

Why do sex workers need online spaces?

In an international study on the relationship between HIV transmission and sex work, the amount of control sex workers had over their working conditions directly correlated to rates of transmission.² Working indoors is an essential part of that control.

On the closure of Rentboy.com: “But we can’t afford to lose even one more tool that keeps us alive in this economy of violence.”³

Online advertising means that people who trade sex are able to move away from street-based work, where people face higher rates of violence, HIV/STI transmission and vulnerability.

A 2017 study from West Virginia University and Baylor University found a **17% drop in female homicide rates** correlated to Craigslist opening its Erotic section – because it made sex work safer.¹

Online advertising gives the opportunity for sex workers to screen clients for safety via peer references or standing bad date lists, which would themselves be exposed to civil liability under FOSTA (H.R 1865).

On the closure of online platform

MyRedBook: “Many Bay Area sex workers have been able to improve their working conditions by using MyRedbook, as the site provided a private, discreet venue for negotiations that otherwise often happen in a public venues [sic] or on the street.”⁴

Online spaces provide access to community, which is essential for harm reduction information and support.

On the closure of online platform MyRedBook: “Today we also lost extensive online forums for a community of sex workers to keep each other safe, screen clients, and blacklist predators,”⁴

1. Berlatsky, Noah. Female homicide rate dropped after Craigslist launched its erotic services platform, 20 Nov 2017. Available at: <https://thinkprogress.org/craigslist-erotic-services-platform-3eab46092717>.

2. Shannon, Kate et al.; *Global epidemiology of HIV among female sex workers: influence of structural determinants*; The Lancet, Volume 385, Issue 9962, 55 – 71

3. Anonymous, *Rentboy wasn't my 'brothel'. It was a tool to stay alive in this economy of violence*; The Guardian, 1 Sept 2015. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/01/rentboy-online-brothel-tool-economy-sex-work>.

4. Conger, Kate. MyRedbook shutdown could compromise sex worker safety, law enforcement resource, 27 June 2014. Available at: <http://www.sfexaminer.com/myredbook-shutdown-could-compromise-sex-worker-safety-law-enforcement-resource/>

