This issue highlights the National Center on Sexual Exploitation’s list of companies promoting sexual exploitation.

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• Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, USA & Canada Prov.
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• Sisters of the Holy Cross
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• Society of the Holy Child Jesus
• U.S. Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union

USCSAHT Partner
• Society of the Divine Savior USA

Dirty Dozen List

Amazon
Backpage.com
Comcast
EBSCO Information Services
HBO
iBooks
Roku
Snapchat
STEAM
Twitter
YouTube
The National Center on Sexual Exploitation works for a world where the pornified vision of reality—with its utilitarian and insatiable consumption of human beings for selfish sexual pleasure, and its raw, brutal, debasing, hate-filled themes—become intolerable to all those who have concern for the well-being of humanity, have respect for human dignity, and affirm human rights.

The NCOSE announced its annual “Dirty Dozen List” in February 2018. The list names and shames a range of actors who contribute significantly to the normalization of pornography, prostitution, sex trafficking, and other forms of sexual exploitation.

The groups, agencies, businesses (and this year, individuals) named to this list are among the nation’s worst for masquerading as mainstream entities with respectable reputations, while facilitating access to, or pandering and profiting directly from pornography and/or prostitution.

Others push policy agendas that normalize egregious forms of sexual exploitation. This list ensures that their participation and collusion with the various aspects of the sex trade becomes public knowledge, and equips concerned citizens with information and tools to hold them accountable.

The NCOSE is committed to continue naming and shaming until these mainstream contributors to the normalization of sexual exploitation no longer stand in allegiance with pornographers, sex traffickers, and sex buyers, but join the concerned public in fighting for the right of everyone to live ‘sexploitation-free’ lives.
With operations in 97 countries and 943 locations worldwide, Backpage.com is likely the largest facilitator of sex trafficking in the world. As a classified advertising website known as ‘the hub’ for prostitution advertising, Backpage.com serves as a virtual auction block where sex buyers can shop for human beings for sex from the privacy of their home, office, hotel room, or cell phone. Many of those bought and sold via the website are sexually trafficked women and children. The website facilitates this activity by allegedly editing ads to conceal the illegality of underlying criminal activity and remains immune from prosecution due to the Communications Decency Act Section 230.

NCOSE demands that Backpage.com stop promoting and profiting from sexual exploitation. They must stop facilitating sex trafficking, prostitution, and the exchange of pornographic photos (including child sexual abuse images) by eliminating the ‘adult services’ section of their website.

Comcast Corporation is an American telecommunications conglomerate that provides numerous services including broadcasting and cable television, home phone services, and high-speed Internet. Unfortunately, Comcast’s Xfinity also peddles pornography via its video-on-demand and premium channel services. Comcast provides dozens of pornography titles via its Cinemax, Playboy, Vivid, Hustler, TEN, and Too Much for TV channels and subscriptions. All in all, by one review conducted in April 2016, there were 515 X-rated offerings on Comcast’s Xfinity. Many of the pornography titles offered by Comcast Xfinity contain themes of incest, racism, sexism, prostitution, and exploitation.

Comcast’s current ISP model requires that customers wishing to block hardcore material jump through complicated hoops to filter or ‘opt-out’ of those services. However, the ‘opt-in’ model would require those customers wishing to view hardcore pornography online to ‘opt in’ to access such sites, while other customers automatically would receive their Internet free from sexually exploitative material.

EBSCO Information Services offers online library resources to public and private schools (K-12), public libraries, universities, and more. In its advertising for schools, it promises ‘fast access to curriculum-appropriate content.’ However, its Explora, Science Reference Center, Literary Reference Center, and other products, provide easy access to hardcore pornography sites and extremely graphic sexual content. In 2017, EBSCO removed some content from their K-12 databases. However there remains an incredible amount of easily accessible sexually explicit material bypassing school filters mixed in with educational material. On June 23rd 2017, EBSCO wrote to NCOSE saying they were ‘confident’ the sexually graphic content was completely removed from their school products. But on June 26th NCOSE researchers found over 50 sexually graphic articles across four states in 50 minutes of searching. The vast majority of these graphic results came directly from EBSCO’s middle school and elementary school databases. The material still largely bypasses school and home filters because it is within the EBSCO search engine.

