



The ABCs vs XXX

HOW TO ENSURE YOUR SCHOOL'S
ONLINE LIBRARY DATABASES
ARE PORNOGRAPHY FREE

————— SafeSchoolsSafeLibraries.com —————



NATIONAL CENTER ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The ABCs vs XXX

HOW TO ENSURE YOUR SCHOOL'S ONLINE LIBRARY DATABASES ARE PORNOGRAPHY FREE

A. Educate Yourself on the Impact of Pornography and about Online Library Databases

Online Library Databases

Schools are increasingly supplementing their curriculum by assigning students to use online research databases.

All of the databases available to K-12 schools checked by NCOSE contained sexually explicit materials, bypassing school filters, and sometimes showing up with innocent, unrelated searches.

Providers include:

- EBSCO Information Services
- Cengage
- ProQuest
- OverDrive

These databases market their products to schools and libraries as curriculum- and age-appropriate. The databases are primarily filtered based on lexile measurements, a system that evaluates the reading level of material. Pornography and sexually explicit material consists mostly of low-difficulty vocabulary words, which means that posts with pornography show up higher in the results for elementary and middle schools than college students or law students using the same services.

Learn more about these databases by visiting endsexualexploitation.org/ebSCO.



Pornography

The pornography of today has created an unprecedented epidemic of sexual harm. Children and young people are being exposed to violent and degrading content, which by default has served as their sex education.

Quick Facts about the Harms of Pornography:

- A 2014 study found that increased pornography use is linked to decreased brain matter in the areas of motivation and decision-making, impaired impulse control, and desensitization to sexual reward.¹
- Analysis of the 50 most popular pornographic videos (those bought and rented most often) found that 88% of scenes contained physical violence, and 49% contained verbal aggression. Eighty-seven percent of aggressive acts were perpetrated against women, and 95% of their responses were either neutral or expressions of pleasure.²
- A 2015 meta-analysis of 22 studies from seven countries found that internationally the consumption of pornography was significantly associated with increases in verbal and physical aggression, among males and females alike.³
- A study of 14- to 19-year-olds found that females who watched pornographic videos were at significantly greater likelihood of being victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault.⁴

For more research visit endsexualexploitation.org/publichealth.

The Risks to Children and Adolescents

A growing body of neuroscience reveals that adults are developing addictions to pornography, because pornography hijacks the brain's reward center in a way similar to drug addiction.⁵ A nationally representative online survey of 3,000 people reports that nearly half of young people (ages 13–24) actively seek out pornography weekly or more often.⁶ This is especially troubling given that research shows that adolescents are more susceptible to forming addictions than adults, because the dopamine neurons in their nucleus accumbens (i.e. the brain's pleasure center) are much more active and have an exaggerated plasticity in response to addictive stimulus.⁷ Thus, it can be said that a propensity for

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1. Simone Kühn and Jürgen Gallinat, "Brain Structure and Functional Connectivity Associated with Pornography Consumption," *JAMA Psychiatry* 71, no. 7 (2014): 827–834.
 2. Ana J. Bridges, Robert Wosnitzer, Erica Scharrer, Chyng Sun, and Rachael Liberman, "Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update," *Violence against Women* 16, no. 10 (2010): 1065–1085.
 3. Paul J. Wright, Robert S. Tokunaga, and Ashley Kraus, "A Meta-Analysis of Pornography Consumption and Actual Acts of Sexual Aggression in General Population Studies," *Journal of Communication* 66, no. 1 (February 2016): 183–205.
 4. Silvia Bonino, Silvia Ciairano, Emanuela Rabagliette, and Elena Cattelino, "Use of Pornography and Self-Reported Engagement in Sexual Violence among Adolescents," *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 3, no. 3 (2006): 265–288.
 5. Simone Kühn and Jürgen Gallinat, "Brain Structure and Functional Connectivity Associated with Pornography Consumption: The Brain on Porn," *JAMA Psychiatry* 71, no. 7 (2014): 827–834. Ji-Woo Seok and Jin-Hun Sohn, "Neural Substrates of Sexual Desire in Individuals with Problematic Hypersexual Behavior," *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience*, (November 30, 2015). Porn Study Critiques, "Current List of Brain Studies on Porn Users," (September 29, 2015) <http://pornstudycritiques.com/current-list-of-brain-studies-on-porn-users/> (accessed February 4, 2017).
 6. Barna Group, "The Porn Phenomenon: A Comprehensive New Survey on Americans, the Church, and Pornography," (2016).
 7. Frances E. Jensen with Amy Ellis Nutt, *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2015).



addiction is more strongly “hardwired” into the adolescent brain.⁸

This is particularly concerning, as studies have found that adolescents commonly stumble upon sexually explicit material while searching for information—a common activity of children and teens doing school work on library computers. For instance, one study found that 42% of adolescents reported exposure to pornography within the past year, with 66% of those teens describing such exposure as unwanted,⁹ and a recent survey found that 27% of young adults report first viewing pornography before puberty.¹⁰ This is alarming given that Internet pornography consumption by adolescents is associated with risky sexual behavior (that can have profoundly adverse effects), such as anal and group sex, hookups, multiple sexual partners, and substance use during sex.¹¹

Such outcomes are not surprising in light of research into how the human brain develops which shows that adolescents are not as readily able to access their frontal lobes—the portion of the brain that controls impulses and allows for rapid, smart decision making.¹²

Like other public health issues, pornography exposure does not impact all people the same way. However, for many, repeated exposure and use is correlated to problematic sexual behaviors that can lead to porn-induced erectile dysfunction, divorce or failed relationships, and sometimes sexually aggressive and violent behaviors. Research is also showing correlations to violence against women, increased STI rates, and increased sexual dysfunction among young men who consume pornography.

