

Do churchgoers like Web porn? Not on Sunday, study reveals

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BOSTON (ABP)—According to a new study, people who live in states with high church-attendance rates buy as much Internet pornography as their more secularized counterparts—but they are less likely to subscribe to an adult website on Sundays.

Researcher Benjamin Edelman said subscriptions to a top-10 seller of online adult entertainment he studied are not statistically different in pious states from subscription rates elsewhere, but significantly fewer subscriptions in religious states are purchased on the Christian Sabbath.

“This analysis suggests that, on the whole, those who attend religious services shift their consumption of adult entertainment to other days of the week, despite on average consuming the same amount of adult entertainment as others,” Edelman, an assistant professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, wrote in the study.

Studies of Americans’ beliefs generally reveal some of the highest levels of religiosity in the developed world. For example, 68 percent of Americans say the Bible is the word of God and is to be taken literally. At the same time, social critics have argued the rise of Internet pornography is contributing to a coarsening of American culture.

Edelman, an expert in electronic commerce, set out to learn if consumption patterns of adult entertainment would reveal two separate Americas, or if porn consumption is widespread regardless of factors such as moral conservatism and religious conviction.

Edelman analyzed anonymous credit-card purchases of online porn by ZIP

codes and factored in the availability of broadband Internet access in the surveyed areas. Broadband connections allow faster downloading of images and video, and broadband users outnumber narrowband customers on adult sites 18 to 1.

Edelman found online porn more prevalent in states whose residents tended to express conservative religious views in studies, such as agreeing with the statements, "I never doubt the existence of God."

"Some of the people who are most outraged turn out to be consumers of the very things they claimed to be outraged by," Edelman said in an article in *New Scientist* magazine.

The biggest per-capita consumer of online porn is Utah, home of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That state averaged 5.47 adult-content subscriptions per 1,000 home-broadband users.

Six of the top-10 states for porn-subscription rates are familiar territory for Baptists.

Mississippi, the state with the highest concentration of Southern Baptist churches, ranked third with 4.30 subscribing homes per 1,000, between Alaska at 5.03 and Hawaii at 3.61. Oklahoma ranked fifth at 3.21, followed by Arkansas at 3.12, North Dakota at 3.05, Louisiana and Florida at 3.01 and West Virginia at 2.94.

The study said Americans spend \$2.8 billion a year for online porn.