

**Your child is at great risk!**

# Just 1 Click Away



a Josh McDowell Position Paper

# An Insidious Intruder is Out to Destroy Your Children's Faith & Morals

by Josh D. McDowell

**H**ow concerned would you be if a stranger were slipping into your child's bedroom each evening? What if the purpose of the intruder were to fill your child's mind and heart with destructive teachings and pornographic images of the vilest nature? You would obviously be alarmed and would do whatever it took to seize the "criminal" and see that the person was apprehended and prosecuted.

I am here to tell you that right now an intruder **IS** putting your children at risk. It is systematically stalking your children, and sadly, most parents and Christian leaders are oblivious to it. What I'm about to share and fully document will no doubt strike fear in your heart...and it should.

Studies have shown the number one fear among Christian parents and Christian leaders is that a secular worldview and sexual immorality will somehow capture the hearts and minds of their kids. To address that fear, parents have helped open up and develop more Christian schools and formed more networks to homeschool their children than ever before. Many have sent their kids off to Christian summer camps, and a good number of these families have started attending megachurches (with top rated youth programs in unprecedented numbers) to counteract this threat.

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However, these positive steps may have actually caused many parents and educators to drop their guard. It would be natural to assume that kids are largely insulated from the influences of a corrupt culture if they live in a Christian home, are involved in church, Christian education, and Christian activities. But the grim reality is that our kids are far more exposed today than kids were only ten years ago. The reason for this is because right now we are in the midst of a social media revolution that is allowing a corrupt and perverted morality to have direct access to our children.

## The Social Media Revolution

The culture influenced the previous generation through various mediums such as radio, TV, videos, magazines, etc. If a parent monitored what his or her child listened to, watched, and read, there was somewhat of an assurance a child could be insulated from the negative effects of a destructive culture. However, today's social media revolution has changed everything. The cultural intruder today has ready access to our children through channels that barely existed a decade ago. For example, compare our media growth (general U.S. population) over the last decade.

In 2000	In 2010
• Spent 2.7 hours per week online	• Spent 18 hours per week online
• 100 million daily Google searches	• 2 billion daily Google searches
• 12 billion emails sent daily	• 247 billion emails sent daily
• 12,000 active blogs	• 141 million active blogs
• 0 iTunes downloads	• 10 billion iTunes downloads <sup>1</sup>
• 0 tweets on Twitter	• 25 billion tweets on Twitter
• 0 YouTube videos seen daily	• 2 billion YouTube videos seen daily
• 0 hours of YouTube videos uploaded every minute	• 35 hours of YouTube videos uploaded every minute

In 2000	In 2010
• 0 people on Facebook	• Over 600 million people on Facebook <sup>2</sup>
• 0 articles on Wikipedia in English	• Over 3.6 million articles on Wikipedia in English <sup>3</sup>

More than 250 million new people were added to Facebook in 2010, with 30 billion pieces of content shared each month.<sup>4</sup> By mid-2011, Facebook grew to over 750 million members. If Facebook were a country, it would have the world's third largest population.

Approximately 20 million minors are on Facebook. Seven-and-a-half million are younger than 13-years-old, and five million are younger than 10 years old.<sup>5</sup> Facebook will reach 90% of all social network users and 57.1% of all the U.S. Internet users. By 2013, 62% of web users and half of the U.S. population will be on Facebook.<sup>6</sup>

If Wikipedia were made into a book, its 19,000,000 articles would take over 118,750 days to read which is equal to 325 years.<sup>7</sup>

eMarketer estimates that “nearly 12 million children under 12 will be online video viewers in 2011.” The estimate is 70% by 2015.<sup>8</sup> According to *Harris Interactive*, in 2010, children under 12 years old who spent at least one hour a day online increased from 61% to 76%.<sup>9</sup>

Kids have gone digital. The internet has surpassed TV as their media choice. It is estimated by eMarketer that 40% of all U.S. children under 12 will go online monthly. Nearly half will do so by 2015.<sup>10</sup>

The following will help you to understand the global saturation of the Internet and Facebook. I was recently in Beirut, Lebanon, and had the opportunity to speak at a school to 500 13- to 15-year-olds. I asked them the following questions: “How many of you here are NOT on Facebook?” Not one hand went up. “How many of you have NEVER done a search on the Internet?” Again, not one hand went up. “How many of you have NEVER downloaded something from the Internet?”

