



This is a Toolkit for Business and Professional Women  
(BPW) Australia Members for use the world  
of modern technology and violence issues.

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## SECTION 1

### Understanding the issues

#### A new world of technological progress

When the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children took place in Stockholm in 1996, participants were drawn to presentations considering the impact of 'new technologies' on children and young people. Incredibly, those new technologies were the video camera and the VCR! The audience heard that advances in technology meant that those wishing to abuse children and capture images of that abuse to share with others could now do so with impunity, because they no longer had to take a roll of film to the corner store to get it processed.

How far we have come since then! By the time the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress took place in 2001, discussions had moved on to Internet access and pornography sites. Little could anyone imagine, then that, just a decade later, people would be standing on street corners accessing the Internet on their phones, exchanging messages and images with friends and strangers across wireless networks, downloading materials onto small tablets that stored hundreds of books, movies and other materials. And the video camera was long gone – replaced by digital cameras that store still and moving images on a tiny card to be replayed on a phone, tablet, television or computer and, of course, by the tiny camera included in most mobile phones that allow images to be taken and instantly sent to others.

The content that can be accessed across phones and computers has also increased significantly. In February 2008, it was estimated that there were around 158 million websites on the Internet;<sup>1</sup> by February 2012, this had grown to more than 612 million.<sup>2</sup> Alongside websites with information of all kinds (some good, some bad), there are also now 'social networking' sites like Facebook and MySpace that propose a virtual meeting place for friends and strangers to share news, photos and personal information. It is hardly exaggerating to say that people have virtual lives on the Internet – they meet friends, go to school, shop, date and record all this often in ways that complete strangers can see and store.

There is no doubt that advances in technology have brought unimagined benefits to the world, especially for children and young people. They have broken down barriers, provided access to a wealth of information from across the globe, allowed people to communicate cheaply across continents and join communities of all kinds that enhance both learning and pleasure.

At the same time, though, the largely unregulated free access that the Internet allows, and the sophistication and flexibility of the technologies that provide access to it, have also allowed those who abuse children, young people and women to gain access to them easily and anonymously in a privileged, protected environment. That person on the street corner using a mobile phone might be in the process of being abused on-line – and no-one would know.

Some of the most frequent ways in which modern technologies are misused in order to harm children and women in particular are outlined below. Much of this harm is sexual in nature; all of it can be considered a form of violence.

## **Sexual harassment**

Most people know what sexual harassment is – someone making unwanted sexual advances to another person, sometimes for real, sometimes just to upset them, or making ‘dirty’ suggestions or comments. This can also happen using today’s technology:

Women and young girls particularly (but also men and boys) may receive lewd, suggestive and often aggressive words in SMS messages or emails. Unfortunately, for many young people, especially young adolescents, sending ‘sexy’ messages and photos has become something of a rite of passage and a common way to communicate with the boy or girl they like or are dating. It has come to be known as ‘sexting’. Young girls send their boyfriend photos of themselves in sexy poses in their underwear; boys send suggestive messages in return – and all this may seem like harmless teenage fun until the recipient decides for some reason to send the photos or words on to a third party – and fourth and fifth, sometimes to a whole address book of contacts or onto a public notice board.

The same exchange – at first confidential and then re-posted publicly – happens to racy images and words shared on social networking and dating sites. The result is that the trusting person from whom the images or words originated feels betrayed, humiliated, worthless and abandoned. This can lead to depression, truancy, missing work, avoiding family and friends, self-harm and in extreme cases suicide. Sexting is so rampant among young people in Australia that one of the country’s biggest phone network providers, Optus, has joined with Kids Helpline to develop materials for teachers to use in class to help young people know the risks they are taking.<sup>3</sup>

The unauthorised distribution of images is particularly invasive because the person’s identity is clear for all to see. Such photos, if overtly sexy, may find their way onto so-called ‘soft porn’ sites or into the folders of sex abusers who use the images for self-gratification. In this way the images can circulate for years. Knowing this, but at the same time not knowing what has become of the pictures, the victim fears the worst and comes to fear the future.

Advances in technology, particularly software readily available for enhancing photos as a hobby or for fun, also mean that photos can be digitally altered. A woman or girl’s physical attributes can be changed; her face can even be superimposed onto another body. This is called ‘morphing’.

‘Sexting’ gone wrong is a form of what we have come to know as ‘cyberbullying’ – repeated harassment of a victim on-line across a phone or computer. Repeated cases reported in the press of young people, both male and female, who have ended their lives because cyberbullies have taken away their will to live are frequent. While adult women (and men) may rationalise cyberbullying more readily than children, the daily, repetitive nature of bullying can wear down even the most resilient.

