

**Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) 212-643-9895  
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Craigslist Protest Fact Sheet

Craigslist Corporate Office, San Francisco, California July 8, 2010

Survivors of Craigslist trafficking speak out:

**My first introduction to prostitution was arranged through Craigslist.** I answered an ad for online modeling which turned out to be an agency recruiting for "escorts". Escort is a word they use instead of prostitute. First model, then escort and eventually prostitute. After I was eased into prostitution, many of the pimps, massage parlor owners and girls themselves would use Craigslist to post ads for prostitution. They used words like "sensual massage" and "full body massage" to attract johns.

I was a prostitute for much of my young life and would say Craigslist is now one of the most effective ways to sell your body on the Internet. It's free and the word is out that if you want to buy sex, you can find it on Craig's List. The sad part is that not everybody knows the dirty secret about Craigslist, so if somebody's little girl wanted to be a legitimate model she could easily be lured into a trap. I fear for the vulnerable, the naive. A young person can easily be lured into prostitution by online pimps like Craig.

--- Nekome, a Bay Area survivor of prostitution, July 2010

**I personally know over 20 girls who were trafficked through Craigslist.** Like me, they were taken from city to city, each time sold on a different Craigslist site —Philadelphia, Dallas, Milwaukee, Washington D.C. My phone would ring, and soon men would line up in the parking lot. One Craigslist caller viciously brutalized me, threatening to dump my body in a river. Miraculously, I survived.

--Open Appeal to Craig Newmark (Rebecca Project/ San Francisco Chronicle) May 19, 2010

The technological innovations and unregulated use of the Internet have created a global medium for men's sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children. The sex industry has aggressively adopted every new information technology to increase men's sexual access to women and children.

In the San Francisco Bay area, for several days in October 2008, Craigslist's own search page listed more than 18,000 advertisements for prostitution – called escort, massage, erotic services, adult services, adult entertainment – and other commonly-used terms for prostitution.

Staff members for Illinois's attorney general, [Lisa Madigan](#), have counted more than 200,000 sex ads since late 2008 posted to Craigslist in Chicago alone — which they estimate have generated \$1.7 million for the company. *New York Times April 25, 2010*

**Organized crime uses the services of Craigslist** The Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested 14 members of the Gambino crime family on charges of, among others, **selling the sexual services of girls, ages 15 to 19 on Craigslist.** *New York Times, April 25, 2010*

**Craigslist named as America's Biggest Pimp**

March 2009, The Age

Calling Craigslist the "**largest single source of prostitution in the nation,**" Cook County Illinois Sheriff Tom Dart sued Craigslist founders Craig Newmark and Jim Buckmaster. The lawsuit focuses on allegations of human trafficking and sex crimes, a release from Dart's office said. Sheriff Tom Dart is asking a federal judge to order Craigslist to eliminate its "erotic services" section, where most prostitution ads are posted. He is also seeking reimbursement for tax dollars spent paying the salaries of officers who investigate and arrest those responsible for trafficking women on the website.

"Missing children, runaways, abused women, and women trafficked in from foreign countries are routinely forced to have sex with strangers because they're being **pimped on craigslist.**" Dart said at a news conference. *NBC Chicago.com, March 6, 2009*

**At a news conference, Sheriff Dart said his office has made hundreds of prostitution arrests, many of them based on ads found on Craigslist.** But the sex-for-sale ads still proliferate on the site five months after Craigslist promised new safeguards to settle a nationwide lawsuit by the top state prosecutors from Illinois and 39 other states. *Chicago City Hall Examiner, March 6, 2009*

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) has successfully filed an Amicus Brief in support of the lawsuit against Craigslist filed by Sheriff Dart of Cook County, Illinois seeking to hold them accountable for their role in facilitating sex trafficking. CATW's Amicus Brief includes 65 co-signers representing a range of prominent organizations and individuals. **CATW Amicus Brief Press Release, August 2009**

The Schapiro Group, an independent research firm in Atlanta, released the results of a study done last fall, after the review process started. The researchers bought ads in Craigslist's metro Atlanta area promising "escort services" with young women, with an average of 1 in 4 gaining approval from Craigslist reviewers, said Alex Trouteaud, the firm's lead researcher. **Of the 218 men who contacted the number listed in the ad and agreed to a transaction, 47 percent still wanted to proceed even after learning the girls were minors, Trouteaud said.**

*San Francisco Chronicle, May 20, 2010*

Craigslist's response to the Schapiro Group's study on trafficking of children on craigslist.org/ Atlanta was to send a "cease and desist" letter to the funder of the research study (Women's Funding Network, San Francisco) and to send a "cease and desist" letter to the Governor of Georgia. Craigslist not only refuses accountability for facilitating trafficking but they also attempt to suppress the facts. See

<http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org/about/news/press-releases/women%E2%80%99s-funding-network-releases-georgia-demand-study-to-craigslist>

### **Profiting from the facilitation of prostitution and sex trafficking.**

Craigslist one of the most popular Web sites in the United States, is on track to increase its revenue 22 % this year, largely from its controversial sex advertisements. The ads, many of which blatantly advertise prostitution, are expected to bring \$36 million in 2010 according to a new projection of Craigslist's income. That is three times the revenue in last year's projection.

*New York Times April 25, 2010*

This year, the study showed Craigslist on track to bring in \$122 million in 2010, a 22 percent increase over its projected revenue last year. Though the site is largely free, it does charge people to post job listings in 19 major United States cities, and real estate listings in New York City, in addition to sex listings in all 438 markets in the United States. Revenue in those other categories remained largely unchanged since last year, according to AIM.

