

***RenegadeCast: Evaluating Podcast
Social Media as a
Health Promotion Tool for
Sex Workers & Adult Entertainers
with Internet Access***



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II. PREFACE

I support the legitimacy of all forms of sexual services in exchange for any type of compensation as work or labor, regardless of legal, social or political status. Because of the diversity of activities involved in this type of work, many names are associated with workers in the Adult Entertainment & Commercial Sex Industries in the U.S. and abroad. For simplicity and brevity, I have used the term Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer throughout this report to include any and all variations of sexual services in exchange for any type of compensation. To help guide the context of this discussion, some basic definitions of Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer are shown below.

In general, Independent Sex Work is work by an individual alone or without a representative agency. Street-based, Webcam, phone sex workers and independent escorts fall under this definition. Collective Sex Work refers to work in groups, for agencies, or in established venues. Massage parlor workers and strip-club entertainers are examples of collective work in established venues as are escorts working for an agency. For this paper unless stated, working collectively does not necessarily mean workers that share equally in personal investment, decision making and outcomes/profit of the endeavor, like in a co-op.

Independent in-call/out-call refers to a person who works for him/herself as opposed to working for an escort agency; such individuals generally make house or hotel calls (out-call) or work from their home or another place (in-call). They may have ads on the Internet or in local papers and/or phone books. Street-based Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers solicit their customers on the streets and are independents. Some independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers also initiate contact with customers through bars, hotels, casinos and a variety of other public venues. Massage or sensual massage workers can either be Independent with their own ads and working either in-call or out-call, or they can be working collectively for an established massage parlor

Phone sex operators provide titillation through the phone; customers can call up and have workers “talk dirty” to them while the customers are charged via their credit card, usually by the minute. Webcam workers usually work from home or a location that is not physically available to customers, and their customers can “log-on” to the worker’s Internet site, for a fee, to view live streaming video or, in many cases, still shots of the Webcam worker taken every 15-45 seconds.

Underground Brothels/Houses refer to a group of Sex Workers, sometimes in co-operative or collective situations, work out of an apartment or house (Levitz, 2007). In the U.S. brothels are only legal in some counties of Nevada, and are tightly regulated (Weitzer, 2005). Bondage-Discipline/Domination-Sado-Masochism (BDSM) workers may be independents or may work for an established “dungeon,” or fantasy torture-playroom. Porn workers are adult film actors/editors/producers who either work as independents (e.g., “amateurs”) or for a production company.

For more definitions of types of Adult Industry Work, see “Turning Pro” by Meretrix (2001). Discussion of forced labor or forced work (e.g., “sex slavery” or “sex trafficking”) is beyond the scope of this project and is not, therefore, included in the definitions of Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer used in this specific project; nor is any discussion of forced labor presented in this paper.

III. ABSTRACT

Several new studies have found that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are working in exclusively independent venues have higher rates of HIV and sexually transmitted infections than workers who are organized and working collectively (Cohan et al., 2006; Ditmore, 2002; Ibbitson, 2002). Thus, increasing the number of workers who engage in collective work could decrease HIV/STI rates for this community. The purposes of project were: to create a podcast discussing the benefits and challenges of working collectively that would be useful to independent workers with Internet access, and to determine if these workers would be more likely to network with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers after listening to this podcast. The evaluation tool was an online survey that included 28 quantitative and 4 qualitative questions. During a three-week evaluation period, 216 people listened to the podcast and 27 completed the survey. Of the survey respondents, 8 identified themselves as currently doing independent sex work/adult entertainment, 4 reported that they learned a benefit and a challenge to networking with other workers; 6 felt confident they would benefit by networking with other workers; and 5 said they were more likely to network with other workers. About 90% said they would recommend the podcast to other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and subscribe to the podcast in the future. Evaluation results were shared with the community through a discussion format on Episode 2 of the podcast.

IV. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

“A powerful global conversation has begun. The Internet is enabling conversations among human beings that were simply not possible in the era of mass media. These networked conversations are enabling powerful new forms of social organization and knowledge exchange to emerge.” — The Cluetrain Manifesto, 2007

Studies have documented that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are organized and/or work collectively have lower rates of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) than Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer who work exclusively as independents (Cohan et al., 2006; Ditmore, 2002; Ibbitson, 2002). The reasons for this disparity have not been identified as no comprehensive in-depth studies have been conducted to assess these two populations throughout the U.S. and abroad. Nonetheless, Social Support/Social Networks Theory provides a framework for understanding the role that social relationships play in the health of individuals and communities and may be a factor in reduced rates of HIV/STIs for those workers who have a peer network for support around their work (Heanny & Israel, 2002). Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who work collectively are more likely to receive informational support about how to lessen certain occupational health risks, e.g. exposure to HIV/STI. For example, workers can support each other by offering practical advice on how to: negotiate with clients, both for the type of services that will be provided as well as appropriate compensation for those services; market successfully; prevent burnout (e.g., physical, emotional, etc.); screen clients for a safer encounter; and how to avoid arrest. Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer peers can also provide emotional support when workers need to process a “day at the office.” This is particularly important if their social networks outside of sex work are judgmental or uninformed about their work.

Most outreach intervention programs are targeted at street based Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers because they are the most visible and easily accessible group of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to reach (Ditmore, 2002; Ibbitson 2002; Lydersen, 2005). Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who work in-doors or through Internet-based venues are not being reached by these standard health promotion interventions or outreach activities. This project utilized an emerging web-based social media tool, podcasting, to reach Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who have access to the Internet to increase networking behaviors and thus potentially decreasing HIV/STI rates for this community.

The purpose of the project was to:

1. Create a podcast discussing the challenges and benefits of collective Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers.
2. Promote this podcast among independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who have Internet access.
3. Evaluate if podcast media is an effective tool to reach independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and increase their willingness to network with other workers.

The primary questions were:

1. Will independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers listen to a podcast on collective sex work?
2. As a result of listening to this podcast, will independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers be more likely to network with other workers?
3. What do Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers need or want from a podcast to make it useful in their work?

V. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Traditional HIV/STI prevention outreach or interventions for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers primarily utilize condom distribution, HIV/STI testing, and health education as strategies to improve health outcomes for this community. Since many outreach intervention programs are targeted at street-based Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers because of their accessibility, Independent indoor or Internet workers are not being reached (Ditmore, 2002; Ibbitson, 2002; Lydersen, 2005).

Because prostitution is a criminal activity, networking or organizing among this community is highly problematic and can result in arrest under individual state pimping and pandering laws, or under federal laws against organizing criminal activity, e.g., Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act — known as RICO (Lee, 2007; Lydersen, 2005; Marsh, 2007). Moreover, many workers in legal sex industries (e.g. pornography, strip clubs) are classified as “independent contractors” and do not receive the protections of the Nation Labor Relations Act that employees receive (Wilmet, 1998-1999).

As mentioned earlier, workers who have been organized collectively seem to be at lower risk for HIV/STI than those who work independently. One innovative way to address HIV/STI prevention for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers, while at the same time fostering networks of peer-support, is by developing strategies for increasing community capacity for collective organizing.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

Collective Labor Organizing for Improved Health Outcomes

Historically, labor and union organizing has been a worker-driven tool to improve occupational health and safety on the job, strengthen demands for higher wages, improve collective bargaining, increase access to health insurance, and improve overall working conditions. Unions and collective working situations offer support and regulate the type of work people do, the manner in which the work is done and the employer-employee relationships (Lewchuk, Robertson, Cole, Kerr, & Haines, 2005). Just as unions have studied the correlation between positive health outcomes and organized labor, other studies have shown that lack of social support at work and the absence of opportunities to develop skills have a negative impact on the physical and mental health of marginalized workers (Lewchuk, et al.; Worby, 2002). Labor organizing can protect workers from taking work that is too dangerous, thereby increasing workers’ perceived control over their labor and subsequently reduce stress. Job-related stress, which emanates from the way labor is organized, has serious health problems that can be prevented if workers are able to restructure their work. Networking and organizing among marginalized workers is strategic for mental health and connecting to resources.

Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers deserve commensurate labor rights and occupational health and safety as those afforded workers in other industries (Toms, 2000). While Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are facing similar challenges as other wage-earners, they also face social, political and legal stigma as well as barriers to organizing and improving their occupational safety that are not problems or issues for other wage-earners

(Lydersen, 2005). Since prostitution is illegal in 49 of the 50 United States,¹ Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who exchange sex for compensation are considered criminals. In consequence, these workers are reluctant to turn to the police or government agencies to address their labor conditions (Bruckert, Parent, & Robitaille, 2003).

