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Internet Law

AGs Call for More Oversight of Web Ads After So-Called Craigslist Murder

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By [Martha Neil](#)

A Boston medical student who allegedly attacked or robbed at least two women he met via ads they placed on Craigslist and is now charged with murdering one of them has sparked new calls for stricter oversight of the explicit sex ads for which the website is, in part, known.

The website offers itself as a one-stop shop for advertising housing, services and goods, but it is the "sleaze factor," one expert says, that helps Craigslist get 9 billion page views monthly, reports the [Boston Globe](#).

Although law enforcement officials agree with Craigslist founder Craig Newmark that the website is cooperative with investigators pursuing criminal conduct related to advertising on the site, website ads often are "the enablers" for such conduct, Mass. Attorney General Martha Coakley tells the newspaper. "It's all well and good to say we'll help when we're called upon . . . but in light of what's happened in Boston and around the country, it may be time for a little closer look or oversight."

In an agreement last year with some 40 state attorneys general, Craigslist agreed to security measures concerning erotic ads. They included a requirement that posters must pay a small fee, with a credit card, to help create a record of their identity.

Now, however, some are saying more needs to be done.

"Craigslist has the means—and moral obligation—to stop the pimping and prostituting in plain sight," says Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal in a [press release](#) today. "Like any bricks and mortar establishment, Craigslist has the responsibility and power to prohibit prostitution, pornography and inappropriate behavior on its premises."

Among other measures, he is calling for the website to monitor advertising more closely for violations of Craigslist terms of service, eliminate photographs in erotic ads, impose a "significant fee" on the credit cards of those who violate terms of service and offer a reward to website users for flagging violations.

Hat tip: [Crime Report](#).

Additional and related coverage:

[Boston Globe](#): "Craigslist CEO: Our site is not sex-related "

[Boston Globe](#): "Easy prey drew suspect, DA says"

[AmLawDaily](#): " 'Craigslist Killer' Puts Perkins Coie-Brokered Settlement Back in Spotlight"

[ABAJournal.com](#) (2008): "MySpace, 50 AGs Agree on Rules to Make Web Safer for Kids"

[ABAJournal.com](#) (2008): "N.Y. Bill Would Keep Sex Offenders Off MySpace, Facebook"

[ABAJournal.com](#) (2007): "NY AG to Facebook: Consumer Fraud?"

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