

**The Criteria to Identify Pornography That Can Support Healthy Sexual Development  
for Young Adults: Results of an International Delphi Panel**

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# **The Criteria to Identify Pornography That Can Support Healthy Sexual Development for Young adults: results of an international Delphi Panel**

## **Abstract**

Pornography is not homogenous. There is a paucity of research that offers guidance to young adults and adult stakeholders interested in navigating the available range of pornography to find materials that support healthy sexual development for young adults. Drawing on the expertise of a Delphi Panel of experts from a range of relevant areas this article offers six criteria for assessing whether pornography can support healthy sexual development: includes a variety of sexual practices; includes a variety of body types, genders and races; shows negotiation of consent on screen; is known to be ethically produced; focuses on pleasure for all participants; shows safe sex. The article identifies four pornographic websites that meet these criteria: Sex School, Make Love Not Porn, PinkLabel.TV and Lust Cinema.

**Keywords:** pornography, sexual health, sexually explicit material

# **The Criteria to Identify Pornography That Can Support Healthy Sexual Development for Young Adults: Results of an international Delphi Panel**

## **Background**

This project brings together a Delphi Panel of experts to identify the criteria that should be used to determine which kinds of pornography could support young adults's healthy sexual development, and examples of such pornography.

It is important that we provide young adults with support in navigating ecosystems of sexually explicit material. There is general agreement across the literature that pornography can play a role in learning about sex, although there is no consensus about its most important effects (McKee et al., 2022). The situation is complicated by the fact that pornography is not homogenous. A wide, and increasing, range of materials is available to consumers digitally (Taormino et al., 2013). There is a paucity of research that offers guidance to young adults and adult stakeholders interested in navigating this range of pornographic materials to find resources that could support healthy sexual development for young adults (defined here as people aged 18-25 years old). The current national policy context in which we write (in Australia) focuses on 'protecting' children from explicit sexual information (eSafety Commissioner, undated; Quadara et al., 2017). But this approach tends not to acknowledge that young adults might access pornography for a number of reasons, including for education about sex (Attwood et al., 2018). Formal sex education still struggles to address the concerns that young adults want to learn about sex (Alan McKee et al., 2010). A synthesis of qualitative studies notes that many schools are still delivering 'SRE [Sex and Relationships Education] that is out of touch with young adults's lives' (Pound et al., 2016, p. 1); while a

recent survey of young Australians noted that many were critical of the relevance of school sex education, making comments such as

The education I received didn't prepare me at all for a sexual relationship. I learnt how to use a condom and that only bad things happen ever (quoted in Fisher et al., 2019, p. 80)

This disconnect between what young adults actually want, and what they are given, is a problem familiar from other forms of health information for young people (Kang et al., 2009). Previous research has suggested that we may be able to learn from online pornography about the sexual health topics that interest young adults, and the forms in which they prefer to learn about these issues in order to 're-imagine ideas, constructs and disciplines to create innovative sexual health promotion interventions' (Hare et al., 2015, p. 269). They have noted that people 'barred from expressing important sexual needs in their offline relationships will be more likely to turn to the Internet to do so' (McKenna et al., 2001, p. 302), and that this can be a useful part of healthy sexual development.

There exist historical accounts of the ways in which pornography has contributed to the development of aspects of healthy sexual development. Lynn Comella tells the history of the importance to second-wave feminism of educating women about their bodies and their genitalia, when 'female masturbation and orgasm were being framed as fundamental ingredients of women's liberation' (Comella, 2017, p. 19). Similarly, Hack et al note that Sexually Explicit Materials (a commonly-used term in pornography research - see for example Arrington-Sanders et al., 2015; Hesse & Pedersen, 2017) can be used in formal educational settings, where they can 'create an atmosphere for more open discussion about the sorts of questions young people have' (Hack et al., 2019, p. 708). 'Many of these films and videos', writes sex therapist Terry Trepper:

are quite useful in sex therapy practice, serving as positive modelling, providing suggestions for skill improvement, and encouraging sexual communication (Trepper, 1995, p. 218)

