Cyber-Violence Against Women

Prepared for
Battered Women's Support Services

By Jessica West

Practicum student
University of British Columbia
Bachelor of Social Work

May, 2014

Table of Contents

Introduction

As information and communication technologies continue to advance, it has become easier and faster for us to communicate with one another, to distribute ideas and information and to make connections with people that transcend geographic and spatial boundaries. What we have noticed at Battered Women's Support Services is that as use of information and communication technologies has become more ubiquitous, the use of these technologies as a weapon against women has also become ubiquitous. Not only that, but internet and social media has also become an environment where women are made to feel unsafe and are threatened. Violence against women is being committed through the use of media such as texting, email, Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, LinkedIn, YouTube and just about any other internet or social media platform you can think of. We have decided to term this type of violence, cyber-violence against women.

In many ways this violence is the same as other types of violence against women, whether it be physical abuse, or sexual assault, in that violence is wielded as a tool to control and have power over women, to maintain men's dominance over women as a class, and to reinforce patriarchal norms, roles and structures. However there are several aspects that make this type of violence against women unique. First of all, the anonymity so easily maintained online translates into impunity for perpetrators of online violence[1]. Second, it is easy to commit an act of cyber-violence against women due to: (1) the automation of technology, requiring little or no technical knowledge to do things like monitor a woman's movements or make slanderous comments about her, (2) the affordability of the technology which makes it inexpensive to distribute a woman's photograph or create and propagate misogynistic images and writing, and (3) the ability to contact anyone in the world from anywhere in the world broadens the pool of potential victims and reduces the probability of getting caught. The third aspect that makes cyber-violence against women unique is digital permanence. As the saying goes, "the internet records everything and forgets nothing", whatever content is posted about a person on the internet becomes a part of their permanent online identity, it is nearly impossible to erase. This permanency often has far-reaching and serious consequences for women, in particular, who experience cyber-violence.

Seeing this emergence of cyber-violence against women both as a weapon against women and an environment where women are made to feel unsafe, we wanted to delve deeper to develop our analysis of this type of violence. We initiated this research project to determine in what ways women are experiencing cyber-violence against women, how this type of violence impacts women's lives, how women resist and fight back against this type of violence and how the community responds to women who experience cyber-violence. We hope this will further our collective understanding of what cyber-violence against women is, and that it will be the beginning of a conversation about what needs to change, in both society and in policy to end cyber-violence against women.

---

[1] Flavia Fascendini and Kateřina Fialova, *Voices from Digital Spaces: Technology Related Violence Against Women*, ed. Maia Marie (n.p.: Association for Progressive Communications, 2011), accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.apc.org/en/system/files/APCWNSP_MDG3advocacypaper_full_2011_EN_0.pdf

This report draws on research from a literature review of online media and academic sources, the responses of 60 women who anonymously completed our online survey conducted through Survey Monkey, posted on the BWSS website and promoted via email and social media, and the notes/transcriptions from three different focus groups. One focus group was conducted with a group of five BWSS staff on what they know women to be experiencing in terms of cyber-violence against women through their work. The second focus group was conducted with a group of three crisis and intake volunteers about what stories and experiences women have shared with them on the crisis line and what they know from their own lived experiences. The third focus group was organized with three women who access services at BWSS about how they have experienced cyber-violence in their own lives. Data from these sources have been integrated throughout the entire report, which is divided into sections corresponding with our five main research questions, reiterated below:

⇒ In what ways are women experiencing cyber-violence against women?
⇒ How does this type of violence impact women's lives?
⇒ How are women resisting and fighting back against cyber-violence?
⇒ How does the community respond to women who experience cyber-violence?
⇒ What needs to change in society and in policy to address cyber-violence against women?

It should be noted that throughout this report other terms are used interchangeably with cyber-violence against women, such as "online abuse", "violence against women online and through social media", "online gender violence", etc. In the following section, women's experiences of cyber-violence have been divided into seven categories, corresponding to the seven categories used as response options in our online survey. The categories are:

⇒ Sexual Exploitation or Luring
⇒ Online Gender Violence as an Aggravating Factor of Sexual Assault
⇒ Non-Consensual Distribution of Images
⇒ Intimate Partner Violence/Violence in Relationships
⇒ Online Harassment and Cyber-stalking
⇒ Targeted Harassment of Communities
⇒ Exposure to Rape Culture

Women's Experiences of Cyber-Violence Against Women

Sexual Exploitation or Luring

We asked women the question, "what has been your experience of gendered violence on the internet?". 17% of women responded that they had experienced sexual exploitation or luring, meaning they had been coerced into removing clothing and posing sexually for a webcam, or solicited for sex as a minor[2]. This is the same thing that happened to Amanda Todd from Port

---

[2] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey" (unpublished raw data, April 3, 2014)

Coquitlam, whose story we are all familiar with. When Amanda was 13 years old, a man in a chat room convinced her to flash her breasts to the webcam. He took a screen shot, posted the image to a porn website and sent the link to all of her friends. He blackmailed her to continue to perform sexual acts on camera for him, through which he was able to produce more images to use to blackmail her with. It became a vicious cycle, and because he had the contact information for her friends and family, the threat was very real. In a second incident of sexist violence, one of Amanda's peers preyed on her low self-esteem and coerced her into having sex with him, and then pitted his girlfriend against her in a confrontation. Because of these incidents, Amanda was publicly humiliated and harassed by her peers, at school and through social media[3].

All the while, Amanda was blamed for the sexist violence done to her, shamed, and called a slut. A number of local feminists have written about Amanda Todd, and all ask the question, "why isn't anyone talking about the sexism and misogyny involved in Amanda Todd's life and death?" [4] They argue that the way Amanda was manipulated online by men to remove her clothes on camera was gendered. They called her beautiful and complimented her. This kind of male attention is very powerful in our culture which raises girls to have low self-esteem and be hypercritical of their bodies. We also need to recognize the conflicting messages girls receive in our society about their sexuality. Fazeela Jiwa remarks that "it is hypocritical to shun a young girl for engaging with her sexuality or falling prey to a coercive man's attentions online, while media and other cultural influences reiterate the message that a woman's worth is tied to her sexual appeal"[5].

Online Gender Violence as an Aggravating Factor of Sexual Assault

We have also seen how girls and women are revictimized by social media and blamed for their own sexual assaults through high profile stories in the media. Steubenville has become infamous the gang rape of an unconscious young girl by members of the high school football team, which came to light because of the barrage of disgusting, misogynistic and violent comments and photos that the perpetrators posted on the internet. The boys took pictures of the girl as they violated her naked body and took videos of themselves bragging about their actions. They call her a "dead body" and laugh about how she was "deader than OJ's wife" and "so raped"[6], words that illustrate how the boys dehumanized Jane Doe. They viewed her as less than themselves, less than human,

---

[3] Fazeela Jiwa, "'Bullying' is Too Vague When We're Dealing with Sexism and Misogyny," *Georgia Straight* (Vancouver), October 15, 2012, Commentary, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.straight.com/news/fazeela-jiwa-bullying-too-vague-when-were-dealing-sexism-and-misogyny
[4] Krissy Darch, "Why Isn't Anyone Talking about the Misogyny Involved in Amanda Todd's Life and Death?," *Vancouver Observer*, October 12, 2012, Feminista Blog, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.vancouverobserver.com/blogs/feminista/why-isnt-anyone-talking-about-misogyny-involved-amanda-todds-life-and-death.
[5] Jiwa, "'Bullying' is Too Vague," Commentary.
[6] Alexandra Goddard, "I Am the Blogger Who Allegedly 'Complicated' the Steubenville Gang Rape Case-- And I Wouldn't Change a Thing," *XOJane*, March 18, 2013, Issues, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.xojane.com/issues/steubenville-rape-verdict-alexandria-goddard.

just an object which they felt entitled to act upon.

Toula Foscolos for the Huffington Post describes the assault as "the unflinching, callous, and violent degradation of a young woman. A young woman their own age and running in their own circles, whom they should have protected, and yet chose to prod, poke, violate, and rape, like she was an inanimate object; a sex toy for their amusement and pleasure"[7]. The assault and the boys' intentional promotion of it through social media is a clear illustration of the sexist objectification and entitlement to women's bodies. This entitlement is part of what creates an attitude accepting of horrific violence against women.

Since the boys broadcast the assault all over social media, we know that other youth and members of the community witnessed the assault and did nothing to stop it. Not only did they fail to intervene, but they also supported the actions of the boys, both during the assault and in the aftermath. Students following the events on social media called Jane Doe a "whore" and egged the boys on with their comments and their laughter. Jane Doe received dozens of death threats[8] through social media, she was blamed for the violence done to her and later blamed for "ruining the lives" of the boys when she reported them to the police. The case against Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond went to court, and the two boys were convicted and sentenced in juvenile court. Members of the community and even mainstream media, such as CNN and the National Post, have been outspoken in their support for the boys, their regret over the loss of the boys' promising future and their disapproval for Jane Doe's conduct. A very telling example is this quote from Judge Thomas Lipps who presided over the case, admonishing youth "to have discussions about how you talk to your friends, how you record things on the social media"[9]. He implicitly tells perpetrators of sexual assault not to leave evidence of their crime, rather than telling them that it's wrong to violate someone to begin with.

There have been a number of other stories of boys sexually assaulting unconscious girls and recording the assault on cell phones, through picture and video. We can list them off: in November 2011, 15 year old Rehtaeh Parsons was gang-raped by 4 classmates who took pictures and distributed them to her classmates in Nova Scotia[10]; in January 2012, 14 year old Daisy Coleman

---

[7] Toula Foscolos, "Rehtaeh Parsons: Yet Another Rape Victim to Blame?," *Huffington Post*, April 9, 2013, The Blog, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/toula-foscolos/rehtaeh-parsons-rape_b_3044770.html?utm_hp

[8] Leslie Salzillo, "Breaking: Steubenville's Jane Doe Receives Death Threats," *Daily Kos*, March 17, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/03/18/1194908/-Breaking-Steubenville-s-Jane-Doe-Receives-Death-Threats#.