## **Stalking and grooming**

The anonymity of the cyber world, or the ability to take on a different persona, also allow those who wish to get access to women and children, gain their trust and friendship, and ultimately meet them in person to do so in relative safety.

There has been considerable press coverage of ‘stalkers’, generally child sex abusers who enter youth chat rooms or social sites claiming to be a young person, only to make friends and eventually isolate one child and ‘groom’ her or him. Over time, often without the knowledge of parents, the child reveals personal details to the stalker, comes to depend on him as a confidant, all in the belief that he is, say, a 13 year-old girl or boy. Eventually the stalker will suggest a meeting – a secret that parents shouldn’t know about – and the child learns all too late that the 13 year-old is a grown man looking to abuse them.

Women, too, may fall prey to a similar process of stalking and grooming, particularly through so-called ‘dating sites’ and social networking sites. Although many couples have met through such sites and the

outcomes have been positive for both parties, it is a fact that a woman meeting a man (or other woman) on-line has no way to verify that person's identity, no way to check that what s/he is saying is true, and no protection against the person if things start to go wrong. While once women would walk home in groups to avoid the unwanted attention of stalkers who followed them in the hope of getting one of them alone, there is no such option when a woman goes on-line or answers her mobile phone – the technology that brings people all across the world together can also isolate and increase the risk that abusers will take advantage of this.

It is easy to give blanket advice about not giving out personal details on-line, but most dating and social networking sites ask for personal details as a matter of course and not everyone is able to construct an on-line profile that is at the same time honest but also sufficiently vague to protect from predators.

### **Distribution of illicit pornographic images**

Anecdotal reports suggest that one-third of all websites are dedicated to pornography. Mobile phone companies report that the downloading of pornographic images onto mobile phones is their biggest source of revenue. It is important to remember that pornography is not, in itself, illegal in most countries (the moral arguments are not considered here). What is illegal, though, is sending pornography to those who do not want to see it, especially when it is accompanied by lewd suggestions or threats. Women may be intimidated to receive unwanted images and, if they do not know the true identity of the person sending them, will look around them and wonder whether a work colleague, neighbour or even friend is harbouring inappropriate thoughts about them and might act on those thoughts. The recipients of unwanted pornographic images may thus become mistrustful, afraid to socialize and isolated by fear. Social isolated, depression, fear, trauma, self-harm, loss of employment – the outcomes of unwanted sexual approaches can be serious and long-lasting.

And this is just legal pornography: there is also pornography that is not sanctioned in law such as child pornography (often violent and sadistic), and 'snuff' pornography where the victims are actually killed during the sexual act. Sending these forms of pornography to an unsuspecting victim is not only illegal but a violent attack on the well-being of the person who opens up an email or SMS and finds such appalling images.

### **Soliciting**

In addition to the predators who roam the Internet looking for victims they can abuse, the huge reach of modern technology is also misused by criminal elements who know that the person in front of the keyboard or consulting their phone or tablet is alone and unprotected.

Alongside legitimate dating sites, criminal procurers have built sites that lure women in particular into providing sexual services for money, often starting out as an escort who just accompanies, say, a visiting businessman to dinner but may then be encouraged to provide sex. It is known that traffickers also use this way of recruiting women who they then move into the sex trade or other forms of exploitative labour. It is important to note that it is not the mobile phone or email service that is the heart of the problem here, but the criminals who recognise that they can use all the wonderful things about technology – wide coverage, privacy, ease of use, relatively low costs etc – to commit criminal acts that once upon a time were more difficult to organise.

### **Impact on women**

All the heinous acts described above have a terrible impact on the women (and young people and sometimes men) who fall victim to them. They are a form of psychological violence, resulting in distress, humiliation and fear that can lead victims to change their behaviour, avoid social contacts, suffer depression and considering harming or even killing themselves.



They may also result in physical violence, for example if a stalker persuades a young woman to meet him and rapes her. Enforced prostitution can lead to reproductive illnesses, sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy. And the force and violence used against women may not only be sexual; it may include beating, burning or other forms of direct violence.

