



A STUDY OF
How
MEN

engage
WITH

Porn
online

READER
DISCRETION
ADVISED

This report contains analysis, descriptions, and links to material explicitly depicting sex and other kinds of pornography. Content may be age inappropriate or disturbing to some readers and is intended for research, educational, or professional purposes only.

USING LARGE-SCALE,
CROSS-PLATFORM
U.S.-BASED INTERNET
ENGAGEMENT DATA



20
SEPTEMBER
26

HARMONY
LABS

| equimundo

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The internet ushered in an explosion in availability and access to online material explicitly depicting sex. On this point, the scholarly literature, commentary, and journalism about pornography seem to agree.

About everything else, however, evidence and opinions vary.



IN THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE, COMMENTARY, AND JOURNALISM, we find porn framed as a moral crisis, with [prohibition as the only possible solution](#). There's porn as an [opportunity for increasing media literacy](#), especially for [children and teens](#). There's porn as [reproducing the male gaze](#) or the [imperial gaze](#), as [reinforcing national and cultural stereotypes](#). There's porn as [a vector for pathologizing male sexuality](#), with [problematic porn usage](#), [porn addiction](#), porn as [substitute for male-female relationship](#), and [porn as a correlate to promiscuity, interpersonal apathy, misogyny, and sexual violence](#), or as an [outlet for impulses](#) that might otherwise lead to these attitudes and behaviors.

The [porn industry's exploitation of women](#) is well documented, along with a host of other harms, and the surface area for online interaction with porn is already rapidly increasing under the influence of AI. There's the [deep-fake porn economy](#), [AI-generated porn](#), and AI as a tool for fulfilling sexual fantasy, used by 24% of young man and 13% of young women, according to the [2026 State of the World's Men report](#).

Two things stood out to us as largely missing in our review of the literature and commentary on porn, informed by other recent reviews and reports, like [this one](#) from the [American Institute of Boys and Men](#) or [this one](#) from [Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice](#).

1. THE FIRST MISSING THING WAS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PORN DERIVED FROM THE DIRECTLY OBSERVED BEHAVIOR OF PEOPLE.

Most of the studies about porn we reviewed relied on people describing their own porn use via surveys, or on reporting from a single platform, like [Pornhub](#). The [shortcomings of self-report for media behavior are well documented](#) and likely to be particularly

pronounced for porn, content that channels a range of cultural concerns, taboos, stigmas, and ambivalence. And because people encounter porn across an ever expanding array of platforms, channels, and formats—from traditional tube sites to member-only cam sites, private messenger groups, social media, and more—user behavior on any one platform is likely to provide a very partial view of what's happening with porn and people online. There are definitely some studies derived from cross-platform behavioral media data, like [this one](#), but they tend to rely on just a few thousand study participants.

2. THE SECOND MISSING THING WAS A CONCEPTION OF PORN AS PART OF AN ECOLOGY OF MEDIA THAT INCLUDES OTHER KINDS OF CONTENT AND OTHER TYPES OF ONLINE ACTIVITY, AND THAT ACCOUNTS FOR HOW PEOPLE MOVE BETWEEN CONTENT TYPES, INTENTIONALLY OR UNINTENTIONALLY.

If porn is such an integral part of the lived experience of so many people, why do we cordon it off and treat it as a category of media engagement apart from all others? Harmony Labs is guilty of this. As a matter of policy, we exclude porn from studies of audience behavior. Is this prudishness or shame dressed up as workplace safety? Part of a larger social contract to turn away from our neighbors' bedroom and bathroom behaviors? Something else entirely?

Online life would not be what it is today without porn.

The fact is online life would not be what it is today without porn. Porn played an important role in the early internet's evolution, from how the construct of [privacy](#) gets implemented to the technologies of [video streaming](#) and [credit card-based payment systems](#). Given how central sexuality is in the lives of human beings, and the interest and energy humans invest in its exploration and expression, porn will likely persist as a key driver in whatever the internet and our media lives become next. Perhaps we had better start applying research attention to porn in ways that admit its centrality to contemporary human experience and make better use of the same internet-scale behavioral media data that media brands rely on in the development of their offerings?

We intend the report that follows to be a humble contribution along these lines, and we hope that it helps dispel some of the obscurity and shadow pervading all things porn. We begin by summarizing a few of the report's key findings, then offering an overview of research and reporting design choices and methods. We organize the rest of the report by key insights, starting with insights

derived from a quantitative analysis of porn engagement behaviors, followed by insights derived from a qualitative analysis of porn and other media content different audiences engage with.

This report stems from a larger project with [Equimundo](#) to map audiences of men online: how they participate in media cultures; relate to different masculinities; and see themselves, relationships, and communities; as well as how media engagement contributes to men's flourishing. A primary output of that larger project is an audience segmentation that divides men in the U.S. into five groups along key tensions in flourishing baselines, media behaviors, attitudes to gender, relationships, responsibilities, and more. This report makes use of that audience segmentation in describing the patterns we found in the porn content different audiences engage with. We invite you to explore the full report, [Men's Flourishing and Media: How Online Media Behaviors Relate to Flourishing for 5 Audiences of Men](#).

We also invite your questions, feedback, and suggestions on anything you find here. Please [email us](#) to start a conversation.

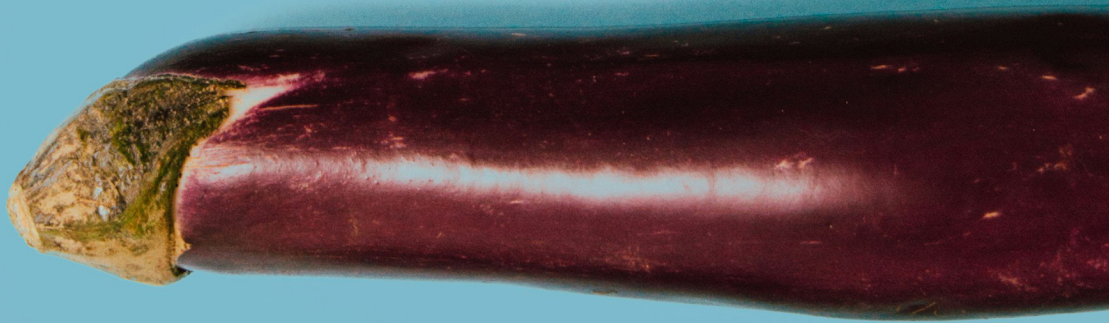
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Porn will likely persist as a key driver in whatever the internet and our media lives become next.

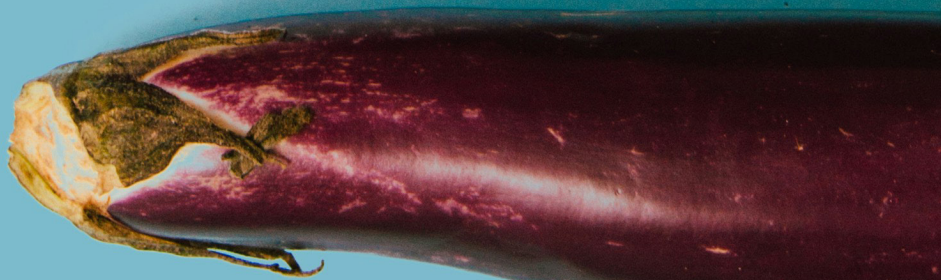
Key



Findings



Overview



BELOW WE INTRODUCE a few of the key findings from this report, which you can explore in more depth in the pages that follow.

AUDIENCES ENGAGE WITH SIMILAR, CONTIGUOUS, OR OVERLAPPING THEMES, CONCERNS, DESIRES, FEARS, AND FASCINATIONS IN THEIR PORN AND NON-PORN MEDIA.

This suggests that all media, including porn, affords men space for exploring, reflecting on, and/or reinforcing formulations and attitudes about masculinity, relationships, responsibility, care, commitment, and more. We have one audience that tends to hold so-called “traditional family values.” Men in this audience identify as providers and protectors. They are mostly heterosexual, religious, and politically conservative. They strive for confidence, strength, wealth, and respect. They view friendship with women as complicated and believe that, in general, men work harder than women. The non-porn stories they engage with reflect these attitudes and beliefs, with many streaming storylines, for instance, resolving in protagonists successfully taking control in crises and difficult situations to provide for their families. In this audience’s porn, infidelity initiated by wives and watched by husbands for their own enjoyment is a key theme. Clearly porn affords this audience a space to explore their fears and fascinations with failing at traditional gender norms and becoming a cuckold, a man whose wife or romantic partner is sexually unfaithful to him. Indeed, more than all other audiences, this audience reports relationship failure as a key change catalyst in their lives. This suggests that we should view porn as part of the total media ecology expressing

and shaping men’s sense of themselves and the world around them, rather than as a shadowy category of behavior to be, at best, medicalized and managed.

PORN IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE MEDIA LIVES OF MOST MEN.

On an average day in our study period, porn reaches more men than news, at 12% versus 9%, but less than half as many men as shopping websites (28%). Indeed, porn sits in the middle of most men’s media engagement, in terms of daily average reach. Content and online activity with a higher average daily reach than porn include search, webmail, social media, YouTube, shopping, and blogs and forums. Content and online activity with a lower average daily reach than porn include news, streaming, education, government, gaming, and food content. This finding for men is more or less stable across age and other demographic characteristics, as well as across our audiences. Men aged 51 - 60 and 18 - 24 are slightly more engaged with porn than other age groups. And, overall, average daily reach of porn for men (12%) is nearly double what it is for women (7%), a difference that becomes even more pronounced as men and women age. This suggests that if we want to reach men in media and contribute to their views of themselves and the world around them, porn needs to be part of our playbook... which requires confronting long-standing exploitative industry dynamics and how AI is contributing to the emergence of new dynamics.

PORN ENGAGEMENT IS TIME LIMITED AND PURPOSEFUL.

The average duration for a porn session for men in our panel was 10 minutes, across 8 porn pages. Average session duration for young men aged 18 - 24 was 7 minutes across 13 porn pages, and 12 minutes for men aged 61 or higher across 16 porn pages, with proportionate increases from younger to older age groups. When we ranked men in our panel according to per user average daily reach and average porn session duration, only in the top 5% to 10% of this distribution do we start to see porn use on

more than 50% of days. [Other researchers](#) have observed that most men use porn as an aid for masturbation. The biological limit on frequency of engagement and dwell times this use enforces may be what we see reflected in our data. The kind of doom scrolling we see with social media or binge watching with streaming media are not typical, or even occasional, engagement behaviors for most men with porn. The stability of use patterns around porn and the psychology of its use may afford unique engagement opportunities for people looking to reach men in media and contribute to their views of themselves and the world around them.

Methods



Overview

WE CONDUCTED THIS STUDY using large-scale, cross-platform U.S.-based internet engagement data from media measurement companies that maintain nationally representative media panels. Panelists are adults, aged 18 or older, who opt into and are compensated for having their media behaviors observed, click-by-click, minute-by-minute, across all their platforms and devices, including visits to porn sites. There were nearly 300,000 media panelists represented in the data we used for the six-month period we studied, between June and December 2025.

