

# Eroticising Inequality:

Why pornography is a violence prevention issue we can't afford to ignore



July 2015 | Maree Crabbe

# What's Coming Up?

- The 'mainstreaming' of pornography
- The nature of contemporary pornography
- Pornography's impact on young people
- Pornography's relationship to gender-based violence
- What we can do about it

**‘It’s every where!’**

The mainstreaming of  
pornography

# Pornography is everywhere

With the click of a button, young people can now access a vast array of free pornographic imagery.

About **30%** of all internet traffic is porn-related\*

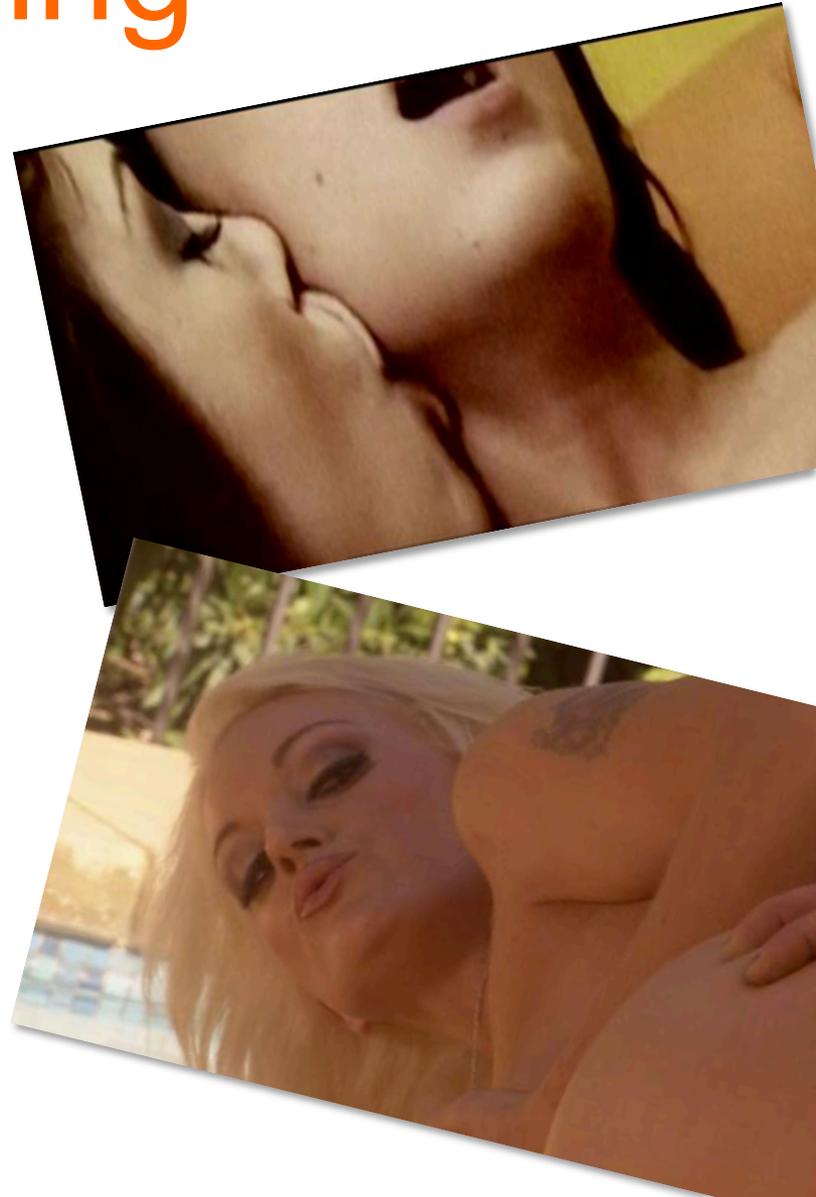
\* Source: S Anthony 'Just how big are porn sites?' [www.extremetech.com](http://www.extremetech.com), 4 April, 2012.



