



**Center for Countering Digital Hate Submission to the White House
Taskforce to address Online Harassment and Abuse - Technology-Facilitated
Gender-Based Violence Consultation - September 2022**

Introduction

1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to your consultation to address online harassment and abuse through technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Addressing this issue, and other forms of online hate and misinformation, is key to our mission as an organization and in this submission we provide insights from our research and work with stakeholders to help develop your Blueprint and legislative reform agenda.
2. Never has there been a more important time to address online hate and misinformation, which we know is leading to escalating harm in the offline world - for individuals, communities and our democracies. We appreciate the leadership that the Biden-Harris administration has shown in wanting to collaborate and progress solutions in this space, and we share a commitment to addressing the underlying causes of these harms.
3. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and others at the White House to discuss these issues and next steps, including ways that we can partner together.

About the Center for Countering Digital Hate

4. The work of the [Center for Countering Digital Hate](#) (CCDH) is carried out by two organizations, which operate collaboratively in carrying out their shared mission. CCDH US is a US nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation headquartered in Washington DC, and CCDH UK is a UK nonprofit company headquartered in London.
5. CCDH is independent, is not affiliated to any political party and does not receive money from technology companies. We believe it is impossible to serve honestly and without fear as an industry watchdog against harms an industry produces if they also pay our salaries.
6. CCDH believes in a world where facts and reason flourish, and dignity and respect are afforded to all. CCDH has been at the forefront of unmasking how online platforms and search engines drive radicalization, online harm and misinformation. The Center's work and mission combines both analysis and active disruption of these networks and the online architecture enabling

its rapid worldwide growth. We champion levers for change to increase the economic, political, and social costs of all parts of the infrastructure - the actors, systems, and culture - that support and profit from hate and misinformation.

7. CCDH fulfills this mission in three primary ways:
 - a. First, by producing [research](#) that exposes the actors, systems and culture that facilitate the spread of hate and disinformation on social media platforms. All of our research is done in-house and we have recently expanded our internal capacity with the creation of a new Quant Lab with data scientists and researchers.
 - b. Second, by developing policy and advocating for legislation that will ensure that social media platforms meet our [STAR Framework](#) (core components of the [STAR Framework](#) are in **Appendix A** of this submission) for addressing digital hate and disinformation, embedding Safety by Design, Transparency requirements (on algorithms, rules enforcement and economics), Accountability and Responsibility.
 - c. Third, by educating the public, civil society organizations, regulators, governments and international organizations about the dynamics behind the spread of digital hate and disinformation, enabling them to better address these problems and more effectively press for change.

8. The Center works with academics and practitioners in diverse fields, such as medicine, political science, behavioral psychology, neurology, the law, countering violent extremism (CVE), counterterrorism and child protection to develop strategies that strengthen tolerance and democracy, and counterstrategies to new forms of hate and disinformation.

The Information Ecosystem and the Need for Change

9. Through our work at CCDH, we have developed a deep understanding of the online harm landscape. Since 2016, we have researched the rise of online hate and disinformation and have shown that nefarious actors are able to easily exploit digital platforms and search engines that promote and profit from their content. This is not just one community subject to harm or harmful subject area. CCDH has studied the way anti-vaccine extremists, hate actors, climate change deniers, and misogynists weaponize platforms to spread lies and attack marginalized groups. Through our work, we have seen the depth and breadth of harm that tech companies profit from on a daily basis, including:
 - **Hate and Extremism:** including but not limited to [racism](#), hate content targeting [women](#), the [LGBTQ+ community](#), and faith communities (e.g. [anti-Jewish hate](#) and [anti-Muslim hate](#)); and

- **Mis/Disinformation** on critical issues like [COVID-19](#), [climate change](#), and [elections](#).
10. What has remained consistent, across all types of harmful content, is the absence of proper transparency and the failure of platforms and search engines to act. Our research and advocacy work shows repeated failures by social media companies to take action on harmful content or the actors/networks who spread it. We have demonstrated how the companies' algorithms - with a systematic bias towards hate and misinformation - have had a damaging impact on our information ecosystem. The failure of social media companies to act on known harmful content connected with extremism, terrorism, racism, misogyny and online hate is a violation of their own terms and conditions, the pledges they make in the media and to governments, and the basic duty they have to their users to have a right to exist safely online and in their communities. This failure to act is the reality of the status quo of self-regulation. Self-regulation means no regulation.