We were interested primarily in the porn engagement behaviors of men, although we characterize overall engagement across men and women for context and comparison.

First, we analyzed behavior across desktop and mobile devices, iOS and Android, as it related to porn and other types of media content. Then we sampled for detailed, qualitative content analysis over 100 porn videos from tube sites and Reddit with high engagement and distinctiveness across 5 audiences, along with 100 YouTube videos, spanning news and entertainment, to understand how audience porn predilections interact with other media choices.

An important caveat about our analysis is that it focuses exclusively on visits to online porn sites using web browsers, mobile and desktop. Our media panel data cannot account for porn engagement via social media platforms or private messaging services. Based on research documenting

[porn distribution networks on Telegram](#), [porn sharing via WhatsApp and Snapchat among youth](#), [nudification app-generated porn content](#), and [entanglement of sexual and social media content more generally](#), we assume therefore that our study underestimates overall porn engagement. Even doubling our estimates, however, yields a picture of porn usage that is more moderate than some commentators have seemed to suggest, like [as in this piece](#) or [this one](#).

There were few precedents for us to turn to in putting together and making publicly available a report like this about porn. As a result, we had many discussions and deliberations in our team, with our partners, and with expert advisors, about how to sample and present data, how to analyze them and interpret findings safely, how to communicate what we found in writing, how much source material to include, what to synthesize, what to elide, and what tone to strike throughout. The [four design principles](#) that underlie all our work at Harmony Labs came in handy here.

We did our best to produce a frank accounting of what we found that maximizes information utility and minimizes potential harm to our team, our partners, the public, and anyone who engages with this report. But we realize the careful, principled decisions we arrived at may make this report inappropriate for some people, and some people may find it triggering, disturbing, problematic, immoral, or otherwise unsavory. We therefore advise reader discretion, and to use what follows for research, educational, or professional purposes only.

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Our study relies on large-scale, U.S.-based internet engagement data from adults who opt into having their media behaviors observed, click by click, minute by minute, across platforms and devices.

BELOW WE SHARE THE RATIONALE behind a couple of the decisions we made and invite you to be in touch [by email](#) to let us know where you think we may have erred.

When describing the content of the porn we analyzed, we default to language that is native to and evocative of that porn content.

Language

In general, when describing the content of the porn we analyzed, we default to language that is native to and evocative of that porn content. Especially in the sections of this report drawn from a qualitative analysis of porn content, our intention is to deliver readers both an analytical overview and a direct taste of the porn audiences engage with. So rather than use a clinical formulation like “masturbate,” unlikely to appear in porn, we default to a more porn-native term, like “jerk off.”

Porn-native audience classifications

In sampling and selecting porn content for close qualitative analysis, we considered only top most distinctive keywords and top most engaged media per audience per platform. We made no effort to favor this or that distribution of “straight,” “gay,” or “trans” content, common self-selection criteria upon entry and age verification on tube sites. Rather, our analysts analyzed all content in the same way, making structured observations as videos unfolded.

Read more about methods in the [Appendix](#).

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*Porn sits in the middle
of most men's
media engagement*



HOW MUCH PORN,
CONTEXTUALIZED

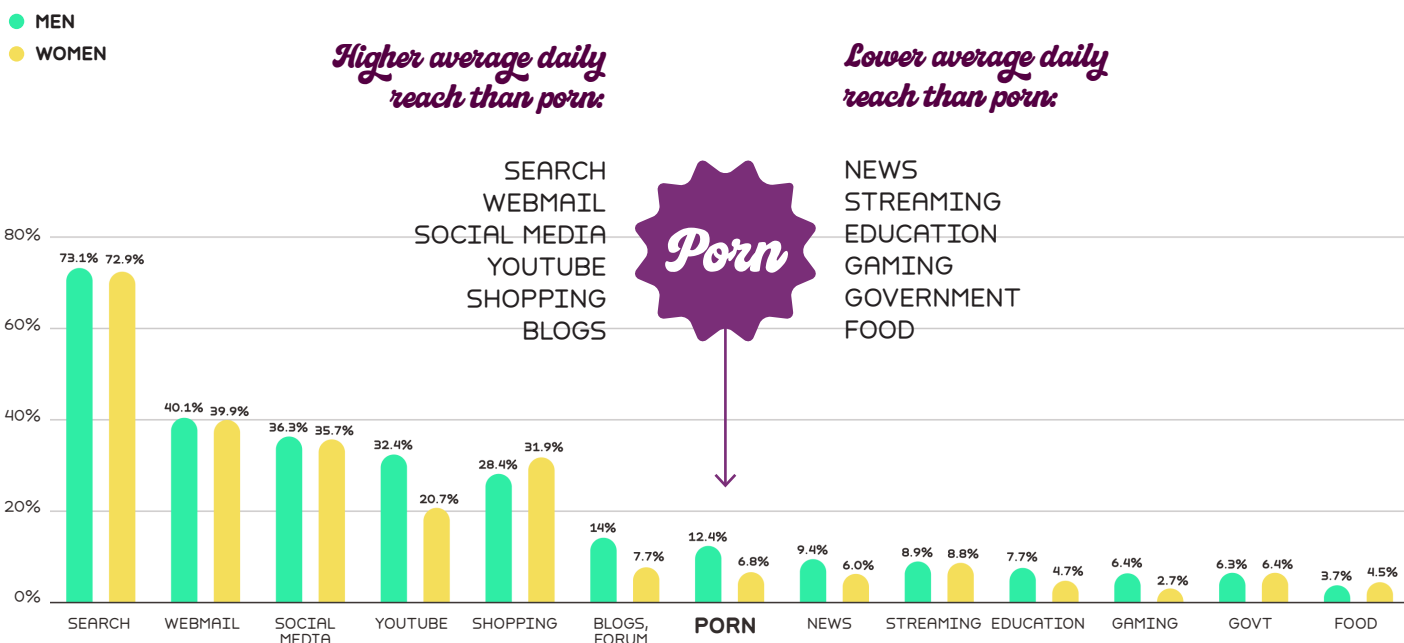
GRUBBS, ET AL.'S 2019 STUDY, [“Pornography Problems Due to Moral Incongruence,”](#) is indicative of the high rates of porn use that characterize survey self-report, with 91.5% of men and 60.2% of women reporting porn exposure “in the last month.” What such numbers and studies don’t typically offer is an understanding of how porn fits in with other types of media engagement, in terms of exposure frequency, intensity, and other characteristics. Which can make it hard to contextualize and interpret numbers which otherwise feel very high.

In our analysis, when we look at web browsing in our media panel data during our study period, we find an average daily reach of 9.5% for porn (12.4% for men and 6.8% for women). In other words, on average, on any day in our study period, nearly 10% of people in our panel are engaging with porn. How does this compare to average daily reach for other types of media or online activity in our panel?

Content and online activity with a higher average daily reach than porn include search, webmail, social media, YouTube, shopping, and blogs and forums. Content and online activity with a lower average daily reach than porn include news, streaming, education, government, gaming, and food content.

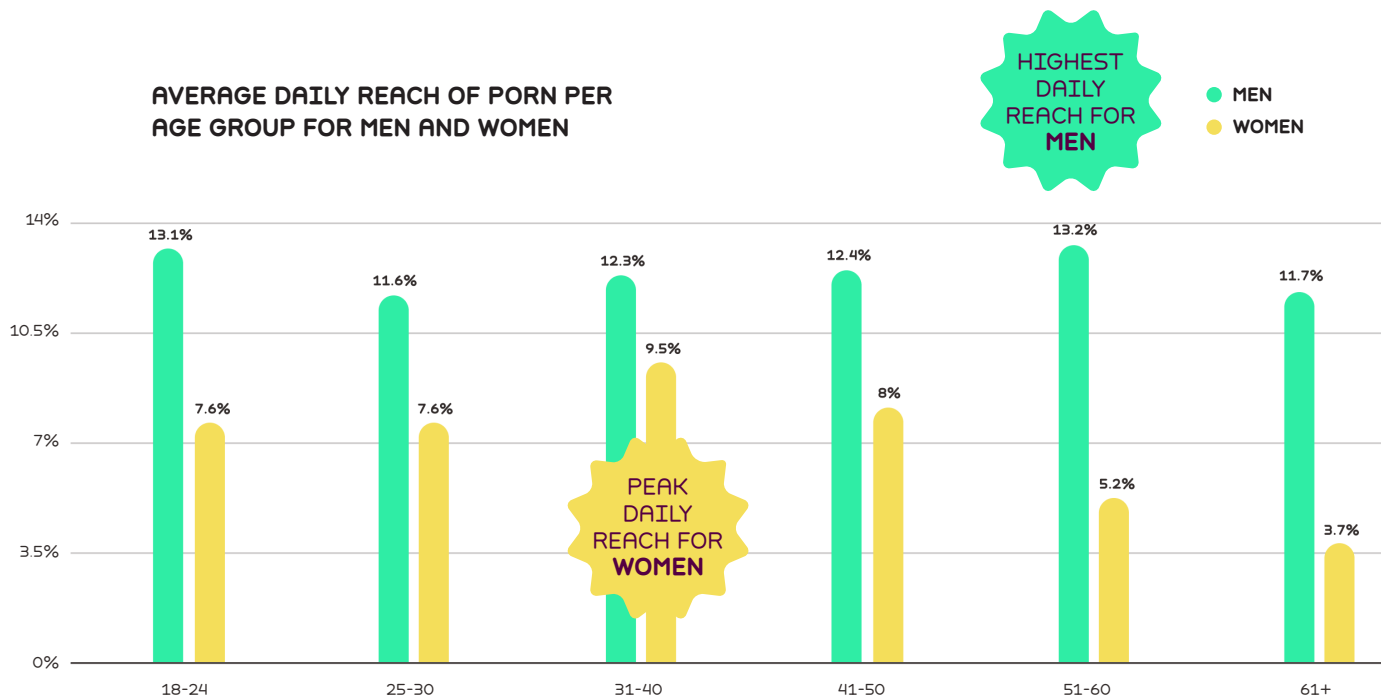
It’s important to note that our study focuses exclusively on visits to porn websites using web browsers. We are not able to account for porn consumption via social media platforms, private messaging services, nor offline porn engagement. Based on research studies and news content documenting [porn distribution networks on Telegram](#), [porn sharing via WhatsApp and Snapchat among youth](#), [nudification app-generated porn content](#), and [entanglement of sexual and social media content generally](#), we assume therefore that our study underestimates overall porn engagement. Even doubling our estimates, however, yields a picture of porn usage that is considerably more moderate than some commentators have seemed to suggest, like [this one](#) or [this one](#).