Still, not one hand went up.

Within 10 minutes of leaving the school, I received 15 tweets from students. And that was in Lebanon!!

The world has changed how we communicate information, and our children are actively engaged in it. Today, kindergarteners are learning on iPads, not chalkboards. Eighteen percent of Facebook users and 33% of MySpace users are children under the age of 17.<sup>11</sup> What young person today doesn't use the Internet?

A survey by the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that 96% of those they interviewed had Internet access and used social networking technologies like text messaging, chat, blogging, online communities, etc.<sup>12</sup> It has been said that kids are "natives" when it comes to the Internet and adults are "immigrants."

This, of course, is not bad in and of itself. The social media revolution is connecting us in positive ways never before imagined 10-20 years ago. The digital age has become part of young people's everyday lives. Yet there is an alarming downside to the instant accessibility this culture has to our children.

A decade ago, atheists and agnostics had little access to our kids. If they wrote a book, few read it. If they gave a talk, hardly anyone listened. It was basically when our young people went off to a university that they

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were exposed to a secular worldview. Not anymore! It is now **JUST 1 CLICK AWAY**. The social media revolution has completely leveled the playing field, which has enabled the culture to spread what I call a destructive **intrusive immorality** directly to our children.

## Intrusive Immorality

As parents and Christian leaders, we want our young people to embrace a biblical sexual morality. Just 10-15 years ago, we (as parents, pastors, or educators) had a good measure of control over what type of things our young people saw or heard that shaped their sexual morality. We could say, "We don't watch those kinds of TV programs in our home; nor do we read those types of books." There were certain controls we could put in place to insulate our children from damaging influences. When our children wanted to visit neighbors or friends, we tried to limit it to people with our same convictions. But today we have, by and large, lost control of the controls. That is because an intrusive immorality is **just 1 click away** from our children.

With just one keystroke on a smartphone, iPad, or laptop, your child can open up some of the worst pornography and sexually graphic content you can imagine. Just a few decades ago pornographic magazines were sold behind store counters and placed in paper bags. Most adult men didn't even want to be seen carrying a porn magazine out of a store. Today pornography is available to anyone, and it is **just 1 click away!**

Out of 2.2 billion Internet users, an estimated 42.7% view porn.<sup>13</sup> A study has shown that "70% of 18-to-24-year-old men visit pornographic sites in a typical month."<sup>14</sup> Of 8-to-16-year-olds, 90% have viewed porn online (most while doing homework).<sup>15</sup> Of 15-to-17-year-olds, 80% have viewed multiple hardcore porn exposures.<sup>16</sup>

The number one search term used on the web's search engine sites is "sex."<sup>17</sup> There are 4.2 million pornographic sites<sup>18</sup> in the world with over 420 million web pages of porn for anyone to view anytime they want to view it—and that includes our children.<sup>19</sup> It all is **just 1 click away**. It would take someone 2,687,500 days which equals 7,358 years to read all those pages!

Twenty-five percent of all daily search engine requests, which amounts to 68 million requests, are for porn. There are 2.5 billion pornographic emails circulated every day with 116,000 of them as child pornography requests.<sup>20</sup> There are over 100,000 websites offering illegal child pornography.<sup>21</sup> It is reported that in 2006, the porn industry revenues were at \$13.3 billion in the United States and \$97 billion worldwide.<sup>22</sup>

Consider this sobering fact: The pornography industry revenues are larger than the total combined revenues of... "Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple, Netflix, and EarthLink."<sup>23</sup> The Internet and the media are now the most prevalent means of distributing pornography around the world, with 72 million visitors to web-based porn sites per month.<sup>24</sup> A report by NBC news (United Airlines video, August 29, 2011) says that more than 50% of all access to the Internet is now on "handheld" devices (not computers).

