

# Use of the Internet for Global Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children

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The Internet has become the latest place for promoting the global trafficking and sexual exploitation of women. This global communication network is being used to promote and engage in the buying and selling of women and children. Agents offer catalogues of mail order brides, with girls as young as 13. Commercial sex tours are advertised. Men exchange information on where to find prostitutes and describe how they can be used. After their trips men write reports on how much they paid for women and children and write pornographic descriptions of what they did to those they bought. Videoconferencing is bringing live sex shows to the Internet.



## Sexual Exploitation on the Internet

Global sexual exploitation is on the rise. The profits are high and there are few effective barriers at the moment. Because there is little regulation of the Internet, the traffickers and promoters of sexual exploitation have rapidly utilized the Internet for their purposes. *PC Computing* magazine urged entrepreneurs to visit pornography Web sites. "It will show you the future of on-line commerce. Web pornographers are the most innovative entrepreneurs on the Internet" (Taylor & Jerome, February, 1997). The pornographers and other promoters of sexual exploitation are the Internet leaders in the

developing privacy services and secure payment schemes.

The Internet is being used by men to promote and engage in the sexual exploitation of women and children. The types of sexual exploitation I have documented on the Internet are: bride trafficking, sex tours, exchange of information on where to buy prostitutes and live sex shows through videoconferencing.

## ***Newsgroups and Web Sites for Men Who Buy Women and Children***

The oldest forum on the Internet for promoting the sexual exploitation of women is the newsgroup alt.sex.services (renamed alt.sex.prostitution). Its "aim is to create market transparency for sex related services" (Atta and M., *World Sex Guide*, July 1996). Postings from this newsgroup are archived into a World Wide Web side called *The World Sex Guide*, which provides "comprehensive, sex-related information about every country in the world."

**The World Sex Guide**  
**Where do you want to fuck today?**

## **Web Site for Finding Women to Buy**

The guide includes information and advice from men who have bought women and children. They tell others where and how to find and buy prostituted women and children in over ninety countries from seven world regions (Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, North America, Central America and the Caribbean, and South America).

"I have a good knowledge of brothels in Brazil, due to my frequent journeys during the last 5 years" (Anonymous, Recife, 7 October 1995).

“Having some experience with the scene in New Zealand I would like to offer the following advice” (Anonymous, Wellington, 30 Aug 1995).

“Another of my ‘catching up’ reports on present knowledge of hot spots around the globe, this time from Bristol, England” (an370191@anon.penet.fi, Bristol 15 Sept 1995).

Details of the men’s reports of their sex tours and buying experiences include: information on where to go to find prostitutes, hotel prices, telephone numbers, taxi fares, cost of alcohol, the sex acts that can be bought, the price for each act, and evaluations of the women’s appearances and performances. One man includes a rating scale on the likelihood of getting mugged in that neighborhood. The men go on to describe, often in graphic detail, their experiences of using women and children. The scope and detail of this exchange is completely unprecedented.

The women are completely objectified and evaluated on everything from skin color to presence of scars and firmness of their flesh. Women’s receptiveness and compliance to men buyers is also rated. The men buying women and posting the information see and perceive the events only from their self interested perspective. Their awareness of racism, colonization, global economic inequalities, and of course, sexism, is limited to how these forces benefit them. A country’s economic or political crisis and the accompanying poverty are advantages, which produce cheap readily available women for the men. Often men describe how desperate the women are and how little the men have to pay.

The postings also reveal that men are using the Internet as a source of information in selecting where to go and how to find women and children to buy in prostitution. Men describe taking a computer print out of hotels, bar addresses and phone numbers with

them on their trips, or describe how they used the Internet search engines to locate sex tours.

“This three day trip happened in June 1995. On the flight I read all the information I had printed out from *The World Sex Guide* - I had a lot of expectations of the City of Angels [Bangkok] (Anonymous, Short Trip, date unknown).”

There is extensive information on legal prostitution in Nevada, USA, including photographs of the brothel entrances and road signs leading to the brothels (Bashful, Reno and Carson City, 1995). One man calling himself Cybersuck provides a list of legal “whorehouses” in Nevada with detailed driving instructions on how to get there (Cybersuck, Legal Whorehouses, 1995,1996).