AVERAGE DAILY REACH PER DIFFERENT MEDIA AND ONLINE ACTIVITY TYPES FOR MEN AND WOMEN



As noted above, men and women show substantial differences in their porn use: with 12.4% average daily reach for men and 6.8% for women. (Such differences track to findings from studies that use self-reported data.) We also see differences across age groups. Porn has the highest average daily reach inside of men aged 51 - 60, followed closely by men aged 18 - 24, and the lowest average daily reach inside of men aged 25 - 30, followed by men aged 61 and over.

This finding may run counter to the prevalent assumption that young people engage with porn the most. Our media panel only includes people aged 18 and older, however. It may be that including porn engagement among adolescents tips the center of gravity for porn consumption more toward youth. Also notable is consistently lower average daily reach for porn among women, and the precipitous drop off in porn engagement among women, as they age.



Men and women show substantial differences in their porn use.

*An average
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8 porn pages
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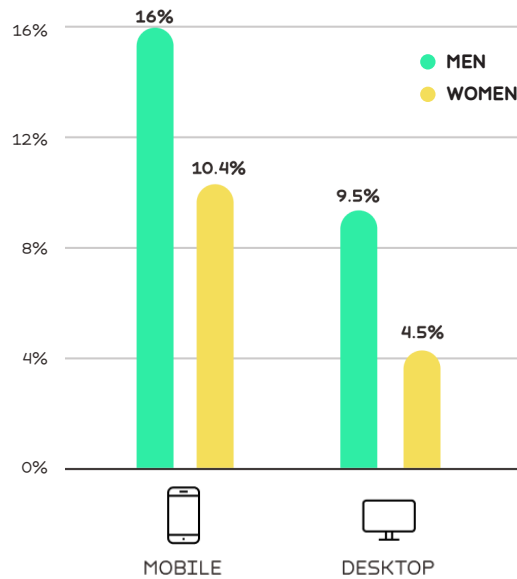
PORN ENGAGEMENT
PATTERNS, GENERALLY



Mobile versus desktop

Porn reaches more people via mobile browsers. Average daily reach of porn on mobile was 12.7%, as compared to 7.3% on desktop. But extended, multi-page browsing is more likely to occur on desktop, and there is a higher ratio of men to women generally engaging in desktop browsing versus mobile browsing.

AVERAGE DAILY REACH OF PORN PER DESKTOP AND MOBILE BROWSING FOR MEN AND WOMEN

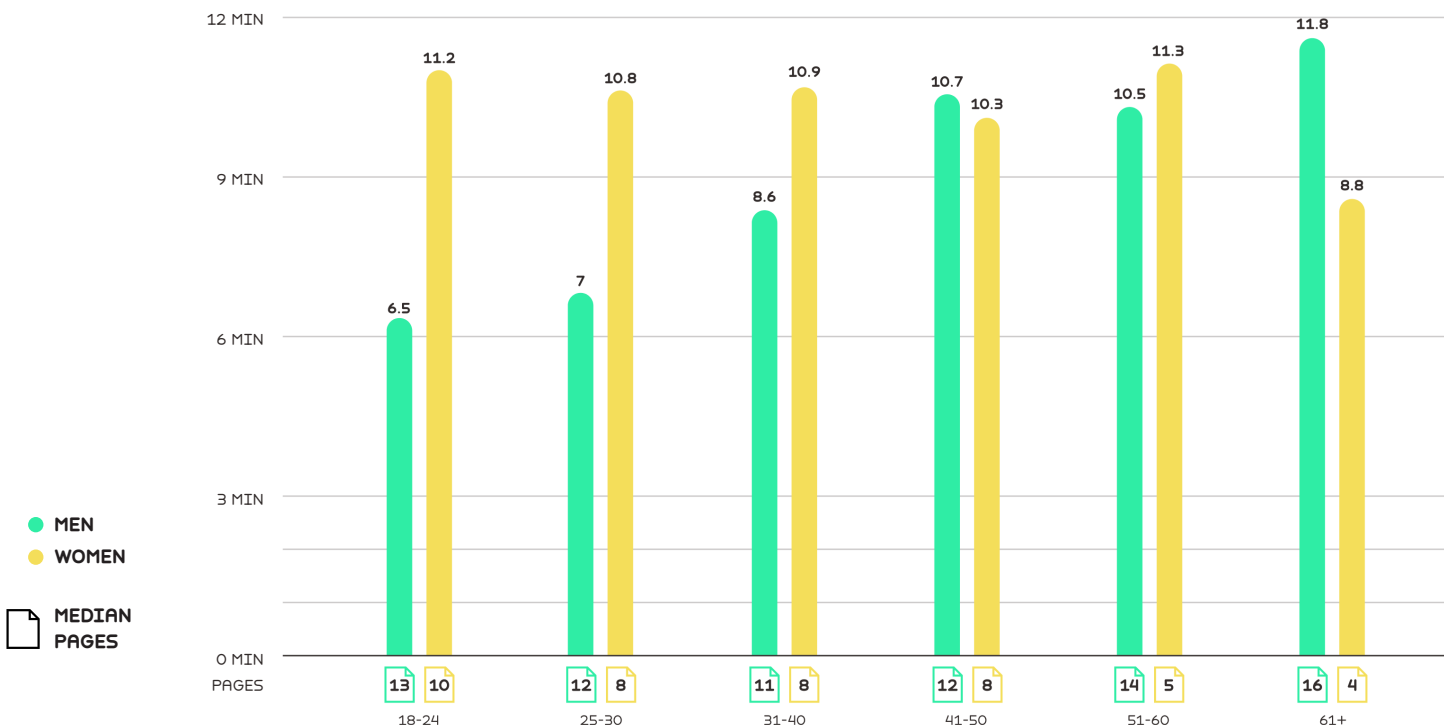


Time on porn

On days when people engage with porn, both men and women spend on average about 10 minutes with it. On days when men engage with porn, older men spend almost twice as much time with it, compared to younger men: 11.8 minutes for men aged 61 and over versus 6.5 minutes for men aged 18 - 24.

Women average 4.2 porn webpages per porn day, whereas men average 7.6 porn webpages. This suggests that women have nearly double the dwell time per porn webpage as men. About 41% of porn days entail just a single porn page visit across men and women. Just as older men spend more time with porn on days when they engage, they also visit more pages: 16 pages on average for men aged 61 or over versus 13 pages for men aged 18 - 24.

PORN MINUTES PER PORN DAY BY AGE GROUP FOR MEN AND WOMEN, WITH MEDIAN NUMBER OF PORN WEBPAGES PER PORN DAY



Transitions to and from porn

72% of transitions to and from porn webpages are to and from other porn webpages. The next largest category of transitions at 5% is from search engines. This suggests that people set their intention to engage with porn and, more often than not, head to a known destination. Yet porn doesn't exist in isolation from other media types and online activities. On days when they engage with porn, men switch between porn and non-porn content an average of 6 times, whereas women engage in this kind of context switching 4.8 times on average. Across men and women, in 95% of cases, porn engagement segues into other types of media engagement, with the mix of content people engage before and after porn sessions being more or less identical. Clearly porn usage exists within an ongoing flow of media engagement. Only 4.8% of online sessions end with porn engagement.

Domains

26% of the people who engaged with porn in our panel visited just one porn domain during the 6-month study period, with pornhub.com, xvideos.com, chaturbate.com, xnxx.com, and xhamster.com as top domains. This may suggest habit, convenience, limited knowledge of available options, and/or brand loyalty. Whatever the case, clearly the dominant engagement behavior is using multiple porn domains.

Seasonality

In our study period, we did not observe much seasonality in porn usage, although we did observe small lifts around holidays like New Years' Eve (+11.9 men; +8.9% women), Christmas (+8.5% men; +3.9% women), and Thanksgiving (+4.6 men; +4.1% women), and slightly less porn usage on Halloween (-.5% men; -.9% women).

Porn doesn't exist in isolation from other media types and online activities.

In search of compulsive behavior

We were curious whether the engagement behaviors of the heaviest porn users in our media panel might be suggestive of [problematic porn usage](#), “defined as one of the most common clinical presentations of compulsive sexual behavior disorder,” “characterized by a persistent pattern of failure to control pornography consumption, resulting in significant distress and impairment in daily functioning.” Obviously, problematic porn usage is a clinical diagnosis, which by definition cannot be reduced to mere media engagement behaviors. But we were nevertheless curious what the range of engagement behaviors among the heaviest users in our panel looked like.

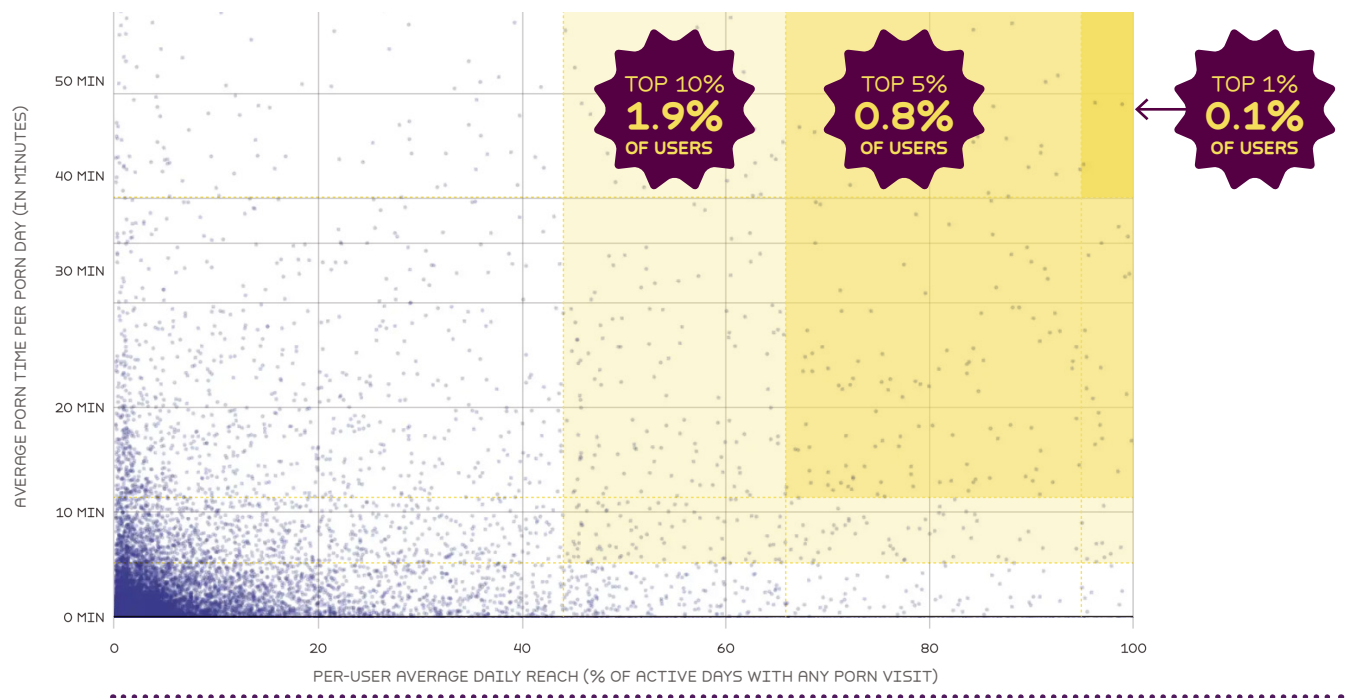
To find out, we first ranked people in our panel who engaged with porn according to two factors, displayed on x-y axes in the diagram below: the average daily reach of panelists engaged with porn within our study period, and the average dwell time on porn on days when users engaged with porn. We restricted the ranking to people in our panel with at least 60 days of observed panel activity. Then we turned our attention to the top 10%, 5% and 1% of this distribution.

