

# 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

**40%**

40% of adults in the U.S have experienced online harassment

**18%**

18% experienced severe forms of harassment

**27%**

27% have self-censored because of online harassment

Stats 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

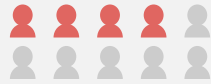
## Impact of online harassment on writing, reporting, and female journalists

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 censored or silenced.

70%

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



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

62%

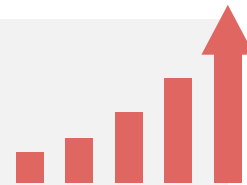
62% of survey respondents reported online harassment having an impact on their personal life and/or physical, psychological or emotional health



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

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

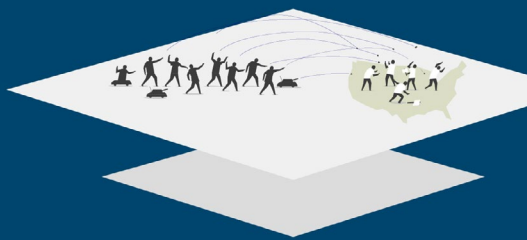
90%



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

### Into 2020: The State of Online Harassment and Opportunities for Collaboration

How we got here and  
what do we do now



### 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

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## Online Harassment •

Unfortunately, these are only a few of the quickly evolving and growing number of tactics used by abusers against their targets.

Pew's 2017 study defined severe harassment as including physical threats, sustained harassment, stalking, and sexual harassment.

- Flaming
- Derailing
- Inflammatory, threatening, hateful comments
- Gendered threats
- Impersonation
- Sustained harassment
- Mob harassment
- Non-consensual distribution of intimate images
- Doxxing
- SWATing
- Threats of violence
- Stalking
- Extortion



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### 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](http://www.onlinesos.org)