**Photograph of Legal Brothel in Nevada**

This rapid publishing electronic medium has enabled men to pimp individual women. Now, men can go out at night, buy a woman, go home, and post the details on the newsgroup. By morning anyone in the world with an Internet connection can read about it and often have enough information to find the same woman. For example, in Nevada, one man bought a woman called “Honey” and named the brothel where she could be found. Within a couple of weeks other men went and bought “Honey” themselves and posted their experiences to the newsgroup. Within a short period of time men were having an orgy of male bonding by describing what each of them did to “Honey.” The men are keeping a special Web site on the Internet for men to post their experiences of buying this one woman (Bashful, Honey, 1994, 1995, 1996). In the last year additional Web sites have been created for dozens of other women. To my

knowledge this is completely unprecedented. The implications for this type of pimping in a fast-publishing easily accessible medium like the Internet are very serious for the sexual exploitation of women in the future.

The most voluminous coverage is on Bangkok, Thailand. The men give information on everything from currency exchange rates to how to run a bar tab. The names, addresses and phone numbers for 150 hotels where men will feel comfortable are listed (baguio@ix.netcom.com, March 1995). All the city sections and their sexual specialties are listed and described. Does the man want massage? Discos? Escort services? A lady house? Japanese clubs? A short-time hotel? A blow job bar? There are detailed descriptions on all of them. At these Web sites the men are presenting an etiquette and buyer's guide on how men should behave and solicit in all of these places.

One slick colorful page on the Web promotes special shows in Bangkok where men can pay to see women smoking cigarettes with their vaginas. The next Web page provides a description of the razor blade show in which a woman dances and pulls two dozen razor blades connected by a string from her vagina. A color photograph of the act is shown (Odzer, Razor Blade Show, 1995). This web site is owned by a woman named, Cleo Odzer. She did her Ph.D. work on prostitution in Bangkok. She likes to present herself as an academic, but she is also a pimp. She refers to the women in the bars as "my prostitutes." She has a picture of herself with a pimp named Choo Choo Charlie. The caption to the photograph reads, "Choo Choo Charlie the tout says, "Psst... you want prostitute? Step right this way into the Patpong Bar. Female, male, katoey... fill all your dreams in the PatpongBar."

At another site a man describes a show in Bangkok in which a woman dances with two pythons and inserts the head of one into her vagina (Anonymous, 15 January 1995).



**Author Cleo Odzer with Pimp in Bangkok**

Some of the men posting information on the alt.sex.prostitution newsgroup are quite straightforward about their misogyny and sadism. Other men, who I'm sure, would deny that they have ever abused a woman, reveal quite inadvertently their abuse of women. The reader can get a glimpse of the humiliation and physical pain most of the women endure at the hands of men who buy them by reading accounts of men's "bad experiences." To the men who buy women and children a "bad experience" means they didn't get their money's worth or that the woman didn't keep up the act of enjoying the men. It means she let her true feelings of pain, desperation, depression and hopelessness show.

The men exchange information on child prostitution. One man says, In Bangkok "there is child prostitution. I have been offered 9-year-olds, and 14-year-olds are not uncommon." His solution: "If child prostitution turns you off, be careful when you select your girl" (Anonymous, Bangkok, Date unknown). Another man described which street corners are the best for finding pimps who can supply pre-teen girls. He said not to worry if you ask the wrong guy, he will probably just direct you to the right one. The men assume that the whole town is there to serve their demand for women and children.

“Outside \_\_\_\_\_ is the best chance of finding guys selling very young girls - pre-teens. You strike contact with the guy, he asks you to meet him somewhere close in an hour, and he will then bring one or two school girls for you to look over.” (Anonymous, Bangkok, Date unknown).

Some men describe finding and buying young girls for sex. Although they are clearly seeking and raping children they always insert in their writings that later they found out the girl was really much older than she looked. They are building in legal protection.

“My helper [bar attendant - pimp] suggested that perhaps I would be interested in some young ones. .... Inside the other room sat about 12 little girls watching TV. On a command from my attendant, they all sat back up on the couches and smiled at me. It was obvious that these young things had not yet matured into ladies....their giggles and squirming quickly gave them away. No dummies either, the establishment had made no attempts to dress them sexy, but rather clothed them in young girl outfits befitting their age. My attendant assured me that all of them were suitably trained. I couldn't restrain myself! I had to have one of them” (Anonymous, January 1995).