In the top 10% of this distribution, panelists engaged with porn at least 43% of days in our study period, for an average of at least 5 minutes per porn day. The top decile represents 1.9% of the porn users in our ranking. *Men are roughly 3.2 times more likely than women to land in the top 10% in our ranking, and top-decile membership among men rises with age, from 0.7% within the 18 - 24 age group to 4.4% within the 61+ age group.*

The threshold for the top 5% in our distribution includes porn usage across at least 64% of days in our study period, with an average of at least 11 minutes per porn day. This top 5% group represents 0.8% of the porn users in our ranking. Men are about 4 times more likely than women to be in this group. Men over age 50 are about 10 times more likely to be in this group than men under age 25.

The threshold for the top 1% in our distribution rises to porn usage at least 92% of days in our study period, with an average of at least 90 minutes per porn day. This top 1% group represents 0.12% of the porn users in our ranking. This group falls below our size thresholds for commenting on demographic characteristics.

PORN USE FREQUENCY X DWELL TIME PER USER



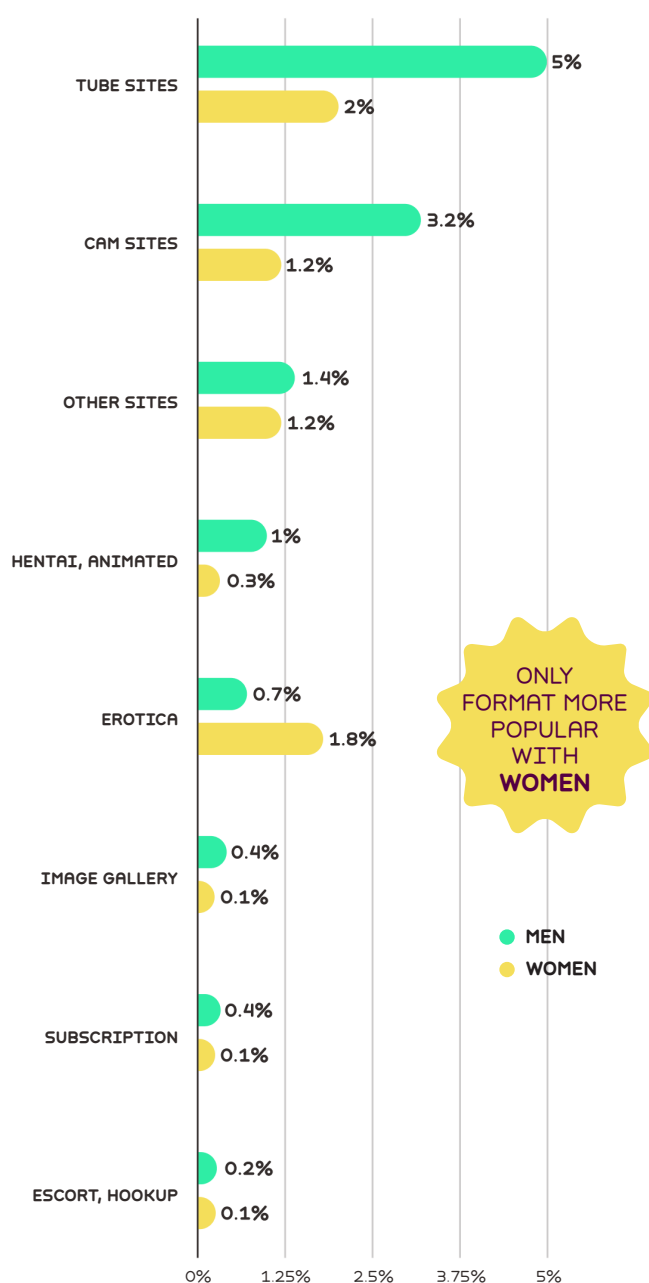
*Men favor video-based
porn experiences.*



ABOUT PORN FORMATS

TO UNDERSTAND THE PORN FORMATS people engage with, we used the following content format classification, derived from our media panel engagement data. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and the lines between them can be blurry. Tube sites may host live cam feeds, for example, or have hentai content, and subscription platforms can also function as image galleries or have recorded content. These categories reflect primary format and business models rather than strict content boundaries.

AVERAGE DAILY REACH PER PORN FORMAT FOR MEN AND WOMEN



Tube sites

Hosts and streamers of free video content, organized by categories and tags, includes .tv and .tube domains (e.g., pornhub.com, xhamster.com)

Cam sites

Live performers, interactive in real time (e.g., jerkmate.com, camsoda.com)

Subscription

Paid, gated content (e.g., onlyfans.com, fansly.com)

Erotica

Text-based literary content, foregrounds reading and imagination over images (e.g., literotica.com, nifty.org)

Hentai, animated

Drawn, animated, comic-based content (e.g., nhentai.net, e-hentai.org, rule34.xxx)

Escort, hookup

Transactional escort directories and hookup platforms (e.g., skipthegames.com, adultfriendfinder.com)

Image galleries

Old-school static image collections (e.g., pornpics.com, sex.com)

Other sites

Miscellaneous domains not captured by other categories, including content distribution network subdomains, adult chat (e.g., omegle.xxx), and various niche sites (e.g., sexpester.com, robbyporn.com)

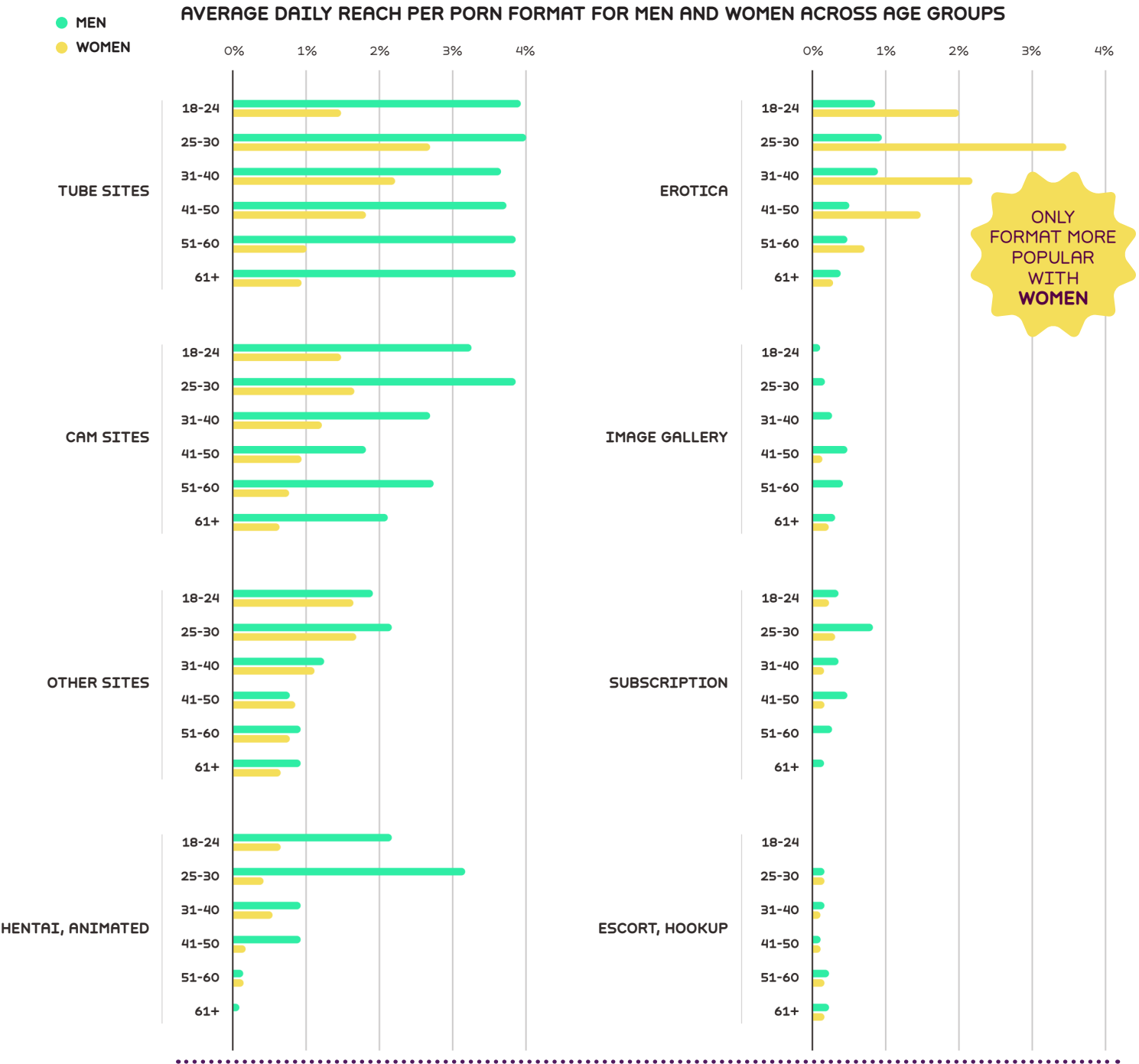
Left, we see how these different porn formats show up for men and women in terms of daily average reach, with tube, cam and other sites dominating for men, followed by hentai and animated, erotica, image galleries, subscriptions, and escort and hook up.

WE CAN ALSO SEE how these different porn formats distribute across men and women in different age groups:

Top porn formats for men and women are tube and cam sites, predominantly video-based experiences, a stable pattern across age groups. Hentai and animated content is the porn format with the steepest age gradient among men: over 2% daily average reach for men aged 18 - 24 and 25 - 30, dropping to .1% for men aged 61 and older,

which may reflect generational differences in familiarity with anime and manga. And we see more engagement with static image galleries among older men.

Erotica stands out as the only subcategory with a higher average daily reach among women, as compared to men, with the exception of men and women aged 61 or older. Erotica also stands out as having the longest per page dwell times: at 2.3 minutes on average for men and women, more than double other porn formats.



