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CENTER ON  
SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION**

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Section, U.S. Department of Justice*

February 1, 2018

Jack Dorsey, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder  
Omid Kordestani, Executive Chairman, Board of Directors  
Twitter, Inc.  
1355 Market Street  
Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**RE: 2018 Dirty Dozen List Notification**

Dear Messrs. Dorsey and Kordestani:

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the distribution of hardcore, adult pornography, the frequent posting of child pornography, as well as the promotion of prostitution on Twitter.

In today's #MeToo culture, where sexual harassment and assault are rampant, corporations like Twitter have a renewed corporate responsibility to refrain from normalizing or promoting material that promotes sexual exploitation. However, Twitter is filled with pornography that supports rape myths, normalizes adult-with-teen-themed and incest-themed exploitation, and reinforces degrading racially charged sexual stereotypes. In fact, media reports suggest that as many as 10 million Twitter accounts may include explicit.

Twitter has come under fire recently for the vast amount of cyber-based sexual harassment, revenge pornography, and even sexually exploited images of children on its platform. We know that pornography is inherently tied to cyber-based sexual harassment, whether in the form of revenge pornography, being spammed with pornography, or having one's virtual identity co-opted by tags to pornography.

Soon, the National Center on Sexual Exploitation will announce its annual "Dirty Dozen List," which names the major mainstream promoters of pornography and sexual exploitation in America. Twitter was previously named to this list in 2013 and 2017. After careful consideration, we have decided to include Twitter on the 2018 Dirty Dozen List.

To be removed from this list, we ask Twitter to initiate a program to sweep through images and keywords to remove accounts, Periscope streams, and web links that include pornographic material or advertisements for pornographic material and/or prostitution. Also, Twitter should improve its reporting system to specifically report accounts or tweets posting pornographic materials or links.

Based on Twitter's recent actions and policy updates, we are hopeful that Twitter can become a partner to combat sexual exploitation.

### **Twitter Has Made Progress in 2017**

In March of 2017, Twitter began blocking several pornography-related search terms from direct searches in the "Photos" and "Videos" section of the social media platform. This is a commendable step in the right direction, although searches using the same keywords in the general search tab are not blocked and turn up reams of sexually graphic and exploitive images and videos.

Further, in December of 2017, Twitter announced it would better enforcing its rules about abusive and hateful content. Twitter now intends to block "hateful content" as well as content that is degrading or abusive or promotes "sexist tropes" or that "reduce someone to less than human."<sup>1</sup>

### **Twitter's Opportunity to Properly Enforce Its New Policies**

In order to cohesively enforce its new policies, and to promote the wellbeing and gender equity of its users, Twitter must recognize that pornography is overtly sexist, objectifying, and sexually exploitive.

Pornography reduces women to be less than human – to be sexual objects whose sole purpose is to be consumed by the public.

- **Pornography Teaches Users that Women Enjoy Sexual Violence and Degradation:** Analysis of the 50 most popular pornographic videos (those bought and rented most often) found that 88% of scenes contained physical violence, and 49% contained verbal aggression.<sup>12</sup> Eighty-seven percent of aggressive acts were perpetrated against women, and 95% of their responses were either neutral or expressions of pleasure.<sup>2</sup> In a separate content analysis of free, Internet pornography, researchers found that nearly half of all videos in which two or more persons were present ended with the act of ejaculation on the face or mouth of a female by one or more males.<sup>3</sup>
- **Pornography Sends a Message that Women Are Less Deserving of Moral Treatment:** A 2010 study from the European Journal of Social Psychology came to the conclusion that objectified persons are associated with less personhood, and so the person viewing the objectified person views them as less of a person and as less deserving of moral

<sup>1</sup> "Enforcing New Rules to Reduce Hateful Conduct and Abusive Behavior." *Twitter*, [blog.twitter.com/official/en\\_us/topics/company/2017/safetypoliciesdec2017.html](http://blog.twitter.com/official/en_us/topics/company/2017/safetypoliciesdec2017.html).

<sup>2</sup> Ana J. Bridges, Robert Wosnitzer, Erica Scharrer, Chyng Sun, and Rachael Liberman, "Aggression and Sexual Behavior in Best-Selling Pornography Videos: A Content Analysis Update," *Violence against Women* 16, no. 10 (2010): 1065–1085.

