

Unwanted exposure to pornography & sexually explicit/suggestive products on Etsy

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.

According to [Etsy's policies](#), pornography is prohibited and sexually explicit/suggestive images should not be included in the thumbnails for products, so as to prevent unwanted exposure. However, these policies are clearly very poorly enforced, as numerous Etsy users complain of unwanted exposure to pornography and sexually explicit/suggestive products.

Dec 17, 2021:

A donor shared with NCOSE how her grand-daughter was exposed to sexually explicit/suggestive products on Etsy, after looking at innocuous items.

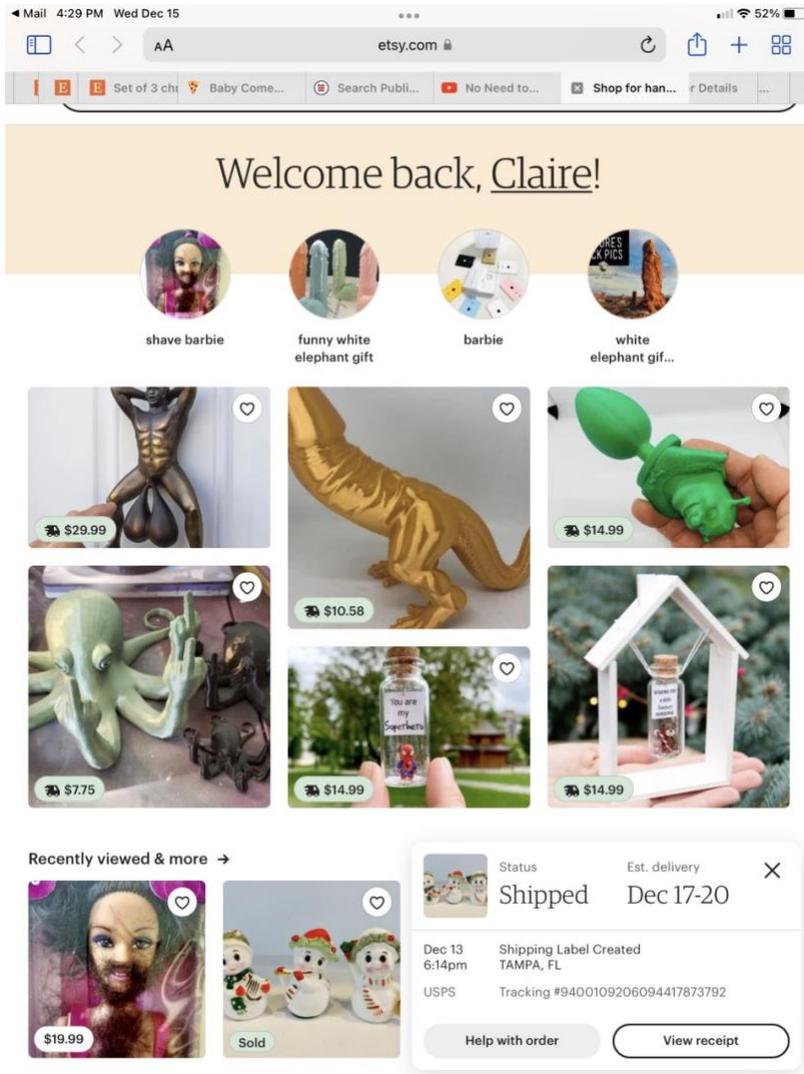
From: [REDACTED]
Date: Thursday, December 16, 2021 at 2:28 PM
To: NCOSE Public <public@ncose.com>
Subject: Complaint —Etsy

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

[Allow sender](#) | [Block sender](#)

Good afternoon. My name is [REDACTED]. I donate each month to you because I very much believe what you're doing to protect innocent people is so important. I try to keep up with your "dirty dozen lists" and articles. I have a complaint that I would like to pass on: My granddaughter is 12 years old and found some figurines on Etsy of some small porcelain snowmen. She was so excited to have found these and ask if I'd help her purchase. I did. Upon receiving the email that the figurines had shipped I clicked the link so we could view the receipt. The receipt showed in the lower right hand of the page and the page was filled with gift ideas. Dildos, a door knocker of a man with huge brass balls, a penis animal, an octopus with each leg shooting a bird. Below that was a light switch of a naked man with the on-off switch being a penis. I reached out to the seller to let her know that what started as a very fun and exciting find for a Christmas gift turned into a traumatic experience for a young girl. Please add Etsy to your "Dirty Dozen List". Attached is the picture of the page that popped up from the email link to view your purchase. Thank you

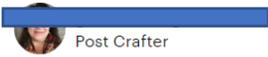
The attached screenshot from her email:



Dec 1, 2021

In the following thread in the Etsy community, numerous users share similar experiences of being bombarded with unsolicited porn and sexually explicit products. Many complain there was no way to change their viewing preferences to get rid of it. Some aptly describe this experience as a form of sexual harassment.

