

A Lexicon of Online Harassment

Term	Definition	Additional Notes	Links/ References
	This section highlights the many different words used to talk about online harassment and speech online. We put this together because?		
Online harassment	Is the use of the digital technology to harass, intimidate, threaten or attack a person or community.	This is a simple definition that can cover a variety. There are numerous variations to this term that focus on who is being harassed or the means of technology used to harass them.	
Cyber Harassment	Similar in meaning to online harassment, however the term 'Cyber' itself is used as a prefix to denote anything related to the internet.	The evolution of the prefix 'Cyber' is in the word Cybernetics, which is associated with systems level feedback loops and self-regulating environments. In the 1990s the prefix became closely associated with sex only for it to evolve more than a decade later into a prefix to denote anything related to the internet.	https://i09.gizmodo.com/today-cyber-means-war-but-back-in-1511111111 And https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cybernetics
Gendered harassment	The use of this term makes an explicit connection between online harassment as a direct consequence of their gender identity and sexual orientation, targeting women, trans*, gender queer, non-binary and gender non conforming individuals.		http://www.womensmediacenter.com/speech-project/online-abuse-101
Online Abuse	Similar in meaning to online harassment.	The Women's Media Center based in the US has chosen to use this term.	http://www.womensmediacenter.com/speech-project/online-abuse-101
Tech-mediated Violence Against Women/ Tech-Related Violence Against Women (VAW)/ Online Violence Against Women	These terms draw attention to the different realities of violence against women mediated through technology platforms and devices. Women are not just verbally harassed on social media, but also through regulation of their use of digital devices, limited ownership of devices, surveillance of what they post online, and other circumstances at the intersection of technology access and use with gendered power relations. These terms highlight the fact that technology itself does not cause violence, but that technology is only a medium through which pre-existing gender inequalities are enacted anew.	These terms have primarily been used by the Association for Progressive Communication (APC)'s Women Rights Program that has been researching, documenting gender based violence mediated through technology since 2006.	https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/good-questions-technology-researching-gender-based-violence-mediated-through-technology-since-2006
Online Violence Against Women	Similar in meaning to online harassment.	Was previously used by APC to describe online harassment. Is used by some women organizations and donors such as Global Fund for women.	https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/online-violence-just-b
Online Gender Based Violence	The use of the word 'gender' expands the definition to include other forms of gender identity and sexual orientation than that implied by 'women'.	Is the latest term to be used by APC to describe Online harassment in a more inclusive manner.	
Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls	Similar in meaning to online harassment	Coined by the UN Broadband Commission and UN Women in their report published in 2015 focusing on Online Harassment targeting women and girls.	http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/cyber_violence_gender20report.pdf?v=1&d=20150924154259
Account hijacking	Where an individual's or group's email, social media, computer account or cloud account is used without authorisation.		
Cyber Bullying	Refers to harassment targeted towards youth by other youth or adults.	Bullying has been used to reference harassment. Academia has distinctly defined this as harassment that targets youth. Social Media platforms such as Facebook and Google have also used it with a focus on youth.	https://www.datasociety.net/pubs/oh/Online_Harassment_2015.pdf https://www.facebook.com/help/420576171311103/
Cyber Stalking	The use of digital technology devices, or activity online, to track an individual and use that information to harass or intimidate them online, to monitor their actual physical movements, or to apprehend them in physical space.		https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/11/what-the-law-can-and-cant-do-about-online-harassment/382638/
Catfishing	Is the use of a fake profile or persona online to lure someone into a relationship.	The term first appeared in a 2010 documentary entitled 'Catfish' a story about a man falling in love with a middle-aged married mother who pretended to be someone else online.	http://www.slate.com/blogs/browbeat/2013/01/18/catfish_rumor.html
Counter Speech	is a narrative that challenges or opposes hate speech or online harassment by actively re-framing both the content and the terms of the conversation. Counter speech comes in different forms, in some cases it is a simple response to the speech online like a tweet or Facebook comment; in other cases it can be a more widely orchestrated campaign. Parody has also become a common tactic to counter hate or violent speech.	The feminist campaign in response to online harassment, Zero Tolerance, is a good example of a parodic counter speech campaign that focused on abusers.	http://stoppinghate.getthetrollout.org/ ... and http://zerotolerance.guru/
Dangerous Speech	Dangerous speech 'is speech that has a special capacity to catalyse mass violence.'	Scholar Susan Benesch developed a framework to measure the 'dangerous-ness' of speech based on: the speaker, the audience, the speech act itself, the historical and social context, and the means of dissemination of the speech.	https://www.usshm.org/m/pdfs/20140212-benesch-countering-dangerous-speech.pdf
Distributed Denial of Service Attacks (DDoS)	DDoS is an online attack orchestrated through the mobilisation of people and technology. In this, a large volume of requests are sent to a website server to the extent that it overwhelms the server that is hosting the website thus causing the site and anything else on the server to be unavailable.	DDoS attacks date back to the early 1990s and has a long history in online activism and protest. However, it is also used to silence speech online by disabling websites, and therefore is challenged as a legitimate form of protest.	https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/d334pm/history-of-cyber-civics-mit-edu/blog/erhardt/molly-sauter-and-the-computer-hackers https://cyber.harvard.edu/publications/2010/DDoS_Independent_Rights
Doxing	Is an abbreviation of the phrase 'dropping docs'. It is the act of sharing the personal details of an individual with people online, particularly physical address or ID documents, as a form of intimidation and harassment.	This usually is done through a combination of cyberstalking and investigation to retrieve an individual's personal information. In most cases it is not difficult to find people's personal information because of the significant amounts of personal information shared online.	https://www.schneier.com/essays/archives/2015/10/the_ris_e_of_politica.html