*Porn engagement
patterns are
largely stable
across audiences.*

PER AUDIENCE PORN
ENGAGEMENT PATTERNS



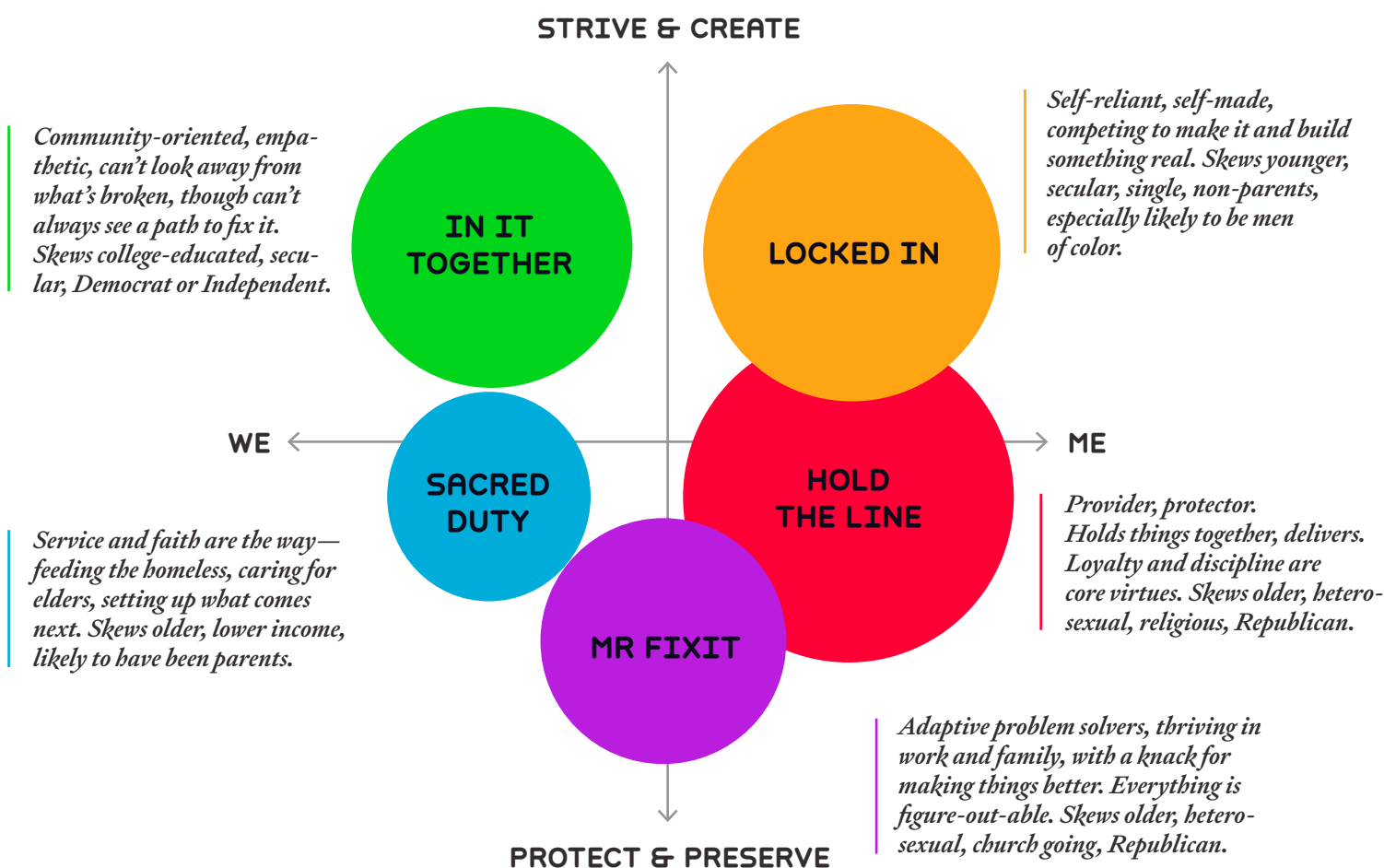
THIS REPORT IS PART OF A LARGER PROJECT with [Equimundo](#) to map audiences of men online: how they participate in media cultures; relate to different masculinities; and see themselves, relationships, and communities; as well as how media engagement contributes to men's flourishing. As part of that larger project, we segmented men into five audiences.

The five audience segments we created divide along key tensions in flourishing baselines, media behaviors, attitudes to gender, relationships, responsibilities, and more. We organize them according to values, using the [Narrative](#)

[Observatory](#) values architecture, derived from [the work of Shalom Schwartz](#), and arrange them along an x-y values axis. There's a collective focus on the left ("We") and an individualist focus on the right ("Me"); and a predilection for stability and tradition down below ("Protect & Preserve") and for creativity and innovation up on top ("Strive & Create").

We size each audience according to the percentage of men contained in our nationally representative survey. And we present the audiences throughout the report in order of size. We encourage you to check out the [full report](#) from this work.

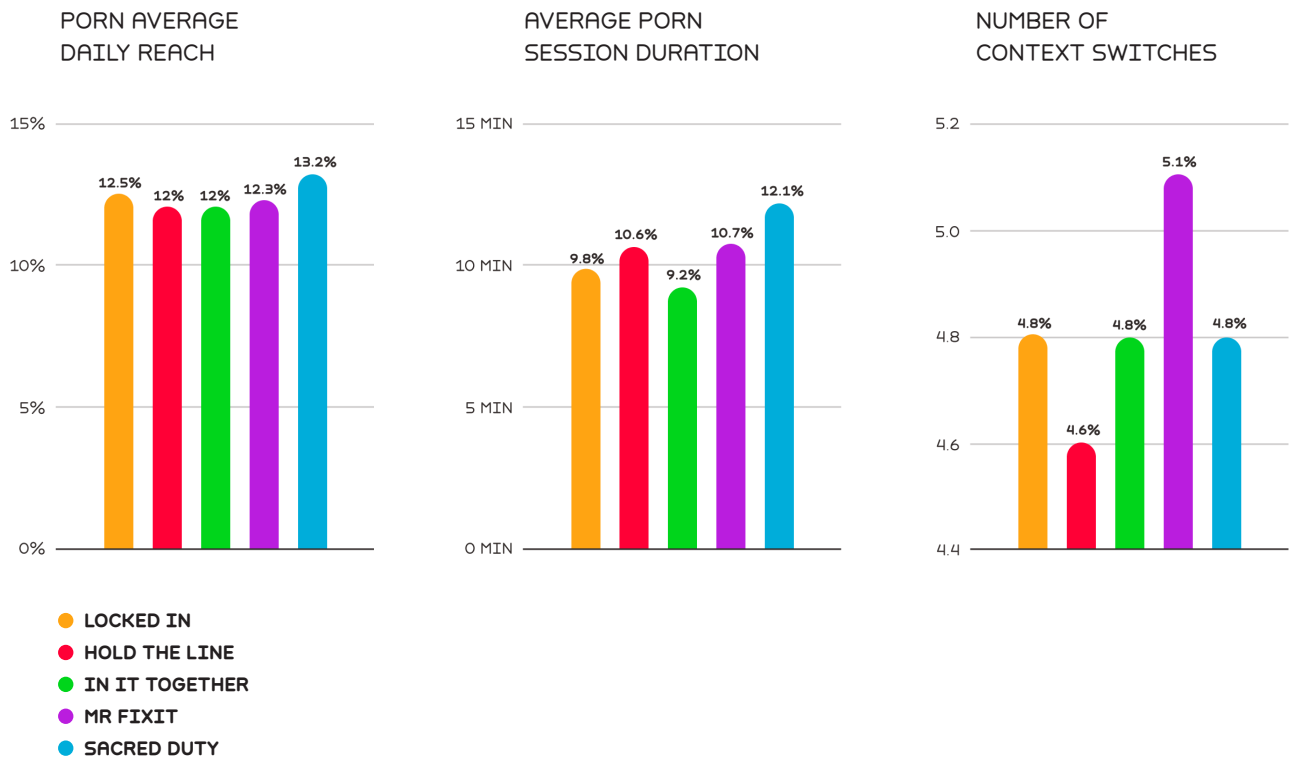
5 AUDIENCES OF MEN, 5 WAYS OF BEING



We rely on these five audience segments to further divide the area of men's porn engagement. Average daily reach for porn is pretty similar across audiences. The audience with the highest average daily reach for porn is Sacred Duty (13.2%), followed by Locked In (12.5%), Mr Fixit (12.3%), and Hold the Line and In It Together (12.0%). The Sacred Duty audience

also averages the longest session duration, at around 12 minutes. Mr Fixit and Hold the Line follow at almost 11 minutes, and Locked In and In It Together at almost 10 minutes. On days when these audiences engage in porn, they switch between porn and non-porn content about 5 times, which may suggest, again, that porn engagement occurs within a larger media ecology.

PER AUDIENCE AVERAGE DAILY REACH FOR PORN, PER PORN DAY ENGAGEMENT DURATION, AND NUMBER OF CONTEXT SWITCHES BETWEEN PORN AND NON-PORN





*Different
audiences
prefer
different
porn
content*

PER AUDIENCE VIDEO
CONTENT CLOSE UP



WE USED THE EQUIMUNDO AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION to create 5 porn content samples of between 20 and 30 videos each for detailed qualitative content analysis by human analysts.

For each audience, we identified the most distinctive porn-related keywords, drawn from URLs that reflected search terms, video titles, and other metadata. Then for each of the top 5 most distinctive keywords we selected the top 5 most-visited tube site videos within our panel, yielding about 25 videos per audience. We supplemented this with video material from porn-related subreddits, such as r/porn and r/trashyboner. Some videos identified through this process were no longer available at the time of analysis, so we substituted them with others. Analysts watched the full videos, recording observations related to protagonists, plots, settings, sound, camera work, clothes, climaxes, bodies, women, romance, power, pleasure, and emotional tone, using a method of structured open-ended content analysis we've written about [here](#).

Analysts also analyzed a sample of twenty non-porn highly distinctive, highly engaging YouTube videos for each audience, recording observations related to key themes, in order to contextualize porn inside of non-porn content engagement.

When it comes to porn, the borders between fear and fascination, disgust and desire, are porous and well trafficked.

In general, we find audiences drawn to similar, contiguous, or overlapping themes, concerns, fears, and desires in the porn and non-porn media they engage with. For instance, we see the Hold the Line audience drawn to non-porn stories that resolve in protagonists taking control in difficult situations, often as their family's providers and protectors. In surveys, Hold the Line men report relationship failure as a change catalyst more frequently than other men. In the porn they engage with, infidelity initiated by wives and watched by husbands is a key theme. Clearly men in this audience use the porn they engage with to explore their fear and fascination with failing at traditional gender norms and becoming a cuckold, a man whose wife or romantic partner is sexually unfaithful to him.

In the pages that follow, we describe some high-level patterns in the porn content engaged by men in each audience. These patterns capture what is most prominent and prevalent in each audience, not necessarily the full range of each audience's porn predilections. Based on what we found, and how it compares to themes in the non-porn media each audience engages with, it is clear that, when it comes to porn, the borders between fear and fascination, disgust and desire, are porous and well trafficked. This may point to an important function porn plays in the lives of the men who interact with it. Porn may afford a private, contained, safe space to explore, transgress, reconstitute, or otherwise play with the boundaries, borders, values, relationships, and goals men use to structure who they are and how they show up in the social world.

