Anticipating and Responding to Emerging Forms of Technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence

HAESOO KIM, Cornell University, USA

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1 Introduction

Women and marginalized populations often are disproportionately faced with the consequences of abuse and violence, and technological abuse is no exception [6]. As new technologies develop, forms of abuse that utilize such technologies also develop with them. This has been further exacerbated by the introduction of generative AI technology. Emerging risks such as non-consensually generated sexual images (i.e., deepfakes) [2], automated harassment, as well as misinformation, defamation and impersonation through AI-generated content [3] continue to threaten and endanger the safety of individuals.

Technological developments have a long history of enabling and interacting with patterns of gender-based violence. From misogynistic and sexually harassing messages [11], the creation and distribution of non-consensual sexual imagery (NCSI) [12], and abusing dual-use technologies [4], technological developments and tools have the potential to increase the scale and scope of gender-based violence in online spaces. However, while previous work effectively identifies emerging forms of violence, there is relatively limited scholarship in identifying the underlying factors and motivations that enable these recurring patterns.

I argue that, to anticipate developing forms of technologically-facilitated gender-based violence, an understanding of the underlying cultural and societal factors are crucial. While violence is delivered through technology, it is driven by social and cultural forces [10]. This perspective can be powerful especially when combined with speculative design practices [5]. By synthesizing knowledge and existing patterns of technologically-facilitated violence, we are able to generate informed predictions about how novel technologies may exacerbate or recreate existing forms of violence, which allows for preventative design interventions [9]. This sort of culturally-aware analysis can also help understand the differing impact or conceptualization of violence, as different cultures may perceive or respond differently to them [1, 13, 15].

Author's Contact Information: Haesoo Kim, hk778@cornell.edu, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA.

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2 Previous and Ongoing Work

To this end, I have conducted previous work that focuses on understanding digital gender-based violence through a combination of historical, culturally-aware, and speculative approach. Here, I present two of my recent work, conducted in collaboration with different groups, that exemplifies the aforementioned research directions.

1. ***"My Body is Not Your Porn": Identifying Trends of Harm and Oppression through a Sociotechnical Genealogy of Digital Sexual Violence in South Korea*** (To appear in CSCW 2026): In this work, we explored the phenomenon of digital sexual violence through a historical lens, focusing on South Korea. South Korea has a fraught history of digital sexual violence. Its history of societal and structural misogyny and lackluster legal responses to previous digital sexual violence incidents have led to the occurrence of multiple high-profile and systematic digital sexual violence cases over the years. Through case studies, we identify how the technological, cultural, and legal factors have interacted through time, proposing the significance of a sociotechnical-historical perspective in exploring gender-based violence.

2. ***AI-facilitated Coercive Control: An Experimental Study*** (CHI 2026): In this paper, we explore how conversational generative AI technologies could be utilized to facilitate and exacerbate coercive control behaviors. Using a speculative approach, we developed four scenarios describing potential harms of AI-facilitated coercive control, ranging from AI-generated harassment and verbal abuse, using AI to generate materials for gaslighting and coercion, and inserting bias into AI responses through prompt injection. We explore how the various capabilities and use cases of generative AI intersects with existing patterns of coercive control, such as manipulation, surveillance, and harassment. Through an evaluation of commercial AI products, we identified risk factors such as vulnerability to multi-turn manipulation and AI systems providing hints on how to overcome safety guardrails, as well as escalating and exacerbating the harms through iterative processes.

3 Going Forward

Building upon previous work, I present considerations for discussion in the workshop as well as the larger field of gender-based violence, technology-facilitated abuse, and online harms.

I would like to emphasize the need to focus on the lived experiences of victims and potential victims to reduce the negative impacts of gender-based violence. Experience-centric solutions, such as increasing user agency [7, 8], building resilience [16], and literacy training, can help us build upon sustainable solutions that are independent from the technology involved. Particularly, as perpetration of digital abuse grows in scale and accessibility with new technologies, 'threats' of harm can also become a major factor. Even if an individual has not directly been the target of violence, targeted violence towards women and marginalized people can impact their sense of safety, health, and behavior. Online behaviors such as overall social media use and self-disclosure may be affected as risks become more tangible. Thus, exploring the indirect repercussions of violence is necessary to fully understand the impact it has on individuals.

In addition, higher-level considerations of researcher safety and health must be considered for the sustainability of the field. Researchers investigating violence and abuse in online spaces are often exposed to toxic content, and accounts of traumatic events. We also risk the potential of desensitization or normalization as we are repeatedly faced with these subjects. Recent work in trauma-informed computing have explored methods to promote researcher safety in qualitative research [14]. Building upon such efforts, how can we, as a field, develop systematic practices to maintain the safety and well-being of researchers as we conduct work in this area? I would like to invite discussion from others in the field, including personal best practices and considerations to ensure the safety and sustainability of our work.

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