This submission

11. This submission should be read alongside CCDH's new [Star Framework](#) for global standards, and the research summary in Appendix B of this report. The relevant research summary involves an assessment of various forms of online hatred, harassment, and violence directed at women and the LGBTQ+ community and the spread of disinformation on women's fundamental rights, such as access to reproductive health information and care.
12. In respect of technology-facilitated gender-based harassment and abuse, we have worked to:
- Disrupt bad actors and their monetization of violent misogyny, such as high profile misogynist [Andrew Tate](#);
 - [Reveal](#) the impact of social media companies failing to respond to misogynist abusers and the high risk of recidivism;
 - Put pressure on social media platforms and search engines to be responsive to complaints about illegal content and breaches of their rules where they failed to act to reports of breaches, such as dangerous hate campaigns and content targeting the [LGBTQ+ community](#) and the [Muslim community](#);
 - Investigated and made recommendations about platforms and search engines that are driving and funding dangerous disinformation and online hate, for example, our [Stop Funding Misinformation](#) campaign has pressed for change on the monetisation of harmful content through programmatic advertising.
 - Reform the legislative environment that changes corporate behavior through publicly evidencing the harm, by working with legislators across

the globe on solutions and proposals and developing the [STAR Framework](#) to drive global standards..

13. In this document, we have set out core elements of the [STAR Framework](#) with explanations and examples from our research. Through the [STAR Framework](#), we aim to establish key global standards for social media reform, to ensure effectiveness, connectedness, and consistency for a sector which impacts people globally. This is **attached** to the cover email and the link and core components are in **Appendix A**.
14. [We were pleased](#) to see the President's announcement about the new Principles to Enhance Competition and Tech Accountability, which incorporate many of the components of the [Star Framework](#) that we have been discussing at the CCDH Global Summit, with Members of Congress and White House staff. The STAR Framework's principles of transparency, responsibility and accountability standards must apply to search engines in addition to social media platforms. Our research (see Appendix B) shows that the major search engines, like Google, are also spreading and profiting from online hate, harassment and disinformation content and there is no justification for them to be exempt from accountability or transparency requirements. To do otherwise would perpetuate this harm and fail to address a key part of the information ecosystem, thereby continuing the pattern of the public shouldering the negative externalities borne by negligent tech companies.

Prevention

15. We cover prevention in our [Star Framework](#), in particular, changing the incentives that allow social media companies and search engines to operate a profit-driven business model, without regard to harm to individual users, society or democracy. Safety by design - embedded at the front end, before products are released to the public - is the best way to prevent online harassment and abuse so that systems are established to disrupt and prevent this form of online harm, that companies are responsive to reports from users, and that there are ways to prevent recidivism or amplified impacts.

16. Reforming Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act 1996 is critical for changing the incentives and disincentives that guide corporate behavior. In the short-term, we consider that there is potential for enforcement action to be taken through the courts using the five exceptions to Section 230 - in particular, the FOSTA-SESTA amendment and the criminal law exceptions appear to be under-utilized. We do understand that there have been challenges with how courts have interpreted the immunity provisions since they were enacted, in an expansive fashion. The [recent Texas decision has also complicated existing understanding of the law](#), so it would require a clear legislative strategy - but even negative case law may assist in shaping future reforms.
17. The transparency requirements in the [Star Framework](#) will also help to drive prevention strategies and safety by design by enabling earlier identification and assessment of risks, analysis of tech company rules enforcement - so more responsive and lower risk of recidivism, and making it easier for the public, civil society researchers, like CCDH, regulators and governments to plan prevention strategies and to disrupt bad actors operating on the platforms and search services.