[9] Tabatha Southey, "Rape Is Still Treated as a Matter of Sex. But I Know Better.," *The Globe and Mail*, March 22, 2013, Columnists, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/columnists/rape-is-still-treated-like-a-matter-of-sex-but-i-know-better/article10243048/.

[10] Thomas Durante and Daniel Bates, "Tears for Rehtaeh Parsons as Hundreds Turn up at Vigil for Teen Who Killed Herself after 'Bragging Rapist' Posted Picture of Her Online," *Daily Mail* (UK), April 12, 2013, News, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2307827/Rehtaeh-Parsons-Hundreds-turn-vigil-teen-killed-rape-ordeal.html.

was raped by a senior on the high school football team, Matthew Barnett, in Maryville, Missouri, while another boy filmed it[11]; also in 2012, 15 year old Audrie Pott was sexually assaulted by three boys who took pictures and distributed them to their peers in Saratoga, California[12]; Savannah Dietrich of Louisville, Kentucky, was 16 years old when she was sexually assaulted by two boys who also took pictures that she didn't find out about until a month later[13]; and in June 2013, a 21 year old woman went on a date and was gang-raped by 4 football players who captured the assault on cell phone cameras, in a dorm room at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee[14].

In each of these examples, technology was used both during the sexual assault to record or take pictures of the assault and after the assault, as a way to revictimize, humiliate and intimidate survivors[15]. For girls like Jane Doe in Steubenville and Daisy Coleman, technology and social media were used by community members to bombard them with threats and abuse to try to keep them from reporting and to shame them. The boys who sexually assaulted them also used social media to undermine and discredit the girls' stories after the assault.

These horrific stories are not just rare occurrences sensationalized by the media either. It happens more often than we think, as two women in our survey, accounting for 3.4% of our respondents, reported experiencing gender violence online as an aggravating factor of sexual assault and rape[16]. We happen to know the stories of Jane Doe in Steubenville, Rehtaeh Parsons, Daisy Coleman, Audrie Pott, Savannah Dietrich and Jane Doe at Vanderbilt University because their experiences led them to either take action in court or, unfortunately, take their own lives. But for the many girls and women around us who experience this type of violence and choose to do neither, their stories are hidden. We must also acknowledge that all of the girls listed above are young, white, middle class and assumed to be straight and cis-gendered. We know that this describes the kind of women portrayed as survivors of sexual assault in television, movies and news media most of the time, as they are seen as the closest thing to the "perfect" or "most innocent" victim, someone audiences will be able to sympathize with. But this invisiblizes the experiences of women of colour, older women, working class women, queer and trans women and other marginalized

---

[11] Daisy Coleman, "I'm Daisy Coleman, the Teenager at the Centre of the Maryville Rape Media Storm, and This Is What Really Happened," *XOJane*, October 18, 2013, It Happened To Me, [Page #], accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me/daisy-coleman-maryville-rape.
[12] Nina Burleigh, "Sexting, Shame and Suicide," *Rolling Stone*, September 17, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/sexting-shame-and-suicide-20130917.
[13] Abigail Pesta, "'Thanks for Ruining My Life,'" *Newsweek* (U.S.), December 10, 2012, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.newsweek.com/thanks-ruining-my-life-63423.
[14] Associated Press, "Harrowing Reality of Vanderbilt Football 'Rape' Revealed," *Daily Mail* (UK), September 7, 2013, News, [Page #], accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2415115/Four-Vanderbilt-football-players-accused-raping-unconscious-21-year-old-female-student-rammed-hallway-door-covered-security-camera-towel-victim.html.
[15] Nicole Bluett-Boyd et al., *The Role of Emerging Communication Technologies in Experiences of Sexual Violence*, research report no. 23 (Melbourne, Australia: Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2013).
[16] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

women who are even less likely to be believed, even more likely to be blamed and less likely to have the resources to fight for justice through the criminal justice system.

Non-Consensual Distribution of Images

Another category of violence against women online and through social media is the non-consensual distribution of images, more commonly talked about as revenge porn and sexting. 5.00% of our survey respondents reported experiencing this type of violence[17]. Revenge porn, is the term used to describe when people (generally men) post naked pictures of their ex-partners (generally women) on designated revenge porn websites with their exes' contact information, including phone number, email address, Facebook profile and home address, for the purpose of humiliating and getting revenge on their ex-partner, resulting in women being bombarded with harassing, degrading, and threatening messages from strangers[18]. Revenge porn websites often refuse women's requests to remove the pictures and contact information and it is extremely difficult to get the content off of the internet once it has been posted. The devastating impacts of revenge porn has hit mainstream consciousness due to the tireless work of anti-revenge porn activists such as Charlotte Laws and Annmarie Chiarini who shared their personal experiences with revenge porn online.

In January 2012, Charlotte Laws' daughter Kayla found that her computer had been hacked and nude pictures that she had taken of herself, with no intention of sharing with anyone else, had been posted to a revenge porn website run by a man called Hunter Moore[19]. Hunter Moore justified his website by saying that his victims were sluts, asked to be abused and deserved to lose their jobs, embarrass their families and find themselves forever ruined. People who posted on his website called women "fat cows," "creatures with nasty teeth," "ugly whores," "white trash sluts" and "whales", demonstrating the rampant misogyny and sexist intent of the website. Charlotte Laws dispels the myth that women who find their pictures on revenge porn websites "asked for it" or "had it coming" because they took nude pictures of themselves by revealing that through her interactions with dozens of revenge porn victims across the United States, she found that 40% had their pictures hacked, like her daughter, 12% had their pictures morphed (their faces were Photo-shopped onto pictures of naked bodies that were not their own), and 36% had pictures posted by angry exes.

---

[17] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"
[18] Danielle Keats Citron, "'Revenge Porn' Should Be a Crime in U.S.," *CNN* (U.S.), January 16, 2014, Opinion, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/29/opinion/citron-revenge-porn/index.html.
[19] Charlotte Laws, "I've Been Called the 'Erin Brokovich' of Revenge Porn," *XOJane*, November 21, 2013, accessed February 18, 2014, http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me/charlotte-laws-hunter-moore-erin-brockovich-revenge-porn.

Annmarie Chiarini was one of the latter. In the course of an emotionally abusive relationship, her ex-partner pressured and coerced her into taking nude photos for him[20]. After she ended the relationship, he created a CD of the pictures and put it up for auction on Ebay, sending the link to all of her contacts, as well as posting her picture, her workplace and her contact information to a porn website.

A more common form of non-consensual distribution of images amongst youth is sexting. Although young girls and boys often take and send naked photos of themselves voluntarily, as a part of modern youth flirtation and dating norms, girls are more frequently pressured or coerced into sending naked photos, and this coercive behaviour is normalized through gendered expectations. As Bluett-Boyd et al. argue, "there is a gendered expectation for girls to provide nude images that draws on already existing social norms and scripts about heterosexuality, male entitlement and female attractiveness."[21] Girls' photos also tend to travel further than the intended recipient and girls experience more social consequences for sexting[22]. One example, is the story of 16 year old Alexis, from Fairfield, Virginia, who was kicked out of school for sexting[23]. She was dared to send a topless picture of herself to a male friend, who then sent it to another male friend. The two of them together sent the photo to their entire lacrosse team. Since the picture went viral, the school administration found out about it and called Alexis in for a disciplinary meeting. She was told that her behaviour was "outrageous", especially since she wasn't dating either of the first two boys, and she was asked whether she felt she had "harassed the boys" and "what justice" the boys should receive, meaning how she would make amends for the harm she had done to them. Subsequently, she was expelled from the school, while the two boys received no punishment.

At another school in Cincinatti, the school administration wanted to crack down on sexting and decided to punish the ten girls whose pictures had been most widely circulated[24]. These stories tell us that girls are disproportionately experiencing negative ramifications for sexting, an activity that one study has shown, young girls and boys engage in in equal numbers[25]. The study found that

---

[20] Annmarie Chiarini, "I Was a Victim of Revenge Porn. I Don't Want Anyone Else to Face This," *The Guardian* (U.S.), November 19, 2013, Comment is Free, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/19/revenge-porn-victim-maryland-law-change.

[21] Bluett-Boyd et al., *The Role of Emerging.*

[22] Amanda Hess, "The Real Difference Between Teenage Boys and Girls' Sexting Habits? Boys Forward More.," *Slate*, March 4, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/03/04/sexting_statistics_teen_boys_and_girls_sext_in_equal_numbers_but_boys_forward.html

[23] Katie JM Baker, "Girl Sends Sext, Gets Kicked Out of School. Lacrosse Players Share Sext, Get Off Scot Free," *Jezebel*, April 10, 2013, [Page #], accessed April 25, 2014, http://jezebel.com/girl-sends-sext-gets-kicked-out-of-school-lacrosse-pl-471285308.

[24] Hess, "The Real Difference Between".

[25] Ibid.

boys were almost twice as likely as girls to forward naked pictures of girls to friends and boys were much more likely to have received a forwarded picture as well. Like other forms of cyber violence, the power relations of sexting are gendered such that girls whose nude photographs are circulated without their consent are shamed and punished, while boys feel empowered by circulating their nude photos, through text message and online. Kate Conway, who has written on the subject of youth and sexting comments that, "girls learn that having their naked bodies visible in the public domain is a shameful thing (and somehow their fault), while guys seem to get away with it fairly scot-free. I mean, when was the last time you heard of a non-famous young man being literally bullied to death because a photo of his penis made the rounds?"[26] Sexting girls' photos without their consent can be seen as a dangerous social weapon, used to inflict humiliation, shame and social repercussions on girls. It can also be used to dehumanize girls, and reduce them to the body parts depicted in the photograph.

Violence in Relationships

Cyber-violence against women can also be an extension of the violence women experience in their relationships. It can be used by a woman's partner as a tactic to maintain power and control over her both while she is in the relationship and after she leaves. A survey conducted by British organization, Woman's Aid, found that of 307 domestic violence survivors, 45% were abused online during their relationship[27]. Although some people believe that online abuse in relationships is less serious than physical abuse, in much the same way that verbal and emotional abuse are seen as less severe, cyber-violence is often used systematically by abusers in conjunction with a range of other tactics to undermine and control women in relationships[28].

