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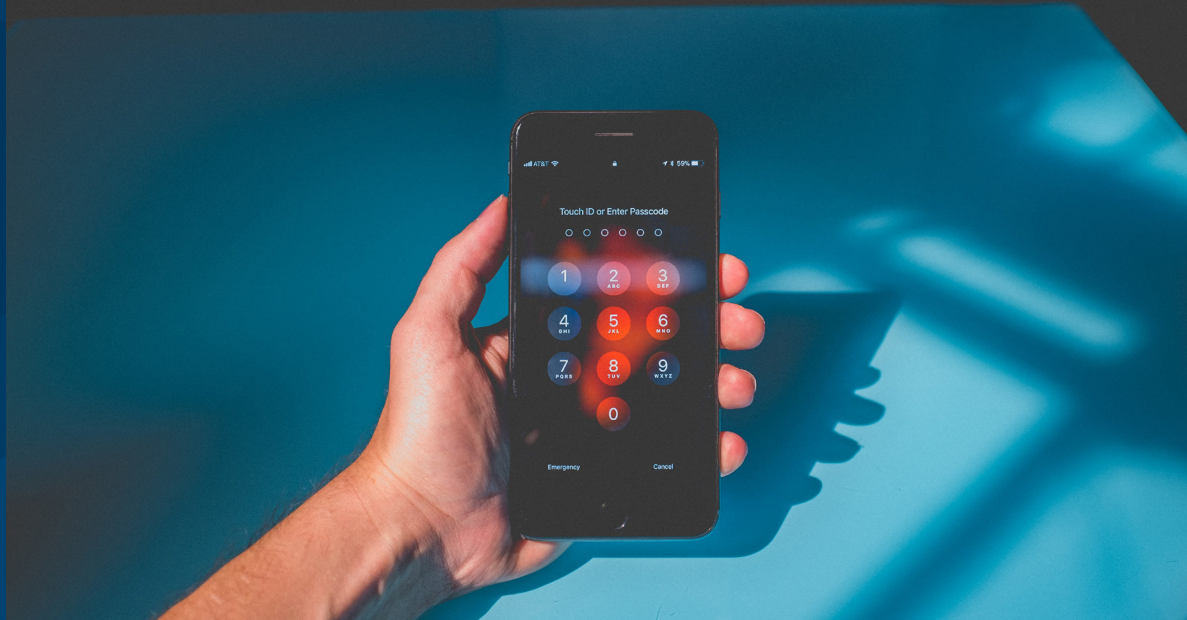
The Tech Safety Initiative: Helping Survivors of Tech Abuse

Creating a one stop shop to fight technology-facilitated abuse

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Justice should create a Technology Safety Initiative that serves as a one-stop shop to address technology-facilitated abuse. Currently there is no central office or website within the federal government to address abuse that occurs at the intersection of technology, domestic violence, and stalking. Because there is no official resource for technical safety in the US, survivors struggle with non consensual device monitoring being seen as a real harm. The Office on Violence Against Women has a unique opportunity to use funding from the Emerging Issues in Violence Against Women program to create an online resource guide for victims of technology-facilitated abuse curated by domestic violence and online security experts.

THE PROBLEM

Domestic violence survivors and the support systems they turn to don't have a clear place for help at any level of government when an abuser is spying on their cell phones or other electronic devices. While attempting to achieve physical or emotional safety, survivors may reach out to support hotlines, law enforcement, technical friends, or online guides—which results in a lack of coordinated care and often no resolution. The adverse impact and steps to address technology-facilitated abuse have yet to be fully captured in the United States.

> *There is no federal resource to support the over 3 million adults in the US who have experienced stalking and abuse enabled by technology.*

THE SOLUTION

The Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women should create a Technology Safety Initiative that gives service providers and the clients they serve a one-stop shop to address technology-facilitated abuse. The Technology Safety Initiative is a project to convene experts across the Federal Government and social service sector working to address the harms that occur when technology is layered on top of domestic violence and stalking. One result is a website hosting resources curated by these experts providing a holistic look at safety planning and legal resources in the technology-facilitated abuse space. This Initiative is the first step to address safety for people experiencing harassment and surveillance via technology along with gender-based violence.

For more information on this proposal, see 1) the Tech Safety Initiative operational plan and 2) the corresponding policy brief.

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PROJECT

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