The 2019 ‘Dirty Dozen’ List

No corporation should profit from or facilitate sexual exploitation. However, many well-established brands, companies, and organizations in the United States do profit as major, mainstream facilitators of sexual exploitation. Since 2013, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE) has published an annual ‘Dirty Dozen List’ to highlight companies that perpetuate sexual exploitation—whether that be through sex trafficking, prostitution, sexual objectification, sexual violence and/or pornography. The ‘Dirty Dozen List’ has initiated thousands of actions targeting them to create change and policy improvements at Google, Hilton Worldwide, Verizon, Walmart, and the Department of Defense.

The ‘Dirty Dozen Campaign’ provides a tool that gives power to individuals who want a voice in the culture. Campaign participants have taken tens of thousands of actions, such as emails to executives and posts on social media. The results speak for themselves - the NCOSE has seen over 110 corporate policy improvements as a result of activism on campaigns such as the ‘Dirty Dozen Campaign’.


Continue reading to learn how you can make a difference in an ever-more sexualized culture.
Amazon, the world’s largest online retailer, is known for lightning fast shipping and selling virtually anything online. While their corporate policy ostensibly prohibits it from selling pornography, Amazon.com is promoting material that sexualizes children and normalizes the dehumanization and sexual commodification of women.

Items for sale on Amazon include child-like sex dolls, photography books with eroticized child nudity, and pornographic magazines and clothing items. Amazon thereby sets a standard among online retailers that it is acceptable to profit from sexual exploitation.

Their Kindle e-reader has sexually explicit content containing incest, babysitter- and group-sex themes. A mother demanded Amazon take action after her 12-year-old daughter accidently found sexually explicit material on Amazon’s website while searching for “free Kindle books for teenagers.” Her search resulted in titles like ‘Being Bad’ and ‘Bad Babysitter’.

Further, Amazon Prime produces original movies and TV shows that insert unnecessary gratuitous nudity, thus bringing softcore pornified content to mainstream entertainment. It provides faulty tools for blocking unwanted recommendations for sexually explicit programs.

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EBSCO

EBSCO Information Services offers online library resources to public and private schools (K-12), public libraries, and more. In its advertising, it promises “curriculum-appropriate content.”

While EBSCO has made significant improvements to elementary and middle school databases, high school databases still contain sexually graphic, non-academic, materials. Its Explora, Science Reference Center, Literary Reference Center, and other products, sometimes provide easy access to hardcore pornography sites and extremely graphic sexual content.

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Google

Google has failed to prioritize the digital wellbeing of its users through Google Chromebooks used in schools, Google Images, and YouTube.

Google Chromebooks are marketed to schools as “built from the ground up to be shared with an unlimited number of students.” Unfortunately, many schools distribute unprotected and unfiltered Chromebooks when Google could easily turn on a default setting for safer use by children.

Further, in a fraction of one second, Google Images turns up countless graphic pornographic results where penetration is clearly visible after using innocent search terms.

YouTube, the world’s largest video-sharing platform, regularly hosts pornography and sexual violence while Google shirks responsibility by forcing users to act at content flaggers.

Advertisements like Walt Disney Co. and AT&T are suspending advertising with YouTube over mounting concerns about the platform being used for the eroticization of children and for pedophile networking.

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Home Box Office Inc. (HBO), a division of Time Warner, is an American premium cable television network that has consistently produced content which normalizes rape myths, sexual violence, and commercial sexual exploitation.

When prostitution is normalized, it becomes more difficult for law enforcement to convict the sex traffickers, pimps, and sex buyers who are abusing women, men, and children. The Denver Police Department confirmed that when jury pools review cases of 17 or 25 year olds who have been exploited in prostitution or sex trafficking, the juries assume these victims are wholly autonomous and wealthy based on what they saw in TV shows and movies.

Such shows include Game of Thrones and The Deuce. Beyond the routine buying and selling of women (some of whom look like mere teenagers), the prostituted women in Game of Thrones and Westworld are subjected to sadistic violence, torture, and murder. Previous shows such as Cathouse and Hung normalized commercial sexual exploitation. Cathouse was essentially an extended commercial promoting the real-life pimp Dennis Hof and his Nevada brothel.

