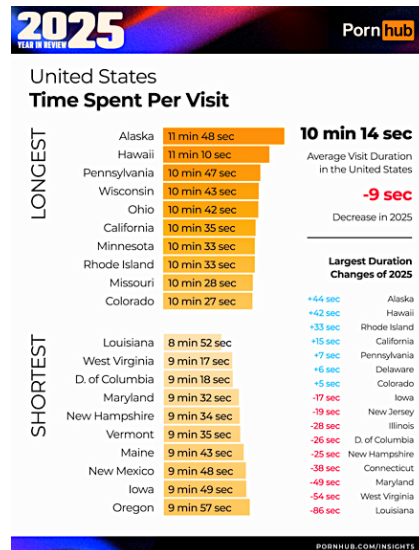
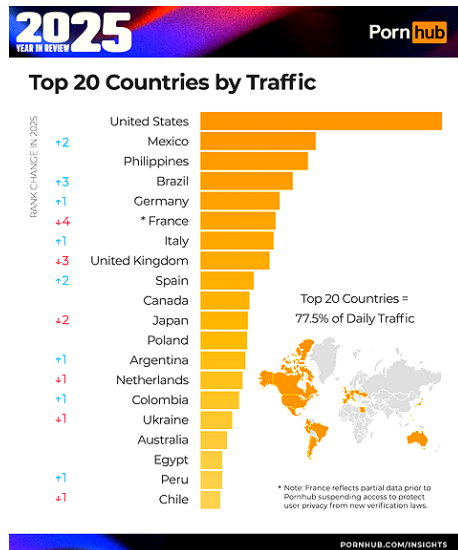
Campbell & Kohut (2017, listed in References) notes the incomplete state of research on the impact of pornography on interpersonal relationships (compared to the mass of research about individuals). It offers an excellent reference list of research studies and suggestions for additional areas for study,

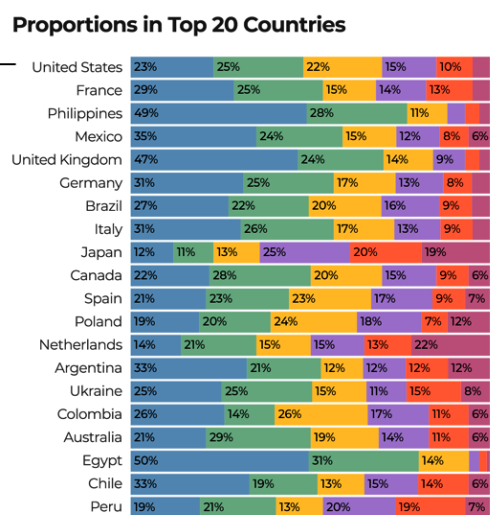
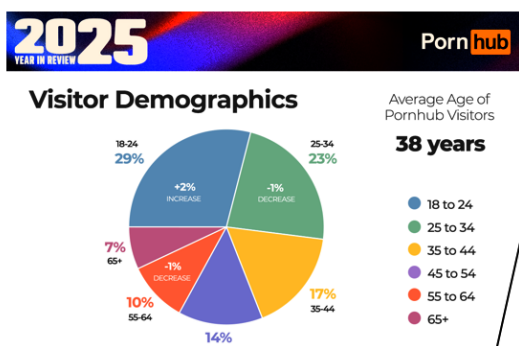
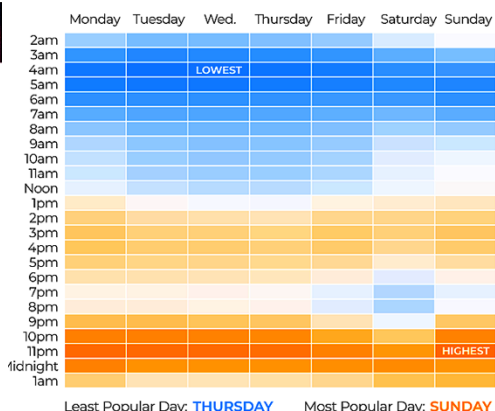
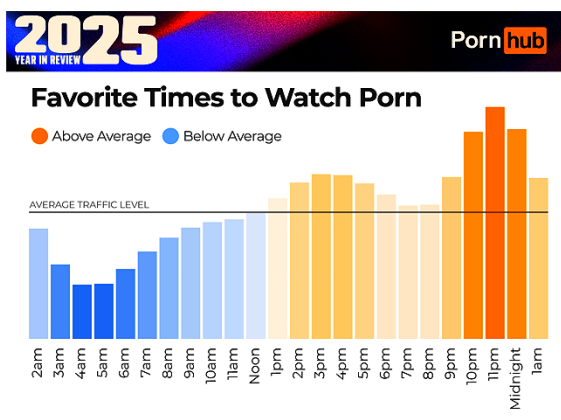
Online Pornography: Some Usage Data (<https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2025-year-in-review>)