HBO Home Box Office Inc. (HBO) is an American subscription-only, cable television network owned by Home Box Office, Inc., a division of Time Warner. As estimated by Nielsen in July 2015, approximately 30.9% of the 116.4 million U.S. homes with televisions receive HBO. Through its HBO NOW streaming service, its content can be streamed to mobile devises via broadband connections. Additionally, a deal with Amazon grants Amazon Prime members unlimited streaming access to past seasons of HBO programs, as well as select current series. Additionally, its channel HBO Zone airs movies and original programs aimed at young adults ages 18-34, and features pornographic movies. HBO is also available via satellite to subscribers of the DISH Network.

Since the early 2000s HBO has produced a string of original programs that incorporate graphic sex scenes. Examples include G String Divas, Cat House: The Series, and Hung. Graphic depictions of sex, rape, and brutal sexual violence are also commonplace in The Deuce, Game of Thrones and Westworld.
Apple’s iBooks app is automatically pre-downloaded on most iPhones as an easy way to access audio and written books while mobile. However, this app contains erotic literature that supports rape myths, normalizes adult-with-teen- and incest-themed exploitation, and reinforces degrading racially charged sexual stereotypes. Even innocent searches autopopulate graphic suggestions. Many stories feature ‘barely legal’ student-teacher, and ‘babysitter’ sex, ‘forced sex’ (aka rape) or submission of Black, Asian, and Indian minority races to white males. Apple encourages authors to correctly label their genres but does not transparently inform readers of the true category system in iBooks. ‘Erotica’ isn’t listed under the ‘African American Fiction’ category on the main page, but in the second section listed on the ‘African American Fiction’ page itself. This means that people are easily accidentally exposed to sexually graphic material. This is inconsistent with Apple’s other policies that have kept pornography off of their app store and Apple TV streaming devices.

A lot of erotic content on iBooks isn’t even labeled under the title of ‘erotica’ but is deceptively located under the ambiguous section title ‘What’s Hot.’ This section heading suggests to the Apple user that these books may be the most popular, and, believing that the topic is ‘safe,’ they may read, or worse, allow their children to read, selections without suspecting the content may be harmful.

During the avalanche of public apologies that came out during the #MeToo phenomenon, most alleged predators invoked passive verbs, scaled to generalities, and employed excuses, producing disingenuous, excusatory apologies. This shows sexual assault and harassment are not merely behavioral problems; they are rooted in deep-set cultural beliefs.

A leading media streaming company, Roku provides its users with the ability to stream television programs, movies, music, and more, on their personal devices. Roku also facilitates access to hardcore pornography channels through hundreds of private and hidden channels. This stands in sharp contrast to the policies of other streaming device industry leaders such as Apple TV or Amazon’s Fire TV, which have rightly kept hardcore pornography off of their systems. Pornographers are well aware of the backdoor Roku has left open to them. They widely advertise for their private channels and applaud Roku in forum after forum for being the go-to streaming device to permit this material.

Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to send and receive photos and videos, which will disappear after a few seconds of the recipient viewing them. Snapchat’s ‘Stories’ string Snaps together to create a narrative that lasts for 24 hours. To create a ‘Story,’ a user chooses to add their Snaps to their ‘Story.’ Depending on their privacy settings, the photos and videos added to a ‘Story’ can be viewed by either all Snapchatters, just the user’s friends, or a customized group, whereas Snaps are viewed only by a user who is personally sent the Snap from the sender. Snapchat’s ‘Stories’ also includes public content.
Snapchat cont. from pg. 4

from media outlets like Cosmopolitan, that could contain sexually graphic material that cannot be easily blocked by users.

There are 100 million daily active users, 65% of users upload content – snaps or stories. 71% of users are under age 25. A 2014 survey of high school seniors revealed that 46% of them used Snapchat daily and 77% of college students used the app daily. There are approximately 6 billion daily Snapchat video views (Facebook has 8 billion video views a day).

Arguably the most popular smartphone app used by Millennials and teens, Snapchat is frequently used for sexting and the sharing of self-produced child sexual abuse images. Many of the pornographic images on Snapchat are created and distributed by children and many of these images end up on third party websites. Snaps have been hacked and recipients can easily take screenshots to save and further distribute Snaps they have received.

The Snapcash app went from reported revenue of $3 million in 2014 to projected revenue of $50 million in 2015. A major contributor to this growth is the development of the feature Snapcash, which enables Snapchat and its users to monetize and profit from the exchange of pornography. Many porn performers and strip club employees are using Snapcash to earn money for nude videos and photos of themselves.

