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My Porn & Me

Zachary Neuendorf

Iowa State University

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“Can I borrow your laptop to google gear pump prices?” my dad asks me from the living room.

Back in my room, before I answer, I feverishly reach for my laptop, and with the speed of a weasel on cocaine, I go to the “History” tab, move down to ‘Clear History’ and with a click, all the webpages that defined my existence for the past month, vanish.

A few seconds go by before I answer him with, “Yeah, yeah. One second.”

Within those few seconds, I am convinced he knows precisely what I am doing—covering up the dirty internet trails that I frequently travel down.

Imagine I do not clear my history and my dad begins typing ‘gear pump prices’ into the Google search bar. He types ‘g’—with my history still intact and my dad’s languorous typing skills in action, the first result to be offered to him would have been ‘gay porn’. Then second, third and fourth results would likely be ‘gay porn’ followed by the categories ‘amateur’, ‘tumblr’, ‘homemade’, and ‘artsy vintage’.

It is not my preference that would embarrass me—my sexuality is old news. But the ‘porn’ tag that follows lends an extending hand of imagination to a parent. See, being gay in America translates into a prepubescent fondness for Mariah Carey. And all sufficient fathers are totally cool with that.

However, once ‘porn’ gets tagged onto ‘gay’ it unleashes a fresh can of worms. I figure this is the moment that parents piece together that their little one not only likes the bodies of others, but their kids actually enjoy bodies so much, they will watch strangers plow each other on the web. And in my case, it is Brazilian men on webcam.

I am not cagey about my Brazilian-porn leanings, as demonstrated, but it’s not information I feel morally obligated to share with my dad, which is odd because I know damn well my father is a scout into sexually graphic territory. After all, it was his Playboy I picked up at age 12, fingered through, saw perky breasts and tidy vaginas and decided with certitude that these women looked alright, but it was likely my interests be found in Playgirl.

It was proven three nights later when, once all the family was snoozing, I snuck onto the family computer and found the Playgirl website, my doors came crashing down. Yeah, this was cool with me.

Just on the off-chance my dad does ever gain knowledge of my porn habits, I have formulated an argument for porn culture I will deliver with so much respectable gravitas that he will have no choice but to give me and my porn the standing ovation it deserves.

Like all well-buffed debates, I have recruited two intelligent women to reaffirm my stance with their respective touches of nuance. At my table, we have Marrysa Harkness and Katie Stirk.

Both are students, occasional porn watchers and heterosexual, yet both prefer, interestingly enough, to watch women. This is not uncommon, and it is very revealing as to why we watch porn—proving pornography accomplishes more than sexual stimulation. Why would heterosexual people look at same-sex bodies?

“I hate looking at a man’s face and body acting in porn. It’s the biggest turn off.”
Not physically, per se—but of course with the right amount of vigor and experimentation, I am sure porn time counts as gym time. However, I am talking about the strength that matters—the strength of the spirit. Porn has opened me to all the fetishes of the world. Some do not satisfy my taste buds, but somebody out there loves those fetishes and it makes me feel cozy to know people share them. One example—the community that lives for sploshing—those who find food sexually tantalizing, is extraordinarily vibrant.

Justification Number Two: Scripted porn is funnier than any Adam Sandler movie.

Harkness and I have watched porn together when we could have been watching How I Met Your Mother, and I can guarantee more laughs were shared. Across the porn landscape, we have dialogue worthy of trash cans, themes that range from fisting to bondage and the actors in charge of delivering the dialogue and themes are hammmy enough to serve at Christmas dinner. It’s a delight.

Justification Number Three: Friends who watch porn together stay together.

It can be a bonding experience with the people you trust, admire and those who you wish to see squirm. To be clear, I am not talking about viewing porn with friends and simultaneously pleasing yourself in their company (DISCLAIMER: Doing this is totally fine—it just is not how I roll).

I have watched porn with one friend, two friends, red friends, blue friends. And not once have I regretted the vulnerability we forced ourselves into. We all want to talk about our sexual tendencies but the window in day-to-day life to bring up such topics is either brief or non-existent. By setting aside time for communal pornographic viewing, you can break the ice and out pours a flood of your dirtiest, juiciest secrets concerning your sexuality. Whether we admit it or not, it is secrets that build friendships.

Justification Number Four: Let’s get political and pretend we are defending ourselves against raging feminists with the best intentions.

They are hooting and hollering that porn objectifies its participants. I’ll let Stirk dish on this—“I don’t think porn is objectifying. These women and men are choosing to be exposed. Nude models understand the risks and the parameters that encompass the empire that is porn, so I suppose they’re objectifying themselves? Haha, no” Hell yeah, well said.

Justification Number Five: Yes, we are aware some people devour too much porn.

Do I? Do Joe or Joanna down the hallway? Likely not. Chances are we take in enough porn to appease us sexually. Harkness believes if you spend “like a third of your day watching porn, you should consider jogging instead,” and I concur. If porn consumes you and begins to inhibit your social life or mental state, please seek help.

Sex addiction is real, and the debate arguing against that fact is repulsively archaic. If you live with sex addiction, do not let shame paralyze you. We are all creatures with feelings we feel the need to stuff under the bed because we don’t think anyone will understand. But screw that belief system. Because at our core, we are humans who love each other no matter what.

And at this point in my lecture, my dad will have jumped out of his chair and applauded for me until his hands blistered. Ignoring his pain, he will clap away as I bow for my hundredth minute.

That’s the fantasy. The reality, anyhow, is not any less heartening. He does not care. Nor should anyone else. It is my time, my desire, and he gets that. Sex is so natural the topic itself is actually incredibly boring. But just like the act of sex, porn can be laughable, laudable, loathable and lovable.

By the way, none of this means I won’t delete my internet history when my mom asks to google ganache recipes.