

SEXTING: IT IS ALL THE RAGE UNTIL YOU'RE CAUGHT



Photo by Connor Jay

By Serena Rawr Quihuis

In every generation, there is a trend. Whether it be a clothing fad, the slang we use, or "extra-curricular" activities we choose to take part in. I'm finding that our generation in specific, is becoming very fond of, dare I say it...Sexting. Gasp! I said it. I'm being realistic when I say that the majority of us here in high school know what sexting is.

For those of you who don't know what it is, let me hit you with some knowledge. Sexting is sending provocative, revealing, or nude pictures to somebody via text message. Hence the term "Sexting."

The thing about it is, adults just don't understand why we do it. I mean, why DO we do it?

We know we aren't supposed to, we know it could lead to some bad consequences, and yet, we still click and send. The fact that we know it's wrong, I think, adds to the desire to take that picture, and furthermore send it.

You feel 'bad' or 'sexy,' and you want to impress the person you're sending it

to of course. For us teens, it's just plain innocent fun. No big deal, right?

Even celebrities do it! Take Miley Cyrus for example. A while ago some provocative pictures of her surfaced on the internet and all over the news media. There were pictures of her taken in her underwear, and other pictures came up of her getting friendly with another teen.

In a nationwide survey, it was said that roughly twenty percent of teens admit to sexting.

That's the number of teens who ADMIT to doing it, I'm sure the real number is much higher than just twenty percent.

What's the big deal if it's just a flirty picture? Well, the thing about your flirty pictures is that it's ILLEGAL!

Did you know that? I bet you didn't, and if you did, it didn't stop you from sending that picture now did it. Shame on you.

I honestly think this is more of a social problem than a federal one, but unfortunately, there are some serious consequences dealing with both social and federal aspects.

Now, I believe that there is a difference between sexting and pornography, but the government sees it a different way.

Sexting is treated as child pornography in almost every state. **True Story:** Not too long ago in Florida, an eighteen year old teen was arrested and registered on the sex offender list for sending nude pictures of his sixteen year old girlfriend to her friends and family.

The couple were high school sweethearts, avid members of the church

"OH MY GOD, did you see the picture going around school? What?"

community, and were together for two years. When asked why the teen sent the pictures, he said it was because he got angry at her, and sent the pictures out of irrational anger.

I bet now he definitely regrets sending the pictures, and he should! The teen got kicked out of college, fired from his job, and will be registered as a sex offender until he's forty three. That's twenty five years!

As a registered sex offender, he can't leave the country without getting permission from his parole officer, and he struggles to find another job to hire him.

What happened to the teen in Florida was a tragic lesson, but not as tragic as the next story.

Last year in Cincinnati, Ohio, a teenage

girl hung herself after nude pictures of herself were sent around her school and to numerous other schools in the area. Click. She sends the picture.

Seconds later, her seemingly innocent, fun picture, is now in the possession

around the school can do some collateral damage. With the new wave of technology that our generation has, those innocent pictures you took could be spread around the world with just a click of a button. Remember, once it's on the internet, it stays there, FOREVER.

What most teens don't know is that perspective job employers will often look you up on the internet to see if you've got anything you might be ashamed of.

The biggest part of this ordeal that most teens aren't aware of is that if you are a minor sending or receiving those pictures to another minor, it's still illegal, and there are consequences.

If convicted, the juvenile may or may not receive lock up time, depending on the judge. If the minor does NOT receive lock up time, however, they will still be forced to register on the sex offender list for a minimum of ten years.

Thanks to The Federal Adam Walsh Protection Act of 2007, it is mandatory that kids as young as thirteen register as an offender. California state law states that it is illegal to possess or send any lewd pictures of minors.

Who would you hold responsible? The person taking and sending the picture, or the person in possession of the pictures?

It just doesn't make sense. Something that is supposed to be fun and carefree turns into a federal crime with just a click of a button.

Is there nothing else to do but send 'risque' pictures? Now that's sad.

Don't go sending a picture that you know isn't safe or private. You know that the risks of that picture being seen by someone other than the person you sent it to is very high.

What if that person gets angry and sends the picture to the whole school? What happens when someone goes through your phone, and posts the picture on the internet? These are things that should be considered.

Remember, pressing the send button can be your downfall. A felony is just a click away.



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