

Why NSFW Porn Clips Are Popping Up On Regular Sites Today

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VidMe went defunct, and sites that hosted its videos are now unwittingly hosting embeds to a very NSFW step porn site. The pornographic imagery has been cut from this screenshot.

Screenshot by Daniel Van Boom/CNET

Do you remember ? It was a video hosting and streaming site set up in 2014 that hoped to compete with . It ultimately couldn't compete, and closed its virtual doors in 2017. Its domain was apparently recently purchased by a porn site, 5 Star HD Porn. The result is that websites that used to host VidMe clips now have embedded clips of extremely NSFW porn videos.

user , posting a thread to Twitter showing that sites like The Washington Post, New York Magazine, The Huffington Post and more all had 5 Star HD Porn videos embedded on their article pages. that archived versions of these stories previously had VidMe embeds where the porn now is.

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At the time of this writing, The Washington Post and Huffington Post appear to have rectified the issue. The pornographic embed is still live on the New York Magazine site, as well as other publications, like Complex. "We are in the process of permanently removing this content whenever it appears," a spokesperson for the Huffington Post said.

Twitter hasn't noticed but a now-defunct video hosting/advertising platform (VidMe) let their domain expire so it was purchased by a porn website, now there

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It's possibly the most dramatic example of the risks posed by link rot. Blogs and news sites regularly embed YouTube clips, Facebook and Instagram posts, and tweets into articles. The result is that old articles often have broken links to deleted YouTube videos or removed tweets -- the latter of which are particularly prevalent after .

5 Star HD Porn didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Twitter user who posted about the issue noted that doing an internet search on VidMe plus any keyword now surfaced sites that had hosted VidMe content, which has since been replaced with the 5 Star embeds. (I unearthed a few such sites this way.) Users added to the thread sites they found to still be unwittingly hosting the NSFW content.

Doxie stumbled on the issue while searching for content for an Instagram meme page and discovered a Facebook page with undetected pornographic images. "I just think it's funny when multibillion dollar companies make 'mistakes' like this (and get away with it) but will likely turn around to blame their algorithms and technology," Doxie told CNET. "It's quite absurd in my opinion."

"A few people mentioned this is something called 'link rot,'" Doxie added, "never heard of the term, I'm not a tech person. I just post memes online."