Many individuals, and even teenagers, who do not routinely engaged in the sex trade, have used Snapchat for sexting and Snapcash for selling self-made pornography. Individuals are frequently enticed, pressured, and even bullied by their peers to create and send sexts. In many other instances, predatory adults groom minors by seeking sexual images of, and even sexual encounters with, underage boys and girls. Many Snapchat images have found their way on ‘revenge’ porn sites. In fact, minors have been criminally charged with distributing or creating child pornography through Snapchat over the last several years. Snapchat still does not allow users to opt-out of sexually graphic content or to report Snapchat users that are sending sexually explicit photos and videos, or using their Snapchat app to promote or advertise pornography or prostitution. Snapchat’s business model facilitates sexual exploitation yielding hefty profits for the company without any regard for the associated harms.

Steam is the ‘Walmart’ of online videogame distribution, with over 35 million users who are minors. Steam offers categories of ‘nudity’ and ‘sexual content’ video games, which include over 780 video games with explicit content, featuring only mild warnings, such as ‘may not be appropriate for all ages, or for work.’

Owned by Valve Corporation, Steam 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.

These games, for example House Party, Men of Yoshiwara: Ohgiya, Super Star, Porno Studio Tycoon and more, promote themes of sexual violence, exhibitionism, and rape, with the dangerous misconception that sexually exploiting others is harmless and fun. When videogames include sexually graphic and degrading themes, the user is not only a voyeur but an active participant in staging the scene.

The House Party ‘hook up’ game on Steam literally trains its users in predatory tactics for sexual assault, and even sex trafficking, which then plague real people offline in high schools, universities, military bases, and more.

The game includes disturbing features that allow users to increase their odds of ‘having sex’ with a woman in the game if they manipulate and coerce women into sex acts. Different game scenarios include blackmail using nude pictures, increasing women’s alcohol consumption, impersonating a friend through text, and jamming a woman’s cell phone reception to isolate her in a room away from other party goers. Users ‘win’ the game by having sex with women at the party. The sexual encounters are blatant animated pornography, featuring genitalia, ejaculation, and more.

As our society suffers from the consequences of campus sexual assault, military sexual assault, and rising child-on-child sexual abuse, we see that normalizing the sexual use (and often abuse) of others in videogames is irresponsible on the corporate and social level.

Recommended Policy and Platform Improvements

The NCOSE urges Steam® and its parent company Valve® to do the following:

• Remove the game House Party due to its singularly degrading and exploitive themes.
• Create an 18+ category on its website where all games with any amount of nudity or sexual content are stored. All accounts should have this 18+ category disabled by default. There should be an extensive opt-in process to view such games so that children are no longer automatically exposed to this content.
• Institute a more robust policy enforcement against selling games that normalize or glamorize sexual exploitation in the future, no matter the age of the user.
There are as many as 10 million Twitter accounts that may include explicit sexual content. Twitter has come under fire recently for vast amounts of cyber-based sexual harassment, revenge pornography, being spammed with pornography, having one’s virtual identity co-opted by tags to pornography, and even sexually exploited images of children on its platform. Korea caught 117 people distributing explicit sexual content via Twitter—33 of the distributors were elementary school children.

Twitter is responsible for doing its part to curb sexual exploitation, yet the company has by default shifted responsibility to report sexually graphic tweets or accounts onto the individual user. Twitter must recognize that pornography is overtly sexist, objectifying, and sexually exploitative. Pornography and prostitution reduce women to be less than human— to be sexual objects and prostituted as suggestions in the video player when finished watching the explicit film. This is especially dangerous for younger audiences using YouTube.

**Enforce the Standards, Regardless of the Partner**

It appears that Google is willing to let the terms of use slide for celebrities who upload content that is in direct violation. Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, and Robin Thicke are just a few examples of celebrities who have amassed millions of views (and $$$ for Google) with music videos that include full frontal nudity.

**What Should YouTube Do?**

Despite positive changes regarding Google Play and AdWords, Google has remained reticent regarding changes to anything relating to the content on YouTube. While the launch of the YouTube Kids App is a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough. Together, with thousands of concerned parents and users, NCOSE urges Google to:

- Turn Safe Search and Restricted Mode on automatically for all YouTube users, so that they have to opt-in for more graphic or adult content, instead of being automatically bombarded with sexually exploitative material.
- Improve the ease and access of reporting videos that violate its Terms of Use.
- Apply the same image filtering software currently used to identify child pornography to flag all forms of adult pornography or sexualized nudity as well.
- Develop a more thorough review process for channels applying to monetize their videos.
- Extend the AdWords policy to YouTube and refuse to profit from sexually exploitative content.
- Update YouTube to work more efficiently with third-party filters.
- Most importantly, we call on Google to use its creativity and immense talent to develop effective solutions for this growing problem.