Victim and Survivor Support and Access to Justice

18. We have noticed a [common pattern amongst technology companies to shift the burden onto individual users](#) rather than take responsibility for the harm that they are causing through their products and services. For example, this year we met with a tech company who suggested referring women users who are exposed to harmful and abusive content to social services. There are two key issues with this:
 - Why are these women being exposed to this content at all? If the company has the system in place to enable detection of harmful and abusive content (which they should, if their products are meeting basic consumer safety standards), why is it being shared?
 - Through their products and services they are actually creating a new cohort of women who are subject to abuse. This “solution” enables them to continue to profit from unsafe systems and content and merely pass associated costs on to individuals and social services that are already stretched financially. This is unjustifiable and inequitable. It is not productive to create a problem and then simply pass it on to someone else.

19. As above, the [Star Framework](#) will create a new operating environment for Big Tech and enable responsive enforcement of rules and pathways for challenging inaction when reports / complaints are made. Our experience with the status quo is shown in our series of “failure to act” [research](#) where reports of illegal content and other forms of harmful content are made to Big Tech using their own reporting tools with minimal response. For example:
- 87.5% of [Covid and vaccine misinformation](#)
 - 84% of content featuring [anti-Jewish hate](#)
 - 94% of users sending [racist abuse to sportspeople](#)
 - 90% of [misogynist abuse](#) sent to high-profile women over DM
 - Failing to act on 89% of [anti-Muslim hatred](#)
 - Users who [repeatedly send hateful abuse](#).
20. This is important and not a one-off problem. The status quo is simply enabling Big Tech to gaslight women who effectively become revictimized by having no response to their complaints about abuse and harassment.

Research and Data Collection

21. As outlined in our [Star Framework](#), there needs to be research, independent of Big Tech, done to assess what is truly happening on social media platforms and through search engines. Publicly accessible APIs with transparency on metadata, transparency reports, and an accountability and responsibility framework will be key.
22. We are happy to discuss opportunities to partner on research, including priority areas.

Addressing online forms of gender-based violence against women and LGBTQ+ individuals who are disproportionately targeted as public figures, political and government leaders, and journalists, in the US and globally

23. When we published [Hidden Hate](#), we were overwhelmed by how the experience of the five women in our study resonated with so many other people as a shared experience and was having a chilling effect on freedom of expression online - both when being the subject of abuse and when witnessing other women becoming targets. We found their ability to participate and exist online was threatened by hate in their direct messages, including cyberflashing and image-based sexual abuse, which many women and marginalized groups experience, and curtails their ability to express themselves freely online.

24. This is a common problem that impacts individuals at all levels of society, as abusers seek to silence, intimidate and harm. Big Tech must take responsibility and put the right systems and processes in place to mitigate and address all forms and targets of online abuse - everyone deserves to be safe online and to enjoy freedom of expression.

Addressing the links between online misogyny and other forms of online hate, harassment, and targeted violence

25. In our research summary in Appendix B, you can see the convergence and breadth of online harm and harassment against women and the LGBTQ+ community. In our latest study on [Incels](#) we have shown three key pathways that exist as part of the Incelosphere: “NEETS” (not in education, employment or training), body dysmorphia, and suicide / self-harm for men. These forums are designed to radicalize men and teenage boys by operating within a larger network of forums. As outlined in the report, these spaces were also used to share conspiracy theory and hate content, including antisemitic and racist content, and to normalize views about rape and pedophilia. Through our study we noted an increasingly violent thread of content: posts mentioning incel mass murders increased 59% between 2021 and 2022.
26. Fundamentally, the same underlying infrastructure, systems and processes and profit-driven business model are driving and amplifying harmful behavior and extremism without regard to public safety across the broad range of subjects and communities. Addressing these essential infrastructure issues and adopting the [Star Framework](#), will disrupt these links and make the Internet safer.

