

Online Violence

As the web is becoming a space where marginalized people can make their voices heard, new challenges for the safety of its users are constantly arising. For women, online violence can manifest in many ways including harassment, doxing, toxicity, bullying, revenge porn, misinformation, and defamation.ⁱ Since the introduction of social media platforms, online violence against women has been on the rise. Online forms of violence often are correlated to offline forms of violence and should, as such, be viewed in continuity with one another.ⁱⁱ Moreover, online violence is not limited in time or space.ⁱⁱⁱ

(Definitions sorted by alphabetical order)

Cyberbullying: harassment or violence that happens using technology.^{iv}

Gendered Online Violence: Cyber violence and hate speech online against women are a form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The terms “cyber violence” and “hate speech online against women” encompass different types of cyber violence such as cyber harassment, cyber stalking, non-consensual image-abuse, and the specific term “sexist hate speech”.^v

Online Harrassement: one or more people working together to repeatedly target an individual using abusive comments or images over a short or coordinated period, with the aim of humiliating or otherwise distressing her/him.^{vi}

Online Violence: The use of online digital devices or services to engage in activities that result in physical, psychological, emotional self-harm or cause harm to another person.^{vii}



Statistics on Online Violence in the U. S.



- ❖ Growing shares of Americans report experiencing more severe forms of harassment, such as physical threats, stalking, sexual harassment, and sustained harassment. Some **15% experienced such problems in 2014** and a slightly larger share (18%) said the same in 2017.¹ **That group has risen to 25% in 2021.**^{viii}
- ❖ About **four-in-ten Americans (41%) have experienced some form of online harassment.**^{ix}
- ❖ In the U.S., **two out of every ten young women, aged 18-29, have been sexually harassed online** and one in two say they were sent unwarranted explicit images.^x



- ❖ In the United States, according to the Pew report 2017, women are **twice as likely as men** to say they have been targeted because of their gender.^{xi}

Statistics on Online Violence, Worldwide

- ❖ Research shows that women and girls are specifically targeted by online violence. The EU estimates that **1 in 10 women have already experienced a form of online violence from the age of 15 onwards**.^{xii}
- ❖ Globally, online violence attacks are most common on Facebook, where 39% have suffered harassment, followed by Instagram (23%), WhatsApp (14%), Snapchat (10%), Twitter (9%) and TikTok (6%).^{xiii}
- ❖ Research showed that adolescents who reported cyberbullying were **11.5 times more likely to have suicidal ideation**, compared to 8.4 times of those who reported verbal bullying.^{xiv}
- ❖ A study found that, worldwide, **70% of female journalists have experienced some form of harassment**, threat, or attack, and 1 out of 3 women journalists have considered leaving the profession due to online attacks.^{xv}
- ❖ A study found that, while 64% of all white female journalists surveyed said they had experienced online violence, the rates were higher for those identifying as Black (81%), Indigenous (86%), and Jewish (88%).^{xvi}
- ❖ Online abuse and trolling in Australia costs economy up to 3.7 billion.^{xvii}

Impact of Cyberbullying on Children

- ❖ Although most parents report that bullying occurs in school, 19.2% stated that bullying occurs through social media sites and apps.^{xviii}
- ❖ 37% of bullying victims develop social anxiety.^{xix}
- ❖ A survey conducted by MDPI found that of the total number of women who have been victims of online violence, **61.64% have experienced online violence once**, while 12.33% have experienced online violence more than once. On the other hand, these percentages are much lower for the male population: only 6.17% of male respondents stated that they were victims of online violence once, and the same percentage experienced it more than once.^{xx}



- ❖ 64% of students who were victims of cyberbullying said that it affected their ability to learn and feel safe at school.^{xxi}
- ❖ 70% of students with a physical disability report being cyberbullied.^{xxii}
- ❖ One in four students who experienced bullying turned to self-harm to cope.^{xxiii}