### So what can be done?

There are two main prongs of attack against this serious misuse of modern technology to inflict sexual and other forms of violence:

The first is to ensure that these forms of violence are included in legislation and that the police and judiciary are trained and equipped to bring perpetrators to justice. Some people may say that this is a harsh stand to take, that a young boy who sends a girl a sexy photo, for example, should not be treated as a criminal. But the fact is that the consequences of what might seem like a bit of teenage fun can be serious, even leading the death of the girl who receives them, so the problem must be treated seriously. It is up to the courts to decide how to deal with someone who might just have been 'having a bit of fun' (hardly 'harmless'). It may well be that a warning and community service is sufficient to send a signal that such behaviour is not tolerated; not taking action at all or expecting teachers to deal with it is not an option.

Obviously men who stalk and groom women and children, who abuse and who use technology to access them to inflict violence on them should be met with the full force of the law. This can only happen if laws are in place, police are trained and equipped to investigate such cases, and the judicial system stays abreast of technological advances and the laws that govern their misuse. All this requires leadership from the government in power which not only leads the way but also make the resources available for others to do the job.

The second main area of action is complementary to this and involves building a society in which violence is totally rejected, whether it is perpetrated using modern technology or not. The focus here must be on education, information, public debate and clear messages that violence is not acceptable. This sounds easier than it really is because the topics being covered are sensitive and complex and too often trivialised because people are embarrassed or just reluctant to consider them.

Parents, of course, are the most important players in encouraging their children to reject violence in all forms, as do teachers and other care-givers. The media have a role to play in avoiding sensationalism and trivialisation and encouraging real debate on these issues of public concern. Groups like BPW can promote understanding of the issues, lobby government and other responsible organisms (for example mobile phone service providers) to take a stand against the misuse of technology, take the issue into schools and support discussion, and look for other ways to raise awareness. Some ideas are included in this toolkit.

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<sup>1</sup> Kane, J and Portin, P: *Violence and technology*, European Commission, Brussels, August 2008. Available at: [www.kaneinternational.com.au/publications](http://www.kaneinternational.com.au/publications).

<sup>2</sup> Statistic gathered from major server hosts by [www.howmanyarethere.com](http://www.howmanyarethere.com).

<sup>3</sup> Optus and Kids Helpline: *Erasing cyberbullying*, Melbourne 2012. Download from: [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au).



## SECTION 2

### Facts and Figures<sup>1</sup>

When you are preparing education, information or advocacy materials, it is a good idea to build your credibility by citing reliable statistics that show the extent of the problem or the context in which it exists. These facts and figures may help, but be sure to update them by using the sources given.

#### Mobile phone use

- By the end of 2011, Australian phone operators had more than 28 million subscribers – more than the whole population, because many subscribers own two mobile phones: one for personal use and one for work.
- Between 2011 and 2012, mobile phone internet usage doubled, mostly because of the growing availability and decreasing prices of smartphones – 43% of Australians now own a smartphone.
- 26% of Australians use smartphones for social networking, and almost seven in 10 of these are below the age of 35.
- One-third of Australians check their e-mail on their phone.
- 60% of mobile phone users in Australia are between the ages of 18 and 29.

#### Internet use

- Only 1.1% of Internet users in the world live in the Oceania/Australia region, however the region has a small population and, in penetration terms, 67.5% of the population of the region has Internet access, second only to North America.
- Penetration of Internet use in Australia is a massive 89.8%, a growth of more than 196% over the first decade of the 2000s.
- In 2011, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that 67.2% of Australian Internet users were in the 15-64 age group; 19.8% under the age of 15; and 12.9% over 65.
- Half of all Australian Twitter users use their accounts every day; 36% of Facebook users visit the site daily; and 16% of YouTube viewers visit every day.
- At 31 August 2010, more than 9.5 million Australians had Facebook accounts.
- At February 2012, there were 612,843,429 websites on the Internet, of which 184,200,000 were considered 'active'.
- By May 2006, the Interpol database contained evidence of more than 20,000 children who had been sexually abused to produce child pornography – fewer than 500 of these children have ever been identified.

<sup>1</sup> April 2012. Sources: Mobile phone statistics at [www.bestphonedeads.com.au](http://www.bestphonedeads.com.au) and [www.heidiallen.id.au](http://www.heidiallen.id.au); Internet usage statistics at [www.internetworldstats.com](http://www.internetworldstats.com), [www.howmanyarethere.com](http://www.howmanyarethere.com) and [www.budde.com.au](http://www.budde.com.au).





## SECTION 3

### The legal framework

It is important to remember that violence is a crime, and that women and children enjoy protection in the law against many different forms of violence. Sometimes the law may be specific – for example most countries have specific laws against domestic violence or rape – but sometimes the law is not obviously linked to the particular issue of sexual violence and modern technology. Privacy laws or telecommunications law might be used, for example, in the case of compromising images being forwarded to third parties without consent of the person depicted. Here is a very general overview of some of the legal framework within which this issue might be considered. A lawyer who can explain the legal situation in your state or territory might be a good choice for a guest speaker.

