TFA, Cyberstalking, & NDII: CYBERCRIMES FACT SHEET

Cybercrimes against individuals are defined as criminal offenses that involve the use of a computer to harass, threaten, stalk, extort, coerce, cause fear to, or intimidate an individual, or without consent distribute intimate images of an adult, except that use of a computer need not be an element of the offense. This fact sheet explores three types of cybercrimes: technology-facilitated abuse (TFA), cyberstalking, and nonconsensual distribution of intimate images (NDII).

TFA (technology-facilitated abuse) is the misuse or repurposing of digital, electronic, or networked technologies to monitor, control, coerce, threaten, harass, stalk, impersonate, exploit, humiliate, sabotage, or otherwise harm another person. TFA can occur in the context of domestic violence, sexual abuse, dating violence, stalking, harassment, fraud, or other forms of interpersonal harm.[ABC]

- Digital, electronic, or networked technologies include, but are not limited to phones, computers, tablets, cameras, smart-home devices, standalone location trackers, location-sharing apps, social media, cloud accounts, messaging apps, spyware, banking/payment apps, court-appointed co-parenting apps, dating apps, generative AI or deepfakes, and more.[DEF]
- 41% of U.S. adults report harassment through technology and 25% report severe forms of harassment such as stalking, threats, sexual harassment, and repeated unwanted contact.[G]
- 71% of U.S. adults ages 18 to 35 report at least one TFA incident in their lifetime.[H]
- 15% of U.S. adults experienced at least one form of TFA from an intimate partner in the previous six months.[I]
- TFA is often connected to offline harm: 72% of young adult TFA victims reported offline harm or threats, and 14% reported physical harm by the same person or group responsible for their most damaging TFA experience.[J]
- TFA can create a sense of constant presence, making victims feel watched, reachable, or unsafe even when offenders are not physically nearby.[KL]

TFA, Cyberstalking, & NDII: CYBERCRIMES FACT SHEET

Cyberstalking involves a pattern of unwanted conduct by a person who misuses technology to monitor, contact, track, threaten, harass, impersonate, or disrupt one's personal and/or professional quality of life in ways that cause substantial emotional distress and/or fear for the safety of themselves or others. It often co-occurs with in-person stalking and/or other forms of interpersonal violence like domestic or dating violence.

- National stalking data shows that most cases involve some form of technology.[M]
- 67% of all stalking victims and 54% of cyberstalking-only victims knew the offender in some capacity.[N]
- Emerging adults (ages 18 to 24) with experiences meeting the legal definition of stalking in the U.S. were more likely to label their experience as stalking if they were physically versus digitally pursued.[O]
- Stalkerware continues to evolve: One study of cybersecurity detection data found 33 previously unseen types of stalkerware from 2024-2025.[P]
- 48% of stalking victims were pursued both in person and through technology, with 34% targeted solely through technology and 18% reporting only physical pursuit tactics by the offender.[Q]

NDII (nonconsensual distribution of intimate images) involves creating, taking, stealing, altering, distributing, or threatening to distribute nude, sexual, or intimate images without consent. NDII is one form of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA). The content may be real, altered, or artificially generated.[R] This type of abuse is particularly harmful due to the possibility that content can be copied, saved, reposted, and circulated beyond the victim's control.

- 14% of people in the U.S. have had intimate images shared without their consent.[S]
- Most perpetrators know their victim personally, nearly half are intimate partners.[T]
- 39% of victims of image-based sexual abuse reported it to law enforcement, victim support, or a digital platform; 31% did not report or disclose to anyone; 14% told someone but did not report it.[U]
- Americans lost $8 million from sextortion in just 7 months (in 2021).[V]
- Motivations are not only fueled by revenge. For sharing intimate images without consent, common motivations are related to social rewards, humor, sexual gratification, control, humiliation, retaliation, and trading.[WX] One study found perpetrators' self-reported reasons for taking/creating intimate images without consent were: being "funny or sexy" (61%), for control (45%), for humiliation and revenge (38%), and to impress or trade images with friends (38%).

This project was supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-24-GK-02960-MUMU awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice. August 2026.

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