



CHALLENGE THE HARMS OF
SEXUALLY VIOLENT IMAGES

February 28, 2018

Ms. Mary Jordan, Chair of the Board
Mr. Craig Richmond, President and Chief Executive Officer
Vancouver Airport Authority
PO Box 23750
Airport Postal Outlet
Richmond, BC V7B 1Y7

Dear Ms. Jordan and Mr. Richmond,

Public, free WiFi is a great customer service. I am writing today to ask that you increase the safety of passengers by filtering inappropriate “adult content” on the public WiFi offered at the Vancouver Airport.

Major Canadian airlines, as well as some airlines in the United States have moved to filter the WiFi offered on their flights. They recognize that there is potential for people to access inappropriate content, and inflict this on their fellow travelers.

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.¹ Among the documented harms of pornography is the link between pornography use and sexual violence.²

Because most pornography today is viewed online, an unfiltered WiFi hotspot allows people to access and freely view pornographic material in your airport. This behavior can expose other travelers, including children, to unwanted pornographic material. As well, in an unfiltered environment, children could access this material inadvertently on their own device. Parents may be able to control access to this content in their homes, but are dependent upon organizations and companies to set WiFi controls in public places for protection.

Heathrow Airport in the United Kingdom is an example of an airport that has established “family friendly” WiFi, using a third party filtering technology.³ As one of the largest airports in Canada, we would ask that you lead the way and begin filtering the public WiFi in your airport.

¹ 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.

² http://www.socialcostsofpornography.com/Layden_Pornography_and_Violence.pdf, accessed Nov. 24, 2016.

³ https://www.heathrow.com/file_source/Heathrow/Static/PDF/Airport_guide/Wi-Fi_FAQs.pdf, accessed Feb. 15, 2018.

In response to the recognition that pornography is harmful to society, Defend Dignity will soon launch the 2018 version of our campaign, *Choose Change*. The goal of this campaign is to reduce the ease of access to violent, sexually explicit images via public services offered by companies and organizations. 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 Vancouver Airport Authority, 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 us in this [List](#), and join other Canadian businesses that have chosen change and recognized the need to filter public WiFi.

In summary, we would ask that the Vancouver Airport Authority establish a porn-free, family friendly WiFi environment for all travelers.

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,

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