Link: [Pornography showing up in Our Picks For You - Welcome to the Etsy Community](#)



Post Crafter



Pornography showing up in Our Picks For You

by [redacted] Post Crafter • 06-23-2021 11:13 AM

Pornography is showing up in "Our Picks for You" for me, and I don't know why. I don't search for porn. Some of it is pretty hard core. I thought that in Etsy's policies the explicit pictures should not show up on the Thumbnail. I tried to email Etsy, but Etsy doesn't provide a path for complaints of this nature. At another persons suggestion I went the "reporting harassment" route, but had to send the complaint under harassing messages which really isn't the problem-there was no place to send this complaint. I did get a very nice email back saying to clear my history, which I had already done. I did it again, but the porn multiplied and was even worse. I do like the "Our Picks for You" because it helps me research for my shop. I sell digital prints, and I like to search for ideas of art to create. "Our Picks for You" could help me find original ideas I hadn't thought of if it weren't peppered with porn. I don't understand why a big company like Etsy can't provide a function that helps you control your viewing preferences. Pinterest does. Facebook does. So I am resorting to reporting listing which requires me to click on it. I can only assume this triggers the algorithm to think I want to see porn. I just don't understand why Etsy doesn't have a remedy for this-I feel totally disrespected. I hope lots of users complain about this problem to Etsy, so they will take notice and be motivated to make a change.

Labels : Listings Marketing Search



Community Maker



by [redacted] Maker • 06-23-2021 11:28 AM

If the shop is not adhering to Etsy policies regarding mature listings, report them by clicking the "report this shop" button

[Translate to English](#)



Reply

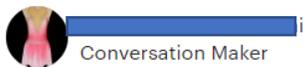


Post Crafter



by [redacted] Post Crafter • 06-23-2021 03:49 PM

That could keep me pretty busy!!!! They should pay me for being the pornography police! I do report, but then I am shown more and worse porn.



Conversation Maker



by C [redacted] mi • Conversation Maker • 06-23-2021 11:37 AM

I agree with @ [redacted] me

There are several women on Etsy's board, as well as several prominent staff members like [@FidosFlowers](#) who seem to be really engaged in Etsy's branding.

When these types of complaints pop up weekly, I wonder if the women of Etsy are aware of Etsy's porn issue. Etsy is essentially our landlord. If our landlord was plastering unsolicited porn all over the windows and doors of our shop and passing out graphic images to customers browsing our shops, it would be considered sexual harrasment at best.



Community Maker



by hopeandjoyhome • Community Maker • 06-23-2021 11:43 AM

"If our landlord was plastering unsolicited porn all over the windows and doors of our shop and passing out graphic images to customers browsing our shops, it would be considered sexual harrasment at best." ..Oh but just go in the back door so you don't have to see it!! Even though your customers will or it can appear right in your listings!



Conversation Maker



by M [redacted] • Conversation Maker • 06-23-2021 11:52 AM

E-bay has banned the sale of adult products. I wonder how many of those sellers have moved to Etsy. I never used to see porn and adult items in "picks for you." This month, it seems like every other day I see graphic art and adult toys in the picks for you.



Post Crafter



by [redacted] Post Crafter • 06-23-2021 12:28 PM

@ [redacted] hink that's probably it.

I personally have no problem at all with adult items being sold on Etsy, but surely there could be a little button you can toggle on and off: 'Show adult products' and 'Don't show adult products'.

Those little knits haunted me for days!

[Translate to English](#)



4 Likes



The [redacted]
Post Crafter



by [redacted] Post Crafter • 06-23-2021 12:22 PM

I honestly don't understand the 'Picks For You' section. I was searching for mother of the bride gifts and wedding favours (all traditional & tasteful ones!), then for the next week my 'Picks For You' section was full of graphic knitted men's parts... I really don't understand the connection!

I cleared my history and tried searching for dresses, earrings etc but these items stayed up there for a good week. Not what I wanted to see when I look at Etsy several times a day!

[Translate to English](#)



4 Likes

[Reply](#)



[redacted]
Conversation Maker

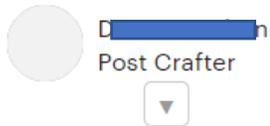


by [redacted] Conversation Maker • 06-23-2021 12:25 PM

You don't understand the connection?

