Online Harassment
Fact Sheet

The distinction between online and offline has disappeared. This is especially evident in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election and the violence that devastated the Capital Gazette newsroom and communities in Charlottesville, Parkland, and Christchurch.

— Liz Lee, founder

Online Harassment
by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
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<th>%</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40% of adults in the U.S have experienced online harassment</td>
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<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18% experienced severe forms of harassment</td>
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<tr>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27% have self-censored because of online harassment</td>
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States from Pew Research, 2017

Men and women are equally likely to face harassment, but women experience a wider variety of online abuse, including more frequent and more serious violations. Of course, marginalized groups are also disproportionately affected.

Stats from Data Society, 2016

72% of internet users have witnessed at least one harassing behavior online.
Impact of online harassment on writing, reporting, and female journalists

While anyone can use OnlineSOS resources, we’ve geared much of our work towards journalists because they are disproportionately targeted and a critical part of democratic society. Journalists who experience harassment are at risk for physical violence and being censured or silenced.

Nearly 70% of survey respondents reported having a severe reaction to their online harassment, including: fearing for their safety or the safety of their loved ones; refraining from publishing their work; and/or permanently deleting their social media accounts.

Stats from PEN America, 2018

Nearly 70%

Almost 40% of survey respondents reported avoiding certain topics in their writing due to online harassment.

Stats from Women’s Media Foundation & Troll Busters Report, 2018

62%

62% of survey respondents reported online harassment having an impact on their personal life and/or physical, psychological or emotional health.

62%

2 out of 3 female journalists report having been harassed online at least once.

States from Women’s Media Foundation & Troll Busters Report, 2018

90%

90 percent of survey respondents indicate that online threats have increased over the past five years.

90%

Almost 40% of survey respondents reported avoiding certain topics in their writing due to online harassment.

New in 2019

An in-depth report about the state of online harassment today, what’s being done about it and recommendations for stakeholder action.

In the report, we explore:

- Online harassment’s evolution and impact
- The parallels between online harassment and misinformation
- The individual experience and what options people have (or don’t have)
- What grassroots groups address the challenge and how
- Current research about online harassment and its related topics
- A new set of frameworks for understanding online harassment and potential solutions
- Opportunities for collaboration in 2020 and beyond

Read Now

September 2019
About OnlineSOS

OnlineSOS is a nonprofit that aims to create better outcomes for individuals facing online harassment through resources and advocacy.

OnlineSOS also conducts research and hosts convenings with the tech, legal, academic and advocacy stakeholders to find solutions to online harassment. OnlineSOS is funded by Google.org, New Media Ventures, and Craig Newmark Philanthropic Fund and led and advised by an award-winning team with tech, mental health, marketing and legal expertise.

OnlineSOS was founded in 2016 and is headquartered in San Francisco, CA.
To learn more, visit: www.onlinesos.org