The story of Donna, a woman who wrote a blog post detailing her experience on the Take Back the Tech website, illustrates this systematic control[29]. She describes how she was in an abusive relationship with a man who was very jealous and possessive, and acted on this by being obsessive about Facebook pictures of her with other men, he picked fights with her male Facebook friends, selected her Facebook profile pictures for her, and made her dress explicitly and send him pictures online. There was also close integration of this online abuse with emotional abuse as he

---

[26] Kate Conway, "Turns Out You Can't Scare Teens Away From Taking Crotch-Selfies," *XOJane*, April 5, 2013, accessed May 7, 2014, http://www.xojane.com/sex/turns-out-you-cant-scare-teens-away-from-taking-crotch-selfies.

[27] Alexandra Topping, "Online Trolling of Women is Linked to Domestic Violence, Say Campaigners," *The Guardian*, September 3, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/sep/03/online-trolling-women-domestic-violence.

[28] Tammy Hand, Donna Chung, and Margaret Peters, *The Use of Information and Communication Technologies to Coerce and Control in Domestic Violence and Following Separation*, report no. 6 (n.p.: Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2009).

[29] Donna, "My Body Is My Business," *Take Back the Tech Blog*, entry posted 2012, accessed April 25, 2014, https://www.takebackthetech.net/write/my-body-my-business.

manipulated her into feeling guilty when she didn't do "small things" for him. He made her feel that she didn't understand her body and appearance as well as he did, and that justified his control over her online profile pictures and how she represented herself online. He fixated on how she looked in pictures and used these to attack her with sexualized insults and slurs. In this way, he insidiously combined emotional abuse with cyber-violence to make her feel powerless and dependent on him.

Another way a woman's abusive partner could exert power and control over her using technology is by recording images and videos and then threatening to distribute them without her permission. This is especially effective for heightening a woman's sense of fear and anxiety and controlling her actions because she never knows when the abuser will follow through on the threat and distribute the image to people she knows[30]. We heard one story of this in the volunteer focus group, when a volunteer recalled a conversation with a woman calling the crisis line who worked as an escort, and her partner had images of her conducting her work[31]. He threatened to send the images to her family, who didn't know about her work, if she did not do what he wanted. He used this threat to coerce her to have sex with him whenever he wanted.

Women are also very at risk after they leave abusive relationships as well. In fact, "it is estimated in the United States that between 29% and 54% of all female murder victims are battered women, and in 90% of these cases, stalking preceded the murder"[32], leading us to conclude that stalking is an indicator of escalating violence. As discussed by Hand, Chung and Peters, regular stalking has been noted as a common and serious form of abusive behaviour used to control women after they leave relationships, and the same applies to cyber-stalking[33]. There are frequent stories in the media of women being tracked, harassed or blackmailed through social media by their ex partners. An August 2010 story described how a 23-year-old man impersonated one of his ex-girlfriend's online in order to intimidate and blackmail another ex-girlfriend, threatening to expose sexual pictures he had of her to her new boyfriend if she didn't return to him[34]. In Seattle, a 31-year-old woman was cyber-stalked by her ex-boyfriend, a Seattle police officer, after she ended the relationship[35]. He posted sexual images of her on a fake Facebook page and then attacked her

---

[30] Hand, Chung, and Peters, *The Use of Information.*

[31] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author, Vancouver, March 20, 2014.

[32] Hand, Chung, and Peters, *The Use of Information.*

[33] Ibid.

[34] Associated Press, "Man Charged in Facebook Stalking Case," *NBC News*, August 25, 2010, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/38851897/ns/technology_and_science-security/t/man-charged-facebook-stalking-case/#.U1rnDc2K82U.

[35] Sara Jean Green, "Seattle Cop Gets 90 Days for Explicit Web Photos of Ex-Lover," *Seattle Times*, January 8, 2014, Local News, accessed April 25, 2014,http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2022626374_cyberstalkingcasexml.html?utm_source=WMC+General&utm_campaign=e8215286a5-

physically as well. A September 2013 story in the Guardian told how a woman named Lucy was continually harassed by her ex-partner online. He created anonymous social media accounts to contact her and her friends and family. Lucy commented on her experience, " "When you leave you think you have a chance of a new life without them, but when they contact you online it's like they are in the room…Being bullied online brings it all back – you can heal from a punch in the face, but the mental torture never goes away." "[36]

These stories in the media echo what we know women to be experiencing from our work with them at BWSS. In a focus group on the subject, BWSS staff shared stories of how women were abused by their ex-partners through different types of social media and online platforms[37]. One woman's ex-partner constantly created new email addresses in order to continue to send her harassing messages. Another hacked into her Facebook account in order to send messages to her friends and family telling his side of the story of their relationship, while also using his own Facebook account to send harassing messages to her and her contacts. Another woman's ex-partner was more passive aggressive. Instead of directly contacting her, the person continually checked her LinkedIn profile, with the knowledge that she would be able to see whenever someone views her profile. Then, because they worked in the same field, the ex would go after the same job contracts as her.

BWSS crisis line and intake volunteers have heard similar stories in their work taking calls on the crisis line, as they shared in a focus group for volunteers[38]. Facebook in particular came up as a popular way that abusive ex-partners attempted to continue the abuse even after women left the relationship. One woman's ex-partner continually created new Facebook profiles to get around Facebook's blocking mechanism and keep messaging the woman. Another one created fake accounts of the woman and used these accounts to contact people she knew and spread rumours about her. In another situation, the woman's ex-partner blocked *her* on Facebook so that they could post things on Facebook about her without her knowing what they were saying. Another volunteer recalled the story of a woman who was involved in a family court process with her ex-partner over divorce and child custody issues. Her ex, knowing that she suffered from panic attacks and anxiety, followed her around in order to record her having an attack so that he could threaten to show the recording in court to get custody of their children.

WMC+Roundup++1%2F12%2F2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f7c32608b8-e8215286a5-326415569.

[36] Alexandra Topping, "How Domestic Violence Spreads Online," *The Guardian*, September 3, 2013, News, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/sep/03/domestic-violence-spreads-online-watching.

[37] Focus Group with BWSS Staff, interview by the author, Vancouver, March 5, 2014.

[38] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.

New technology, social media and internet platforms have made it easier for abusers to maintain contact and continue to harass women after they leave their relationships, and it is a very common experience for women leaving abusive relationships. The Woman's Aid survey found that 48% of the 307 survivors surveyed had been harassed or abused online by their ex-partner after they had left the relationship[39]. With regards to this phenomenon, one participant in our volunteer focus group observed that "women didn't have control over what was happening, whereas in their life they had control over leaving the situation and starting a new life all over again and all that stuff. But there was this one aspect that they just couldn't, they had no control over it and didn't know what to do about it"[40]. Another participant agreed, "that person doesn't even have to contact them directly, they can just continue the abuse, just without any direct contact". Hand et al. echo this concern, that for women fleeing abusive relationships, "feeling safe from an abuser no longer has the same spatial or geographic boundaries that it used to because information and communication technologies enable abusers to contact, track and communicate with women wherever they are, at any time, resulting in the erosion of feelings of safety for women fleeing abuse"[41].

Online Harassment, Cyber-Stalking, Targeted Harassment of Communities

Of course, women are also cyber-stalked by people other than their partners or ex-partners. As our survey revealed, 32% of women responded that they had experienced online harassment or cyber-stalking, and 85.7% of women responded that they were attacked by someone other than a partner[42]. Working to Halt Online Abuse (WHO@) defines online harassment as "intentional crossing of emotional or physical safety boundaries usually involving repeated communications after the person has been told to go away; causing fear and/or distress"[43].

They also note that when a woman feels that an online environment has the potential to harm her, she is put in a less powerful position than her abuser and often responds by restricting her activities online.

We have also seen in the media how women are attacked in chat rooms, on blogs and through platforms like Twitter, just for being women and espousing an opinion. The recent article by

---

[39] Topping, "Online Trolling of Women,"
[40] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.
[41] Hand, Chung, and Peters, *The Use of Information.*
[42] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"
[43] Jac Sm Kee, *Cultivating Violence through Technology?*, [Page 23], November 2005, http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/gender/all/cultivating-violence-through-technology.

Amanda Hess, " The Next Civil Rights Issue: Why Women Aren't Welcome on the Internet"[44], delves into this issue in detail. She cites a 2006 University of Maryland study that created fake online accounts in chat rooms with feminine usernames and masculine usernames and found that accounts with feminine usernames received an average of 100 threatening or explicit messages per day, while those with masculine usernames received an average of 3.7. This study paints a clear picture of how women are targeted for online harassment just for being women.

When women dare to take part in feminist groups, or speak or write about women's issues, their exposure to abuse seems to increase. Our survey found that just over half of women surveyed reported experiencing harassment targeted at communities, that is, abuse because of their gender, their membership in a women's group or blogging about women's issues[45]. Amanda Hess writes about her own experiences receiving death and rape threats because of her blogs, and those of other popular women journalists and bloggers, such as Alyssa Royse, a sex and relationships blogger, Kathy Sierra, a technology writer, Lindy West, writer for women's website Jezebel, Rebecca Watson, an atheist commentator, and Catherine Mayer, writer for Time magazine[46]. An especially well-known story is of Caroline Criado-Perez, who lobbied for the Bank of England to include women other than the Queen on British currency, and subsequently received hundreds of death and rape threats on Twitter, while police and Twitter executives refused to take action.

One survey respondent shared her experience of receiving death and rape threats for blogging about gender-based violence and commented that it is important to acknowledge the ways that women of colour are targeted based on their gender and their race. She gives examples of how Asian women who are outspoken are targeted for not fitting into the stereotype of a "submissive Asian woman", and black women bloggers are compared to non-human primates by their online attackers when they experience online harassment[47]. We can also see how women of colour are subjected to racialized and gender-based online violence in the example of Zerlina Maxwell. Maxwell appeared on a Fox News televised debate taking the position that women should not have to to carry around guns to keep themselves safe and the onus should be on men and society to make rape unacceptable[48]. Following the segment, she was inundated with Tweets threatening her, calling her racialized slurs, suggesting that she should be raped so that she will know why white women need to carry around guns, and the desire to see her killed by "an out of control black man".

