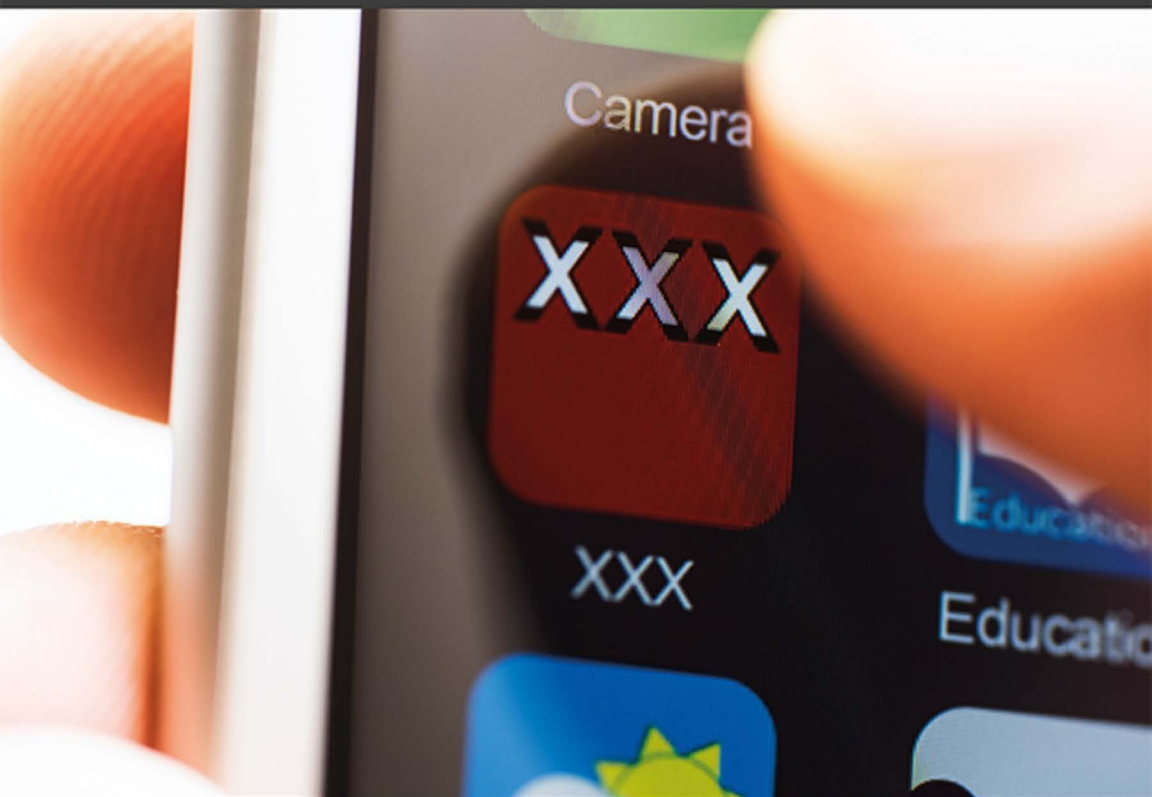


ADOLESCENCE AND SOCIETY



Youth and Internet Pornography

The Impact and Influence on Adolescent Development



RICHARD JOSEPH BEHUN AND ERIC W. OWENS

Youth and Internet Pornography

This much-needed book provides an in-depth, nonjudgmental look at how consumption of Internet pornography and sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) impacts the social, physical, emotional, and sexual development of adolescents.

Youth and Internet Pornography explores some of the most contemporary issues in this field, including deepfake technology, the long-standing conflict between legal challenges to pornography versus individual rights, and the interrelationship between adolescent use of Internet pornography and the larger culture. The text outlines how different generations interact with the Internet, as well as the related legal and ethical issues around working with these different age groups. Behun and Owens use clinical illustrations and guided practice exercises to contextualize theoretical constructs and research, providing a comprehensive guide to how those working with young people should consider the impact of Internet pornography in their day-to-day practice.

This book is essential reading for professionals and policy makers hoping to mitigate outcomes in counseling, youth and social work, and education, as well as supplementary reading for courses in human sexuality and development.

Dr. Richard Joseph Behun is Assistant Professor of Counselor Education at Millersville University. Dr. Behun is a licensed professional counselor, national certified counselor, and approved clinical supervisor. Dr. Behun conducts research and lectures in the areas of sexuality and the mandated reporting of child sexual abuse.

Dr. Eric W. Owens is Associate Professor of Counselor Education at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Owens is a licensed professional counselor and certified school counselor and has worked in college, school, and clinical settings. Dr. Owens has authored texts and presented nationally and internationally on a host of counseling topics.

