

## Craigslist in legal trouble for “child prostitution ads”

Submitted by [Justin Sorkin](#) on Fri, 03/06/2009 - 07:42



Craigslist is in legal trouble for posting "child prostitution ads"! Yes, the popular national classified-ad Web [site](#), Craigslist is accused of posting juvenile prostitution ads in its "erotic services" section.

San Francisco Bay Area based Craigslist is popular site for online classified ads that millions of Americans use daily to find jobs, internships, apartments, used furniture, for sale/barter/wanted, and of course "erotic services," due to which the site is presently in trouble.

Cook County, Illinois Sheriff Tom Dart, who reckoned that Craigslist has become the largest source of prostitution in America, filed a federal lawsuit against the Craigslist owners on Thursday, in which Dart has demanded that Craigslist should eliminate its Erotic Services section.

Dart said, "Craigslist is the single largest source of prostitution in the nation. Missing children, runaways, abused [women](#) and women trafficked in from foreign countries are routinely forced to have sex with strangers because they're being pimped on craigslist."

According to Dart, in its "erotic services" ads section, Craigslist publishes ads, like "Teens for [Cash](#)" and "Hot young girls needed for Naughty Nanny Service." The FBI has noted over 2,800 child prostitution ads published on Craigslist, and Chicago is one of the top 10 cities known for child prostitution.

Dart said, "It's abundantly clear it's prostitution. You have pictures that are pornographic. You have people setting out their rates of what they charge for what services and what amounts of time."

In the federal lawsuit against Craigslist, Dart stated that he has found that the majority of the prostitutes booked by his department or other law enforcement agencies [nationwide](#), publicize their flesh businesses through Craigslist. He implored the court to ban the erotic services ads, which he claimed are public nuisance and threat to property, [health and safety](#) of the community.

Dart said that he filed the lawsuit, after the website ignored his written requests to close its Erotic Services section for two years. He said, "Pimps are preying on the most vulnerable members of our society and taking advantage of our struggling economy. The worst part is craigslist's owners know their Web site is still being used for illegal purposes and they're doing nothing to stop it."

Supporting Dart's case, Salim Goswani of the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, said, "The marketplace for prostitution has shifted. It's going away from what we commonly see on the street to online, and Craigslist is the biggest facilitator of this."

Responding to Dart's allegations, Craigslist spokeswoman Susan McTavish said, "Craigslist is an extremely unwise choice for those intent on committing crimes, since criminals inevitably leave an electronic trail to themselves that law enforcement officers will follow. On a daily basis, we are being of direct assistance to police departments and federal authorities nationwide."

She said, "Misuse of craigslist to facilitate criminal activity is unacceptable, and we continue to work diligently to prevent it. Misuse of the site is exceptionally rare compared to how much the site is used for legal purposes. Regardless, any misuse of the site is not tolerated on craigslist."