Like undocumented workers, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are burdened by circumstance of powerlessness and exploitation at work. A common concern for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers is the lack of safe working conditions and police harassment (UNAIDS, n.d.). Furthermore, while unionizing or collective bargaining/organizing is a potential strategy to improve working conditions for workers in other industries, these activities are undermined by the illegal nature of prostitution in sex work. Such conditions lead to serious occupational injury and abuse.

Even when Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers work in legalized divisions of the industry, they still face legal and structural barriers to organizing. Under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), only workers who are classified as “employees” have the legal right to organize (Wilmet, 1998-1999). Most workers in legalized sex work/adult entertainment are classified as “independent contractors.” In Nevada, for example, where prostitution is legal in licensed brothels, the workers are “independent contractors” and are not eligible for sick leave, health insurance, workers compensation or unemployment (Answers.com, 2007).

In Los Angeles, Porn Actors were denied access to the “Screen Actors Guild” (SAG), the actors union, because the NLRA determined that since SAG is a private organization, it is under no legal obligation “to accept everyone seeking admission” (Wilmet, 1998-99, p. 467). Over the last 13 years in San Francisco, hundreds of exotic dancers have been engaged in labor struggles in fighting for their rights as “employees”; they have filed numerous class-action law suits against strip clubs for classifying them as “independent contractors” and charging them “stage fees” (Kay, 1999). Although many of these dancers have won or settled their cases, receiving back wages and “stage fees,” many exotic dancers in San Francisco, and in many clubs across the country, are still being classified as “independent contractors” and charged “stage fees” (Passion, 2007). To date, exotic dancers at the Lusty Lady in San Francisco are the only workers who have been able to organize *and maintain* union status (Akers, 2006).

The need for networking and alliances among Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers cannot be overstated (Open Society Network, 2006). Although Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are organizing all over the globe, studies show that many Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers face barriers to organizing and building their own advocacy capacity and are in need of peer support and opportunities to network with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers (Cohan et al. 2006; Ditmore, 2002; Ibbitson, 2002; Lydersen, 2005). Participative approaches in labor organizing are the key to stress reduction and worker burnout prevention (Mureau, n.d.). While not providing immunity from legal consequences for Sex Workers, the Internet provides an opportunity for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to broadly network with other Sex

¹ As stated in the Preface, the one exception is that in certain counties of Nevada, prostitution is legal in highly regulated licensed brothels (Weitzer, 2005).

Workers/Adult Entertainers and increase community capacity for collective sex work while decreasing their exposure to law enforcement and consequent pandering charges².

HIV/STI Testing in the Sex Worker/Adult Entertainment Industry

Preventing burnout and disease are crucial for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are uninsured and do not have access to workers compensation, sick pay or disability leave — and often work when they are sick. Some occupational risks associated with Sex Work/Adult Entertainment include: working long hours; the strain and stress on the body (including back and feet); dealing with rude and or/manipulative customers; being criminalized and incarcerated; the potential for violence; and the stress of dealing with societal stigma about their work (Akers, 2006; Lutnick, 2007; Weitzer, 2005). However, regardless of the evidence, the perception of the potential risk for HIV/STI transmission from Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to the general public dominates the legal policies that affect these workers in the U. S.

Testing mandates for HIV/STIs across the industry are disparate for workers. In the United States there are only two types of Sex Work/Adult Entertainment where sexual intercourse, mutual touching of the genitals and receiving/giving oral sex are legal: 1) In licensed Nevada brothels between workers and customers and 2) In Pornography production between actors (Weitzer, 2005). In Nevada brothels, condoms have been legally required since 1986 and signage of the law is clearly posted for customers view (Anonymous Nevada brothel worker, personal communications, April 1, 2007; Weitzer). Initial and ongoing testing for HIV/STIs of workers is a mandatory policy. While the Nevada brothel model may not be ideal for all workers doing prostitution, having legal and social structures that reinforce the prevention of HIV/STIs have benefited the Brothel workers in some capacity: no cases of HIV have been documented in Nevada brothels (Weitzer).

In the porn industry however, while some production companies use condoms on film, condom use is not mandatory and HIV/STI testing is an optional policy only if the production company elects to require it from contracted actors before filming can occur (Anonymous porn worker, personal communications, April 1, 2007). In 2005, 3 female porn film actors in California tested positive for HIV after having sexual intercourse without a condom with an HIV+ male actor (Rotblatt, et al., 2005). While in this case Cal/OSHA attempted to cite the production company for failure to comply with Cal/OSHA bloodborne pathogen standards that protect employees from occupational injury and illness from exposure to human fluids, the production companies appealed the citations arguing that porn actors are independent contractors and not employees and thus do not fall under Cal/OSHA standards.

For workers engaged in illegal prostitution outside of the Nevada brothels, mandatory HIV testing of persons convicted for prostitution is legal in most states and mandatory STI testing, treatment and quarantine are also legal for persons arrested for prostitution (Blumberg, 1989; Cal. Penal Code, n.d., Snell, 1994; Zink, 1992).³ Worthy of note is that some studies in Nevada and Australia suggest that law

² Pimping and pandering are some of the charges that are used against Sex Workers who try to organize and apply strategies for safer sex work (Lydersen, 2005).

³ Under California "hold and treat laws" a person who had been previously convicted of prostitution is a known prostitute and can be held without a charge and tested for [STIs] (Snell, 1994).

enforcement of prostitution is a contextual factor for increased HIV/STI transmission for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers (Ditmore, 2002). While Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are the experts in their work, for those workers who are having sexual contact with their clients, there are legal restrictions on their ability to negotiate safer sex practices with these clients (Ditmore; Ibbitson, 2002; Lutnick, 2007). According to recently published data from the Sex Worker Environment Assessment Team (SWEAT) Study in San Francisco, women reported that, “work interactions are safest when they can make their boundaries clear at the beginning. But fear of arrest often prevents a thorough discussion of boundaries, which sets them up for unfavorable interaction with their clients” (Lutnick, 2007, p. 48). Moreover, in the Cohan et al. (2006) found that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with a history of arrest were more likely to experience work related violence and test positive for HIV/STIs.

While supported by courts time and time again as a necessary “administrative search” that does not violate their fourth amendment rights, many Sex Workers rights advocates are vehemently against mandatory testing of workers in a correctional setting or through a criminal justice framework.⁴ Unlike heavy equipment operators and train conductors who are also legally subjected to urine and blood samples under “administrative searches,” prostitutes, even legal prostitutes in Nevada brothels, are not entitled to labor protections under the National Labor Relations Act (Answers.com, 2007; Wilmet, 1998-1999). Nor are pornography workers, many dancers in strip clubs or any other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are classified as “independent contractors” (Kay, 1999; Wilmet). Labor-driven occupational health and safety standards addressing comprehensive illness and injury prevention for workers in this industry that are inclusive of employees as well as independent contractors are needed.

Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and Peer Support/Social Networking

Like many other workers, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers can also benefit from social support and workplace networking and organizing. In countries where prostitution is legalized, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers have increased capacity for worker controlled environments that address a full range of occupational health and safety issues that are specific to their labor (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2004). In New Zealand, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are provided with comprehensive occupational safety and health protections like job-related pregnancy, standards on the firmness of mattresses, and protection from “overuse disorders” or repetitive injury from activities related to their work. Moreover, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers can withdrawal from a contract to provide sexual services at any point in the date, and clients are required and responsible under the law to use condoms. This shifts the worker-client power balance in favor of the Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and shifts the responsibility of condom use from the Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to the clients.

Collective organizing can provide the mechanism for peer support, peer education and social networking. For example, Collective Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers can teach other workers:

⁴ The US Supreme Court recognizes administrative searches as those that involve a government intrusion with intent to obtain information to be used to ensure compliance with regulation or to protect public health and safety (Zink, 1992).

- How to screen clients
- How to negotiate with clients
- How to give a genital screening of clients for infections or parasites
- How to handle disruptive clients
- How to discuss and negotiate services provided and services that will not be provided
- How to establish revenue systems
- How to utilize confidential phone and emails services
- How to build a safer more provocative webpage
- How to make more money and prevent overuse disorders
- How to establish more regular clients and decrease exposure to criminalization
- Where to access Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer friendly services
- How to recognize when you are being exploited by a manager

These are just a few examples of what peer support, peer education and social networking can provide for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers. In addition to providing Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with a level of professionalism and skills for improving their working conditions, collective arrangements can shape the behaviors and norms of local clientele. Often times the “going rates” and services that are expected of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are set by other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers (Anonymous escort worker, personal communications, April 1, 2007). Collective arrangements can help set the rate and services provided in the favor of the workers as opposed to clients or management. Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers can provide each other with support in the face of violent or abusive clients by establishing a “bad date” list, and “good customer” list. These lists can be used to correct clients’ behavior by letting the customer know that if they behave badly, they will be on a bad-date list (Ollson & Quan, 2006).