Adolescence and Society

Series Editor: John C. Coleman

Department of Education, University of Oxford

In the 20 years since it began, this series has published some of the key texts in the field of adolescent studies. The series has covered a very wide range of subjects, almost all of them being of central concern to students, researchers, and practitioners. A mark of its success is that a number of books have gone to second and third editions, illustrating its popularity and reputation.

The primary aim of the series is to make accessible to the widest possible readership important and topical evidence relating to adolescent development. Much of this material is published in relatively inaccessible professional journals, and the objective of the books has been to summarise, review and place in context current work in the field, so as to interest and engage both an undergraduate and a professional audience.

The intention of the authors is to raise the profile of adolescent studies among professionals and in institutions of higher education. By publishing relatively short, readable books on topics of current interest to do with youth and society, the series makes people more aware of the relevance of the subject of adolescence to a wide range of social concerns.

The books do not put forward any one theoretical viewpoint. The authors outline the most prominent theories in the field and include a balanced and critical assessment of each of these. Whilst some of the books may have a clinical or applied slant, the majority concentrate on normal development.

The readership rests primarily in two major areas: the undergraduate market, particularly in the fields of psychology, sociology and education; and the professional training market, with particular emphasis on social work, clinical and educational psychology, counselling, youth work, nursing and teacher training.

Also in this series

Young People and the Care Experience

Julie Shaw and Nick Frost

Youth and Internet Pornography

The Impact and Influence on Adolescent Development

Richard Joseph Behun and Eric W. Owens

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/Adolescence-and-Society/book-series/SE0238

Youth and Internet Pornography

**The Impact and Influence on
Adolescent Development**

**Richard Joseph Behun
and Eric W. Owens**

First published 2020
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2020 Richard Joseph Behun and Eric W. Owens

The right of Richard Joseph Behun and Eric W. Owens to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN: 978-1-138-39052-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-39053-9 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-42314-7 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

This text is dedicated to all of the professionals out there working to help our young people navigate the digital age. It is not easy, and it is not always fun. But it is definitely worth it, and we thank you.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xii
1 Strange bedfellows: adolescents and Internet pornography	1
<i>An introduction to adolescents and SEIM</i>	2
<i>A few caveats</i>	4
<i>Terminology</i>	5
<i>Prevalence of adolescents' use of SEIM</i>	7
<i>An overview of the text</i>	8
<i>Conclusion</i>	9
<i>Summary</i>	10
<i>Additional resources</i>	10
<i>References</i>	11
2 The digital divide: strangers in a strange land	14
<i>Generations, defined</i>	15
<i>Digital immigrants and digital natives</i>	16
<i>Popular culture and adolescents</i>	19
<i>The digital native and the helping relationship</i>	21
<i>Conclusion</i>	25
<i>Summary</i>	25
<i>Additional resources</i>	26
<i>References</i>	26
3 Thoughts and values: pornography and attitudes and beliefs	30
<i>The Centerfold Syndrome</i>	31
<i>Permissive sexual attitudes</i>	32
<i>Gender-stereotypical sexual beliefs</i>	34
<i>Sexual self-development</i>	36

<i>From theory to practice</i>	38
<i>Approaches to intervention</i>	39
<i>Conclusion</i>	42
<i>Summary</i>	42
<i>Additional resources</i>	43
<i>References</i>	43

4 From thinking to doing: the impact on behavior and sexual decision making 46

<i>Sexual experience and casual sex</i>	47
<i>High risk behavior</i>	48
<i>Sexual aggression and victimization</i>	49
<i>SEIM and addiction</i>	49
<i>Conduct issues, substance use, and other mental health concerns</i>	51
<i>From theory to practice</i>	52
<i>Approaches to intervention</i>	54
<i>Conclusion</i>	56
<i>Summary</i>	57
<i>Additional resources</i>	57
<i>References</i>	58

5 Thoughts of the self: pornography and adolescent self-image 61

<i>Self-image and SEIM: understanding the relationships</i>	62
<i>Body image</i>	63
<i>Physical attractiveness</i>	66
<i>Genitalia and other sexual-related body parts</i>	66
<i>Self-esteem</i>	68
<i>Conclusion</i>	69
<i>Summary</i>	70
<i>Additional resources</i>	71
<i>References</i>	71

6 From the self to the world: the intersection of pornography and culture 74

<i>Age</i>	75
<i>Gender</i>	76
<i>Political ideology</i>	77
<i>Worldview</i>	78
<i>Religion</i>	79
<i>LGBTQ</i>	81