We start with the largest audience in terms of size, Hold the Line (29% of men) and move toward the smallest audience, Sacred Duty (11% of men).

*Long story arcs,
detailed situations,
infidelity,
and family taboo*





DISTINCTIVE PORN

KEYWORDS:
UNDERWEAR
VIRTUAL
VOYEUR
STORY
HOTWIFE

29%
OF MEN



HOLD THE LINE IS OUR LARGEST AUDIENCE, 29% of men. They believe that men and women have different strengths and work to do, with men's work centered on a responsibility to provide for, protect, and create joy for family. Hold the Line has a strong sense of agency and favors stories that resolve in protagonists taking control. They were one of two audiences more likely than other audiences to engage with gender grievance content. They lag most on mutuality, serving and celebrating others' accomplishments, in a world often perceived by them as marked by scarcity and threat. They also lag on the bridging and connection dimensions of flourishing and cite relationship failure as a change catalyst more frequently than other men.

In the sample of other media this audience engages with, we find themes of hierarchy and power, the importance of law and order, and punishment for transgressors. We find a desire for romance, along with mentorship, skill, and the mastery of specific crafts. There is content worrying about the relationship

*Women show up as wives:
bored, mischievous,
insatiable, seductive,
strong, wielding power
through pleasure giving.*

.....

between men and women, ideas that women have it easier, that women can be nasty, along with stories of good men, doing their best, trying and failing.

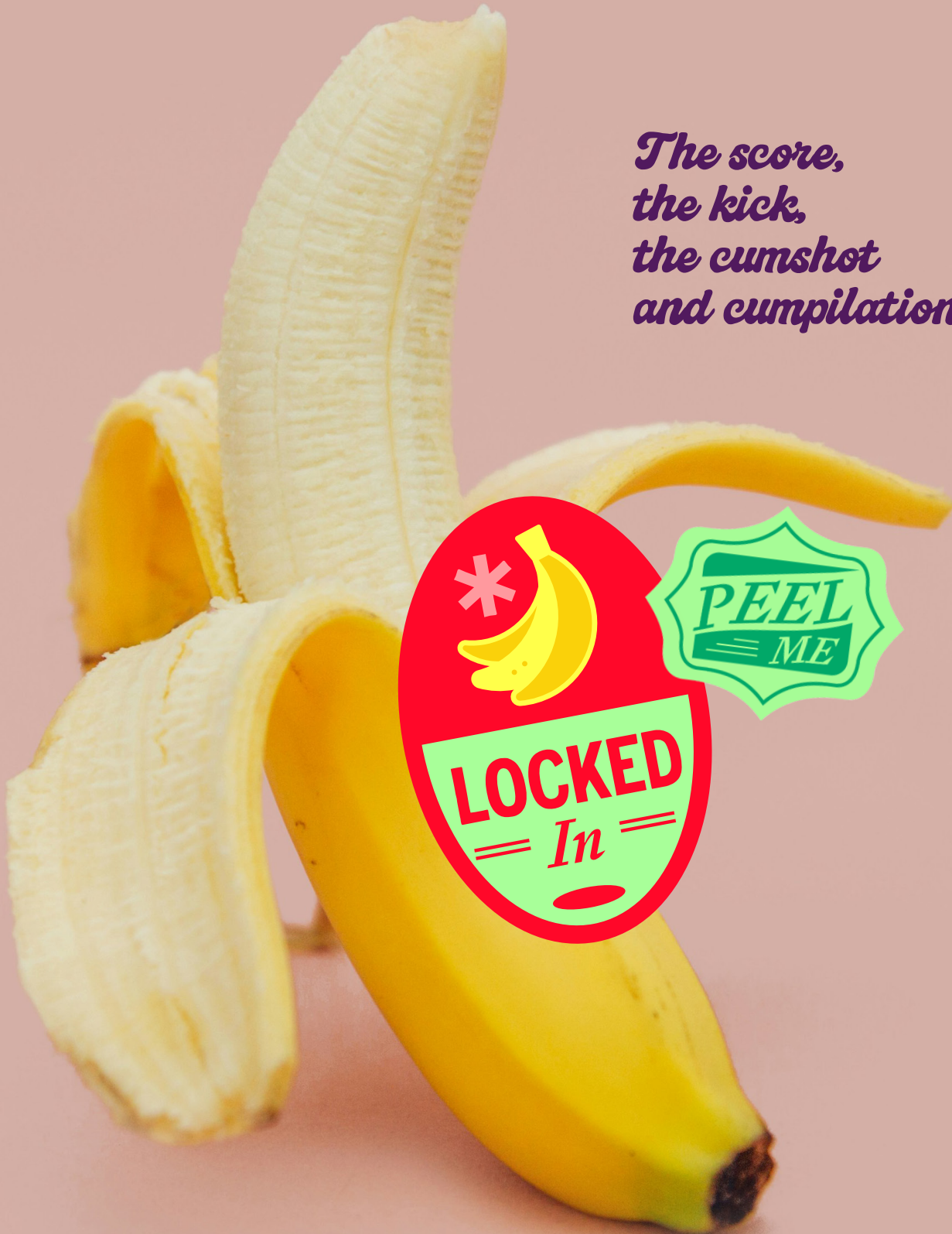
Hold the Line's porn features long, slow story arcs and lots of set up and dialogue for situations driven by establishing and violating strong taboos, with family, male domestic authority, and related social orders as key. There are step moms seducing step sons, and vice versa, as well as a rarer, more direct incest situation of parent and child. There are old people getting together with young, doctors with patients, multi-racial coupling.

Settings tend to be domestic, or extensions of domestic settings, e.g., cars, hotels, often playing with boundaries between private and public space. There is a lot of lace and lingerie, underwear and undressing, slowly revealing hot bodies beneath. Production values are high. The camera is an invisible, omnipresent voyeur.

Women show up as wives: bored, mischievous, insatiable, seductive, strong, wielding power through pleasure giving. These are women with agency, not submissive figures. Men do not share women, nor interact with each other, except as meditated by women, e.g., a husband watching his wife fucking another man while jerking off. The fear in the room is clearly cuckolding, infidelity, and failing at "traditional" gender norms.



*The score,
the kick,
the cumshot
and cumulation*





**DISTINCTIVE
PORN**

KEYWORDS:

BBC
BLOWJOB
SISSY
CUMSHOT
FEMBOY

23%
OF MEN



LOCKED IN IS OUR SECOND LARGEST AUDIENCE, 23% of men. They believe men have it harder, and everyone is basically on their own. They have a strong sense of resilience and bridging, but can lack agency, purpose, connections to other people, mutuality, and a sense of service beyond themselves. When asked who benefits from their work, the most prevalent response in this audience is “myself.” They favor stories that resolve in shared belonging, an outcast, for instance, finding a fuller expression of himself at the same time he finds his tribe. They’re not afraid of navigating conflict, but can avoid closeness and commitment. Overall, this audience lags most on flourishing and was one of two audiences more likely than other audiences to engage with gender grievance content.

In the sample of other media this audience engages with, we see lots of reaction videos, with big reactions and a fast pace. There are a lot of gaming play-alongs. Women loom large. They show up in control, as smarter, savvier, and more strategic than men. There are stories of rejection and defeat, in sports and other contexts. There’s alpha males, and other hierarchies of men. There are confrontations with and flouting of rules-based systems.

Locked In’s porn is amateur and close up, with player point-of-view camera work, often from above. There’s lots of self-conscious camera interaction, lots of quick-cut edits, video collage and cumpilations, high-stimulation highlight reels in a visual language native to TikTok or Instagram.

This porn is all about the kick, the score, the cum shot, with partners as props and no holds barred action that can feel brutal and forced. It’s less about the story or the situation, with dialogue, romance, or foreplay in short supply. There are a lot of blow jobs, and a lot of sound, isolated, close up squishing, squirting, choking. Men appear with men, women with women, and everything in between, all races, in groups and gangs. Everyone in the scene is participating in and knowingly performing the same transaction of pleasure, including men with men when women are around.

The action unfolds in office settings, on desks, in closets, or too close up to tell. Women in eye glasses recur, as an icon of intelligence and perhaps also material prowess. They submit. They swallow. They perform pleasure self-consciously, exaggerated for the camera. Mostly though, it’s all about the bodies, not the situation, the immersion, the dress and props.

The action is all about the bodies, not the situation, the immersion, the dress and props.





*Professional
authority figures
in fantasy role play*



**DISTINCTIVE
PORN**

KEYWORDS:

GAY
COCK
CASTING
STRAIGHT
FANTASY

21%
OF MEN



IN IT TOGETHER IS IN THE MIDDLE IN TERMS OF AUDIENCE SIZE, 21% of men. They believe men and women deserve the same power and the same shot, and have similar strengths, rejecting the notion that men have it harder. They genuinely feel for others, especially when those others are in distress, reporting, for example, “I see what’s broken and I can’t look away. I will use my power to give voice to the voiceless.” Their sense of agency and resilience is the lowest of any audience, however, as is their access to broadening emotions, which means they lag on flourishing. They choose stories where protagonists shift power dynamics by showing up for their community.

In the sample of other media this audience engages with, we find relationship how to’s, with men actively seeking intimacy and tenderness, though under a veneer of irony and cynicism. Women occur as “tougher than iron, hotter than fire,” as [Chalkeaters](#) put it in their [Mario Song Remake](#). There’s worry about competition, who’s fittest in terms of body, success, finance. There’s music commentary, music videos, book reviews. There’s humor. And there’s all the problems that regularly occur in news, especially anti-trans and anti-Muslim actions.

In It Together’s porn features professional authority figures—cops, prison guards, military

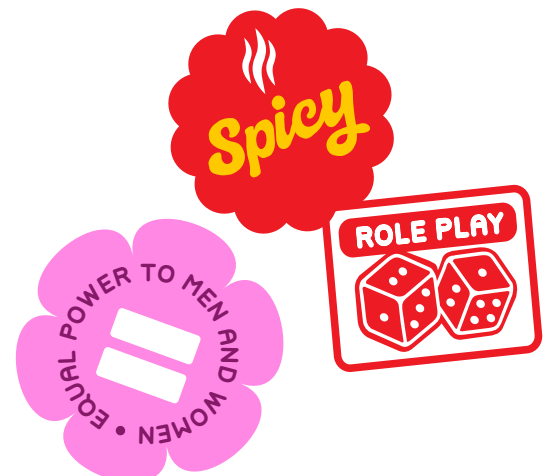
The high-fidelity reality constructions can recall reality TV. Pleasure experiences are naturalistic.

officers, casting directors—in high-stakes, institutional situations and settings, where corruption, power, and ambiguous roles drive a slow progression from undressing to sex that can ripen into a tenderness which includes caressing and kissing.

