

Slutpage visits may be common among US college students

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Visits to digital groups, websites or email lists that share nude or semi-nude photos of women without their consent, known as slutpages, may be common among US college students, according to a survey conducted at a large university in the USA. The findings, published in the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, could help inform sexual violence prevention education offered by universities, according to the authors.

Researchers at Michigan State University, USA found that one in three US college students may be viewing slutpages, based on a study of student behaviour at a large US university. One in ten participants reported using a secret photo storing app to store or share nude images, and one in 30 reported posting nude images or videos online without consent. Younger and [male participants](#) were found to be more likely than older or female participants to engage in any of these behaviours.

Megan Maas, the corresponding author said: "Use of these sites has significant implications for the victims featured on the pages, as previous research indicates that victims of non-consensual pornography distribution experience post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. Due to the semi-private nature of these sites, they are difficult to regulate, but as they are often linked to specific high schools or universities, campus-specific interventions could be used to deter their use."

To examine the demographics and behaviours of users, the researchers analysed data on 1,867 undergraduate students attending a large

university in the USA, collected as part of a larger study on the sex lives of college students. Participants, who were 20 years old on average, reported their use of social media, slutpages and secret photo storing apps as well as participation in fraternities or sororities and university team sports.

The authors found that, of those surveyed, men involved in fraternities visited sites or posted nude images or videos online without consent more frequently than men who were not involved in fraternities, women who were in sororities and women who were not in sororities. Men who played [team sports](#) visited sites or posted nude images or videos online without consent more frequently than men who did not play a team sport and women, regardless of whether they played a team sport, but less frequently than men involved in fraternities.

Megan Maas said: "This study indicates that slutpages appear to be a social form of image-based sexual abuse. The finding that male participants involved in fraternities or sports teams visited these sites and posted nude images and video online without consent more frequently than male participants outside these groups, or [female participants](#) in general, indicates that use of such sites could be motivated by a desire for some men to communicate and connect with their male peers. Our findings suggest that sexual violence prevention education offered by universities should include discussions of these sites in order to address problematic attitudes that objectify women and justify sexual violence."

The authors caution that as their study focused on use of slutpages among a sample of students at a single university, their findings cannot be generalised to all university students, adults who do not attend universities or to teenagers. Future researchers could investigate the reasons for visiting these sites and additional ways that individuals use them, such as commenting on or posting images or videos without consent.

More information: "Slutpage Use Among U.S. College Students: The Secret and Social Platforms of Image Based Sexual Abuse," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 2021. [DOI: 10.1007/s10508-021-01920-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-01920-1)

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