

Price of pornography

Usage should depend on statistics



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It's as easy as buying a magazine, watching a movie or pointing and clicking on the Internet. And it's as dangerous as strychnine.

Pornography is one of the largest industries in the United States — revenues from pornographic videos and magazines have grown from \$1 billion in 1970 to \$10 billion today, and show few signs of letting up.

The immorality of pornographic material is unquestionable, yet it still exists in convenience stores, television stations, movie theaters, and Web sites. It's been swept under the rug by many as something that's sick, but tolerable. The consensus seems to be that what people do in the privacy of their own homes is their business.

Sadly, the consequences of pornography are often overlooked. Countless rapes, incestuous acts and other sex crimes have a direct link to pornography.

It is time to seriously address and correct the problem. Monday is the first day of Pornography Awareness Week, so let's become aware.

■ In a study of 43 pedophiles, the Los Angeles Police Department found adult or child pornography (magazines photos, or videos) involved in 100 percent of the cases investigated.

■ According to computer bulletin board operators, 98.9 percent of the consumers of online pornography are men.

■ Eighty-five percent of revenue from pornographic magazines and videos goes into the pockets of organized crime.

■ There are more outlets for hard-core pornography in this country (an estimated 15,000-20,000) than McDonald's restaurants (about 9,000).

■ An estimated 70 percent of all pornography ends up in the hands of children.

■ States with the highest readership of "men's magazines" have the highest incidence of reported rape.

■ The newest generation of pornography allows personal computer users to control sexual situations on their computer screens, disrobe images of women and use simulated sex toys on them.

■ In addition to 800 numbers, many porn lines give customers the option of dialing an international phone number. Most of the lines are to small countries like the Republic of Sao Tome, an island off the African coast. Some of these countries have about 2,000 phones, half of them being answered for international porn calls.

■ Peep-show booths, which sometimes have holes built in their walls to allow men to perform anonymous sexual acts with one another, play a significant role in the spread of sexually transmitted

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diseases.

■ Playboy's electronic headquarters received 4.7 million hits (electronic visits) in a recent seven-day period.

Had enough? That's not all.

■ Mass murderer Ted Bundy admitted that he copied and was stimulated by pornography in his Florida killing spree.

■ In recent studies, Los Angeles compared its statistics on crime in areas of sexually oriented businesses with those of a survey in 1969. Businesses saw an increase in pandering by 340 percent, murder 42.3 percent, aggravated assault 45.2 percent, robbery 52.6 percent and purse-snatching 17 percent.

■ A recent study by FBI researchers of 36 serial killers revealed that 29 were attracted to pornography and incorporated it into their sexual activity, which included serial rape and murder.

■ 86 percent of all rapists admit to regular use of pornography, with 75 percent admitting actual imitation of pornographic scenes in commission of sex crimes. Free speech?

At what price?

Is it worth preserving this billion-dollar industry to ensure the continued exploitation of and violence against our nation's women?

Wake up to reality, it's not worth it.

Pornography isn't even an issue of free speech. Is an issue of taking advantage of a principle designed to protect the free expression of ideas. Is it OK to freely express utterly disgusting material that is linked so clearly to such heinous crimes?

I am quite confident the framers of the Constitution did not have Hustler, Playboy and the Spice Network in mind as they wrote the Bill of Rights.

Pornography is not free literature or speech. It is not entertainment. It is not trivial. It is not healthy.

It is trash.

It is poison to the mind, body and soul. It is demeaning to men and women alike, and it is a killer.

If the immorality of pornography doesn't change your mind, then maybe the facts will.

Motor control

Civility should be meaningful



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Oh, mother, I hate to tell you this. It pains my heart. I thought that college was supposed to educate people. Round them out. Make them thinkers.

But oh, here in the last months of my collegiate education, I can't help but feel saddened. It seems that civility and the ability to think before your mouth opens has gone away. I realize all the world is not like college, but I thought this place was supposed to be better.

It isn't. Someone — and you better be thankful for this — whose name and phone number I know but won't publish for all the world, decided to take it upon his drunk self to call one of my columnists and open his mouth long before he thought. And he did it with a group of laughing folks in his residence hall room.

And it isn't even over anything like race, or gender, or something important and fiery.