I'm telling you, it could be something as innocent as the word 'gift'.
Someone tagged all their knitted dicks as 'gift' and why shouldn't they?

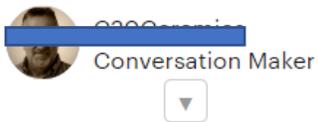
Etsy thinks you like gifts and shows you more gifts.



by [redacted] • Post Crafter • 07-14-2021 09:13 PM

I never searched for ANYTHING even remotely sexual, illicit, in any way, yet my front page is full of naked women. There is even one pic of a woman's butt and a man's hand reaching out to touch it. I don't want to see this. I am sorry, this is sexual harassment, imo.

 [Translate to English](#)



by [redacted] Conversation Maker • 06-24-2021 01:28 AM

I have reported 1 shop twice to Etsy for selling explicit pornography..... but Etsy doesnt seem to care...its is still there and doing well by the number of sales. This is not just "mature content", it is full on x rated "sculpture". It hasn't appeared in my feed fortunately, but appeared in full glory when I looked at the favourites of a customer..... which I will never do again!

 [Translate to English](#)

The following reddit threads contains similar complaints of unsolicited exposure to pornography and sexually explicit/suggestive products.

Link: [Pornography on etsy. : Etsy \(reddit.com\)](#)



 r/Etsy · Posted by u/rtuite81 7 months ago 

7



Pornography on etsy.

Reposting without examples. Hopefully it has the same impact.

I recently bought a vinyl cutter and was directed to Etsy to purchase digital files to use for my projects. My main genre, I guess, would be nerd culture. Video games, star wars, etc. I was just browsing this morning on my phone and tapped the search field and one of the suggestions was "erotics shotz." My imagination went to shot glasses with suggestive sayings or maybe symbols. Mother's Day is coming up, and my wife would have likely enjoyed a gag gift of that nature.

She would not, however, enjoy what I saw on that page. That garbage belongs on Hustler, not what I thought was a marketplace for creativity.

The worst part is I was able to access those uncensored listings without a login, which means there is 0 age verification.

I'm not one of those guys who is ashamed of sex, nor do I feel like anyone should be. However, these listings are blatantly pornography. If you search for the store "erotics shotz" you will see what I'm talking about.

Etsy's own policy states that [pornography is not allowed](#). However, this content is showing up not only when not logged in, but is being recommended to new users with no history of searching for such things. Of course, now that I've clicked on it it's going to be all over my recommendations.

I also, as an active member of multiple anti-exploitation and human trafficking awareness organizations, feel it's necessary to point out there is no mechanic on this website to verify that models are of age and consenting to the photos that are being sold. This is a [federal requirement](#) by all sites that serve pornography and nudity.



10 Comments



Share



Save



Hide



Report

59% Upvoted



This thread has been locked by the moderators of r/Etsy

New comments cannot be posted

Sort By: Best ▼



sagetrees · 7m

Yep that's full on hardcore porn. It seems to be just one shop with only one sale (nope sorry, 58 sales). Report them to etsy. I already clicked on report.

↑ 6 ↓ Share Report Save



funsizedsamurai · 7m

It really has gotten out of control, and I think Etsy needs to have some serious default filters in place. I was looking for mugs the other day, so I typed in funny mothers day mugs. Porn and nude pictures came up on the first few pages. I wasn't shocked or upset, but more annoyed.

Etsy does have mature requirements, and pages can be reported for mature listings, but this is onerous from an individual perspective.

For the sellers, the TOS for etsy say that mature pictures or language is not allowed at all in the first thumbnail or the listing title and "mature" must be used in the tags.

↑ 9 ↓ Share Report Save



Robert3678 · 7m

Etsy doesn't have any filters, but you can try this filter:

<https://www.visumex.com/view-filter-for-etsy-introduction/>

↑ 1 ↓ Share Report Save

Link: [Todays Etsy, opinion : Etsy \(reddit.com\)](#)



 r/Etsy · Posted by u/8-sky-watcher 3 months ago

13

Today's Etsy, opinion

A selling/buying online platform that doesn't honor its own policies.

A vast online landfill of mostly made in China, fake originals, **porn**, resales, resale craft supplies found elsewhere, stenciled "art". soiled panties, smelly dirty socks, dildos, inflatable anus and vagina, fakes of every imaginable product, can food, brand name candy, ready made junk bought at wholesale with private label or passed as handmade, silk screen t shirts, mugs and everything silkscreened under the sun, dead baby rats, sex solicitation, and the Etsy "eclectic" listings goes on and on.

