

Sex industry

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The term sex industry refers to the people and organizations that provide sexual products, services, or performances in exchange for monetary compensation. The term encompasses a variety of enterprises, including print, video, and Internet pornography, prostitution, phone sex operations, sex shops, massage parlors, and strip clubs. Those employed in the sex industry are typically known as sex workers and might include street prostitutes, call girls, escorts, strippers, exotic dancers, phone sex operators, brothel workers, erotic masseuses, and actors/actresses in pornographic films.

The sex industry also includes the managers, staff, owners, producers, directors, photographers, pimps, madams, businesses, organizations, and enterprises that provide the infrastructure and support necessary to this multi-billion-dollar industry. As a male my outlook on the sex industry will be much different than if I were a female, due to the profession or the lack thereof, being 80% female according to *The Spot Light on the Sex Industry* by Patrick McDonald.

In today's society it is still considered immoral and illegal in most places to participate in the sex trade, although it has been around for hundreds of years. Contrary to the ugly stereotypes of prostitutes as fallen women, dope addicts, or disease carriers,* sex workers are women at work supporting children as single parents, trying to save money to go to school, surviving economically in a job market that underpays women at every economic level.

Because of the nature of the sex industry, in which many enterprises are illegal or only semi-legitimate and in which much earnings and activity goes

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unreported, estimates of the scope of the industry are necessarily flawed. Nonetheless, all available data suggest that the sex industry plays a very significant role in the U. S. economy, as in other countries. Since the rise of video recording technology and home videocassette players in the early 1980s, the consumption of hard-core pornographic videos in the United States has increased dramatically.

A federal study in the 1970s estimated that the total value of hard-core porn in the United States was under \$10 million; by 1996 estimates indicated Americans were spending more than \$8 billion per year on pornographic videos and magazines, sex shows, peep shows, and sex toys (Schlosser 1997). This figure included 665 million hardcore video rentals, \$150 million spent on pay-per-view adult movies, and \$175 million on pornographic movies viewed in hotel rooms.