This is fantasy role play—emphasis on fantasy, with roles lightly held, as if only aids to a more primary arousal. Situational dress matters, as does the undressing, the unbuckling, the undoing of straps, and the obviously worked out bodies beneath, cut and made up. Penises are big. Production values are high, with the camera as omnipresent voyeur, and the cameramen sometimes joining in on the action. The high-fidelity reality constructions can recall reality TV.

There’s mood music, moaning, sometimes humor. The climax is not always the cumming. There are innocent women, seducing women, women masturbating as instructed by authority. There are gay men, straight men, trans and “ladyboys.” Pleasure experiences are naturalistic.

.....



*Older ample bodies
and parts as
fetish and
protagonist*





**DISTINCTIVE
PORN**

KEYWORDS:
AMATEUR
MATURE
MOUTH
HOMEMADE
HAIRY

16%
OF MEN



MR FIXIT IS THE SECOND SMALLEST AUDIENCE, 16% of men. They believe in God and the transformative power of religion, with 45% reporting a Christian affiliation and 41% attending church. They also believe in long-term commitment, leaders who get things done, and loyalty, especially at work. They are probably the calmest men in the room, but can perceive traditional family values and the gender roles that uphold them as under threat. Mr Fixit chooses stories where protagonists form unlikely partnerships and find purpose in protecting others and overcoming the drive for revenge. They lag on agency, resilience, and bridging.

In the sample of other media this audience engages with, the damage and danger of life is prominent, with looming threats and attack imminent. In endless repair videos, there is a joy in fixing things: guns, cars, appliances. There is the man as father, as protector, strong and steady. There is conspiracy thinking and partisan politics. America comes first, with “less developed” countries providing a foil of the dangers that lie ahead, if “we” lose resolve. Pop culture references are older: Tom & Jerry, Sponge Bob, Hannibal Lecter.

In Mr Fixit’s porn, decontextualized, objectified body parts feature as protagonists and fetish: hairy, wet, carnal, fleshy, fluid-filled and ready to burst, spurt, and drip from

whatever’s around. We find glory holes in weird unaccountable locations, like classrooms and kitchens, and tables designed for penis penetration, along with all manner of domestic interiors and some outdoor exploration.

Camera work can be amateur, with self-made solos, frontal perspectives, and mirrors. Cameras are fixed in one position. Interactions are matter of fact, even technical, slow and methodical, with little foreplay, story, or romance. There can be dialogue, and there’s lots of sound: slurping and kissing.

Older ample bodies are part of the turn on, men and women. The bums, boobs, and cocks are big and floppy. The women seem to be playing, having the raunchy fun they’ve always wanted, giving and receiving pleasure. There are everyday clothes to be removed, lingerie and underwear, and the occasional dildo or butt plug.

Decontextualized, objectified body parts feature as protagonists and fetish: hairy, wet, carnal, fleshy, fluid-filled, and ready to burst.





*Pleasure,
pain,
all the roles
and other extremes*

Luscious
& RIPE



**DISTINCTIVE
PORN**

KEYWORDS:
BSOME
BRAZILIAN
DOM
FETISH
LADYBOY

11%
OF MEN



SACRED DUTY IS OUR SMALLEST AUDIENCE, 11% of men. They believe a good life comes from serving something larger than yourself, which can look like God, community, life partners, family elders, or folks with disabilities. This is the audience most comfortable with carrying it all, reporting strong access to both narrowing and broadening emotions, and caring, with a lot of flexibility, tolerance, and forbearance in how they meet the world, including in their attitudes on gender. They've seen it all. They have enough. And they're largely flourishing. They choose stories where protagonists channel pain into purposeful community service.

In the sample of other media this audience engages with, cancel culture looms large, as does fame making online as a kind of mob justice. Conspiracy thinking shows up, along with wilderness survival and elite physical training and competition. There's science and technology content as a way to make sense of and successfully navigate the world, as well as existential musings on the human condition. Gaming tips are here too, and manhwa.

What stands out in Sacred Duty's porn is the fantasy role play, with an emphasis on the role as a vehicle to push past boundaries and into new terrains of pleasure and pain. There's BDSM, master and slave, gangs and groups, protesting and pleasuring, spanking and slapping.

The camera work is professional and active, with wide angles, weird angles, and artful cuts to close ups of bodies in complex contortions. The production values are as high as the artifice generally. The settings are homes, basements, and other close confining private spaces. The action is slow and meticulous, procedural, with a lot of dialogue and descriptive verbalization, perhaps as a way of checking in on consent. Cunnilingus is a go to.

There's women punishing women, men with men, women with men, ladyboy with ladyboy, everyone interacting. There's less mixing by race and age. Bodies are worked out, tattooed. Dress is functional and part of the fun: fetish, leather, latex, costumes. There are lots of props: dildos, leashes, paddles, whips. Bestialism makes an appearance in sex with a horse.

Action is slow and meticulous, procedural, with a lot of dialogue and descriptive verbalization, perhaps as a way of checking in on consent.



PER AUDIENCE PORN SUMMARY

Here are porn features for each of our five audiences at a glance, as well as themes from each audience's other media choices,

derived from a qualitative content analysis of 200 videos from tube sites, subreddits, and YouTube.



Long story arcs, detailed situations, family taboos, infidelity



The score, the kick, the cumshot and compilation



Professional authority figures in fantasy role play



Older ample bodies and parts as protagonist and fetish



Pleasure, pain, all the roles and other extremes

DISTINCTIVE PORN KEYWORDS:

UNDERWEAR
VIRTUAL
VOYEUR
STORY
HOTWIFE

BBC
BLOWJOB
SISSY
CUMSHOT
FEMBOY

GAY
COCK
CASTING
STRAIGHT
FANTASY

AMATEUR
MATURE
MOUTH
HOMEMADE
HAIRY

3SOME
BRAZILIAN
DOM
FETISH
LADYBOY

STORIES, SITUATIONS, SETTINGS

Long story arcs, lots of set up and dialogue, driven by establishing and transgressing strong taboos, with family and related social order as central. Step moms with step sons. Old with young. Doctors with patients. Multiracial coupling. Houses, hotels, cars, airplanes, and street scenes. Playing with boundaries between public and private, inside and outside.

All about the kick, the score, the cum shot, with partners as props and no holds barred action that can present as brutal and forced. Not much story, situation, dialogue, romance, foreplay. A lot of blow jobs. A lot of sound, isolated, close up squishing, squirting, choking. Men with men, women with women, everything in between, all races, in groups and gangs. Office settings, on desks, in closets, or too close up to tell.

Professional authority figures feature—cops, prison guards, military officers, casting directors—in high-stakes, institutional situations and settings, where corruption, power, and ambiguous roles drive a slow progression from undressing to sex, and toward a kind of tenderness, including kissing. Fantasy role play, with high fidelity reality constructions, mimicking reality TV. Mood music, moaning, sometimes humor. Climax not always cumming.

Decontextualized, objectified body parts as protagonist and fetish: hairy, wet, carnal, flesh and fluids close up. Glory holes in walls, through tables, at home, in kitchens and bedrooms. Matter of fact, technical interactions, little foreplay, story, romance. Some dialogue, lots of sound, slow, methodical, dripping in cum, kissing.

Fantasy role plays foreground the real pleasures and pains of pushing passed boundaries, BDSM, master and slave, gangs and groups, loud and moaning, protesting and pleasuring, slap happy. In homes, basements, and other close confining private spaces. Slow, meticulous, procedural, lots of dialogue and electro-pop music. Bodies in complex contortions. Cunnilingus.

PRODUCTION AND POINT OF VIEW

High production values, voyeuristic, camera as invisible witness.

Amateur, close up player point-of-view camera work, often from above; self-conscious camera interaction; quick-cut video collage and compilations.

High production values, voyeuristic, camera men included in scene or action.

Fixed camera, amateur, self-made solos, frontal perspective, mirrors.

Most active, professional camera work, wide angles, weird angles, close ups. High production values, high artifice.

GENDER

Women as wives, bored, mischievous, seductive, insatiable, powerful, wielding power through pleasure giving, as in being fucked by two men. Cuckold fear central.

Women with eye glasses submitting, swallowing, performing pleasure, self-conscious in interaction with camera. Men sharing in the transaction of their pleasure with each other.

Innocent women, seducing women, women masturbating as instructed by authority, naturalistic pleasure experiences, gay men, straight men, trans and "ladyboys".

Older ample bodies as turn on, men and women, big bums, boobs, cocks. Porn stars. Women at play, in pleasure, having raunchy fun, more parts than faces.

Women punishing women, men with men, women with men, ladyboy with ladyboy. Less mixing by race and age. Everyone in groups interacting. Worked out bodies in complex contortions. Tattoos. Bestiality.

PER
AUDIENCE
PORN
SUMMARY
CONTINUED



DRESS AND PROPS

Lace and lingerie, underwear and undressing. Slow reveals.

All about the bodies, dress and props not so much.

Situational dress, undress important, unbuckling undoing straps, worked on bodies, cut and made up. Huge penises.

Lingerie and underwear as props, everyday clothes, butt plugs.

Functional dress: fetish, leather, latex, Easter bunny costume. Dildos, whips, leashes.

THEMES FROM
OTHER MEDIA

Women have it easier. Women can be nasty. Stories of good men, doing their best, trying and failing. Focus on hierarchy and power. Importance of law and order, punishment for transgressors. Desire for romance. Desire for mentorship, skill, and craft mastery.

Women as smarter, savvier, more strategic than men. Women in control. Stories of rejection and defeat, in sports and other contexts. Alpha men, and other hierarchies of men. Flouting rules-based orders. Reaction media. Gaming play-alongs, group, side by side, solo.

Women as "tougher than iron, hotter than fire." Strong, responsible women. Relationship how to's for men. Men seeking intimacy and tenderness, under a veneer of irony and cynicism. Competition, who's the fittest in terms of body, success, finance. Music videos. Humor. Problems in the news: anti-trans and anti-Muslim actions. Book reviews.

The damage and danger of life, imminent attack. Joy in fixing things: guns, cars, appliances. Fatherly iconography, man as protector, strong and steady. Conspiracy thinking and partisan politics. America first, with "less developed" countries as foil. Older pop culture: Tom & Jerry, Sponge Bob, Hannibal Lecter.

Cancel culture and fame making as mob justice. Conspiracy thinking. Wilderness survival. Science and technology. Musings on the human condition. Manbwa. Gaming. Elite physical training and competition.

Conclusion

OUR STUDY BUILDS AN IMPORTANT FOUNDATION for understanding what men watch online. But its bigger value may be in what it reveals about how porn fits into men's wider media lives, their intimate lives, and their understandings of themselves and others. Porn is not a marginal or exceptional form of media consumption. Rather, it is one component of the broader digital ecosystem in which most men spend their time, alongside social media, streaming, gaming, news, and online communities.