## But Can They Really Be Reaching My Child?

There is absolutely no question that immoral sexual content is reaching many of our children. According to research from Family Safe Media, the average age of the first Internet exposure to pornography is 11 years old.<sup>25</sup> (Some studies say eight-and-a-half years old).<sup>26</sup> Intrusive immorality is **just 1 click away** from your child.

A 2009 survey of 29,000 North American university students confirmed that 51% of males and 32% of females first viewed pornography before their teenage years.<sup>27</sup> *The Nature and Dynamics of Internet Pornography Exposures for Youth* reports that 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to Internet porn before they are 18 years old. Eighty-three percent of boys and 57% of girls have seen group sex. Sixty-nine percent of boys and 55% of girls have viewed same-sex intercourse. Thirty-nine percent of boys and 23% of girls have been exposed to sexual acts depicting bondage.<sup>28</sup>

According to a study cited in the *Washington Post*, more than 11 million teenagers view Internet porn on a regular basis.<sup>29</sup> A **Focus on the Family** poll revealed that 47% of families said that pornography is a problem in their home.<sup>30</sup> These were largely Christian families responding to the poll.

This is particularly troublesome when most of our young people see little or no problem with viewing pornography! Overall, studies show that 67% of young men and 49% of young women 18-26 years of age consider viewing pornography as acceptable behavior.<sup>31</sup> Intrusive immorality is clearly shaping the sexual values, not only of an entire generation, but also of our young children.

The Department of Justice warns that "*never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States has so much indecent (and obscene) material been so easily accessible by so many minors in so many American homes with so few restrictions.*"<sup>32</sup>

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Of course, as a concerned parent, you no doubt warn your children and teens to stay away from “sex sites.” You may even install Internet filtering and monitoring software on your computers, as you should.

Yet what happens when your young people visit with their friends, and they turn on their cell phones? Do the parents of your children’s friends have sexually explicit material blocked from all their electronic devices? The problem is that sexually-oriented and perverted material through cyberspace is everywhere, and it is difficult to avoid, even when you try to block it.

More than 1.5 billion pornographic P2P (peer-to-peer) downloads occur each month,<sup>33</sup> and most are not detected by “family filters.” (Peer-to-peer is from one computer directly to another computer.) An entire pornographic video can be downloaded by a child, often without detection by parents.

Tragically, many parents are in denial and question if pornography is really harmful or that accessible. They ask, “What harm can it do?” Recently, a Christian tweeted me in response to the statistics in this article and said, “What does it matter what our kids see...our Gospel of Christ is compelling...why do you fear the Internet?”

## How Harmful is an Intrusive Immorality?

Many studies have documented the adverse effects pornography has on an individual. In 2005, Dr. Jill Manning, author of *What’s the Big Deal about Pornography?* testified before a U.S. Senate sub-committee on the harms of pornography. There she cited numerous effects that have been documented on children and adolescents when directly exposed to pornography. Some of the effects include:

- Lasting negative or traumatic emotional responses
- Earlier onset of first sexual involvement
- Increased risk for developing sexual compulsion and addictive behavior
- Increased risk of gaining an incorrect and out-of-context view of sex
- The objectification of another human being for selfish sexual gratification<sup>34</sup>

Granted, all these negative effects may not be caused by casual or intermittent exposure to pornography. However, the real danger is in the massive amount of sexually perverted material that is available, and the reality, that for your child, it is **just 1 click away**. The sheer over-exposure, no matter how infrequent, tends to desensitize a young person. Rather than gaining a correct biblical view of sexual morality, young people will tend to think everyone is doing whatever they want sexually. This is clearly the impression given through cyberspace.

Do you realize that 4 out of 10 teens are posting sexually suggestive messages? But another 39% of teen boys and 38% of teen girls say they have had sexually suggestive text messages or emails—originally meant for someone else—shared with them.<sup>35</sup> It, no doubt, seems to our kids that the entire world around them, including their peers, is into premarital sex. We, of course, know that not everyone is “doing it,” yet our kids’ perception becomes their reality.

