

Pornography and Sexual Content on Kik

Cover Page: National Center on Sexual Exploitation's Policy on Sharing Proof

WARNING: *The material in this document may contain graphic text, blurred images, and survivor quotes that may trigger the viewer.*

Why do we post proof in the first place?

NCOSE researchers have collected this proof as evidence of the material that is made, contained, and/or distributed by the corporations and institutions NCOSE is confronting.

Proof is shared with corporate executives, shareholders, and/or board members, as well as with policymakers, law enforcement, journalists, and the general public to **give witness to the sexual exploitation and abuse that is often rampant, yet sometimes hidden, on these platforms.**

Why do you blur out images, including faces, if they're publicly available?

While we believe it is important to provide ample evidence of wrong-doing to support our claims and inspire change, **we also strongly believe that no one – neither adult, nor child – should be exposed to the type of material our researchers collect:** either for their own well-being, or out of respect for those being exploited. It is for this reason we pixelate/blur/block not only nudity or sexually graphic content, but also the faces of those being exploited.

We also want to limit access to this material (unfortunately, a luxury not afforded to children and adults using many of the platforms and products made by these companies). Therefore, we add several layers before someone can access the proof, and also don't include all the proof that we have obtained. If someone feels they need to see more evidence to understand the extent of the problem or the type of exploitation that is happening, they may request it of NCOSE by writing to public@ncose.com.

Did you receive people's permission to post?

Any personal testimony shared to NCOSE directly is posted only with the affected parties approval.

For material that is publicly available, we do not seek permission to post. However, we redact names and usernames of survivors from articles, social media, etc. even when publicly available. To read more about our commitment to ethical engagement with survivors, please go [here](#). We do not redact names or usernames of exploiters who have posted publicly.

Disclaimer: while we do collect information on those who request access to more proofs, that information will only be used for our own, internal analysis. It will not be distributed, shared, or posted publicly or with outside parties.

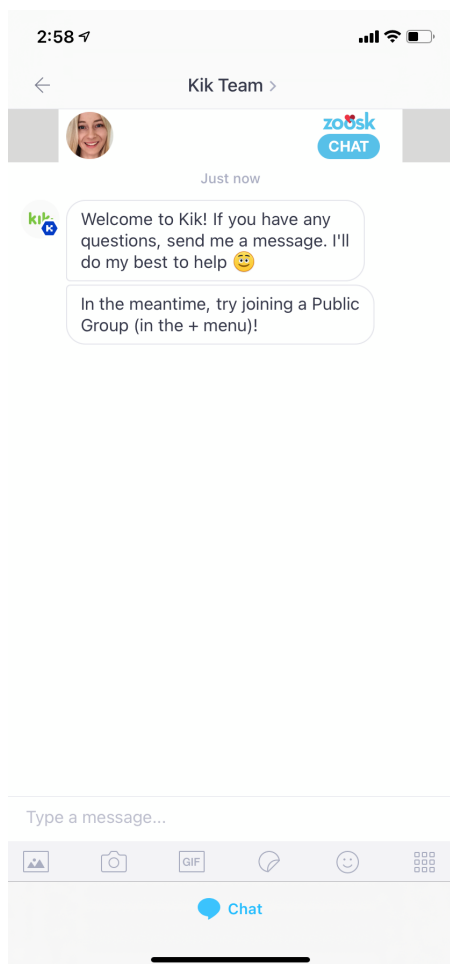
Pornography and Sexually Explicit Material on Kik

Kik's policies that ban pornography and other inappropriate content are not being enforced in any meaningful way – in fact they are thriving within the app.

