TEENAGERS AND PORNOGRAPHY:

A New Look

By: Jennifer C. Jones
Jenniferjones5@msn.com

Sean hears her footsteps on the stairs and quickly snaps the desk light off. He tosses his jacket over the computer screen. It's two a.m. He has exams tomorrow. Maybe she'll think he's studying. Just a few more minutes, then he'll stop.

"Sean" is one of millions of teenagers who use the Internet daily to find and view pornography. The Washington Post reports more than 11-million teens regularly view pornography on line. That may not be surprising when Nielson Media Research reports 75 percent of the US population over age two lives in homes with web access. The London School of Economics says 9 out of 10 children between the ages of 8 and 16 have viewed porn on the Internet. Most of the time it was accidental--often while a child was doing homework.

But could there be a connection between Internet porn and behaviors that can encourage sexual dependence? Many experts say yes.

"Sexual dependencies are a pattern of thinking, a habit or a behavior with sexual connotations," explains Gregg Lott. Lott is the Clinical Director for Oxbow Academy, a residential treatment center that specializes in sexual dependency. These behaviors, thoughts or obsessions impair or interfere with a teen's daily functioning.

Located in Wales, UT, Oxbow is finding a new and growing clientele in parents who are determined to break the cycle of sexual dependency in their teenage sons.

While no one is quite certain how these behaviors get their start, experts do agree Internet pornography plays a role in how they develop.

Dr. John Mark Haney, a Texas therapist, recently wrote, "For many young people, pornography is not a casual interest, but an addictive force that is leading to a quiet epidemic of young people who cannot control their online or television habits." Haney says accessibility has made the Internet the "super fix for a new breed of addicts."

Dr. Thomas Kimball is the Associate Managing Director for the Center for Addiction and Recovery at Texas Tech University. "Behaviors can be just as

