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University of Washington

March 7, 2022

Steve Huffman  
Co-Founder and CEO  
Reddit  
420 Taylor Street  
San Francisco, CA 94102

### **Re: Reddit on 2022 Dirty Dozen List**

Dear Mr. Huffman,

We write to inform you that Reddit will once again be named to the annual Dirty Dozen List, which features 12 leading mainstream contributors to sexual exploitation and abuse. The National Center on Sexual Exploitation—a non-partisan nonprofit in Washington, DC dedicated to addressing the full spectrum of sexual exploitation—calls on Reddit to improve key policies and practices.

Reddit has become a hub of image-based sexual abuse, child sexual abuse materials (i.e. child pornography), hardcore pornography, and prostitution – which means Reddit is also likely facilitating sex trafficking.

**Reddit fails to institute strong policies and proactive practices to prevent these harms**, as nonconsensually shared sexually explicit materials and posts advertising prostitution (which likely obscure sex trafficking in many cases) were easily discoverable by our team. The Reddit User agreement appears to say nothing about sexually explicit or adult content—allowing this content to flourish on its platform without any meaningful age and consent verification. On paper, Reddit does prohibit “sexual or suggestive content involving minors,” and “involuntary pornography” but it fails to proactively and consistently enforce this rule. Yet despite an estimated net worth of \$2 billion (and a valuation of more than \$10 billion), Reddit refuses to spend the necessary resources on sufficient moderators and readily available technology solutions.

In addition to this, Reddit does not have advanced parental controls—relying only on personal privacy settings that take multiple, convoluted, steps to restrict the visibility of “adult content.” Yet a child is not locked into these settings and can easily log out of the account in order to view explicit content. Adults are also able to

easily contact and groom minors because anyone with an account can message other users and comment on their posts without restriction.

**Further, Reddit appears to ignore survivors of sexual exploitation and image-based sexual abuse who ask for non-consensual materials to be removed.**

In 2020, NCOSE assisted a survivor who was a minor at the time of her sexual abuse and had scores of abuse images uploaded and disseminated on the Internet. These images are Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) (also known as child pornography) which is contraband, meaning it is illegal under federal law to house, possess, or distribute it, including on the Internet. One of the websites the CSAM was uploaded to was Reddit. There were at least 28 unique URLs depicting this survivor's abuse on Reddit. On December 18, 2020, NCOSE's Law Center sent a takedown request on behalf of the survivor to you, your Legal Department, as well as to Reddit's information, contact, and help desk email addresses. Several months later, we still had not received a response or acknowledgement from Reddit despite being informed of the very serious federal crimes occurring on your website.

Eventually, our lawyers received a notice from Reddit stating that you no longer monitored contact@reddit.com or support@reddit.com, which then prompted us to fill out a Customer Support Ticket on your website. After a convoluted process, our lawyers submitted the ticket once again explaining the very serious exploitation and abuse of our client and the federal crimes occurring on their website. Our Law Center received an automated email stating that Reddit would look into our situation and investigate further if any action was necessary. **Fourteen months after the initial takedown request, we still do not have confirmation that the content was removed.**

We urge Reddit to stop facilitating sexual abuse and exploitation. Instead, Reddit can become part of the solution by implementing strong policies against hardcore pornography, instituting proactive moderation and filtering solutions to enforce such a policy, and institute survivor-centered practices and reporting mechanisms. When a user is found to upload sexually explicit material, especially if the material depicts child sexual abuse material or nonconsensually shared intimate images, Reddit must permanently ban them from its platform and prevent them from creating another account. In addition, Reddit must report the user and the material to the appropriate law enforcement agency in instances of CSAM, or suspected CSAM, as required by law. Reddit must also create prominent, simple, and lock-able parental controls, and prevent adult strangers from messaging minors.

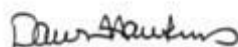
As Reddit seeks IPO, please think about the dignity of the people who are being harmed, harassed, and violated on your platform. We hope you place as much value on them as you do on your own valuation. After all, you have built up your bottom line at their expense.

We will be sending this letter with additional proof to Reddit's current and potential investors to ensure they are aware of what they are funding and the potential risks they face in propping up your platform. We welcome a conversation with Reddit about these issues. Please contact us at public@ncose.com.

Respectfully,



Patrick Trueman, Esq.  
President



Dawn Hawkins  
CEO

Cc:

Nellie Peshkov, Vice President of People and Culture  
Shariq Rizvi, Executive Vice President of Monetization  
Jen Wong, Chief Operating Officer