

Transcript of Rightscon 2023 session

Title: Crying shame: The supply chain of non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII)

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Rohini's slide deck: <https://zenodo.org/records/12277588>

This is an edited version of a transcript that was generated automatically from the video recording of the session. It has been edited for fixing mis-transcribed words, spelling, punctuation, grammar and for removing superfluous words.

The names of session participants who asked questions are redacted. This is because an announcement was made at the start of the session that it was being videographed but will not be publicly available. So, we do not have explicit consent from the participants to include their names or other identifying information in this transcript.

Becky Faith: We're going to start off by hearing from Rohini who's going to be talking about her research in India and then we're going to be having a discussion with Luisa and Erika, which will focus on strategies and issues for countering the issue, and then we're really excited to open up the space to the audience.

Rohini Lakshané: This is forthcoming research from the India perspective that I have done as a fellow at Factor Daily. There's another paper that will be released on Take Back the Tech which is from a global perspective and there is some overlap between the two.

Another point to note is that since the content is sensitive and controversial, there are no specific names or links. There are very few specifics in this since I don't want to be publicizing them but the final report will have some provision for those who want to be able to study this further or those who want to be able to act on some of these mechanisms of distribution and capture.

So with that, what I mean by a "supply chain" is that non-consensual intimate imagery on the internet quite often stays on the internet and never gets taken off.

And there is a path that it follows from the time it is captured to the time it comes onto the internet, to it getting distributed and it often gets fed back.

So even if it gets taken off one source or one location, it gets fed back into this loop and thus remains in circulation indefinitely.

By supply chain, I mean this <reference to slide deck:<https://zenodo.org/records/12277588>. This is a flourishing and lucrative industry in India and some other countries. But it's hard to find actual figures of how much money these mechanisms and entities are making. So, it is hard to give an evaluation of that. What this presentation is going to be is just what is the source, where it ends up, what is the path it takes, and how it keeps coming back. So this is related to distribution, which will come later in this presentation.

The term is downstream distribution where different entities with different intent including monetary gain, keep distributing it on the internet or even offline. And that enables the endless perpetuation of NCII. Despite the presence of different takedown mechanisms, legal remedies, which would enable a victim-survivor to take down this sort of content.

My research has revealed that there are certain discernible types of non-consensual intimate imagery, and there are both online and offline modes of distribution. This includes NCII that's captured consensually, but distributed without consent. And NCII that's captured non-consensually and then distributed ahead. And some mechanisms that are not necessarily so easily categorizable where different malicious actors [who] may or may not be known to the victim, capture and/ or distribute this content. I'm going to elaborate on some of these in the next few slides.

Some content is completely clandestinely captured. The people in the frame don't know that they are being captured. That includes hotel rooms and this tweet <reference to a screenshot of a tweet containing text and photos> that you see is included as an example. It's from a specific hotel chain in India where this person found a wireless camera hidden inside a ceiling fan. But, of course, this is not about this specific hotel chain. It is a very rampant problem that cameras are planted in hotel rooms, guest houses, etc. Airbnbs were known to have it. In my research I have not found conclusive evidence that a certain location was the origin of this clip.

Airbnb, of course, has rules against this and it has a policy about what people can do if they find a camera, but just stating that there have been instances in other countries.

Then, spas, massage centers including those [that] offer under-the-table sexual services, which are illegal in India, changing rooms, restrooms including those in big pubs and restaurants, then cameras planted by voyeurs or stalkers, which is something like someone taking a shower in their bathroom.

They know this person comes here at this time or someone just walking around their house in their underwear or just skimpily dressed.

It's very clear that someone has planted it [the camera] at a very specific location and an angle to be able to get that particular video or image.

Sexual or romantic partners who've planted a camera or who surreptitiously turn on a camera without telling the partner that they are recording them.

The other form is where at least one person in the frame knows that the camera is switched on and it's recording.

This is typically the scenario where the perpetrator, the one who has leaked the images online or who wants to keep these images for extortion has recorded themselves and at least one other person in the act without their consent.

