

Project Title: Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence and Harassment (Interviews)**Investigators:** Dr Anastasia Powell (RMIT University) and Dr Nicola Henry (La Trobe University)

Thank you for your interest in participating in a research project on technology-facilitated sexual violence and harassment being conducted by RMIT University and La Trobe University, with funding support from the Australian Research Council. Please read this document carefully and be confident that you understand its contents before deciding whether to participate. If you have any questions about the project, please ask one of the investigators.

What is the project about? Why is it being conducted?

This study explores the nature, impact and scope of technology-facilitated sexual violence and harassment. Our aim is to document adult's experiences of these harms, and identify the gaps within current Australian law and policy for responding to such behaviours. For the purposes of our study, we are particularly interested in hearing about your experiences of:

- online sexual harassment, or stalking-type behaviours, whether via mobile phones, social media sites and via the use of other technologies
- the recording and/or distribution of intimate or sexual images without permission
- threats to record and/or distribute intimate or sexual images
- unwanted sexual requests and experiences, such as via online dating sites and social applications
- abusive, offensive and hateful speech directed at you on the basis of your sex, gender identity or sexuality, and
- other experiences where online or mobile phone technologies have been used to harass, abuse, stalk or otherwise harm you, or cause you to feel unsafe.

Why have you been approached?

We have contacted you as someone over the age of 18 years with a personal experience of one or more of the above-mentioned behaviours. This research is the first of its kind in Australia and internationally and your experiences and perceptions will be invaluable for informing our research, as well as possible legal, prevention and support responses to these behaviours.

If you agree to participate, what will you be asked to do?***In-Person Interviews, Melbourne (Australia)***

Should you agree to participate in a face-to-face interview we will arrange with you a time and date of your choosing. Interviews will be held in a central Melbourne location or we can arrange a location more convenient for you. Only one of the above-named investigators will do the interview with you. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded on a digital/voice-only recorder. Questions will focus on your personal experiences of one or more of these behaviours; the impacts on you; and the responses you have received from others. We expect the interview to take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Compensation in the form of a retail voucher of \$50 value will be provided to you at completion of the interview, towards acknowledgement of the time and effort taken to participate in this research.

Telephone Interviews

Should you agree to participate in a telephone interview we will arrange with you a time, date and contact number of your choosing. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded on a digital/voice-only recorder. Questions will focus on your personal experiences of one or more of these behaviours; the impacts on you; and the responses you have received from others. We expect telephone interviews to take approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

Alternately, you can share your experiences via an anonymous online form on our project website: techandme.com.au

What will happen to the information you provide?

The transcript of your interview will be de-identified and you will be protected by a false name (a "pseudonym"), which will be used in any publications arising from the study. This means that your real name (should you choose to disclose this prior to setting up the interview) will only be known to the person who interviews you. This will not be shared with anyone else and will remain confidential and kept separate to the interview transcripts on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked filing cabinet to which only the investigators have access. The interviewer will destroy any documents or files that contain your name and/or contact details immediately after the interview has been transcribed. Any information that could be used to identify you will also be removed from the transcript (such as names of other people you mention in the interview etc.).

It is anticipated that the findings of this research will be published in academic journals, books and presented at conferences. As mentioned above, you will not in any way be identified in these publications or presentations. A summary of the study findings will be available on the research study website and a final research report will be made available to the Australian Research Council. Results from the study will also be available to you upon request.

The data you provide will be stored on password-protected computers and in locked filing cabinets at RMIT University and at La Trobe University, which will only be accessed by the investigators, Dr Powell and Dr Henry. Your participation and any information you provide will be kept completely confidential within legal requirements, and all care will be taken to de-identity your interview such that no connection can be made between your participation and the information that you provide in the interview. The transcribed and de-identified interview will be securely kept on RMIT and La Trobe University secure data archives for use in future publications and research by Dr Powell and Dr Henry.

What are the possible risks and benefits associated with your participation?

This research will provide you with the opportunity to reflect on your own experiences and perceptions of technology-facilitated violence and harassment. You might find some comfort in being listened to by a sympathetic listener. You may also benefit from knowing that this issue is being studied and that future responses to the issue can be informed by this particular study, the first of its kind internationally. We hope to make important recommendations for policy and law reform, victim support activities and prevention programs.

As the interview questions will be asking you about any personal experience (or experiences) you may have had in the past concerning one of the above-mentioned behaviours, there is a possibility that you may feel upset, distressed or uncomfortable. You can take a break at any stage of the interview or choose not to answer any question you do not want to answer. You can also stop the interview altogether at any time. You are free to withdraw from the project as well, provided you let the investigator know any time up to three weeks after the completion of the interview. Once the interview has been transcribed and the follow-up has been completed, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data as it will be completely anonymised (de-identified).

If you experience any distress as a result of your participation in this research, you are encouraged to seek assistance by contacting a counselling or support service. Some free and confidential services you could contact include: www.beyondblue.org.au; <http://www.lifeline.org.au>; the Sexual Assault Crisis Line ph: 1800 806 292; the National sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service ph: 1800 737 732; Women's Information and Referral Exchange ph: 1300 134 130.

What are your rights as a participant?

Your involvement in this project is your own personal decision and is completely voluntary. You also have the right to have any questions about the research answered at any time. Should you agree to take part, you reserve the right to withdraw your participation at any time without explanation, provided the request is received within three weeks after the completion of the interview. You also have the right to request that the interview stop at any stage. After the interview, you have the right to have all traces of your participation removed and any unprocessed data withdrawn and destroyed.

Whom should you contact if you have any questions?

If you have any further questions about the study or if anything is unclear, please feel free to contact either of the investigators (see details below).

Yours sincerely,



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If you have any concerns about your participation in this project, which you do not wish to discuss with the researchers, then you can contact the Ethics Officer, Research Integrity, Governance and Systems, RMIT University, GPO Box 2476V VIC 3001. Tel: (03) 9925 2251 or email humanethics@rmit.edu.au