Responsible and responsive technology

27. This is comprehensively covered in our [Star Framework](#).

Appendix A: Core Elements of CCDH’s STAR Framework

The full version of the STAR framework can be accessed [here](#),

<p>S</p>	<p>Safety by Design: Safety by design means that technology companies need to be proactive at the front end to ensure that their products and services are safe for the public, particularly minors. Safety by design principles adopt a preventative systems approach to harm. This includes embedding safety considerations through risk assessments and decisions when designing, implementing, and amending products and services. Safety by design is the basic consumer standard that we expect from companies in other sectors.</p>
<p>T</p>	<p>Transparency: There are three key areas where transparency is desperately needed and should be prioritized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algorithms; • Rules enforcement; and • Economics, specifically related to advertising.
<p>A</p>	<p>Accountability to democratic and independent bodies: Regulation is most effective where there are accountability systems in place for statutory duties and harm caused, particularly where there is a risk of inaction because of profit motives and commercial factors. Frequently, accountability systems include an enforcement and independent pathway for challenging decisions or omissions.</p>
<p>R</p>	<p>Responsibility for companies and their senior executives: The final element of the STAR Framework is responsibility - both social media and search engine companies and their senior executives that are responsible for implementing duties under a legislative framework. Responsibility means consequences for actions and omissions that lead to harm. A dual approach - targeting both companies and their senior executives - is a common intervention strategy for changing corporate behavior.</p>

Appendix B: Center for Countering Digital Hate - Recent Relevant Research

Incels (September 2022)	
Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	This was a systematic study of over a million posts over the past eighteen months on the world's leading incels forum. By stripping language down to mathematics, we can eke out trends that provide real insight into incel communities. Our Quant Lab researchers studied an active community with thousands of members, some more active than others, that attracts a wider audience who make millions of visits a month. Analysis of their discourse shows this core group poses a clear and present danger to women, other young men, and reveals an emerging threat to our children.
Key Findings	<p>A network of four sites founded by two individuals offers pathways into the incelosphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researchers identified the largest dedicated incel forum based on traffic figures from SimilarWeb which show it receives an average of 2.6 million visits a month. • The network hosts dedicated forums for discussion of body image, suicide and unemployment. All except for the suicide forum do not allow women as members. This network has been linked to dozens of suicides and at least one mass shooting. • This wider incelosphere network has 55,818 members and receives an average of 7.6 million monthly visits. Analysis of usernames suggests that membership of the body image and unemployment forums overlaps with membership of the incel forum. • Google searches for terms connected with body image and unemployment present links to incelosphere sites on their first page of results. <p>The incel forum at the heart of the network has millions of visits but just 4,000 active members</p>

Incels (September 2022)

- Researchers collected all posts from the most popular subforum of the incel forum, posted from January 1 2021 to July 7, 2022 creating a dataset of 1,183,812 posts.
- This dataset reveals that the incel forum consists of a small number of active members with interest from a much larger number of visiting users:
 - 2.6 million visits a month, making a 16:1 ratio of visits to posts
 - 17,118 total members
 - 4,057 active members who posted in the period of study
 - 406 'powerusers' who account for 74.5% of all posts on the forum
- The US accounts for 44% of all visits to the incel forum, while the UK accounts for 7.5%. Amongst active users, 6% use predominantly British spellings in posts.
- Incel forum posts most frequently link to YouTube. Forum members share content from incel YouTube channels, which have 136,000 subscribers and 24.2 million video views.
- Users often link to Incel TV, a channel YouTube has previously refused to remove. Another called Sluthate Creeps posts videos of women in covertly filmed London.

Forum posts reveal promotion of extreme hatred, rape, pedophilia and mass shootings

- Over a fifth of posts in the forum feature misogynist, racist, antisemitic or anti-LGBTQ+ language, with 16% of posts featuring misogynist slurs.
- Forum members post about rape every 29 minutes, and examination of discussions of rape shows that 89% of posters are supportive.
- Over a quarter of incel forum users have posted pedophilia keywords, and discussions of pedophilia show 53% of posters are supportive.