#### International law

Australia has ratified a number of international conventions and reports on these to various treaty bodies within the United Nations system. When a nation ratifies a convention, it is bound to translate the convention into its national legislation (although this does not always happen and sometimes happens only to a certain degree). Not-for-profit organisations are able to comment on governments' reports when they come before the treaty bodies. Since BPW International representatives attend these meetings (for example, sessions of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, and the International Labour Conference in Geneva), BPW national clubs can enlist their help in making submissions to the bodies on the progress of governments in acting in the interests of women and children in areas such as sexual violence and cyberbullying.

A number of international conventions may be relevant, but the two main instruments of interest are:

#### *The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979*

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

CEDAW defines discrimination against women as “...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

In ratifying the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

Not surprisingly, since the Convention was adopted in 1979, it does not specifically mention sexual violence and technology, nor indeed violence in any form (since the subject was still taboo). However Article 5 does call upon States Parties to take appropriate measures “to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women”. Article 6 relates to trafficking in women and their exploitation for sexual purposes, and may also be relevant.

### *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989*

In international law, a ‘child’ is considered to be any person who has not yet reached the age of 18, so the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) applies to young women who may not otherwise consider themselves as ‘children’. Many countries set the age of majority lower than this (and the age of majority may differ, for example, in relation to marriage or sexual activity or military service), however all people under the age of 18 have a right to protection in international law.

A number of Articles of the CRC are particularly relevant to the problem of sexual violence and modern technology:

First of all, Article 12 enshrines the right of the child “who is capable of forming his or her own views...to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child...in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”. This one can be tricky for parents! It is generally taken to mean that children should be listened to, but is taken in the context of the parents’ responsibility to protect the child.

Article 13 is also relevant, since it says “The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or *through any other media* of the child’s choice”. It is crucial to note, though, that “the exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) for respect of the rights or reputations of others; or (b) for the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals”. In other words, free speech is the right of all children, but not when it might harm the rights or reputation of another person.

Article 16 of the CRC says that “No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation”, and this is directly relevant to sexting, cyberbullying, harassment and posting of images. The Article stresses that the child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks – it is not just a matter for the school principal. Article 17 is also directly relevant, since it recognizes the importance of the mass media and says that States Parties should “encourage the



development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being”.

Children also have a right to be protected “from physical or mental violence, injury or abuse...including maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse” (Article 19), and ratifying States are called upon to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure that protection.

Article 34 of the CRC calls upon States Parties to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including inducement or coercion to engage in unlawful sexual activity, exploitation in prostitution and in pornographic performances and materials. Finally, in a catch-all protection Article 36, the CRC says that “States Parties shall protect the child against all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child’s welfare”.

## **Federal law**

The Federal Government has substantial authority under its powers to regulate telecommunications, conceivably encompassing restrictions on harassment via the net, by voice and by SMS. State and Territory Governments have powers through their criminal codes and other legislation. There has been much debate about the ‘lag’ between technological advances and legislation of misuse of these technologies, and there are no specific national laws that protect women and children from violence perpetrated through the misuse of technology. An example of laws that might be used, however, are:

### ***Broadcasting Services Act 1992***

The provisions of Schedule 5 and Schedule 7 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* inserted in 1999 and 2007 allow the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to effectively ban some content from being hosted within Australia. Under this regime, if a complaint is issued about material on the Internet the ACMA is allowed to examine the material under the guidelines for film and video.

Where content is deemed to be prohibited, the ACMA is empowered to issue local sites with a take-down notice under which the content must be removed; failure to do so can result in fines of up to \$11,000 per day. If the site is hosted outside Australia, the content in question is added to a blacklist of banned URLs. This list of banned web pages is then added to filtering software (encrypted), which must be offered to all consumers by their Internet Service Providers. A number of take down notices have been issued to some Australian-hosted websites.

### ***Privacy Act 1988***

The Privacy Act regulates the handling of personal information. It defines ‘personal information’ as “information or an opinion (including information or an opinion forming part of a database), whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion”. It can therefore apply to lewd statements about a person or harassing comments.

A personal information security breach occurs when personal information is subject to loss or unauthorised access, use, disclosure, copying or modification.

