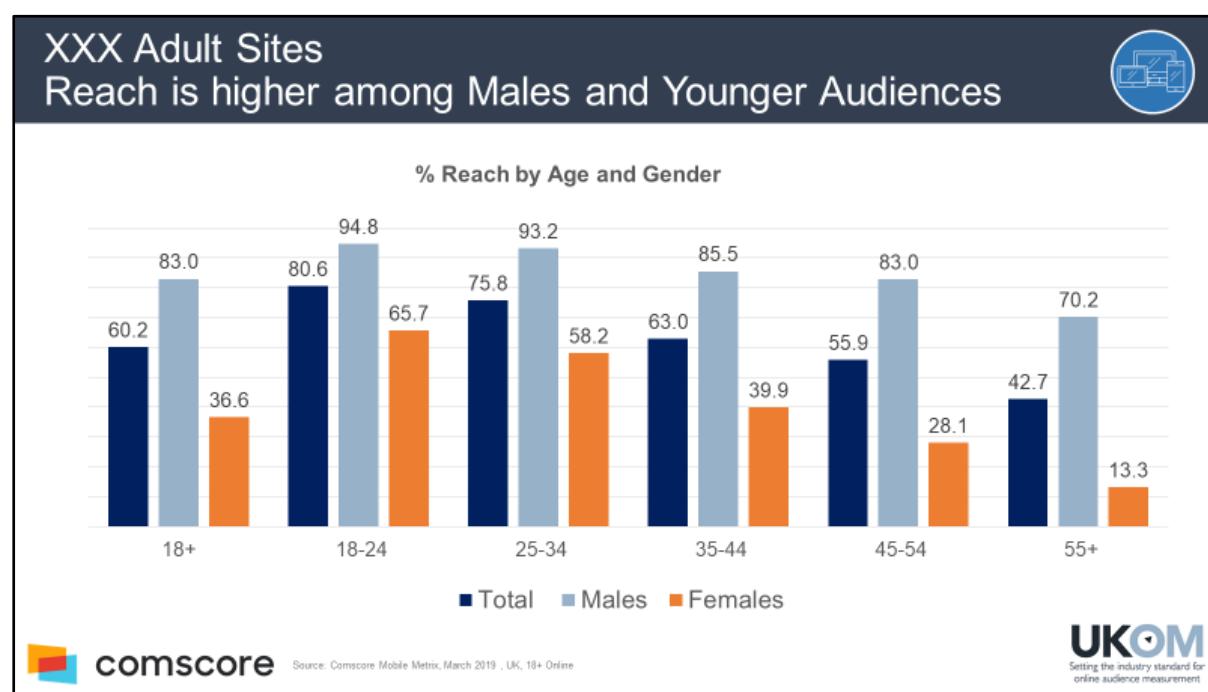


# UKOM Insights

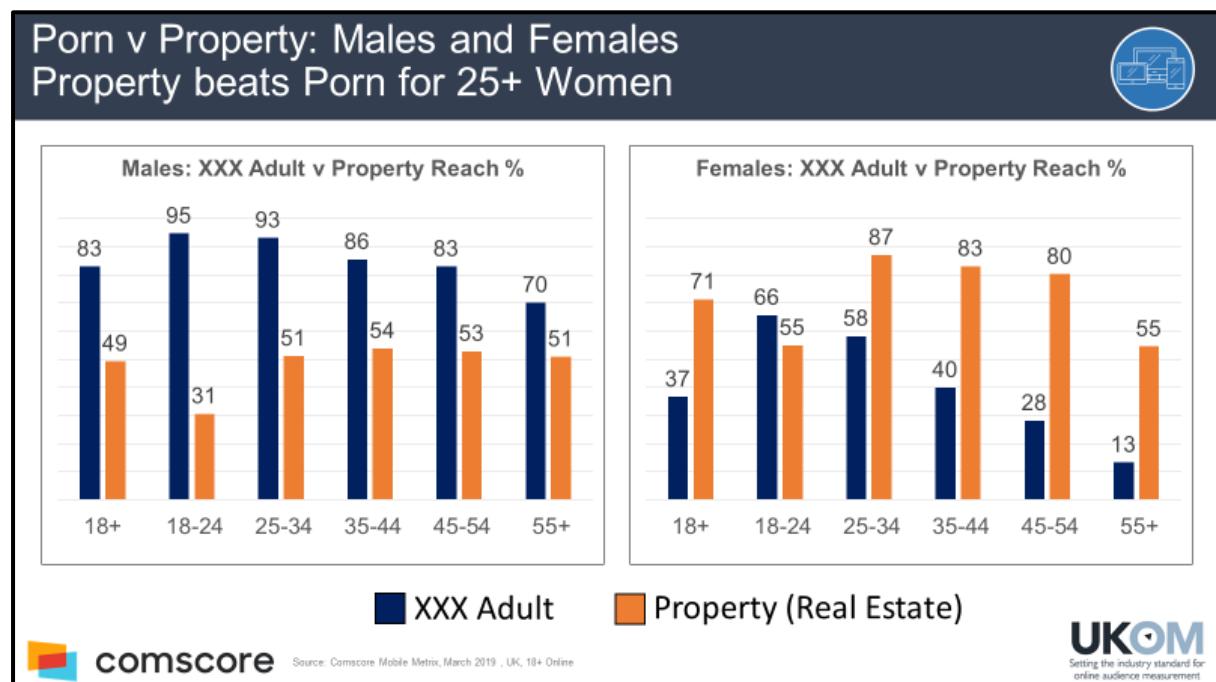
## Age Verification for Adult Sites Online