Relationships with co-workers are extremely important, not only to learn the skills of the trade, but also to process the work without shame. The level of professionalism that is afforded to workers in other industries is necessary for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to help attenuate the stigma associated with the industry. Support from co-workers is essential and quite distinct from the support offered by family and friends outside the industry. For example, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers peers offer practical solutions rather than simply assert that she or he “should leave the industry.” (Bruckert et al, 2003, p. 36).

Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and Internet Media

The Internet sex industry is estimated to be a 1 billion annual business with over 1.3 million sites and over 260 million pages of erotic content (Legon, 2003). The Internet is a potential location to dialogue with Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers on a local and global level. The Internet can provide relatively low-cost broad based intervention strategies to reach a huge number of people. It is community driven and potentially less reliant on a singular or centralized resource (Harris, Kutob, Surprenant, Maiuro, & Delate, 2002). The Internet can provide information to individual Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers unable to access health clinics or who do not want to publicly reveal themselves as Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers. Internet outreach is a tool for reaching people who would not make the time-consuming trip to a site outside their usual routine or living/working area. Equally important, Internet-based interventions are available 24 hours

a day, 7 days a week and thus do not face the usual challenges of sites with limited hours of operation due to budgeting restraints.

Limited data on Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers shows interventions that target reductions in HIV/STI transmission are effective for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers when they address overall well being and empowerment with education and other related services (UNAIDS, 2006). Education that focuses on the inclusion of all priorities set by Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers — e.g., social, legal and economic issues and not just the prevention of disease — are the most successful. By addressing the prejudices and stigmatization Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers routinely face through a peer-based social support networks model via an Internet setting, advocates and Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers can provide peer education and facilitate the strengthening of individual capacity to a broad audience at relatively low-cost.

Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are joining support groups and online communities as an organizing tool (Navarro & Fisher 2004). In April of 2007, the US-based Open Society Institute (OSI) assembled a meeting of 35 sex worker advocacy groups representing 20 countries in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Ditmore, Thurkal & Hunter, 2007). In preparation for the training, OSI conducted a survey of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and the results revealed that these workers were using the Internet to advertise their services, yet few workers were using the Internet to access resources, services, and other health-related information specific to their Industry (SWEAT, 2007).⁵ Since one of the goals for the training was “to improve sex workers’ capacity for communication” technical advice on how to use the Internet as a tool for advocacy and activism for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers was a highlight of this training (Ditmore et al., p. 46). The Internet coupled with a younger, Internet-savvy generation of workers willing to speak out offers a potential means for improving working conditions for a socially marginalized group of workers whose presence on the World Wide Web is increasing. The Internet also provides a forum for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to network and educate one another about ways to work without getting arrested.

Public health initiative towards Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers could increase the success of their interventions for HIV/STI prevention and save resources by combining a worker-driven, peer-education intervention that address social, legal and economic issues of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with a broad reaching, low-cost intervention available to Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who have access to the Internet.

Internet Interventions & Social Media

“The new social media sites — blogs, wikis, del.icio.us and Flickr, among others — underscores the transformation of the Web to a participatory medium in which users are actively creating, evaluating and distributing information.” — Lerman & Jones, 2006

The online environment is becoming an increasingly important tool to reach a broad network of people at relatively low costs. The Internet is a possible medium for people without access to services or support groups but who do have access to the Internet. Internet interventions have been used to alleviate

⁵ From the African based organization SWEAT and not the SWEAT Study being conducted in San Francisco California.

depression, diabetes, obesity and asthma; to build capacity for HIV positive people to gain health educational material; to help people learn tools for managing cancer, heart disease and stroke; and for social support/social networking for a broad range of issues, including smoking cessation (Christensen, Griffiths, & Jorm, 2004; Harris et al., 2002; Kalichman et al., 2006; Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2006). The Internet is a modern technology being cultivated as a tool for organizing (Fine, 2006). However, improving the information online goes beyond improving access: social cognitive theory informs us that people develop better skills based coping through a sense of agency (Kalichman, et al.). Using the Internet for health-related information is associated with self-efficacy, greater social support and personal well-being, and thus improved health-outcomes.

Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who live in areas that do not have services specific to their concerns, or who live in areas with no history of labor organizing around sex work/adult entertainment, are often isolated from other workers. Like other groups that are socially isolated, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are at risk for numerous occupational health and safety issues. Social media is an important and new part of Internet-based emerging technology and can be used as a tool for health promotion (Young Adult Library Services Association, YALSA, 2006). Because social media is peer-driven and freely available on the World Wide Web, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet access can utilize this media to organize for improved health and labor conditions.

Social media is defined by Wikipedia (a social media site) as, “the online technologies and practices that people use to share content, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media themselves. Social media can take many different forms, including text, images, audio, and video” (Wikipedia, 2007). Social media refers to consumer-created content technologies that are Internet-based. Social media goes beyond access when it successfully “engages and encourages” meaningful participation with accessible as well as useful information (Fine, 2006; Johnmar, 2006). Some examples of social media are:

- Blogs — Online “journals” with multiple user access and contributions
- Vlogs — Video file blogs
- Message boards — Internet forums
- Social networking technologies — Facebook, MySpace
- Podcasting — Audio or video file that can easily be downloaded from the Internet onto personal computer or MP3 devices, like an iPod (Wikipedia, 2006).

Podcasting is form of social media that is growing rapidly on the Internet. Podcast marketing is growing exponentially each day. So far in 2006, 10 million individual users have downloaded a podcast, and 3 million people download one or more podcasts a week (Golfweek, 2006). Apple has been a trailblazer in podcast media; their online store, iTunes Music Store (iTMS), is a resource for podcast creators to upload their podcast shows and for consumers to download these podcasts at no cost to either producers or consumers. iTMS receives 15,508,000 unique visitors per month, an 182% increase of unique monthly visitors from the previous 12 months and as of July 12, 2006, 9.2 million, or 6.6% of Web users had recently downloaded a podcast (Bausch & Han, 2006).

As a result of its rapidly expanding capacity to reach a large audience of Internet users and its emerging popularity, podcasting is an ideal opportunity to pilot a low-cost, social media tool that can reach a large audience 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are located in regions without service organizations for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers, or in regions that historically have been unfavorable to labor organizing around Sex Work/Adult Entertainment, may need capacity building around labor organizing to improve their health outcomes. A podcast targeted toward independent workers might provide an opportunity to address a gap in capacity building for these workers.

Community Capacity Building

“Horizontal knowledge is communication among individuals, who may or may not know each other, but who are loosely coordinated by their involvement with something, or someone, of mutual interest. And it’s extremely powerful, because it makes people much smarter.” — Prof. Glen Reynolds (Cook & Hopkins, 2007)

Community capacity is about the assets (e.g., wisdom, expertise, leadership) that already exist within a community and building upon those assets.

“The starting point for any serious development effort is the opposite of an accounting of deficiencies. . . . Identifying the variety and richness of skills, talents, knowledge, and experience of people...provides a base upon which to build new approaches and enterprises.” (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1988, p.159)

We can build on the capacity of a given community by incorporating the target community as the experts in their community and launching a project with prominent figures within the community as leaders and educators (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2002). Community-based health interventions that build on existing assets within a community are viewed as role models in community capacity building (Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse, 2002; VicHealth, n.d.).

One way to achieve this is by tapping into the assets in the Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers community as well as the online assets (social media tools) available to anyone with Internet access. A challenge of community capacity is that it is very difficult to measure, and there is quite a bit of discourse around the measures that should be utilized (Smith, Littlejohns, & Roy, 2006).

In spite of the legal and structural barriers to lawful organizing, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers already have the capacity to organize and work collectively, subsequently decreasing their occupational exposure to HIV/STIs through social and peer based support networks. By placing the emphasis on existing capacities within the community and utilizing a peer based educational project that incorporates new Internet social media technologies, this project was an attempt to access a “hardly reached” community of Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet access to increase community capacity for collective work and facilitate healthier work related outcomes.

