

# When technology meets misogyny

*Multi-level, Intersectional Solutions to Digital Gender-Based Violence*



**GEN POL**

Gender & Policy Insights

Women are disproportionately more affected by online violence than men. In [When Technology Meets Misogyny](#), GenPol refers to the concept of digital gender-based violence (DGBV) and proposes it as the most appropriate to be adopted by legislators, practitioners and advocates globally.



The concept of digital gender-based violence (DGBV) conveys several important meanings:

- The violence that characterises the phenomenon;
- The fact that such violence is motivated by gender;
- The fact that it has a real impact on the victims' lives.

DGBV includes:

- Gender-based online harassment and ICT-related hate crimes: misogynistic and highly sexualised comments, death or physical violence threats.
- Unsolicited pornography: sharing of sexually graphic materials without the consent of the recipient, computer intrusion, doxing, swatting, impersonation, vandalising someone's social media.
- Cyber-stalking.
- Image-based abuse: non-consensual pornography or revenge porn, hacking, upskirting, digital voyeurism.
- Digitally facilitated trafficking sexual and economic exploitation.



20% of young women (18-29) in the EU have experienced online sexual harassment



9M girls in the EU have undergone a form of DGBV by the time they were 15

Source: EIGE, Cyber violence against women and girls (2017).

## Case studies

### Australian Legislation on image-based abuse (IBA)

The Crimes Amendment (Intimate Images) Act in New South Wales made it a crime to intentionally record, distribute or threaten to record or distribute an intimate image of another person without their consent.

It's a comprehensive legislation, which makes motivation irrelevant and doesn't over-criminalize young perpetrators; however it encounters some limits in the difficulty of removing images from the internet and the lack of awareness of the the gendered implications by law enforcement personnel.

### The case of the non-profit organisation Childnet

The project deSHAME illustrated how digital harassment is a gendered phenomenon and showed that a holistic and gender-sensitive approach involving multiple stakeholders can ensure a successful response to online sexual violence.

The project included some recommendations and practical resources as well as training for the police and social workers. The advocacy strategy was strong, focusing on seeking space on corporate boards, but - due to the charity's specific mission - the focus was only on young people.

### The power of grassroots initiatives in Romania

Venera Dimulescu's academic research on revenge porn led to the involvement of NGOs and survivor-led research which, through a "stick to the facts" approach helped to change the narrative around DGBV and its victims.

The project sparked a national conversation that led to a new anti-revenge porn law. However, the activists and the survivors studied were targets of DGBV.

## Case studies

### The case of UK's Glitch!

Glitch is a single-issue campaign organisation that aimed at raising awareness among young people while advocating for the government to implement measures to tackle the problem.

It has gained national and international praise but it has faced difficulties in funding and organisation. Moreover, activists remain targets of online abuse.

### European Women's Lobby (EWL) Partnership with Google

The partnership helped EWL gaining visibility and financial support for DGBV-related initiatives.

It contributed to develop a further understanding of the evolution of gender-based abuse in modern time and possible good practices; the role of large tech companies in regard to DGBV remains problematic.

### The issue of moderators

Human moderators are not able to cope with the volume of UGC, and the quotas they are subject to pose a strong strain on their mental health.

Mixing systems utilising both algorithmic and human intervention and increasing support shown by large tech companies to their moderators are possible solutions.

## GenPol's Policy Recommendations



### For policy makers, legal and law enforcement agencies

- Implementation of New criminal and civil legislation to address specific legal loopholes.
- Training of legal and law enforcement personnel to recognise the gendered and intersectional components of online violence.
- Holding tech companies accountable.



### For media companies and research institutions

- Specially designed training should be provided to media personnel.
- The safety of journalists should be ensured.
- Research institutions should contribute through their research efforts



### For the tech industry

- Introducing equality and diversity policies, training and programmes, and specific initiatives.
- Engaging in cross-sector partnerships.
- Improving their moderation systems.



### For employers, trade unions, professional associations and E&D teams

- Training their personnel and raise awareness among their members via toolkits and resource packages, online events, and cooperation with experts and women's rights organisations.
- Providing employees and survivors of online violence with appropriate support.



### For activists, women's and human rights organisations, trainers and educators

- Keeping an intersectional approach to DGBV-related issues.
- Practitioners and educators should familiarise themselves with existing research and material on DGBV.
- Advocacy strategies should include ambassadors and the identification of gatekeepers in tech, politics and media.



### For organisations supporting survivors and practitioners

- Funding support networks for survivors.
- Grant-giving organisations and funds should finance research projects on DGBV, the creation of resources for practitioners and activists, and campaigns.
- Mental health and domestic/sexual violence charities, legal and medical professional associations should offer specialised training on DGBV.