---

[44] Amanda Hess, "The Next Civil Rights Issue: Why Women Aren't Welcome on the Internet," *Pacific Standard Magazine*, January 6, 2014, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.psmag.com/navigation/health-and-behavior/women-arent-welcome-internet-72170/

[45] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[46] Hess, "The Next Civil Rights,"

[47] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[48] Josh Marshall, "Monstrous," Talking Points Memo, last modified March 9, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/monstrous?ref=fpblg%5D.

Exposure to Rape Culture

We also think of exposure to rape culture as a type of violence against women, and any woman who actively uses the internet and social media knows that the web is permeated with rape culture. It takes a few keystrokes and the click of a button for someone to post a rape joke or a misogynistic comment to a social media site that will distribute it to hundreds of people. People create Facebook groups to share rape jokes, and memes like #rapeface[49] get spread like wildfire. Much has been written about portrayals of violence against women in television and film media being used as entertainment for the male gaze, to profit the men who produce it[50]. Portrayals of violence against women easily extend to the internet as well, in the advertising and clickbait that appear on social media websites alongside private individuals' misogynistic and violent comments and images.

In order to avoid accidentally stumbling on such content, women would have to vigilantly police their own online media consumption and engagement with the internet. Women in the volunteer focus group talked about how prevalent such content is online, from sexist jokes and misogynistic photos to the horrifying comments people post to online articles[51]. It is also apparent from our survey that women are very cognizant of being exposed to rape culture just by going online, 73.3% of the women in our survey reported that they have been exposed to rape culture online.[52] To quote one survey respondent, "I think that every woman who uses the internet - ever - is exposed to rape culture through advertising and the exploitation of women's bodies for profit etc. While this isn't personal, I find it to be extremely oppressive". The messages is clear, every time a woman ventures into online environments, she is at least exposed to rape culture, as a minor form of cyber-violence, and she is also at risk of being subjected to other forms of cyber-violence against women as well.

Impacts of Cyber-Violence Against Women

The impacts of cyber-violence against women are psychological, social, physical and economic. The most prevalent are psychological impacts, which are felt by most women who experience cyber-violence. 65% of the women from our survey reported experiencing some sort of

---

[49] Sandra Hawken Diaz, "Talking to My Son About #Rapeface," *Huffington Post*, October 21, 2013, The Blog, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/sandra-hawken-diaz/rapeface-meme_b_4136653.html?just_reloaded=1.

[50] Natalie Hill, "'You Watch that?' Why We Consume Violence Against Women as Entertainment," *The F Word* (blog), entry posted January 9, 2012, accessed May 7, 2014, http://www.feminisms.org/4232/you-watch-that-why-we-consume-violence-against-women-as-entertainment/.

[51] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.

[52] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

psychological impact, ranging from the most common, anxiety and damaged self-image (with roughly half and 43% of respondents respectively), to the most extreme, thoughts of suicide and engaging in self-harming behaviour (10% of respondents)[53]. These impacts are apparent in the self-published stories of Daisy Coleman, Annmarie Chiarini and Savannah Dietrich who describe experiencing all of the above and other psychological impacts. Annmarie Chiarini writes about her insomnia, panic attacks, experience of overwhelming fear that kept her from leaving her house, feelings of humiliation, being diagnosed with PTSD, thoughts of suicide and her attempted suicide[54]. Savannah Dietrich also faced humiliation, struggled with social anxiety and discomfort with physical touch from males, as well as thoughts of suicide[55].

Not only do girls and women who experience cyber-violence against women sometimes face thoughts of suicide and attempt suicide, but sometimes they also complete their suicide attempt, such is in the tragic stories of Rehtaeh Parsons, Audrie Pott and Amanda Todd. Rehtaeh Parsons' mother Leah Parsons describes how her daughter's experiences with sexual assault and cyber-violence caused her to struggle with depression, mood swings and substance use[56]. Speaking of her daughter, Leah Parsons commented, "'It wasn't the rape that sent her over the edge, as horrible as that was…It's the public humiliation and shame from her peer group, and everyone saw a picture of her getting raped.' "[57] An anonymous woman blogged about how she was lured and sexually exploited as a young teenager in much the same way that Amanda Todd was. She describes how the continual exploitation and blackmail by men on the internet and the cyber-bullying and shaming of her peers who found out about it caused her to experience depression, panic attacks, feelings of shame, substance abuse and thoughts of suicide[58]. Looking back on her experience, she writes "I lived in a constant state of shame. I felt like I didn't deserve to live. There were many times when I thought of suicide, but I never took that final step".

Daisy Coleman writes of her own damaged self-image, how she has engaged in self-harm and attempted suicide three times in response to the violence she experienced but ends with a statement of resilience and resistance. In her own words, Daisy says:

> "Since this happened, I've been in hospitals too many times to count. I've found it impossible to love at times. I've gained and lost friends. I no longer dance or compete in pageants. I'm different now, and I can't ever go back to the person I once was. That one

---

[53] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[54] Chiarini, "I Was a Victim," Comment is Free.

[55] Pesta, "'Thanks for Ruining My Life."

[56] Durante and Bates, "Tears for Rehtaeh Parsons," News.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Anonymous, "Like Amanda Todd, I Was Blackmailed with Naked Pictures at 16," *XOJane*, October 18, 2012, It Happened to Me, accessed May 7, 2014, http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me-it-happened-to-me-i-was-blackmailed-with-naked-pictures-at-16-years-old

night took it all away from me. I'm nothing more than just human, but I also refuse to be a victim of cruelty any longer."[59]

Cyber-violence against women can have serious and detrimental economic impacts for women as well, particularly nonconsensual distribution of images and revenge porn. As Danielle Citron explains, women can lose their jobs over things that get posted about them on the internet, and with the impossibility of ever completely erasing things from the internet, revenge porn images and defamation can haunt women forever, keeping them from being hired for new jobs or advancing in their current job[60]. In our survey, 13% of women reported some impact on their job (losing their job, being unable to advance in job or being unable to find a new job)[61]. Interestingly, a significant number of women (10%) reported that their credit rating was damaged as a result of online abuse.

Cyber-violence can also coincide, exacerbate or lead to physical violence against women. When the 23-year-old Pennsylvania man's attempts to coerce his ex-partner to return through Facebook threats to expose sexual images of her failed, he waited outside of her house armed with a box-cutter and a gun[62]. Likewise, a 31-year-old woman in Seattle who was being cyber-stalked by her police officer ex-partner and found herself the victim of revenge porn, was also choked and pushed to the ground in a physical confrontation with him[63]. 5% of women in our survey reported experiencing physical harm and abuse as a result of online violence, while 3.3% of women reported physical abuse that was exacerbated by online violence. A number of women (12%) also reported experiencing physical illness as a result of violence[64]

The social consequences for women can be very severe, particularly if their entire community is involved with the cyber-violence. In the case of Daisy Coleman, her brother and herself were bullied at school, she was suspended from her cheer leading squad, her mother lost her job, her family was forced to move back to Albany and their home in Maryville was burned down[65]. Likewise for the 33-year-old woman whose ex-partner solicited men on the internet to come rape her, she also moved out of her community, and the affects were felt by her whole family as her children had to switch schools.[66]. Rehtaeh Parsons also left school as a result of the cyber-violence and moved

---

[59] Coleman, "I'm Daisy Coleman, the Teenager," It Happened To Me.

[60] Citron, "'Revenge Porn' Should Be a Crime," Opinion.

[61] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[62] Associated Press, "Man Charged in Facebook."

[63] Green, "Seattle Cop Gets 90 Days," Local News.

[64] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[65] Coleman, "I'm Daisy Coleman, the Teenager," It Happened To Me.

[66] Justin Jouvenal, "Stalkers Use Online Ads as Weapons Against Victims," *Washington Post*, July 14, 2013, Local, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/i-live-in-fear-of-anyone-coming-to-my-door/2013/07/14/26c11442-e359-11e2-aef3-339619eab080_story.html

to live with her father in Halifax[67]. Our survey found that 3.3% of women responded that they had to move out of their community as a result of cyber-violence[68]. A common social impact of cyber-violence is isolation from friends and family. In our volunteer focus group, one of the volunteers spoke about a caller whose ex-partner was posting things about them on Facebook and how as a result of the things they were saying, some of her friends and family, including her sister, stopped speaking to her[69]. They believed whatever her attacker had posted on Facebook. In our survey, this is one of the most commonly reported social impacts with 28% of women responding that they experienced isolation from friends and family as a result of cyber-violence[70].

Isolation from friends and family is very serious for women, and the threat of exposing information that could potentially cause women's friends and family to turn against them is taken very seriously by women. Often women will comply with their abuser's threats in order to avoid such repercussions, as was the case for one woman who talked to one of our volunteers on the crisis line. Her abuser knew how afraid she was of her family finding out about her work as an escort and used that to coerce her to have sex with him on demand[71].

The most common social impact reported by women is withdrawing from online activity, with 40% of women reporting that they have experienced this as an impact of cyber-violence[72]. One respondent explains:

> "I began blogging as a way of disengaging from an already violent environment for women of color, but over time, while I did manage to gain a support group, it's also negatively impacted my well-being such that I often have to remove myself from the community or "blank out" the blog to be safe from certain people."

The women in our focus group for women who access services at BWSS also felt this impact the most[73]. Having experienced abusive relationships in the past, all of the women avoided using social media and online platforms in order to keep themselves safe. They were very afraid of the possibility of people online using their personal information against them, violating their privacy and becoming the victims of bullying and violence. However, avoiding online activity to keep safe also meant that they were left out of online social networks and the significant amount of socializing that takes place online in our society. Therefore, the real social impact of withdrawing from online activity is often social isolation.

---

[67] Durante and Bates, "Tears for Rehtaeh Parsons," News.

[68] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[69] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.

[70] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[71] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.

[72] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[73] Focus Group with Women Accessing BWSS Services, interview by the author, Vancouver, April 3, 2014.