Evaluating Social Media & Social Marketing

“We must be willing to challenge the most basic assumptions about our efforts, to ask ourselves openly and honestly whether we have made the right guesses in our plans.”
— Fine, 2007

Since social media is a relatively new phenomenon, there is a dearth of published evaluations of social media focusing on social or behavior change from a public-health perspective. The majority of published evaluations are industry driven and consider social media as a tool for business to engage in marketplace conversations with their consumer audience (Cook & Hopkins, 2006; Future of Media, 2006; Golfweek, 2006; Social Media Summit, 2007). Given that the potential reach and impact of social media is so broad, evaluations that are centered around health promotion and social change are vital to inform activists and the public health community as prospective content creators what works and what does not work (Fine, 2007; Lefebvre, 2006).

As mentioned previously, there have been numerous evaluations of Internet-based health interventions; however, many of these projects are not considered social media evaluations in the sense that the audience (target population) does not create the content. However, one project that is similar to social media is SexInfo, a project that engages youth to utilize text messaging for sexual health, is an Internet intervention that was recently evaluated and presented at an “Internet Evaluation Meeting” hosted by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (Levine, 2007). Because in this case text messaging was through an Internet-based cell phone provider with user driven content, SexInfo is comparable to social media. SexInfo is described as, “a new sexual health cell phone text messaging service for young people in San Francisco,” particularly African Americans aged 18-25 (SexInfo, 2007). Through focus groups, surveys, and a community advisory board, the project was able to determine several factors that contribute to the success of the intervention — e.g., that urban youth considered text messaging accessible and affordable; that most target youth have MetroPCS as their cell phone provider as it is the least expensive; and that the intervention was reaching the intended community (African American youth from the Bay View/Hunters Point neighborhoods of San Francisco).

Social marketing is a health-intervention strategy that has been evaluated frequently and can be compared with social media. While there are many ways to describe social marketing, it generally has three essential components: 1) The target audience must play a central role in decision making; 2) The primary focus is on “voluntary change;” and 3) “The behavior change is for the benefit of an individual, group or population, not for profit of commercial gain” (Turning Point, 2003, p. 12). On these three issues, social marketing and social media share similar conceptual values. With social media, the “target audience” is the content creator, he or she voluntarily creates and converses horizontally, and the “behaviors” or issues promoted benefit the group as people are initiating and/or engaging in the conversation based on what is meaningful to them.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has funded several demonstration projects (evaluations) that utilize social marketing to improve physical activity and increase awareness around nutrition (Centers for Disease Control, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Huhman et al., 2005). Social marketing campaigns have

also been used to address or bring awareness to HIV, Homophobia, Suicide, Anti-smoking, and Drug Overdose (Better World Advertising, 2007). The evaluation of this podcast is comparable to a social marketing campaign in that the podcast and evaluation was created and guided by a similar target group and initially “test marketed” for feedback to shape future podcasts.

VII. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Goal: Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet access who listen to *RenegadeCast* will have reduced rates of HIV/STIs and increased health in their sex work.
- Outcome Objective: Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet access will utilize podcast media as a tool to share health related information and to establish networks with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet access to improve their occupational health and safety.
- Impact Objectives: As a result of listening to *RenegadeCast*, Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers will have:
- 1) Increased their knowledge of benefits and challenges of networking with other workers; and
 - 2) Increased their confidence in networking with other workers.
- Process Objectives:
- 1) Develop Internet based social media that reflects the needs and wants of Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that have access to the Internet.
 - 2) Engage members of the Sex Worker community to facilitate all aspects of the project;
 - 3) Create a podcast about the benefits and challenges of networking among Sex Workers titled *RenegadeCast-Sex Workers organizing for health*;
 - 4) Build a Website to host *RenegadeCast* as well as blogs and other media pertinent to the community of Sex Workers engaged in the project;
 - 5) Develop an online survey so that *RenegadeCast* listeners could evaluate Episode 1, "Pandering for our Health";
 - 6) Promote the Website, podcast and survey through public, private and semi-private Sex Worker emails, list serves and forums on Erotic Service Provider Websites;
 - 7) Share the survey evaluation results with the community through direct links to the survey results as well as through the second episode of *RenegadeCast* (*Episode 2: Evaluating RenegadeCast; co-producers Naomi Akers and Melissa Gira discuss survey results*).

VIII. METHODS

Target Population

The primary target population for this project was independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who have access to the Internet, either through their work or through social networks. Given that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers without access to the Internet are unable to participate in this type of social media, they were not included in the target population.

Development of Podcast

“Formative evaluations are designed to assist those who are developing projects in the early phases. The emphasis is on feedback to developers with an eye to improving the final product.” —Weiss, 1998

This project was a formative evaluation of a podcast created by current/former Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers. The podcast was titled *RenegadeCast-Sex Workers Organizing for Health*. A formative evaluation of Episode 1, titled “Pandering for our Health”, was chosen to determine if the target audience: 1) could be reached through this type of media; 2) would be likely to change behavior as a result of listening to this media; and 3) would provide the feedback necessary to improve future episodes of the show. The primary topics of the first episode addressed social, legal and structural challenges of networking with other workers in addition to the benefits to overall health and well-being. Inclusion criteria for the podcast guests were that they had identified themselves as having experience with the Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer community in some way, either personally or professionally.

All persons involved with the podcast were over 18 years of age and consented to being involved with the project (see Appendix A for a sample Informed Consent). Multiple open-ended questions were posed to the guests of the show in a semi-structured manner (see Appendix B). Episode 1 of *RenegadeCast*, was created and produced by Naomi Akers and Melissa Gira. Melissa Gira appeared as a guest on the podcast, along with two other current/former Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are also service providers at an occupational health and safety clinic in San Francisco for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and their current partners.

Two file versions of the 35-minute show — an MP3 basic and M4A enhanced with pictures and links to the survey — were hosted on Libsyn.com, an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed public site that enables monitoring and tracking of podcast download activity, i.e., frequency of downloads and determining the site from which the download originated. *RenegadeCast* was also posted at the iTunes. For example, if a user downloaded the show through the iTunes, the host Website would be able to track that information. While the show was physically hosted at Libsyn.com, invitations for the show listed two sources for the podcast: the iTunes Music Store and the Website created for the project (“www.towtruckpanties.com”), which featured multiple links to the online evaluation on SurveyMonkey.com and a blog for listeners to post comments.⁶

⁶ A feature of SurveyMonkey.com is that it easily allows users to analyze and export survey results.

The project described here relied heavily on the input of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are working collectively and cooperatively. Most participants for the podcast interviews contributed to the design of the podcast; in this respect, they were vested stakeholders in the project and were consulted on every aspect of the podcast design and distribution.

The podcast for this project was inspired by *Whorecast*, one of the longest running sexually oriented podcasts. *Whorecast* has made it to the “Top Ten” in iTunes on the subjects of Politics, Religion and Sexuality (Gira, 2006). Podcaster Gira also provided technical expertise for the podcast *RenegadeCast*.

Recruitment Strategies

Listeners to the podcast were recruited via email announcements, hyper-links and postings located on Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers-friendly Websites, and/or through promotional flyers announcing the podcast. Since the podcast was publicly available via the Internet, there were no inclusion or exclusion criteria for listeners. Outreach activities targeting Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers as listeners were primarily Internet driven and included postings on Internet sites geared towards or frequented by Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers.

As well, invitations (including the link to the podcast and evaluation survey) to listen to the show were emailed directly to Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers in public, semi-public and private Internet venues (see Appendix C). First generation email invitations went directly to more than 1,500 male, female and transsexual/transgendered Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet ads in 12 major cities around the world. The number of email invitations that were forwarded from Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to others is not available.

The following three strategies were used for dissemination of the program:

- *Public*: “Erotic Service Providers” on Craigslist, ErosGuide, Pinkbook/Redbook, MySpace.
- *Semi Public*: Sex Worker email lists, invitation to post at Sex Worker political roundtables, Sex Worker Outreach Project Core, St. James Infirmary, Vegas Decrim., BayAreaDoms.
- *Private*: Five multiple private forums in Pinkbook/Redbook — people on these private forums tend to be more active since they had to work hard to establish themselves.

Recruitment of participants for the online survey was achieved through promotion on the podcast, with audio prompts, and through hyperlinks (a “button” on a webpage that directs the user to another webpage) available on the M4A version of *RenegadeCast*. Prospective participants were given a domain name, or Internet address, for the online survey. Additionally, participants could access the online survey through hyperlinks located next to the “link” or “button” for downloading the podcast.