### **Case study: Man jailed over nude Facebook photos**

In April 2012, a jilted boyfriend who put nude pictures of his former girlfriend on Facebook was sentenced to six months in jail – the first such case in Australia. The 20 year-old man posted six photos of his ex-girlfriend because, he told police, “she hurt me and it was the only thing I had to hurt her”.

Privacy experts responded saying the case had exposed the “tip of the iceberg” and commentators said that crimes of harassment on-line were not taken as seriously as physical offences. They have called for the government to include online offences in its review of privacy legislation. (Reported in *The Age*, 22 April 2012)

### ***Sex Discrimination Act 1984***

The Sex Discrimination Act of 1984, while focusing on the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, also covers sexual harassment in certain circumstances. Article 3 of the Act outlines its objectives:

- a) to give effect to certain provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to provisions of other relevant international instruments; and
- b) to eliminate, so far as is possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy or breastfeeding in the areas of work, accommodation, education, the provision of goods, facilities and services, the disposal of land, the activities of clubs and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and
- c) to eliminate, so far as possible, discrimination on the ground of family responsibilities in the area of work; and
- d) to eliminate, so far as is possible, discrimination involving sexual harassment in the workplace, in educational institutions and in other areas of public activity; and
- e) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle of the equality of men and women.

In 2008, a report was submitted to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the effectiveness of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 in eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality, and some amendments to the sexual harassment provisions were made. The Sex and Age Discrimination Legislation Amendment Act 2011 was passed in 2011, expanding the protections against sexual harassment.

### **Case study: Call to remove sexters from offender register**

The Law Reform Commission has called for young people convicted of ‘sexting’ offences to be removed from the Sex Offenders Register. Inclusion on the Register may lead to severe limitations on employment and other opportunities. The Commission has called for a special panel to be set up to review the situation of the 4,000 Victorians currently registered and to remove those “who do not present a risk”. It has argued that the Register was intended to monitor and sanction those who pose a risk of abusing children, not young men (and women) who send sexually harassing messages or photos. *The Age* newspaper, for example, has highlighted the case of a young man registered for 15 years for sending pictures of himself and his girlfriend having sex. (*The Age*, 22 April 2012).

## State/Territory law

State and territory laws vary. You will need to consider the laws that are applicable where you are. Again, a local lawyer who works in relevant areas might be a good guest speaker for a club event.

As an example of the legislation that is currently being put into place, the example of Victoria's amended Crimes Act is worth considering:

### *A Victorian example*

In April 2011, *Brodie's Law* put Victoria at the forefront of combating workplace violence in the form of bullying and harassment. In 2006, 19 year-old Brodie Panlock took her own life when she could no longer stand the ongoing bullying and harassment she suffered at work at Café Vamp in Hawthorn, a suburb of Melbourne. The bullies who made Brodie despair for the future were successfully prosecuted under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. The company, director, manager and two employees were all convicted and fined a total of \$337,000. Café Vamp was sold and the owners moved interstate.

However, the public were unhappy with the result, believing the people involved should have been sentenced to prison terms. As a result, the Crimes Act of 1958 was amended – and is now popularly known as *Brodie's Law*.

Before the amendment, the *Crimes Act* 1958 defined 'stalking' as "engaging in a course of conduct with the intention to cause physical or mental harm, apprehension or fear. That conduct includes following the victim; contacting or giving offensive material to the victim; entering or loitering near the victim's home, workplace or other place frequented by the victim; interfering with the victim's property; keeping the victim under surveillance; and engaging other person/s to do any of the above." The penalty was up to 10 years imprisonment.

The legislation was updated by the *Crimes (Stalking) Act 2003*, which extended the definition of stalking to include contacting the victim or any other person by post, telephone, fax, text message, e-mail or other electronic communication or by any other means whatsoever; publishing on the Internet or by an e-mail or other electronic communication to any person a statement or other material:

- a) relating to the victim or any other person; or
- b) purporting to relate to, or to originate from, the victim or any other person; causing an unauthorised computer function (within the meaning of Subdivision (6) of Division 3) in a computer owned or used by the victim or any other person;
- c) tracing the victim's or any other person's use of the Internet or of e-mail or other electronic communications

There has been a call to urge Commonwealth Parliamentarians to see the need and vote this into Federal Law in Australia.





## SECTION 4

### Actions that BPW Clubs can take

#### **Club event**

The heart of what we might call the 'policy debate' within BPW is the club meeting. Here guest speakers open up a world of knowledge to club members, provide an opportunity for exchange of opinions and information, and keep the organisation tuned in to issues that are of importance to women, their work, their families and communities.

