**Study: One-In-Five Houston Males Solicits Online Sex Ads**

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The population of active online sex customers varies from city-to-city, and a new study tracking online sex services — such as prostitution — finds that Houston is by far the most active. (Photo by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

**(CBS HOUSTON) –** The population of active online sex customers varies from city-to-city, and a new study tracking online sex services — such as prostitution — finds that Houston is by far the most active.

Decoy online ads for the sale of sexual services and prostitutes were tracked in a study conducted by the Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research and supported by the Phoenix Police Department. The telephone numbers for the voicemail and text responses to online sex ads were collected, and the market data found that more than one-in-five Houston males (21.4 percent) were soliciting online sex ads.

In Houston, the study found there were approximately 169,920 males over the age of 18 that were soliciting the ads.

Of the 15 cities included in the study, Kansas City had the second-highest percentage of metro area online sex solicitors with 14.5 percent, Las Vegas was the third-highest at 13.5 percent and San Francisco had the least-highest percentage of online sex customers with .6 percent.

The collected Houston data also showed that 472 was the average number of ads posted on Backpage.com – a classified advertising website that is second only to Craigslist as the nation’s largest ad listing service — in a 24-hour time period.

Backpage includes listings for “adult entertainment,” although the website officially prohibits illegal services such as prostitution. Craigslist removed its adult services section in 2010.

The decoy ads for sexual services were placed online on two websites in 15 U.S. cities twice, one week apart. A model was created to estimate online active sex customers for the websites during each day.

“Online sex customers experience a lower risk of being caught by police than street-level prostitution customers due to the insulation provided by the relative anonymity inherent in internet-based solicitation, or attempt to buy sex,” wrote the researchers.

Houston data also showed that there were 31 total calls for the two ads, 10 text messages, 21 voicemails and that nearly three-quarters (74.2 percent) of calls came from local metro area codes.