Sex education researchers Watson and Smith worked with sex educators, sex therapists and sexual health practitioners to identify sexually explicit materials that they used in their teaching or practice (2012). Cyndi Darnell writes from the perspective of a sex therapist and similarly provides a list of SEM that she has found useful for clients (Darnell, 2015). These articles are an important part of the genealogy of the current project. The gap in knowledge addressed in the current project is that previous researchers on pornography were not looking explicitly for materials that are useful for young adults; they consider material for use in an educational or therapeutic context, rather than material that young adults might consume by themselves; they did not speak to producers or researchers of pornography as expert stakeholders; and their research was conducted when the range of types of pornography, and ease of access, were both less than is currently the case.

The question of how we define sexual health is also important for understanding the approach taken in this project. The World Health Organisation defines sexual health in the following way:

Sexual health is fundamental to the overall health and well-being of individuals, couples and families, and to the social and economic development of communities and countries. Sexual health, when viewed affirmatively, requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence (World Health Organization, 2022)

This definition of sexual health is important to the project as it goes beyond a biomedical approach where the main focus is on preventing STIs and unplanned pregnancies. If we were to take such an approach to this project our interest would be in how pornography might lead to lower infection and pregnancy rates. However the holistic approach supported by the WHO definition also considers matters such as sexual pleasure, consent and communication (A. McKee et al., 2010). Our interest is thus in how pornography might contribute to this wider understanding of healthy sexual development, following on from the findings of the research mentioned above.

Finally, it is useful to start with a definition of pornography. A 2020 interdisciplinary Delphi Panel seeking to define pornography included researchers from psychology, public health, human geography, history, literary studies, film studies, gender studies, cultural anthropology, sociology, communication studies, cultural studies, media studies. This study found that there was no single definition that was acceptable across disciplines, but that two definitions could between them cover the usage of the term for researchers from a range of disciplines, and that these two definitions can be operationalised according to the need of the research project:

(1) Sexually explicit materials intended to arouse, and (2) Pornography is not a thing but a concept, a category of texts managed by institutions led by powerful groups in society in order to control the circulation of knowledge and culture, changing according to geographical location and period (McKee et al., 2020, p. 1088)<sup>1</sup>

## **Method**

This project aims to identify pornography that can support healthy sexual development, and thus the development of reproductive autonomy and sexual agency, for young adults; and the

criteria that should be used to classify material in this way. The rationale behind the project is to allow young adults and adult stakeholders to understand the range of options of pornographic genres that are available, and to make healthy decisions in that context. For the project 'young adults' are defined as being 18-25 years old. There exists no universally-agreed definition of the ages of 'youth' or 'young people' (United Nations, Undated, p. 2); a range of 18-25 was suitable for this project, and has been used by previous researchers on young people (see for example Poobalan et al., 2012). We have emphasised in the title of this article that this age group are "young adults" to prevent confusion. We acknowledge that research shows that young people often start having interpersonal sexual encounters, as well as encounters with pornography, under the age of 18 (Fisher et al., 2019) and that therefore an argument could be made that this project should include younger people. However, in Australia - where this project was based - it is illegal for people under the age of 18 to view pornographic material and for this reason it would be inappropriate to include under-18s in the age-range for the project.

A Delphi Panel was constituted to generate this information. Delphi Panels seek to build expert consensus on topics where such a consensus does not yet exist. Literature on Delphi Panels suggests that between fifteen and fifty members is typically appropriate (Hsu & Sandford, 2007, pp. 3-4). For this project the authors initially recruited thirty members for a Delphi Panel to address the question of healthy pornography for young adults. The makeup of the Panel was unusually diverse. Typically a Delphi Panel brings together experts from similar, or at least cognate, backgrounds. By contrast, for this Panel experts who were all stakeholders in the Panel's question were recruited from a range of professional backgrounds. The authors of this article themselves come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds: media and cultural studies, adolescent health and sexual health, and maternal and reproductive health. Between us we were able to identify six experts in each of five areas: sex educators,

pornography researchers, pornography producers, adolescent development experts and sexual health experts, for a total of thirty experts.