On July 15, 2019 the UK will become the first country in the world to introduce age-verification for online pornography. Under the new legislation, commercial porn websites that sell adult content or that are ad funded will be required to implement technology that enables people to prove that they are over aged 18 before they can view the content. For visitors, there are a variety of different age-verification options including use of credit cards, driving licences, passports, digital IDs and cards which can be bought face to face in a shop and used online. The legislation is being introduced by the government to protect children from accessing inappropriate material but it will impact millions of online users. So how many people in the UK access online pornography each month and who are they?

According to UKOM approved Comscore data, in March 2019 26.4 million adults in the UK visited sites classified under the content category 'XXX Adult' – that's 60% of the UK online population. Males (83% of males 18+) are much more likely to visit than females (37% of females 18+) and penetration decreases as people get older - reducing from 81% among 18-24s to only 43% for 55+. Combining both age and gender reveals that MEN at EVERY age group have a higher propensity to visit adult sites than WOMEN of ANY age group. For females, the highest reach was among 18-24s at 66% which is still lower than the lowest male 'reach' of 70% among 55+. Of all the demographics, males 18-24 had the highest reach with 95% of the online population of that segment visiting the category in March 2019.



Females may have a lower propensity to visit adult sites but, with the term “property porn” now an official entry in the Collins English Dictionary, a survey\* by YouGov in 2018 showed that 1 in 3 Brits say they ‘occasionally or often spend time looking or thinking about property they can’t afford’. So how does ‘property porn’ compare with adult ‘porn’ in the more traditional XXX sense, and is viewing real estate more popular among females? The data below compares reach by age and gender of the two categories within UKOM approved Comscore data: XXX Adult and Real Estate. For males, XXX Adult sites are far more popular than Real Estate (83% v 49%) whereas for females, the situation is reversed (71% for Real Estate v 37% for Adult sites). In fact, between the ages of 25-54, viewing property is as popular among females as porn is among males, with over 80% of females ages 25-54 browsing each month.



Putting ‘property porn’ to one side, the introduction of age verification for pornographic websites is a big step for the UK government, who are increasingly seeking to protect young audiences online. The UK’s film regulator, The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) will be responsible for ensuring providers meet the new standards. Although some opponents are concerned over freedom and privacy issues, children’s charities have welcomed the initiative which they believe will make it harder for young people to accidentally stumble upon pornography. Comscore estimates show that around 1 in every 8 teenagers aged 13-17 in the UK visited sites within the XXX Adult category in March 2019.

The XXX Adult sector is so big that anything that impacts a user’s desire or ability to access adult content could also impact overall online time spent. In March 2019, the XXX Adult category generated 2% of all UK online time spent – that’s 7 billion minutes – making it bigger than time spent gambling online. If the new age verification measures put people off from visiting adult sites, then as well as seeing a reduction in visitor numbers to the category, we could see a reduction in total online minutes or perhaps even a shift towards other activities.

UKOM will keep an eye on the sector and any potential impact over the coming months and will update you on any changes in usage once the law has been introduced.

**Notes on Data:**

All data is based on UKOM industry standard and development level approved Comscore MMX Multi-Platform data based on March 2019 data. All UK data is based on UKOM industry standard approved Comscore MMX Multi-Platform data across Desktop PCs (including laptops and notebooks) and Mobile devices (smartphones and tablets).

Categories selected are the following Comscore content categories: XXX Adult and Real Estate.

Analysis is carried out on 18+ online users except where specified the data is based on teens.

\*<https://www.bing.com/search?q=yougov+%2B+property+porn&form=EDGTCT&qs=PF&cvid=6eaedcb6f0cc4d3eb66908b2ead4cb&refig=73ecd0d585694121ec50b9b7e77fa108&cc=GB&setlang=en-US&plvar=0&PC=MSE1>