This is not to understate the deep, far reaching effects of porn on sexual norms and mainstream culture. A quick look at almost any corner of popular culture reveals the influence of porn, an effect commentators have dubbed “[pornification](#).” Mainstream pop artists from [Madonna](#) to [Miley Cyrus](#) to [Jack Harlow](#) to [The Weeknd](#) have frequently incorporated overt adult industry aesthetics, visual tropes, and direct references into their music lyrics, videos, and stage performances, for instance. A [2019 meta-analysis](#), published in the [Journal of Adolescent Health](#), reviewed 59 studies tracking the impact of mainstream, non-explicit sexual media. It found that regular exposure to such media significantly alters how young people perceive peer norms, leading to more permissive attitudes toward risky and aggressive sexual behaviours, especially among adolescents.

Many corners of popular culture reveal the influence of porn, an effect commentators have dubbed “pornification.”

Understanding pornography therefore requires us to understand the wider media environment in which men encounter it, the needs and aspirations they bring to it, and the ways those experiences may intersect with cultural expectations of sex, relationships, masculinity, and intimacy. These questions matter at a moment when relationships and gendered expressions themselves appear to be in flux. Equimundo's upcoming [State of the World's Men 2026](#), as well as recent [State of UK Men 2025](#) research suggest that men have not lost interest in love, sex, or partnership. However, young men have begun to question whether relationships are worth the perceived costs and pressures involved and are seeking alternative ways to find intimacy. In the UK, one in four men believe that no one will ever fall in love with them, with 40% suggesting that a “serious relationship is too big of a commitment,” and around 15% of UK men reporting having used an AI virtual girlfriend or boyfriend.

These tensions are important for understanding porn. If men continue to desire connection, while some are becoming less confident that meaningful relationships are possible, then digital spaces may become even more important as places where men explore sexuality, seek affirmation, manage loneliness, encounter models of intimacy, or construct narratives about what relationships are supposed to look like. Porn is one part of this landscape, alongside dating platforms, social media, gaming, online communities, and AI companions. The question, then, is not simply whether porn is harmful or beneficial. It is what role porn plays in a changing ecology of intimacy, what men are learning from it, and what kinds of sexual and relational possibilities the digital environment makes easier or harder to imagine.

This has several implications for how we think about action.

FIRST, PORN SHOULD BE TREATED AS PART OF THE BROADER MEDIA AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT SHAPING MEN'S LIVES RATHER THAN AS A DISCRETE BEHAVIOR TO BE ISOLATED OR MANAGED.

Our findings suggest that men move between porn and other forms of media fluidly. Porn therefore reflects and reinforces ideas about masculinity, relationships, bodies, sex, power, and desire that circulate well beyond dedicated porn platforms. This means that efforts to promote healthier relationships and more equitable forms of masculinity cannot focus only on what happens within porn itself. They must also engage the broader media environments in which sexual scripts are produced, repeated, and normalized.

SECOND, THE MEANING OF PORN MATTERS AS MUCH AS THE FACT OF ITS USE.

Our audience analysis suggests that men do not arrive at porn with identical motivations, concerns, desires, or expectations. For some, their porn use may be primarily about sexual pleasure or exploration; for others, it may intersect with loneliness, relationship anxieties, curiosity, identity, status, or fears about masculinity and sexual performance. The finding that some audiences are drawn to content that reflects their anxieties and preoccupations suggests that porn can provide a space in which men work through questions about themselves and their relationships, even when the sexual scripts available to them may be limiting or harmful. Future interventions will need to take these different starting points seriously, rather than treating all consumption as equivalent.

THIRD, PREVENTING HARM IS NECESSARY, BUT IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT.

Reducing exposure to violent, coercive, exploitative, or otherwise harmful content is important. But a digital environment in which harmful content is absent is not necessarily one in which healthy sexuality and intimacy are present. If men are already turning to digital media to explore sexuality, seek information, explore desire and pleasure, or make sense of relationships, we should also ask what positive alternatives they encounter. What would it look like for online environments to make consent, mutual pleasure, communication, emotional intimacy, care, and reciprocal relationships more visible and accessible? Can this kind of content exist inside of or alongside more transgressive content? This shifts the conversation from simply preventing harmful content toward creating healthier sexual and relational cultures online.

FOURTH, SEXUAL AND MEDIA LITERACY REPRESENT CRITICAL INVESTMENTS, PARTICULARLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

For young people, porn is one of the places where they encounter ideas about sex and relationships, whether or not it is intended to function as education. They may encounter the eroticization of violence, coercion, exploitation, incest, unrealistic bodies and expectations, and highly commercialized ideas about sex, while having few supportive spaces in which to process what they see. The answer cannot be to tell young people to avoid this material. They need the knowledge, critical skills, trusted adults, and safe spaces to understand what they encounter and develop their own agency around sexuality, relationships, and intimacy.

Our findings point toward a need to engage the digital ecosystem itself. If porn is one component of men's media environments, then online strategy needs to move beyond

content moderation or attempts to reduce screen time. We should be asking how to make healthier forms of connection easier to find and participate in within the digital spaces men already use. This could include credible spaces where men can ask questions about sex without shame; content that models consent, mutuality, communication, and emotional intimacy; opportunities to critically examine the sexual and gendered scripts encountered online; and partnerships with creators and platforms that can help make more caring forms of masculinity and intimacy culturally visible. The goal should not simply be less harmful online lives, but better digital lives and more flourishing IRL. These implications also raise important questions that this mapping cannot answer on its own. There are two areas, in particular, that merit further research and experimentation:

How does identification with different sexual orientations and gender identities intersect with porn usage, and how do people use porn to explore, push beyond, and problematize the boundaries of their own self-described sexual orientations and gender identities? Our media data do not include information about sexual orientation as it relates to gender identity, so we had no way to explore these relative to the kind of porn users engage. We definitely ran into a lot of trans people depicted in the porn content we analyzed for each audience, and a lot of trans-adjacent keywords. Others have written about the correlation between the public panic about trans rights in the U.S. and private fascinations explored via porn, as in this Playboy article. It would be useful to explore these correlations using cross-platform, internet-scale media data.

How can we use knowledge of people's actual porn behaviors to equip them at a young age with the sexual, media, and porn literacies they need to enjoy lifelong agency over their sexual explorations and expressions? For many young people, porn is an important vector for learning about sex. Inside of porn, young people encounter the eroticization of violence, coercion, exploitation, incest, and more, and porn online unfolds according to a host of technical, social, and commercial dynamics that many young people do not yet fully appreciate. Supportive, safe, youth-driven forums for unpacking and processing what they find in porn, how they feel, and pathways to satisfying sexual intimacy for them and their partners are few and far between. This should change.

There are also important questions about the wider media ecology that warrant further exploration, including how people understand their own relationship with porn; how sexual desire is engaged through media that may not conventionally be classified as porn; how porn use relates to sexual pleasure and relationship experiences across different audiences; and how sexual content travels beyond dedicated porn platforms into social media, private messaging, search, gaming, and other parts of digital life.

There is much more to understand and considerable scope for action. We hope this research opens a broader conversation about what men and boys need from the digital environments that increasingly shape their lives, and about how researchers, educators, advocates, technology companies, content creators, and others can work together to create pathways for healthy, fulfilling sexuality, relationships, and other forms of connection.

[BRIAN WANIEWSKI](#),
[GARY BARKER](#),
[CAROLINE HAYES](#),
[RICHIE HARDCORE](#),
[CODY RAGONESE](#)

September 2026

Appendix

Methods

WE DRAW OUR FINDINGS from an analysis of the click-by-click, minute-by-minute media behaviors of people who opt in to and are compensated for participating in media measurement panels in the U.S. There were nearly 300,000 panelists in the 6-month period we studied, from June to December 2025.

Quantitative Analysis

FIRST, WE ANALYZED BEHAVIOR across desktop and mobile devices, iOS and Android, as it related to porn and other types of media content.

Porn websites and apps were identified from within our panel's media engagement through a multi-layer keyword and rules-based filtering approach at the level of the URL and associated metadata. Domains were flagged as pornographic if they contained any of a pre-defined set of about 200 explicit keywords (e.g., porn, sex, xvideo, erotic, camgirl), including both platform-specific identifiers (e.g., xvideos, xhamster, redtube, onlyfans) and general explicit terms (e.g., xxx, nsfw, hentai, fetish, erotic, bdsm). Additionally, domains ending in the suffixes .tube, .xxx, .porn, .sex, and .adult were flagged, as these top-level domains are predominantly or exclusively associated with adult content. For Reddit specifically, a domain match alone was insufficient; visits were only classified as pornographic if the URL path corresponded to one of 36 curated known NSFW subreddits (e.g., r/gonewild, r/nsfw, r/rule34). To reduce false positives, domains were excluded from flagging if they belonged to government (.gov) or educational (.edu) domains, or if the matched keyword appeared as part of a benign substring, as in "unisex," "essex," "express," or "scams."

In our quantitative media analysis we use an average daily reach metric. This metric indicates the percentage of panel users or a group of panel users who visit particular content types or

engage in a particular kind of online activity on a given day, on average within our study period.

Qualitative Analysis

THEN WE ANALYZED PORN CONTENT that was distinctive to different audiences via qualitative content analysis of video samples drawn from each of the five audiences' media engagement. For each audience, we identified the most distinctive porn-related keywords, drawn from URLs that reflected search terms, video titles, and other metadata. We scored these keywords using a log-odds method that calculates how much a keyword over or under-indexes for a given audience relative to all others. Then for each of the top 5 most distinctive keywords for each audience we selected the top 5 most-visited tube site videos within our panel, yielding 25 videos per audience. We supplemented this with video material from porn-related subreddits, such as r/porn and r/trashyboner. For the subreddit videos, we identified the most popular videos by overall post engagement rather than panel visit data, because URL structures do not reveal which specific videos panelists are browsing within a subreddit. Some videos identified through this process were no longer available at the time of analysis. Analysts watched the full videos, recording observations related to protagonists, plots, settings, sound, camera work, clothes, climaxes, bodies, women, romance, power, pleasure, and emotional tone, using a method of structured open-ended content analysis we've written about [here](#).

Analysts also analyzed for each audience a sample of twenty non-porn highly distinctive, highly engaging YouTube videos, recording observations related to key themes. To create non-porn YouTube video samples, we applied the same approach to YouTube, by selecting 20 videos per audience from channels that scored high on within audience distinctiveness and in panel engagement. The content of these videos was diverse, from news to entertainment.

About

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[HARMONY LABS](#) is a nonprofit media research lab on a mission to research and reshape society's relationship with media, using science, data, and creativity. For more than a decade, our work has helped storytellers and strategists, decision makers and dreamers, harness the immense power of media to shape a positive, pluralistic future and support human flourishing. We recently released a companion report to this one, [Men's Flourishing and Media: How Online Media Behaviors Relate to Flourishing for 5 Audiences of Men](#).

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[EQUIMUNDO: CENTER FOR MASCULINITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE](#) works internationally and in the United States to engage men and boys as allies in gender equality, promote healthy manhood, and prevent violence. Through a research-first approach, Equipundo drives innovative solutions to shift norms, narratives, and policies — in partnership with women, girls, and individuals of all gender identities.