Reporting Fake profiles	Is a type of online harassment in which an individual's profile is reported to Facebook as being in violation of their (now amended) Real Name policy. In order to verify a person's identity and account their Facebook account would be deactivated. This is especially effective against Trans* people and others who have social names that do not match legal documents.	This is a common tactic globally, where groups report certain pages or profiles on social media platforms, the result is a group's or individual's profile taken down.	https://www.theverge.com/2014/9/2/6083647/facebook-s-reports https://www.theverge.com/2015/12/15/10215936/facebook-reports
Flaming [verb]	Leaving inflammatory comments both as a method of direct harassment and as a means of derailing the conversation by stealing focus and elevating the emotional state of participants.	Flaming was a popular term used in the earlier years when writing about harassment online. Harassment on a social media platform raises questions about the jurisdiction governing that platform, essentially where the company is registered and which jurisdiction it is liable in.	http://www.womensmediacenter.com/speech-project/online-abuse-101/#flaming http://www.ichrp.org/en/article_19_04thdr
Freedom of Expression	"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." - Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights		
Gendered Surveillance	Is the framing of surveillance from a gender and feminist approach. Highlighting the fact that historically surveillance have been used to control women's bodies and the digital era has led to the proliferation of this with the collection of large amounts of data.	There have been a few recent research articles by APC and a project launched by Internet Democracy project focusing on this issue.	https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/BigDataSexualSurveillance.pdf , https://genderingsurveillance.internetdemocracy.in/
Google Bombing	In concert with Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), Google Bombing works towards causing a particular site to rank high in a Google search. The site could have irrelevant or negative links about a subject.	This can be used by harassers to highly rank negative content related to a person in a search engine, meaning a search of a person would yield this content as a top result. It is also a tactic that can be used by people to obscure that negative content as well. Tactical Tech's own research about attacks on pro-choice activists in Latin America and the Caribbean shows that in some cases when people search for information about abortion they are shown information anti-choice information.	http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=cyberlaw https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6684506-google-bombing
Harmful Speech	"Harmful speech consists of a range of phenomenon that often overlap and intersect, and includes a variety of types of speech that cause different harms. The most familiar type is hate speech, which commonly refers to speech which demeans or attacks a person or people as members of a group with shared characteristics such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability."	The Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society has been researching this topic for the past three years and just recently published a series of essays on the topic."	https://cyber.harvard.edu/publications/2017/08/harmfulspeech
Hate Speech	According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Hate Speech is: "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law"	Similar to Online Harassment, Hate Speech has numerous definitions and explanations. Although, unlike Online Harassment, many countries and International Law define what speech is considered hateful and criminalise it. This includes targeting people based on their Race, Ethnicity and Religion. It is noteworthy that Gender and Sexual Orientation are absent from International Law's definition of Hate Speech.	http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx https://cyber.harvard.edu/publications/2016/DefiningHateSpeech The European Commission on Hate Speech online: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/maga/6
Honey Trap	Is the practice of using romantic and/ or sexual relationships (or the potential of one) to amass information about an individual in order to use it for political manipulation or extortion.	This tactic has been used to entrap LGBTQ activists in a variety of countries where homosexuality is criminalized	
Identity theft/ Impersonation	The theft of an individual or group's identity in order to impersonate them online, or to develop fake profiles of them online.	This is a tactic used in many parts of the world to attack women activists by creating fake profiles and having those fake profiles make controversial claims or post content of a sexual nature.	https://femfreq.tumblr.com/post/134929929680/harassment-through-impersonation-the-creation-of
Revenge Porn	The publishing of intimate photos or videos without consent. The content could have been made with or without the knowledge and the consent of the individual.	What has been popularly known as "revenge porn" is being re-labelled by many activists and women's rights organisations as either "Non-Consensual Image sharing/ Non-consensual distribution of intimate content". The term revenge porn is problematic in its assumption that the intention is revenge rather than intimidation and humiliation, and that the images are pornographic.	The Cyber Civil Rights Initiative has been working on issues of non-consensual porn particularly on legal issues in the US. https://www.cybercivilrights.org/about/ https://www.nytimes.com/magazine/2016/12/05/the-attack-on-cyber-civil-rights
Sexortion	The use of intimate images or personal information as coercion for sexual exploitation or blackmail. It could start as a honey trap and then evolve to different kinds of exploitation.	Is sometimes used in contexts where homosexuality is criminalised, pathologised or stigmatised. Research shows that individuals are entrapped, and then are threatened with the intention to share that information with their family or community.	https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/may/22/facebook-tacticaltech.org/anonymity-visibility And https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/06/opinion/swatting-fbi.html
SWATting	Is the act of placing a fake call to the police and tricking them into sending a SWAT team (heavily armed police) to a person's address.	This term is generally used in the US, however the action of sending the military to an individual's house is common in other parts of the world as well.	
Trolling	An internet troll has existed since the beginning of the internet. Trolls' actions were usually done for the 'lulz', that is for laughs, and personal amusement at someone else's expense, and sometimes without malice. That definition has evolved over the past decade to refer to an online harasser. However, some might question the use of the word trolling to refer to serious forms of targeted attacks like stalking and doxing.	Trolling long precedes its negative connotation of online harassment. It is worth having a conversation about the relevance of the term and its use when referring to harassers.	http://pbs.illiaclemon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Cyber-Trolling-101.pdf https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LOL#variations_on_the_theme