HBO’s GO home streaming service and app allow easy access to such exploitive content.

In addition, parental controls on HBO are ineffective, decreasing the odds of parents even using them, and increasing the odds that children will be exposed to sexually exploitative material.

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Massage Envy currently forces its customers to waive any right to bring forward claims against the company, even in cases of unlawful conduct. As of January 2019, the Massage Envy Franchise (MEF) Policy states in part: “At no time shall you have a right to, nor shall you, assert or bring any claim, demand, or legal action against MEF or any of its affiliates ... neither MEF nor any of its affiliates shall have any liability for (i) ... (iii) any claim based upon any alleged unlawful act or omission by the franchisee or any independently owned and operated massage envy® location.”

Many former employees report being trained to do all in their power not to see or any independently owned and operated massage envy® location.”

A number of cases against Massage Envy Franchise (MEF) Policy states that it does not make TV ratings clear when a user accesses Netflix through a third-party device, such as Apple TV, Amazon Fire, or Roku. Netflix allows a loophole for children to easily get around parental control features and it regularly recommends children’s content paired right next to NC17 and TV-MA content.

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Nevada is the only state in the U.S. with legalized brothel prostitution in more than 20 active brothels. Despite the myth that legalization assures safety, there remains clear evidence of sexual violence, racism, and socioeconomic disadvantages linked to prostitution.

As one woman being prostituted in two legal brothels in Nevada recounted, “We did not have the ‘independent contractor’ freedom to turn down buyers. Management required us to line up when someone arrived at the brothel. Once picked from the lineup, we would bring the sex buyer back to our room where he was allowed to do whatever he wanted with us. The violent-natured men I encountered in legal brothels are no different than the men buying sex on the streets. I cannot count the number of times I physically fought with men in the brothels and how many times I was raped because I was too scared to fight back.”

Conversely, a buyer stated, “I don’t hire prostitutes for the conversation... I get enough conversation at home... I pay a prostitute for a good time and that means using her mouth for my pleasure. I pay her to give me what I want and in my book when you pay the money, you’re the boss. I give the orders and she follows them. So if I want anal or something a little bit out of the ordinary, I get it. Otherwise, I’ll find someone else. There are plenty of whores in the sewer willing to do what I tell them for cash.”

Research indicates that many prostituted women, whether in legalized, unregulated, or criminalized settings, experience the constant threat and high rates of sexual violence and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Voters in Lyon County, Nevada voted 81% to keep prostitution legal. Yet, at the same time and because of demand, Nevada has the highest rates of illegal sex trade in the country -- 63% higher than the next highest state of New York and double that of Florida.

Further, a recent audit of Nevada’s legal brothels in Lyon County revealed that 30% of the women had red flags for being sex trafficking victims.

Its normalization of prostitution as ‘work’ for women, has turned Nevada into a magnet for sex traffickers and prostitution tourists. States and local
communities that profit from prostitution through sex-tourist revenues, like pimps, are complicit in sexual exploitation.

Instead of legalizing and embracing sexual exploitation, policies should work to combat demand (highly penalizing and reducing sex buyer behavior), while offering social services and job training opportunities to the women engaged in prostitution to help them exit the industry. To see further details on victimization, go to: https://endsexualexploitation.org/nevada/

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Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue

Since 1964 this magazine has sexually objectified women for sport and profit. This magazine sends the message that women’s bodies are for public consumption. Any retailer that displays and sells it is condoning the toxic culture of entitlement to the female body.

In 2015, the cover featured a model revealing a portion of her pubic area. After more than 30,000 complaints were filed, Safeway quickly moved the magazine away from checkout stands and stated that two-thirds of the cover would be out of sight. Patrons should not have to shop with exposure to soft-core pornography in the checkout line. These images are not about body positivity. They are about feeding male sexual entitlement, and the mega-corporation that profits from the hyper-sexualization of women.

In the aftermath of the sexual abuse scandals that have enmeshed Olympic sports, SI’s flagrant sexual objectification of women—including female athletes—is clearly mainstream misogyny.

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Steam® is a popular distribution platform, owned by Valve Corporation, which sells thousands of video games for PC, Mac, Linux box, mobile devices and televisions, in addition to connecting gamers with community forums on its website.