# The mainstreaming of pornography

- More than **90%** of boys have seen online porn
- More than **60%** of girls have seen online porn\*
- Young people's exposure can be intentional or accidental

\* Source: Boys & girls aged 13-16, University of Canberra, Fleming et al.



# Consumption of porn is gendered

Young men are more likely than their female peers to:

- Use porn for sexual excitement and for masturbation
- Use porn alone and in same-sex groups
- View a wider range of images
- Initiate porn's use, rather than be introduced to it by an intimate partner.

Michael Flood 2010

# The mainstreaming of pornography

- Porn's influence can be seen throughout popular culture, in music, films, TV, fashion and advertising
- The pervasiveness of porn's presence in popular culture makes it seem legitimate



**‘Rougher and harder’**

The nature of contemporary  
mainstream pornography

# Porn is no longer the centrefold it used to be...

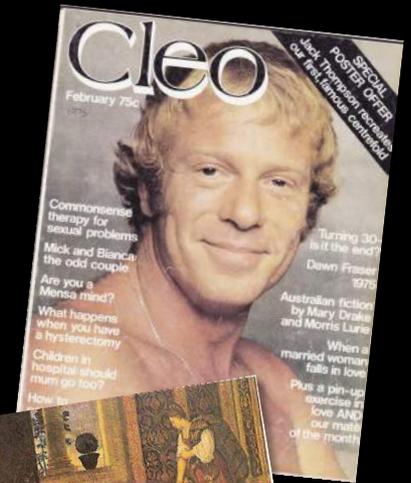
ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN  
**PLAYBOY**

NOVEMBER 1974 • \$1.25

YES, VIRGINIA,  
THERE'S STILL  
SEX IN CINEMA—  
12 PAGES' WORTH

QUICK, BEFORE  
YOU GO BROKE!  
EVERYTHING YOU  
OUGHT TO KNOW  
ABOUT POKER

ROBERT SHERRILL  
LOOKS FOR AN  
HONEST POLITICIAN





Pornography has  
changed and it's  
rougher, harder and  
more violent than ever



*“You know, when I started, it was like very lovey dovey sex, not tough like Gonzo. After three years, they wanted to get more energy, more rough and they do one girl with, you know, four guys and just take over and destroy her.”*

Anthony Hardwood, LA-based porn star since 1997



*“In the last 10 years, there’s been an increase in what I would call the aggression that we see on camera.”*

Nina Hartley, veteran porn performer



*“We want to see people pushing themselves, and working really hard, doing something that’s beyond what they’ve normally done before. That’s what’s really exciting. That’s what’s visually interesting. That’s why rough sex and strong sex works, because it’s incredible to look at. As human beings, we want to see stuff like that.”*

John Stagliano, Founder of ‘Gonzo Porn’

# Acts of aggression are commonplace in best selling pornography

- **88%** of scenes include physical aggression
- **48%** of scenes include verbal aggression
- **94%** of cases – including gagging, choking and slapping – are directed at females
- **95%** of aggression was met with neutral or positive response

**“So, this is what sex is like?”**

The impact of pornography  
on young people

The genie is out  
of the bottle.\*  
Pornography is  
now the most  
prominent sex  
educator for  
many young  
people.\*\*

\*Larry Flynt 2010, \*\*Michael Flood 2009



A 'new normal' in  
pornography has arrived,  
providing a disturbing  
model of sexuality for  
young people today

# Welcome to Sex Ed by Porn

While porn producers may not see their role as sex educators for young people that is effectively what they have become ...