Incels (September 2022)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The incel forum's rules were changed on March 5, 2022 to accommodate pedophilia. The relevant rules changed from "do not sexualize minors in any way, shape or form" to "do not sexualize pre-pubescent minors in any way, shape, or form."• Posts mentioning incel mass murders increased 59% between 2021 and 2022.• Analysis of the 'tags' applied to discussion threads on the forum shows that over a third are tagged with topics promoting expressions of anger or despair over members' incel status. Just 6.5% are tagged with topics promoting a more optimistic outlook. <p>Forum members as young as fifteen express violent and extremist views on the forum</p> <p>Researchers identified three users aged between 15 and 17 who were amongst the forum's most active members and expressed extreme views.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adam: 17, logged on for 10 hours a day, posted about "Jewish propaganda"• Ben: 15, discussed desire to commit a mass shooting in posts• Carl: student, discussed evading referral to UK's anti-extremism program.
Public reaction to the research	To come - research to be released 23 September 2022.
Media	Released today (23 September 2022), but examples to date: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BBC• Washington Post• The Hill

Andrew Tate (August 2022)

Link to Research	Here
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Andrew Tate (August 2022)

Purpose of Research

To provide some insight into the nature and extent of the economics fueling Andrew Tate's online web of misogynist content, to help deplatform him from mainstream platforms, and to inform and disrupt those who are unknowingly supporting or profiteering from his misogynist hate online.

Key Findings

YouTube is making up to £3.4 million in ad revenue from channels that are dedicated to posting videos of misogynist influencer Andrew Tate, including videos in which he promotes violence against women.

CCDH researchers identified 47 videos of Andrew Tate promoting extreme misogyny, of which nine were identified as carrying paid advertisements from brands that include Schwarzkopf hair products, Vans shoes, and even Google Ad services. Ads were recorded on clips in which Tate:

- Labels a former partner who accused him of assault **“a dumb hoe”**, viewed 12.8m times
- Talks about fighting women, saying **“grip her up by the neck”**, viewed 1.6m times
- Describes **putting his “imprint” on 18-19 year-old girls**, viewed 8.4m times
- Claims **“being a man” means “being territorial” of women**, viewed 3.3m times.

The social analytics tool Social Blade estimates that just three YouTube channels that carry ads and are dedicated to reposting clips of Tate have amassed nearly 234 million views across all of their videos, making up to £3.4 million in annual ad revenue.

Nearly half of the YouTube videos CCDH researchers identified promote Tate's “Hustler's University”, a private community hosted on the chat app Discord which Tate promises will “teach you exactly how to make money”.

A recent investigation from [The Observer](#) revealed that Tate encourages subscribers to his “Hustlers University” scheme to repost clips of him in order to earn commission. According to the report, this strategy has made him millions of pounds in less than three months, with 127,000 members paying £39 a month to participate in the scheme.

One such YouTube channel called “Successful Tate”, which is dedicated to reposting clips of Tate, has a subscriber count of 140,000 with over 83.4 million views across 249 videos. Estimates from Social Blade show the channel could be earning up to £1.7 million annually.

Andrew Tate (August 2022)

	<p>The former professional kickboxer turned social media influencer who, despite having been in the public eye for several years, has rapidly risen to prominence on social media in the last few months, particularly on video platforms like TikTok.</p> <p>Calls for Tate to be removed from the platform have been made over fears that the former Big Brother star could be “normalizing violence” against women. He has previously labeled women as a “man’s property” and asserted that rape survivors must “bear responsibility” for attacks.</p>
Public reaction to the research	Major public pressure informed by our research - led to Tate being deplatformed from Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok and Youtube - see, for example SKY News' coverage.
Media	Examples of media on this research: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independent• Yahoo• The Guardian

Anti-Abortion - Fake Clinics (June 2022)

Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	To understand how and to what extent Google products - maps, search and ads - were leading users to fake abortion clinics (also known as pregnancy crisis centers) - immediately preceding <i>Roe v Wade</i> being reconsidered in the Supreme Court.
Key Findings	<p>CCDH researchers found 1 in 10 Google search results for abortion services in 'Trigger Law' states lead users to anti-abortion 'fake clinics'. These 'fake clinics' appear to offer independent advice on abortions but are actually run by organizations that oppose abortion, shame abortion care, or promote alternatives to abortion. Some advertise so-called abortion “reversal” which is an unproven and potentially dangerous procedure. We found that 11% of Google search results for “abortion clinic near me” and “abortion pill” in US “Trigger Law” states lead to websites of anti-abortion fake clinics.</p> <p>Google Map Results - 37% presenting anti-choice providers as abortion clinics local to the user</p> <p>51 of the total 445 search results led to anti-abortion fake clinics, also known as crisis pregnancy centers or pregnancy resource</p>

