

Forced Online: Push Factors of Internet Sexuality: A Preliminary Study of Online Paraphilic Empowerment

Amir Rosenmann, MA
Marilyn P. Safir, PhD

University of Haifa

ABSTRACT. Online sexual behavior may be more completely explained by integrating a *Pull Factor* analysis, centering on the characteristics of the Internet that make it an appealing outlet for sexuality (e.g., “Triple A Engine”) and a *Push Factor* analysis, centering on characteristics of the offline world that disallow fulfillment of sexual desires. This new framework is utilized in explaining paraphilic (unconventional) sexualities online. Because paraphilics are members of highly concealable, horizontal and rare sexual minorities, they are pushed online by mainstream society. Online, paraphilics interact with similar others, and through *lurking*, *re-learning* and *self-disclosing*, may become *sexually empowered*. Clinical ramifications of attainment of positive sexual-social identity via empowerment are discussed, as are possible affects on public policy. doi:10.1300/J082v51n03_05 [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2006 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

Amir Rosenmann and Marilyn P. Safir are affiliated with Department of Psychology, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel.

The authors would like to thank Tammy Ben-Shaul for her help with an earlier version of this paper. This paper was first presented in the 6th European Federation of Sexology Conference, held in Cyprus, June 2002.

Correspondence may be addressed: Marilyn Safir, PhD, Department of Psychology, University of Haifa, Haifa 31905, Israel (E-mail: msafir@psy.haifa.ac.il).

Journal of Homosexuality, Vol. 51(3) 2006
Available online at <http://jh.haworthpress.com>
© 2006 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1300/J082v51n03_05

KEYWORDS. Internet, paraphilia, push factors, lurking, re-learning, self disclosure, sexual empowerment, fetish, sexual minorities, social identity

Online sexuality has been at the heart of heated debates for the past several years. Media and research have repeatedly focused on such topics as online sexual addiction (e.g., Cooper, Putnam, Planchon & Boies, 2001), going online for sex from the workplace (e.g., Cooper, Safir, Rosenmann, Schehr & McLoughlin, 2004; Websense Company, 2002), virtual betrayals resulting in actual divorces (e.g., Young, Griffin-Shelley, Cooper, O'Mara & Buchanan, 2000), just to name a few. It appears, however, that no issue has stirred public concern more than the issue of predatory online sexual deviants (Cybertipline, 2003; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2003; The Anti-Pedophilia Webring, 2003). Public alarm is evident not just in the media, but also by the demands for and enactment of legislature and law enforcement (McCabe, 2000).

Despite this public outcry, not much is known about the nature of paraphilic activity online (paraphilia is roughly equivalent to the layman's "sexual deviant"). While many paraphilic sexual proclivities are unorthodox but harmless, some paraphilic sexualities are indeed destructive to unwilling or unsuspecting participants. Why these types of sexualities appear to thrive on the Internet demands further elucidation of the complex set of interactions between the sexual online and offline worlds.

Online sexuality, in itself, has already been a subject of much research. Models, such as the *Triple A Engine* (purporting that online sexuality is attractive because of its Anonymity, Accessibility and Affordability; Cooper, McLoughlin & Campbell, 2000), clarify why people go online for sex, by explaining what factors create the allure of online sexual experiences. We define these types of factors as "Pull Factors of Internet Sexuality"—characteristics of the Internet that make it a highly appealing outlet for sexuality. This line of research has been instructive, but its potential for explaining online sexual behavior is limited by its focus on the Internet alone, neglecting the interactions of this new social environment with offline social environments.

To explicate online sexualities further, we must attend to the "Push Factors of Internet Sexuality," defined as those characteristics of the offline world that disallow and interfere with fulfillment of sexual desires. Such Push Factors may consist of social value structures, cultural beliefs, and physical hindrance of the offline world. A theoretical and

empirical focus on the interactions between these two sets of factors, Pull Factors and Push Factors, may provide more comprehensive answers for these questions about online sexual behavior.

This new theoretical framework enables systematic investigations of specific groups of online sex users, studying what makes the Internet appealing to them specifically, and how they employ its accommodating features. Such research may center on diverse groups of people pushed online for sex, such as those who live in rural settings far from direct human (and sexual) contact. Individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, as sexually unappealing or even devoid of sexuality, may be pushed online as well. Hamman (1996) reports on one such middle-aged woman who relinquished her right to be romantic or sexual before rediscovering these aspects of herself online. Finally, and most central to our contention, those individuals whose sexual interests are considered by mainstream society to indicate a moral or psychological impairment may be forcefully driven into the virtual sexual world.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF PARAPHILIC EMPOWERMENT ONLINE

The American Psychiatric Association (1994, 2001) defines paraphilic sexuality as a persistent sexual interest in an unconventional sexual object or activity. Specifically, it is defined as sexual interest that involves a nonhuman object, suffering of self or others, or nonconsenting and/or underage partner.

People who demonstrate such sexual interests are in violation of some of the most deeply rooted taboos in society. A cross-cultural study that examined attitudes towards several nonnormative, yet undisruptive, private behaviors (e.g., using a flag as a rag), found that a harmless paraphilic activity was most likely to be deemed as universally immoral or unhealthy. The participants were also highly likely to believe that the person engaging in such activity should be stopped or punished (Haidt, Koller & Dias, 1993).

Violating these taboos, whether in thought or in action, should be considered a major stressor in the lives of individuals with paraphilic sexualities. Consequential feelings of abnormality and unacceptability are exacerbated by the overriding difficulties of belonging to an offline paraphilic community. Research in social psychology has shown that minority communities are vital to their members, providing them with

an environment in which the disdained stigma is tolerable and normative (e.g., Crocker & Blanton, 1999). For most paraphilics, the benefits of belonging to a minority community are unobtainable offline, setting them apart from nonsexual minorities.

Paraphilic minorities, as other sexual minorities, are by default *horizontal minority groups* (Gonsiorek, 1995): Minorities that are not organized in communities in which a child is born and raised. This lack of intergenerational structure results in a critical difference between sexual minorities and ethnic minorities, for instance, where the individual is brought up in an environment that shares his or her minority status (Bat-Chava, 1994). With the onset of sexuality, individuals with paraphilic tendencies, like members of other sexual minorities, discover that they are different from the rest of their social environment in key aspects. Unlike members of ethnic minorities, these sexual minority youth receive no support in dealing with their emerging (sexual) stigma. In fact, they are quite likely to learn of their inadequacy and abnormality from the people closest to them, leaving them to cope alone. In this isolated state, paraphilics are left estranged, without efficient social buffers to mitigate the effects of sexual stigma.

In many cases, stigmatized minority status is accompanied by visible cues of group membership. While having a visible stigma is obviously detrimental to an individual's impression management, research has shown that such concerns are even more central in the social interactions of individuals with concealable stigma. These individuals need to be mindful of both verbal and nonverbal interactions constantly, in order to control the flow of possibly damaging information. This in turn, may deter them from engaging in interpersonal contact (Frable, Blackstone & Scherbaum, 1990). In addition to the cognitive strain associated with continuous mindfulness, paraphilics may also find social interactions emotionally painful. Tact and politeness often lessen the amount of direct negative evaluation a visibly stigmatized person comes face-to-face with. Nothing is spared for the invisibly stigmatized individual who is fully exposed to societal disapproval (McKenna & Bargh, 1998), without being able to adopt and assert a positive sexual self.

Finally, paraphilic minorities are at times minuscule in size, and may be limited to men, who are sexually aroused by specific stimuli, for example, women's footwear. The rarity of the paraphilia combined with its concealable nature make offline social interactions with others of the same sexual persuasion hard to come by.

Therefore, we suggest that being a member of a highly stigmatized minority, without having a community to affirm this pivotal part of the

self, can be debilitating psychologically. Research has demonstrated that social isolation of paraphilic sexual life may be a major cause of clinical symptomology such as depression and sexual compulsivity. Weinberg, Williams and Calhan (1995) studied an offline-organized group of male footwear fetishists. They reported that the socially active fetishist who is highly involved with the group, and who has informed others in his life about his attractions (both homosexual and paraphilic), rarely suffers from this symptomology.

However, such offline paraphilic organizations are extremely rare. Offline social isolation of most paraphilics is a central Push Factor that may drive them into the comfort of online interaction with others of the same persuasion. Once pushed online, paraphilics can find an online group of some sort (e.g., site-based forums and chats, IRC chat rooms, "MSN Communities," "Yahoo Groups") that caters to their specific proclivity. This makes for a dramatic break from their often desolate offline situation.

This shift from offline to online environments has not yet been sufficiently researched. In proposing future research, we suggest possible forms paraphilic participation might take in online communities, and what ramifications this participation might have for the paraphilic individual, and for society in general. These suggestions were formulated based on scant research and through personal observations.

Excerpts from a message thread in the *Official Crush Message Board (OCMB)* discussion forum appear in the following text to illuminate the suggested forms of this involvement. This online forum is dedicated to those who find scenes of women crushing small animals (mostly insects and snails) sexually appealing. The OCMB does not allow pornography in the main forum. Pornography is posted in "private areas of the message board, [where] hardcore crush images/video clips upto mouse crush is allowed, but not beyond." Access to these private message boards is granted to those members of the online community who contribute at least 40 posts in general discussion areas (OCMB Policy Statement, 2004; see Appendix A). No provision for privacy is made in the policy section. Access to the general OCMB forum requires choosing an alias, or user-name, but no password is needed. As of the final board survey on April 5, 2004, OCMB had 4,932 registered members. The attributes of the OCMB forum, including its lack of privacy policies, openness to the public, and wide member base, suggest that OCMB contributors have low expectations of privacy. Thus, reprinting excerpts of the forum, while protecting contributors' identities, fall

within the ethical guidelines posed by the APA (Kraut, Bruckman, Cohen, Couper, Olson & Banaji, 2004).

Lurking is the simplest and most passive form of cyber-sexual paraphilic activity. It entails reading the posts of others, or viewing pornography depicting paraphilic fantasy. Lurkers are, by definition, invisible and silent in the online group, but their existence may be deduced from indirect clues (McKenna & Bargh, 1998). It is common for active members of an online community to make direct references to lurkers, while trying to provoke them into active group participation, transforming them into full members of the community:

What are you doing to leave your mark in this community? Are you one that hopes to be a well known member here some day? Are you just drifting along just getting what you can from here? . . . I came on ocmb as a lurker because I could find some nice urls [Internet addresses] and people posting briefcases of crush pics [pictures] and clips . . . man what a treat. Sometimes you could get lucky and find some cases that still had clips in them. I lurked on for about a year and a half and found the new ocmb here.

For those who lurk about the board. . . join in and share with us . . . you mite *Isic-might*] just be the next “C” [the user-name of one of the board administrators] just waiting to be molded. Members here need to post and reply to anything others are willing to share. after all if nobody was nice enough to share then there wouldn’t be a board here. (OCMB, Forum Archives, “Are you ??????”, *J*, January 22, 2003; see Appendix B)

Conversely, even though a passive and solitary activity, lurking is gratifying both sexually and psychologically. The available online enactment of paraphilic fantasy may create a level of sexual arousal that had not been experienced before with offline non-paraphilic stimuli (Levine, Risen & Althof, 1990). Some researchers stress the effect such positive reinforcement might have on maintenance of paraphilic sexualities (Weinberg, Williams & Calhan, 1995). Seeing the fantasized sexual act or reading the posts of others who share the same paraphilic interest, refutes the fear of being the only person with that specific sexual interest, and alleviates the distressful concomitants of such fears.

Lurking, and even more so, actively participating in a group, may be instrumental in allowing *re-learning* (Peters, 1997): cognitively incorporating affirming sexual values and learning the know-how of par-

aphilic sexuality. This process of paraphilia affirmative re-learning provides paraphilics with an opportunity to positively re-evaluate themselves; much in the same way other offline minorities induce positive self-evaluation in their members:

I've been lurking this board for about half a year and I knew I had to join in someday, but did not have the courage. I'm glad that I finally did it and had great fun here and it is also a interesting place where you can learn something about our fetish, or just discuss about the many different parts of it. It's great to be in touch with many people who feel basically the same about seeing beautiful women stepping on an insect, in fact a daily and very common thing to happen for most people. (OCMB, Forum Archives, "Are you ????????", P, January 22, 2003; see Appendix B)

This Forum and topic is-meaning shareing [*sic*]with other people. Normally I keep to myself and my barely tolerent [*sic*] girlfriend (she hates my fetish's) . . . Having had this fetish since I was old enough to speak (I don't know why or how), I'm used to being a silent observer . . . Hell, I've never met/spoken with anybody face to face who had any like to this kind of sexuality, much less a FEMALE . . .WHOO . . . [*here the contributor is referring to women who are involved in the online community*] I thought I was destined to a lonely extension of my personality . . . Maybe this forum will help me change that . . . I'm both happy and sad . . . (OCMB, Forum Archives, "Are you ????????", A, January 22, 2003; see Appendix B)

In fetish communities, such as OCMB, re-learning primarily takes the form of "meaning sharing" (as contributor A puts it), talking to like-minded individuals, sharing the special significance mundane life can have, when it intersects with the fetish scene (lines 6-8, in P's post cited earlier). Finding others who share similarly constructed sexual realities dispels the often repeated fear of being singular and completely alone. The individual now learns that he or she is a part of a group, from which validation can be drawn, and sexual scripts exchanged.

In other paraphilic groups this stage of re-learning is even more central. Paraphilic minorities which are considered heinous by society, and not only "sick" "weird" and disconcerting, have a more pronounced need to replace conventional sexual morality with group affirmative values. Pedophiles constitute one such group, which is specifically tar-

geted by law enforcement agencies, and whose sexual practices are considered not only abnormal but wrong and illegal. In pedophile group discourse, re-learning oftentimes intentionally invokes Gay and Lesbian Liberation rhetoric, portraying the pedophilic individual as a victim of prejudice and bigotry, while depicting mainstream society as oppressive and conservative (see Appendix C: "Proud to Love 2001").

Closely linked with the re-learning process is the possibility of *virtual self-disclosure*, transforming the lurker into an acknowledged member of the sexual minority group. As a result of caution to avoid offline identifying details, virtual self-disclosure focuses on the subjects most pertinent to the group, including sexual histories, past experience with the paraphilic community, and present sexual situation (lines 2-7, in A's post cited earlier). Sharing life experiences not only enriches the community (lines 12-14, in J's post cited earlier), but is an important step towards actualizing the sexual self and attaining self-integration (McKenna & Bargh, 1998), even if this occurs in a secluded arena in virtual life (Palandri & Green, 2000).

A possible outcome of experiencing differing levels of online involvement may be a sense of *sexual empowerment*. Empowerment is here defined by a feeling of belonging to a peer community, resulting in feelings of social and self-acceptance. This is a singular experience for individuals who spent their lives feeling negatively about themselves, fearing that their sexual selves can never be accepted.

Seriously though, I have no idea what my "mark" is [referring to J's post, cited earlier, which opened the thread]. I know that I have made great friends here. I cherish those friendships!!!! I have posted stories and ___ [here 'R' refers to her partner] has posted clips. We do that for the people that are not as lucky as we are. We have the luxury [*sic*] of living out the fetish with our loved ones. But I still say that the most important thing to me is the friendships I have formed here. I have gotten to know some really great people. Maybe that is the "mark" we all leave. Friendship, acceptance and loyalty. R (OCMB, Forum Archives, "Are you ????????", R, January 23, 2003; see Appendix B)

If online involvement continues, a positive sexual-social identity eventually emerges. For this identity to evolve, a meticulous construction is needed, as the paraphilic must overcome internalized stigma that has been learned and reinforced over many years. After a positive sexual-social identity is created online, the duality of offline life and online

life may take a psychic toll, and ambivalence is sure to remain in the background of the new empowered sexual self.

The online paraphilic community would become the major sexual reference point for the individual, from where paraphilia affirming values can be extracted. The empowerment process, interfaced with this newly found in-group would inescapably erode adherence to sexual standards imposed by mainstream society. Mainstream society is likely to become much less effective in controlling this new and empowered cyber-paraphilic sexuality.

ONLINE SEXUAL EMPOWERMENT: SUGGESTIONS FOR MICRO AND MACRO RAMIFICATIONS

The newly evolving online sexual environment has a wide range of complex implications for the paraphilic, for the individual's immediate social contacts, and for society in general. The most direct impact that immersion in online paraphilic communities may have on the lives of paraphilics is the development of problematic online behavior patterns. The online world becomes a safe-haven for individuals whose sexuality has been implicitly, if not explicitly, rejected on countless occasions over their life course. A feeling of online refuge can easily be deduced from use of terms like "home" or "family" that appear ubiquitously in opening statements and posts by individuals in these groups. The allure of this virtual, albeit psychologically real, safe-haven is antithetical to offline rejection by mainstream society, resulting in an online world which is much more rewarding and secure.

Given the rift between rejection offline and acceptance online, paraphilics may spend much time and energy online, resulting in their being less capable of dealing with the "real world" and its demands. Cooper, McLoughlin and Campbell (2000, p. 525) write:

[The Internet] can pose a particular hazard for those users whose sexuality may have been suppressed and limited all their lives when they suddenly find an infinite supply of sexual opportunities. Individuals may enthusiastically embrace the opportunities provided by the Internet without considering the possible dangers associated with it.

Conversely, one might argue that in light of the paraphilics' social dilemma, a more lenient approach is warranted. Ross and Kauth (2002) point out that statistically abnormal involvement with the online world may have an adaptive function in some individuals' lives, especially if they are members of sexual minorities.

Immersion in the online community may alleviate much of the debilitating loneliness and lack of social support that paraphilics experience. Weinberg, Williams and Calhan (1995) found that clinical symptomology usually associated with paraphilic sexuality, was only prevalent among those participants for whom "Social isolation played some roles in the development of their fetish interests and continues to play a role in the unsatisfactory integration of these interests into their current lives." (p. 27). This and other studies (e.g., Chalkley & Powell, 1983) lend support to the suggestion that the newly found sense of belonging and empowerment found online may facilitate a decline in paraphilia related symptomology such as sexual compulsion, self-hatred (Levine, Risen & Althof, 1990), and depression (APA, 1994).

Alleviation of paraphilia-related symptomology does not come without a price. As previously suggested, these individuals' offline functioning may directly suffer from immersion in the online world. In addition, the development of a greater sense of self-acceptance diminishes the chances that these individuals would seek professional help, which could potentially enable them to develop more adaptive sexual and social behavioral patterns (Coleman, 1995). However, even without this online influence, research established that only a minority of paraphilics seeks professional help (Weinberg, Williams & Calhan, 1995; Chalkley & Powell, 1983). Now, with the advent of the Internet, these numbers may further decrease.

A greater sense of self-acceptance and empowerment may also drive these individuals to integrate their identity, "coming out" with their abnormal sexuality offline too, thus creating an "alternative lifestyle" (Palandri & Green, 2000). This newly empowered sexual self is sure to collide with the mores of offline society, and hence, with people close to the paraphilics in their offline lives. Serious conflicts between couples, for instance, may result from discovery of such paraphilic interests (Newman, 1997).

On the macro level, the creation of self-perceived legitimate paraphilic "alternative-lifestyles" poses a serious challenge to society's ability to restrain and control unacceptable sexual behaviors, where society deems such control necessary. As described earlier, the process of paraphilic empowerment entails breaking away from the sexual value

system maintained by mainstream society, often re-labeling it as arbitrary, anachronistic and hence, illegitimate. A study comparing data from pedophiles' offline writings with that obtained from an online pedophilic discussion group (alt.boy-lovers newsgroup) demonstrated the process of re-labeling this objectionable sexuality. While offline data comprised solely of excuses for pedophilic behavior, arguing for diminished responsibility for the offensive behavior, online data were dominated by justifications of the behavior, claiming pedophilia is a valid and positive sexual variant (Durkin & Bryant, 1999). In light of this, the researchers urged banning pedophiles from Internet use, whenever possible.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Through our discussion, we have completed a full circle. The predicaments encountered by paraphilic individuals offline push them online, where they can utilize all the benefits the Internet has to offer, as presented by pull factor models. Once online, a radically different social climate may exert a dramatic influence on the self and behavior of the paraphilic individual, both online and offline. A systematic investigation of paraphilic communities online, and the identity dynamics of paraphilic individuals who are members in these communities is now underway.

Another area that warrants scientific attention is the role women play in some of the paraphilic communities online. Contrary to conventional clinical wisdom, contending that paraphilic individuals are almost inevitably men (e.g., Chalkley & Powell, 1983) many central OCMB contributors are women (e.g., R, quoted earlier). The position of these "Crushbabes" in the online community deserves close attention.

REFERENCES

- American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition*, Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association.
- Bat-Chava, Y. (1994). Group identification and self-esteem of deaf adults. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 494-502.
- Blanton, H. & Crocker, J. (1999). Social inequality and self-esteem: The moderating effects of social comparison, legitimacy, and contingencies of self-esteem. In T. R.

- Tyler, R. M. Kramer & O. P. John (Eds.). *The Psychology of the Social Self*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 171-191.
- Chalkley, A. J. & Powell, G. E. (1983) The clinical description of forty-eight cases of sexual fetishism. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 142, 292-295.
- Coleman, E. (1995). Treatment of compulsive sexual behavior. In R. C. Rosen & S. R. Leiblum (Eds.) *Case Studies in Sex therapy*. New York: Guilford Press. 333-349.
- Cooper, A., McLoughlin, I. P. & Campbell, K. M. (2000). Sexuality in Cyberspace: Update for the 21st Century. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 3, 521-536.
- Cooper, A., Putnam, D. E., Planchon, L. A. & Boies, S. C. (2001). Online sexual compulsivity: Getting tangled in the Net. <http://www.sex-centre.com/SexualCompulsivity/OnlineSexualCompulsivity.htm>.
- Cooper, A., Safir, M. P., Rosenmann, A. Schehr, T. & McLoughlin, I. (2003, submitted for press). Workplace worries: A first look at online sexual activities at the office. Cybertipline. (2003). http://www.missingkids.com/cybertip/ncmec_default_cybertipline.htm
- Durkin, K. F. & Bryant, C. D. (1999). Propagandizing pederasty: A thematic analysis of the in-line exculpatory accounts of unrepentant pedophiles. *Deviant Behavior*, 20, 103-127.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2003). Innocent Images Operation Candyman. <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/candyman/candymanhome.htm>.
- Frable, D. E. S., Blackstone, T. & Scherbaum, C. (1990). Marginal and mindful: Deviants in social interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 140-149.
- Gonsiorek, J. C. (1995). Gay male identities: Concepts and issues. in A. R. D'Augelli & C. J. Patterson (Eds.). *Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Identities Over the Lifespan*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 24-48.
- Haidt, J., Koller, S. H. & Dias, M. G. (1993). Affect, culture, and morality, or is it wrong to eat you dog? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 613-628.
- Hamman, R. (1996). Cyborgasms: Cybersex amongst multiple-selves and cyborgs in the narrow-bandwidth space of America Online chat rooms. <http://www.socio.demon.co.uk/Cyborgasms.html>.
- Kraut, R., Bruckman, A., Cohen, J., Couper, M., Olson, J. & Banaji, M. (2004). Psychological research online: opportunities and challenges: A report by the BSA Advisory Group on Conducting Research on the Internet. <http://www.apa.org/science/apainternetresearch.pdf>.
- Levine, S. B., Risen, C. B. & Althof, S. E. (1990). Essay on the diagnosis and nature of paraphilia. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 16, 89-102.
- McCabe, K. A. (2000). Child pornography and the Internet. *Social Science Computer Review*, 18, 73-76.
- McKenna, K. Y. A. & Bargh, J. A. (1998). Coming out in the age of the Internet: Identity "Demarginalization" through virtual group participation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75, 681-694.
- Newman, B. (1997). The use of online services to encourage exploration of ego-dystonic sexual interests. *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy*, 22, 45-48.
- Official Crush Message Board. (2004). <http://www.ocmb.org>.

- Palandri, M. & Green, L. (2000). Image management in a Bondage, Discipline, Sado-masochist subculture: A Cyber-Ethnographic study. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 3, 631-641.
- Peters, A. J. (1997). Themes in group work with lesbian and gay adolescents. *Social Work with Groups*, 20, 51-69.
- Ross, M. W. & Kauth, M. R. (2002). Men who have sex with men and the Internet: Emerging clinical issues and their management. in A. Cooper (Ed.), *Sex and the Internet: A Guidebook for Clinicians*. Brunner-Routledge. pp: 47-70.
- The Anti-Pedophilia Webring. (2003). <http://j.webring.com/hub?ring=stoppedos&id=3&hub>.
- Websense. (2002). Internet Misuse in the News. <http://www.websense.com/company/news/features/index.cfm>.
- Weinberg, M. S., Williams, C. J. & Calhan, C. (1995). "If the shoe fits . . .": Exploring male homosexual foot fetishism. *Journal of Sex Research*, 32, 17-27.
- Young, K. S., Griffin-Shelley, E., Cooper, A, O'Mara, J. & Buchanan, J. (2000). On-line infidelity: A new dimension in couple relationship with implications for evaluation and therapy. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 7, 59-74.

doi:10.1300/J082v51n03_05

APPENDIX A

OCMB Policy Statement

(<http://www.ocmb.org/misc.php?s=&action=faq&page=4>; 6.4.04)

BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. By holding an account at this message board, you are agreeing that you meet *all* of the following conditions:
 - Are at least 18 years of age, or whatever age you need to be in your state/province to view adult material legally.
 - Do not find adult material objectionable, anti-social or unacceptable in *any* way.
 - Accept that the nature of the material inside can be sensitive and controversial in places.
 - Are not here on behalf of, or under the direction of any law enforcement agency worldwide.
 - Are not here with the intent to cause trouble or behave in an anti-social or otherwise destructive manner.
2. If you do *not* meet any one of, some of, or all of these conditions, then you are *not* permitted to hold or use an account at this message board.
3. The rules stated below are a *compulsory requirement of your membership* at ocmb.org. They have been brought into force through the wishes of the *majority* of members as this message board and so long as this *majority* wishes, they will remain in place. The administration at ocmb.org reserves the right to append to, and/or alter these rulings as they see fit; you will be told of any such additions and/or alterations if and when they are made. It is *not* the place of the administration to bring these rules to your attention, it is *your* place to read them and respect them as a member of this message board. Nor is it *our fault* if any disciplinary action is taken against your account through you *violating* these rules, it is *yours* for breaking them. These rules explain for the most part what the majority of you will probably think of as being common sense, and for the most part, they will keep a flame free and pleasant environment in which we can all enjoy our fetishes. *If you do not agree to adhere to these rules, then you should not sign up for an account at this message board.*

OCMB.ORG TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. In public areas of the message board, hardcore crush material is not allowed; any such content will be either deleted or moved at the modera-

tor's discretion. Post only insect crush, food crush and object crush. Anything above that is forbidden.

2. Copyright for Members—A “reasonable” amount of paysite material may be posted to the forums at a “reasonable” frequency for the sake of promotion, unless they are produced by one or more of the producers stated in the following table, in which case absolutely no material may be posted, whether with or without the consent of the producer in question (see clause 2e). This is a three strikes and your out ruling; violate it three times and you get banned, without exception . . .

LIST OF CENSORED WEBSITES
<i>Crush-Fetish.com (Stomp Productions)</i>
<i>mastersofcrushing.com</i>
<i>Website/Producer Name Here</i>
<i>Website/Producer Name Here</i>

- 2a. *Copyright for Members*: Passwords to paysites are not to be posted to nor exchanged by way of this message board, this is a three strikes and you're out ruling—violate it three times and you get banned, without exception . . .
- 2b. *Copyright for Members*: If you wish to link to material elsewhere online, then by doing so, you confirm that to the best of your knowledge, the location to which you are diverting traffic conforms to the conditions laid out in clause 2. This is a three strikes and you're out ruling; violate it three times and you get banned, without exception . . .
- 2c. *Copyright for Webmasters*: If you find your material present on the board, that is, a clip/image posted directly to the message board, that you do not want here, then you are to contact the administration of this board at admin@ocmb.org and tell us, we will then “expeditiously” remove the material, and your name will be added to the list earlier and covered by clause 2. You will neither strike out, nor will you create conflict upon the message board itself; copyright is an extremely professional issue, that will be handled professionally on this message board, if it's to be handled on this message board at all. This is a three strikes and you're out ruling; violate it three times and you get banned, without exception . . .
- 2d. *Copyright for Webmasters*: Copyright issues that do not concern this message board, that is, if no links to your material, or material itself is posted to this board, any copyright infringement issues should be directed towards the administrator of the location at which distribution is occurring and not via the message board; outbreaks upon this message board concerning material that has frankly nothing whatsoever to do with this message board will not occur. This is a three strikes and you're out ruling; violate it three times and you get banned, without exception . . .

- 2e. *Copyright for Webmasters:* We are not a commercial playground, if you do wish your presence censored from the message board for promotional purposes, and simply wish to advertise here, then for community purposes, following your censorship, any advert posts made on the message board by your site or any agent acting on behalf of your site, will be moved to the Web Reviews and Updates forum without warning, any posts within which the promotion of your material occurs will be subject to clause 2. If you do wish to continue holding a membership here for commercial reasons only, and wish to be exempted from clause 2e, then you may contact us and we shall agree on a reasonable price for the level of advertising that you require.
3. You will not flame your fellow members or the Administration of the board in the forums for any reasons. Any flames should be carried out either by Private Message or in the Flame pit. We will frown duly upon any flames that alienate a mass group of the message board, including but not limited to racial flames. We will also frown duly upon rash unfounded statements posted to the forums concerning member's identities, or sincerity. Any concerns to this effect, should be sent to a Moderator or Administrator via Private Message.
4. In private areas of the message board, hardcore crush images/video clips up to mouse crush is allowed, but not beyond. Although, the discussion (text based) of harder crush and links to such crush outside the message board is permitted, we cannot claim responsibility for the areas in question.
Exceptions are as follows . . .
 Roadkill images in the car crush forum are permitted, but common sense should be kept in mind. NO HUMAN ROAD KILL, we are not a rotten.com replica.
Note: Road kill is "not" classified as a woman running over an animal in her car while posing for the camera.
5. In the GTS forum, faked human crush is permitted, but no real human crush may be posted; we are not a rotten.com replica.
6. The flame pit forum isn't moderated, we will only intervene if there is something posted in there that is extremely out of order. Such as something that threatens the board's reputation or existence, or something that places any member of the board at risk.
Note: Any posting of people's personal details in flame wars will result in your genitalia being ripped out, fed to you on a spoon made of barbed wire and then yanked out of your stomach with a hooked fork through the tip of your left big toe. Any suggestions of such tactics will result in the Administration of The Official Crush Message Board sharpening their knives in anticipation. You get the idea of course (evilgrin). Oh and you'll never feel safe online again . . .

7. Please try to combine multiple posts into a single thread where possible. Do not post several threads containing one image each, start 1 thread and then post several replies to that thread.
8. Before members can be granted access to a Private forum, they must have made at least 40 posts in which we can get to know them, and they must've been active for at least 1 month, or they must be a recognized, long standing, contributing member of the community, or they must've been vouched for by a very trusted member.
- 8a. Paying members do not automatically receive access to the private areas of the message board, nor will they ever; at no point do we state in the package details that private access is inclusive. It is your responsibility to read these rules before signing up in ere and assumption of this. We will only refund if you discover that you do not want the membership based on this restriction within 7 days, beyond 7 days, we will not refund, no exceptions . . .
- 8b. Any members with access to private forums, must post periodically on the board. If such members go dead for weeks on end, then they risk having their private access revoked. Special exceptions will be made for members of the board who have put a lot into it.
9. Please try to keep your posts on topic, for the forum that they are posted in. That is, don't post a joke in the Official crush forum, and an insect crush image in the Jokes forum.
10. Members who only wish to advertise on this message board and do not wish to post or join in or contribute, should advertise in the Web Reviews and Updated forum. Adverts by such members will be moved to the forum in question if they do not abide by this condition, repeated violation of this condition, will result in that member's account being frozen. Note that any advert posts in which illegal site content is advertised will be deleted immediately and the member in question will be cautioned and then banned if the caution is ignored, such material includes but makes no limit to Child Pornography. If we have sufficient evidence with which to identify you, we may also at our discretion forward our data to the relevant legal authorities.
11. If you view an older topic on a later page in a forum and wish to reply to it, then please make sure that you have something worthwhile to contribute to the discussion. We welcome responses to older topics fully if the content of the response is genuinely for the sake of subject in question. But will frown duly upon those who simply respond needlessly to such a topic (see rule 13 immediately).
12. The granting of the ability to download attachments is based on contribution. If you have under 50 posts, then do not contact us and ask for download privileges, if you have between 50 and 100 posts, and you ask, then we will assess your posting activity and decide whether or not you can download based on that, but expect that we "might" say no. If you

have over 100 posts, then we will assess your posting activity and decide whether or not you can download based on that. We will rarely say no unless you have spammed the board in order to obtain your 100 posts, in which case, see rule 13 below. If you are a paying member, then you will be able to download attachments up to the designated size in your package right away, there are no delays or qualification periods imposed.

13. Members who spam the forum: that is, post very short, clearly insincere messages to the board solely to obtain a required number of posts with which to request access to a private forum, or to download attachments or to otherwise obtain a privilege, will be banned without warning, all of your posts will be deleted, your account will be closed and you'll receive no notice of this . . . You have been warned, don't try us . . .

These rules for the most part will help to sustain an ordered atmosphere in which we can all enjoy our fetish in peace. Please read them and listen to them.

Thank you for your notice.
Admin.

APPENDIX B

OCMB, Forum Archives, "Are you ????????", complete cited posts.

User name signified by initials

([http://www.ocmb.org/showthread.php?s=&threadid=23472
&goto=nextoldest](http://www.ocmb.org/showthread.php?s=&threadid=23472&goto=nextoldest); 6.4.04)

J-Moderator (Foot/Shoe forum)

Are you ????????

What are you doing to leave your mark in this community?

Are you one that hopes to be a well known member here some day?

Are you just drifting along just getting what you can from here?

I remember when I first found crush on the web

Man was I excited to see a website that had material on it about crush!

I couldn't believe there were others out here on the net with the same interests as I had.

I remember looking through yahoo search engin for porn and decided to type in crushing with high heels

I sifted through alot of garbage and there it was!

I believe I had the OCMB when it was on ez boards and a couple of clubs one ran by the one and only "D" Ha ha yea buddy I was your biggest leecher

I came on ocmb as a lurker because I could find some nice urls and people posting briefcases of crush pics and clips . . . man what a treat

sometimes you could get lucky and find some cases that still had clips in them

I lurked on for about a year and ahalf and found the new ocmb here

For those who lurk about the board . . . join in and share with us . . . you mite just be the next "C" just waiting to be molded

Members here need to post and reply to anything others are willing to share

after all if nobody was nice enough to share then there wouldn't be a board here

I never had any ideal I would come to this board and make so many nice friends

I sure never dreamed of being a mod here!

I want to thank everyone here . . . from the top of the list to the newest member here for making time to share your stories or clips, pic, or imput on this board

you all make this board the best board anywhere to be found on the net!!!

Before I go from here I want to leave a mark on the crush community

I hope someday . . . years from now I would be remembered here
 Leave a mark on this community . . . help make it the best it can be
 January 22, 2003 03:33 AM

P–Story Master

In many ways I felt the same about crush on the internet, and especially when I found the OCMB, “J.”

First amazed by finding a lot about just by typing crush related words, and finding the OCMB was absolutelt great. It was by a link in Creative Feet that I found this place.

Creative Feet had a few great stories and the were all from the OCMB, I couldn't believe my eyes when I came here I've been lurking this board for about half a year and I knew I had to join in someday, but did not have the courage. I'm glad that I finally did it and had great fun here and it is also a interesting place where you can learn something about our fetish, or just discuss about the many different parts of it.

It's great to be in touch with many people who feel basically the same about seeing beautiful women stepping on an insect, in fact a daily and very common thing to happen for most people.

I like to read the post and also like to tell my stories, or ask a question, share an interesting lnk, etc. That's the reason why I'm here, not to leave a mark, but I think you do anyway when participating in this board. And it is always nice to hear some feedback about your post To know if people liked it or have something to add to it, etc.

January 22, 2003 11:24 PM

A–Registered Crush Fan

Hmmm . . . Forums aren't new to me . . . This Forum and topic is-meaning shareing[v3] with other people . . . Normally I keep to myself and my barely tolerent girlfriend(she hates my fetish's) . . . Having had this fetish since I was old enough to speak (I don't know why or how), I'm used to being a silent observer . . . Hell, I've never met/spoken with anybody face to face who had any like to this kind of sexuality, much less a FEMALE . . . WHOO . . . I thought I was destined to a lonely extension of my personality . . . Maybe this forum will help me change that ... I'm both happy and sad . . .

January 23, 2003 12:47 AM

R–Crushbabe (moderator)

Good question “J.” . . . did someone help you with it. . . . lol Just Kidding. Seriously though, I have no idea what my “mark” is. I know that I have made great friends here. I cherish those friendships!!!! I have posted stories and __

has posted clips. We do that for the people that are not as lucky as we are. We have the luxury of living out the fetish with our loved ones. But I still say that the most important thing to me is the friendships I have formed here. I have gotten to know some really great people.

Maybe that is the “mark” we all leave. Friendship, acceptance and loyalty.

R January 23, 2003 02:52 AM

APPENDIX C

Proud to Love 2001

(<http://www.boybliss.net/cgi-bin/ultimatebb.cgi>; July 15, 2002)

Updated March 17, 2002

Proud To Love promotes the belief that, “No one should be discriminated against because of their attraction to boys.”

I am using the term “boy-lover” and “men who are attracted to boys” interchangeably. The kind of prejudice and discrimination I am talking about is the kind of prejudice and discrimination that those who are gay and lesbian have historically faced for years because of their sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation is based on attraction, not behavior.

Discrimination based on sexual attraction can cause depression and a lack of self-esteem? In the recent article “Can discrimination cause mental illness?” by Randy Dotinga-November 9, 2001. On Planet Out, this is clearly documented.

If depression and low self-esteem can result from discrimination in gays and lesbians think of what it is doing to men who are attracted to boys. We are even more stigmatized.

Many adult males have feelings of love, affection, and a desire to both mentor and nurture adolescent and pre-pubescent boys. It’s the sexual aspect of our fantasies and attraction that makes boy-lovers unique.

There is no proof, however, that most boy-lovers are sexual with boys. We are well aware of the law, the penalties for violating age-of-consent laws, and although we hold a variety of beliefs regarding adult/child sexual expression, most of us do not break the law.

The most common reason most people discriminate against boy-lovers is because the religious right has promoted such discrimination and prejudice. Many segments of the Christian right do not distinguish between attraction and behavior. For example, the religious right condemns lesbians and gays because of their sexual orientation [meaning attraction]. Many fundamentalist

Christians view boy-lovers as gay, and this is part of why we are being stigmatized by the religious right.

In 1976 Anita Bryant began her "Save Our Children" campaign in order to discredit the gay community. In response the gay community began to distance itself from boy-lovers in order to sanitize their image. We believe this was wrong.

It is important that people distinguish between behavior, and attraction. Adult/child sexual behavior is illegal. Being "attracted" to boys is legal, and men who are attracted to boys should not be treated like criminals. Treating men who are attracted to boys like criminals is the same as racial profiling. In one instance the basis is skin color. In the other instance the issue is desire and fantasy.

The question of whether it is or is not harmful for adults and children to be sexual is a separate issue from discrimination based on "attraction." This website does not deal with that issue.

Web sites relating to the above statements can be found in the links portion of this web site.