IX. EVALUATION DESIGN

The online survey was made available for all listeners of the podcast; however, the *primary target* audience of the podcast and evaluation survey were independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who have access to the Internet. Given that podcasts are Internet-based, Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers without access to the Internet were not included in this evaluation.

The survey was primarily multiple-choice, with four open-ended questions (see Appendix D). The general themes of the survey questions were:

- How participants accessed the podcast
- Their history with listening to podcast social media and its value as a networking tool
- What they liked/disliked about the podcast
- Types of sex work/adult entertainment in which participants were involved (at any time or within the last 3 months)
- Their peer social support networks
- What they learned from the podcast
- Their likelihood of networking with other workers as a result of the podcast
- What the podcast needed to be more useful
- If they would subscribe⁷ to the podcast in the future.

X. EVALUATION RESULTS

All evaluation data was collected 18 days after the podcast was posted on the Internet. Since Libsyn.com offers a statistical-analysis service with RSS subscription, the project was able to monitor the activity of Website visits and podcast downloads (see Appendix E, **Chart 1** for results of activity monitoring). The podcast was hosted on Libsyn.com and was promoted for downloading at both towtruckpanties.com and at iTunes. Over a period of less than three weeks, 216 people downloaded the show and 36 responded to the online evaluation survey to Episode 1 of *RenegadeCast*, “Pandering for our health.” Of the 36 people who began the survey, 27 completed 4 or more of the 32 questions posed, while 9 answered only the first 1-3 questions of the survey. Thus, 25% of participants did not respond to a significant number of questions and their feedback is excluded from the evaluation results presented below.

Of the 27 respondents who completed ≥ 4 questions, 70% downloaded the podcast from the towtruckpanties Website, while the rest downloaded it from the iTunes. Over half ($n=16$: 59%) of the 27 respondents reported that they learned of the podcast through email; other respondents learned of the podcast through word-of-mouth ($n=6$: 22%), or through the Internet in some other way: blogs, stumbled upon it or at towtruckpanties.com ($n=5$: 19%).

⁷ An advantage to podcast social media is that listeners can subscribe to the podcast for free; future episodes of the show are automatically downloaded to the subscribers’ computer without the user having to initiate the download or any future recruitment efforts or announcements from the podcast producers.

Sixteen people reported having worked as a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer at any time and 3 skipped the question; Of the 16 people who responded that they had ever worked as a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer, 9 reported currently working or having a plan to work within the last 3 months (see Appendix E, **Table 1** for types of Sex Work/Adult Entertainment reported). Of the 9 survey participants reporting currently working in the last 3 months, 8 said they had worked exclusively as an independent; of these, exactly half (n=4) reported learning at least one challenge and one benefit to networking with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers as a result of listening to the podcast. The other half did not.

Open-Ended Questions about “Likes & Dislikes”

Twenty participants responded to an open-ended question “What did you like about this podcast”, while 18 answered the question “What did you not like about this podcast?” Most people reported that they were excited about the podcast and wanted to see more media created from within their community. In general, respondents appreciated the range of information presented in the podcast, the interview style format, the music, and the diversity (range of sex work and experience) represented in the interviews.

“I liked the whole premise of sex workers talking in such an accessible way I get so flustered when people gripe that we don't get represented in the media.” –survey participant

“The diverse sex work experience presented the empowerment and positive sides of sex work (there always needs to be more of this!)” –survey participant

“I think it would be great to have some levity and more personal story in a podcast to balance out some of the really necessary and wonderful discussions of politics and such. I liked what Alix had to say about sex workers never being asked before what they actually liked about sex work. I think it would be great to hear some lighter stuff...stuff that might engage people in different ways, especially folks who aren't already connected to these conversations.” –survey participant

“Appreciated the specific legality information around Webcam work - would love more legal info.” –survey participant

“The info on the coop was ok, but I would have liked more discussion as to why that doesn't happen more. . . .” –survey participant

Five respondents said the podcast was too long and 6 had issues with the quality of the sound or the type of the sound in the podcast. Some respondents reported that they would have preferred to see more art, pictures, legal information, links to resources within the community, and discussions about barriers to cooperative working; one person expressed suspicion about the motivation behind the project.

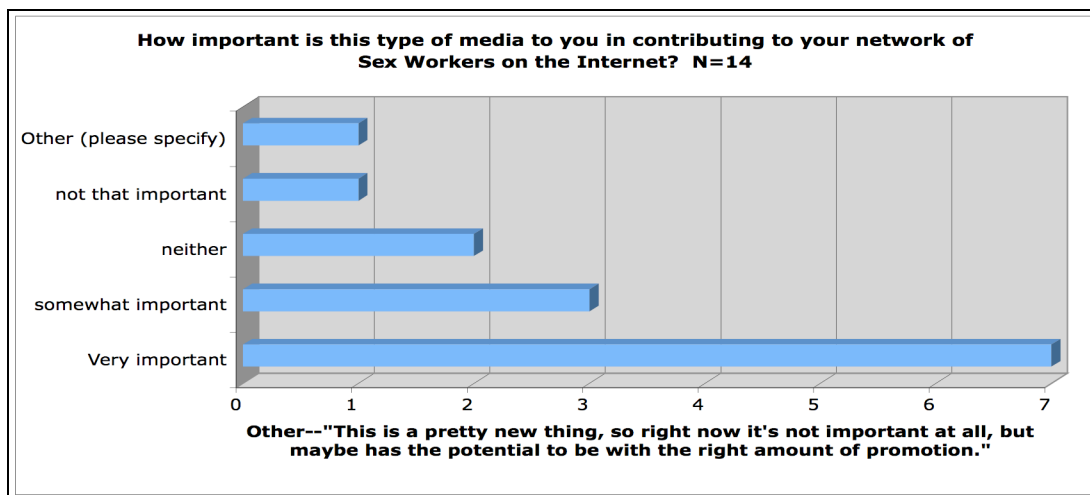
Importance of Podcast Social Media

Of 25 people who answered the question, 19 (76%) reported prior experience listening to a podcast. The podcast topics most frequently reported were Sex-Worker related (n=14), politics (n=9), work/labor issues (n=8), sexual health (n=7), and general health (n=6). Survey respondents were asked to rate *RenegadeCast*:

10 thought the show was “totally riveting” or “way better/slightly better” than other podcasts they had listened to in the past; 9 thought the show was “so-so” or “could use some help;” and 2 thought the show was “totally boring” or “totally sucked.”

Most of the Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer survey respondents (n=10: 71%) reported that this type of media was important to contributing to their network of other workers on the Internet (**Chart 2**, shown below).

Chart 2. Response to Question about Importance of This Media



Of the 8 survey respondents who reported having worked exclusively in independent venues in the last 3 months, the majority (n=5: 63%) reported that they would be more likely to talk with other workers about occupational health and safety issues after listening to *RenegadeCast* (**Chart 3**, shown below).

Chart 3. Response to Question about Influence of Podcast on Future Communication with Other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers



Additionally, 75% (n=6) reported that they were more confident in the possibility of benefiting from networking with their peers (**Chart 4**, shown below).

Chart 4. Response to Question about Future Networking with Peers



Eleven participants replied to the open-ended question, “What does this podcast need to be more useful to the Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer community?” A desire for greater diversity was the most common reply, received from 5 respondents.

“Maybe list off some URLs & phone #s as basic resources? More diversity — economic/class, race? Practical, realistic talk about how substance use affects sex workers? General health alerts; & maybe alerts re: local & national policy that's affecting sex workers (along w/ info on how s.w.'s can help affect what's happening w/ those things)?” —survey participant

Five of the survey participants agreed that the podcast needed more information to increase their interest in networking with other workers. Four of those five participants then replied to the open-ended question, “What types of information would you like to have to?” In general, participants wanted to hear more about street-based work, wanted more legal information, more about the positive aspects of the industry and affirmations about the art, culture and optimism from within the community:

“I'd like to know about sex worker movements and groups happening across the country. I'd like to know about the art and culture being created by individual worker and groups. I'd like to hear positive vision statements about what we want to do—so much of what I hear comes out of political and social organizing movements is reactive and negative, complaints or concerns. I want to hear about grand visions, empowering ideas, glimpses of people working together to make amazing things happen.”—survey participant

Thirteen participants who completed the survey stated they were service providers of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers, 13 stated that they were friends with a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer and 4 reported being a sex partner or client (participants could choose more than one answer). Of the 27 survey participants, the

majority of listeners stated that they would (n=19) or might (n=2) subscribe to this podcast in the future and that they would (n=20) or might (n=1) share this podcast with other workers.