Despite hosting approximately 35 million users who are minors, Steam facilitates video games that promote themes of sexual violence, exhibitionism, and rape.

When video games include sexually graphic and degrading themes the user is not only a voyeur but an active participant in staging the scene. As our society suffers from the consequences of campus sexual assault, military sexual assault, and rising child-on-child sexual abuse, normalizing the sexual use and abuse of others in video games is irresponsible on the corporate and social level. It promotes the dangerous misconception that sexually exploiting others is a harmless game.

In June of 2018, after receiving backlash from gamers about working to remove rape-themed games, Steam instituted a new policy to “allow everything onto the Steam Store, except for things that it decides are illegal, or straight up trolling.” As soon as this new policy launched, the number of games tagged for “nudity” doubled from approximately 700 games to around 1,400 in just four months. Now there are over 2,000 games with this tag.

Currently, Steam provides “filters” to remove “mature content” but these filters are little more than irritants on the way to finding sexually graphic content.

When an individual signs up for a Steam account, they are not prompted to enter their age, making it impossible to gauge what age-appropriate content to display. “Adult Only” games
Twitter has done little to stem the overwhelming tide of sex trafficking, prostitution, and pornography accounts on its site. Media reports suggest that as many as 10 million Twitter accounts may include explicit sexual content.

Twitter prides itself as being a platform for “free expression” yet refuses to remove accounts posting likely advertisements for sexual slavery. Twitter is being used to advertise prostituted persons and sex trafficking victims for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation, often via pornographic images or webcamming. Sometimes these tweets include offers to meet in person for “escorting” services, and sometimes they ask users to follow and pay for nude images, videos, or live streaming.

It has been documented by law enforcement that pimps and sex traffickers often either coerce trafficking or child sexual abuse victims into making such social media or advertising posts or create the posts themselves in their victim’s name. This is what was found to happen on Backpage.com—the notorious classifieds ads website that was shut down by the Department of Justice for knowingly facilitating sex trafficking.

Further, Twitter has come under fire for the vast amount of cyber-based sexual harassment, revenge pornography, and even sexually exploited images of children on its platform. Pornography is inherently tied to cyber-based sexual harassment, whether in the form of revenge pornography, being spammed with pornography, or having one’s virtual identity co-opted by tags to pornography.

Twitter is filled with pornography that supports rape myths, normalizes adult-with-teen-themed and incest-themed exploitation, and reinforces degrading racially charged sexual stereotypes. These include ads for prostitution webcamming and in-person encounters.

When Tumblr announced they would no longer allow pornographic content, thousands of users flocked to Twitter attracted by Twitter’s loose policy. Disturbingly, recent news reports show that pedophiles have also begun migrating to Twitter, and no doubt use Direct Messages and other tools to share information about accessing child sexual abuse images (i.e., child pornography).

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Steam cont. from pg. 4
are not automatically included in their products—but other games with “Nudity” tags are included. Many of these titles not only contain “nudity” but also contain graphic sexual acts, sexual violence, sexualized child-like characters, and/or stripping and prostitution. These games are still advertised and made available with an easy click in the browsing section.

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United Airlines has experienced systemic outbreaks of inappropriate aircrew reactions to sexual harassment on their airplanes. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwanted sexual advances or attention including physical actions, speech, and viewing pornography in-flight.

While these actions have occurred on virtually every airline, United aircrews received ineffective training, evidenced by consistent failures in addressing sexually harassing actions, speech, or pornography-use.

Sara Nelson, a United Airlines flight attendant and president of the union, interviewed by CNN said, “In my 22 years as a flight attendant, I have never taken part in a conversation—in training or otherwise—about how to handle sexual harassment or sexual assault. If these policies are not elevated in airlines’ training, flight attendants are at a loss for what to do when confronting inappropriate—and sometimes criminal—behavior.”

Further, United Airlines appears to be chronically ill-prepared to address the growing problem of pornography use and the ensuing culture of sexual harassment that this fosters. United Airlines aircrews have resorted to giving alleged “hush” money or even openly joking about a case of sexual harassment. This leaves passengers vulnerable and isolated to endure a toxic sexual environment without recourse.

