

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 publicly?

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 proof, that information will only be used for our own, internal analysis. It will not be distributed, shared, or posted publicly or with outside parties.

Evidence of Exploitation on Instagram

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Instagram is a top virtual destination for grooming, sextortion, sex trafficking, and a host of other harms

Multiple [news stories](#), [survivor](#) and [whistleblower](#) testimony, [lawsuits](#), and external reports would support our assessment that Instagram’s changes aren’t actually doing much to protect children. For years, Instagram has been on the top of nearly every list outlining the most dangerous apps for youth...and recent reports are no different:

- ⇒ [#1 platform for the highest rates of sextortion](#) (Instagram 42%, Snapchat 38%, “by far the most frequently used social media environments where victims were targeted” - Canadian Centre for Child Protection, August 2022)
- ⇒ [#1 platform minors reported potentially harmful experiences](#) (Thorn Report, February 2023)
- ⇒ [#2 parent-reported platform for sexually explicit requests to children](#); Facebook named #1. (Parents Together report [Afraid, Uncertain, and Overwhelmed: A Survey of Parents on Online Sexual Exploitation of Children](#) surveyed 1,000 parents, April 2023)
- ⇒ [#2 social media platform where children were most likely to have seen pornography](#): 41% on Twitter, 37% on pornography sites, and 33% on Instagram (The UK Children’s Commissioner report ‘A lot of it is actually just abuse’ *Young people and pornography*, January 2023)
- ⇒ [#2 platform where minors have had a sexual experience with an adult](#), tied with Kik and Tumblr (Thorn Report, February 2023)
- ⇒ [#2 for highest rates of minors reporting any sexual experiences](#) on the platform (Thorn Report, February 2023)
- ⇒ [Only platform listed in top 5 worst in every single of Bark’s Annual Report categories: severe sexual content, severe suicidal ideation, depression, body image concerns, severe](#)

bullying, hate speech, severe violence. (Bark 2022 Annual Report analyzed more than 4.5 billion messages across text, email, YouTube, and 30 + apps and social media platforms.)

- ⇒ **Instagram correlated with higher rates of parent-reported [children sharing sexual images of themselves](#)** – a form of Child Sex Abuse Material (Parents Together, April 2023)

Sexualization of children and other sexual exploitation continues to fester on Instagram

Articles about Instagram’s inaction and poor policy implementation abound, here are some for the past year:

- ⇒ [A user with more than 33,000 followers that posts sexualized images of young girls was reported](#) by a researcher; Instagram provided a same-day response saying that “due to high volume”, it had not been able to view the report, but that its “technology has found that this account probably doesn’t go against our community guidelines” (The Guardian – April 2022)
- ⇒ Some accounts containing sexualized images of children and teenagers had a total of more than [500,000 followers](#) (Forbes – June 2022)
- ⇒ In 2022, Irish regulators [sued Instagram for releasing children’s phone numbers and emails](#) (BBC – September 2022)
- ⇒ Instagram hosts multitudes of [“tribute sites” that are public accounts with sexualized photos of teens and children](#), often scraped from their parents’ private accounts; pedophiles network, exchange tactics, and share links to the dark web in the comments (iNews - November 2022)
- ⇒ According to a study by pro-prostitution organization Sex Work CEO, [73% of adult content creators use Instagram to find potential sex buyers](#) (showing that prostitution and pornography accounts are active on Instagram – and likely accessible by children as we have found in the past)

Proliferation of Pedophile Networks

As long discussed and brought to Instagram’s attention by NCOSE and also by other advocates like Collective Shout and Defend Dignity—there is a rampant problem of parasitic accounts that collect photos of young children and collect them for fetishization and sexualization. Often in these cases, comments overtly sexualize children and often network to discuss the trading of more explicit content (child sexual abuse material). NCOSE and allied advocates have brought examples of these accounts to Instagram for years.

The *Wall Street Journal*’s investigative piece [“Instagram Connects Vast Pedophile Network”](#) elevated what NCOSE has been pushing on Instagram for yearsand the Stanford Internet Observatory echoed our same sentiments of frustration that small groups of researchers are able to find instances of abuse instantly: why can’t Instagram?

