

REPRESSIONS, EXCLUSIONS AND SEXIST VIOLENCE

Kit against online gender-based violence

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This KIT, created by Donestech with the support of Barcelona City Council, Universitat de Barcelona and the Association of Women for Research and Action, ALIA, seeks to describe and get to know online gender-based violence and take the necessary steps towards free and safe digital interactions for every women. From a critical and feminist position, the KIT introduces the topic of online gender-based violence and, above all, it offers a series of proposals, resources and initiatives for users to take care of and defend ourselves, counteract and alteract against this type of violence.

This KIT will be very useful for women and LGTBQI* individuals, especially for those women who have been battered, but also for feminists and sex and gender dissenters who are increasingly affected by this type of online violence. We encourage you to use this KIT, both preventively and reactively, and we hope that it will be useful to you.

You can also download the KIT in PDF format. The file includes images, illustrative data and additional contents such as interactive resources, online tools, related useful links and activities.

[Kit against online gender-based violence](#)[Download](#)

1. ICT are also genderized

Information and communication technologies, especially the Internet and social networks, are crucial to understand the development of current societies. They have to do with how we communicate with, take care of, organize, work with ourselves, with friends, family, comrades in arms, co-workers and hobby companions. Likewise, current society is not yet free from gender inequalities or from one of its most severe expressions, gender-based violence. Thus, the Internet and social media are also affected and are therefore not neutral. Consequently, in an unequal society in terms of gender, we still find a strong digital gender legacy, especially in relation with the chances to participate and lead the current and future technological development. Control of digital communication channels is still in the hands of white, Western and heterosexual men. Therefore, we have a highly masculinized digital society where, if nothing is done, male chauvinists and neo-chauvinists have a greater power to impose their speech and ways of doing. As a more serious expression of male chauvinism and gender inequalities, our societies are not free from gender-based violence, nor from online gender-based violence.

2. Gender-based violence: what are we talking about?

In Europe, one out of three women is sexually and/or physically assaulted for being a woman and, in Catalonia, more than half of the women has suffered some form of gender-based violence in their lives. This is also related to ICT. Gender-based violence are more easily enabled through the Internet and social media. In addition, new types of violence appear. Gender-based violence has serious consequences for victims. Impacts are serious for physical and psychological health, at social and cultural levels, in terms of educational and work opportunities, of power and political participation, of freedom of expression and movement, as well as of ability to create friendly narratives and spaces for people, also online.

Act 5/2008 of 24 of April on the right of women to eradicate gender-based violence uses the expression “gender-based violence” because it is the concept that broadly encompasses behaviours of dominance, control and abuse of power of men over women and that, at the same time, has imposed an idea of masculinity that is still seen as superior by part of the society. Violence against women is the most serious and devastating expression of this culture, which not only destroys lives, but also hampers the development of women’s rights, equal opportunities and freedom.

3. Online gender-based violence: what forms can they take?

Some forms of online gender-based violence are about insulting, embarrassing and/or undermining women’s self-esteem, such as cyberbullying due to sex reasons or slut-shaming in online comments. Other forms of violence have to do with content and revenge of a sexual nature, such as sexual cyberbullying or non-consensual pornography. Finally,

there are new kinds of attacks, as well as a strong technological component, such as attacks on feminist websites or cracking accounts.

4. Online gender-based violence: who is who? Aggressor and victim

All cases of gender-based violence of this type have in common that the majority of assailants are men. They act individually or in groups against women, LGTBIQ individuals* and even children. They mainly address their attack toward their couples or former couples, but also towards sexual and gender dissenters. Above all, they attack people who stand out for their ability to generate changes in this regard, including female feminists, politicians, technologists, artists and popular athletes, among others.

5. What can we do? Let's take care of ourselves!

Cal que les dones seguim participant de les TIC de forma creixent. Per això és important que ens cuidem i minimitzem riscos en les nostres pràctiques online. Des dels feminismes doncs, es proposen una diversitat d'accions i de mesures per cuidar-nos, des d'estratègies de mitigació i anàlisi de riscos digitals fins a la destrucció de material sensible o l'ús de formes de navegació segura.

Women need to continue increasing their participation in ICT. That's why it is important that we take care of ourselves and minimize risks in our online practices. Therefore, from the different forms of feminism, we are suggested a variety of actions and measures to take care of ourselves, from mitigation strategies and analysis of digital risk to the destruction of sensitive material or the use of safe browsing.

- Take care of (us): personal care (sleep, order...), including our space, as well as the computer.
- Assess risks: uses, contexts, schedules, spaces, privacy standards, digital footprint.
- Mitigation strategies: masks, collective identities, camouflage, fragmentation, fortification, blocking, reduction.
- Destruction of sensitive material: photographs, videos, others.
- Prioritize safe and free tools: non-corporate email, platforms, messaging, safe software and free software.
- High security: Safe-anonymous browsing (TOR), safe network at home, standalone servers, encryption/authentication.

6. What shall we do? Let's alteract!

Simple taking care of ourselves is not enough. We have to act and reverse the current situation, too. The solution can only consist of facing aggressors and eradicating this type of violence, thus also enabling safe and digital relationships free of gender-based violence for

all people. For this reason, feminisms also propose initiatives and actions, such as alerts of so-called “machitrolls” or the creation of safe alternative spaces, discourses and imaginaries, free from gender-based violence. Shall we continue to move together towards safe digital relationships free of gender-based violence?

- Record cases and situations, either personal or not.
- Identify assaults, defences and strategies, investigate and make them visible.
- Recover memory and break the silence and bring the infinity of stories of women back to life.
- Block or silence aggressors or groups of aggressors.
- Create and share information and training for equality and gender transformations.
- Report aggressions and seek help.
- Create networks, communities and act together.
- Build friendly spaces for women and LGTBIQ* individuals.
- Demand changes: structural, to online platforms, to institutions.
- Parody, irony, humour and joy!



Núria Vergés Bosch

Núria Vergés Bosch is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Barcelona. She is currently General Director of Care, Time Organisation and Equity at Work within the Ministry of Equality and Feminism of the Government of Catalonia. She has a daughter. She holds a degree in Political Science and Administration from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a Master's degree in Public and Social Policy from the Pompeu Fabra University and the Johns Hopkins University. She also has a Diploma of Advanced Studies (DEA) in Political and Social Sciences from the UPF and a PhD in Information and Knowledge Society from the UOC. Her career is highlighted by her feminist and technosocial activist work, as well as her work in teaching and research. She has been director of the Equality Unit at the University of Barcelona, member of the COPOLIS research group and member of the Interuniversity Institute of Women and Gender Studies (IIEDG). She has also been part of Alia -women's association for research and action- and has participated to the interdisciplinary feminist research seminar SIMREF. She has been involved in projects such as La Base, Telenoika and Fxl, and she is co-founder of the Donestech research group. She has carried on multiple projects and [publications](#), and has been coordinator of the IDEES magazine [special issue](#) on feminisms. You can also find her singing.



DonesTech

DonesTech is a group formed by several researchers that was created in Barcelona in 2006. Its aim is to carry out research and to act in the field of women and new media or new information and communication technologies (ICT). It has become a key entity for understanding cyberfeminist research and action in activist environments. DonesTech has carried out research about the use of ICT by women, as well as their participation in the information society. The group has been pioneering in the research and the cyberfeminist action in Catalonia and in the rest of Spain.