

Definitions

Note: Terms connected with TFSV evolve quickly, and there can be variability in definitions and framing, depending on source, purpose, and audience. The following definitions were current and common at the time this resource was developed, and they are intended to create common understanding for the purposes of the resource.

cheapfakes or shallow fakes:¹ Video or audio recordings that have been manipulated without the use of artificial intelligence, to alter how the recording is perceived. This could be slowing a video down to make someone look intoxicated or splicing together different parts of what they said to change their message to be homophobic or misogynistic.

coordinated flagging:¹ Deliberately misusing a digital platform's mechanisms for reporting abuse to disrupt or silence a person's online presence or content. This can include a group of individuals organizing to "flag" or report the person's posts for removal, or reporting the person's account to be suspended, claiming they or the content they posted violated the platform's community standards or terms of use.

cyberstalking:² Using technology to track a person's activities or location or to make them feel constantly watched and afraid. Many kinds of technology can be used to stalk someone, including phones, social media, email, cameras, smart home devices, and more.

deepfakes:¹ Realistic video or audio recordings created using artificial intelligence, where a person is seen or heard saying or doing something they did not say or do in real life. Most deepfakes online are manipulated pornographic images where the face of the person in the video has been swapped with someone else's face.

defamation:¹ Online posting of something untrue about a person that could negatively impact their reputation.

doxing:¹ Online disclosure of a person's personal information (e.g., full name, home address, social insurance number, bank account information) without consent.

hate speech:¹ In Canada, to qualify legally as criminal hate speech, the person making the speech must have willfully promoted hatred against a group – for example, by creating online discussion boards or chats that spread hate and misinformation about transgender folks or, in the case of incels, fostering hatred of women based on their own inability to find a romantic or sexual partner.

impersonation:¹ Pretending to be someone else.

indecent exposure/cyberflashing:³ Intentionally sending an unsolicited sexualized image – for example, sending photos via text, apps, or AirDrop.

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non-consensual distribution of intimate images¹ (also referred to as image-based sexualized exploitation or image-based sexualized abuse): Sharing nude or sexualized images without consent online or in private messages sent to other people. The Province of British Columbia passed a law to help protect people from this in 2023.

online mobbing/swarming¹ Simultaneous coordinating of online harassment or abuse by many people against one person.

online sexualized harassment^{1,4} Unwanted or unwelcome sexualized behaviour conducted by electronic means (e.g., email, phone, social media, online discussions). It can include a focus on or references to someone as sexually desirable, their sexual activity, and/or their sexual history. It can be one instance but often is repeated.

sextortion¹ Attempting to sexually extort a person by capturing sexualized or intimate images or recordings of them and threatening to distribute the images or recordings without consent unless the person follows orders (e.g., to pay or to perform sexualized acts).

spyware/stalkerware¹ Apps or devices that can spy on and/or monitor a person through mobile phones and/or computers, gaining access to their device's camera or location information and transmitting that data to the perpetrator.


swatting¹ Calling 911 or law enforcement to make a false report about a person doing something dangerous or harmful, like holding a hostage or owning a weapon, to send police officers or a Special Weapons and Tactics – SWAT – team to their location.

technology-aggravated sexualized assault¹ Sexualized assault with an online component – for example, a group of people filming themselves sexually assaulting someone and posting the video on social media.

threats and intimidation^{1,5} Includes sexual assault threats, death threats, and threats to release intimate images, videos, or deepfakes directed at a person or people close to them, including family and friends, through text messages, emails, anonymous accounts on social media, and so on. Intimidation is intentionally making someone fearful or timid, usually through threats.

trolling¹ Posting messages, images, videos, or other online content or creating online campaigns (e.g., hashtags on X) to annoy a person, cause disruption in their life, and/or incite violence against them. Trolling is considered technology-facilitated sexualized violence when the abuse is gendered or sexualized (e.g., threats of sexual assault or targeting based on sexual orientation). Many trolls are anonymous and use fake accounts on digital platforms, so the accounts are not associated with their real names or identities, sometimes making it difficult to hold them accountable or stop the violence. It is important to recognize that the term trolling is often used to minimize the fact that sexualized or gender-based harassment is happening.

voyeurism¹ Secret observation or recording of a person by accessing their webcam or phone camera without their knowledge or consent, or through a hidden recording device, in situations they expect to be private (e.g., at home or during sexual activity).



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- ² Women's Shelters Canada. (2023). *Learn more about technology*. Tech Safety Canada. <https://techsafety.ca/glossary>
- ³ Rape Crisis England and Wales. (n.d.). *What Are Indecent Exposure, Flashing and Cyber Flashing?* <https://rapecrisis.org.uk/get-informed/types-of-sexual-violence/what-is-indecent-exposure-or-flashing/>
- ⁴ A. Powell & N. Henry. (2019). Technology-facilitated sexual violence victimization: Results from an online survey of Australian adults, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(17), 3637–3665.
- ⁵ Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Intimidate*. Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intimidate>



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