XI. LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of this project was the small sample size. There was a huge discrepancy between the number of participants who *visited* the Website that hosted the podcast (over 1,500) compared with the number of people who actually *downloaded* the podcast (n=216). Additionally, of the 216 people who downloaded the podcast, only 36 responded to the on-line survey invitation and only 27 completed it. Some reasons for the small number of individuals completing the evaluation survey might include: 1) Many Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are simply not interested in this type of media; 2) They do not have the necessary skills, resources or the time required to listen to a podcast and complete an online survey; 3) Listeners may not have been sufficiently motivated to complete an online survey (offering incentives may have increased the number of respondents); and/or 4) the survey may have contained too many questions, particularly the types of questions that required essay responses or that were too personal.

Since the evaluation period of this project was limited to three weeks and the number of current (last 3 months) Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who completed the survey was extremely small, a key limitation to this evaluation is the inability to determine whether this type of social media is appropriate for reaching Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with Internet access. Moreover, this type of media is not appropriate for networking and capacity building for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who do not have access to the Internet. Thus, the small number of respondents and insufficient survey results affect and limit the conclusions that could be drawn from this evaluation.

XII. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

“Community: social media allows communities to form quickly and communicate effectively around common interests.” — Spannerworks, 2007

Because many facets of the industry are criminalized and/or stigmatized, new or prospective workers do not have easy access to advice and mentorship when entering the Adult and/or Commercial Sex Industry. As mentioned earlier in this report, this kind of mentorship is illegal in most states, usually under “pimping and pandering” laws (Marsh, 2007).

“Generally, this is a competitive industry and it’s hard to trust many peers, some of whom actively misinform their co-workers, or worse.” —survey participant

In addition, occupational health and safety guidelines for all Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers are difficult to develop and disseminate when aspects of the industry are criminalized. As a result, many workers are vulnerable to numerous health risks, including but not limited to: 1) job related injury and illness; 2) misinformation from sources that are either uninformed or informed by intolerance; and 3) vulnerability to

abuse and exploitation from people who capitalize on the fact that many of these workers are marginalized as a criminalized population.

Although numerous health-related podcast shows are freely accessible on the Internet, no studies have been published evaluating their validity or usefulness in promoting health. This project is a first step in contributing to a body of knowledge around a new and innovative health media. However, the small number of participants who actually responded to the survey makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions from the data collected. The number of participants might have been larger had we asked fewer questions on the survey; provided incentives to complete the survey; and/or allowed a longer evaluation period.

The primary outcome objective for the project was that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers would use a podcast to share health-related information and establish networks with other workers to improve their occupational health and safety. During the three-week timeframe for the evaluation, 1,500 people visited the Website and 216 downloaded the podcast. Thus 216 people were exposed to the podcast and received health-related information around occupational health and safety issues specific to this industry. Moreover, the majority of the 27 listeners who completed the survey stated that they would subscribe to this podcast in the future and would share the podcast with other workers. Of the Independent workers who responded to the survey, 37.5% said they had no network of other workers to ask for information around occupational health and safety; after listening to the podcast, however, nearly two-thirds (62.5%) agreed that they now were more likely to network with their peers about health information.

Additionally, after listening to the podcast 75% of Independent Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers felt more confident in networking with other workers (Impact Objective #2). Only 4 respondents reported that they learned one challenge and one benefit to networking with other workers as a result of listening to this podcast (Impact Objective #1). Possibly this audience was already aware of the challenges and benefits to networking, or perhaps one episode of the podcast was insufficient to address the full range of information required for the potentially diverse audience of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers on the Internet.

“Generally, other sex workers are in the same boat as me, and attempting to communicate in some way.” –survey participant

Of the 8 respondents who had been working independently for the 3 months preceding the survey, all stated that they currently have colleagues to consult when they are having a difficult time or when they need information around work-related issues in general. However, when first starting in the industry 3 of the respondents did not have a contact to help them get started in the business and 3 currently do not have other workers from whom they can obtain information about occupational health and safety issues. While this group of respondents have a network of other workers for general support, there is an unmet need in the area of mentorship on topics such as getting started in the business and staying healthy and safe.

As mentioned previously, interventions that target reductions in HIV/STI transmission are most effective for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers when the information about overall well-being and empowerment is included in the presentation of educational information about health and other related services (UNAIDS, 2006). Education that focuses on the inclusion of *all priorities set by Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers*

themselves — e.g., social, legal and economic issues and not just the prevention of disease — are the most successful. The results of the present study support this finding: participants said they want information that better reflects the diversity of their community, such as art, photography and other images, culture, group activities, social organization, etc. In other words, while they definitely want and need information about health, a podcast that simply presents health information without addressing other aspects of their work and life is unlikely to be embraced by this community. Based on the results of this formative evaluation, future episodes of *RenegadeCast* will balance health related information with other topics that are of interest to this audience.

XIII. AUTHOR'S REFLECTION

"The people formerly known as the audience..."— Rosen, 2006

In September 2006, I had the good fortune to work with Melissa Gira in my position as Executive Director of the St. James Infirmary, a peer-led occupational health and safety clinic for Sex Workers. She inspired me to create a podcast-evaluation project about the benefits and challenges of networking. This was an ambitious project. Simultaneously creating a website to promote the podcast that was target specific, attractive and fun while learning an entirely new skill set of Internet technologies and staying focused on the purpose of the evaluation and the topic of the show was extremely challenging.

Less than 24 hours after the podcast was uploaded onto the Internet, Melissa received the following email:

"I'm a freelance writer and reporter working for Yahoo on some original features stories. I was wondering if you had some time to talk on the phone? I'm interested in your insight with regard to how sex workers are using the web for social networking, work, community, and finding future clients. I listened to your interview on a podcast at towtruckpanties.com and would love to talk further."—email respondent

This email highlights the concept that the Internet is a potentially effective tool for reaching a broad audience in a very short time. As well, there is great potential for the Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer community to use the Internet as a networking tool both within their community and to network outside their community to build bridges and convey in their own words those issues that are important to them.

The Internet is a dynamic media tool but there are many pitfalls. In the first three days of the show, only 4 results came back under a Google search for "RenegadeCast." At the end of three weeks that number jumped to over 200 Google results for the same query; three months later the number had jumped to 899. Unfortunately, because of the way that Google searches can be manipulated, only a handful of these searches will lead a user directly to the intended podcast. Moreover, while in some ways the Internet is somewhat simple, there are diverse skills and resources necessary to produce and subscribe to podcast social media. Production of the first episode of *RenegadeCast* was extremely time consuming.

When I first began the research for this project in late September of 2006, most of my searches on the Internet for evaluations of social media yielded information targeted towards businesses and for-profit

industries. There were few results about the use of this media by either the public-health community or non-profit institutions. By September of 2007 when this report was being completed—one year later—a significant change in results of searches for “evaluation of social media” had become evident! This drove home the concept that Internet media is quickly expanding, and this media is critical for capacity building around communication, networking, organizing, and participatory conversations.

Reporting evaluation results back to the community was an important step for this project. We recorded a second episode of *RenegadeCast* discussing the evaluation results. When this report was written, 68 people had downloaded *Episode 2: Evaluating RenegadeCast*. In just two months, the total audience of both episodes of *RenegadeCast* was 357 unduplicated people; at five months the total audience had more than doubled. Were I to do this project over again I would have allowed a longer post time in order to capture a larger audience and increase the evaluation period. To remain true to the horizontal foundation of Social Media, a broad range of workers will be included in future productions of the show.

This horizontal communications platform has unlimited potential. The public-health community and advocates for social change are catching on and “connecting” in fresh and exciting new ways. This gives me tremendous hope for the future.

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XV. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A — Informed Consent

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Hello, my name is Naomi Akers. I am a graduate student at SFSU in the Health Education Department. I am conducting research on Internet media as a health promotion tool for the Sex Worker community, and I am inviting you to participate because you have experience with or knowledge of collective or cooperative sex work/adult entertainment that would be helpful to share over the Internet.

Participation in this research includes conducting an audio interview that will be recorded and used in a podcast available on the Internet. A podcast is a prerecorded show (MP3 or M4A file) that is publicly available for people to download from the Internet and listen to whenever they would like to. Your participation is voluntary. By participating in this interview you agree to participate in this research, and have your voice recorded over the Internet for the podcast titled, “*RenegadeCast*.” The podcast will be available on Apple’s iTunes Music Store and on Websites that will support public uploading and downloading of the podcast.

