

To the inquiry into the harm done to children by internet pornography,

I begin my submission by noting that recent improvements to electronic communications technology have also greatly facilitated easy access to pornography. And to the detriment of future generations we have, as yet, done very little to mitigate this.

Children in their formative years are particularly at risk from pornography, with a recent UK survey of 18 year olds finding that eight out of 10 say it is too easy for young people to accidentally see pornography online, and seven out of 10 saying accessing pornography led to unrealistic attitudes to sex and had a damaging impact on their view of sex and relationships (<http://www.ippr.org/publications/young-people-sex-and-relationships-the-new-norms>).

Furthermore, this problem is exacerbated by the dramatic and ongoing rise in smartphone use, even amongst very young children. With smartphones, access to pornography is available anytime and anywhere. Is it any wonder that pornography addiction and its effect on relationships is becoming a growing problem? (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/car.1092/abstract>)

The terrible thing is that there is often little parents can do to protect their children. Parents can install their own filters on devices they own, but inevitably some of their children's friends at school will download porn and show it to them.

What is needed is ISP filtering of all pornography unless an adult explicitly opts out. This is not a perfect solution, but it will go a long way to protect children and is the means favoured in the UK (<http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2015-10/28/cameron-porn-filter-law-net-neutrality>). I hope the committee will endorse the UK's lead and recommend the same filtering scheme here.

Yours faithfully,