Pornography teaches about:

Body image

Pleasure

Sexual Health

Negotiating  
consent

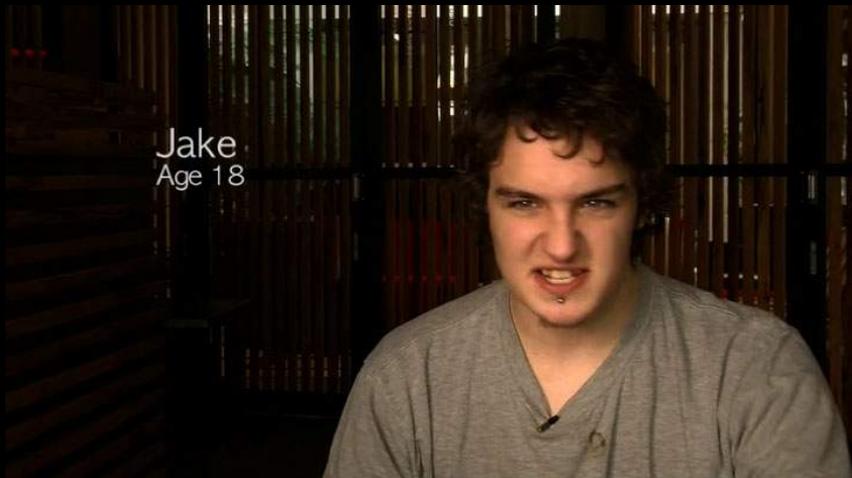
Gender, power  
and aggression

Performance



*“When boys start having sex, they imagine porn and everything that goes on in porn because that’s the dream really, like boys, you know, have their way with girls, whatever they want. Girls can put their legs behind their head and, you know, take it all.”*

Sara



*“The first time I had sex, because I’d watched so much porn I thought ‘all chicks dig this, all chicks want this done to them, all chicks want it up here, all chicks love it there. So I tried all this stuff, and yeah, it turned out bad.”*

Jake



*“Girls, like they love it in the porn, so maybe boys think that girls like that. And, you know, when you love someone, you’re always willing to just make them happy... At the end it just became like, I just became an object, just to blow his load on. I just felt gross at the end of it.”*

Sara

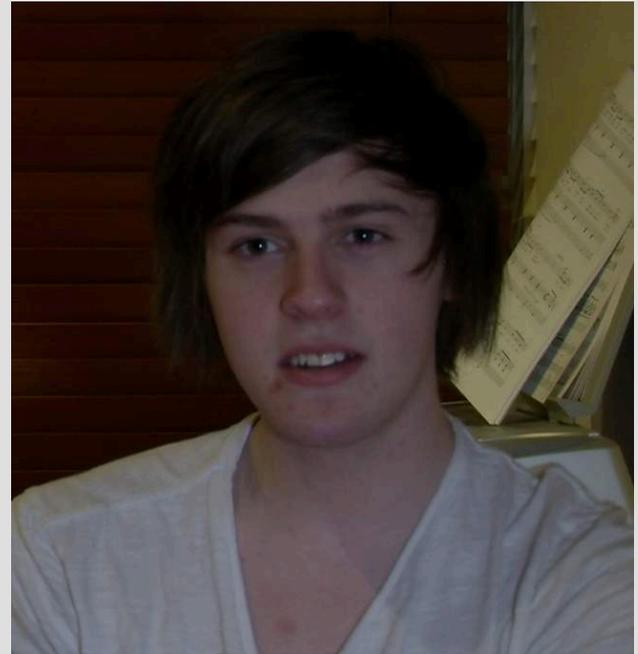


*“There’s the typical ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ in gay porn. I think sometimes it’s like an emasculated role and a dominant role.”*

Jack

*“That top guy can be almost an arsehole, and just be very rough and very aggressive, and, I don’t know, the bottom guy just seems like a piece of meat, in a way. The top guy is there to do what he wants, to get his rocks off, and the bottom guy is just left to hang out, and take it.”*

Liam



“We had frequent accounts of both boys’ and girls’ expectations of sex being drawn from the pornography they had seen...We also found compelling evidence that too many boys believe that they have an absolute entitlement to sex at any time, in any place, in any way and with whomever they wish. Equally worryingly, we heard that too often girls feel they have no alternative but to submit to boys’ demands, regardless of their own wishes. ”