Additional Resources to Learn More:

- NCOSE developed a summary of research about pornography’s harms to assist you in preparing for meetings. The “Pornography & Public Health: Research Summary” is available for download at endsexualexploitation.org/publichealth.
- PornHarmsResearch.com – directed by NCOSE
- FightTheNewDrug.org
- TruthAboutPorn.com
- YourBrainOnPorn.com
- ProtectYoungMinds.com
- EducateAndEmpowerKids.com
- CultureReframed.org

8. Ibid.

9. Janis Wolak, Kimberly Mitchell, and David Finkelhor, “Unwanted and Wanted Exposure to Online Pornography in a National Sample of Youth Internet Users,” *Pediatrics* 112, no. 2 (February 2007): 247–257.

10. Barna Group, “News Conference on Barna’s New Study: ‘The Porn Phenomenon,’” (January 15, 2016) <https://www.barna.org/blog/culture-media/barna-group/porn-press-conference#.VrS9OrSJndl>, (accessed February 4, 2017).

11. Debra Braun-Courville and Mary Rojas, “Exposure to Sexually Explicit Web Site and Adolescent Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 45, no. 2 (2009): 156–162.

12. Jensen and Nutt, *ibid.*



B. Determine Your Local Policies & Scope of the Problem

Start in your home

- Ask your child about their experiences.
- Do they use online resources for research or homework assignments?
- Does your child have different login information than a parent does? If so, obtain your child's login information as well.
- Has your child ever seen pornography, or sexually graphic/explicit material or articles on those resources or at school? Do they know of anyone else who has? If so, have they told anyone?
- If your child has seen such material, reassure the child that they are not in trouble. In a calm and loving manner ask your child to tell you about what the material they encountered. Later write down the details.
- If your child indicates that they have not seen sexually explicit content via an online research database, this does not mean that sexually explicit content is not readily available on the database. It is imperative that you do your own search.

This is a great opportunity to have a needed conversation on these topics with your child and you'll be surprised what you learn. For tips about having this conversation, visit EndSexualExploitation.org/parents.

Test the online library databases on your own

Warning: during this process, you may be exposed to graphic sexual content. If you are not comfortable searching for the proof yourself, you can still move on to the next step. This is just helpful information, but it is not necessary. As an alternative you can use the proof on NCOSE's webpage available at endsexualexploitation.org/ebsco.

1. Login into the resource using your child's login.

Note: To the best of our knowledge, the system does not track the searches performed, so your child's account will not be flagged for inappropriate searches. After calling more than 150 schools to learn about their filters, we discovered that not a single school was tracking students' online behavior.

2. Enter the relevant database product. For instance, if your school uses EBSCO, there are several EBSCO products marketed as age-appropriate for K-12 children (i.e., Explora Primary, Explora Middle School, Explora High School, Science Reference Center, Points of View, etc). A search should be conducted on each individual product.
3. Next, conduct searches for key words and phrases. Possible search terms include: *pornography, porn, hot girls, kink, feminist porn, nudity, human reproduction, anal, BDSM, bondage, 50 Shades, sexual fantasy, sex toys*, etc. Also conduct searches using slang terms, the names of celebrities popularly known for sexual exhibitionism, as well as innocent search terms. Plan to spend a minimum of 30 minutes to an hour to conduct a thorough search of each database product.
4. Look for these kinds of material: articles glamorizing prostitution, normalizing group, anal, or public sex, linking to or showing pornography; written "erotica" (e.g., eroticized depictions of sexual violence, incest, teacher/student relationships), or other any other sexual content that is



inappropriate for the demographic it is marketed towards.

5. If you find sexually explicit content on the database, take screen shots as proof. If it's possible to take a screenshot that includes the logo or name of the school or library that is useful because it cannot be denied that the content was found on their systems.
6. Send any screenshots of proof to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation at public@ncose.com.
7. Consider sending the logins for your school online database to the National Center on Sexual Exploitation at public@ncose.com if you would like us to check the systems for explicit content instead of searching for it on your own.

Inquire about the local policies in your school

Questions to Ask:

- What is the school's exact policy on pornography and accessing pornography via the school's computer or Internet systems? Request a copy.
- How would the school know if this material was being accessed? Is it only if a student is observed accessing explicit material that it is reported?
- What happens if a student does access pornography via the school systems? Is there a reporting process? Are parents always notified?
- What training has the school and library staff received on these topics?
- What, if any, filters are on school computers or other electronic devices?
- Are school administrators aware of the sexually explicit material available via online library databases? *Note: You will likely have to show them proof. Share proof from your own local school. You can also share proof on the [NCOSE endsexualexploitation.org/ebSCO](http://NCOSE.endsexualexploitation.org/ebSCO) page.*
- Who holds the contract with the online database service provider, your local school, the school district, or your local library system who is sub-contracting to the school?
- Will your school reach out to the school district, or to the company itself, to demand that it filter sexually graphic material out of their search results?
- What steps will school administrators take to address this problem? Will they consider shutting off access to these databases until they are fixed?

C. Reminders

Take really good notes about your actions and your findings!

Be considerate and very patient. Even if you're upset about your child's experience or what you have found so far in your research, treat the school staff as allies and friends. We make considerably more progress in this way. Some individuals may be quick to go on the defense and shut down all communications on these issues, so we want to delay or totally prevent that from happening by using a calm demeanor.

Let us know how your efforts are going. We are happy to help with each step. Contact National Center on Sexual Exploitation at public@ncose.com or 202-393-7245.