Conclusion 82

Summary 84

Additional resources 85

References 85

7 Potential pitfalls: legal and ethical issues in the field 88

Ethics, law, and pornography 89

Ethical issues and obligations for helping professionals 89

Laws and legal issues and obligations for helping professionals 92

Conclusion 97

Summary 101

Additional resources 102

References 102

8 What's new? Current issues in youth and internet pornography 104

Protected speech or protecting the public: government involvement in SEIM 105

Deepfakes: artificial intelligence and pornography 109

Sexting: "send nudes" 111

Conclusion 114

Summary 114

Additional resources 115

References 115

9 Conclusion: making sense of it all 118

Technology as a cultural construct 118

Attitudes, behaviors, and self-image 119

The intersection of culture and pornography 120

Ethics and the law 121

A primer on academic research 122

Rapid evolution: the technological boom 123

Conclusion 124

Summary 124

References 125

Index 127

Preface

I'm lost. I really am. Trying to work with teenagers in this day and age? I barely knew how to set the clock on my VCR and now we have smartphones and tablets and video game systems that are on the Internet. My TV is online! I don't even know how that happened; my kids set it up. The whole world is online, and man, it's not necessarily a good thing. I mean, yeah, the world is at our fingertips, but is it always a good thing to have access to every corner of the world?

The Internet isn't going anywhere. For some, this is a welcome relief (as if there was any question that the Internet *might* be going away?). Children, adolescents, and young adults do not know a world without the Internet. There has always been access to anything you want; the entirety of the world's knowledge is available with a few keystrokes and a wireless router. But for others, the Internet could go away. Those of us who remember the buzzing sound of a dial-up connection and the words "You've got mail" could probably do without it some days.

Pornography isn't going anywhere either. There are many perspectives on pornography, and most people have some opinion about it should you ask. For some, pornography is a social catastrophe, emblematic of the crumbling of a moral and value-based society. For others, pornography is a way to explore fantasies in a healthy way or engage one's sexual partner on a different level. For still others, it may be some combination of both or something altogether different.

Finally, we have adolescents. One of the authors currently lives with an adolescent and so understands all too well the challenges that come with this stage of life. To be honest, both authors somehow successfully navigated their own adolescence but may not remember it that well anymore. Adolescence is a time of great change and plenty of dissonance. Everything seems to be changing, from one's body to one's mind.

Where these three things intersect, you'll find this text. Our purpose, which we state throughout, is not to pass any moral judgments or take a particular stance on pornography (or the Internet, for that matter). There are plenty of judgments and opinions out there for the reader to consider, many of which are available online. Instead, we hope to provide a reasoned, thoughtful consideration of adolescents and their consumption of Internet pornography. We hope we have taken as

scientific an approach as possible, doing what we can to eliminate our own biases from the text and allowing the reader the opportunity to learn, evaluate, reflect, and then develop their own opinions.

Because in the end, the purpose of this text is to help. We have written this book for counselors, psychologists, social workers, health-care professionals and other human service providers who work with adolescent populations. It might also be helpful for parents or other caregivers to read to better understand the challenges facing our own kids. It's a confusing world out there, and one that isn't getting any easier. We know there is no way to make it any less confusing by writing a book, but maybe we can help some adults better understand how to work with some adolescents. If so, we have accomplished what we came here to do.

Acknowledgments

No text is ever written alone, even if there is only one author. In our case, there are two, which results in twice as many people who deserve acknowledgment. Word counts limit how many of them we can consider here, but there are many more whom we might not be able to mention.

Authoring any manuscript takes time, and time is a finite resource. The time spent researching, writing, revising, writing again – it comes at the expense of time spent in other places. Thank you to Shannon, Ryan, and Katie for your patience, especially when dad was busy in his office. Thank you to Julie and Shiloh for your unconditional love and understanding. I cherish every second we spend together, and I am so happy to be going through this life journey with you both. I would also like to acknowledge that there is no greater motivation than a mother-in-law telling you to write a book in your spare time because she thinks you have too much time on your hands.

We must also acknowledge the efforts of our research assistants who made this book far easier to write. Thank you to Karen Rossmell for her time management, organization, sense of humor, and minimal complaining during this project. Taylor Schlegel was instrumental in making this work a reality. Her efforts in organizing research, reference review, and editorial assistance was invaluable. We also must recognize the efforts of Elizabeth Gilmore and Alyssa Hyduk who also worked tirelessly to make sense of our research, review various iterations of the text, and provide feedback. While still working on their degrees, Taylor, Elizabeth, and Alyssa became part of the team. We both value you very much.