UK Children’s Commissioner’s Report, 2013



# Putting it in context

Pornography's relationship to  
gender-based violence

# Research has identified two key underlying determinants of gender-based violence:

- Rigid gender stereotypes and roles
- Unequal gender relations

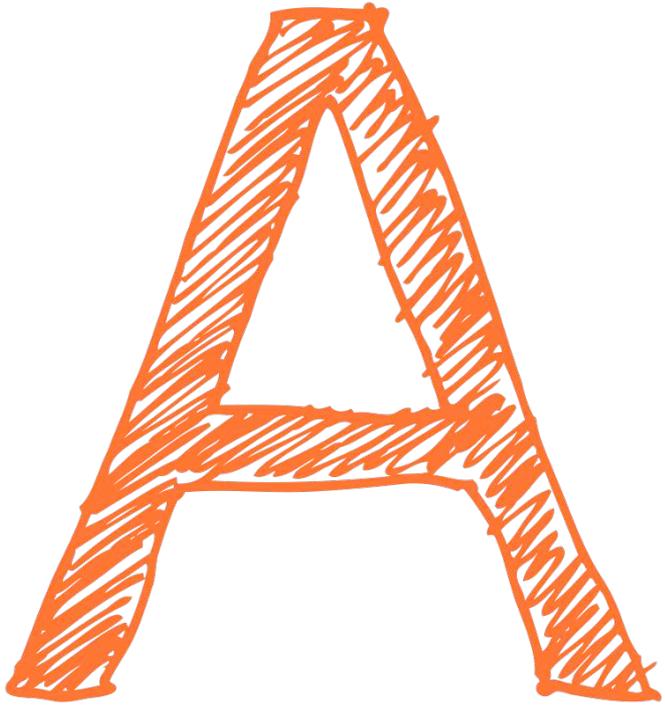


# Eroticising inequality:

*Pornography not  
only suggests that  
violence against  
women is okay...  
...it says it is sexy*



So what can we –  
as parents,  
teachers, youth  
workers, schools,  
policy-shapers  
and as a  
community – do?



# What we can do about porn

1. **Limit** young people's exposure and access to pornography
2. **Equip** and encourage young people to *critique* what they see
3. **Help** young people develop *skills* required to resist pornography's influence
4. **Inspire** young people that relationships and sex can be better than what they see in porn

# What does it look like in practice?

- **Talking** about pornography – and sex, gender, power and the media – *with young people*
- **Equipping** the *people who live and work with young people* to have the conversations
- **Supporting** *political and community leaders* to understand the issues, and how we can address them through policy and practice
- **Finding** creative and compelling ways to explore the issues and have the conversations *as a society*

Pornography  
isn't going to  
go away.

It's a violence  
prevention  
issue we can't  
afford to  
ignore.



Porn is shaping what is considered **'normal'**.

FIND OUT MORE

## What does it mean to...



Young people



Parents



Schools

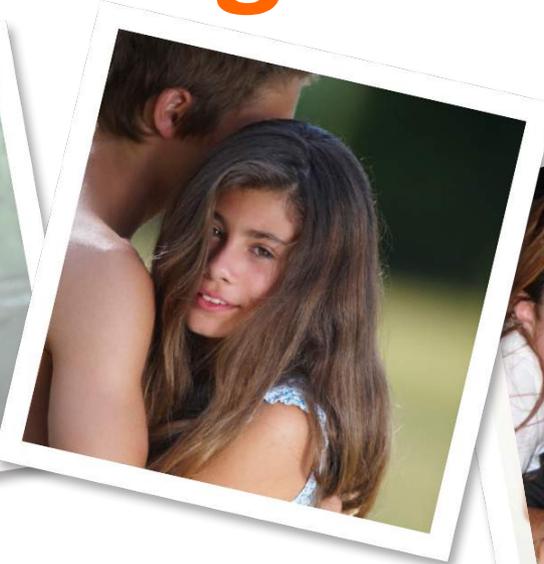


Community organisations

For more information, see: [www.itstimewetalked.com](http://www.itstimewetalked.com)

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