“That a team of three academics with limited access could find such a huge network should set off alarms at Meta,” he said, noting that the company has far more effective

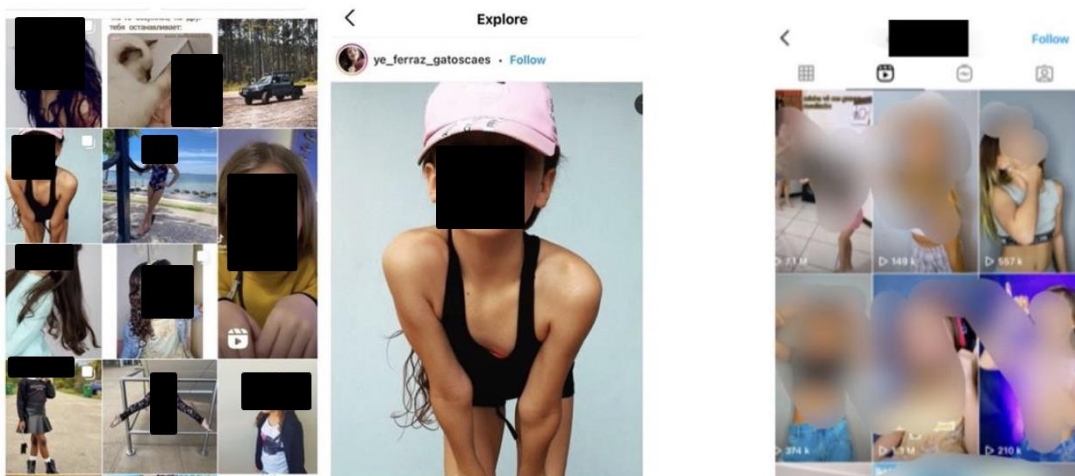
tools to map its pedophile network than outsiders do. “I hope the company reinvests in human investigators,” he added.

Test accounts set up by researchers that viewed a single account in the network were immediately hit with “suggested for you” recommendations of purported child-sex-content sellers and buyers, as well as accounts linking to off-platform content trading sites. Following just a handful of these recommendations was enough to flood a test account with content that sexualizes children.

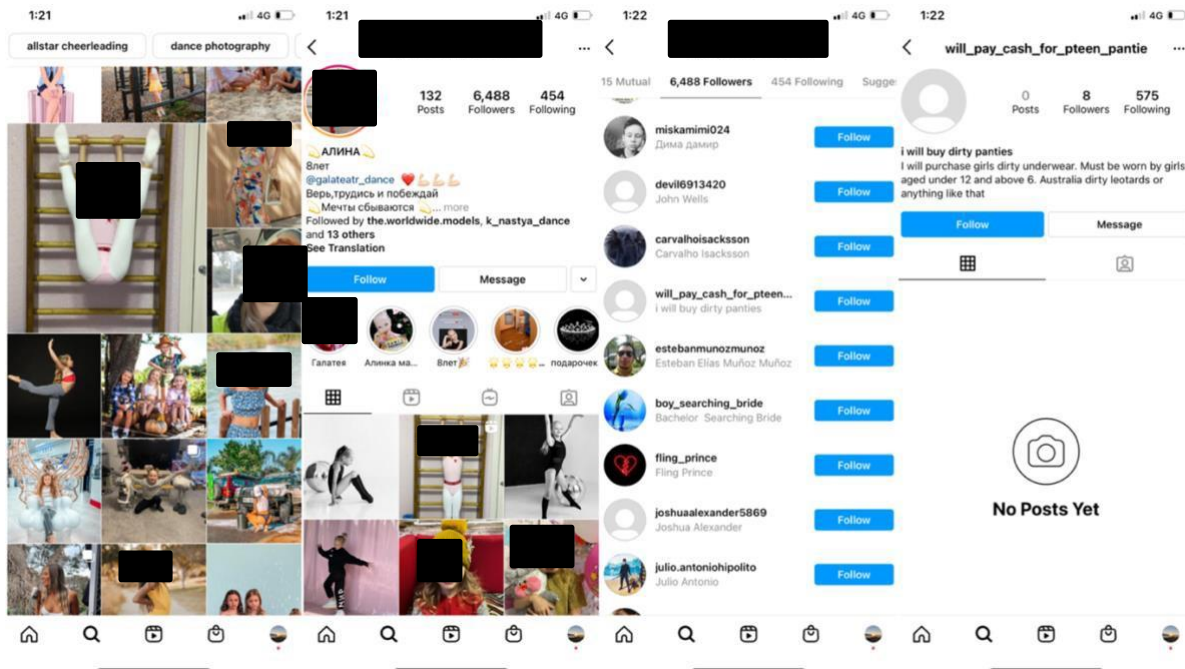
The Stanford Internet Observatory used hashtags associated with underage sex to find 405 sellers of what researchers labeled “self-generated” child-sex material—or accounts purportedly run by children themselves, some saying they were as young as 12. According to data gathered via Maltego, a network mapping software, 112 of those seller accounts collectively had 22,000 unique followers.

