



CHALLENGE THE HARMS OF SEXUALLY VIOLENT IMAGES

March 14, 2018

Mr. Marc Gaudrault, CEO
TekSavvy
800 Richmond St
Chatham, ON N7M 1P7

Dear Mr. Gaudrault,

As Canada's largest independent telecom company, we would ask that you take the lead in Canada and restrict the ease of access to violent, sexually explicit images by offering default filtering, at the ISP level, specifically targeted to pornographic sites on the internet. This would be in line with the actions taken by ISP providers in the U.K.¹

This request comes in light of the growing body of evidence that today's online pornography is harmful to society and therefore has created a public health crisis.

Today's "adult content" is misogynistic, violent, degrading, racist, and normalizes rape culture. We also know that there is a seamless link between pornography and other forms of sexual exploitation, such as human trafficking, including those who traffic children.²

Among the documented harms of pornography is the link between pornography use and sexual violence.³

Today, pornography is usually accessed online, which is why ISPs must be vigilant about addressing this harm to society. We are pleased to see that in your acceptable use policy, you specify that you prohibit, "Uploading or downloading...materials that ...(ii) are defamatory, obscene, child pornography or hate literature."⁴ We would ask that you take the next logical step and include violent pornography on this list. Further, we would ask that you assist your customers to adhere to this policy by offering a default filter at the level you deliver this service into their homes.

Many organizations and companies provide filtering on their public WiFi, but this does not protect consumers outside of these filtered WiFi spots. In recognition that

¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2017/01/26/porn-blocking-legislation-cement-internet-filtering-uk-law/>

² Farley, Melissa. "Pornography, Prostitution, & Trafficking: Making the Connections." Presented at the Pornography: a Public Health Crisis forum, hosted by National Center on Sexual Exploitation, Washington DC, July 14, 2015.

³ http://www.socialcostsofpornography.com/Layden_Pornography_and_Violence.pdf, accessed Nov. 24, 2016

⁴ <https://teksavvy.com/en/why-teksavvy/policies/legal-stuff/acceptable-use-policy>, accessed June 2, 2016

pornography causes large-scale harms to society, we need to provide a broad-based solution, starting at the portal to the online world.

Defend Dignity will soon be launching the 2018 version of our *Choose Change* campaign. The goal of this campaign is to reduce the ease of access to violent, sexually explicit images. We would invite you to choose change and join our Change Maker List.

The Change Maker List will promote organizations that have pro-actively changed policies and practices to reduce the ease of access to violent, sexually explicit images.

As well, we are asking the public to join us in “challenging the harms of sexually violent images.” We will do this through the *Choose Change* website, where we will ask the public to contact organizations, such as TekSavvy, to encourage them to embrace practices that will promote the overall public health of Canadians.

We will be celebrating organizations who have or will make these positive changes by highlighting them on our Change Maker List on the *Choose Change* website. We hope you will join this List, like other Canadian businesses that have chosen change.

We know that TekSavvy prides itself on being different, in a good way, and doing the right thing. In light of this great corporate personality, we look forward to 2018 being the year that TekSavvy does the right thing, leading by example, and offers default filtering, at the ISP level, specifically targeted to pornographic sites on the internet.

Prior to the launch of this campaign on April 16, 2018, we would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you, to discuss this matter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Glendyne Gerrard
Director, Defend Dignity
glendyne.gerrard@cmacan.org
416-674-7878 x243
30 Carrier Drive, Suite 100
Toronto, ON M9W 5T7
Defenddignity.ca