Welcome to the
Inaugural National Research Conference on Violence against Women and their Children

ANROWS Research to Policy and Practice

Technology facilitated sexual violence & harassment:
Overcoming rape culture in cyberspace

Presenter: Dr Anastasia Powell
RMIT University

Facilitator: Julie Oberin
WESNET
Technology facilitated sexual violence

Dr Anastasia Powell & Dr Nicola Henry

anastasia.powell@rmit.edu.au

ARC funded Discovery Project: Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence and Harassment
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What is Technology Facilitated Sexual Violence?

1. Unauthorised creation and/or distribution (actual or threatened) of sexual images;
2. Creation and/or distribution (actual or threatened) of sexual assault images;
3. Using a carriage service to procure a sexual assault;
4. Online sexual harassment and cyberstalking; and
5. Gender-based hate speech.
Rape Culture Unveiled
DON'T WRAP IT AND TAP IT

TAPE HER AND RAPE HER

GANG RAPE

5 out of 6 people enjoy it
Preventing Sexual Violence in a Technosocial World
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<th>Individual-Level</th>
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<td><strong>Reducing victim vulnerability</strong></td>
<td>Education-based, aimed at improving potential victims’ technical capabilities to protect themselves online</td>
<td>Service providers enabling easy access to information on using privacy settings, and how to document and report abuse</td>
<td>Legal protections in place, effectively enforced</td>
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<td>Cross-jurisdictional consistency and cooperation</td>
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<td><strong>Reducing offender motivation</strong></td>
<td><em>Education-based, aimed at promoting digital sexual ethics</em></td>
<td><em>Terms of use that ban hateful &amp;/or harassing content, effectively enforced by service providers</em></td>
<td>Policy strategies directed at underlying causes of sexual violence more generally</td>
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<td>Feminist/social justice activism</td>
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<td><strong>Promoting effective guardianship</strong></td>
<td>Education-based, promoting ‘bystanders’ to take action against hate speech and harassing content</td>
<td>Service providers providing mechanisms for reporting hateful/harassing content; Counter-speech; pro-active development that limits the opportunities for abuse</td>
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Reducing Victim Vulnerability

- screening calls;
- deleting Internet history files;
- changing mobile numbers;
- performing a “factory reset” on smart phones to wipe out any surreptitiously installed applications;
- locating GPS tracking or hidden cameras;
- changing computer passwords;
- adopting an androgynous or male avatar in an online game setting;
- desisting from taking explicit photos or films with intimate partners;
- blocking individuals and/or deactivating accounts on SNS;
- protecting privacy online; and
- exercising extreme caution in dating scenarios with unknown men.
Reducing Offender Motivation

• **Individual:** education prevention programs promoting sexual ethics, extending to online and mobile encounters

• **Organisational:** Internet intermediaries and social networking service providers proactively enforcing policies and terms of use that ban hateful/harassing content, *with consequences* (such as temporary or extended account deactivation)

• **Societal:** Regulations requiring companies to provide mechanisms for responding to hate/harassment online; Regulations limiting anonymity in some online services; Laws criminalising new forms of online harassment and abuse (e.g. ‘revenge pornography’)
Promoting Effective Guardianship

• Education fostering *digital citizenship*, protecting internet users:
  “capability to partake freely in the internet’s diverse political, social, economic, and cultural opportunities, which informs and facilitates their civic engagement” (Citron, 2011, p.1440)

• Promote *individual bystander action*: reporting hateful/harassing content, participating in counter-speech

• *Organisations as proactive bystanders*: enforce policies, engage in counter-speech

• *Societal*: law enforcement, cross-jurisdictional consistency and cooperation; Public education campaigns
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