Underage-sex-content creators and buyers are just a corner of a larger ecosystem devoted to sexualized child content. Other accounts in the pedophile community on Instagram aggregate pro-pedophilia memes, or discuss their access to children. **Current and former Meta employees who have worked on Instagram child-safety initiatives estimate the number of accounts that exist primarily to follow such content is in the high hundreds of thousands, if not millions.**

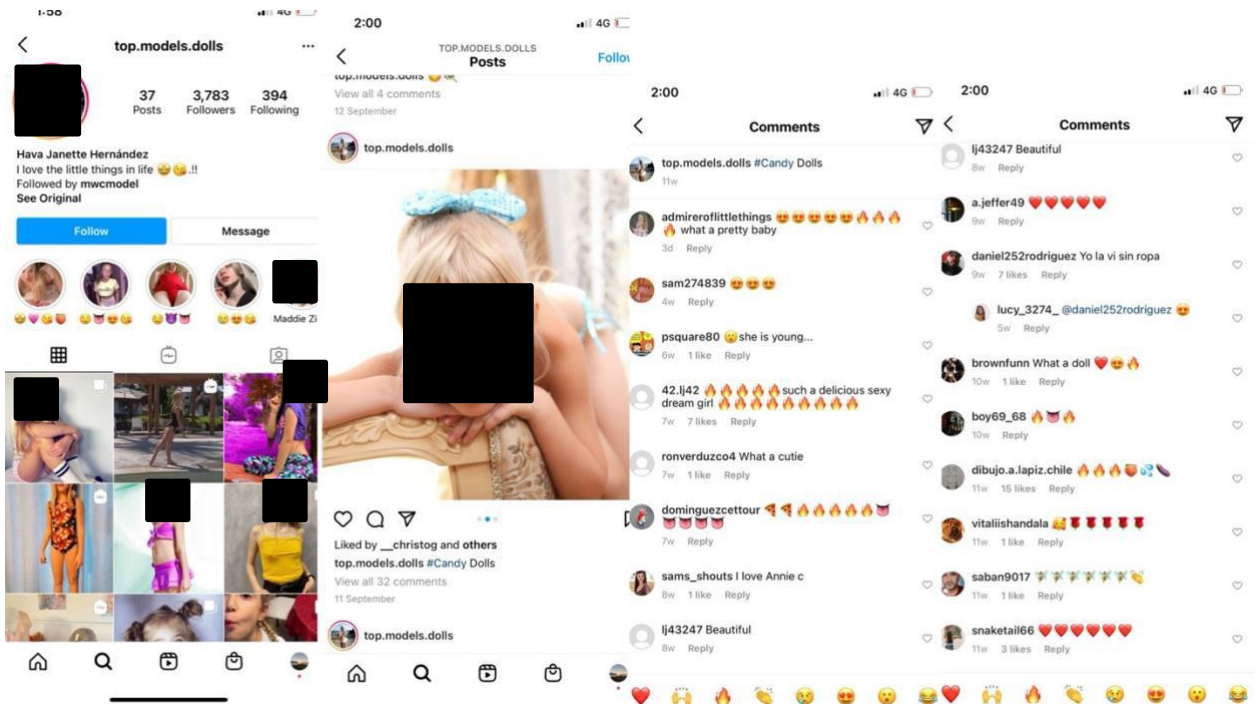
Minors including pre-teens are still being recommended via Explore, Suggested for You, and (particularly concerning) Reels – where pre-teens are essentially providing sexual entertainment for men. Some girls have hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of views on their Reels.