So the first action that BPW clubs should consider taking if the issue of sexual violence and technology is of interest, is to organise a club event at which the topic can be thoroughly explored, members can voice opinions and ask questions, and the enthusiasm and resources for further activities can be gauged.

#### ***Use the toolkit***

The toolkit has been designed as a series of factsheets specially so that you can photocopy or print off (or distribute by email) the introduction called 'Understanding the issue'. This should give all members a basic introduction to the topic and give you a good basis for discussion. There are also regularly items in the news that touch on the issue and you will find that members have personal stories to relate too.

#### ***Find a date***

When you are organising a special club meeting, think about a date that is suitable when the media might be covering this or related issues, or when other groups might also be linking in to it. One obvious date is around White Ribbon Day, 25 November, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Another possible date is sometime in February, around Safer Internet Day in Australia. Or you may find a suitable date that coincides with something happening in your state or territory, for example if there is a revision of the laws relating to cyberbullying, stalking or another element of the issue.

#### ***Identify a guest speaker***

A number of not-for-profit organisations in Australia work on issues related to sexual violence and technology. There are also some school-based initiatives that might be running in your area, and of course the police and Internet/phone companies may be doing something locally. This toolkit includes a list of on-line sources of information and potential partners, and you might start with those to identify someone to come and speak to your club meeting.

Identify other groups in your community that are working on these issues and see what they are doing – consider inviting them to your club event and above all don't duplicate what they are doing but work together if possible

### ***Organise a roundtable discussion***

One way to share the load of preparing the meeting is to organise a roundtable that involves several club members starting off the discussion on these issues. You should consider inviting some young people to participate, too – not only YBPW members but computer-savvy young people from the local community, or your own children or grandchildren. Sexual violence and modern technology is an issue that has no age boundaries, but it is clear that it is a challenge that young people in particular will have to deal with as technology continues to advance.

When you have explored the issue at a club meeting, you may find that members want to do more. Consider designing a modest project (see below) and seek funding for it from your local council, local businesses or other sources (for example mobile phone shops or computer stores might be interested). Above all, though, do not replicate the work that other organisations might already be doing. Resources are scarce for community projects, and it is a waste of everyone's time and effort – not to mention potentially confusing for your target audiences – if you just double-up on something that is already in place. To get an idea of what is already being done, and the materials already available, follow some of the website links provided in this toolkit. You may be able to partner with one of the organisations you find there, or may be able to use materials that already exist to do some work of your own.

Importantly, if your club is interested in pursuing this issue, make sure you know the laws in your state or territory that relate to sexual harassment, violence against women and children, stalking, pornography and cyberbullying, especially if the misuse of mobile phones or Internet services are mentioned. These will form the framework for any work you do.

### **Advocacy and awareness**

You may decide to run a public awareness campaign (consider launching it in November) using social media and mobile phones. The aim of an awareness campaign is simply to help other people to understand the issues and, above all, to consider what they can do to protect themselves and their family and friends from the negative repercussions of inappropriate use of modern technology. Consider these steps:

1. Decide who you wish to target in your campaign: young people in your community; women in your area; older people in the community etc. Everything you do should be done with this target group in mind.
2. Work within your club to find a memorable slogan that will catch your target group's attention and also carry a message, for example:
  - Stay safe in Cyberspace
  - My mobile phone; my private life
  - Technology is for connecting, not hurting
  - New technology; new risks
3. Send an SMS to all the women you know asking them to make sure they text the slogan to friends and colleagues (focusing on those in the target group as much as possible), and spread the word

about the risks of sexting, posting personal information and photos on insecure sites, and responding to approaches from people on-line who may not be what they seem.

4. Post the message on your Facebook page and send it to LinkedIn contacts.
5. Use the slogan in your newsletter, on your website and – if you have succeeded in acquiring funding – on t-shirts, posters and bumper stickers. Try and make enough to distribute these to locations where your target group will see them – the local shopping centre (get permission), schools, medical clinics (or sell through members).
6. Send out a press release to your local community newspaper to let them know what you are doing. Share the materials in the toolkit with them as background reading. Invite a journalist to your club event.
7. Send a letter about your campaign to local politicians and let them know that these issues are serious and that government should make available appropriate resources both for information to the public and also to police and social support services for victims. Be concise and tell your local members what you think they should do: keep the issue high on the policy agenda; move to change the law (in what ways?), introduce new legislation; make funding available in the budget etc.

### **School-based actions**

If you have already run projects with local schools, or if you have teachers or other school personnel among your membership, then you should be able to initiate discussions with local schools about the possibility of working on a schools-based project together (and potentially with other partners). Be aware that, if you do not have these links already established, then schools-based projects can be very challenging.