Women's Resistance to Cyber-Violence

When a story about cyber-violence against women becomes public knowledge through news media it is typically because of the actions a woman took in resistance to the violence. Most often these actions involved reporting the attacker(s) to the police, and indeed in the cases of Jane Doe in Steubenville and at Vanderbilt University, Audrie Pott, Daisy Coleman, Savannah Dietrich, Rehtaeh Parsons, and Amanda Todd, all of the girls and/or their families reported their sexual assaults and cyber-harassment to the police. Huffington Post commentator Nico Lang appreciates the strength and courage girls and women show when they report their assaults to police, speaking of Steubenville's Jane Doe in particular, he asks "Why can't we have pride in… her courage in coming forward with her story, in the face of insurmountable odds and a system that favors abusers? That's the kind of strength I want to champion. This girl is a hero."[74]

Although all of these girls came forward and reported their assaults to the police, there is huge variance in the response each girl received from the justice system. Steubenville's Jane Doe's attackers Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond were convicted in juvenile court for two years and one year respectively[75]. Currently, Vanderbilt University's Jane Doe's attackers have been charged with 2 counts of aggravated battery and one has been charged with unlawful photography; they await trial in the summer[76]. Audrie Pott's attackers were only investigated after her suicide, resulting in their arrest 7 months after her death on charges of misdemeanor sexual battery, felony possession of child pornography and felony sexual penetration; more nude pictures of girls were found on their phones, which brought on more charges; their sentencing could range from community service to juvenile detention[77]. The initial charges against Daisy Coleman's attacker Matthew Barnett were

dropped after two months under suspicious circumstances and it was only after much publicity and public outrage that the case was reopened and he was found guilty of child endangerment and sentenced to two years probation[78]. Savannah Dietrich's attackers were charged with sexual abuse

---

[74] Nico Lang, "We Need to Talk About Steubenville," *Huffington Post* (U.S.), March 25, 2013, The Blog, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nico-lang/steubenville-rape-culture_b_2944752.html.

[75] Drew Singer, "Steubenville Rape Case: Teens Charged with Making Online Threats Against Victim," *Huffington Post* (U.S.), March 18, 2013, Crime, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/18/steubenville-rape-case-twitter-threats_n_2904463.html.

[76] Associated Press, "Harrowing Reality of Vanderbilt," News.

[77] Burleigh, "Sexting, Shame and Suicide".

[78] Emily Bazelon, "The Online Avengers," *New York Times Magazine*, January 15, 2014, [Page #], accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/19/magazine/the-online-avengers.html?ref=magazine&_r=2

and voyeurism, and were sentenced to 50 hours of community service and counseling[79]. 17 months passed without any arrests being made against Rehtaeh Parsons' attackers. Finally, two boys were charged with distributing child pornography, but to date no one has been charged for her sexual assault[80]. Similarly, it has been only very recently that a man in the Netherlands was charged with luring and blackmailing Amanda Todd (and numerous other young people), two years after her death in 2012[81].

We also have media reports of adult women who have gone to the police to seek protection and justice for cyber-violence. The Washington Post reported on the stories of two women, one 33 years old and one 64 years old, whose ex-partners cyber-stalked them and impersonated them online[82]. Their exes posted their images and contact information on Craigslist, Facebook and porn sites, soliciting men to come to their homes and rape them. Both women found themselves hostages in their own homes as dozens of strange men came at all hours trying to break into their homes to attack them. They both called their local police departments to chase away the strange men and report the actions of their ex-partners. In both instances, the ex-partners were arrested and convicted.

This kind of effective response, however, isn't always the norm. Charlotte Laws and Annmarie Chiarini also called the police, but they received no such response from their local police department[83]. This was also the case for Lucy, who tried to report her ex-partner for cyber-stalking her[84]. The lack of response from police with regards to violence against women is a regular pattern known to most women and helps explain why very few women choose to report sexual assault and abuse to the police. This is reflected in our survey, in which only 6.7% of women responded that they appealed to the police and of those, only half saw their attacker arrested or obtained a restraining order.

Receiving such an apathetic response from police and the justice system can be discouraging for women, as it reflects the ways that society excuses and justifies violence against women, excuses,

---

[79] Pesta, "'Thanks for Ruining My Life.'"

[80] Irene Ogrodnik, "1 Year Later: What's Changed Since Rehtaeh Parsons' Death?," *Global News*, April 7, 2014, accessed April 25, 2014, http://globalnews.ca/news/1254563/1-year-later-what-changes-have-been-made-since-rehtaeh-parsons-death/.

[81] CBC News, "Amanda Todd Case: RCMP Detail 5 Charges Against Dutch Citizen," *CBC News*, April 17, 2014, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/amanda-todd-case-rcmp-detail-5-charges-against-dutch-citizen-1.2614034.

[82] Jouvenal, "Stalkers Use Online Ads as Weapons," Local.

[83] Chiarini, "I Was a Victim," Comment is Free.
Laws, "I've Been Called the 'Erin.'"

[84] Topping, "How Domestic Violence Spreads," News.

justifies and protects those who perpetrate violence against women. But we can also see how women have taken justice into their own hands and empowered themselves through other resistance strategies.

Frustrated with the minimal consequences meted out by the justice system to her attackers, Savannah Dietrich decided to defy the judge's gag order preventing anyone from speaking about the crime outside of the courtroom and tweeted the names of her attackers[85]. The judge's imposition of such an order can be seen as revictimizing because it would prevent Savannah herself from speaking about the violence done to her, it would prevent her from healing. Her actions in fighting back against her attackers and the judge show a great deal of courage. She faced a contempt charge filed by her attackers' lawyer, which was only dropped after considerable media and public pressure. But Savannah's resistance was successful as she succeeded in getting the court records unsealed and securing stiffer punishment for her attackers. Exposing their attackers and their attackers personal information is one way that women fight back against online violence, and this is demonstrated in the results of our survey as well, in which 6.7% of women reported exposing their attackers to their friends/family/employer and 3.3% reported exposing their attackers' personal information online. One woman commented, "When I get especially hateful messages from people who don't bother being anonymous, I usually publish it publicly and let the social justice community have at them"[86]. Another example of this is how Caroline Criado-Perez retweeted all of the threats and harassing messages she received, exposing those who didn't bother maintaining their anonymity, alongside the anonymous attackers[87].

Some women and girls empower themselves by telling their own story in the media, whether through mainstream news media or online blogs. Daisy Coleman and Paige Pankhurst from Maryville both shared their stories through mainstream news. Daisy Coleman's candid article in the Kansas City Star prompted massive public support both in the physical world and online, exemplified by the Twitter campaign spear-headed by internet hacktivist group Anonymous, #Justice4Daisy, and resulted in her case being reopened by a special prosecutor[88]. Paige Parkhurst, whose case was also dropped, said this of her decision to come forward to the media:

> "I felt like I needed the story to come out from me also, and that I needed to be able to voice my opinion, along with my mother. We didn't have this kind of support when everything happened, but now that we do have a lot of support and we do have people

---

[85] Pesta, "'Thanks for Ruining My Life.'"

[86] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[87] Hess, "The Next Civil Rights."

[88] Bazelon, "The Online Avengers."

listening, it's like a miracle. It feels really good that it's finally getting spoken about. We've waited for this day for a very long time."[89]

Daisy has also written her own version of her story, which has been published on women's websites XOJane and Jezebel.

Other women who have experienced cyber violence against women in the form of nonconsensual distribution of images and targeted harassment of communities have also chosen to write and publish their stories in their own names. Both Charlotte Laws and Annmarie Chiarini have published their personal accounts, and bloggers like Anita Sarkeesian, Jill Filipovic and Amanda Hess have fought back against the online harassment directed at them. Anita Sarkeesian exposed the image-based misogyny and threats that have been sent to her on her own blog, Feminist Frequency, highlighting and deconstructing the image manipulation, Photoshop and meme creation tactics attackers have used to transmit their message of hate and violence[90]. She also spoke at TedXTalks Women 2012 about her experiences of the threats, misogyny, targeted attacks on her online reputation, attempts to silence her and the creation of a video game that invited players to virtually beat up her likeness[91]. 6.7% of women in our survey also reported fighting back by sharing their story through media[92].

Some women empower themselves by seeking justice on a macro level, like Charlotte Laws and Annmarie Chiarini whose experiences motivated them to fight for legal reforms. Annmarie joined the coalition of advocates for revenge porn legislation, End Revenge Porn, and testified in support of an amendment to the Maryland misuse of electronic mail statute to include all forms of electronic communication[93]. Charlotte Laws has been a crusader in this form of resistance. She started her battle by going after Hunter Moore, owner of the revenge porn website her daughter and so many other women's images were posted on without their consent[94]. She began by contacting Moore's publicist, attorney, hosting company, Internet Service Provider and his advertisers; she registered her daughter's photo with the US Copyright office, spoke to 9 attorneys about copyright law and

---

[89] Azmat Khan, "Second Alleged Maryville Rape Victim, Paige Parkhurst, Speaks Out," *Al Jazeera America*, October 15, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/america-tonight-blog/2013/10/15/second-alleged-maryvillerapevictimpaigeparkhurstspeaksout.html.

[90] Anita Sarkeesian, "Image Based Harassment and Visual Misogyny," *Feminist Frequency* (blog), entry posted July 1, 2012, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.feministfrequency.com/2012/07/image-based-harassment-and-visual-misogyny/

[91] "Anita Sarkeesian at TEDxWomen 2012," video file, YouTube, posted by TEDx Talks, December 4, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZAxwsg9J9Q.

[92] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

[93] Chiarini, "I Was a Victim," Comment is Free.

[94] Laws, "I've Been Called the 'Erin.'"

recourse, contacted the FBI and compiled an investigative file eight inches thick of data. She also developed an alliance with Facebook to kick Hunter Moore off Facebook whenever he tried to join again, and got Moore banned from PayPal so he couldn't collect donations. Her efforts payed off when the FBI investigation forced Moore to shut down his website. Partnering with Anonymous and exposing Moore's personal information online secured her victory against Moore. This victory encouraged Charlotte Laws to pursue justice at a higher level and she testified in favour of the anti-revenge porn law that passed in California. She is also part of the End Revenge Porn coalition that advocates for legal reform and anti-revenge porn laws in states across the United States.