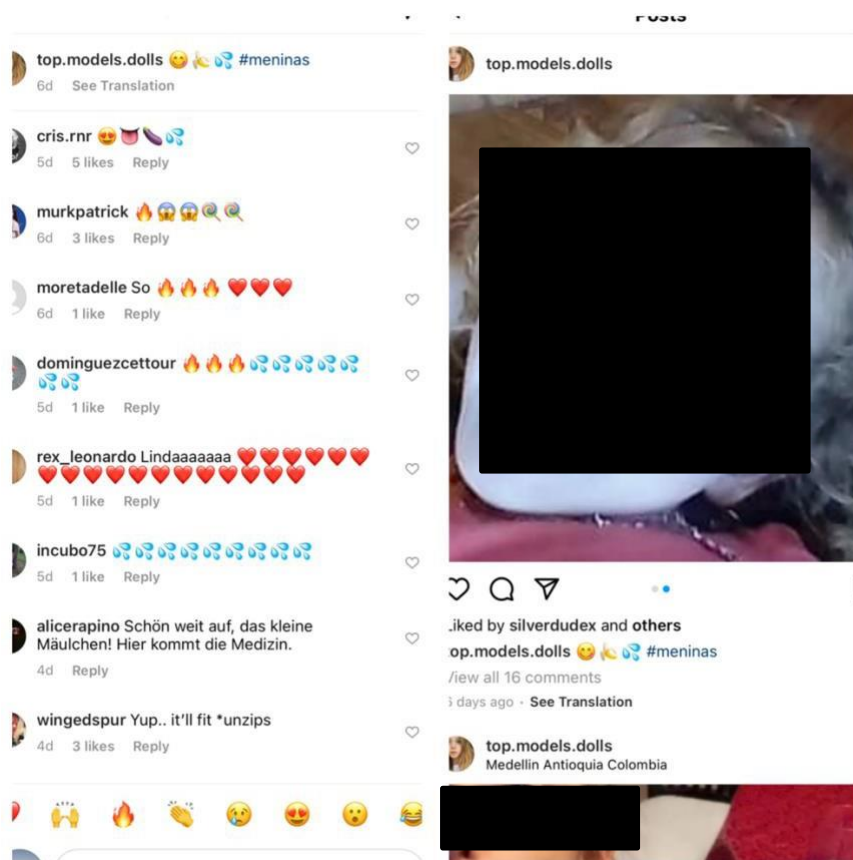


⇒ Pre-teen girls followed by/targets of approaches from predators.



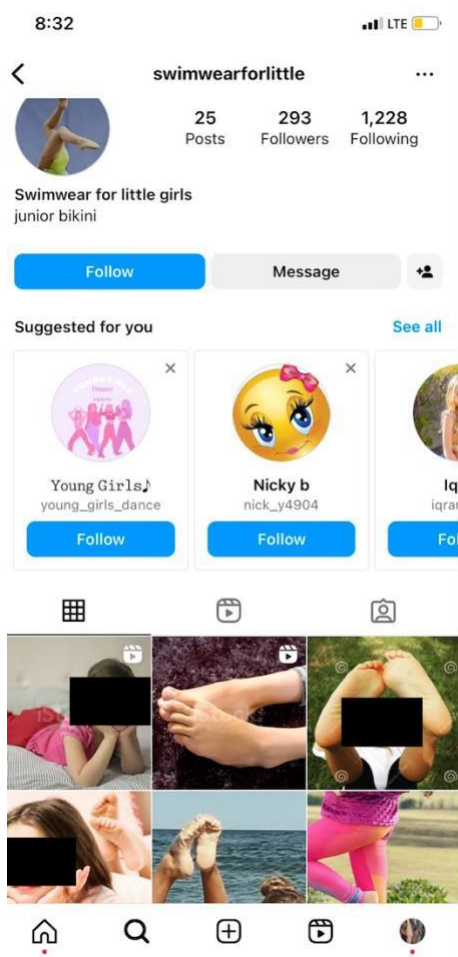
⇒ Accounts operating as pedophile networks





[Collective Shout](#) frequently documents incidents where men make sexualized/sexual abuse/predatory comments to underage girls, and the account owner ‘likes’ the comment. Instagram repeatedly comes back with “no violation.”

Hashtags also remain a serious concern, given the ease with which they connect predators with children. Repeat offenders posting sexualized comments should be barred from the platform and “suspicious adults” should be prevented from commenting on minors’ content, as well as on managed accounts for children 12 and under. We’ve also asked Instagram to prohibit re-sharing or re-posting minors’ content, or content portraying minors, without permission.



Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) trading on Instagram

Unfortunately, NCOSE researchers were quickly able to find dozens of accounts on Instagram with high markers for likely trading or selling child sexual abuse materials (I.e child pornography.)

9:57



[REDACTED]cp.sale



0
Posts

317
Followers

0
Following

Backup

Selling Mega Links CP 🍆

Only Accept Paypal 💰

Fake Check! ⚠️

Every cathegory 😊

DM Me 😏

Follow

Message



No Posts Yet

When **[REDACTED]**cp.sale posts, you'll see their photos and videos here.



Adult image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) on Instagram

In addition to the many harms perpetuated against children, we know they are not the only ones at risk on your platform. [Instagram is increasingly being called out as a hub for image-based sexual abuse – the nonconsensual capture, posting, and sharing of sexually explicit images.](#) The Center for Countering Digital Hate found that Instagram failed to act on 90% of abuse sent via DM to high-profile women.

It is time for Instagram to make safety and protection a top priority instead of an afterthought.