



National Task Force
to End Sexual and
Domestic Violence Against Women



National Council
of Women's
Organizations
Many Voices. One Vision.

Cyberstalking and Online Threats

An advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline chatted with a woman who contacted us because nude pictures of her were posted online without her consent. She was very scared the photos were going to hurt her chances of getting into [school]. The advocate gave her a number of resources to help her understand the nature of what happened to her, as well as some legal resources so she could educate herself about her rights. She was very grateful for the information felt relieved to have some “next steps.”

“...he has gotten aggressive
and even called me all kinds
of names on Facebook...”

—Anonymous Hotline Contact

“Anna Mayer” had a pseudonymous blog, until posters disclosed her real name, email address and phone number. Someone created a fake Twitter account, tweeting Mayer fantasized about rape and rough sex. Posts were aimed at potential employers, forcing Mayer to tell her supervisor and include a disclaimer on her resume.

A law student became the topic on AutoAdmit on the thread, “Stupid Bitch to Attend Yale Law.” People threatened to rape her and posted videos of her picture being shot. When she found a job, posters e-mailed her employer that she was barely literate and slept with the dean. The police simply told her, “Boys will be boys.”

Online harassment is defined by an internet user being called offensive names, having someone purposefully try to embarrass them, being physically threatened, being stalked, harassed for a sustained period or being sexually harassed online.*



18% of internet users have experienced severe forms of online harassment such as being the target of physical threats, harassment over a sustained period of time, stalking, and sexual harassment.

Young people are particularly prone to online harassment. 65% of young internet users have been targets.

Young female internet users experience the most severe online violence.

- 25% have been sexually harassed online
- 26% have been stalked online
- 23% have been physically threatened online
- 18% have experienced sustained harassment online

Men are more likely to experience name-calling and embarrassment, while young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment and stalking.

- 66% of internet users who experienced online harassment were on social media
- 22% were harassed in the comments section of a website
- 16% were harassed in online gaming

*As defined by:

Duggan, M. (2014). Online harassment. *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech.* Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/online-harassment/>.

All statistics taken from:

Duggan, M. (2014). Online harassment. *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech.* Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/10/22/online-harassment/>.