However, Charlotte Laws' resistance can be seen as quite extraordinary and it is rare for women to be able to invest that amount of time, effort and money in their resistance. For most women, their primary strategy of resistance is securing their own safety. For Lucy, the previously mentioned woman who has been cyber-stalked by her ex-partner, this means being vigilant about checking and adjusting her privacy settings on online platforms she utilizes, and leaving/deleting profiles on social media sites if she feels unsafe[95]. One woman in our volunteer focus group also mentioned limiting those who can view her online profiles and changing her last name on Facebook, to make her online profile more secure[96]. 23% of women in our survey reported blocking attackers from contacting them through online platforms and 15% reported leaving social media platforms. 35% of women also responded that they appealed to online platforms to take some sort of action to stop their attackers, with mixed results[97]

20% of women in our survey responded that they confronted their attacker(s). In our volunteer focus group, women discussed the everyday ways that they confront people who perpetrate cyber-violence. One volunteer talked about how she confronted a strange man who was posting creepy messages on her young 13 year old cousin's Instagram profile and told him to leave her alone[98]. Two women discussed how they respond to people who make sexist and misogynistic jokes on social media. One volunteer said she tells people that she doesn't like their jokes and that they aren't funny, while another woman said that she deletes and blocks people who make such jokes and comments on social media.

Whether it is through casual confrontation with online misogynists, reporting to police, advocating to change laws or telling their own story, survivors of cyber-violence against women are resisting and fighting back against this violence in huge numbers, and we have the evidence to prove it.

---

[95] Topping, "How Domestic Violence Spreads," News.
[96] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.
[97] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"
[98] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.

70% of the women we surveyed reported taking some kind of action to fight back against the violence they experienced[99].

Community Response to Women Who Experience Cyber-Violence

When women tell people in their community about the cyber-violence they experience, or when the violence they experience is exposed, they get a range of responses from the community. In a very few instances, women's families and friends are supportive and help them with their resistance against the cyber-violence, such as in the example of Kayla Laws' mother, Charlotte Laws, who responded to her daughter's victimization by beginning a crusade against Hunter Moore and the entire world of revenge porn. More often, women's experiences of violence are minimized, with comments like "it's only online, it's not real", "just ignore it" and "don't feed the trolls".

Women are also told that if they don't like the abuse, they should just get off the internet. The message is that cyber-violence isn't a serious concern, and it is up to women to ignore and shield themselves from online abuse, that perpetrators of online violence can do whatever they want and no one can stop them. Several women in our online survey commented that this was the response they got from their community[100]. One respondent said "[people] told me not to express my opinion and censor myself". Another remarked, "Many people told me not to engage or defend myself, instead to just ignore it.", while a third woman commented "I don't think there has been much of a response, it's become "normal" to see and hear these types of things online". One survey respondent describes the way communities frequently minimize women's experiences of cyber-violence very thoroughly:

> "Cyber-bullying isn't taken seriously for what it is, and because the internet grants a certain degree of anonymity this anonymity is taken as unanimous permission to behave in any way that an individual may want. When and if the individuals in question have been called out on their actions, the cyber-bullying has been waved off under a blanket of 'it was just on the internet its not like anyone was really hurt. its not a big deal so don't take it so seriously.' There's no sense of accountability for a person's actions, even and most especially when that person is an unknown. Family and friends will sometimes be sympathetic, but that doesn't really last. Social media websites and online friends tend to
>
> stand behind the 'freedom of speech' excuse for such behaviors, and I've never had authorities encourage me to do anything."

---

[99] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"
[100] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

This ambivalence and minimization certainly describes the response women get from the police when they dare to call for help. The British organization, Woman's Aid survey found that 75% of women were concerned that police didn't know how to respond to online abuse, while 12% had reported to police and hadn't been helped[101]. This is illustrated in media reports by Lucy, who called the police to report her ex-partner's constant online harassment and received no support, instead police told her to get off the internet. Likewise, when Annmarie Chiarini showed the printouts of her ex-partner's online blackmail to local police, they responded that there was nothing they could do, and even seemed amused by her predicament[102]. When Kayla and Charlotte Laws went to the LA police department they were faced with judgmental police officers who asked questions about why Kayla had taken the pictures of herself in the first place, blaming her for the theft and distribution of her photos without her consent[103]. The same response is even given to minors who are being sexually exploited by adult men online, as we can see from how police responded to appeals for helps from Amanda Todd and her family. They were told, "if Amanda does not stay off the Internet and/or take steps to protect herself online ... there is only so much we as the police can do"[104].

Through our own work with women, we also hear about how the police ignore women's appeals for help. In the volunteer focus group, one woman mentioned that her caller whose ex-partner was blackmailing her with videos of her having panic attacks tried to report him to the police, but the police said that there was nothing that they could do without proof, that the videos only proved that he recorded her, not that he was threatening her[105].

Even when the police take action to investigate reports, like in such cases as when girls are sexually assaulted and the assault is recorded on cell phones and distributed, it does not guarantee that survivors will be treated with dignity and respect during this process. For example, although the Sheriff's office thoroughly investigated and collected evidence of Daisy Coleman and Paige Pankhurst's sexual assaults, after the prosecutor dropped charges against the boys, the Sheriff blamed the girls' mothers for being "uncooperative" and was quoted as saying, " "We did our job. We did it well. It's unfortunate that they are unhappy. I guess they're just going to have to get over it" "[106].

[101] Topping, "Online Trolling of Women."

[102] Chiarini, "I Was a Victim," Comment is Free.

[103] Laws, "I've Been Called the 'Erin.'"

[104]http://www.canada.com/news/details+Amanda+Todd+case+reveal+terrors+online+sexploitation/9173507/story.html (no longer available online)

[105] Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers, interview by the author.

[106] Dugan Arnett, "Nightmare in Maryville: Teens' Sexual Encounter Ignites a Firestorm Against Family," *Kansas City Star*, October 24, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.kansascity.com/2013/10/12/4549775/nightmare-in-maryville-teens-sexual.html.

The most insidious form of community response is when community members blame girls and women for the violence that happens to them, and side with the perpetrators of the cyber-violence. Nowhere is there a clearer example of this than in Steubenville, where members of the community rallied en masse against Jane Doe, taking to social media to shame her for drinking, and attacking her with sexualized slurs. The community even turned on Alexandra Goddard, the blogger who screen captured the social media evidence of the boys' crime and blogged about it publicly[107]. It seemed like the whole town was on the side of the boys, the star athletes whose "futures were ruined" by Jane Doe coming forward and reporting them. Daisy Coleman experienced a similar response in Maryville when she reported Matthew Barnett, whose family had political ties and a great deal of power in the small town. It is suspected that the Barnett family's power is what swayed prosecutor Robert Rice to drop charges against Barnett[108]. Members of the community rallied in support of Barnett and harassed Daisy Coleman and her family, driving them out of town.

Women who experience less severe types of cyber-violence are also blamed and shamed for the violence done to them. Victims of revenge porn are frequently criticized for having taken nude pictures of themselves at all, young girls are chastised for engaging in sexting, and women are generally blamed for having any type of personal information publicly accessible online, making themselves willing bait for online predators. Fairbairn, Bivens and Dawson comment on this in their report for Crime Prevention Ottawa and OCTEVAW. They write, "In [our] perspective, women and young women are using social median and will continue to use social media, including in their dating/intimate partner relationships. It is too simplistic to ask them not to use it. It is also victim-blaming to identify the activities of the targeted person as problematic."[109]

Being blamed for cyber-violence is a common experience for women. 23.3 % of women in our online survey reported being blamed for the violence done to them[110]. One woman writes, "most people either blamed me for the abuse saying I deserved it. Others ignored it", and another responded, "no help no support at all. I was told that being on line is a risk and if I'm being harassed it's my own fault".

What Needs to Change

What needs to change to eliminate cyber-violence against women and make online spaces safer for women? Jac Sm Kee argues that digital spaces are crucial areas for women to participate in given their importance for work, politics and social engagement, which means it is imperative for

---

[107] Goddard, "I Am the Blogger," Issues.

[108] Arnett, "Nightmare in Maryville: Teens."

[109] Jordan Fairbairn, Rena Bivens, and Myrna Dawson, *Sexual Violence and Social Media: Building a Framework for Prevention* (Ottawa: Crime Prevention Ottawa, 2013), [Page 35], accessed April 25, 2014, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10766356?ppg=1.

[110] Battered Women's Support Services, "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey"

women to advocate for the right to communicate, including on the internet, to create gender-just online spaces[111].

Jac Sm Kee writes about how difficult it is to assign responsibility for online abuse. Should Internet Service Providers or online platforms respond since it is an abuse of their service? Should the state respond to online violence as a crime, protecting citizens by investigating and punishing criminals? Or are individuals responsible for their own actions and assume all risks involved?[112]Fascendini and Fialova argue for advocates to engage with online platforms and providers and demand that they develop corporate policies, practices and tools that respect women's rights. To elaborate, online platforms should create clear options for getting images or abusive content removed, they should respond immediately and effectively to complaints from victims of online abuse, and finally, they should establish genuine consent for terms of use[113]. We all know that people rarely read the terms and conditions of use for any online site, since the documents are often extremely lengthy and garbled with incomprehensible legal jargon. Terms of use for social media sites need to be revised to be concise and clearly outline how the site is to be used, what consequences will be applied to those who violate such conditions and how individuals can report users who violate the terms in ways that are abusive.

I want to briefly touch on legal reform as an avenue for eliminating cyber-violence against women. In Canada, we currently do not have any laws that women can effectively appeal to for protection from cyber-violence. There isn't even a criminal definition of cyber-stalking, the way there is in other countries; it is simply prosecuted as Criminal Harassment, under section 264 of the Criminal Code[114]. We can see from the evidence discussed previously in this report that this lack of inclusion in the laws has inhibited women's ability to appeal to law enforcement for protection from cyber-violence. Fascendini and Fialova provide an in depth analysis of which types of laws could possibly be changed to address this. After examining the potential in cybercrime laws, privacy laws and child pornography laws, they conclude that including cyber-violence within violence against women laws would be the most effective direction for legal reform to take. West Coast LEAF is currently undertaking a project on Cyber-Misogyny with a greater focus on strategies for legal reform that will address this very issue in more depth than I will here[115].

