

# PORNOGRAPHY



Pornography use and addiction have exploded in recent years with ease of access through the internet. Pornography is much more accessible, affordable, and anonymous than ever before. Even children are being exposed to pornography at unprecedented levels. Through its creation and consumption, pornography objectifies and degrades people – especially women and girls. All pornography is therefore harmful in how it shapes social attitudes.

This policy report focuses on the most severe harms related to pornography. People who consume pornography have increased positive attitudes towards extramarital sex and decreased affection and sexual intimacy within relationships. Violent pornography, which is shockingly prevalent, contributes to greater acceptance of violence in sex and distorted perceptions about sexuality.

Pornography exploits vulnerable Canadians, objectifies human bodies, destroys relationships, and causes social and community harm. Neurological research shows that pornography is highly addictive, causing changes to the brain and contributing to negative changes in attitudes and beliefs.

Both Parliament and the Supreme Court of Canada have recognized, to some extent, the harm that pornography can cause and the need to curb its negative effects. Canada has obscenity laws in place, but the standard for conviction is difficult to meet and the law is poorly enforced. Other countries have recognized the problems with unfettered access to internet pornography and have implemented restrictions such as age-verification measures that Canada should also consider.

ARPA Canada's recommendations in this report include protecting children from exposure to pornography, preventing exploitation in the creation and distribution of pornography, clarifying and enforcing existing obscenity laws, and studying the social harms of pornography and the links between pornography, human trafficking, and other sexual crimes.

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