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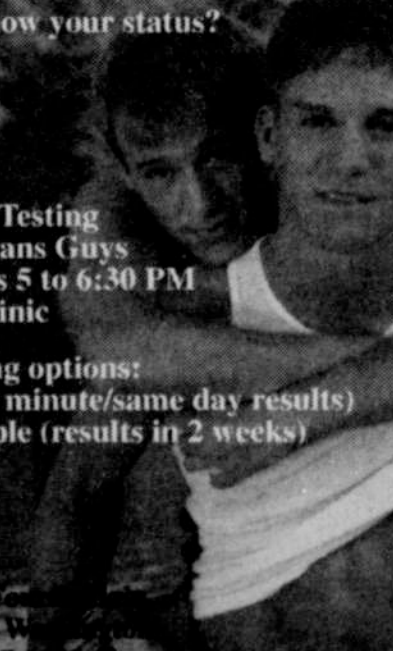
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## State Law

In Oregon, it is against the law both to buy or sell sex and simply to offer to buy or sell sex. Prostitution is a misdemeanor that can yield a maximum of one year in prison and a \$6,250 fine. In Multnomah County, the court might offer one "get out of jail free" card for community service instead.

Promoting prostitution, a Class C felony, criminalizes anyone benefiting from a prostitute's income, including pimps, madams, brothel operators and housemates who share toilet paper and other necessities. Criminal convictions could result in sentences of five years in prison and a \$125,000 fine.

Compelling prostitution, a Class B felony, carries the severest penalties. Compelling prostitution occurs when someone, generally a pimp, forces, coerces or threatens an adult to engage in sex work. This law also criminalizes anyone benefiting from a juvenile's or family member's prostitution. A conviction could result in a maximum of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

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There are a half-dozen or more queer posts every day in the Erotic Services section of Craigslist's Portland site: "full service massage," "fetish play," "versatile college student" or anything else you hunger for from \$100 to \$300 an hour.

The Internet didn't start as a virtual bordello. Before the advent of Craigslist, a community-oriented classifieds Web site, Travis said he spent six months of "hardcore" working on Gay.com in Eugene cruising for clients to scrape together rent. David and several other escorts also report first being propositioned while chatting with older men via Gay.com or similar networking sites.

But as the Internet has grown and Craigslist and more explicit sex-for-pay sites have proliferated, johns no longer need to troll the streets or chat rooms. They now have a veritable cybermenu of sexual entrees to peruse.

Craigslist and other Internet sites have opened sex work to people who ordinarily might not consider it by granting them greater control of their anonymity, services and experiences. Ex-street workers are joined by social workers supplementing their meager wages, fellows in their 30s and 40s funding their artistic or educational endeavors, trans women offering the exotic and creative women trying to queer the field of W4M (women for male clients).

"I used to get in uncomfortable situations because men got upset that I wasn't submissive," said Star, a 21-year-old gender-queer W4M. In response, she rewrote her Craigslist ad to read: "Bend over Boyfriend! Ever fantasized about taking it up the ass from a punk hottie wearing a sparkly pink strap-on?"

"When I first posted the ad, I thought I'd get a few responses. When I checked back the next day, I had 25 responses," she said. "Now I'm really into it. I slap guys around and call them 'little sluts.'"

Internet sex work is rarely motivated by the desperation of street prostitution; instead, like all employment, it is the result of rational cost-benefit analysis. When asked why he continues escorting despite now having a home, job possibilities and an intense disdain for his clients, Benjamin said: "I definitely don't feel like this is my only opportunity. To put it in one word: easy. Easy, hard cash. Sometimes I'm out in five minutes with \$150."

Unlike street workers, those hawking sex via the Internet can screen their clients and activities through e-mail and phone conversations and have greater control over location and price.



Star supplements her income by pegging men in the ass with strap-on dildos.

Certainly the potential for danger still exists—Benjamin warns, "I don't feel as safe doing outcalls; I have a huge knife next to my bed, of course"—but not one interviewee reported having been physically harmed by an Internet client.

On the contrary, most claimed to enjoy a relatively high level of job satisfaction.

## The Professional

Jeff sits cross-legged in an office chair, flanked by two computer monitors, screen savers dancing, and a tasteful living room of imported art. He has two degrees, business investments, property and a very affectionate cat. "And interestingly enough, I do pay

income tax," he jokes. At around \$200 an hour and \$800 a day, he's a member of Portland's upper escorting echelon. If he were a businessman, his morning-after power breakfast would be at the Heathman. But instead of an aggressive boy-club style, he speaks with the tranquillity and patience of a counselor, explaining his 10 years of experience as if recalling nice summers at the lake. "I get to meet the most interesting people," Jeff asserts. "At my level, I interact with people who want to share joy and, especially in the longer situations, where the sex is incidental."

Jeff gets most of his clients from Hooboy's Male4MaleEscorts.com, although he rarely takes new clients.

"I've heard Male4MaleEscorts.com is one of the top 20 visited sites on the Web," he said.

Male4MaleEscorts.com centers around clients' reviews of escorts that read like gay "Letters to Penthouse." The site lists hundreds of escorts internationally, including 29 in Portland.

Many Internet-based escorts agree on one basic premise: You have to like sex. But they differ in how much they like the people they are having sex with. Cyberescorts who began selling on the street tend to describe their clients with repulsion, claiming they generally disassociate themselves from the sex and only pretend to enjoy themselves. "My act is Mary Sunshine, but I really want to mace them," Benjamin exclaimed.

Conversely, the escorts who started on the Internet spoke mostly of enjoying their clients and the intimacy they share. "A lot of people think escorts are unattached from sex, but the reason I do this job is because I'm connecting with people," Ryan said.

The discrepancy in satisfaction can likely be attributed to the difference in economic backgrounds. Sex workers who sell for survival do not always have the luxury of saying no, nor are they exposed to as palatable a clientele. But those who sell on the Internet frequently come from a more comfortable economic background, start at a later age and choose sex work from a greater field of options.

"The difference between street workers and me is night and day," said Logan, 34, who is funding a master's degree. "This works for me, but it's a completely different ballgame than someone who has to do it for food or a place to stay."

