

PORNOGRAPHY



Pornography exploits vulnerable Canadians, objectifies women, and causes social and community harm. Neurological research has shown that consumption of pornography is highly addictive, and internet pornography is much more accessible, affordable, and anonymous than it was in the past. Some may try to treat pornography as artistic freedom of expression, but it must be curtailed due to its demonstrable harm to society.

People who consume pornography have increased positive attitudes towards extramarital sex and decreased affection and sexual intimacy within relationships. Additionally, pornography often includes violent videos, which contribute to greater acceptance of violence in sex as well as rape and distorted perceptions about sexuality. Pornography treats women as objects and is an affront to human dignity.

The Supreme Court, as well as various pieces of government legislation, have recognized the harm that pornography causes. The federal government can and should combat its negative effects. Canada has obscenity laws in place, but the standard is quite flexible and there is considerable leeway in various media.

Some countries have banned various types of extreme pornography or require internet service providers to block and filter out certain pornographic material. Efforts to combat all illegal pornography, including through international cooperation, should be expanded.

There is a definite role for families, communities, and other areas of society in combatting pornography. However, the civil government also has a role in combatting pornography and its harmful effects. Lack of prosecution of obscenity laws and the vagueness of the law permit pornography to proliferate within Canada.

ARPA Canada's recommendations include studying the harms of pornography and the relationship between pornography, prostitution, and human trafficking. Additionally, the Canadian government can look at ways to combat pornography directly through campaigns, clarifications in the law, and enforcing compliance with existing obscenity laws.

For more information about this topic, please refer to our related policy report document. This report can be found on our website at [ARPACanada.ca/publication/pornography](https://www.arpacanada.ca/publication/pornography).