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Currently, YouTube has over a billion users—almost one-third of all people on the Internet. YouTube reaches more 18-49 year olds than any cable network in the U.S. Every 60 seconds 300 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube and 323 days worth of YouTube videos are viewed on Facebook. YouTube’s 2014 revenue was estimated to be $4 billion.

Google’s YouTube is an Internet conduit to user-generated videos where cute videos are mixed together with sexually graphic material. A simple search term like ‘how to have’ can autocomplete with child sex themes. While YouTube fixes such problems whenever they receive concentrated media attention, the website does little to proactively monitor or restrict inappropriate content. It appears that whenever they can get away with it, YouTube allows inappropriate content to remain on its platform in order to generate views and more profit.

**Users Must Serve As Moderators**

Google’s current system depends largely on reactive moderating, which relies on users to flag and report offensive or sexually explicit content. YouTube prefers this method to taking responsibility upon itself to provide more active moderation and policing in real-time, because the views on explicit videos help to serve YouTube’s bottom line.

When users must act as moderators, they must first watch the explicit content and then report exact time stamps with descriptions. The main problem with this established procedure for content removal is that users must first be exposed to the harmful content and then they must continue to view the offensive material as they alert Google about the violation.

**Ads on Explicit Videos**

Sexually explicit videos on YouTube often amass many views, becoming eligible for lucrative pre-roll video ads that make YouTube and the Uploading Channel lots of money.

**Searches and Related Content**

Many innocent search terms used on YouTube will bring up hardcore and violent explicit videos because uploaders use misleading descriptions when adding the content. Certainly, Google has the ability to develop a system for analyzing the images and not just the text descriptions of uploaded content. Another problem is that, once users view an explicit video, other videos with sexually explicit thumbnails will
A Legislative Remedy to Stop Internet Porn

“If there is a single legislative test of the strength of our national resolve to deliver on the promise of #MeToo, it is the battle over passage of the much needed FOSTA-SESTA legislative package that would amend Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which until now protects websites hosting third-party content from lawsuits based on the actions of those third-parties.

“The most infamous of these websites is Backpage.com. Carl Ferrer, James Larkin, and Michael Lacey represent a corporate class of sex traffickers, who sit at the apex of the global supply chain of sexual exploitation.

“As a ‘business’ that helps arrange prostitution transactions and derives earnings from them, there can be no doubt that Backpage, and its executives and owners, are the functional equivalents of sex traffickers (i.e. pimps). As an example, from January 2013 to March 2015, 99% of Backpage’s global revenue was attributable to prostitution advertising. During this same period, Backpage made nearly $51 million in revenue from prostitution ads in California alone.

“Low level sex traffickers, who post ads on websites for the purpose of marketing the women and girls they monger, may easily be arrested and prosecuted. But that is not true for Ferrer and company. The 1st Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Section 230 of the CDA protects Backpage’s activities even if they knowingly facilitated sex trafficking.

“Inspired by Backpage’s success, others have flocked to the Internet to start up their own prostitution advertising platforms. Thus, the Internet now hosts a thriving and ever-expanding virtual, open marketplace for the marketing and purchase of people for sex.

“Which brings us back to #MeToo. If there was ever a time for our country to say we value women and children too much to see them traded like public sexual commodities on the Internet, surely this is the moment.

“The U.S. Senate could do just that by passing the legislative package known as FOSTA-SESTA, which in February 2018 passed in the U.S. House of Representatives 388 to 25. The underlying bill, the ‘Enable States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act’ (FOSTA), was sponsored by Rep. Ann Wagner. An amendment offered by Rep. Mimi Walters added the provisions of the ‘Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act’ (SESTA), sponsored by Sens. Rob Portman and Richard Blumenthal. This legislation restores civil rights of action to victims of sex trafficking and empowers states Attorneys General to prosecute the corporate kings of sex trafficking.