The increase in revenue from sex ads to \$36.3 million for the year, according to AIM, was largely caused by Craigslist's decision last May to double the rate for these ads in all of its American markets to \$10.

*New York Times April 25, 2010*

### **Craigslist's Adult Services Section Facilitates Prostitution and Sex Trafficking.**

- [Boston](#) police branded a 22-year-old medical student as the "[Craigslist](#) Killer" who murdered a [New York](#) masseuse and attacked at least two other women in escort prostitution in Boston hotels. **The slain 26-year-old New Yorker advertised her services on craigslist** and was shot in a Boston hotel. N.Y. Daily News, April 23, 2009
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- A woman purchased for \$2,000 and prostituted on Craigslist. David Brown of Queens was convicted last night of sex trafficking, second-degree kidnapping and third-degree promoting prostitution in connection with making a troubled young woman have sex with about 3 men a day for 12 straight days in August of 2008. **Brown found his customer base on craigslist.** Press Release, NOW-NY, December 3, 2009
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- The 15-year-old, a runaway, claims Lallis offered her a place to stay and another man talked of how they "made money prostituting girls in Connecticut and New York," the Day reports. **According to a court document, the girl claimed Lallis asked her if she would prostitute herself by putting an ad on Craigslist,** telling her he would lose his phone, car and hotel room if she refused. She claims that customers would send her a text message and that the men would arrange the meetings and wait nearby, the Day reports. She also says that the men didn't allow her to go anywhere without them or talk to anyone "because they did not want her getting involved with another pimp." NBCCConnecticut.com June 10, 2010

### Connecticut's Attorney General and 39 States Sue Craigslist

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal today demanded that Craigslist purge apparent, often graphic solicitations for prostitution rampant on certain sections of its website.

In a letter to Craigslist's attorney, Blumenthal demanded that the site better enforce its rules prohibiting illegal activity such as prostitution, and inappropriate ads and images.

In spite of rules banning such content, **Craigslist's "erotic services" section is rife with ads containing explicit language and images bordering on pornographic, as well as hourly rates and descriptions of services clearly sexual in nature, Blumenthal's office found.**

*State of Connecticut, Office of the Attorney General, March 27, 2008*

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal today announced that Connecticut and 39 other states have reached an agreement with Craigslist under which the online classified ad website will act to deter and crack down on prostitution ads in its erotic services section.

Blumenthal led the multistate effort and negotiated the agreement, which the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is joining.

Under the agreement, Craigslist will require that posters of erotic services ads give a working phone number and pay a fee with a valid credit card. The site will provide the resulting information in response to law enforcement subpoenas.

Other states signing the agreement are: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Also joining the agreement are the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam.

*State of Connecticut, Office of the Attorney General, November 6, 2008*

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) President and Chief Executive Ernie Allen said, "The criminals engaged in the sexual trafficking of children no longer parade them on the streets of America's cities. Today, they market them via the Internet, enabling customers to shop for a child from the privacy of their own homes or hotel rooms."

*Press Release from the Connecticut Attorney General's Office, November 6, 2008*

**"The craigslist brothel business seems booming -- belying its promise to fight prostitution," Blumenthal said.** "The best evidence is thousands of ads that remain on craigslist -- skimpily and slickly disguised with code words. We are asking craigslist for specific answers about steps to screen and stop sex-for-money offers -- and whether the company is actually profiting from prostitution ads that it promised the states and public that it would try to block. We're seeking answers, so we can reach legal conclusions. If it is breaking its promises to the public, it may be breaking the law.

**The exploitation continues...**

**"If published reports prove true, craigslist may be earning \$36.3 million or more from adult and possibly illegal ads -- huge profits from prostitution and human trafficking. Even if craigslist only provides a host site for the ads, it should be held accountable."**

*Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, State of Connecticut, May 3, 2010*

**CHICAGO A woman feared she'd never see her young child again unless she complied with her husband's scheme to sell her sexual services on Craigslist**, authorities said Wednesday. After paid sexual encounters in eight states, the woman sought help by calling a national anti-sex trafficking hot line, said Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart, who was notified of the woman's plight on March Her desperate plea led to the arrest Sunday in Chicago of her husband, a 32-year-old Rockford, Minn., man, Clinton Danner. The man's arrest comes after Craigslist promised last year to screen all submissions to its "adult services" section before posting them. Dart and other law enforcement agents have repeatedly accused the online site of promoting prostitution in its ads.

*Huffingtonpost.com, March 18, 2010*

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Hillsborough, is calling on the online classifieds site to voluntarily shut down its adult services section, which critics say is used to advertise sex with underage girls.

**But Congresswoman Speier is also asking the House Judiciary Committee to hold a hearing on how Web sites like Craigslist are being used to "facilitate criminal activity."**

*San Francisco Chronicle, May 29, 2010*

**Craigs Newmark and Jim Buckmaster must stop the trafficking of women and children on craigslist.com.**

Johns – men who buy sex acts- create the demand for commercial sex acts which includes trafficking. Craigslist promotes the cultural acceptance of prostitution which fuels sex trafficking.

Pimps and traffickers who market and benefit financially from these women and children as commodities, further increase the demand for victims. Craigslist provides an online brothel, earning huge profits from marketing the sexual exploitation of women and girls.