This man continues with a graphic description of the sex that is so pornographic and abusive I will not reprint it. It includes many references to her 'tiny' mouth and vagina and her 'grimace of pain' when he had intercourse with her.

We know that many of the girls and women in Bangkok's sex industry are virtual slaves. The men who buy them know that. Slavery is accepted and exploited by these men, and their comments prove that. One man on the Internet newsgroup said, “Yes there is slavery in Bangkok. Some girls work against their will.” He then goes on to describe where the “kept” women are most likely to be found. He says, “if this is a problem for you, simply

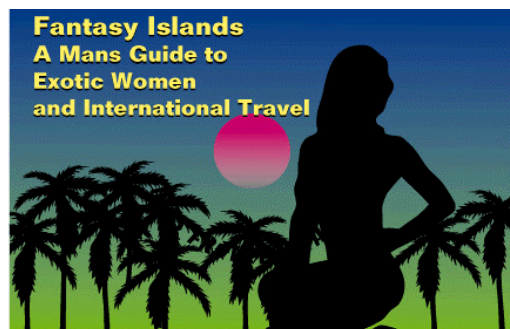
stay away from [these hotels]. Another way of handling this is, of course, to be gentle and gentlemanly [sic] and give the girl a good time whether she is a slave or not” (Anonymous, Bangkok, Date unknown).

On this newsgroup, the men tell each other that they can exploit the women and girls held against their will for sadistic practices.

“The hotel girls are usually younger than most other 'available' girls in Bangkok, 14-15 years old being rather common. They are in effect 'owned' by the hotel, which means that you can treat them more or less any way you want - and many men do. Hotels like this should be like paradise for those of us who are into S&M [sodomasochism]” (Anonymous, Bangkok, Date unknown).

### **Sex Tours**

Centers for sex tourism are also the sources of women trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation to other countries. For centers of sex tourism in European countries women from poor countries are imported legally and illegally to staff the brothels. The largest source of trafficked women today is the countries of the former Soviet Union. Advertisements for sex tours to these sights appear on the Internet.



**Advertisement for Sex Tours**

Sex tours enable men to travel to “exotic” places and step outside whatever community bounds may constrain them at home. In foreign cities they can abuse women and girls in ways that are more risky or difficult for them in their hometowns.

As prostitution has become a form of tourism for men, it has become a form of economic development for poor countries. Tourism was recommended by the United Nations, the World Bank and United States advisory boards as a way to generate income and repay foreign debts (Lee, 1991). States set their own tourist policies and could, if they wanted, prevent or suppress the development of prostitution as a form of tourism. Instead, communities and countries have come to rely on the sale of women and children’s bodies to be their cash crop. As the sex industry grows, more girls and women are turned into sexual commodities for sale to tourists. In the bars in Bangkok, women and girls don’t have names – they have numbers pinned to their skimpy clothes. The men pick them by number. They are literally interchangeable sexual objects.



**Sex Tour Advertisement for Amsterdam**

The Netherlands is the strongest international prominent for legalized prostitution. Amsterdam is the leading sex tourist center in Europe. In 1997 the

Netherlands legalized brothels. The result has been increased trafficking to Amsterdam from all over the world.

### ***Bride Trafficking***

Mail order bride agents have moved to the Internet as their preferred marketing location. The Internet reaches a prime group of potential buyers - men from Western countries with higher than average incomes. The new Internet technology enables Web pages to be quickly and easily updated; some services claim they are updating their selection of women bi-weekly. The Internet reaches a global audience faster and less expensively than any other media. One mail order bride agent explained why he preferred operation on the Internet.

“So when the World-Wide Web came along, I saw that it was a perfect venue for this kind of business. The paper catalogs were so expensive that their quality was usually very poor; but on the Web you can publish high-resolution full-color photos which can be browsed by everyone in the WORLD” (Toms, Santa Barbara International 1996)

The agents offer men assistance in finding a “loving and devoted” woman whose “views of relationships have not been ruined by unreasonable expectations.” The agencies describe themselves as “introduction services,” but a quick examination of many of the Web sites reveals their commercial interests in bride trafficking, sex tours and prostitution.