Consensual capture but not consensually distributed on the internet. These are the most commonly known cases where the images were meant for private use... within the context of an intimate relationship. Nude selfies etc. which were then leaked out of spite or for defamation, slut shaming, etc. on the internet.

A slight outlier example of this is the videos of couples getting intimate on empty carriages of the New Delhi Metro. They ended up on pornographic websites and that happened because they were taking advantage of the privacy over there [in the metro carriage] but they knew that there were security cameras. There is visual signage, visible cameras as well as audio announcements that you are under surveillance but nobody would reasonably expect that highly secure, guarded footage from a public transport system would end up on porn sites.

Unfortunately in my research I have not come across anything that was done to prevent these incidents from happening. In fact, the police registered complaints of things like public obscenity on the people who were getting intimate in the carriages.

Other entities that bring about non-consensual distribution are personnel or centers where laptops or mobile devices are repaired. Those who deal with discarded devices, used devices... It's possible for these people to recover deleted images at times. Or if those images have not been deleted and you turn in a phone for repair, they'll just go through the contents of the device to know what is there and if there's something of importance for them.

People who specifically hack into, very intentionally hack into people's accounts or devices with the intent of finding or extracting their intimate images.

And then people who know the victim, coworkers, roommates, anybody else who has physical access to the victim's devices.

Now, once they've been captured in these ways and they've entered the distribution chain, what are the modes in which they get distributed?

Some pornographic websites exclusively post NCII, some of them are professionally produced porn and NCII.

There used to be a website called DebonairBlog that only posted NCII and was one of the largest websites in India at one time. It ran for more than a decade. It's defunct now. These websites make money off ads and also off subscriptions.

DebonairBlog also used to sell copies of DVDs when it ran. Telegram is a huge location, not just in India but abroad as well. So this is what my Telegram looks like <shows screenshot> and some of these are paid subscriptions.

Some content is free, but some of it-- you have to pay to be able to access the link, or you have to pay the file distribution, the file hosting service, to be able to download the link. As you can

see, some of them have a timeout of one week, et cetera. And this is done not just to recycle their content, because for them, it's free content, but also to avoid things like strikes. This last channel struck out was deleted by Telegram, because it was used to spread pornographic content. To avoid action by Telegram, they make sure that the images are deleted every one week, every one month, et cetera. Posts are deleted, sorry, not posts but images, so that they can avoid a strike by Telegram. And similar groups exist on WhatsApp as well as Discord.

There are accounts on social networks, including Twitter, that post explicit content. And some of it is NCII. While Twitter has a policy, and all major social networks have a policy against posting of NCII, this content does end up over there. And then it keeps the content in circulation.

Messaging boards, I've not included their specific names or URLs, but there are some bulletin boards, which are now a bit old. They were very popular in the early 2000s. Messaging boards also circulate content.

They are also used to identify the women. There is a "Who is she?" thread used to identify who is the woman in this image or video.

And there are file sharing websites like Terabox.

The offline modes... These are clandestine channels. While DVDs and Blu-rays are almost obsolete now. There are some people who still have the players. Some physical markets where those are sold, NCII content is sold in the open and there are people who sideload content, which means that they'll copy-paste off a laptop and make multiple memory cards, USB drives and they will load them onto somebody's device for money. And this is like very low investment work because you're only paying for electricity and the internet connection. Very low capital and it keeps making you money because you can keep giving people this content, sideloading it.

Circulation between friends and social circles who will send it on WhatsApp or via Bluetooth, etc. So these are the major findings from my research.

Becky Faith: Thank you so much, Rohini, and I've got so much respect for this work that you've been doing over the years. What I think is outstanding about it is that you take this economic angle; that you never fail to look at the whole supply chain and to point out the fact that people are making money and that there are economic drivers behind this as well that serve to shut women down online.

And I'm sure some of you who are watching this are thinking well, why aren't they using the term "revenge porn" because it's used a lot in advocacy in this space.