I will also be writing a report that documents the process and results of the podcast and evaluation survey. If you are a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer, or if you are a service provider who wishes to participate confidentially, your name will not be used in any publications, reports, presentations or Internet based media that is generated from this study. Listeners of the first version of this podcast will be asked to complete an online survey evaluating the podcast.

PROCEDURES

Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. The audio portion of your interview will be digitally recorded for a podcast that will be broadcasted on the Internet. This interview should take about an hour and you will be asked questions about your experience with the Sex Worker community and/or your experience working as a Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers, for example in strip clubs, massage parlors or in brothels. You may be asked questions your opinions of your collective sex work/adult entertainment and how it may contribute to either an increased risk or a decreased risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infections to Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers in general. You will not be asked about any sexual acts that you may or may not engage in personally during your work as a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer. If you are a provider of services for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers you will be asked to share your expertise in your field of work/study. You can skip any of the questions you do not feel comfortable answering and participation in this research is voluntary.

The podcast show *RenegadeCast* will have more than one persons interview used for each segment of the show. Your interview will be edited or shortened to fit into a 30-45 minute, uninterrupted show, that has other interviews on it. It is important for you to know that the portion of your interview that is used for the podcast will be available to anyone who has access to the Internet. The podcast will “live” or be stored on the Internet indefinitely, and anyone who downloads the podcast will have that portion of your interview on

his or her personal computer. So if you say something during your interview that you decide you do not want in the publicly available podcast on the Internet, you can let me know either during or directly after the interview and I will make sure to delete that section. The complete and unedited portion of your interview will be stored on my personal password protected computer, for duration of this study and will be destroyed/deleted on June 1, 2007. The exact webpage of the podcast is not available at this time but you will be provided with the webpage to download the final version of the podcast sometime in March of 2007. If you do not have access to a computer, you will be invited to listen to the podcast at the St. James Infirmary, an occupational health and safety clinic for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and their current partners.

If you do not want your normal or natural voice on the Internet for the podcast you can choose to have your voice altered so that it is unrecognizable.

RISKS

If you are a Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers this interview will be confidential, your real name will not be used and you may use any name you feel comfortable using. We can make a name up for the interview if you like. To protect your identity, if you are a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer, we recommend that you do not use your real name or any names that you use to do your sex work/adult entertainment (for example any “working names” or pseudonyms you may have Internet ads under, or any “working names” that you give to your clients). Your real name will never be used in any publications, reports or presentations. Your real name will never be used in association with your original interview or on any podcasts that may result from your interview.

If you are a Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and are concerned that your voice may be recognized over the Internet by people who know you (for example friends, family, customers, co-workers, etc.) you may choose to have the researchers digitally alter your voice for the podcast so that it is unrecognizable. If you do not want your voice altered you may be at risk of having your voice recognized over the Internet by people who know you. A further risk is that if people recognize your voice over the Internet they may learn that you are a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer. There may be other risks if your voice is recognized over the Internet. These risks could be social, economic, political, legal or psychological.

If you are a service provider for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers you may participate confidentially and your real name will not be used in association with your original interview or on any podcasts that may result from your interview. You may also choose to have your voice altered through computer software so that it is unrecognizable to people who may know you. If you use your real name and your voice is not altered you run the risk of people you know learning about your opinions of sex work/adult entertainment or about your work with this community. There may be other risks if your voice is recognized over the Internet. These risks could be social, economic, political, legal or psychological. However, you will not be asked to provide any information about illegal activity or your knowledge of any illegal activity. If you inadvertently discuss your knowledge of illegal activity, that portion of your interview will be deleted at the time of your interview.

Do you want your voice altered? Yes _____ No _____

QUESTIONS

You have spoken with Naomi Akers about this study and have had your questions answered. If you have any further questions about the study, I can be reached via email at: towtruckpanties@yahoo.com or by phone at 415-902-7532.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT IS VOLUNTARY.

You are free to decline to participate in this research study, or to withdraw your participation at any point.

SEX WORKERS/ADULT ENTERTAINERS: FAKE VOICE I agree to participate in this study, but <u>I want my voice altered</u> for this podcast. Signature _____ Date: _____ Research Participant (FAKE NAME)	SEX WORKERS/ADULT ENTERTAINERS: REAL VOICE I have been informed of all the risks if people recognize my voice over the Internet and <u>I DO NOT want my voice altered</u> . Signature _____ Date: _____ Research Participant (FAKE NAME)
FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS: FAKE NAME I am a service provider of sex workers/adult entertainers and <u>I DO NOT want to use my real name</u> . Signature _____ Date: _____	FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS: REAL NAME I am a service provider of sex workers/adult entertainers and <u>I want to use my real name</u> . I have been informed of all the risks Signature _____ Date: _____
Naomi Akers Signature _____ Date: _____	

APPENDIX B — Questions for Podcast Guest Speakers

Interview questions for Internet Podcast guests who are **service providers/researchers** with expertise in Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers health:

1. Tell us a little bit about the type of work you do?
2. In your opinion, why is this work important?
3. What are things that you've learned that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers do to stay safe their work?
4. What is collective sex work? Community capacity? Social Capacity? And how are these important for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers and the advocates who support them?
5. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers who are working collectively?
6. What are some of the challenges for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers to organize?
7. What type of resources are out there for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers?

Interview questions for Internet Podcast guests who **Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers** who work in a collective capacity:

1. Tell us a little bit about the type of work you do in the adult entertainment field?
2. What are some of the top 10 things you do to stay safe in your sex work?
3. How did you learn what you needed to know to work safely?
4. What type of resources are out there for Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that you found particularly helpful for your sex work?
5. How did you start working with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers?
6. What are some of the advantages?
7. What are some of the challenges?
8. How would Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers go about working collectively or with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers?

APPENDIX C — Recruitment Script for Podcast Listeners

I wanted to write you and tell you about a new show created by current and former Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that you can download off the Internet and listen to on your iPod, MP3 player or on your computer. The show is about some challenges and benefits that Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers have faced when trying to network with each other. You'll hear what is happening from other workers in the industry and learn more about an exciting research project that is by and for Sex Workers. You can listen to the show by downloading it at: www.towtruckpanties.com

When you are finished listening to the show, you can give your feedback by going to this link and completing an anonymous online survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=446013455482>

This survey will take you about 15 minutes to complete and the results will be used to create a better podcast! Thanks for checking this out—we hope you enjoy the show! If you like it, please be sure to pass this email on to other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers you know. If you have any questions you can email them to: towtruckpanties@yahoo.com

APPENDIX D — Online Podcast Evaluation Survey (SurveyMonkey.com)
[available at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=446013455482>]

“Welcome to the *RenegadeCast* Evaluation. This survey is an evaluation of Podcast media for Sex Workers. You have been invited to complete this survey because you listened to the Podcast titled *RenegadeCast*.” Please take the next 10 minutes to complete this survey.

Afterwards, if you choose, you can visit a web site about a medical clinic for Sex Workers!”

1. Where did you hear about this Podcast? Please be specific as possible, for example if from a web site please give the site name, if from an email please explain from “a friend” “from a business” “from a co-sex-worker”, etc.
2. Which site did you download this Podcast from? (iTunes, St. James Infirmary, Sacred Whore, Towtruckpanties, other, please specify....)
3. Have you ever listened to a Podcast before this one? YES NO

IF YES SKIP TO 4 IF NO SKIP TO 6

4. What topics were the Podcast you listened to on? Check all that apply: General health related, sexual health related, sex work related, gender issues, work/labor issues related, politics, religion, music, comedy, commercial, other (specify)
5. How would you rate this Podcast in comparison to others? Way Better, Slightly Better, About the same, Could use some help, Totally Boring.