We must also thank the team at Routledge/Taylor and Francis for all of their support. They have been a wonderful organization with whom to work. Finally, we thank all of the people out there researching these topics. This is difficult work, and it is an especially challenging field to find yourself in. Thanks for all that you do.

1 Strange bedfellows

Adolescents and Internet pornography

I struggle quite a bit in my practice today. I've been a counselor for a long time, and I think I'm quite good at the work. I've been dealing with issues related to healthy sexuality for my entire career, and I've always enjoyed my work with younger people. But as I get older, they get younger, and I feel like there's a disconnect. I mean, navigating the world of adolescent sexuality has never been easy and it is completely normal for adolescents to be working through a lot during this time of their lives. But the Internet . . . the Internet has changed the game. It seems like pornography has become such a bigger part of what these kids are bringing to counseling now.

Many who work in the helping professions (e.g., counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, physicians) find themselves engaged in conversations with adolescents about sexuality. This has been the case for as long as there have been helping professions. Adolescence is a time of normal curiosity and experimentation. It is a period of personal growth that can shape the life that is to follow. Adolescence is, in a word, challenging.

These trials are what often bring adolescents to counseling. Navigating the world of healthy sexual relationships can cause real distress in the lives of this population. Developing mature relationships during puberty is not easy and issues related to sexual behavior challenge even the most mature teenagers. Exploring sexual identity while existing in a world of close peer relationships and constant scrutiny can be harrowing. The challenge of adolescent sexual growth can result in mental health concerns, such as depression, anxiety, and so forth.

Of course no review of adolescent sexuality would be complete without considering how pornography has intersected with technology and how this intersection impacts adolescents. Just as sexuality has always been a pressing issue for this population, so has pornography. Those of us from older generations are familiar with the stories of teenagers who stole a copy of their fathers' *Playboy* magazine and snuck off to do anything but read the articles. But the Internet has changed how adolescents consume pornography. The ubiquity of sexually explicit Internet material (SEIM) has forever changed how we think about adolescents and pornography.

For those who help teenagers navigate these challenges, the landscape has changed. The vignette at the beginning of this chapter demonstrates this difficulty;

2 *Strange bedfellows*

while this population continues to exist within their time and space, counselors, psychologists, and others may have real problems understanding what it is like to be an adolescent in the ever-expanding digital age. The Internet has changed everything, from the way we communicate to how we interact with the world. Dating apps, messaging programs, and social media have changed the game, especially for the adolescents who are native to this digital world and to the helpers who might be immigrants in this unfamiliar land. The unending supply of SEIM makes our work as helping professionals more challenging than ever.

The purpose of this book is to provide insight to the helpers who work with this population. This task can be daunting because technology is constantly changing and the research surrounding it has difficulty staying abreast. Our goal in this text is not to be all inclusive; that would likely be impossible. However, we do hope to provide the reader with an understanding of how adolescents interact with SEIM and the potential effects SEIM has on this population.

After reading this chapter you should be able to

- 1 Explain, in broad terms, how adolescents interact with SEIM;
- 2 Understand how the terms *adolescent*, *pornography*, and *Internet* will be used throughout this text;
- 3 Have an understanding of the prevalence of SEIM consumption among adolescents; and
- 4 Describe how the text will follow in subsequent chapters.

An introduction to adolescents and SEIM

Over the past three decades, pornography has become far more commonplace than at any other point in history (Löfgren-Mårtenson & Månsson, 2010; McNair, 2002; Paul, 2005; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007). The Internet has played a significant role in this mainstreaming of pornography, providing unequaled access to encounter, consume, create, and distribute sexually explicit content. Because the Internet is global and accessible worldwide, this phenomena is not isolated to any one country or community; data suggest adolescents across the globe are engaging with SEIM more than ever (Flood, 2007; Häggström-Nordin, Sandberg, Hanson, & Tydén, 2006; Lo & Wei, 2005; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007; Sabina, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2008).

When compared to more traditional media (e.g., radio, print, television, movies), the Internet is a highly sexualized environment (Cooper, Boies, Maheu, & Greenfield, 1999; Peter & Valkenburg, 2006a). Research demonstrates significant increases in the number of youth who are intentionally or accidentally encountering pornographic material online (Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2007; Wolak et al., 2007). We can safely assume that adolescents' access to SEIM is unmatched by any other medium; the sheer amount of SEIM available and the vast diversity in content is unparalleled (Coopersmith, 2006; Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2007). Additionally, the risk of online bullying, sexual victimization, or harassment from others is real and pervasive.

Furthermore, the Internet is present and prioritized in the lives of many youth (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010; Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickur,