

# **Sexting and Youth**

A Multidisciplinary Examination of  
Research, Theory, and Law

Edited by  
**Todd C. Hiestand**  
and  
**W. Jesse Weins**



**CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS**  
Durham, North Carolina

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sexting and youth : a multidisciplinary examination of research, theory, and law / edited by Todd C. Hiestand and W. Jesse Weins.

pages cm

ISBN 978-1-61163-386-3 (alk. paper)

1. Internet and teenagers. 2. Sexting. 3. Sexting--Law and legislation--United States. 4. Teenagers--Sexual behavior. I. Hiestand, Todd C. II. Weins, W. Jesse.

HQ799.2.I5S494 2014

004.67'80835--dc23

2013050641

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS  
700 Kent Street  
Durham, North Carolina 27701  
Telephone (919) 489-7486  
Fax (919) 493-5668  
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

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# Preface

*Todd C. Hiestand & W. Jesse Weins*

In the fall of 2013, according to media reports, about a dozen teenage girls in San Diego, California, took naked pictures of themselves and texted them to their boyfriends. Some of the girls were as young as thirteen. Soon, the pictures had circulated through six high schools and one middle school. Police involvement followed with threats of child pornography charges for those thirty students involved in the so-called “sexting ring.”<sup>1</sup> Variations of this theme across the country and world have parents, school administrators, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and legislatures wondering about how to respond.

Beginning with industry market research and now progressing to large-scale government-university partnerships and grant projects, data has been accumulating on the topic. This book supplies one of the first secondary compilations of academic information and analysis surrounding youth sexting. It surveys the purposes and types of research, highlights theoretical points of interest, and provides analysis for major surrounding academic disciplines. It is a multidisciplinary examination, with contributions ranging from prevalence and research methodology, to adolescent behavior and development, to technological and sociological perspectives, to cultural and media studies, to legal studies and educational policy. International approaches are also presented.

Sexting could be studied generally without regard to age and maturity. Society, however, has placed constraints upon youth sexual activities and especially upon sexually explicit images of youth. Because of this, the question of teenage sexting is more fraught with policy and legal difficulties than adult sexting and arguably has greater need for timely analysis. We therefore chose

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1. Dave Summers and Christina London, “Charges to be Filed in Teen Sexting Ring,” *nbc-sandiego.com*, October 29, 2013, [http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Charges-To-Be-Filed-in-Teen-Sexting-Ring-229646361.html?fb\\_comment\\_id=fbc\\_746614005353065\\_95630648\\_746994315315034#f1380b74fccdeac](http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Charges-To-Be-Filed-in-Teen-Sexting-Ring-229646361.html?fb_comment_id=fbc_746614005353065_95630648_746994315315034#f1380b74fccdeac).

to look at youth because that is where academic research and societal debate have centered.

The authors contributing to this volume carry their own kinds of expertise, and their viewpoints and conclusions are varied and at times even conflicting. This was intentional. Contributing authors were not required to advocate a particular opinion but rather offer up the views that they currently hold in light of the available information, which we believe provides a fair and comprehensive picture of one of the most challenging and controversial social issues in recent years.

# Acknowledgments

Thanks to Carolina Academic Press and all of the exemplary authors who contributed to this work. I am also incredibly grateful for the support of MidAmerica Nazarene University, my colleagues at MNU, and Dr. Earl Bland for his guidance during this project. Infinite thanks to my co-editor, it's always a pleasure working with you. Most of all, love and gratitude to my beautiful wife, Christy, and wonderful daughter, Lucy—I am the luckiest!

Todd C. Hiestand

I am grateful to a number of people for their time and help in producing this edited work, especially our contributing authors for their dedication, the publishing team at Carolina Academic Press, and Dr. Donald Simmons, Jr., for his guidance. Additionally, thanks to the researchers and practitioners who generously supplied content or reviewed draft manuscripts for improvements. Special thanks to Todd for his vision and attention to detail, and, of course, to my wife, Anne, for her patience and support.

W. Jesse Weins

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