



### My Year in Smut: The Internet Escapades Inside Danni's Hard Drive

Taylor Marsh

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Sex. That's the main event, whether you're reading this book or just living life. It's the one subject that fascinates us all. This drama is about the people and the absurd situations that pervade porn, specifically seen through the year Taylor Marsh spent as editor in chief, then managing editor of a neophyte entrepreneurial Internet company, Danni's Hard Drive, which is run by the "Most Downloaded Woman in Internet History" (according to the Guinness Book of World Records).

The story that will unfold is partly about Danni Ashe, a woman who started off as a stripper, but who eventually landed on the World Wide Web, leaving her very first job behind to take on her second job, president and head porn Diva of her own multi-million dollar Internet and video smut company. On the other side of the story sits a strong, authority bucking activist writer who, while accomplishing a lot for her boss, would ultimately become the sequin studded g-string that cut just a little too tight up Danni's derriere.

It's about an industrious former stripper who created and founded the "number one subscription site on the Web," and the gal that she hired to assemble a creative and technical team, recreate and reorganize her content, as well as perform the tasks of managing editor at what was undoubtedly the first and most critical "strategic inflection point" in her company's history. Coined by Intel Chairman, Andrew Grove, it is basically a point in corporate time when something radical impedes a business's standard way of operating so that a fundamental change in procedures must be implemented in order for the company to continue to prosper.

In July 1997, Danni's Hard Drive was going through a strategic inflection point, turning the business away from ad hoc amateur practices, and into a serious money making machine. Danni's contract with the people who provided all of her pictorial and written content, The Score Group, was about to end. When it did, The Score Group was coming on line and about to become her number one competitor. If Danni didn't make it through this critical corporate juncture the future of her company was in serious jeopardy. To say that Taylor was unprepared for the combustible atmosphere at Danni's Hard Drive is a profound understatement.

Debating the realities and opportunities of executive female pornographers, which used to be a non-starter due to the fact that females could only be employed as porn performers, the Internet seemed a perfect place to set up shop as an editor. Watching the new world of gal-driven pornography unfold online, while continuing to accumulate further research regarding the sexual habits of humans, which is actually what Taylor does. Ultimately, Taylor was curious how the Divas of Porn navigated a newly emancipated porn world, even if they didn't call themselves feminists. Because as Taylor sees it, without women's rights these gals would still be relegated to the video set bedroom, the porn boardroom still designated for guys only.

There is also the issue of what constitutes appropriate erotic content, written and photographic, which is particular critical in pornography and especially important on an e-commerce smut site. No other medium offers such immediate access to pornography through anonymous, unknown and unmonitored means, allowing the curious voyeur, regardless of age, to access porn if they but try. So, effective Internet blocking software is important, but not nearly as crucial as a parent's involvement in their child's online activities. Especially since once an adolescent or young teen finds an adult site the homepage is often very innocuous. Oftentimes all they have to do is click on the statement that reads, "I am over eighteen," and "I am not

offended by nudity," and presto, he or she is treated to an explosion of adult content free of charge, which is meant to tease surfers into becoming subscribers. This free content can include XXX-rated sexually graphic advertising banners, full n! udes and topless porn stars.

It's astounding to think of the mounds of money that continually came in during Taylor Marsh's fourteen months at Danni's Hard Drive. But she was completely naïve when it came to the business of pornography, having never been associated with porn in her life, though the sexual and political world of adults is her professional playground. Taylor's conclusions are many, but one in particular rests uncomfortably with her. Whether speaking of Alfred Kinsey, Hugh Hefner or Larry Flynt, and regardless of whether you approve, agree or can stomach their products; along with their capitalistic ambitions, these men also had political passions, purpose and philosophies that each of them believed in and staked their lives on. Mr. Kinsey was brave enough to turn his research towards women at a time when we weren't allowed to speak openly about our sexuality, and whether you agree with his methods or not, he believed that bringing feminine sexuality into the American conversation was philosophically important. Mr. Hefner braved the suburban standards of the 1950s by daring to suggest that men could create a different kind of life for themselves outside the traditions of Puritanical America, and in the process help spark a revolution. Mr. Flynt, as outrageous a pornographer as you are likely to find, was willing to go to! jail for his first amendment beliefs. The current generation of techno smut peddler hasn't the conscience, the heart or the soul of any of their political and philosophically oriented predecessors.

The Internet invites us all to become covert peepers, seducing us with the carnal carnival that is breeding online. It's a vast, ever expanding arena. Peddling porn online is evidently not unlike working with a very large beast, and it didn't take Taylor Marsh long to learn that to satisfy the brute and its paying customers you would have to become enslaved.



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