Visualizing the Data: Online Violence

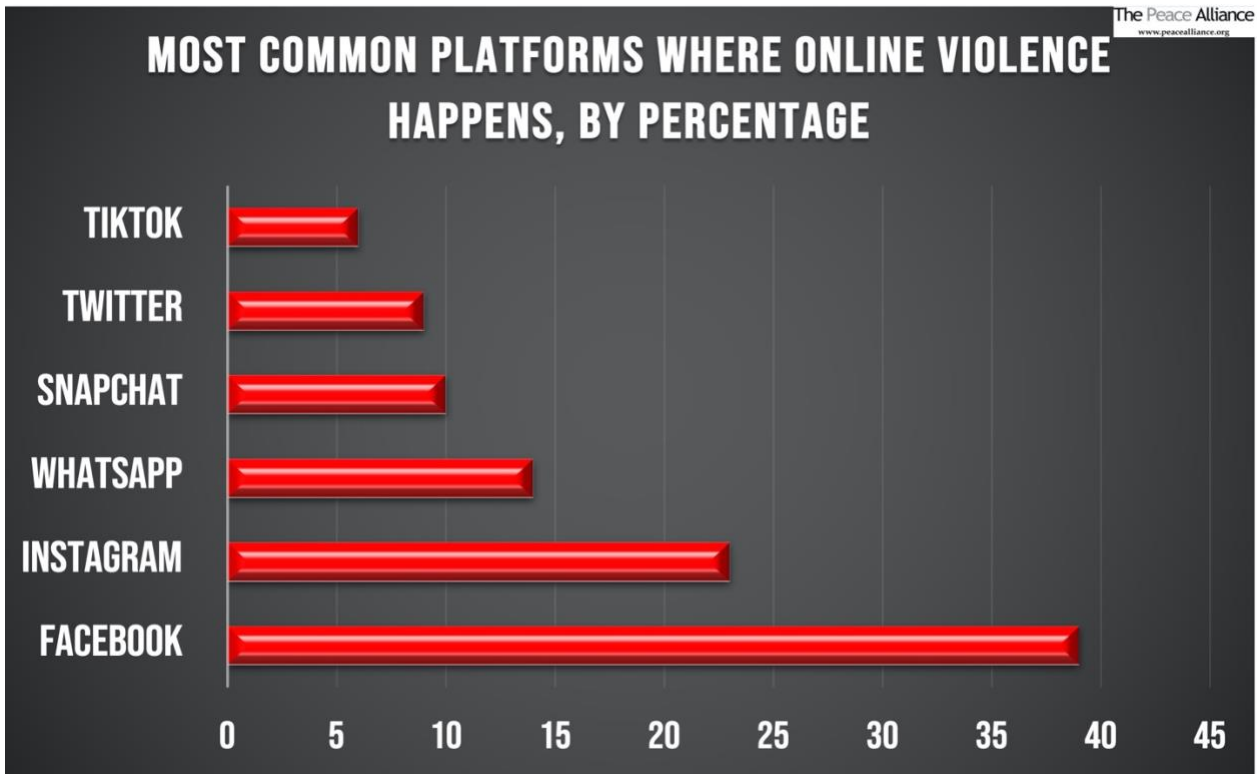


TABLE 1: compiled by author based on data accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/oct/05/online-violence-against-women-flourishing-and-most-common-on-facebook-survey-finds>

