

TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED STALKING: FACT SHEET



Stalking is a [prevalent victimization](#) and the majority of stalkers use (or misuse) technology^A to monitor, watch, contact, control, threaten, sabotage, isolate, and frighten victims, as well as to damage victims' credibility or reputation.

- 80% of stalking victims report being stalked with technology.^B
- 41% of undergraduate students have experienced tech-facilitated stalking.^C
- The vast majority of tech-facilitated stalking victims are pursued by people they know, most commonly by a well-known or casual acquaintance.^D
- [Every U.S. jurisdiction has a statute](#) criminalizing tech-facilitated stalking, with the majority explicitly recognizing online acts.
- 15% of adults experienced intimate partner tech abuse in the 6 months prior (to a survey).^E

Intimate partner and dating violence often include stalking through technology, sometimes called "digital abuse." Excessive contact, monitoring online activity, location tracking, demanding passwords, and hacking into accounts may be both digital abuse AND stalking.

Tech-facilitated stalking impacts the daily lives of victims and is just as invasive, threatening, and fear-inducing as in-person stalking.

- Victims of tech-facilitated stalking often report higher fear than victims who experience in-person stalking, and are just as concerned for their safety.^F
- Victims of online stalking and/or harassment experienced a multitude of harmful and detrimental consequences for their mental health, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal ideation, and panic attacks.^G
- Victims report that online stalking prevents them from continuing with their regular routines, reduces time spent outside, and has resulted in them withdrawing from online life and developing a distrust of technology as well as people.^H

Victims of tech-facilitated stalking fear:^I

- 62% not knowing what will happen next
- 62% losing jobs, friends, and/or freedom
- 58% it will never stop
- 52% being killed or physically hurt
- 32% someone close to them being harmed

"I changed my number multiple times... I would go to sleep and I would get 100 missed calls, 45 text messages. You wake up and you see, 'I'm going to kill you. I'm going to come take you from your family.'" –Stalking Victim^J

Offenders both use tech designed for stalking and misuse tech designed for other purposes to facilitate their stalking. **Technologies and tactics used by offenders are constantly evolving and may seem impossible or unrealistic, but stalking offenders are creative in the pervasive ways they terrorize victims.**

Among tech-facilitated stalking victims:^K

- 66% receive unwanted phone calls/messages
- 55% receive unwanted emails/messages
- 32% are monitored through social media
- 29% had inappropriate or personal information posted about them, or received threats to do so
- 22% were spied on or monitored with technology
- 14% were tracked with a device or app

In a study of college stalking victims:^L

- 24% had a stalker create a fake profile pretending to be the victim
- 21% experienced spoofing (calls, texts, or emails from the stalker but seem to come from someone else)
- 16% have been doxed (had private or identifying information published publicly online)
- 16% had intimate images shared without consent

Stalkers often facilitate or enhance their tactics using technology. While technologies may change over time, the dynamics and dangers of stalking are constant.

TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED STALKING: FACT SHEET

SOURCES

- ^A Smith, S.G., Basile, K.C., & Kresnow, M. (2022). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Stalking. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/nisvsStalkingReport.pdf>
- ^B Morgan, R.E., & Truman, J.L. (2022). Stalking Victimization, 2019. Washington, DC: US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/sv19.pdf>
- ^C Reyns, B. W., Henson, B., & Fisher, B. S. (2012). Stalking in the twilight zone: Extent of cyberstalking victimization and offending among college students. *Deviant Behavior*, 33(1), 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2010.538364>
- ^D Morgan, R.E., & Truman, J.L. (2022). Stalking Victimization, 2019. Washington, DC: US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/sv19.pdf>
- ^E Fissel, E. R., Graham, A., Butler, L., & Fisher, B. S. (2022). A new frontier: The development and validation of the intimate partner cyber abuse instrument. *Social Science Computer Review*, 40(4), 974-993. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439321994618>
- ^F Fissel, E. R., & Reyns, B. W. (2020). The Aftermath of Cyberstalking: School, Work, Social, and Health Costs of Victimization. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 45(1), 70-87. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-019-09489-1>
- ^G Stevens, F, Nurse, J.R.C., & Arief, B. (2021). Cyber Stalking, Cyber Harassment, and Adult Mental Health: A Systematic Review. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 24(6), 367-376. <http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0253>
- ^H Stevens, F, Nurse, J.R.C., & Arief, B. (2021). Cyber Stalking, Cyber Harassment, and Adult Mental Health: A Systematic Review. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 24(6), 367-376. <http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0253>
- ^I Holtemeyer, J. Analysis of: Morgan, R.E., & Truman, J.L. (2022). Stalking Victimization, 2019. Washington, DC: US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/sv19.pdf>
- ^J Kavanagh, M. (2018, November 2). *He said he would kill her and her family: Hampton teen speaks out about being cyber stalked.* WTKR. <https://www.wtkr.com/2018/11/02/he-said-he-would-kill-her-and-her-family-hampton-teen-speaks-out-about-being-cyber-stalked-for-years/>
- ^K Morgan, R.E., & Truman, J.L. (2022). Stalking Victimization, 2019. Washington, DC: US DOJ, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/sv19.pdf>
- ^L Brady, P.Q., Reyns, B. W., Landhuis, J., & Woodward Griffin, V. (2023). APPLIED stalking: What the next generation of stalking victims consider to be 'stalking' and why victims report their experiences to the police. Forthcoming at the *Journal of Criminal Justice*.