	<p>centers. Out of 70 map results collected in the study, 26 led to sites of anti-abortion fake clinics (37%). When the researchers searched for “abortion clinic near me” and “abortion pill”, Google displayed a selection of 3 local providers in listings headed “abortion clinic” or “abortion pill” on its first results page. Our research found that in some cases where there was only one registered abortion clinic in the whole state, Google instead directed users to fake clinics in their vicinity. This was illustrated by the map results for Rapid City, South Dakota, which led to fake clinics nearby whilst the only registered abortion clinic in the state is located in Sioux Falls.</p> <p>Misleading anti-choice ads top search results seeking abortion services</p> <p>Nearly 28% of Google ads displayed at the top of search result pages were for anti-abortion fake clinics. One such ad from The Cline Centers claimed to offer free abortion consultations. However, upon further inspection of their website, it was revealed in a disclaimer that the clinic neither performs nor provides referrals for abortion procedures. This was corroborated by a Google review alleging that the “fake clinic” does not “provide medical care” and “exaggerate[s]” the risks of abortion.</p> <p>While Google labels anti-choice ads with a disclaimer reading “Does not provide abortions”, some appeared as the first result for searches seeking abortion services. Reports have suggested that some users seeking abortions have overlooked these disclaimers and contacted fake clinics expecting them to be clinics that offer abortions.</p> <p>Examples of narratives identified on fake clinic websites assessed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions that a hysterectomy may be required to halt bleeding following an abortion. • Suggestions that abortions are unnecessary as 20% of pregnancies end in miscarriage. • Claims that “suicidal impulses” are “common” following an abortion. • Claims that so-called abortion “reversal” has a 65% success rate.
<p>Public reaction to the research</p>	<p>Significant support from Democratic Members of Congress on this issue, which resulted in a letter to Google being written by Senator Warner and Representative Slotkin, collectively signed by 13 senators and 7 members of the House of Representatives.</p> <p>Subsequently, workers at Google who were members of the Alphabet Workers’ Union (AWU) signed a petition demanding privacy protection for users and workers in re abortion access (i.e.</p>

	<p>stop collecting data) and to get rid of ads for “misleading pregnancy crisis centers”.</p> <p>Google and Yelp both changed their policies as a result of this pressure and our report.</p>
Media	<p>Examples of media on this research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politico • Forbes • CNN • USA Today • Washington Post • The Hill • The Independent

Digital Hate: LGBTQI (August 2022)	
Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	<p>This study was conducted by CCDH in partnership with the Human Rights Campaign. CCDH researchers analyzed discourse and hateful rhetoric targeting LGBTQ+ people on Twitter and Facebook, finding an alarming and intense increase in recent months. This wave of hate has centered around the false and baseless lie that LGBTQ+ people ‘groom’ children. This, we know, has driven offline hate crimes. For example, a drag queen in the Bay Area was attacked by the Proud Boys this June, with the far-right extremists using the same hateful slurs identified in this report. This abuse, like the attempted white supremacist attack on a Pride parade in Idaho and incidents involving Neo-Nazis in Florida, did not happen in isolation: extremist rhetoric and attacks against LGBTQ+ people have ramped up online and offline in recent months.</p>
Key Findings	<p>Twitter: This wave of hate on Twitter has centered around the false and baseless lie that LGBTQ+ people 'groom' children.</p> <p>CCDH researchers identified 6,607 tweets a day containing the slur "groomers" and mentions of the LGBTQ+ community in the month following the passage of the 'Don't Say Gay or Trans' Bill, up from 1,307 a day the month before. This amounts to an increase in the overall volume of tweets engaging in this discourse of 406%.</p>