<sup>3</sup> Stacy Gorman, Elizabeth Monk-Turner, and Jennifer N. Fish, "Free Adult Internet Web Sites: How Prevalent Are Degrading Acts?" *Gender Issues* 27, no. 3–4 (2010): 131–45, doi:10.1007/s12147-010-9095-7.

treatment.<sup>4</sup> Pornographic images clearly objectify and should, according to the Twitter's own standards, be removed.

- **Pornography is Linked to Increased Sexual Harassment and Violence:**

A study of 804 Italian males and females aged 14 to 19, found that males who viewed pornography were significantly more likely to report having sexually harassed a peer or forcing someone to have sex.<sup>5</sup>

Building on the link between pornography use and sexual violence, a recent meta-analysis of 22 studies from seven countries provides clear evidence confirming that pornography exposure is significantly associated with sexual aggression.<sup>6</sup> As the authors state, “the accumulated data leave little doubt that, on the average, individuals who consume pornography more frequently are more likely to hold attitudes conducive to sexual aggression and engage in actual acts of sexual aggression.”<sup>7</sup>

Fraternity men who consumed *mainstream* pornography expressed a greater intent to commit rape if they knew they would not be caught than those who did not consume pornography. Those who consumed *sadomasochistic* pornography and *rape-themed* pornography also clearly display less bystander willingness to intervene, greater belief in rape myth, and greater intent to commit rape.<sup>8</sup> In other words, there was no type of pornography that did not result in a greater intent to commit rape by a user if they knew they would not be caught.

### Examples of Pornographic Accounts and Material Currently Found on Twitter:



<sup>4</sup> Loughnan, Steve, et al. “Objectification Leads to Depersonalization: The Denial of Mind and Moral Concern to Objectified Others.” *European Journal of Social Psychology*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 8 May 2010, [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ejsp.755/full](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ejsp.755/full).

<sup>5</sup> Silvia Bonino, Silvia Ciairano, Emanuela Rabagliette, and Elena Cattelino, “Use of Pornography and Self-Reported Engagement in Sexual Violence among Adolescents,” *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 3, no. 3 (2006):265-288.

<sup>6</sup> Paul J. Wright, Robert S. Tokunaga, and Ashley Kraus. “A Meta-Analysis of Pornography Consumption and Actual Acts of Sexual Aggression in General Population Studies.” *Journal of Communication*, (December 29, 2015): 1-23.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> John Foubert, Matt Brosi, and R. Bannon, “Pornography Viewing among Fraternity Men: Effects on Bystander Intervention, Rape Myth Acceptance & Behavioral Intent to Commit Sexual Assault,” *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 18, no. 4 (2011): 212-231.

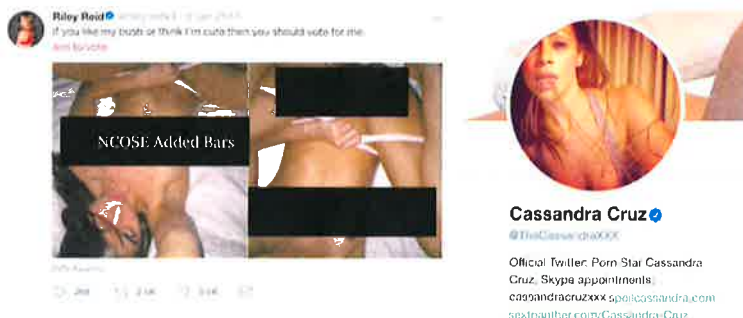


Picture 1: Note Teen Theme



Picture 2: Note "Real Rape Videos" Description

Many Twitter Verified accounts of pornography performers regularly post pornographic images, videos, and links to pornographic content. These links and images should not be allowed on Verified accounts.



Further, Twitter's reporting system currently does not allow users to accurately report pornographic images or links. Instead it only lists "sensitive" images, and responses from Twitter to reports about pornographic material are not consistent in removing these graphics.

Major corporations such as Omni Hotels, Marriott International, Hilton Worldwide, Walmart, Facebook, and others have eliminated or are eliminating pornography from their business models.

This is Twitter's invitation to do likewise, and in so doing assume a leadership position within the social media business sector. Please inform us of policy and enforcement changes, and we would be glad to publicly commend Twitter for fighting for freedom from sexual exploitation. You can contact us at 202-393-7245 or public@ncose.com.

Sincerely,

Patrick Trueman  
President & CEO

Dawn Hawkins  
Senior Vice President & Executive Director