SKIP TO 8

6. If this is the first Podcast you ever listened to, was it easy for you to find on the Internet?
7. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "totally riveting", 3 being "so so" and 5 being "totally sucked", how would you rate this Podcast?
8. Were you able to listen to the entire episode? YES NO

IF YES SKIP TO 10 IF NO SKIP TO 9

9. If NO, How much did you listen to: more than half or less than half?
10. What did you like about this podcast?
11. What did you not like about this podcast?
12. What is your relationship to the Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers community? (check all that apply)

I am a Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer _____, Owner/manager of adult entertainment business _____, Client/customer _____, sex partner of Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer _____, service provider _____, relative _____, friend _____, co-worker (non- Sex Worker/Adult Entertainer) _____, Really big fan _____, None _____, Other, specify _____

IF YES TO SEX WORK SKIP TO 13 IF NO SEX WORK SKIP TO 32

13. If yes to sex work/adult entertainment, specify type of sex work ever done, check all that apply:
Independent In-call/out-call _____, independent BDSM _____, independent massage _____, independent lingerie modeling or other modeling _____, independent stripping _____, phone sex _____, Webcam _____, street-based _____, Escort agency _____, legal brothel _____, other _____

brothel_____, massage parlor_____, BDSM dungeon_____, strip club_____, lingerie modeling studio_____, out-call stripping through an agency_____, Porn through a production company_____, other Porn_____, Other sex work please specify_____.

14. Have you worked or planned on working as a Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers in the last 3 months?

IF YES SKIP TO 15 IF NO SEX WORK SKIP TO 30

15. If yes to working or planning to do sex work/adult entertainment in the last 3 months, specify type of sex work you are doing currently: check all that apply

Independent In-call/out-call_____, independent BDSM_____, independent massage_____, independent lingerie modeling or other modeling_____, independent stripping_____, phone sex_____, Webcam_____, street-based_____, Escort agency_____, legal brothel_____, other brothel_____, massage parlor_____, BDSM dungeon_____, strip club_____, lingerie modeling studio_____, out-call stripping through an agency_____, Porn through a production company_____, other Porn_____, Other sex work please specify_____.

16. Do you have your own sex work business where you do sex work and other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers contract with you?

17. Do you have other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that you can talk to when you are having “a hard time” in your sex work?

18. Do you have other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that you can ask for information around sex work in general if you need it?

19. Do you have other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that you can ask for information around sex work related occupational health & safety (whatever that means to you) if you need it?

20. What did you learn from this podcast that is useful to you in your sex work?

21. As a result of listening to this podcast I have learned at least one barrier/challenge to working with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that I did not know before: YES NO

22. As a result of listening to this podcast I have learned at least one advantage/benefit to working with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers that I did not know before: YES NO

23. As a result of this podcast I am more likely to talk with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers about sex work related occupational health & safety: Strongly agree, agree somewhat, no change, disagree somewhat, strongly disagree.

24. As a result of listening to this podcast, I feel confident that I would benefit by networking with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers in some capacity: Strongly agree, agree somewhat, no change, disagree somewhat, strongly disagree.

25. If you answered “no change, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree,” please briefly explain what you would need to improve your confidence to network with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers into mutually beneficial working relationship:

26. I might be interested in networking with other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers in some capacity, but would need more information that was not provided in this Podcast. Strongly agree, agree somewhat, no change, disagree somewhat, strongly disagree.

27. If you answered “Strongly agree or agree somewhat” What types of information would you like to have?

28. If the information that you got came from other Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers, would you think that it is more valid than information that came from public health service providers who were not Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers? More valid from Sex Workers, Both equally valid, Less valid from Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers.
29. How important is this type of media to you in contributing to your network of Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers on the Internet? Very important, somewhat important, neither, not that important, not important AT ALL, I am not interested in contributing to my network
30. What does this podcast need to be more useful to the Sex Workers/Adult Entertainers community?
31. Would you recommend this Podcast to other Sex Worker/s you know who work on the Internet?
YES NO MAYBE
32. Would you subscribe to this Podcast again? YES NO MAYBE

APPENDIX E — Survey Results Not Presented in Text

Chart 1: Statistics from Libsyn on Activity of Site Visits

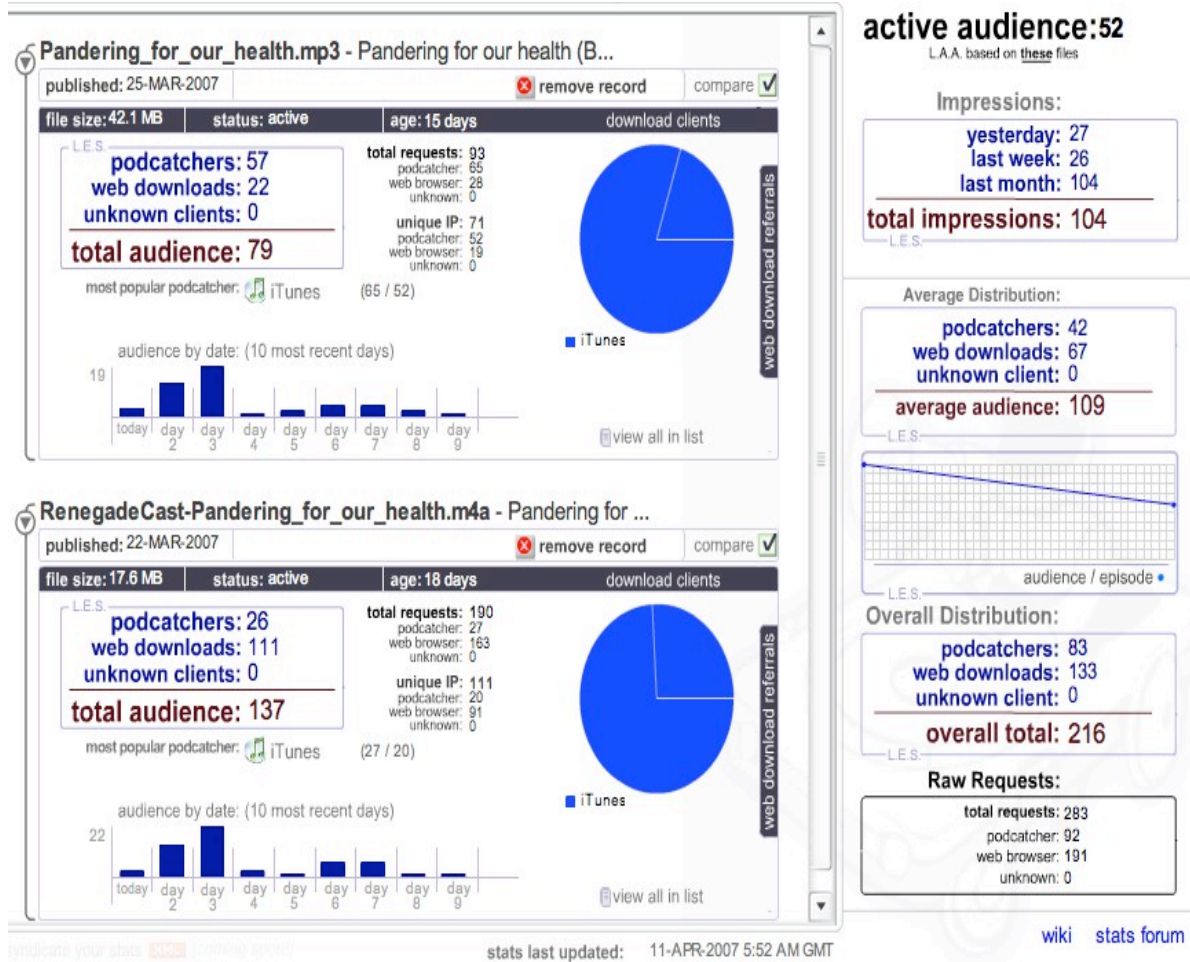


Table 1: Types of Sex Work/Adult Entertainment

WORKED IN SEX WORK/ADULT ENTERTAINMENT FIELD AT ANY TIME	N	WORKED IN SEX WORK/ADULT ENTERTAINMENT WITHIN THE LAST 3 MONTHS	N
<i>INDEPENDENT WORK</i>		<i>INDEPENDENT WORK</i>	
Independent In-call/out-call	12	Independent In-call/out-call	6
Independent BDSM	7	Independent BDSM	3
Independent massage	7	Independent massage	3
Independent lingerie modeling or other modeling	5	Phone sex	2
Independent stripping	5	Street-based	1
Phone sex	6	Independent Porn	1
Street-based	3	Independent stripping	1
Independent Porn	3		
Bar hustling	2		
<i>Total</i>	50	<i>Total</i>	17
<i>COLLECTIVE WORK</i>		<i>COLLECTIVE WORK</i>	
Strip club	3	Porn through a production company	1
Porn through a production company	2		
Escort agency	2		
Massage parlor	1		
BDSM dungeon	1		
Out-call stripping through an agency	1		
<i>Total</i>	10	<i>Total</i>	1