

Five Facts About Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

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FACTS

1

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV)—any act that is committed or amplified using digital tools or technologies causing physical, sexual, or psychological, social, political, or economic harm to women or girls because of their gender¹—is a challenge that is keeping girls and women from participating in public life. It covers a wide range of online harms, including trolling, SWATting, doxing, cyberstalking, hacking, impersonation, and others.²

2

TFGBV has compounded effects on women of intersectional identities.³

3

It can take as little as twenty-five minutes and zero dollars to create a non-consensual deepfake pornographic video of a woman, using only a clear picture of her face. Estimates hold that ninety-nine percent of all pornographic deepfakes depict women.⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments and civil society organizations should continue to work to increase public awareness of TFGBV through further research and strategic communications campaigns, aimed at stigmatizing these antidemocratic behaviors.

Technology companies, including social media platforms, should institute robust engagements with civil society groups, including women's rights, civil rights, and civic tech groups, to ensure they are proactively considering the concerns of TFGBV survivors and victims before rolling out new features on their platforms.

Legislatures around the world should urgently pass federal level/nationwide legislation that may include both civil and criminal penalties for the creation and distribution of non-consensual deepfake pornography. They should also consider the introduction of excess penalties for the creation or distribution of deepfake pornography against political candidates during elections.

Search engines, payment platforms, financial institutions, and app stores should delist and demonetize websites and applications that are dedicated to the creation and distribution of deepfake pornography and ensure underage users are not able to access apps that “nudify” individuals.

Civil society organizations, schools, and law enforcement should consider launching awareness-building campaigns to highlight the impact of deepfake pornography on survivors and victims.

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4 Many platforms have rolled back transparency for researchers and resources allocated to content moderation, making it more difficult to track and respond to TFGBV.⁵

5 Targets of TFGBV report that they do not get the support they need from law enforcement or their employers.⁶

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulators should create a transparency and oversight mechanism similar to the European Union's Digital Services Act (DSA) to ensure researchers and journalists have access to data for public service and research purposes, while protecting the privacy of platform users.

Given the widespread rollback of investments in trust and safety by platforms and the demonization of content moderation policies, **governments should explore oversight measures** that encourage platforms to exercise their duty of care to ensure minorities, including women, are able to safely express themselves online.

Governments should invest in training for and community building with law enforcement entities on TFGBV. Governments must improve awareness and training on the existing legal infrastructure and consider holding community events to improve trust between TFGBV survivors and victims and the law enforcement community.

Employers must also have proactive strategies in place to support employees who may become targets of TFGBV. These may include doxing support, mental healthcare, assistance navigating law enforcement, and other emotional, physical, and psychosocial provisions to ensure women's online freedom of expression is maintained.

¹ UN Women. 2024. "Placing Gender Equality at the Heart of the Global Digital Compact," Accessed May 16, 2024. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/placing-gender-equality-at-the-heart-of-the-global-digital-compact-en.pdf>.

² UNFPA. 2022. "What is technology-facilitated gender-based violence?" Accessed May 24, 2024. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/TFGBV_Brochure-1000x560.pdf.

³ Jankowicz, Nina et al. 2021. "Malign Creativity: How Gender, Sex, and Lies are Weaponized Against Women Online," The Wilson Center. Accessed May 15, 2024. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/malign-creativity-how-gender-sex-and-lies-are-weaponized-against-women-online>.

⁴ Home Security Heroes. 2023. "2023 State of Deepfakes," Accessed May 3, 2024. <https://www.homesecurityheroes.com/state-of-deepfakes/>.

⁵ Free Press, 2024. "Big Tech Backslide: How Social-Media Rollbacks Endanger Democracy Ahead of the 2024 Elections." Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.freepress.net/big-tech-backslide-report>.

⁶ Fagone, Jason, 2015. "The Serial Swatter," *The New York Times Magazine*, November 24, 2015. Accessed May 24, 2024. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/29/magazine/the-serial-swatter.html>.

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