The school curriculum in Australia is highly regulated and teachers are often reluctant to consider adding even more activities to an already packed curriculum. They also do not always look kindly on non-teachers entering the classroom to ‘teach’ children or even to facilitate discussion. So it is best to use any contacts you have to devise something that can work for everybody concerned.

Be aware, also, that there exist some solid materials for use in schools that have been prepared by organisations working on issues like cyberbullying. You will find links to some of these in the resources list in this toolkit.

Despite the difficulties, there are things that you can do (again in consultation with schools) that help to open up discussion of sexual violence and technology in the classroom:

You might consider, for example, offering a prize for the school student or class that designs the best slogan and poster that you can use for your awareness raising/advocacy activities outlined above. This will usually encourage the school or teacher to include the issues in classroom sessions so that the students can develop their ideas for the slogan/poster.

A variation on this might be a prize for the best short video/‘spot’ on one of the issues that can be posted on YouTube and so be available to a large audience. An essay competition is also a possibility, but remember that you will probably not get secondary use from an essay whereas multimedia productions can be used again.

### **Workplace-based actions**

Sexual violence using modern technologies is not only a problem for young people but for people, women especially, of all ages. It may accompany other forms of harassment and bullying in the workplace, so the workplace is a good location for project activity.



You could, for example, link awareness about sexual harassment using new technologies to an activity like the Total Respect Workplace project designed by BPW Melbourne North-West in 2011. This project, which aimed to raise awareness of workplace bullying and harassment, particularly against young female workers, asked small business owners and managers to sign up to three promises to reject such behaviour. Those who did received a sticker for the window of their business – attracting interest from customers and passers-by and promoting the issue further. A Total Respect Workplace pack is available from BPW Melbourne North-West ([bpwmelbnw@gmail.com](mailto:bpwmelbnw@gmail.com)).

You should also consider involving local trade unions and chambers of commerce in workplace-based activities. For example, they may be able to facilitate your running a session on sexual violence/technology as a side event at a union meeting. Even sharing the ‘Understanding the issues’ pages of the toolkit with them would be a good initiative.

Your local council will also have access to business groups and may organise business breakfasts or lunch-time meetings. If you have posters or stickers and have printed out Understanding the issues, you may be able to distribute these materials at a meeting. Be ready to answer questions!

In short, there are many ways you can engage further with the issue of sexual violence and technology if you wish to. Remember always that the basis for all your actions should be understanding, so use this toolkit and follow up the resources indicated. If you do run a project of any kind, be sure to share it with BPW Australia so that other clubs can learn from your experience.



## SECTION 5

### Partners and on-line resources

#### Potential Partners

The potential partners and resources listed below are just a few of the hundreds available online and offline. They can help in getting information you need to kick-start your projects and might be able to provide guest speakers for a club event. To contact the organisations listed, use the Contact Us link on their websites. These groups work nationally but there may be organisations in your state or territory that work on the issue too.

#### *Think U Know*

[www.thinkuknow.org.au/site](http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/site)

This is an initiative of the Australian Federal Police and Microsoft (both of whom may have possible guest speakers available – contact them for someone in your state or territory). ‘Think U Know’ is an Internet safety programme. The site also provides advice for teachers, parents and carers.

#### *Take Back The Tech!*

[www.takebackthetech.net](http://www.takebackthetech.net)

Take Back The Tech! is a collaborative campaign that takes place during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (25 Nov - 10 Dec). It is a call to everyone, especially women and girls, to take control of technology to end violence against women.

#### *Optus and Kids Helpline*

[www.optus.com.au/aboutoptus/About+Optus/Corporate+Responsibility/Our+Community/Strategic+partners/Kids+Helpline](http://www.optus.com.au/aboutoptus/About+Optus/Corporate+Responsibility/Our+Community/Strategic+partners/Kids+Helpline)

[www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

Kids Helpline and Optus have joined forces through the *Erasing Cyberbullying Campaign* to help schools around Australia tackle online safety with the launch of a new education pack. The pack contains a USB stick with lesson plans and DVDs covering the key issues aimed at teachers in schools.

### ***The Alannah and Madeline Foundation***

[www.amf.org.au](http://www.amf.org.au)

The AMF runs a programme called **eSmart** to help school students stay safe in Cyberspace. The organisation can also provide information on child protection activities in general.