The catalogues offer women, mostly from Asia and Eastern Europe. Pictures of the women are shown with their names, height, weight, education and hobbies. Some catalogues include the women’s bust, waist and hip measurements. The women ages range from 13 to 50. One of the commonly promoted characteristics of women from Eastern Europe is that they “traditionally

expect to marry gentlemen that are 10 to 20 years older” (Toms, 1995).



**Filipina Girl from Catalog**

In 1990 the Philippines’ government banned the operation of sex tour and mail order bride agencies in the Philippines because of this. Now, he uses his own mail order bride to make contact and recruit women and adolescent girls in the Philippines.

One agent-pimp complains because the Philippines government has passed a law banning the operation of sex tour and mail order brides agents in the Philippines. He says, “The Philippines government is.....definitely working against the interests of their own people. These girls want and need to leave that country.” The same agent also complains that the U.S. government will not allow his youngest brides on offer into the country. “The service itself is not restricted by the American government, although they are real picky about getting your bride into the states — they won’t give a visa to a bride under age sixteen” (World Class Service, 1996). In his catalog of potential brides there is one girl, named Hazel, aged 13; another girl, Eddy Mae, is aged 14. There are a total of 19 girls in his catalog aged 17 or younger.

The bride traffickers sell addresses to men. Later they offer to arrange tours for the men to come and meet their woman with whom they have been corresponding, or to

meet as many women as possible. Men can pay for these services over the Internet with their credit cards.



### **Bride Traffickers Accept Credit Cards**

There are some catalogues which list women with young children. One web site asks if men want women with or without children. On another Web site there are pictures of naked children playing. I think children are being trafficked also in this way. The men are being subtly shown ways of acquiring women and children - all in one package.

If the Philippines has banned the operation of sex tour and mail order bride agencies, then in international cooperation, the countries which send the men on tours and receive the mail order brides should also ban the operation of such agencies and prohibit the advertisement of these services from computers in their country.

### **Sexual Exploitation and Organized Crime**

Sex tourism, bride trafficking and prostitution are different forms of sexual exploitation. An examination of advertisements on the Internet reveal the links among these types of sexual exploitation and enable us to see that the agents using women in any way that is profitable.

Most of the mail order bride agents on the Internet also offer tours. Men pay for the addresses of the women in the catalogues, later the tour/bride agent set up a group tour for men to go to meet the woman or women with whom they have been corresponding. “The Moscow trip is a logical conclusion to

your correspondence efforts. The purpose of the tour is to meet as many lovely ladies as possible as soon as possible.”



### **Mail Order Bride from Russia**

Men going to either Russia or the Philippines are assured of getting a wife to bring home, if that is their desire, or they are assured of the availability of many women. Men don't want to believe they are taking home a prostitute as a wife, so the men are assured that they will be introduced to marriageable women, as well as other "available and willing" women. A man is usually offered the option of paying for an "escort" for each day. "Each and every day you will be escorted by your choice of lovely, elegant ladies." Men are assured that if they have not established a correspondence with a woman, they can still go on the tour to try out the women.

I will take a series of advertisements from a U.S. based agency and describe what is offered and show the connections among the forms of sexual exploitation.

A picture of a Filipina tops the first page of *Travel Philippines*. She invites the men to "Come explore the Philippines with me!" The advertisement describes the Philippines as an "exotic and interesting place to visit." Information is given on tickets,

lodging, food and water, money changing, night life and the tour schedule.



### **"Come explore the Philippines with me!"**

Prostitution is briefly mentioned as being "everywhere," and a price range for prostitutes is listed. Men are told, "You can partake or not, it's up to you. Most do partake." Marriage is also briefly mentioned: "As most of you know, the Philippines is the happy hunting ground for men seeking a wife. There are all kinds of women of every description. It's hard to go to the Philippines and not get caught up in the idea of marriage. The whole lifestyle seems to revolve around love, marriage and kids" (Craven, *Come Explore*, Fall 1995)

On the next linked page the man is asked "would you like to have a beautiful female companion as a private tour guide?" or "would you like to have introductions to 'decent' marriage minded ladies?" (Craven, *Tour Philippines*, Fall 1995) If he chooses the private tour guide he is directed to the *X-Rated Escorted Tours*. At the top of this page a picture of the same Filipina from the introductory page appears, this time with her breasts exposed. The woman invites the men to "Come explore the Philippines and Me!"