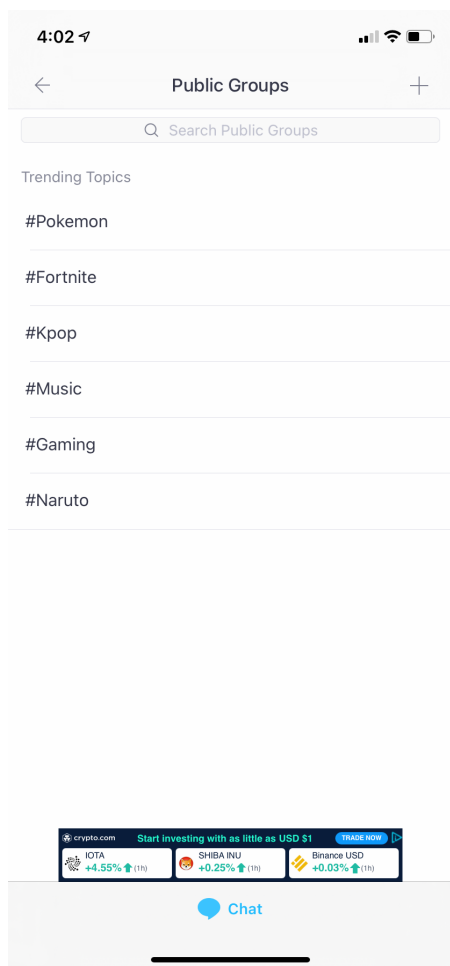
NCOSE researchers quickly found evidence of pornography, chat groups dedicated to trading sexually explicit images/nudes, and other content that clearly isn't allowed on Kik.

When NCOSE set up a Kik account in February 2022 as a fake 13-year-old, Kik first sent a prompt to try searching for public groups to join. The public chat groups had popular suggestions to search like #Fortnite and #Pokemon. When we clicked on those auto-prompted terms, groups filled with sexual content were suggested.

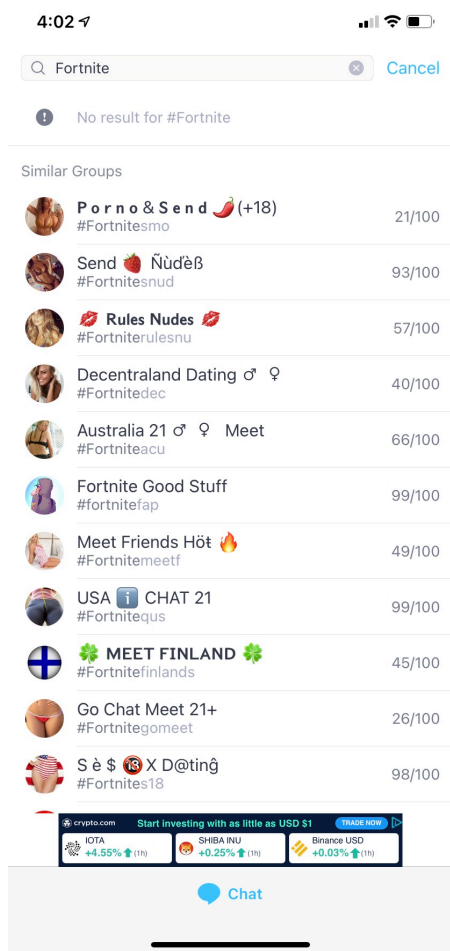
The initial bot message that suggested joining Public Groups:



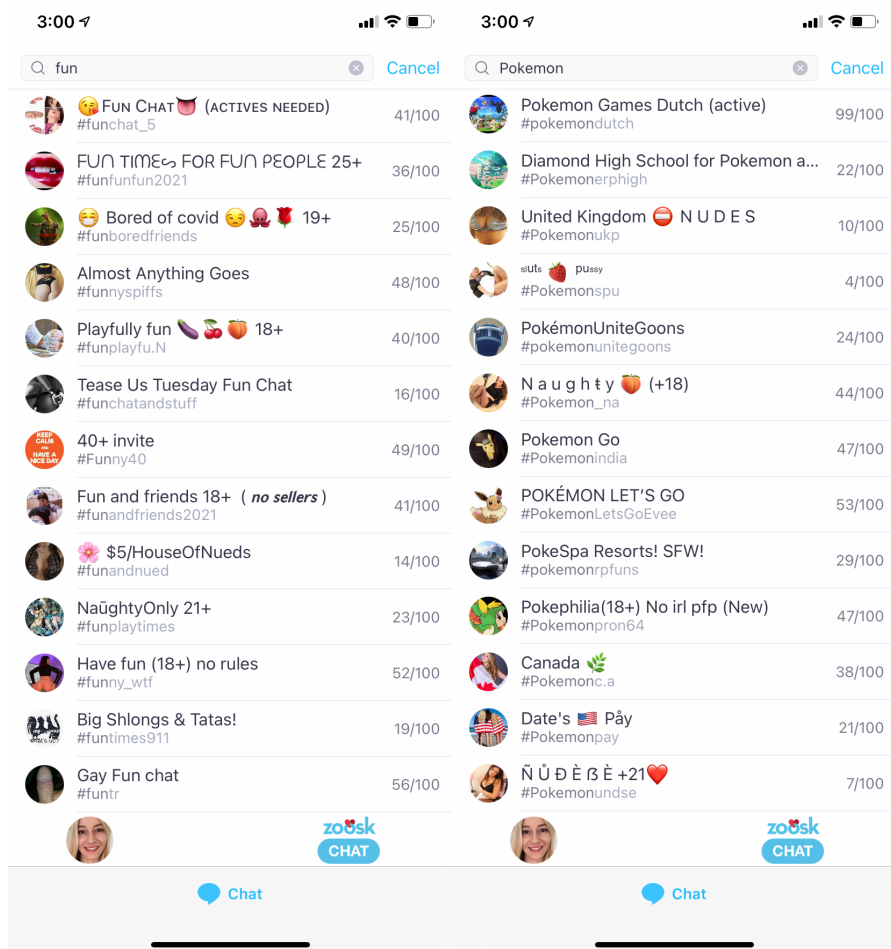
The auto-search “trending topics” suggested by Kik:

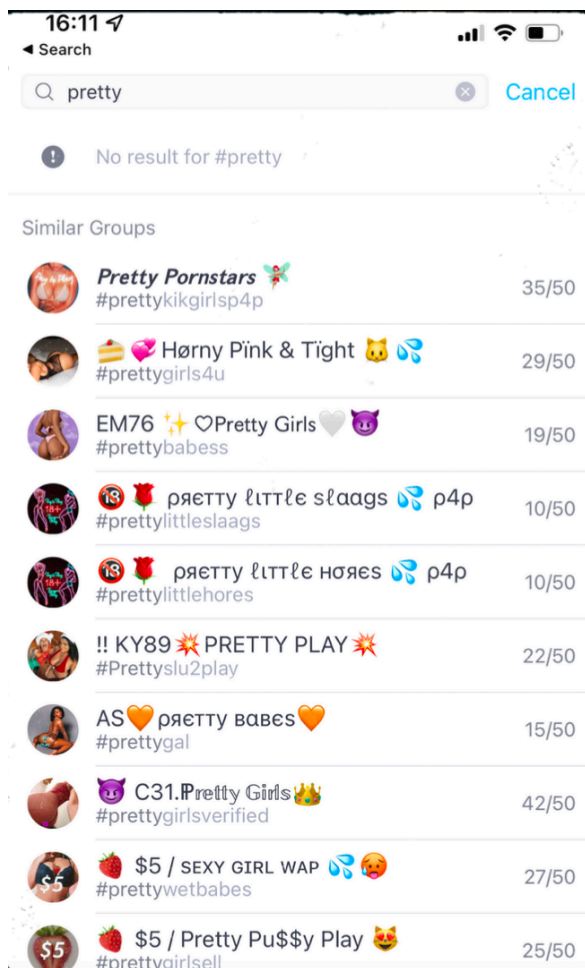


Here's what came up when we searched #Fortnite:



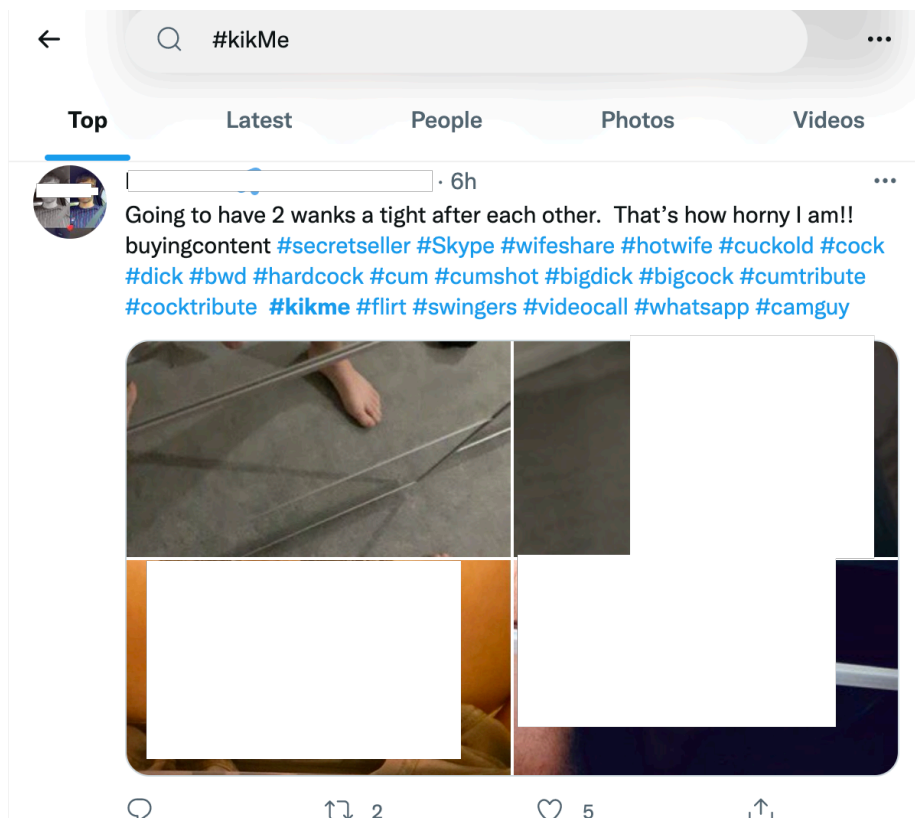
Other innocent tags such as #Pokemon, #Kpop, #Fun, #Pretty, and #Middle brought up similar results:



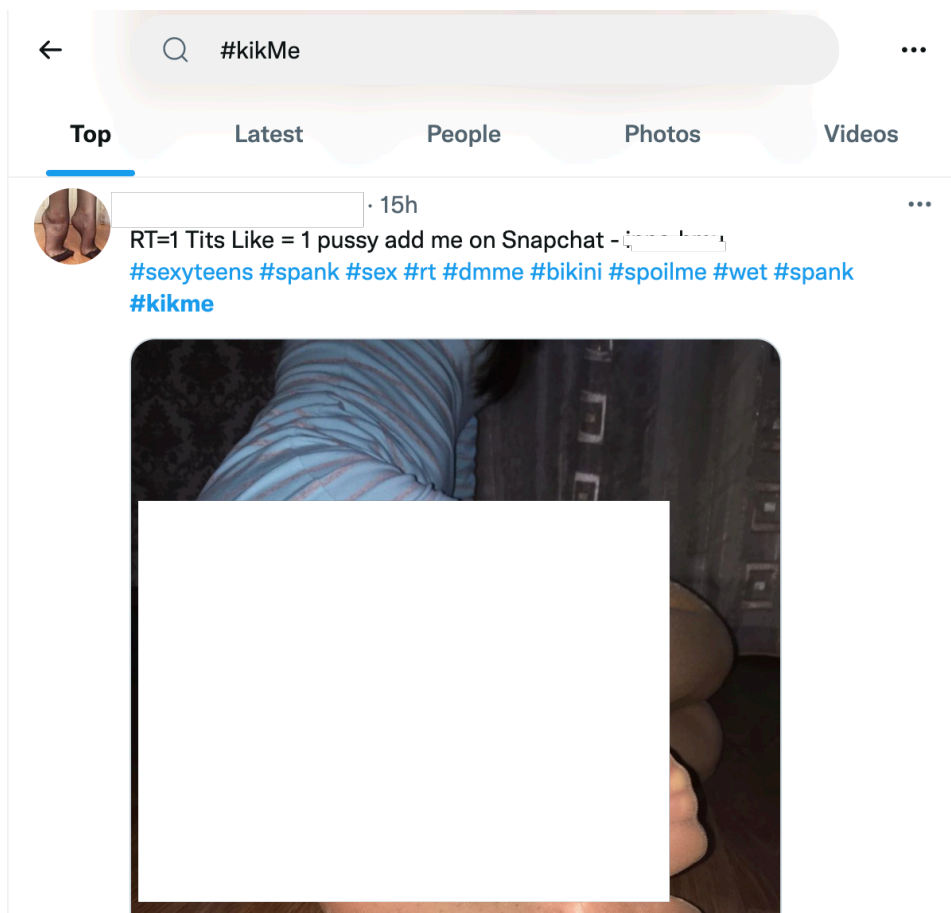


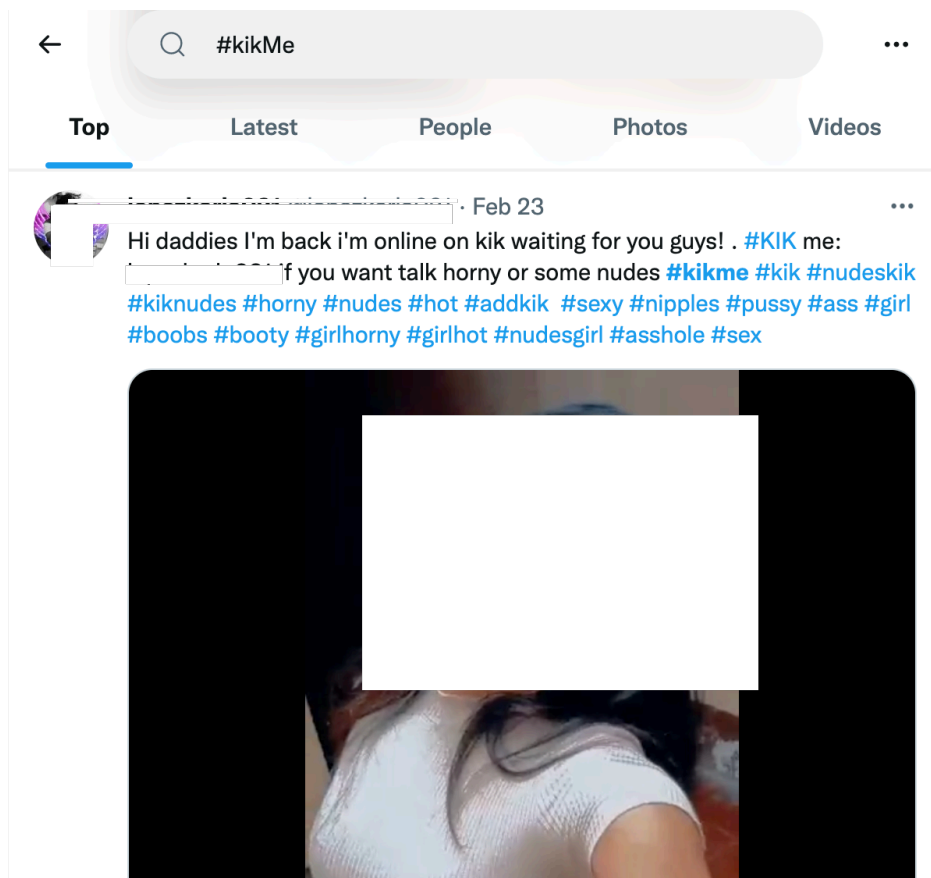
It's critical to point out that the above screenshots only include a fraction of the content on Kik, because the majority of chatting on Kik takes place in private groups.

On apps outside of Kik, it's a well-known fact just how easy and accessible sexual content is throughout the platform. People looking to remain anonymous while trading pornography, promoting or selling commercial sex acts, or participate in other sexual behavior flock to the app in droves. The popular hashtag #KikMe is absolutely filled with pornography and inappropriate content on external platforms like Twitter, driving more traffic to Kik that is explicitly against their written policies.



The above screenshot, when uncensored, depicted male genitalia.





When combined with the overwhelming evidence of grooming and escalation to child sexual abuse, the presence of pornography and inappropriate content has no place on Kik, especially given this content is explicitly banned in Kik's policies. The platform must do more to prevent this material from not only thriving throughout Kik, but actively being suggested to users only 13 years old.