### ***Family Smart***

[www.familysmart.com.au](http://www.familysmart.com.au)

Family Smart guides parents in proven ways to increase their own and their children's wellbeing through seminars, workshops, counselling and keynote speaking. Seminar topics include Resilience in 'Cyberia', Resilient Kids Online and Teens in 'Cyberia'.

### ***Womens Health Victoria (equivalents in other states and territories)***

[www.whv.org.au/what-we-do/violence-against-women](http://www.whv.org.au/what-we-do/violence-against-women)

Women's Health Victoria Clearinghouse collection has links to online resources on Information Communications Technology (ICT) and Violence Against Women.

## **Resources**

### ***Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)***

[www.acma.gov.au](http://www.acma.gov.au)

ACMA has a range of resources on staying safe online. As the national body overseeing regulation of the media and communications industries, it is tasked with implementing national legislation and works closely with both the industry and not-for-profit sectors.

### ***Australian Human Rights Commission***

[www.humanrights.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/publications/cyberracism\\_factsheet.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/publications/cyberracism_factsheet.html)

The Commission has information on cyber-racism and actions that can be taken to report it.

### ***Cybersmart***

[www.cybersmart.gov.au](http://www.cybersmart.gov.au)

Cybersmart has helpful tips to help kids, parents and teachers on being mobile and cyber-smart. They also have video resources for parents, information on how to keep your computer safe and a toolbox on understanding the technology.



## ***Department of Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy***

[www.dbcde.gov.au/easyguide/socialising\\_online](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/easyguide/socialising_online)

The Australian Government's *Easy Guide to Socialising Online* provides information on how Internet users can protect themselves and their information when using social networking sites, search engines and online games.

## ***Childnet International***

[www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

Childnet International is an international not-for-profit that works closely with the Australian Communications and Media Authority as well as other governments to promote the positive elements of technology while reducing risk. It has projects, publications and interactive resources for young people, parents and teachers on safe and positive ways to use the Internet, use of new mobile phone technology, advice on Peer2Peer, file-sharing and downloading. Childnet's electronic resource pack is available from BPW Melbourne North-West ([bpwmelbnw@gmail.com](mailto:bpwmelbnw@gmail.com)).

## ***Kane International***

[www.kaneinternational.com.au](http://www.kaneinternational.com.au)

Kane International has publications, blogs and courses aimed at combating trafficking, exploitation and violence. Of particular interest is a publication titled *Technology and Violence*, written in collaboration with the former Head of Child Safety at Microsoft.

## ***Webwise***

[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

Webwise has various publications and learning resources on how to use the Internet to communicate safely and effectively with others. It outlines strategies for assessing the trustworthiness of online information.

## ***Safe Internet Alliance***

[www.safeinternet.org/issues/personal-safety](http://www.safeinternet.org/issues/personal-safety)

The Safe Internet Alliance is a community committed to better protecting Internet users, especially children, teens and the elderly, from the real and worsening problem of Internet corruption, crime, and abuse.

## ***National Cyber Security Alliance***

[www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org)

The National Cyber Security Alliance's aim is to educate and empower a digital society to use the Internet safely and securely at home, work, and school, protecting the technology, individuals' use, the networks they connect to, and our shared digital assets.



## SECTION 6

### References and resources

Although many of these resources are written to protect children, the information and advice they contain applies similarly to women using new media.

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Taylor, M 2001, *Child pornography and the Internet: Challenges and gaps*, Cork. See also: [www.csecworldcongress.org](http://www.csecworldcongress.org)

Victorian Department of Education Safer Internet Day programme resources: [www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/events/safernetday.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/researchinnovation/events/safernetday.htm)

-- 1998, *Teen safety on the information highway*, NCMEC Atlanta. See also: [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

If you have a mobile phone or tablet, you can download the **Cyber-safety Help Button**, a free Australian Government initiative, designed to keep children and families safe online. [www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton](http://www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton).

## SECTION 7

### FEEDBACK FORM

Please take a few minutes to fill in this form and send it to BPW Australia (Director of Policy) so that we can improve the toolkit and keep in touch with your activities.

Club \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (preferred) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please evaluate the following statements on a sliding scale, where 1 = not at all and 5 = absolutely.

	1	2	3	4	5
The toolkit was interesting					
The toolkit was useful and helped me to understand the issues					
The resources and links provided were very helpful					
The toolkit will be useful to develop club activities					
My club is likely to follow up this topic further					
We would like to see more toolkits like this on items of interest to BPW clubs					

Please email your feedback to: [dirpolicy@bpw.com.au](mailto:dirpolicy@bpw.com.au)

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