Community forums that are taken over by a group of rude know-it-alls who many times accuse, misinform, make false assumptions, harass, belittle, mock, insult and bully others whenever they feel like it. Most times the thread topic goes astray.

A vast wasteland where sellers are busy policing other sellers.

A vast wasteland of clueless buyers who many times fall victim to "original" "handmade" or even "vintage".

A company that doesn't care about honest small sellers.

A company that harasses sellers and buyers with in your face **porn** listings and unsolicited in your face **porn** images of every kind imaginable.

A company that doesn't seem to care or want to clean up the **porn**, the resellers, the fakes, and or China made off its platform.

and unfortunately the minority of small sellers with integrity and honesty are heading toward extinction from Etsy

 44 Comments  Share  Save  Hide  Report

68% Upvoted

Log in or sign up to leave a comment

Log In

Sign Up

Sort By: Best ▾



GildedLionMinis · 3m · edited 3m

Can confirm. I sell mermaid figurines and one of them has "nude" in the title because the mermaid is topless. And uh, now I get a lot of pornographic erotic art in my "recommended for you" section when I did a couple of searches to see if the listing showed up. Partially my fault since one of the tags is "nude mermaid" but ugh it sucks.



Incognito409 · 3m

I expect it to change and evolve, but the abundance of **porn** and sex toys is beyond my comprehension.

1 Reply Share Report Save



ShredShredChugChug · 3m

You know what they say... Sex sells.

Etsy gets a cut of everything. At the end of the day a buck is a buck.

They're running a business and are only concerned with their own margins. Just as every other seller is.

They also seem to have a lack of competition. Shopify is definitely in their shadow, but has its own set of challenges to hurdle.

Once people realize these things ^ it's less hard to wrap your head around it.

5 Reply Share Report Save



ArborBee · 3m

I mean hey, if you've got the materials, there's a lot of money in making silicone dildos in funky shapes. It's still hand made lol.

2 Reply Share Report Save



Incognito409 · 3m

I really don't have an issue with the dildos, its when I search for pantie patterns for dolls and get dirty panties and nude crotch shots.

1 Reply Share Report Save



KazFoxsen · 3m

[KazFoxsen.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/KazFoxsen)

Yeah, I can see how searching for panty patterns could return some weird results. Could you start your search with "doll clothes pattern" and maybe tack on "underwear" if the results are too broad?

1 Reply Share Report Save



Technical-Building22 · 3m

Yea, if you ever search up 3d printed stuff, half of it is **porn**... kinda shocked that Etsy doesn't care about this sort of stuff.

1 Reply Share Report Save

Link: [Etsy suggests kinky things : Etsy \(reddit.com\)](https://www.reddit.com/r/etsy/comments/10jz8qk/etsy_suggests_kinky_things/)



93

r/Etsy · Posted by u/ksilva00 9 months ago

Etsy suggests kinky things

Newbie

Hello all,

I recently went to purchase a purple cuban link chain dog collar for my dog (we have a silver one now but her favorite color is purple lol) but Etsy misunderstood me and now I keep getting suggestions for kink kits! Is there any way to block the shops or the categories from coming up? I have tried clicking the things to make them go away but I think it just has made them come up more. 🙄 Any help is appreciated!

Also if anyone is selling a purple cuban link chain dog collar, drop your shop name in the comments below, I am still looking! :)

33 Comments Share Save Hide Report

98% Upvoted

Log in or sign up to leave a comment

Log In

Sign Up

Sort By: Best



HarnessMeDesignsOUB · 9m

HarnessMeDesigns.Com

Why Etsy doesn't have a SFW and NSFW filter is beyond me. I believe you can clear your cache ect then search a bunch of wholesome things to correct the algorithm.

91 Reply Share Report Save



HarnessMeDesignsOUB · 9m

HarnessMeDesigns.Com

Lol I sell lingerie as well - there's no nudity but I would prefer a NSFW filter as it would allow people to search strictly for my type of wear, rather than like a safety mask vs a kinky mask in your case or for me a safety harness vs a body harness.

Etsy feels so slow to implement some of the most basic stuff a website needs lol.

6 Reply Share Report Save



theskimocowboy · 9m

Yeah I would love a filter because I searched for something, unintentionally got bdsm gear at first, and now I am getting VERY NSFW ads from etsy on Facebook which I periodically look at on breaks at work.

 1   Reply [Share](#) [Report](#) [Save](#)

(Dec 2021)