In discussing women's access to legal recourse, we must also acknowledge the role the police play, as women's first contact with the criminal justice system. Therefore, Any legal approach to

---

[111] Kee, *Cultivating Violence through Technology?*

[112] Kee, *Cultivating Violence through Technology?*

[113] Fascendini and Fialova, *Voices from Digital Spaces.*

[114] Fairbairn, Bivens, and Dawson, *Sexual Violence and Social.*

[115] West Coast LEAF, "Legal Responses to Cyber-Misogyny Project," West Coast LEAF, http://www.westcoastleaf.org/index.php?pageID=247&parentid=29.

making online spaces safer for women must include policies to educate police about cyber-violence, ways it is enacted and the reality of its consequences, as the Government of Nova Scotia has begun to do, in response to Rehtaeh Parson's death[116]. Police officers should be required to complete training to give them knowledge of cyber-violence as a form of violence against women and how the internet or texting can be used as a weapon to intimidate, control or threaten a woman's safety. Having training in this area should better prepare police officers to take women's reports of cyber-violence seriously and respond effectively and empathically.

Fascendini and Fialova recommend increasing women's awareness of the options available to them to ensure their safety and privacy online, though limited as they may be, and empowering women to make decisions to protect their online safety[117]. However, Hand et al. note that when there is no physical violence, women rarely identify their experiences of online abuse as violence, similar to how women do not often identify verbal or emotional abuse as actual abuse. The question is, how do we provide information on cyber-violence against women to women in a way that is accessible and communicates validation of their experiences as violence[118]. We need to create informational materials that speak to women, reflect their experiences and articulate the connection between negative online behaviours, power and control, and gender, in order to paint a clear picture of what cyber-violence against women is.

Fairbairn et al. note that "trying to prevent abuse and harassment related to technology can feel like a game of "whack-a-mole" where trying to anticipate and react to sexual violence in the context of the next technological trend to "pop up" is overwhelming and not productive as a long term strategy" [119]. They identify a number of strategies for prevention of violence through social media, mainly focusing on education as an over-arching approach. Education and awareness campaigns should promote community awareness of consent and the applicability of consent to actions done through social media as well as challenge notions of victim-blaming and shaming of girls and women. Another aspect that should be addressed in community education and awareness programs is challenging rape culture and toxic masculinity. Through rape culture, "boys are taught that they don't prove their masculinity through their appreciation for women, but through their callous conquering of them. Rape becomes a method to assert masculinity, and sharing the photo of your triumph becomes a way to document your place in the social order."[120]We need programs

---

[116] Government of Nova Scotia, *Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying: Progress Report and Transition Plan*, August 20, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://site.ebrary.com/id/10785137?ppg=1.

[117] Fascendini and Fialova, *Voices from Digital Spaces.*

[118] Hand, Chung, and Peters, *The Use of Information.*

[119] Fairbairn, Bivens, and Dawson, *Sexual Violence and Social*, [Page 54].

[120] Elizabeth Plank, "Audrie Pott Rape: Viral Rape is Trending, and We Should All Be Very Worried," Policy Mic, last modified April 12, 2013, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.policymic.com/articles/34611/audrie-pott-rape-viral-rape-is-trending-and-we-should-all-be-very-worried

that will challenge society's tacit acceptance of this form of masculinity and teach boys alternative ways of being masculine in our culture. Fairbairn et al. recommend making use of tools we already have, like bystander intervention programs, to incorporate these messages about cyber-violence against women.[121]

We also need to acknowledge that cyber-violence against women is very prevalent among youth, as we can see from the media stories of the young girls affected by aggravated sexual assault and sexting. Therefore, like other prevention programs on dating violence and violence against women, we need to target prevention programs at youth, and engage youth in the creation of such programs. Fascendini and Fialova recommend that social media literacy programming be led by youth, for youth, on the consequences of sharing sexual images through social media and other forms of cyber-violence against women commonly experienced by young people[122]. Programs for youth also need to avoid the pitfall of warning young girls against taking nude pictures of themselves or engaging in social media because such tactics replicate victim-blaming. Instead, youth programs need to address boys' questions of "How forwarding a picture a girl sends me of herself [is] different from forwarding a picture of my toaster?""[123]as posed by a youth at a college campus workshop facilitated by writer Soraya Chemaly.

What is really needed is a complete shift in societal views of cyber-violence against women. It should not be acceptable to tell women to "get off the internet" when they experience cyber-violence, or to blame them for taking pictures of themselves if they find themselves the victims of revenge porn, anymore than it is acceptable to find fault in a woman's choice of dress or beverage when she is sexually assaulted. We need to resist the assumption that men's status of entitlement to use the internet and social media allows them to bestow or withdraw the privilege of access from women. We need to challenge the wide-spread acceptance of cyber-violence against women as a given and assert the right for girls and women to move freely in cyber-space, and to use the internet, texting and social media without the threat or experience of harassment, blackmail, stalking, humiliation, or otherwise malicious attack because of their gender.

---

[121] Fairbairn, Bivens, and Dawson, *Sexual Violence and Social*.

[122] Fascendini and Fialova, *Voices from Digital Spaces.*

[123] Soraya Chemaly, "What Rehtaeh Parsons' Death Teaches Us about Rape as a Conformity," *Huffington Post*, April 12, 2013, The Blog, accessed April 25, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/the-sad-lesson-of-rehtaeh_b_3070891.html?utm_hp_ref=amanda-todd#comments.

Bibliography

"Anita Sarkeesian at TEDxWomen 2012." Video file. YouTube. Posted by TEDx Talks, December 4, 2012.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZAxwsg9J9Q.

Anonymous. "Like Amanda Todd, I Was Blackmailed with Naked Pictures at 16." *XOJane*, October 18, 2012, It
Happened to Me. Accessed May 7, 2014. http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me/it-happened-to-me-i-
was-blackmailed-with-naked-pictures-at-16-years-old.

Arnett, Dugan. "Nightmare in Maryville: Teens' Sexual Encounter Ignites a Firestorm Against Family." *Kansas City
Star*, October 24, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014.
http://www.kansascity.com/2013/10/12/4549775/nightmare-in-maryville-teens-sexual.html.

Associated Press. "Harrowing Reality of Vanderbilt Football 'Rape' Revealed." *Daily Mail* (UK), September 7, 2013,
News. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2415115/Four-Vanderbilt-football-
players-accused-raping-unconscious-21-year-old-female-student-rammed-hallway-door-covered-security-
camera-towel-victim.html.

———. "Man Charged in Facebook Stalking Case." *NBC News*, August 25, 2010. Accessed April 25, 2014.
http://www.nbcnews.com/id/38851897/ns/technology_and_science-security/t/man-charged-facebook-
stalking-case/#.U1rnDc2K82U.

Baker, Katie JM. "Girl Sends Sext, Gets Kicked Out of School. Lacrosse Players Share Sext, Get Off Scot Free."
Jezebel, April 10, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://jezebel.com/girl-sends-sext-gets-kicked-out-of-
school-lacrosse-pl-471285308.

Battered Women's Support Services. "Cyber Bullying as Gender-based Violence Online Survey." Unpublished raw
data, April 3, 2014.

Bazelon, Emily. "The Online Avengers." *New York Times Magazine*, January 15, 2014. Accessed April 25, 2014.
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/19/magazine/the-online-avengers.html?ref=magazine&_r=2.

Bluett-Boyd, Nicole, Bianca Fileborn, Antonia Quadara, and Sharnee Moore. *The Role of Emerging Communication
Technologies in Experiences of Sexual Violence*. Research report no. 23. Melbourne, Australia: Australian
Institute of Family Studies, 2013.

Burleigh, Nina. "Sexting, Shame and Suicide." *Rolling Stone*, September 17, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014.
http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/sexting-shame-and-suicide-20130917.

CBC News. "Amanda Todd Case: RCMP Detail 5 Charges Against Dutch Citizen." *CBC News*, April 17, 2014.
Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/amanda-todd-case-rcmp-detail-5-
charges-against-dutch-citizen-1.2614034.

Chemaly, Soraya. "What Rehtaeh Parsons' Death Teaches Us about Rape as a Conformity." *Huffington Post*, April 12,
2013, The Blog. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/the-sad-lesson-of-
rehtaeh_b_3070891.html?utm_hp_ref=amanda-todd#comments.

Chiarini, Annmarie. "I Was a Victim of Revenge Porn. I Don't Want Anyone Else to Face This." *The Guardian* (U.S.), November 19, 2013, Comment is Free. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/19/revenge-porn-victim-maryland-law-change.

Citron, Danielle Keats. "'Revenge Porn' Should Be a Crime in U.S." *CNN* (U.S.), January 16, 2014, Opinion. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/29/opinion/citron-revenge-porn/index.html.

Coleman, Daisy. "I'm Daisy Coleman, the Teenager at the Centre of the Maryville Rape Media Storm, and This Is What Really Happened." *XOJane*, October 18, 2013, It Happened To Me. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me/daisy-coleman-maryville-rape.

Conway, Kate. "Turns Out You Can't Scare Teens Away From Taking Crotch-Selfies." *XOJane*, April 5, 2013. Accessed May 7, 2014. http://www.xojane.com/sex/turns-out-you-cant-scare-teens-away-from-taking-crotch-selfies.

Darch, Krissy. "Why Isn't Anyone Talking about the Misogyny Involved in Amanda Todd's Life and Death?" *Vancouver Observer*, October 12, 2012, Feminista Blog. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.vancouverobserver.com/blogs/feminista/why-isnt-anyone-talking-about-misogyny-involved-amanda-todds-life-and-death.

Diaz, Sandra Hawken. "Talking to My Son About #Rapeface." *Huffington Post*, October 21, 2013, The Blog. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/sandra-hawken-diaz/rapeface-meme_b_4136653.html?just_reloaded=1.