While most airlines have a written policy against in-flight pornography, adequate training ensures in-flight crews are consciously aware that policy exists and know how to enforce it.

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Signs of Progress

The Dirty Dozen Watch List has two purposes. It puts entities on notice so that, should they not demonstrate significant and sustained efforts to address their role in fueling sexual exploitation, they know they may be listed in a subsequent “Dirty Dozen” listing.

The Watch List also affirms an entity’s positive step towards addressing its role in sexual exploitation. However, because some such steps represent only small progress in terms of the entity’s total contribution to sexual exploitation, or because of doubt about the entity’s intent to carry through with its pledge, placement on the Watch List also signals lingering concerns about their determination to ending sexual exploitation.

Snapchat

Snapchat, the most popular social media app among teens, removed the function known as Snapcash. This feature allowed users to send money to each other. Snapcash was largely used to pay for prostitution and pornography on the app.

Snapchat also enabled in-app reporting so that users can finally report abusive and sexually explicit behavior. For example, many teens have been bombarded with unsolicited pornographic photos from other users. In-app reporting helps mitigate these malignant accounts. The removal of Snapcash, and the creation of in-app reporting, were some of the key requests NCOSE made when it put Snapchat on the 2018 Dirty Dozen List. Progress has been made in response to its concerns.

However, Snapchat should remove accounts that distribute porn ads and prevent Discover publishers from promoting sexually graphic material to minors.

U.S. Department of Justice

Most people are unaware that Federal law prohibits the distribution of obscene adult pornography on the Internet, on cable/satellite TV, on hotel/motel TV, in retail shops, through the mail, and by common carrier.

The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld obscenity laws against First Amendment challenges, explaining that obscenity is not protected speech, similar to other forms of unprotected speech like blackmail, defamation, or child pornography.

Yet the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) refuses to enforce existing federal obscenity laws. Prosecution of obscenity declined drastically under Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and halted completely under President Barrack Obama when in 2011 former Attorney General Eric Holder dismantled the Obscenity Prosecution Task Force.

Because obscenity laws have not been enforced, there has been a dramatic rise in illegal pornography production and distribution in the last decade. Hotels, and cable and TV companies, and internet pornography distributors, regularly sell pornography with themes including teenagers, incest, rape, sexual slavery, and extreme violence. Will DOJ step in?

Google

In the National Center on Sexual Exploitation’s (NCOSE) dialogue with Google over the years, one request has been that they make their built-in filter, Safe Search, much more visible.

Specifically, NCOSE met with Google executives and asked that Safe Search be put in the top right corner of Google Search Settings. While there are still other matters of concern, Google agreed to make the change and has done so.

Considering that a search of the word “sex” returns countless images of hardcore pornography in a fraction of a second, NCOSE considers this a great step forward. More users will now know the filter is available to them.
In recent years, Tumblr has gained a bit of a reputation as a hub for pornography. In 2017, a group of researchers studied the pervasiveness of pornography on the Tumblr site. At the time, Tumblr had approximately 130 million users, only 0.1% of whom uploaded pornographic content. However, this small contingent had a major impact – 22% of all Tumblr accounts followed this small pornography faction – thus consuming pornography on Tumblr. Another 28% of users did not follow a pornographic account, but followed one of the 22% that did – meaning 28% of Tumblr users were unintentionally exposed to pornographic content through features such as reblogging. In total, pornography appeared in the social media feeds of 50% of Tumblr users.

These numbers are more troubling once age is accounted for. Thirteen percent of users, who were unintentionally exposed, were under the age of 18. Even 10% of the consumers were under the age of 18. Therefore, 23% of Tumblr users who have been exposed to pornography through the site were under the age of 18.

Researchers found that, “on aggregate the gender distribution of consumers reflected the gender distribution of the overall population.” They found that primarily younger women viewed pornography whereas pornography use by men was prevalent at both younger and older ages.

Last November, it was discovered that child sexual abuse images (i.e. child pornography) were also being shared on the popular social media platform Tumblr. As a result, Apple removed the Tumblr app from their App Store.