The authors of this paper are highly credentialed in the areas of pornography research, sex education, adolescent development and sexual health. Between us we have published extensively in academic journals in these areas and we hold, or have held, relevant academic appointments. In identifying the experts for our Delphi panel we used relevant criteria to identify them. Most of the pornography researchers, adolescent development experts and sexual health experts were credentialed in the university system. The pornography producers and sex educators were mostly not credentialed in the university system. The pornography producers had track records in producing sexually explicit material, as well as engaging in debates about representation of gender and sexuality in pornography. The sex educators all had track records in providing sex education. A list of Panel participants is included as Appendix 1 and we encourage interested readers to Google them to find out more information about them.

Each of these areas of intellectual work offers a different but valuable perspective on the issue being investigated. Each of the Panel members was ‘highly trained and competent within the specialized area of knowledge related to the target issue’ Hsu and Sandford (2007, p. 3). This diverse range of experts created its own challenges for the project. Researchers into interdisciplinarity have demonstrated that different disciplines have their own assumptions, languages and processes which are not always easily congruent (Repko & Szostak, 2020). Nevertheless we felt that it was worth taking the risk that the diverse experts in this Panel might not reach consensus because a significant social problem like the one under review demands a transdisciplinary approach: often researchers in sexual health, for example, might not be aware of the cutting-edge work being done in ethical pornography and vice versa. In doing so this Delphi Panel in some ways can also function as an Action



Research project (Costello, 2003) where the very act of bringing the Panel members together to gather data might create a change in the area being researched by letting researchers see work on the same topic that is being conducted in radically different areas of knowledge production.

We acknowledge that there are limits on the diversity of the experts recruited for the Panel. For example, we did not recruit any anti-pornography researchers for the project (for example, Dines, 2010; Jeffreys, 2009; Tankard Reist & Bray, 2011). By choosing experts from a range of different institutional backgrounds the project already faced challenges in agreeing on some fundamental issues, such as whether “health” is a positive goal (see below). To have included experts who reject the fundamental assumptions of the project – for example, that consent is an important part of sexual health (see, for example, Bridges et al., 2010) – it is unlikely that the project would have been able to produce useful data. Nevertheless, we stand by our claim that the group of experts recruited was unusually diverse for a Delphi Panel.

Because the project aimed to bring together experts from a diverse range of areas the Panel did not aim for exhaustive coverage in any given area. To have sought such coverage from every area included could have led to a Delphi Panel of more than a hundred members, which would have been unwieldy.

We note that thirty experts agreed when approached to be part of the Panel. Twenty four of these experts actually completed the first round of the Panel; while seventeen completed the second round, as discussed below.

***Round one: initial nomination of possible resources and criteria: initial nomination of possible resources and criteria***

The first round of the Panel used a qualitative instrument. The experts were told that “For this project, “young people” are defined as being 18-25 years old, and were asked:

- Please nominate some examples of the best Sexually Explicit Materials to support the healthy sexual development of young people (if you do not know of any, please answer N/A)
- What do you think are the most important criteria when deciding on the best Sexually Explicit Materials to support the healthy sexual development of young people?
- If the resources you recommend are not free to access, what ideas do you have about how we could provide equitable access to these materials, particularly for young people from less advantaged backgrounds?
- What other comments would you like to make about this topic?