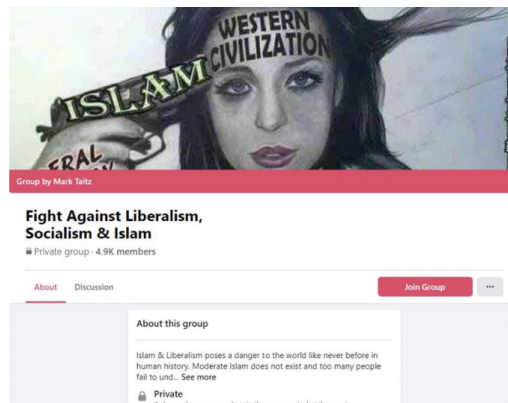
	<p>We estimate that the 500 most-viewed tweets that advance the false 'grooming' narrative were viewed at least 72 million times. These slurs clearly violate Twitter's 'Hateful Conduct' policy, and it is appalling that Twitter failed to act on 99% of the 100 most-viewed hateful tweets identified in this report.</p> <p>Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCDH researchers identified 59 ads which promote the 'grooming' narrative that were viewed over 2.1 million times. The ads were purchased and ran between March and August 2022, with language that claims opponents of 'Don't Say Gay or Trans' Bill are protecting pedophiles or that teaching about LGBTQ+ issues in schools amounts to 'radical sexual grooming'. • Having spoken out against the Bill, Disney became a target in this narrative and was the subject of over half of the Facebook ads in this study. The company has also been targeted on Twitter, where 345,152 tweets mentioning Disney appear alongside slurs like 'predator', 'pedophilia', and 'grooming'.
Media	<p>Examples of media on this research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hill • Daily Dot • Washington Blade • WCBS Radio

Anti-Muslim Hate (April 2022)	
Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	To assess the prevalence of online hate against the Muslim community, and how responsive social media companies were in responding to complaints about anti-Muslim content that breached their terms and conditions. This was particularly so in light of commitments made by these companies through the Christchurch Call.
Key Findings	Specific gender examples:

- Some English-language posts in our sample had been shared by Hindu nationalist accounts. Instagram failed to act on this post from a Hindu nationalist account which claims Hindu women marrying into Muslim families will be beaten and carried that #islamiscancer hashtag.



- Facebook failed to act on this Private Group which makes its purpose of spreading anti-Muslim hatred clear in its banner image which portrays Islam as a gun pointed at the head of a woman representing “western civilization”.



General Findings:

- CCDH researchers identified and reported 23 groups dedicated to anti-Muslim hatred and 530 posts with 25 million views to the platforms. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube collectively took no action on 89% of posts containing anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.
- Found that tech platforms failed to address 89% of posts promoting the “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory—violating pledges made following the 2019 Christchurch mosque terror attacks and signing on to the Christchurch Call.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook failed to take action against 94% of posts promoting anti-Muslim hate; Twitter 97%, YouTube 100%; Instagram 86%; and TikTok 64%. Facebook hosts several groups dedicated to spreading anti-Muslim hatred, with a combined 361,922 followers.
Media	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wired