“I wish I could say that without a shadow of a doubt that the Senate will pass FOSTA-SESTA. Tragically, that is not the case. FOSTA-SESTA has powerful opponents. Those opponents generally fall into three camps: 1) those who see the sex trade as just another business sector, 2) those who believe that any amendment to the CDA whatsoever imperils the technology sector, and 3) those who claim that amending the CDA fatally wounds freedom of speech.

“These are specious arguments. People are not products to be sold online. The lives of women and children are not a sacrifice to make on the altar of corporate self-interest. The victims of sex trafficking need more free speech, not less.

“Members of the U.S. Senate, this is your moment to decide: does the spirit of #MeToo that has swept our country include victims of the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking or not.”

Excerpted from Lisa Thompson, Vice President of Policy and Research for the National Center on Sexual Exploitation (https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/me-too-power-bring-corporatized-sex-trafficking/)

NCOSE Successes

*Google* adopted a policy to prohibit pornographic ads and any ads that link to websites with sexually explicit content.

*Facebook* has taken steps to improve blocking and reporting of child pornography on its site.

*Google Play* instituted policies that prohibit pornographic apps in their app store after the first year on our list (though lax enforcement of this policy followed). After a second year on the list, Google Play removed all apps in violation.

*Walmart, RiteAid, Food Lion* and other retailers moved to put the sexually explicit *Cosmopolitan* magazine behind blinds in their retailer shops.

*Hilton Hotels Worldwide* publicly announced it would stop selling pornography and issued orders to implement this policy in all of their properties around the world.

The *Department of Defense* stopped the sale of pornography in all Army and Air Force base exchanges. The DOD also ordered regular searches and removal of all sexual materials displayed in public and in workplaces for all military branches.

*Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG).* This premiere international hotel company, which includes brands like *Holiday Inn* and *Crowne Plaza,* was a candidate for the 2016 Dirty Dozen List for its sale of hardcore pornography via on-demand television offerings. But IHG worked with NCOSEx to remove pornography from all its hotels globally and stayed off the list. (https://endsexualexploitation.org/dirtydozen-2018/#victory)
SESTA Passes Congress

On March 21, 2018, the U.S. Senate passed the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA). The legislation passed the House (388 to 25) in late February. SESTA provides a much-needed update to the Communications Decency Act (CDA) that protects both people from being exploited online and First Amendment rights. SESTA enables state law enforcement officials to take legal action against individuals or businesses that violate federal sex trafficking laws, such as the alleged actions by Backpage.com, without inadvertently affecting good actors who are not knowingly facilitating sex trafficking. SESTA allows victims of sex trafficking to seek civil remedy against the websites that facilitated their victimization. (http://polarisproject.org/news/press-releases/sesta-passes-senate)

Take Action: Urge Congress to reauthorize the TVPA
https://act.polarisproject.org/page/7792/action/?ea.url.id=1305122

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) expired in Sept. 2017. Originally passed in 2000, the law has been reauthorized four times since. In 2017 three bills were introduced to reauthorize it: H.R. 2200 introduced by Reps. Chris Smith (R-NJ) & Karen Bass (D-CA); S. 1311 introduced by Sens. John Cornyn (R-TX) & Amy Klobuchar (D-MN); and S. 1312 introduced by Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) & Dianne Feinstein (D-CA). Along with reauthorizing funding to combat trafficking, the bills contain a number of new provisions aimed at addressing current policy gaps, such as strengthening the Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report by ensuring countries are more accurately analyzed and ranked; exempting restitution for trafficking survivors from federal taxes; bolstering efforts to keep goods made from forced labor from entering the U.S.; and increasing support for the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking.

For actions related to other NCOSE projects, go to:
https://endsexualexploitation.org/projects/

Toll-Free 24/7 Hotline
National Human Trafficking Resource Center
1.888.373.7888
Text “BeFree” (233733)

Stop Trafficking! is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among USCSAHT members, organizations and concerned persons, collaborating to eliminate all forms of human trafficking. To access back issues, go to:
http://www.stopenslavement.org/past-issues-chronological.html
To contribute information, please contact: jeansds@stopenslavement.org
Editing and Layout: Jean Schafer, SDS

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

National Center on Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE)
https://endsexualexploitation.org
NCOSE Updates
https://endsexualexploitation.org/dirtydozen-2018/#updates

2018 Dirty Dozen Flyer

Towards a Global Indicator on Unidentified Victims in Child Sexual Exploitation Material
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/594970e91b631b3571be12e2/t/5a9eb8fd/1567616423028/forums.jpg