This data was then analysed (results below) and used to generate the questions for the second round. In total the Panelists offered fifty-two suggestions of Sexually Explicit Materials that might support Healthy Sexual Development. We then reduced this to a manageable number of websites for review and analysis by the Panel in the second round, as follows. We first counted the number of nominations that each website received, excluding self-nominations in order to ensure there was no conflict of interest. This led to a list of seven sites that were nominated multiple times. Having considered the amount of material available on each of the pornography sites, and the amount of time it would take for a Panelist to make a reasonable assessment of each one, we decided to create a shortlist of four of these seven websites for review. Drawing on the expertise of members of the research team we chose four of the seven resources in order to maximise the range of different types of pornography they represented. Each of the four websites chosen to go forward had a different aesthetic and approach. Consensus was reached by all authors on the four most appropriate websites for further analysis using these criteria – listed below in Table one. We note that there is no standardised

taxonomy of pornography aesthetics – this is not an approach typically taken either by pornography producers, or experts in the aesthetics of pornography. The descriptions of the differences between these sites are therefore less scientific and objective than readers might be used to.

We then analysed Panelist suggestions for the criteria they used to make their judgements about healthy pornography for young adults. A variation of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the results to synthesise recurring suggestions for criteria (several Panelists made similar suggestions using slightly different language). The full data set of survey responses is available at

[https://figshare.com/articles/dataset/Full\\_list\\_of\\_survey\\_responses\\_about\\_criteria\\_to\\_determine\\_pornography\\_for\\_Healthy\\_Sexual\\_Development/21454554](https://figshare.com/articles/dataset/Full_list_of_survey_responses_about_criteria_to_determine_pornography_for_Healthy_Sexual_Development/21454554). In total ten possible criteria were identified and then included as survey questions for Round two: assessment of proposed resources and criteria (see Table two below).

### ***Round two: assessment of proposed resources and criteria***

Panelists were presented with the list of four websites identified from Round one: initial nomination of possible resources and criteria – see Table one.

[Insert Table one here.]

Panelists in the second round were then presented with the ten possible criteria for judging what pornography is healthy for 18-25 year olds – see Table two.

[Insert Table two here.]

In the first survey we used the term ‘Sexually Explicit Material’ rather than ‘pornography’. Responses to the first survey made clear that the language of Sexually Explicit Materials, although common in social psychology, caused some confusion for some Panelists outside that area. Pohl et al note that it is a common problem in interdisciplinary research that experts

may not understand the ways in which terminology is used in other disciplines. Terms from one discipline may be unfamiliar in another, or may have different meanings in different research contexts. They note that researchers can address differences in language by ‘deliberately using everyday language and avoiding scientific terms’ (2008, p. 415). For this reason the second round of the survey used the term ‘pornography’ rather than Sexually Explicit Materials, and Panelists were emailed with an explanation for this change. Panelists were asked to assess each of the possible criteria for healthy pornography on a Likert scale from ‘Very important’ to ‘Not at all important’. Panelists were also offered the opportunity to provide qualitative feedback to the question ‘Would you like to add any comments about the criteria by which we should assess healthy pornography for 18-25 year olds?’.

We also arranged free access for the Panelists to each of the four potentially healthy pornography sites. For each of these Panelists were then asked to rate their agreement with the statement ‘This is healthy pornography for 18-25 year olds’, on a Likert scale from ‘Strongly agree’ to ‘Strongly disagree’. After one panelist contacted us to note that they have an ideological issue with one of the proposed sites and thus would not be reviewing it, we also added a sixth option ‘I did not visit this site’. Some other Panelists had problems with their work computers not allowing access to some of the sites, and were also able to use this option. Data about the numbers of Panelists affected is provided as part of the results below. Again, Panelists were also invited to provide qualitative data, in answer to the question ‘Would you like to add any comments about whether the nominated sites represent healthy pornography for 18-25 year olds?’.

The qualitative data from the second round was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## Results

Twenty-four experts completed the first round of the Panel. We invited Panelists to nominate their own areas of expertise from the five we had identified, and to nominate in as many categories as necessary to cover their range of expertise. The first round featured responses from eleven experts in sexual health, eight pornography researchers, nine sex educators, six pornography producers and five adolescent health experts. Their responses are those that were presented above, as those responses became the questions for the second round of the survey.

Seventeen experts contributed to the second round of the Panel, including responses from eight experts in sexual health, six pornography researchers, five sex educators, four pornography producers and two adolescent health experts. The experts who did not complete the second round gave a variety of reasons for leaving the project including ill health, increased workload, and, from one, a concern that taking part in this round of the project might jeopardise their future career prospects.

In reporting the quantitative results of this round we have avoided conducting statistical analysis. Delphi Panels gather data from a small number of global experts rather than aiming for representativeness of a large sample: seventeen responses is not an appropriate sample size on which to conduct statistical analysis. Instead we offer a descriptive account. We expand on this and discuss the meaning of the responses in the Discussion section.

When asked what aspects of pornography support healthy sexual development panelists overwhelmingly agreed with six of the criteria, presented in Table three starting at the top with the criteria with the most experts nominating ‘Strongly agree’ (see above for the full wording of each criterion).

[Insert Table three here]

The other criteria featured a variety of different response patterns (Table four). We refer to these as *contested criteria*.

[Insert Table four here.]

The only criterion with which the majority of Panelists disagreed was

- The material should be made explicitly for education purposes and should not aim to arouse the viewer

Here fourteen experts disagreed (eight strongly), two neither agreed nor disagreed, and only one somewhat agreed.

In regards to the assessment of possible healthy pornography sites, no experts disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposition that ‘For each of the following websites, to what extent do you dis/agree that it is healthy pornography for 18-25 year olds’. Ranked by the most experts who chose ‘Strongly agree’ the sites are listed in Table five.

[Insert Table five here.]

We must emphasise at this point that reporting this data should not be seen as a commercial for these websites. Rather, this is the result of a Delphi panel of a range of recognised experts on areas involving sex education, pornography, sexual and adolescent health identifying resources that meet the criteria they have developed for pornography that can support healthy sexual development. In particular we note that we removed all self-recommendations from the data to ensure there was no risk of conflict of interest.

Our analysis of the data noted a certain tension between the quantitative and qualitative responses.

One theme we noted was a tension about the politics of the word ‘healthy’ in the responses of the Delphi Panel. Some researchers completed the quantitative part of the survey but also

marked their concern about the discourse of 'health'. One pornography researcher wrote that 'I have really mixed feelings about the terms of the debate ... Healthy just seems like such a loaded term'. Another respondent - pornography researcher, sex educator and sexual health expert - wrote:

Let's remove 'healthy' as a descriptor. It's a value-laden judgement that is hard to measure when we cannot even understand nor define what 'health' is

A second theme was the contested nature of the criterion 'Should include representations of emotional intimacy during sex'. A pornography researcher wrote that:

I think that, for example, casual sex can be enjoyable, healthy and safe even if it doesn't involve intimate emotions. It's all about negotiating consent and boundaries before and during sex. I was thinking about whether ideas of emotional intimacy in fact stem from hetero- and mononormative frameworks that privileges certain sexual attachments and practices over others

A pornography producer wrote that:

I'm non-committal on that because I feel 'emotional intimacy' could include things like smiling, showing care for the other partner, chemistry or similar. I don't think all porn should show people in love but I also think connection and communication during sex is important and this could be equated to 'emotional intimacy'.

Experts also explained their disagreement with the criterion 'The material should be made explicitly for education purposes and should not aim to arouse the viewer'. As one sexual health expert wrote:

pornography should absolutely be arousing for the audience it aims to target.

Pornography represents a safe space for young people to explore their sexuality and what they may or may not find arousing, presenting in a manner that is representational

whilst also being educational is the key. Porn can be arousing and educational at the same time, the two do not exist exclusive of the other.

Similarly, a sex educator wrote that:

I think there is definitely room for more educational content that allows a skilled facilitator to unpack the material in a safe and non-confrontational way with participants, however to entirely remove porn and erotica from arousal is potentially unhelpful. The shame around arousal and desire is already an issue, and the already too sterile conversations we have with young people make talking about the true nuance and influence of pornography difficult.

A third theme in the qualitative data is the question of accessibility. As noted above the first survey asked respondents:

- If the resources you recommend are not free to access, what ideas do you have about how we could provide equitable access to these materials, particularly for young people from less advantaged backgrounds?

One respondent notes that it is a central part of ethical pornography production and consumption that

creators need to be paid for their labour. This is part of what makes the movement 'ethical' is labour is acknowledged and paid for (sex educator/porn researcher/sexual health expert)

But, as a porn researcher/sexual health expert wrote 'There are very few young people who are willing to pay for porn'. As a sexual health expert wrote 'All sites are great but if people are unable to access them due to being priced out then they are pointless for that age bracket'.

A third expert agreed that



obviously better if all available free to young people ... would only be possible with grant/public sector funding (sex educator/porn researcher/porn producer/sexual health expert).

A fourth noted that

Not being able to access sites easily is going to be a HUGE problem for people accessing this work. Accessibility matters and this is in part where some issues will be around young people accessing erotic material (sex educator/porn researcher/sexual health expert)

There was no clear consensus about how we might address this problem. Two experts suggested that governments should ‘fund sexy sex education’ (porn researcher) or should ‘make these resources less niche and more accessible, for example including them in their sex education programmes’ (porn producer). One porn researcher/sexual health expert suggested ‘available through schools and trusted services’. One sex educator suggested that healthy pornography could be produced and made freely available through crowdfunding; another expert suggested building the costs of producing healthy pornography into academic research grants (sex educator/porn researcher/sexual health expert). A third suggested that ‘sexual health agencies’ could fund access to healthy pornography (sex educator/porn researcher/porn producer/sexual health expert). A fourth suggested philanthropy: ‘Donations from those with the means’ (sex educator/porn producer). A fifth suggested that ‘Educators can partner with producers to license materials and provide at a lower price or as part of their curriculum’ (porn producer). Another expert suggested that.

Many of the producers are committed to changing the sexual landscape for the better and offer reduced cost/free access to educators when contacted. Subscription services can often be tailored to include groups/classes (sex educator)

And once again, as with our previous point, one expert suggested that

We should include those young people in the processes of knowledge co-creation and dissemination to find sustainable solutions to best reach those young people from less advantaged backgrounds (porn researcher)

## **Discussion**

This article provides the first data on the criteria which might be used to identify pornography that could support healthy sexual development for young adults, and the first list of sources of pornography for young adults drawing on those criteria. The data raises a number of important points that relate to previous research in this area.

The results of the project contribute to our discussions about the ways in which struggles over the definition of the word ‘health’ are political in nature (Benford & Gough, 2006). The word often has a moral connotation, used to police the behaviour of marginal or powerless groups in society – for example, for many decades homosexuality was described as ‘unhealthy’ (Knauer, 2000). This was the biggest source of disciplinary disagreement in the project. We note that while there are problems with the word ‘healthy’, nevertheless it can be used in what we might call a ‘strategic use of health discourse’, referencing the ‘strategic essentialism’ of feminist writing (Colebrook, 2001). In order to engage in interdisciplinary debates around important matters of shared interest we must sometimes use each other’s languages, even if we do not always fully agree with them (Pohl et al., 2008). We also note at this point that the World Health Organisation definition of sexual health is not heteronormative, but allow for a range of different sexual identities and practices. They do not fall into the trap of, for example, naming certain minority sexual acts like anal sex or BDSM as being ‘unhealthy’ (McKee et al., 2021).

Secondly, we suggest that this work could inform future research on ‘porn literacy’ (Dawson et al., 2020) that moves from a ‘harm reduction’ approach (Davis et al., 2020) to an approach that seeks to support consumers to ‘read porn well’ (Byron et al., 2021).

Thirdly, we note in relation to the finding that accessibility of healthy pornography is a challenge, that although a respondent suggested that the material could be made available through schools and other trusted services that, although this would obviously be an ideal, but in our current politicized educational climate it is difficult to imagine such an approach being operationalized (Thompson, 2019). This issue remains perhaps one of the most pressing emerging from this project.

### **Limitations and implications for future research**

In reviewing the data, five important limitations and points for future research stand out.

The first is that several Panelists made the point that young adults in the target audience must be included in this discussion. As a sex educator and sexual health expert wrote ‘Consultation with youth is critical’; a porn researcher suggested that ‘I encourage involving the target group in the work of the Delphi panel’; while a third expert wrote that

It would be good to engage with young people about what they want and need, and to compare this to their current access to these resources (adolescent development expert/sexual health expert)

As a Delphi Panel includes only experts who are recognised globally for their expertise this research method is not well suited to including the voices of young adults. For this reason, future work in this area should recruit 18-25 year olds and seek their perspective on the question of what constitutes healthy pornography.

A second limitation emerges from the fact that this project was unfunded and thus Delphi Panel members could not be paid for their time. This made it more difficult for experts from lower-socio economic groups, and particular those involved in precarious labour, to contribute their expertise to the process. This should be addressed in future projects.

A third limitation is related to the fact noted above that one Panelist – an expert in adolescent development – gave as their reason for dropping out of the Panel that it might jeopardise their future career prospects if it were known that they had viewed pornography. This raises important questions about cultural and political desires to shut down research on pornography.

A fourth limitation, noted above, is that the Delphi Panel did not include any anti-pornography researchers. Had it included them the project would have produced different results.

Finally, in terms of future research we note that the current project does not include detailed feedback from Panelists about the content of the websites reviewed, nor any detailed textual analysis of that content. We scoped the current project to be of a scale that could be completed while drawing on the work that can reasonably be expected from members of a Delphi Panel, all of whom – as noted above - are giving their time for free. The authors are currently considering a second project which will address the content of the sites in more detail.

## **Conclusion**

This project makes an important contribution to identifying pornography that can support healthy sexual development for young adults aged 18-25. This is particularly important in a digital context where the types of pornography available to young adults are increasingly

diverse. The lack of previous attempts to address this issue might be explained by the lack of interdisciplinary research in this area. By bringing together a radically diverse range of experts for this Delphi Panel this project suggests a productive way forward to ensure that young adults are supported in their healthy sexual development in a digital context.

## **Acknowledgements**

The qualitative data was rich and fascinating, as would be expected from a panel of such distinguished experts. Unfortunately due to word limits it is not possible to explore detail in this article all of the wonderful ideas presented by panelists: we would like to take this opportunity once again to thank the experts who took part for their commitment to the project, and the insights they provided. Particular thanks to Jiz Lee for help in identifying Panelists for this project.

**Word count, including references and tables: 7497**

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*Appendix 1: Experts who contributed to the Delphi Panel*

We encourage interested readers to Google information about each of the Panel members to review their relevant expertise for the project, and how that may inform their responses.

1. Bella Bushby
2. Megan Lim
3. Vijay Ramanathan
4. Cyndi Darnell
5. Cynthia Graham
6. Ms Naughty
7. Heather Corinna
8. Tessa Opie
9. Jacqui Hendriks
10. Anne Philpott
11. Feona Attwood
12. Clarissa Smith
13. Erika Lust
14. Sanna Spišák
15. Kerrin Bradfield
16. Michael Rich
17. Kit Fairley
18. Vex Ashley
19. Andrew Gurza
20. Kendall Buckley
21. Cristyn Davies

22. Jiz Lee

23. Two other experts contributed to the Panel but asked that their names not be made public, one because of potential career ramifications and the other for ‘various reasons’.

Table one: Pornographic websites that might support Healthy Sexual Development

<p>PinkLabel.TV (<a href="https://pinklabel.tv/on-demand/">https://pinklabel.tv/on-demand/</a>)</p>	<p>Favours queer indie materials which are often slightly punk in their orientation, with a range of different sexualities, genders and body types, presenting their sex in unashamed ways.</p>
<p>Sex School (<a href="https://www.sexschoolhub.com/explore/">https://www.sexschoolhub.com/explore/</a>)</p>	<p>Distributes pornography with a stated educational aim, naming videos with instructional titles, and providing sexually explicit materials that show viewers how to have sex, and provide information about topics such as ‘Consent’ and ‘Squirting’.</p>
<p>Lust Cinema (<a href="https://lustcinema.com/">https://lustcinema.com/</a>)</p>	<p>Takes a feminist approach to pornography, paying explicit attention to women’s pleasure and sometimes drawing on the aesthetics of groundbreaking feminist pornographers such as Candida Royalle, with high-quality lighting, better acting, more focus on story, and attractive male actors.</p>
<p>MakeLoveNotPorn (<a href="https://makelovenotporn.tv/">https://makelovenotporn.tv/</a>)</p>	<p>Favours an amateur aesthetic, with people who are not professional porn actors, often with bodies that would be</p>

	<p>considered more ordinary than professional pornography performers, presenting a relaxed and ordinary performance of sexuality, often with their own partners in their own homes.</p>
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Table two: Possible criteria to assess whether pornographic websites could support Healthy Sexual Development

1. The material is known to be ethically produced, including but not limited to attention to consent, safe working conditions and fair pay
2. Shows negotiation of consent on screen, including but not limited to open communication, explicit statements of sexual desires, respect of boundaries and/or ongoing consent
3. Shows safe sex, including but not limited to condom use, dams and/or lube
4. Includes a variety of body types, abilities, genders, races and/or ethnicities
5. Includes a variety of sexual practices and pleasures – not just ‘penis-in-vagina intercourse’, not just orgasms
6. Focuses on pleasure for all participants
7. The material should be made explicitly for educational purposes and should not aim to arouse the viewer
8. Should include representations of emotional intimacy during sex
9. Consults with or involves young adults (aged 18-25) in production to ensure it is what they want
10. There are no common features in healthy pornography for 18-25 year olds – it will be different for each individual

Table three: Criteria where there was agreement among most Delphi Panelists

Includes a variety of sexual practices and pleasures	15 strongly agree, 2 somewhat agree	
Includes a variety of body types, abilities, genders, races and/or ethnicities	14 strongly agree, 2 somewhat agree, 1 neither agree nor disagree	
Shows negotiation of consent on screen	13 strongly agree, 2 somewhat agree, 2 neither agree nor disagree	
The material is known to be ethically produced	13 strongly agree, 3 somewhat agree, 1 disagree)	
Focuses on pleasure for all participants	10 strongly agree, 6 somewhat agree, 1 neither agree nor disagree	
Shows safe sex	8 strongly agree, 5 somewhat agree, 4 neither agree nor disagree	

Table four: Contested criteria

<p>Consults with or involves young adults</p>	<p>Received responses that were majority neutral - 10 respondents chose 'Neither agree nor disagree', with 5 strongly agreeing, 1 somewhat disagreeing and 1 strongly disagreeing.</p>
<p>Should include representations of emotional intimacy during sex</p>	<p>Received a wide spread of responses - 6 neither agreed nor disagreed, 6 somewhat agreed, 3 strongly agreed and 2 somewhat disagreed.</p>
<p>There are no common features</p>	<p>Received a wide spread of responses - 2 strongly agreed, 4 somewhat agreed, 4 neither agreed nor disagreed, 6 somewhat disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed.</p>

Table five: pornographic sites that could support healthy sexual development

Sex School	12 strongly agree, 4 agree, 1 did not view the site
Make Love Not Porn	8 strongly agree, 5 somewhat agree, 1 neither agrees nor disagrees, 3 did not view the site
PinkLabel.TV	7 strongly agree, 7 somewhat agree, 1 neither agrees nor disagrees, 2 did not view the site
Lust Cinema	6 strongly agree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 did not view the site

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<sup>1</sup> The second definition draws on research approaches from the Humanities and may be unfamiliar to readers from more quantitative Social Science disciplines. It draws on ideas explored in most detail in the influential book *The Secret Museum* by Literary Historian Walter Kendrick Kendrick, W. (1996). *The Secret Museum: pornography in modern culture*. University of California Press.