It's about the Dukes of Hazzard for crying out loud. But I believe his words should appear in print, so the good folks on East Campus can defend themselves against such wonderful thinkers like this joker.

This was transcribed from Todd Munson's answering machine Tuesday morning.

“Hey Todd, you dumb f****r. There are those of us out there that live in Burr Hall who I guaran-f*****g-tee that when the Dukes are on, every f*****g room is watching the f*****g Dukes. So let's see. No. 1, there's not incest. No. 2, they don't run 'shine anymore. OK? Now let's get your f*****g facts straight, understand? All right? You pissed a good share of us off. I hope to f*****g god that you don't have any f*****g classes on East Campus, because I guaran-f*****g-tee most everybody out here, including the professors, watches the Dukes. All right, I'll catch you later. Thanks buddy. See you.”

Wow. In one answering machine message, this gentleman managed to harken each and every negative stereotype any student has ever held about East Campus.

Does this bother anyone else? Have we, as the human race, gone from thoughtful, meaningful public debate about the day's issues to veiled threats and obscene tirades on people's answering machines?

Where did we go wrong? Is civility dead? Is discussion a thing of the past? Can we criticize anything without using a word that ends in -uck and doesn't start with s- or f-?

And aren't there more pertinent things to talk about? After the chalking bombardment of letters to the editor, they slowed to a trickle. And in that time, we discussed serious issues such as free speech and morality. We even ran a story about open strip night at a local club with a fleshy photo and no one batted an eye.

But mess with the Dukes and look out.

Have we replaced intellect with television? Shame on you.



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As I find myself getting older, I often feel like the last child out of bed for the Easter-egg hunt, who shrieks in horror when she finds nothing colorful nor sweet.

Especially along the lines of positive reinforcement about the future.

I guess it's time I learned to stop looking inside my shoes and under the couch. I'll find nothing but dust-bunnies there. I think even someone as oblivious to reality as Tony Robbins knows better. In fact, so does my 4-year-old cousin, but she also knows more about long division than I do.

So where to turn? I usually search for the one person who beats an offensive line-man-size chocolate bunny by leaps and bounds — the sage of all my situational trauma.

I call Mom. But the other day when I called her, no more than five minutes into our conversation, this wise woman threw me for a loop:

“Dad and I bought nursing home insurance yesterday. “How depressing is that?”

Whoa. Nursing home insurance? I didn't even know such coverage existed. I couldn't say anything in return.

For all the times I've heard that turnabout is fair play, I guess I'd have to call her statement good, considering I've put her and Dad through nothing short of Dante's ninth and final circle of hell.

But why, why, why must I hear this? I'm the one who should be planning for the future, not my

Nursing home insurance

Parents don't always have answers

parents! And why, why, why must my dear, sweet guru of life's lessons let me down by revealing that she's gearing up for the geriatric grand finale?

Now I have no idea what it is about parents' getting older. Some simply fear it, some laugh at it, some grow bitter about it, and some start regressing into children.

My parents have done all of the above.

For example, they first fell into a revived puppy-love phase. Once again they began acting like besotted, 16-year-old sweethearts. And that was fine, if not fantastic. I could only hope for that much someday.

Then they hit me with the “tacky factor.” (If any of you has older parents, you know what I'm saying. And grandparents may present an even greater example of this phenomenon.) This is when assorted ceramics and the Crock-Pot take decorative center stage, when striped carpet samples fall into the Ford as floor mats, when the outmoded Zenith consistently broadcasts aural artillery that makes it seem as though they're watching their programs on location.

Then came the morbid talks about The Will — the filing cabinet, the brown zip-up binder, the “arrangements.”

But even after all the heinous home-decoration and perfunctory pre-death preparation, which I casually pushed to the back of my mind.

At the mere thought of Nursing Home Insurance, of my parents in a nursing home — of nursing homes, period — I shudder to think.

Now I know it's me who is most afraid, not them. It's me who cannot accept my parents' growing

older.

Because now I find myself embarking on the journey I've always feared: the transmigration between child and adult, adult and child.

I know that in a few years — possibly less than a decade — I have to watch my parents become children, I have to tend to them as children, I have to be an adult, a parent.

I'm not ready for that. These people are my touchstones. These people are the only family I have. These people are the only parents I have.

And they will always be my parents.

But they won't always be around.

Not a colorful



MATT HANEY/DN