The irony is that many Christian adults tend to think none of their kids are involved sexually, while their own kids think everyone else is “doing it.” This irony is also pervasive.

Recently, I did a two-hour seminar on *The Bare Facts: The Truth about*

*Sex, Love and Relationships* at an evangelical organization staff conference. At an afternoon session, 1,800 people showed up with their kids. In the next three days, ten different staff members told me that one of their children (all under the age of 14), had confessed to them that they were addicted to pornography on the Internet. Each parent expressed amazement and never suspected a thing.

A few years ago, I was invited to speak on sex and relationships at one of the largest and most prestigious evangelical Christian schools in North America. They appreciated that I came to speak on that subject, but they made the following request:

“We don’t want you to mention anything about oral sex,” they said, “because we don’t have that problem here. And if you mention it, our kids will simply start thinking about it and want to do it.”

I thought their request was absurd and naive, but out of respect, I honored it. The moment I finished speaking, dozens of kids crowded around me to ask questions. Nearly every question was about oral sex. “Is it sex?” “Is it wrong?” “Can you get a STD from doing it?” etc.

I wished the school headmaster had been standing there to hear his students. As I walked outside, three guys and two girls, all sophomores, approached me and asked, “Why didn’t you talk about oral sex?”

**“We don’t have that kind of problem here.” The disconnect between what many parents and Christian leaders believe their young people are doing, and what kids are actually doing is often worlds apart.**

I made an excuse and avoided telling them that I was asked not to talk on the subject. Instead, I asked them, “Why? Is oral sex a problem here?” And they said, “No, not really.” I replied, “That’s good,” to which they responded, “No, it’s not a problem for kids to do, because everyone is doing it” (which was a slight exaggeration).

I asked them to explain. “Well,” they stated, “at our [Christian] school when a guy wants oral sex, he walks up to a girl and says, “Would you like a taco?” That was their code word for oral sex. They went on to explain, “If she agrees, they go into some room right here at school and perform oral sex. But then the boy is obligated after school to take the girl to Taco Bell to buy her a taco.”

According to these kids, oral sex was commonplace. According to the school leadership, “We don’t have that kind of problem here.” The disconnect between what many parents and Christian leaders believe their young people are doing, and what kids are actually doing is often worlds apart. Sure, we don’t want to think our sons and daughters are engaging in oral sex. But we must realize that in **just 1 click**, the culture is encouraging our kids with sexual immorality from every side.

Premarital sex is acceptable in our culture, as long as it is done responsibly—meaning avoid STDs and unwanted pregnancy. “Oral sex” is the cultural answer to “responsible sex.” Oral sex is becoming acceptable behavior to many of our kids. Yet, as a church, we don’t want to face up to it.

The mother of a 12-year-old recently visited school to have lunch with her child. To her amazement, the conversation around the table of her child’s friends was “oral sex.” (September 8, 2011)

Last summer I spoke to adults at a Midwestern summer camp on how to talk to your child about sex.

I urged parents to start talking when their kids are 9-10 years of age. I referenced the fact that even 10- to 11-year-olds are beginning to explore oral sex.

Again, I received objections from the camp leadership for dealing with the subject so openly with the parents. And again, the reason was the same—they assured me that oral sex wasn't a problem with their Christian families, and if parents bring it up to their kids, then their kids will start thinking about it.

Right after I was reprimanded for my frankness, two women approached me (at separate times). They were both school board members of their respective Christian schools; one was the chairwoman of the board. Both echoed this response: "Thank you for covering oral sex. Last year it was the number one issue we faced with our junior and senior high students." Sadly, it is clear that intrusive immorality has forced itself into our homes and into our schools. It is **just 1 click away**.

At a prominent evangelical Baptist church, a mother approached me just before I was to give a three-hour *Bare Facts* seminar to about 1,500 students on a Monday morning.

"Josh, you have to talk about oral sex!" she exclaimed quite forcefully. My instant reply was, "Why?" She went on to explain that at this church they have two classes for 11-year-olds. Since she has an 11-year-old daughter, she teaches one of the classes. "Friday night [this was Monday morning] I had a party at my house for my daughter's class." Thirteen kids showed up, seven boys and six girls, including her daughter.

"About 8:00 p.m. the phone rang. It was noisy and the music was loud, so I went upstairs to take the call. About 15 minutes later I came back downstairs thinking, 'It sure is quiet.' Then to my amazement, I saw the seven boys lined up with their pants dropped and the girls, including my own daughter, on their knees having oral sex with the boys. They are all

11-years-old, from my church, and one was my very own daughter!"

If you are from outside the United States, you might be saying, "Josh, we don't have this problem here. Our culture is different!"

**No, it's not.** The Internet has marginalized every culture—even yours. You only think you don't have this problem!

Of the top ten countries in the world that access XXX pornography sites, six are Latin American countries:<sup>36</sup>

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| # 1. Bolivia | # 6. Peru      |
| # 2. Chile   | # 7. Mexico    |
| # 4. Ecuador | # 10. Colombia |

One reason is because a high percentage of the population is under 25 years of age.

You don't think the above statistics apply to your culture?

Brazil is the second largest producer of video pornography in the world (after the United States and before the Netherlands and Spain).<sup>37</sup>

When I was in South Korea, several pastors announced that "it [pornography] is illegal in South Korea." What?

China is #1 in pornography revenue at \$27.40 billion a year (2006). South Korea, only the 26th most populous nation, is 2nd with \$25.73 billion per year, which translates to \$526 for every man, woman, and child. Compare the per capita of South Korea (\$526) to that of China (\$27.40), Japan (\$157), Australia (\$99), and the United States (\$45). Korea is off the charts!!<sup>38</sup> Their consumption is four times greater than any other nation, and yet pastors say, "We don't have this problem in our culture." Wake Up!

No culture, no church, no people—whether believers or non-believers—are immune from this intrusive invader.

We must wake up to the fact that there is one global culture...and it is now “digital.” No cultural, political, or spiritual barriers exist. Culture has been marginalized.

## What Can You Do?

You can't reverse this current social media explosion, nor should you even try. In fact, in the last 12 months, on various web sites, more than 200 million people were confronted with the claims of Christ. The social media revolution itself is not the real culprit here. It is simply the vehicle that can bring either positive or destructive influences that are **just 1 click away** from our children. But there are steps we can take. I will very briefly mention just six steps.

### 1. Parents Take the Initiative

Parents should be the primary provider of information about sex, love, and relationships. We are the ones that need to take the initiative.

The #1 impact in a child's sexual attitude and behavior is mom and dad. Without a loving, intimate, and caring relationship with parents, it is extremely difficult (but not impossible) to remain pure.

Proverbs 2-8 talks about sex, parents, and children. What is interesting is that in that passage there is no “commandment” for parents to talk with their children. It is taken for granted that parents will take the initiative! Therefore, the Scriptures admonish young people to listen to their parents about this subject (which is NOT taken for granted).

## 2. Get Knowledge

God spoke through the prophet Hosea and said, “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6, NIV). Knowing that we have an intruder that is invading our homes and schools is half the battle. But we must use this knowledge responsibly and constructively. This is why we produced *The Bare Facts* book and DVD resources.

Wise Solomon said,

“It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.” (Proverbs 19:2 NIV)

The Apostle Paul reiterated this appeal for knowledge:

“For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.” (Romans 10:2 NASB).

*The Bare Facts* resources are full of medical, cultural and biblical truth and provide knowledge of the problem we face. Share this document and *The Bare Facts* resources with other parents, your pastor, youth pastor, Christian school headmaster, etc. Set up a meeting to discuss steps that we, as parents and the Christian community, can take both to protect and educate our children. Intrusive immorality poses a real threat to our kids, and we can take steps to reduce that risk.

Research shows that one of the most effective ways to protect our children is to teach them about sex.

Studies show that “an essential way an adult can influence sexual behavior is by being a source of accurate information.” One study concludes that, “Poor communication about sex, limited or inaccurate information can make an impact on a young person's sexual health and identity.”<sup>39</sup> A great source of accurate information is **The Medical Institute for Sexual Health** ([www.medinstitute.org](http://www.medinstitute.org)).

Take the initiative and start parenting networks to encourage and help moms and dads to impact their own children.

**Get informed.**

**Get connected.**

**Get involved!**

### 3. Model the Truth

It is not that our kids haven't heard the preaching and the teaching about sexual immorality from church, Christian schools, and parents. What is so often lacking is a living model that demonstrates the truth in real life. God said to Moses, "These [commandments] shall be on your hearts; and you shall teach them diligently..." (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, NASB). The commandment must be upon *our* hearts first, so we can then model His truth before our children. In many respects, our kids must see it to believe it. A large scientific study of young people showed that we not only need to build a love connection with our children to see them live out our values, but we also must consistently be a living model of the truth we teach in our marriage, family and lives.

Ask my children why they waited for sex until marriage. One of the first reasons they will say is, "I always wanted what my mom and dad had...it was worth waiting for."

### 4. Teach in the Context of Relationship

I have often said, "Truth without Relationships leads to Rebellion." The truths of Christianity—Christ's deity, His Resurrection, and the reliability of Scripture—are not just foundational truths, but also relational truths. The truths of sexual morality are relational truths. We must teach them within the context of our own personal relationships with our children. Truth within the context of relationship almost

always leads to a positive response. Rules without relationships lead to rebellion (especially with sexuality).

### 5. No Question is Off Limits

Some of the material our kids are seeing and reading is horrific. I realize it is shocking and makes us uncomfortable. Yet from the moment they are born, we must create an atmosphere of openness and approachability that makes any and all questions from our kids acceptable to ask. Be repulsed by your child's questions, and it will probably be the last such question he or she will ask! No question should be off limits.

The "big talk" is just part of the process. The most effective sex education is incorporated into the normal day-to-day conversations shared with your children. We should consistently be looking for opportunities to lovingly communicate our values and to answer questions about sex (2 minutes here, 35 seconds there, 90 seconds, 6 minutes, etc.). These conversations must be age appropriate and honest.

### 6. Start Young

Recently, while in Mexico, I was speaking on the theme of talking about sex and oral sex at a very young age. Several pastors publicly expressed sarcastic doubt and thought I was naive. Then a pastor spoke up and said that in his son's 4th grade class (8 years old) at the local Christian school, they found girls having oral sex with the boys (8 years old)!

Wait to talk to your kids about sex until they are teenagers, and you'll realize that someone else has gotten there first! Many 8- to 11-year-olds are viewing pornography right now. So you must start teaching your children these things at a young age...before they are approached by someone who doesn't have their best interests in mind.

Drs. Clea McNeely and Jayne Blanchard explain that studies show that, "Before age 10, children usually are not sexually active or preoccu-

pied with sexual thoughts, but they are curious and may start to collect information and myths about sex from friends, schoolmates and family members.”<sup>40</sup> It is by far best for a child to get his or her curiosity satisfied by mom and dad. Their curiosity at this age is critical because their sexual attitudes during their teen years are often formed by the answers they get to their curiosity before 10 years old (6-10 years).”

Years ago we were told we had to reach young people with the message of Christ by the age of 18 if we hoped to reach them at all. Today, mainly because of the Internet, that age is 12. You must start young. If you wait until they are exposed to immoral material, it may be too late.

We must start right now to protect our young people from the insidious intruders of intrusive immorality. We can instill a godly faith and godly values within them. But we must wake up and act now! A godless culture is invading our homes and schools—it is fighting for the hearts and minds of our young people – and it is all **just 1 click away!** Take action today.

**Years ago we were told we had to reach young people with the message of Christ by the age of 18 if we hoped to reach them at all. Today, mainly because of the Internet, that age is 12. You must start young. If you wait until they are exposed to immoral material, it may be too late.**

For documentation, research, solutions, answers and more information on how to help your child, go to [www.just1clickaway.org](http://www.just1clickaway.org).



## Endnotes

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