### **Come explore the Philippines and Me!**

Much of the same travel information is repeated, but here the man finds out how much it costs to have an “escort” during his trip. The fee is paid to the travel agent-pimp, not the woman. The agent-pimp suggests that the tourist-buyer tip the woman, although it is not required (Craven, Come Explore Me, Fall 1995).

If the man chooses the marriage option he is directed to the linked page on *Over Seas Ladies*. There he is asked if he is tired of watching TV and having women make him jump through hoops. He is told that the women for sale here “respond to every gesture and kindness, no matter how small.” He is reassured that these women are not concerned about his age, appearance, or wealth. This is followed by thirteen pages of pictures of women from which he can choose (Craven, Over Seas Ladies, Summer 1995).

The agent pimps sells the addresses of the women to the man. For an extra fee the buyer can have a life-time membership which entitles him to the addresses of all the women, those currently available and those in the future. (If the man is seeking a permanent relationship, why he might want or need a life-time membership is not explained.) The whole sexual exploitation racket comes full

circle with the next linked page on *Escorted Wife Seeking Tours*. The man is told “You will meet a lot of beautiful women there. Your penpals that you have been writing to will be happy to see you. The new women you meet will be generally “good” girls, but there are plenty of bar girls there too and you will surely encounter some” (Craven, Escorted Wife Seeking Tours, Fall 1995). Bar girls, X-rated tours with “private tour guides,” mail order brides - all are forms of sexual exploitation organized by the same agency for the profit of pimps, hotels and bars.

Even from the advertising it is apparent that these men are operating prostitution rings. I’m sure that police investigations will show that these agents are most likely involved in trafficking of women from country to country as well. There are now numerous cases of successful police investigations of child pornography on the Internet. We need the same kind of investigations of advertisements on the Internet for sex tours, mail order brides and prostitution.

We also need international judicial and police cooperation. If it is illegal to run a sex tour agency or mail order bride agency in the Philippines, then it should be illegal to advertise these services on a computer in the US. The European Union defines trafficking as a form of organized crime. It should be treated the same way on the Internet.

### ***Live videoconferencing***

The most advanced technology on the Internet is live videoconferencing, in which live audio and video communication is transmitted over the Internet from video recorder to computer. For over two years this advanced technology has been used to sell live sex shows over the Internet. Real time communication is possible, so the man can personally direct the live sex show as he is viewing on his computer.



### **Advertisement for Live Sex Show**

The only limitation on this type of global sex show is the need for high-speed transmission, processing and multimedia capabilities. The software required is available free, but the most recent versions of Web browsers have these capabilities built into them. As more men have access to high-speed multimedia computer and transmission equipment, this type of private sex show will grow. There are no legal restrictions on this type of live sex shows that can be transmitted over the Internet. Of course, as with all Internet transmissions, there are no nation-state border restrictions. With Internet technology a man maybe on one continent, while directing and watching a live strip show, a live sex show, or the sexual abuse of a child, on another.



### **A Hardcore Live Sex Show Web Site**

#### ***Regulation***

As we all know the new technologies of the Internet have leapt over national borders and lawmakers are scrambling to catch-up. Internet users have adopted and defend an unbridled libertarianism. Any kind of regulation or restriction is met with hysterics and predictions of a totalitarian society. Even the most conservative restrictions on the transmission of child pornography are greeted with cries of

censorship. The December (1996) issue of *Wired*, the leading professional publication on the Internet, stated that a new state law in United States which made it illegal to transmit indecent materials to minors was called censorship. The Internet libertarianism coupled with United States free speech absolutism is setting the standard for Internet communication.

Recently, the United States Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the Communications Decency Act, which would have limited some of the pornography on the Internet.

Expressions of concern or condemnation of forms of sexual exploitation of women and children on the Internet are minimized by claims that pornographers have always been the first to take advantage of new technology - first photography, then movies, then VCRs, now, the Internet. Those concerned about the use of the Internet for sexual exploitation are chastened with history lectures on new technology and pornography.

The solution that is being promoted is software programs that will screen out sexually explicit material. President Clinton just announced that he supported a rating system on the Internet, so pornography would be rated so that software programs will screen it out. This is seen as a way to protect children.

Most adults are only concerned that their children may see pornography. They really aren't concerned about the women and children that are being exploited in the making of the pornography. In any search for a solution to pornography and prostitution it is crucial to remember that sexual exploitation starts with real people and the harm is to real people.

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