



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 2, 2010

## Coming to the Internet: Triple-X Domain for Pornography

Without a doubt, pornography is one of the biggest businesses on the Internet, with an estimated \$3,000 spent on Internet porn every second. And with some 370 million websites devoted to sexually explicit materials, online porn peddlers are raking in over \$12 billion every year in sales of videos, photos, books, magazines, and other pornographic merchandise.



Now it looks as if pornographers will have their very own “Triple-X” domain space devoted specifically to websites containing whatever sexually explicit materials the human mind can imagine. On June 25, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the group which administers Web addresses on the Internet, gave its initial approval for a U.S. company to negotiate for the creation of a .xxx domain for websites with pornographic content.

While in the past ICANN has rejected the addition of a .xxx porn-domain reservoir similar to .com and .org, its board determined that it had been unfair in its past responses to ICM Registry LLC, the U.S. company that has repeatedly applied for permission to register and manage .xxx domains.

Stuart Lawley, ICM’s chief executive, had argued for the addition of the domain franchise as a way to make it easier for parents and others to block pornographic sites from computers used by children. “People who want to find it know where it is,” Lawley said of the pornographic web content that has proliferated across the Internet over the last 10-plus years. “And people who ... want to keep it away from their kids can use mechanisms to do so.”

Even though ICANN has given an affirmative nod to the .xxx addition, the group’s chairman, Peter Thrush, said there is still a long way to go before folks will be able to log on to [www.porn.xxx](#) and other smut sites. ICANN’s approval only means “we are returning to negotiations with the applicant,” said Thrush, and predicted that full approval could take as long a year.

Nonetheless, porn marketers anxious for new outlets have already reserved an estimate 112,000 .xxx domain names, and media experts predict the domain reservoir could attract over 500,000 new sites devoted to increasingly lurid smut of every variety. And ICM, the company that has been pressing ICANN for approval of the .xxx domain franchise, will cash in to the tune of \$30 million a year when all is said and done.

Critics have warned that the creation of a .xxx domain franchise does not mean porn peddlers will abandon their .com and .net sites. More likely, those who sell porn on existing sites will simply mirror their websites to their new .xxx domains, or launch portals to even more depraved online fare.



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Craig Gross of XXXChurch.com, a website devoted to helping individuals with addictions to pornography, noted that “even if soft-porn sites like Playboy or Penthouse chose to convert their primary domain to XXX, each would still own the dot-Com and dot-Net equivalents and redirect users to the dot-XXX domain to ensure that the users reach their site no matter what he or she enters in the web browser.”

While mandating that all porn sites move to the .xxx domain would be a step in the right direction, this is not what will happen, said Gross. “Now what will happen is just more porn.”

At any rate, Thrush emphasized for those who charge that his company is helping to create an online pornography empire, ICANN is merely facilitating what the public wants. “We’re not in the content business,” he said, “and that’s up to national governments and lawmakers and people who are qualified to make judgments.”

Actually, plenty of solid judgments have been made on the issue since the news surfaced that ICANN was prepared to concede hundreds of thousands of .xxx domain names to pornographers around the world.

Penny Young Nance, CEO of Concerned Women for America, warned that because the .xxx domain will be a completely voluntary endeavor, “it will not isolate all pornography in one area, but will cause parents and others to think that the Internet is safe for children.” What is worse, she said, the new designation will accelerate “the seepage of pornography into the popular culture, making it an acceptable aspect of daily life.”

Patrick Trueman, who at one time headed up the child exploitation and obscenity section of the U.S. Department of Justice, noted that the addition of the .xxx domain franchise will more deeply entrench the problem of Internet pornography, giving pornographers another option for marketing their evil wares. “The .com domain is a cash cow for pornographers and they are not leaving it,” Trueman said. “ICANN has no enforcement powers to make them leave and thus clean up .com. Pornographers would simply expand to .xxx and maintain their current .com sites, perhaps doubling the number of porn sites and doubling their menace to society.”

Trueman warned that pornography today is a “virtually untreated pandemic” and broadening its availability through Internet expansion is a destructive step for society. “Many who begin by viewing adult pornography deviate down to harder and harder material as they continue a steady consumption of material,” he said, “and many of these will deviate down to the point that they only become excited by child pornography. This is a significant factor in the growth of child pornography on the Internet.”

He added that because pornography exacts such a terrible toll on individuals, families, and communities, it must be battled vigorously. “Countless marriages are breaking up because of pornography use,” he said. “Violence against women, which is depicted in most porn films, is changing male attitudes toward girls and women in a very negative way.”

Rather than adding layer upon layer of acceptability to this deplorable cultural blight, he said, a much more appropriate step “should be to stop the distribution of this destructive material by prosecuting those responsible for it, not protect pornography on the .xxx domain.”

Dr. Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, called the .xxx domain strategy “a bad idea that will have damaging and far-reaching consequences.” He predicted that instead of confining pornography to an online adult smut center, the new domain franchise “will expand the amount of pornography available on the Internet and further pollute our



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nation's psyche with the spiritual toxic waste that is pornography."

Added Land, "In lieu of searching for ways to expand the reach of this destructive material, as is the intent of this decision by Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, society should be focused on reining in the availability of this undistilled evil that corrodes souls, tears apart families and threatens our nation's moral fabric at its base."



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