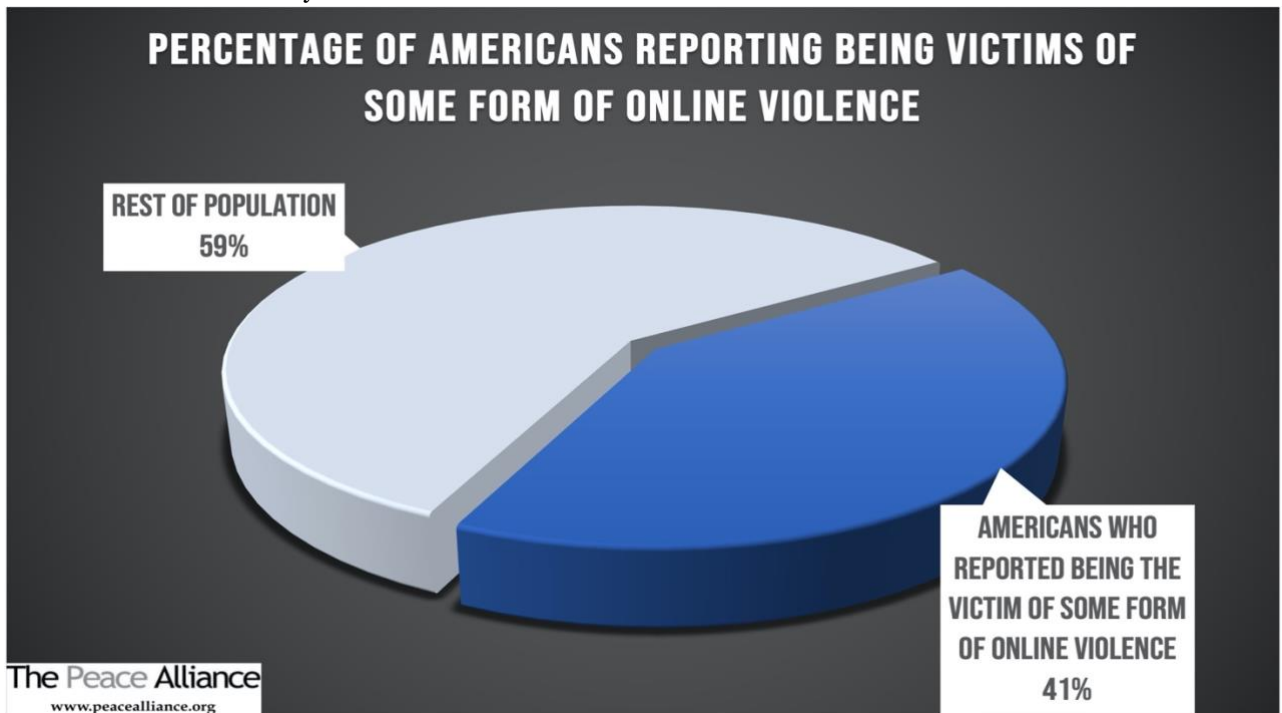


TABLE 2: compiled by author based on data accessed at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/01/13/the-state-of-online-harassment/>

Endnotes

- i <https://medium.com/jigsaw/the-state-of-online-violence-against-women-4f5e03cc2149>
- ii <https://www.stoponlineviolence.eu/>
- iii Dalla Pozza, V.; Di Pietro, A.; Morel, S.; Psaila, E. Cyberbullying Among Young People; Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department, Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs: Brussels, Belgium, 2016.
- iv <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/campaign-2020/cyber-bullying>
- v
- [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/604979/IPOL_STU\(2018\)604979_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/604979/IPOL_STU(2018)604979_EN.pdf)
- vi <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/11/what-is-online-violence-and-abuse-against-women/>
- vii <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Online-Violence%3A-Listening-to-Children's-Online-Castro-Os%C3%B3rio/8bb5067d91408fd906cb9a567bb17d563fef0f59>
- viii <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/01/13/the-state-of-online-harassment/>
- ix Ibid.
- x <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2020/Files/talkx/Session13/brief-online-and-ict-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-covid-19-en.pdf>
- xi Ibid.
- xii <https://www.stoponlineviolence.eu/>
- xiii <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/oct/05/online-violence-against-women-flourishing-and-most-common-on-facebook-survey-finds>
- xiv Alavi, Nazanin; Reshetukha, Taras; Prost, Eric; Antoniak, Kristen; Patel, Charmy; Sajid, Saad; Groll, Dianne (2017). "Relationship between Bullying and Suicidal Behaviour in Youth presenting to the Emergency Department". *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. 26 (2): 70–77.
- xv <https://www.iwmf.org/attacks-and-harassment/>
- xvi <https://www.icfj.org/our-work/chilling-global-trends-online-violence-against-women-journalists>
- xvii <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2020/Files/talkx/Session13/brief-online-and-ict-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-covid-19-en.pdf>
- xviii <https://www.comparitech.com/internet-providers/cyberbullying-statistics/>
- xix <https://dataprot.net/statistics/cyberbullying-statistics/>
- xx <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/24/10609/pdf>
- xxi Ibid.
- xxii <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2017-1.pdf>
- xxiii Ibid.