Donna. "My Body Is My Business." *Take Back the Tech Blog*. Entry posted 2012. Accessed April 25, 2014. https://www.takebackthetech.net/write/my-body-my-business.

Durante, Thomas, and Daniel Bates. "Tears for Rehtaeh Parsons as Hundreds Turn up at Vigil for Teen Who Killed Herself after 'Bragging Rapist' Posted Picture of Her Online." *Daily Mail* (UK), April 12, 2013, News. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2307827/Rehtaeh-Parsons-Hundreds-turn-vigil-teen-killed-rape-ordeal.html.

Fairbairn, Jordan, Rena Bivens, and Myrna Dawson. *Sexual Violence and Social Media: Building a Framework for Prevention*. Ottawa: Crime Prevention Ottawa, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://site.ebrary.com/id/10766356?ppg=1.

Fascendini, Flavia, and Kate?ina Fialova. *Voices from Digital Spaces: Technology Related Violence Against Women*. Edited by Maia Marie. N.p.: Association for Progressive Communications, 2011. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.apc.org/en/system/files/APCWNSP_MDG3advocacypaper_full_2011_EN_0.pdf.

Focus Group with BWSS Staff. Interview by the author. Vancouver. March 5, 2014.

Focus Group with BWSS Volunteers. Interview by the author. Vancouver. March 20, 2014.

Focus Group with Women Accessing BWSS Services. Interview by the author. Vancouver. April 3, 2014.

Foscolos, Toula. "Rehtaeh Parsons: Yet Another Rape Victim to Blame?" *Huffington Post*, April 9, 2013, The Blog.

Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/toula-foscolos/rehtaeh-parsons-rape_b_3044770.html?utm_hp_ref=canada

Goddard, Alexandra. "I Am the Blogger Who Allegedly 'Complicated' the Steubenville Gang Rape Case--And I Wouldn't Change a Thing." *XOJane*, March 18, 2013, Issues. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.xojane.com/issues/steubenville-rape-verdict-alexandria-goddard

Government of Nova Scotia. *Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying: Progress Report and Transition Plan*. August 20, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://site.ebrary.com/id/10785137?ppg=1

Green, Sara Jean. "Seattle Cop Gets 90 Days for Explicit Web Photos of Ex-Lover." *Seattle Times*, January 8, 2014, Local News. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2022626374_cyberstalkingcasexml.html?utm_source=WMC+General&utm_campaign=e8215286a5-WMC+Roundup+-+1%2F12%2F2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f7c32608b8-e8215286a5-326415569.

Hand, Tammy, Donna Chung, and Margaret Peters. *The Use of Information and Communication Technologies to Coerce and Control in Domestic Violence and Following Separation*. Report no. 6. N.p.: Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2009.

Hess, Amanda. "The Next Civil Rights Issue: Why Women Aren't Welcome on the Internet." *Pacific Standard Magazine*, January 6, 2014. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.psmag.com/navigation/health-and-behavior/women-arent-welcome-internet-72170/.

———. "The Real Difference Between Teenage Boys and Girls' Sexting Habits? Boys Forward More." *Slate*, March 4, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/03/04/sexting_statistics_teen_boys_and_girls_sext_in_equal_numbers_but_boys_forward.html.

Hill, Natalie. "'You Watch that?' Why We Consume Violence Against Women as Entertainment." *The F Word* (blog). Entry posted January 9, 2012. Accessed May 7, 2014. http://www.feminisms.org/4232/you-watch-that-why-we-consume-violence-against-women-as-entertainment/.

Jiwa, Fazeela. "'Bullying' is Too Vague When We're Dealing with Sexism and Misogyny." *Georgia Straight* (Vancouver), October 15, 2012, Commentary. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.straight.com/news/fazeela-jiwa-bullying-too-vague-when-were-dealing-sexism-and-misogyny.

Jouvenal, Justin. "Stalkers Use Online Ads as Weapons Against Victims." *Washington Post*, July 14, 2013, Local. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/i-live-in-fear-of-anyone-coming-to-my-door/2013/07/14/26c11442-e359-11e2-aef3-339619eab080_story.html.

Kee, Jac Sm. *Cultivating Violence through Technology?* November 2005. http://www.apc.org/en/pubs/issue/gender/all/cultivating-violence-through-technology.

Khan, Azmat. "Second Alleged Maryville Rape Victim, Paige Parkhurst, Speaks Out." *Al Jazeera America*, October 15, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/america-tonight-blog/2013/10/15/second-alleged-maryvillerapevictimpaigeparkhurstspeaksout.html.

Lang, Nico. "We Need to Talk About Steubenville." *Huffington Post* (U.S.), March 25, 2013, The Blog. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nico-lang/steubenville-rape-culture_b_2944752.html.

Laws, Charlotte. "I've Been Called the 'Erin Brokovich' of Revenge Porn." *XOJane*, November 21, 2013. Accessed February 18, 2014. http://www.xojane.com/it-happened-to-me/charlotte-laws-hunter-moore-erin-brockovich-revenge-porn.

Marshall, Josh. "Monstrous." Talking Points Memo. Last modified March 9, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/monstrous?ref=fpblg%5D.

Ogrodnik, Irene. "1 Year Later: What's Changed Since Rehtaeh Parsons' Death?" *Global News*, April 7, 2014. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://globalnews.ca/news/1254563/1-year-later-what-changes-have-been-made-since-rehtaeh-parsons-death/.

Pesta, Abigail. "'Thanks for Ruining My Life.'" *Newsweek* (U.S.), December 10, 2012. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.newsweek.com/thanks-ruining-my-life-63423.

Plank, Elizabeth. "Audrie Pott Rape: Viral Rape is Trending, and We Should All Be Very Worried." Policy Mic. Last modified April 12, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.policymic.com/articles/34611/audrie-pott-rape-viral-rape-is-trending-and-we-should-all-be-very-worried.

Salzillo, Leslie. "Breaking: Steubenville's Jane Doe Receives Death Threats." *Daily Kos*, March 17, 2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/03/18/1194908/-Breaking-Steubenville-s-Jane-Doe-Receives-Death-Threats#.

Sarkeesian, Anita. "Image Based Harassment and Visual Misogyny." *Feminist Frequency* (blog). Entry posted July 1, 2012. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.feministfrequency.com/2012/07/image-based-harassment-and-visual-misogyny/.

Singer, Drew. "Steubenville Rape Case: Teens Charged with Making Online Threats Against Victim." *Huffington Post* (U.S.), March 18, 2013, Crime. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/18/steubenville-rape-case-twitter-threats_n_2904463.html.

Southey, Tabatha. "Rape Is Still Treated as a Matter of Sex. But I Know Better." *The Globe and Mail*, March 22, 2013, Columnists. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/columnists/rape-is-still-treated-like-a-matter-of-sex-but-i-know-better/article10243048/.

Topping, Alexandra. "How Domestic Violence Spreads Online." *The Guardian*, September 3, 2013, News. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/sep/03/domestic-violence-spreads-online-watching.

———. "Online Trolling of Women is Linked to Domestic Violence, Say Campaigners." *The Guardian*, September 3,

2013. Accessed April 25, 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/sep/03/online-trolling-women-domestic-violence.

West Coast LEAF. "Legal Responses to Cyber-Misogyny Project." West Coast LEAF.
http://www.westcoastleaf.org/index.php?pageID=247&parentid=29.

Appendix A

Online Survey Responses: Experiences of Cyber VAW

1) What has been your experience of gendered violence on the internet?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Exposure to the promotion of rape culture	73.3%	44
Targeted harassment of communities	51.7%	31
Online harassment and cyber-stalking	31.7%	19
None	16.7%	10
Sexual exploitation or luring	16.7%	10
Other	11.7%	7
Non-Consensual distribution of photos/videos	5.0%	3
Intimate partner violence	3.3%	2
Aggravating factor of sexual assault and rape	3.3%	2

Appendix B
Online Survey Responses: Impact of Cyber-Violence

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Psychological/Emotional		
Self-image damaged	43.3%	26
Living in a state of fear	23.3%	14
Anxiety	48.3%	29
Depression	33.3%	20
Substance use/abuse	10.0%	6
Humiliation and shame	30.0%	18
Self-harming behaviour	10.0%	6
Thoughts of suicide	10.0%	6
Re-victimization by the justice system	8.3%	5
Negative impact on school performance	11.7%	7
Social		
Withdraw from online activity	40.0%	24
Isolation from friends/family/community	28.3%	17
Change schools	0.0%	0
Move out of community	3.3%	2
Take kids out of school	0.0%	0
Cut down on social activities	26.7%	16
Harm to reputation	13.3%	8
Blamed for violence done to you	23.3%	14
Economic/financial		
Lost job	1.7%	1
Inability to advance in job	5.0%	3
Inability to get new job	6.7%	4
Loss of income	5.0%	3
Loss of property	3.3%	2
Loss of home	3.3%	2
Damage to credit rating	10.0%	6
Physical		
Physical abuse exacerbated by online violence	3.3%	2
Physical harm and injury resulting from online violence	5.0%	3
Physical illness	11.7%	7
None of the above	20.0%	12

Appendix C

Online Survey Responses: Women's Resistance to Cyber VAW

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Social		
Blocked attacker(s) on social media platform	23.3%	14
Confronted attacker(s)	20.0%	12
Left social media platform	15.0%	9
Exposed attacker(s) to their employer/friends/family	6.7%	4
Shared story with media (newspaper, blog, etc)	6.7%	4
Publicized attacker's personal information online	3.3%	2
Called a crisis line or women's organization	1,7%	1
Went to a transition house	0.0%	0
Legal		
Reported to police (police took no action)	3.3%	2
Reported to police (attacker arrested)	1.7%	1
Reported to police (restraining order obtained)	1.7%	1
Filed civil suit against attacker	1.7%	1
Reported to police (charges laid)	0.0%	0
Reported to police (attacker convicted)	0.0%	0
Appealed to online platform (i.e Facebook, Craigslist, pornography site, etc) to intervene		
Appealed to online platform, but platform took no action	18.3%	11
Online platform removed content	10.0%	6
Online platform blocked attacker from using platform	6.7%	4
None of the above	30.0%	18