

Political wins celebrated with porn, researcher says

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Some celebrate a political candidate's victory with a party. Others, according to a Rutgers–Camden researcher, choose porn.

Rutgers–Camden psychologist Charlotte Markey and husband Patrick Markey of Villanova University published findings in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior* that suggest vicarious winning in elections yields a higher usage of internet [porn](#). Depending on the party wins in 2004, 2006, and 2008, some members "celebrated" with visits to sultry internet sites.

This research, which utilized Google trends, has been popular on blogs as well as with wisecracks from the researchers' friends. Still, the Rutgers–Camden psychologist, who has long studied how popular culture influences behavior, is curious about how the internet's wide proliferation of porn will influence future generations.

"Google trends is a way to get a snap shot of what people are really thinking about," says Markey an associate professor of psychology.

"Thirty percent of all content on the internet is pornography. This sounds absurd for people who don't go to these sites, but for a large part of the population, that's what people are doing."

A major aspect of this research that continues to fascinate Markey is the link between sexual behavior and vicarious winning on males. "Research has shown testosterone levels fluctuate with whether or not one wins in a competition. Even if a man is sitting in a bar and his team wins, his

testosterone levels will rise," notes Markey.

While Google trends doesn't specify gender, it is estimated that 90% of porn use is attributed to men. The researchers chose to focus on U.S. election cycles, studying each state and the District of Columbia the week before and the week after each election, because they could clearly document one winner and one loser at a national level.

"Having access to this technology can be useful for many disciplines, not just psychology," adds Markey. "For a study like this, we could see where people were actually going online, perhaps something participants might not be willing to admit in person, on paper, or even to themselves."

Markey, an associate professor of psychology, runs the Healthy Development Lab at Rutgers–Camden. Her research has revealed links between parents' weight concerns and weight gain among kids; how spouses' eating impacts one another; and most recently, how lesbian couples contribute to each other's well-being. She's also found that men aren't nearly as critical of women's bodies as women are of their own as well as the chilling impact of reality television on one's desires for plastic surgery.

Provided by Rutgers University

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