

PORN-Fed Issue

People will grow up and see adult images anyway



Ya gotta love America.

We're probably the only nation that is as open with gratuitous violence as we are ashamed of nudity and erotica.

For many months, the state of Utah had a giant billboard on I-80 that read "Real men don't use pornography."

Now, Utah is going one step further, as the state has created a "pornography czar." His or her whole job will be to "draft a new state definition of obscenity, help local governments 'restrict, suppress or eliminate' pornography and provide information 'about the dangers of obscenity,'" according to a story on <http://www.CNN.com>.

"The dangers of obscenity"? Are you kidding me? Has the whole state of Utah suddenly decided to overreact to this?

Maybe it's just that one phrase that really gets me — "the dangers of obscenity." Seriously, no four-letter words will jump you in a dark alleyway and take your wallet; there are no four-letter words that will break into your house and twist your children's minds at their very exposure, turning them into depraved juvenile delinquents.

It's an idea that's been around for centuries, ever since we started repressing carnal desire long ago. Go ask Socrates about corruption of the young.

This is something that never ceases to amaze me, how much people are disgusted by the very act that continues the existence of the species.

The 1960s were a revolt against the stifling 1940s and 1950s. And now it seems as if the pendulum is starting to swing back the other way. Pretty soon, we'll be repressed just like generations before us. I quake in fear ahead of time.

I've heard all the arguments before — they, too, are nothing new.

The main argument is that pornography leads to loss of innocence in youth. This is just plain stupid because the young grow up, and we can't do anything to stop that. Along with the loss of innocence of youth, however, comes the corruption of youth, according to this argument. To put it simply, "I can't control my children, so I want to make sure no one else can either."

The head of Utah's chapter of the conservative Eagle Forum, Gayle Ruzicka, had this to say, according to <http://www.CNN.com>: "Pornography has suddenly become a huge, huge business — beyond anything we ever imagined — and it's as addictive as drugs. People are asking for help."

Cliff Hicks is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Suuure they are. I'd bet money that 99 percent of the people asking for help are not the ones using the porn. The people who are asking for help are people who are offended by pornography for whatever reason and want to "help" other people.

Swell. Some of these people say they're uncomfortable with naked photos. They say pornography invades their houses, and that those who use it are depraved, violent, savage and despicable.

We love them right back. The raw fact is that these people are letting their children roam freely on the Internet. It's not a sanitized frontier, folks, and it hasn't been cleared for sensitive eyes.

If you want your children exploring the Internet, be prepared to cope with what they find. If you don't want that responsibility, don't let 'em on the machine.

Do you have the right to profanity? This is a tricky question, one which the Supreme Court has battled with over and over again. I took a civil liberties course, and I'm convinced there is no real answer, according to the law.

Someone once said, "I'd rather have my child watch a film of two people making love than two people trying to kill one another." That's one of the best statements I've heard on the matter.

But, more than that, if you want to have freedom, you have to be prepared to pay the price. That price is being uncomfortable with seeing and hearing things you don't agree with. It's difficult to take.

I love violent entertainment (I'm a John Woo junkie). I've looked at pornography before. (But then again, who hasn't?) I am not a violent person, nor do I think of women as sex objects.

If I did think of women as such, I'd blame advertising before I blamed porn. You watch a Victoria's Secret ad and tell me what they're selling. You watch a Victoria's Secret ad and tell me who they're trying to sell to.

Some of the measures in Utah make sense, like banning pornographic Web sites at public libraries, but the idea of having a "porn czar" is going to lead to encroachments on freedom of speech. Utah has to know that going into it.

America is changing, and some people simply don't want to change with it. While the Puritan people have every right to stay in their houses and avoid seeing this kind of thing, everyone else has the right to buy into it wholeheartedly.

One man's fear is another man's art.

Pornography is "dangerous" only when it's abused, like so many things in our nation. Anything can be used to excess.

Child pornography is already illegal and rightfully so — the argument that it's hurting children only holds water if the parents aren't doing their jobs.

If you can't do your job as a parent, you have no right to complain. If the person using the porn is an adult, you have no right to tell him or her that you know better.

So tell me again, why do we need a porn czar?

Ask women what they think of male Utah pornography czar



"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

— Declaration of Independence

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat."

— Rebecca West

I'll keep it short.

Utah wants a porn czar.

The state Legislature approved the czar position. The governor signed it into law.

The czar is in charge of establishing a definition of indecency in the state, helping to repress pornography and providing information on the dangers of obscenity.

Not long ago, Utah had a big billboard on its Wyoming border. It screamed: "Real Men Don't Use Porn," because men use porn exponentially more than women.

The Utah Legislature is 79 percent male. The Utah Senate is 84 percent male. The governor is male. And make no mistake, a male will be Utah's porn czar. And if it is challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Supreme Court, on which seven of the nine members are male, will preside over the case.

Despite our advances in gender equality, our Constitution remains under the control of the alpha universe. The powers that battle against porn are unilaterally defenders of a patriarchal construct. And those who would have their porn rights restricted are largely male users.

What do women think? Do they care? Or don't they? Do they mind being objectified? Is this, really, any man's business? How can we reconcile the differences in opinion?

And how do we differentiate between a woman's actual opinion and one offered to her through paternal edict?

Is freedom of expression the real issue? Or is this really a juvenile battle over whether or not men can jerk off to the sight of a naked woman?

Shouldn't these questions, of fundamental value to the relationship between men and women, be considered before we defer to the forefathers, who didn't even allow women to vote?

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Scott Eastman/DN