Originally launched on May 25,2007, Pornhub is a Canadian-owned Internet pornography video-sharing website headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, one of several owned by adult entertainment conglomerate Aylo (formerly MindGeek / Manwin / Mansef). As of February 2026, Pornhub is the 22nd-most-visited website in the world and the most-visited pornography website. It is available to users in multiple languages: English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Japanese, Dutch, Czech, Simplified Chinese. In December 2020, facing strong legal challenges from European and other nations, Pornhub removed about 80% of its content. That decision reduced considerably the traffic of viewers coming to its website. Nonetheless, it is estimated that Pornhub receives about 1.133 billion visitors each month (see data below) [from Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pornhub>]

Pornhub publishes [detailed information](#) about who, where, and when visitors use their website. Here are the data for 2025

- 100 billion video views per year
- 100 million+ daily visits to Pornhub and 36 billion+ visits per year
- 120 million+ daily visits to the Pornhub Network including YouPorn & Redtube
- In 2025 worldwide: 62% of Pornhub visitors were men & 38% were women (in 2022: 74% of Pornhub visitors were men; 26% were women)
- In 2025 in the US, 72% of visitors were men and 28% were women
- Average age of Pornhub users in 2025 was 38 years old with 52% < 35years old (in 2022 60% < 35 years old)
- 89% of traffic comes from mobile devices including smartphones (87%) & tablets (2%). 11% of traffic involved desktop computers





References

American Psychiatric Association. (2022). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, 5th edition, Text revision*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association. [DSM-5-TR]

Beckmeyer, J. J., Herbenick, D., & Eastman-Mueller, H. (2022). Sexting with romantic partners during college: Who does it, who doesn't and who wants to. *Sexuality & Culture, 26*, 48-66. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09878-x>

Borgogna, N. C., Meyer, C. L., Trussell, M. R., Garos, S., & Kraus, S. W. (2023). Further understanding the correlations between sexting and mental health: considerations for sex and sexual identity. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 37*(3), 203-212. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2022.0312>

Campbell, L., & Kohut, T. (2017). The use and effects of pornography in romantic relationships. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 13*, 6-10. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2016.03.004>

Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS). (n.d.) Citizen's guide to U.S. federal law on obscenity. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved May 2, 2022 from <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-law-obscenity>

Delevi, R., & Weisskirch, R. S. (2013). Personality factors as predictors of sexting. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*, 2589-2594. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.06.003>

Drouin, M., Vogel, K N., Surbey, A., & Stills, J. R. (2013). Let's talk about sexting, baby: Computer-mediated sexual behaviors among young adults. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*, A25-A30. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.030>

Gassó, A. M., Agustina, J. R., & Gómez-Duran, E. (2021). Cross-cultural differences in sexting practices between American and Spanish university students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*, 2058. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18042058>

- Henshaw, M., Ogloff, J. R. P., & Clough, J. A. (2015). Looking beyond the screen: A critical review of the literature on the online child pornography offender. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1079063215603690>
- Hevern, V. W. (2012). How should we judge deviant behaviors in virtual worlds? [Review of *Transcending taboos: A moral and psychological examination of cyberspace* by Garry Young & Monica Whitty]. *PsycCRITIQUES*, 57(50). <https://collections.uakron.edu/digital/collection/p15960coll21/id/85390/rec/13>
- Madigan, S., Ly, A., Rash, C. L., Van Ouystel, J. V., & Temple, J. R. (2018) Prevalence of multiple forms of sexting behavior among youth: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatrics*. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2017.5314>
- Mikorski, R., & Szymanski, D. M. (2018). Masculine norms, peer group, pornography, Facebook, and men's sexual objectification of women. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, 18(4), 257-267. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/men0000058>
- Mooney, C. F. (1983). Public morality and law. *Journal of Law and Religion*, 1(1), 45-58. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1051072>
- Mori, C., Cooke, J. E., Temple, J. R., et al. (2020) The prevalence of sexting behaviors among emerging adults - A meta-analysis. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49, 1103-1119. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01656-4>
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2025) When sexting goes wrong: The extent of nonconsensual sharing and sextortion among U.S. teens. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 8, 572-579. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2025.12.253>
- Pew Research Center. (2022, July). Majority of Public Disapproves of Supreme Court's Decision To Overturn Roe v. Wade. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/07/PP_2022.07.06_Roe-v-Wade_REPORT.pdf
- Pornhub (2018, January 8). *2017 year in review*. Retrieved from www.pornhub.com/insights/2017-year-in-review
- Weiss, R. (2015). The Prevalence of Porn. *Psych Central*. Retrieved on May 3, 2016, from <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/sex/2013/05/the-prevalence-of-porn/>
- Young, G., & Whitty, M. (2012). *Transcending taboos: A moral and psychological examination of cyberspace*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Zucker, K. J. (2017). Epidemiology of gender dysphoria and transgender identity. *Sexual Health*, 14, 404-411. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1071/SH17067>