

Protect Women by Enforcing Specific Ongoing Consent

Submitted by

Rafaela D. on behalf of



SUBMISSION TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY
AND ETHICS (ETHI), 43RD PARLIAMENT, 2ND SESSION
CONSIDERING “PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND REPUTATION ON
PLATFORMS SUCH AS PORNHUB”

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Contact

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Dear Honourable Members,

My name is Rafaela and I am writing on behalf of my organisation *Arrêter ExploitationHub* based in Montreal, a group deeply invested in ending the sexual exploitation occurring on *MindGeek's* websites, specifically *Pornhub*. We are grateful for you taking time to read this letter as we come to you with our concerns regarding *MindGeek* and *Pornhub*.

Arrêter ExploitationHub is a nonpartisan, non-religious campaign, working in the city to raise awareness of the issues surrounding this company. We are championing legislation changes so that non-consensual and underage pornography is not only taken down from these websites, but that such content can no longer slip under the radar and be allowed to propagate. We are passionate about protecting victims and potential victims from the monetization of their abuse, coercion, or trafficking, which we believe should be treated as a criminal offense. We have been active protesters since September 2020 outside the *MindGeek* headquarters in Montreal each week, and have been forerunners in raising public awareness. We strongly believe *MindGeek* must be held accountable by Canadian law and that there must be justice for victims and survivors.

We have been closely following the investigation that the Ethics Committee has been undertaking, and we have been saddened and shocked that our suspicions have been confirmed about this company and their executives. It has been made crystal clear that Feras Antoon and David Tassillo have acted with negligence and blatant disregard for women and children, who are even now being exploited on their websites.

In December 2020, alongside Glendyne Gerard of *Defend Dignity* and Penny Rankin, President of the Montreal Council of Women, *Arrêter ExploitationHub* founded an informal coalition, *Canadians4Action*, representing over 40 organisations and professionals. Together we initiated a campaign urging *Mastercard* and *VISA* to stop processing payments for *Pornhub*. On December 10th, 2020, following pressure from multiple sources and an internal investigation, *Mastercard* cut ties with *Pornhub*.

We have been continually shocked by the inadequate and insufficient measures taken by *MindGeek* to prevent the upload and circulation of non-consensual and underage

content. We believe that their team of human moderators, used to verify age and consent is grievously inadequate.

MindGeek have boasted that every single video is watched by a “specifically trained” *MindGeek* employee. Yet with an average of 2.8 hours¹ of content uploaded to *Pornhub* every minute, this must be an immense task, if not one that is impossible. Indeed, it is apparently their job to watch each video and determine the age of the participants and make a judgement on whether it appears to be consensual. I strongly believe, from experience, that it is extremely difficult to know the exact age of a person face to face, let alone on a screen with makeup, dark lighting and even when faces are sometimes not clearly visible.

We have taken the liberty to provide you with further information and evidence of child sexual abuse and non-consensually shared videos on *Pornhub* below.

1. The *Internet Watch Foundation* has investigated and confirmed over 100 cases² of child sexual abuse on *Pornhub*;
2. A 15 year old girl³ was missing for a year until she was found by her mother in 58 videos on adult sites including *Pornhub*;
3. 22 women⁴ who were deceived and coerced by Michael Pratt, owner of *GirlsDoPorn*, into performing sex acts on film found the video footage had been uploaded to *Pornhub*;
4. After a 14 year old girl⁵ from California was raped by a relative, the crime scene video was found on *Pornhub* by one of the girl’s classmates.

Right now on *Pornhub* there is pornography featuring:

Incest;
Racial slurs;
Non-Consensual sexual behavior;
Sexual exploitation of a minor
Kidnapping;
Forced sex (i.e. rape);
Revenge porn, and;
Spy cam footage.

¹ <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2019-year-in-review>

² <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/paypal-cuts-off-porn-site-that-ran-child-abuse-videos-98j2bdnjt>

³ <https://meaww.com/missing-teen-adult-video-pornhub-modelhub-snapchat-periscope>

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/10/16/men-behind-girlsdoporn-lured-young-women-with-modeling-jobs-then-tricked-them-into-porn-fbi-says/>

⁵

<https://nypost.com/2018/10/26/videos-on-pornhub-showed-female-teacher-having-sex-with-teen-girl-cops/>

As a young woman, I am passionate about protecting other women from being exploited for profits and gain. We hope that you can agree that the behaviour and business model of *MindGeek* and others in this industry, has been negligent and reckless.

Pornhub has disregarded the safety of their consumers by profiting from the exploitation, rape, abuse and violence of others and thus cannot be trusted to self regulate.

Therefore, we are calling on the Honourable Members to:

1. Form protective legislation on the issue of consent that involves making sure *specific* consent exists and is *ongoing* from the creation to the distribution and consumption of all pornographic works
2. Enforce third-party regulators that will monitor and ensure these protocols for pornographic websites are being followed, and that there are substantial criminal penalties for non-compliance.
3. Detailed and thoughtful plans to provide legal, physical and emotional assistance to victims and survivors whose consent was not given or is no longer given
4. A legal response to businesses that profit from commodifying sexual exploitation

Once again I thank you on behalf of *Arrêter ExploitationHub* for your efforts to eradicate sexual exploitation in Canada.

Kind Regards,

Rafaela D.

Arrêter ExploitationHub

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