In December, Tumblr decided the only way to truly correct this issue was to remove all pornographic content from their platform -- a major victory for ending exploitation. While this certainly seemed like a positive step forward, there remain two areas of concern.

**Tumblr’s definition of pornography may be too narrow.**

While much pornographic content will be removed, it is unclear whether drawings will remain. Tumblr is know for it’s fandom/fanfiction community – including many users, who post sexual drawings of their favorites characters from shows, movies, and cartoons.

**Tumblr will continue to allow written ‘erotica’.**

This is troublesome because often this content is highly pornographic and sometimes even more violent and degrading than visual pornography. It also tends to target a female demographic with messages that normalize or glamorize intimate partner violence – such as in the popular ‘erotic’ fanfiction later published in the novel After. In conclusion, this Tumblr decision to remove pornography must be monitored, since 50% of its users are exposed to this content, many unwillingly and Tumblr may allow a significant portion of degrading pornographic content to remain on the site.

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Many people may not be aware that Tumblr is currently owned by Verizon. Verizon profits from sexual exploitation by providing hardcore pornography as an Internet service provider, through its FiOS television packages, and as a wireless carrier. They have even defended child, rape, incest, and racist-themed pornography as a benefit to their customers.

Verizon has a history of not improving their products and lagging in social responsibility regarding removing pornographic content. Verizon was on the 2018 Dirty Dozen Watchlist. Verizon has recently taken a step toward curbing its participation in sexual exploitation by creating an opt-in system for new subscribers to FiOS IPTV services. Only those who actively seek out on-demand pornography will be exposed to it.

Watch to see if Verizon becomes a sexexploitation-free corporation.

[https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/progress-verizon/](https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/progress-verizon/)

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**TAKE ACTION**

Thank Tumblr for its decision to remove pornography and encourage them to restrict illustrated and written pornography as well. Go to:

[https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/tumblr-porn-ban/](https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/tumblr-porn-ban/)

Thank Verizon for their opt-in system and tell them to do more to protect consumers. Go to:

Informative Web Sites:
(Each contains information related to human trafficking)

Coalition to End Sexual Exploitation
https://endsexualexploitation.org/dirtydozen-2019/

Out of the Shadows
https://endsexualexploitation.org/boysandmen/

Porn Harms
https://pornharmsresearch.com

‘WhatsApp’ and Child Pornography

WhatsApp, owned by Facebook, is a popular messaging app with 1.5 billion monthly users with over 60 billion messages sent per day. Recently some WhatsApp users created ‘group chats’ to share child sexual abuse images (child pornography). While these groups are not searchable within the app, multiple third-party apps were created to discover and provide links to join these groups. Over 130,000 accounts have been banned for participating in these groups.

There are two major factors that contributed to this issue:
1. WhatsApp allows adult pornography on their platform. While child pornography is banned on WhatsApp, adult pornography is allowed. Permitting adult pornography opens the door to gradually more extreme content according to child pornography prosecutors. This is due to the need for escalation by addicted users. As platforms become a gathering place for consumers of pornography to share content, it is not a surprise that child pornography would eventually show up.
2. WhatsApp lacks proper moderation.

Facebook has a team of 20,000 employees monitoring content posted on its platform. However, none of these employees work for the Facebook-owned WhatsApp. Instead, WhatsApp has 300 employees monitoring its content. Can 300 employees monitor 60 billion daily messages? Automation also cannot solve this. WhatsApp must remove all adult content from its platform.

Tell ‘Steam’ to Implement These Four Improvements

• Create parental controls that are lockable, so that children are unable to see and access content the family determines inappropriate.
• Create an 18+ category on the website in which all games with any amount of nudity or sexual content are stored. Make this 18+ category disabled by default.
• Require an extensive opt-in to view 18+ content, so children are automatically protected.
• Reverse Steam’s “allow anything” policy and reject selling games that normalize or glamorize sexual violence and exploitation, no matter the age of the user.

Tell Major Retailers to Remove the ‘Sports Illustrated’ Swimsuit Issue

Fill out a form at the link below to send to executives at Target, Walgreens, and Safeway. Edit the e-mail with your additional thoughts. Go to: https://endsexualexploitation.org/sportsillustrated/