

The Connection Between Sex Trafficking and Pornography

Human Trafficking Search | [April 14, 2014](#) by Michelle Lillie

Pornography undoubtedly perpetuates the commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls in America, yet the exact role it plays linking the two remains a hotly contested topic. It is commonly known in the anti-trafficking field that 80 percent of survivors report that their customers showed them pornography to illustrate the kinds of sexual acts they want performed. Pornography is also used by traffickers to train sex trafficking victims about various sexual acts and situations buyers prefer. Besides being forced to watch pornography, victims of sex trafficking often have a much more violent and personal interaction through forced performance in the industry. There are multiple reasons traffickers force victims into pornography, the top three are listed below.

Traffickers force girls into pornography for psychological control.

It is possible for a young woman or girl to walk away from sex trafficking and start a new life, but sexually illicit photos or films will follow her forever—regardless of whether she was underage when they were taken or not. Once a film or image with the girl's face is uploaded onto the Internet, it is there forever. Traffickers know this and use it as a method of control and blackmail, letting the girls know that now they are on the Internet they can never escape the life.

Traffickers force girls into pornography for a greater financial gain.

It is estimated that the pornography industry's annual revenue has reached \$13 billion.

Traffickers can sell sexual photos of the women in addition to forcing them into prostitution at a great financial gain and the younger the girls, the more expensive the photos, making the underground child pornography industry one of the most lucrative markets for sex traffickers.

Since most transactions between the traffickers and buyers take place online, traffickers also use the photos and films of the girls to attract more clients. Much like in a traditional marketplace, buyers like to see the product before committing to paying for it.

Pornography is in and of itself a form of sex trafficking.

There are multiple organizations, such as the Salvation Army that believe due to the exploitative nature of the industry, pornography is also a form of sex trafficking. Interviews with women who spent time in the pornography industry are almost identical to the stories from sex trafficking victims. One interviewee explained I came home bruised and sometimes a little bloody from the rough scenes. I shot... scenes where they slapped me and spit on me and called me horrible things. A recent report that held Interviews with 854 women in prostitution in nine countries... made it clear that pornography is integral to prostitution. In every country, almost half of the respondents said that they were forced to make pornography while enslaved in sex trafficking.

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