

Chapter 14

Revenge Porn and Blackmailing on the Internet

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ABSTRACT

In the era of technological advancements and widespread internet access, numerous issues have emerged, including cyber bullying, cyber extortion, and the disturbing trend of revenge pornography. Revenge pornography, also known as non-consensual pornography, involves the malicious act of sharing explicit photos or videos of individuals without their consent, aimed at compromising their sexual integrity. While the term “revenge porn” may suggest that the content is leaked by vengeful ex-intimate partners, it is important to note that many cases involve the illegal acquisition of explicit material through means such as hacking, with perpetrators seeking personal gain, amusement, or notoriety.

THESIS STATEMENT

Revenge pornography is on the rise these days, and there is no legislation to regulate it. The government should enact laws that prevent revenge pornography and cyber-blackmail. During the pandemic, sextortion and revenge porn cases have increased dramatically. Is revenge porn and blackmail on the Internet against the law?

INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, technology has advanced quite significantly. With just a swipe on the screen, you can access data and information from the remotest corner of the globe. This ease of access to information has promoted trade, communication, peace, and entertainment. However, technology and the Internet have proved to be a double-edged sword that cuts two ways. The Internet has been abused in many ways; for example, it has promoted cyberterrorism, identity crimes, revenge pornography, and blackmail.

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Revenge Porn and Blackmailing on the Internet

Revenge porn, also referred to as nonconsensual pornography, refers to obtaining and sharing sexually explicit materials to cause embarrassment, annoy or emotionally distress the victim. In this era, cases of revenge pornography have been on the rise, a fact that can be attributed to the absence of strict laws against those who seek to infringe on another person's peace and safety. Blackmail, on the other, refers to the extortion of another person by holding something incriminating on them to manipulate them to do your will. The effects of these activities are quite adverse to the victims resulting in depression, low esteem, loss of employment, paranoia, social out casting, anxiety and, in some cases, it has resulted in suicide.

An example of cyberbullying and revenge pornography is the highly publicized case of Rutgers University in 2010 (Kamal & Newman, 2016). In this particular case, Dharun Ravi secretly placed a web camera inside his dormitory when his roommate Tyler Clementi requested privacy for a night. When Clementi started getting intimate with another male, he live-streamed them on Twitter when he actively encouraged others to join in and watch. Two days later, Mr. Ravi tried to make another recording. This breach of privacy was the death of Mr. Clementi, who killed himself by jumping off the George Washington Bridge. In 2012, Mr. Ravi was found guilty on the charge of invasion of privacy, intimidation, and tampering with evidence, and he was sentenced to serve thirty days in jail and three years of probation.

According to research conducted, ten percent of ex-intimate partners have threatened to expose nudity pictures or videos of their partners, with up to sixty percent following through with this threat (McAfee, 2013). According to the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, ninety percent of the victims are women. It is troubling the ease at which people can access explicit information once it has been electronically disseminated. The real challenge lies in removing eliminating their digital trail once uploaded on social media. Another challenge concerning revenge pornography is that pornography websites post the victim's identifying information such as the name, residence, and phone number, place of work or email accounts. The victim's sexual integrity gets damaged, which leads to lifelong mental health repercussions such as anxiety, depression, damaged relationships, and social out casting.

However, some of the cases of revenge pornography are not actual cases of revenge. In some cases, the perpetrator is usually out to make a profit or just to humiliate the victim just for their fun and notoriety. One of such cases was the 'revenge porn king' in 2010. The perpetrator, Hunter Moore, began the website isanyoneup.com, which featured explicit content about its victim and most of the time; it contained links to the victim's social media profile. Victims usually claimed that an ex-intimate partner trying to get intimidate them, and in some other cases released the explicit content, victims claimed that their computers and other devices had been hacked into. In 2014, the Federal Bureau of Investigations on several counts of identity theft, and fifteen counts of conspiracy indicted Mr. Moore. After pleading guilty, he was sentenced to two and a half years in penitentiary institution and a fine of two thousand dollars (Kamal & Newman, 2016).

Objective Statement

This paper's primary and core aim is to explain how to tackle a blackmailing case and the best practices to avoid being a victim of revenge porn.

What does the term revenge porn and blackmailing on the Internet mean?

Revenge porn has been a matter of deep contention in the academic world. The terms that have been actively suggested to define its true meaning include involuntary porn ("Burns, 2015"), nonconsensual pornography ("Citron & Franks, 2014; Franks, 2015"), image-based sexual exploitation ("Powell, 2009, 2010") and image-based sexual abuse ("Mcglynn & Rackley, 2017; Dekeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2018") All these

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