And one of the things that we in the session wanted to really flag is that we find that quite a difficult term, referring to non-consensual intimate imagery as any kind of form of porn is inaccurate and harmful, because that implies consent. This is a non consensual act, this is about power, and this is about abuse, so that's why we feel that the other term of revenge porn just isn't appropriate.

So we've heard from Rohini that incredibly powerful, powerful insights about the manifestations and the platforms including the offline platforms that are used for the capturing distribution of these images.

And we're now going to hear from Lu, who's just joined us, and thanks so much for joining us at a very short notice after our original facilitator had to drop out, who's doing incredible work with Vita Activa and we'd love to hear more about the work that you're doing, in this community. So, welcome Lu, very nice to see you.

Luisa Ortiz Pérez: Nice to see you and nice to meet you all.

Um, I have to, I have to convey that I am so pleasantly surprised by Rohini's research and by the idea of a supply chain as a concept for us to start zoning into what happens with the images and what happens as the images because the the person's image becomes commodified, becomes part of the market. But what Vita Activa does, and we are a helpline, we function on the basis of peer support, we're a peer support network, and we provide emotional as well as psychological first aid. So, I'm going to talk about the human side of the supply chain, Rohini.

So what happens when people get to Vita Activa is very simple. People will come and tell us, "I just discovered that my intimate images or my intimate content or part of my intimate texts have been released into platforms or into people's sites or into people's chats or into Telegram groups without my consent." And the first thing that happens is that people are destroyed. So 99% of the work that we do is de-escalate.

It is super important to understand that when a person is experiencing that particular level of aggression, the body is behaving in a similar way as if the aggression was happening physically.

And that's one of the first things that I want to really point out. The release of adrenaline and the release of cortisol is equivalent to the one that would happen if somebody is basically confronting you in an aggressive manner.

What happens to the body when aggression takes place? The body goes into fight or flight mode mode. Everybody talks about this response mode, which is the simplification of when somebody is causing me harm. I would either open the door and run or confront them and fight with a troll. What people don't talk about is the third possibility, which is the most advanced level of reaction to fear, which is inaction or passivity, most commonly known as freeze. When the body goes limp, when one goes completely on survival mode, because your body is taking all of the energy that it has to contain and to protect your heart and probably to protect your basic functions.

The body is thinking that you have a lion in front of you and the lion is gonna come and take a bite at your body. Most of the people that come to Vita Activa are in that mode.

It is almost impossible to operate a keyboard when you're in that particular mode because of the level of adrenaline. And I don't know if it's happened to you. Somebody gets a hold of your password. Somebody gets a hold of your images. Somehow, you don't know where your phone is. And just to be able to type just to be able to type your password or your email address on a keyboard is almost impossible because your motor skills are reduced by stress.

Your reaction skills are reduced and your reasoning skills are reduced because your body is in survival mode. That is a point where it's super important for you to receive not only empathic but also very care and trauma-aware support to walk you out of that particular mode and into one where you can make decisions independently.

However, and this is what we call the seven-minute gap, in that seven minutes is the moment when you either call the police or you either call a friend or you wanna change your password and you just start operating in a space where you really are not 100% in command or your abilities.

De-escalating, breaking the person back to where they can actually decide, understand and comprehend what is happening is essential.

And I'm gonna go to the second thing that we do at Vita Activa. It's essential because the trauma and the effect of that trauma can be addressed almost immediately if you're able to start talking to someone empathetic.

85% of the people who receive harm, harassment or hurt online and are accompanied by peer support networks are able to process what is happening to them.

They know that it is happening and they're able to get by in their lives and find ways of healing. 15% of the people will need more than empathetic peer support. Those that don't receive that support and for instance, are confronted by a lawyer, they're confronted by an engineer, they're confronted by a partner who is blaming them or by a person who is harming them. Those people are the ones who actually will come out with very long-lasting effects.

And I don't think I have enough time to tell you what happens with those people but most often those are the people that have to be referred to the next level of care which would be medical, which would be psychiatric, which would be legal. However, maybe I will stop my intervention right now by saying it is super important to humanize the person who is being harmed and care for people the best way we know how, empathically.

It's important to empathize with a level of harm and it's very important to understand our duty of care as organizations, as feminist organizations, as collectives, as comunidades [communities], it is essential to be able to provide support as well as the message that the person is not alone. That lessens the stress a very great deal and allows us to go into the next step of dealing with a crisis, and I'm sure that Erika is going to be talking about that.

So I'm going to stop now and pass the ball.

Becky Faith: Lu, that was incredible, and thank you so much, and thank you for the work you do and for the care that you're providing.

Erika, handing over to you.

Erika Smith: No, well actually it's so hard, I would rather hang on every other word that Vita Activa has to say about this! I think that something that I really appreciate about the helpline for Vita Activa, and this is, as we know, anyone who has any kind of a public profile also face this and I think that a lot of what you were unpacking, Rohini, in the supply chain, is this visibilization of the process. I think that there's a lot of discussion about how non-consensual intimate images happens, but this level is not necessarily seen, not the hidden cameras in a fan, and certainly not this level of production that you were sharing, and the people that actually get to a helpline in that time that is so crucial, is really important.

But it is also one of the things that I certainly have had more contact with because of the work that we do from Take Back the Tech and also the Association for Progressive Communications,

is with people who are journalists, or in the public eye in some way, like women human rights defenders. So a lot of times they're being very specifically targeted. LGBTQI+ activists, etc.

So, sometimes it's everyday women. Sometimes it is often young women. For example, in Mexico, Luchadoras has a helpline to offer them support.

And so I personally am not doing accompaniment as I used to do, but Luchadoras has a four-person helpline. And here at RightsCon, that amazing session about how they're doing work in helplines and many people who are running helplines now, peer-support helplines, just like what Luisa was mentioning, were shared in that session in a very powerful way, I heard, because honestly, I wasn't able to be in it, it was too full, unfortunately.

But I think that something that's important for people to understand [is this incapacity to function that Luisa mentioned]. I don't think anyone would have any doubt about it, is that when activists are struggling, they turn to Vita Activa.

And it's really quite interesting because it's hard to understand that even though you know so much about technology even, and we're talking about people who may be very well-versed, I'm not necessarily talking only about people who are working in technology, who are feminist techies or what-have-you. But people [who] are very well-versed. We're talking about super-skilled people with technology that could be YouTube influencers. "What do I know?" But my point here is, it doesn't matter. You don't know what to do. You may have written the recipe book about what to do, but when you're in that mode that Luisa just shared, it's really paralyzing. And so I cannot stress enough what amazing Helpline Vita Activa has been for so many people that I know and myself as well. So thanks a big shout out to Luisa and Vita Activa's work.

And you can see why and just what she described. And it is really, really true.

I want to have so many different conversations today! I do want to take a step further away thinking about all of the issues that everything that Rohini laid out in terms of the supply chain brings about and areas of action.

But also the way that people are strategizing around this: from legal frameworks to care issues, et cetera. And it is sometimes contradictory. And so, for example, I think that a lot of the world is aware of this problem.

They call it, as you said, Becky, revenge porn. They have laws that call it revenge porn. And what I think is important is not only that the term puts blame on the people who are experiencing it and subject to having their images distributed without consent because they very well may have been consensual images as Rohini was explaining.

I think it also is about how there's a stereotype around it. It's also the area of gender-based violence online or tech-facilitated gender-based violence that is easiest to get new legislation about.

And that legislation is interesting. So there's a lot of uproar around this particular thing and the way that people are reacting to it and a lot of legislation that is promoted by victims.

So what I'm trying to say here is that this is a real concerning and upsetting thing that is full of, I'm trying to think of the word in English, very contradictory rights issues. And when you are not looking at it from perhaps a feminist and inclusive and human rights framework, it can seem that

some of the responses will be very harmful, as Luisa was saying. So, Rohini has shared this with me before.

The response, if you go to police about this, “this is your fault”. Why the hell did you take that picture, obviously, and it is really to shame you to no end. And even people who are aware of their sexual rights and are very comfortable with online sexual expression often have to go through steps of justification and shame and feeling suddenly stupid for taking a risk that they had every right to explore and enjoy.

And it is so hard to sift through that aspect. It is also very hard to understand that there is an incredible and powerful economy behind all of this.

So, a lot of it stays in the realm of rights to privacy. “My intimacy was violated.” This is strong.

This is because of the economy and supply chain process. I wanted to share an example, because in Mexico anyway, the way that these pictures are compiled, you may decide you want to make your own “pack”. And so it may be your own set of video and pictures and sexual expression that you share with friends and with lovers. It may be that people compile your pack without any of your knowledge.

So, it could be something that is completely consensual and shared with an initial group completely consensually, or it could be something that people are assembling and then broadcasting in the very ways that Rohini talked about.

But I know that when you see it happening at the local level, ways to get access to that information is also heavily incentivized by giving personal data about those depicted.

You can get access to the photos if you say who these other girls are, what school they go to, what neighborhood they're in. And then the packs can be better assembled - and sold - to say these girls are from private schools or this is from an elite community.

And so those are pricier to get access to, those photos. And you may or may not be actually getting photos from those schools or those communities, a lot of times, of course, you are. But it's social engineering and crowdsourcing of information to make that [economic] good, to make that robust information that's very attractive.

And what I think I didn't realize initially is how this happens on the ground in communities as well, like at a local bar in Cuautla, Morelos, a psychologist shared with me that she was working in a high school and they told her everybody was hanging out at the bar. Somebody was like, hey, we don't have her picture. And so at the bar, if stealing the phone isn't an option, make friends with the boyfriend to see if they can get some photos of that particular person or, make friends of the friend of the boyfriend get access to those pictures.

I mean, this is an incredible level of people who are developing these databases at a very local level that are trying to get all the images possible when they think someone is hot and will help their pack.

And I, of course, really thought about it much more at a meta level and compilation of images. So we can see how local this can also be. And at the local level is, of course, where it's very harmful. What I'm trying to say is we see so many people absolutely dying inside because of this practice.

And so often it's always the solution is on them to be safer, to not do it, et cetera. And we don't see how much all around it is an economic issue.

Of course, it's a power construct. Of course, there are many other malicious actors working very hard to have access to whatever vulnerabilities might exist. And so that means that our responses are perhaps limited, or even sometimes provoking responses that are very contradictory, can only satisfy certain realities.

And we need to have much more discussion that just basically says there is absolutely no reason if your intimate pictures are exposed that you personally should feel shame, that level of power over the way you feel it should not be possible. But in this patriarchal society, it is the starting point for harassing women, human rights defenders, journalists, etc. And it is the starting point for people to begin to extort other people in dating apps, etc, and force even more exploitation.

So it's an incredibly intricate issue. And when you say revenge porn, it's like, "Yeah, this dude, she two-times, he was so pissed. So he did this," it absolutely invisibilizes so effectively everything that's going on.

Becky Faith: That was fantastic, Erika. And I just noted this week, as we were preparing for this session, that Apple is introducing a new feature in iOS, which says, if you can detect whether you're being sent a nude, and you can choose whether to accept it or not. And I think that's great. But it does show how much more we should be asking of these companies that are designing these products that everyone's spending a lot of their hard-earned cash on, why aren't they designing these products for safety and for consent?

Lu and Rohini, I wondered if you had any kind of responses to this issue around it being an individual's responsibility and other strategies that you think we should be approaching as feminist activists working in these spaces.

Lu, do you want to go first?

Luisa Ortiz Pérez: Sure. I was, I mean, blaming the victim is definitely the name of the game.

I'm absolutely obsessed with this notion of the value chain. And I wanted to also stress on the fact that this old feminist adage of the private is public or the private is political is also very important to point out in this conversation.

I would say that half of the people who come to the helpline and who are experiencing NCIs are experiencing it with intimate partners, people they know. The problem is in the household, the problem is in your bedroom, the problem is in your phone, the problem is in your personal property. If we draw a line, and I'm thinking about Timnit Gebru's idea of how the machine is actually the hyperbole of the person or the individual, and individuals are the product the machine feeds on via our data.

If you draw a line from you as a person to this whole conglomerate of where we have to fight have been multiplied a thousand percent which brings me back to Erika's point. And that's why I love Erika's work so much. That's why the granularity that helped one by one at the local level: the conversation with the people that we know, the people that we love and the actual groundwork that a lot of organizations do with zero resources. That happens in the most dire and complex circumstances is the basis of the work that we all do and it's also what sustains us

and we should be so honored and thankful. Because Apple, Meta or X are not going to sort this out. It's going to be your friend having a conversation with you at the coffee shop, at the kitchen table, so, maybe, Rohini this is a kitchen table matter and it's a capital K and a capital T. This is a Kitchen Table matter and we should take it as such because this is how we have dealt with all these things in the past and I don't know why we are not dealing with them right now in the same way.

Rohini Lakshané: I completely agree that when you know the perpetrator is a known person or someone with a degree or two or six of separation... A lot of my work also finds complete strangers distributing this for everything from gaining credit and validation within an online community to making money off it. There are also political instances of trying to target journalists, politicians, etc.

In terms of strategies -- two things -- very briefly.

Practising good digital security -- and as someone who's also a digital security trainer -- it of course goes back to the victim and puts the onus of securing themselves on the victim -- [I am] very much aware of that. But in terms of a preventive strategy, trying as much as possible for, let's say, making it difficult for someone to extract images from your phone, and steal images from your phone, would maybe prevent this from happening.

Of course, there are extreme things, like you would find tutorials online about how to detect a one mm radius wireless camera in your BnB, which is very much possible. But if somebody is on holiday, are they going to do that? This level of... there's a whole spy camera industry and a spy camera detection industry and how much is an ordinary individual going to be able to do this sort of safeguarding.

But yes, at least some level of digital security would help. The other strategy is that in my own experience, and this is anecdotal, this is not part of my research. It has worked in India and these websites were Indian ... was to send them a copyright violation notice saying that "I'm the copyright holder of this image and I'll sue you for copyright infringement, so take it down."

There are risks to this because when you contact them, they get your contact details. So, please don't use your real contact details and your real name. And there are several steps before you contact them because people who make money off this service are, of course, not going to be nice people. And while there is a threat of infringement, they take it down only because they don't want litigation expenses or to get negative attention and get dragged to the courts. In the instances of some people I have helped, this worked -- the threat of litigation or copyright infringement. When they [the victims] said this is a violation of privacy and we don't consent to our photos being put up, it was ignored. But the same website took it down [when it was a matter of copyright infringement].

Again, reiterating -- Indian website. If it's hosted on... if the jurisdiction is such that it's on a server in another country or let's say in the US where copyright laws and intermediary liabilities etc. are different, it may or may not work and it may actually increase your risk. So, please talk to a lawyer or somebody who's skilled in this.

Becky Faith: Thanks Rohini, that's a bold strategy. So, please take legal advice. We'd love to get some more feedback from the room, whatever it is, the space. We've got a question from [name redacted] who said I would love to know if this economic model is being seen in other regions like a MENA region, so the Middle East and North Africa region as far as you've seen

and researched, so this kind of approach of looking at the whole supply chain and any other questions please or kind of observations. please pop them in the chat because they did come through to us.

Rohini Lakshané: I've replied to [name redacted]'s question in the chat but for the benefit of everyone in the room I'd reply again, Because of how I was searching and my research is India-centric. India has about 452 living languages. And most of the content I've seen is from South Asia.

Because it is India-centric research, the keywords used were in English and some in Hindi and some in Tamil. The content I found is from the Indian subcontinent.

To be able to find content from the MENA region, you would have to search by the languages that are spoken there. I did come across something titled "Arab babe" or whatever. You don't really know just by looking at someone what their nationality would be. Some content I've seen but I don't really know whether it's from the MENA region and because of the way I'm searching, it's very focused on India.

Becky Faith: Thank you. Any other questions from the chat or observations on taking this approach of looking at the whole supply chain from Lu or Erika?

[Name redacted]: Maybe a question to Rohini. What comes next in the research? Because this is fascinating and I'm a fan. What are your next steps? Where do you want to take this argument now?

Rohini Lakshané: A part of this is building evidence because everybody knows that this happens and has been happening. The earliest instance of online NCII from India is from the year 2010. A rampant problem, an old problem, but one is building evidence and if there's someone from law enforcement or a legislator or a policy maker who wants to see the primary evidence because I've not shared links and names, who wants to see where this is and how this can be taken down -- Telegram is notorious for this problem because Telegram says that "we are into an encrypted channel". We don't want -- and again that the argument stands -- that we don't want encryption to be compromised. We don't want secure communications to be compromised. But Telegram says because "we are an encrypted channel, we will not take down harmful content because we don't know what people are talking about; it's encrypted". So, Telegram, because of a combination of reasons, has become a hub for these things. So, this is building evidence that this exists and this is the magnitude and extent of the problem and different entities will have to work, law enforcement will have to work, legislation will have to work, civil society will have to work, platforms will have to work to be able to fix this problem. Of course, they also need the will, but to be able to fix it, different entities will have to work at their level. So, I'm hoping that somebody will pick up their slice of the problem and I'm happy to release whatever information they need to be able to do this.

Becky Faith: Yeah, and they don't just have to work, they have to have the will to work as well. So a great question from [name redacted]. A very great, important question for Lu.

How do people -- and for Erika and for all of you -- find these peer support networks? I was really moved by you talking about the kind of care and the immediacy you provide. So she works at [redacted name of organisation] I'm wondering what role tech companies can play in helping connect victim-survivors to human level support. Great question. Any responses?

Erika, do you want to take it first?

Erika Smith: Okay. I'm biting my tongue, Lu, because tech companies have so much capacity to actually support helpline work, direct helpline work, there's so much studying that they're doing behind the scenes, especially for thinking about social media, but even from [redacted name]. But they also have the capacity to completely crush a helpline.

I mean, we know this has happened in the past, and a helpline that's been dealing with maybe a few to even dozens of calls a day can suddenly be flooded with thousands, if there's not care in the way relationships are built with helpline and capacity.

It's kind of like during the 16 Days of Action when suddenly there's ads on TV of go, get, support, legal help, and women say, okay, and they take the risk and they go to report and it's a disaster.

So I say that with caution, but most people that I know find them by searching for many different search indicators, and so people, these different helplines or support networks pop up, but you're right, a lot of it is word of mouth. I say, you know, from going from one place to another, and that's just not enough of a response.

And I think that there can be some first level stuff done by different tech companies that would help people cope a bit better with this reality.

I'm thinking especially not so much of search engines. I'm sure we would have suggestions across the board, but of social media, but I'm very happy that you're asking that question,

Luisa Ortiz Pérez: [Name redacted], I mean, maybe to build very quickly on that. I'm more and more in this world of AI and ChatGPT, I'm becoming more and more addicted to the underground railroad of slow tech and community-based communication. There is something to be said, and big hello to all the [redacted] friends and allies.

You don't want to be found, and that is the thing. A lot of the tools that are used to hurt us are the same tools that we use to find the information that we need and are the same tools that we use to provide the support and the care.

So it's very difficult for a person to always go through something very intense to be able to trust not only a search engine but a chatbot or a chat room etc etc.

So the main question is trust. How can we trust? Who do we trust and how do we find people that we trust? If people are in the conversation right now, I would say talk to your friends, ask your friends, ask people, and you will find us, and if you know where we are, recommend us to other friends because it's the only way and I mean like abortion helplines in the 60s worked, you know who to call.

[Name redacted], you know how to find Vita Activa, you know how to find Ciberseguras, you know how to find any helpline, if you need it.

Becky Faith: Amazing! Thanks, Lu. Thanks, Erika. Thanks, all of you.

I'd like some nuggets of wisdom for you before we wrap up. I'd like to know if a mass campaign or mass diffusion campaign shedding [light] on this supply chain would be useful and if the answer is yes, then what would be the most useful address see for it.

I'm in the UK and we have had quite a lot of media coverage but I'd love to see some research looking at the economics – how much money is being made out of NCII? What are your thoughts about a mass publicity campaign about this issue; how effective and useful would that be and who should it be targeted at?

Rohini Lakshané: I am not very optimistic about that sort of thing working in India primarily because we are a culture that does not value personal privacy. It's just that the concept doesn't exist and you know, therefore, like it's [NCII is] extremely commonplace, it's very normalized in India. I have another slide deck with a list of Indian movies where NCII is the plot, or is a plot point. Or it's a major device in the story.

It's so normalized. So, the movies don't necessarily say this is acceptable but it is so commonplace that you know it's in the movies. Okay, this incident of NCII happened and this happened so after it, and there's an entire list of Indian movies.

It's very out there but for an ordinary victim, for someone who does not have money or power, there's very little [inaudible]. So it was one of my primary motivations for the research.

Becky Faith: Do you want to combine your response to that question with a little wrapping up nugget as well? That would be great.

Erika Smith: (laughs) - I knew you were gonna say that, but just-- - You do, but... So, no, I meant it's after me. I'm going before you because I wanna be focused.

And Becky's like, "Be short."

I really cannot stress so much. When we've had mass campaigns, a lot of times, it's very, very hard to satisfy everyone. I have worked, for example, with the UNDP, with education, teachers, and parents, and you see these teachers and the parents like, "Oh, this is the best prevention video I've ever seen." And the kids are just like, "It totally would not change anything for me." And so, I think that when we talk about campaigns that unpack this, really our audiences have to be quite diverse, and it has to be discussed from many different perspectives and intersecting identities and how different communities are feeling it.

But I do know one thing: shame is never the answer. Absolutely, don't do it. [Don't say:] Don't express yourself, cross your legs, whatever. That's not gonna be going over well in any campaign.

And it can really provoke very severe self-harm thoughts and feelings, this message that it's permanent out on the internet, is a constant message in any mass campaign.

And so, this abolitionist approach, this really, "just don't do it" type thing, is really ineffective and actually very harmful and victim-blaming. So, that is my concern about that. But I do, I cannot say how important it is to dialogue about all of the different asks that we will have.

Some people may find that legislation in their country makes a lot of sense, but is it really appropriate to criminalize people who are doing this sort of work or what other kind of

reparations or recognition? And addressing the profit that was made and the impact on the victim would be better than perhaps even criminalization, especially given impunity in so many countries. As one example, another example, thanks to NCII, governments are getting away with criminalizing expression again, and certainly they're doing a blanket veto of any sort of sexual expression. Thanks to NCII, platforms are being asked to be very invasive or to destroy encryption, and sometimes it's our own allies and partners that are calling for these things. So this type of nuanced discussion and having it at the kitchen table and elsewhere and policymaking table is super important, where there's a lot of different people at that table, but especially that's more effective.

Becky Faith: You've got a minute, and then we have to wrap up.

Luisa Ortiz Pérez: The money for that mass campaign, give it to us. Give us the money. Give us the money for research. Give us the money for the helpline. Give us the money to pave the way. I want to shout out the phenomenal work that Angie Contreras is doing with Cultivando Género.

She goes school by school, middle school by middle school in her hometown in Aguascalientes, Mexico, and she talks to the young fellows, kiddos, they talk. We need the money. We need the money to survive. We need the money to be, for the need to continue their research, for [name redacted] to be safe, for me to continue my work. A massive campaign, just give us the money. Give the money to the community, 'cause that's how we weave the way out of this mountain.

Becky Faith: I can't think of a better way to end this incredible session. Thank you so much to these incredible women for the work they're doing and for sparing the time.

And thank you so much for coming along and for sharing your knowledge. Please do stay in touch. So thanks again and a big virtual and actual round of applause.

Thank you so much. - Thank you, lots of love. - Thank you so much, everyone. Thank you, Rohini, for all of the hard work and getting this session together as well.

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