Hidden Hate (April 2022)	
Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	<p>This CCDH report uncovered the side of Instagram that is often unseen, but more often experienced firsthand by women who use social media: how harassment, violent threats, image-based sexual abuse can be sent by strangers, at any time and in large volumes, directly into your DMs without consent and platforms do nothing to stop it.</p> <p>CCDH worked with five women with large Instagram followings (a total of 4.8 million followers on the platform):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amber Heard, actress and UN Human Rights Champion Rachel Riley, broadcaster and CCDH Ambassador Jamie Klingler, co-founder of Reclaim These Streets Bryony Gordon, award-winning journalist, and mental health campaigner Sharan Dhaliwal, founder of South Asian culture magazine <i>Burnt Roti</i>.
Key Findings	<p>Our analysis of 8,717 DMs sent to participants showed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 in 15 DMs break Instagram's rules on abuse and harassment. Researchers recorded 125 examples of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) 1 in 7 voice notes sent to women were abusive, and Instagram allows strangers to place voice calls to women they don't know. <p>When we reported these instances of abuse to Instagram, there was radio silence, and Instagram failed to act on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 in 10 abusive DMs reported using the platform's tools. 9 in 10 accounts sending violent threats over DM <u>any</u> image-based sexual abuse within 48 hours <u>all</u> accounts sending 'one-word' hatred. <p>Researchers identified several systematic problems that Instagram must fix:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users cannot report abusive voice notes that accounts have sent via DM; • Users must acknowledge “vanish mode” messages to report them; • Instagram does not automatically consider previous abusive messages; • Instagram’s “hidden words” feature is ineffective at hiding abuse; and • Users can face difficulties downloading evidence of abusive messages.
Public reaction to the research	<p>A lot of people come forward with their own stories confirming our research. One of those people was Harriet Walker, fashion editor of The Times.</p> <p>“As a female journalist I am used to getting unpleasant messages from accounts such as these” she told her readers. She ends her piece with a scathing attack on social media companies that they.. “must first decide that this is a problem worth tackling rather than simply telling women not to look.”</p> <p>Instagram (Meta) has recently announced (21 September 2022) that it is working to address issues raised in our <i>Hidden Hate</i> report, specifically optional user controls that will help people shield themselves from nude photos as well as other unwanted messages. It remains to be seen how effective this is.</p>
Media	<p>There was a lot of media interest in this report, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hill • Daily Mail • The Washington Post • Sydney Morning Herald • The Guardian • BBC • NY Times • NBC News • CNN

Twitter Failed to Remove Accounts Abusing Women (December 2021)

Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	To understand Twitter’s responsiveness in responding to reports of misogynist abuse, and where their inaction may lead to recidivist abuse.

<p>Key Findings</p>	<p>In November 2021 CCDH identified 288 accounts that had sent direct misogynist abuse, including racist comments and death threats, to nine high profile women including Kamala Harris, Chelsea and Hillary Clinton, Malala Yousafzai, and Lizzo.</p> <p>CCDH researchers found that nearly half of the accounts that target women with abuse on the platform are “reoffenders” who have gone on to post more misogynist content that breaks Twitter’s rules on hate speech against women and girls. Those who’ve worked in the field of combatting violence against women have found that many misogynist abusers will go on to reoffend, and this has informed our own research.</p> <p>48 hours after CCDH’s researchers reported each of the posts using Twitter’s own reporting tools, 97% of the accounts remained active. Two months later, the platform had failed to act on 88% of the accounts.</p> <p>Our analysis examined 235 of these accounts whose messages are open to analysis and found that 47% (111) have gone on to reoffend, sending more hateful messages to or about women. Of the reoffending posts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 49% targeted a woman of color ● 41% included the word “bitch” ● 28% were about the target’s perceived sexual availability ● 11% included conspiracy theories ● 11% made hateful comments about the woman’s appearance ● 10% included the word “witch”. <p>As recently as 2019, Twitter’s head of UK government policy, Katy Minshall, told the UK Parliament that “We are acutely aware of the unique experience women have on Twitter and changes we may have to make in our policies to get that right.” Twitter’s own policy on hateful conduct states: “You may not promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis...of gender...We recognize that if people experience abuse on Twitter, it can jeopardize their ability to express themselves.”</p> <p>However, Twitter still doesn’t seem to understand that misogynists will, if left free to abuse again, do just that. Twitter is not only enabling misogynists to amp up their attacks on women in the public eye, but normalizing the chilling effect that it pretends to care about.</p> <p>Twitter’s failure to deal with users who repeatedly post misogynist abuse shows that legislation like the Online Safety Bill is needed to enforce minimum standards for platforms to meet for acting on user reports, with penalties for those that fail to act.</p>
<p>Media</p>	<p>Examples include:</p>

Inside the Metaverse (December 2021)

Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	To investigate how safe the new Metaverse is, given the immersive nature of this new technology and the fact that it was marketed as family-friendly and safe at the launch. Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg and President of Global Affairs Nick Clegg, at the launch of Metaverse promised that “ <i>open standards, privacy and safety need to be built into the Metaverse from day one</i> ” ... “ <i>you really want to emphasize these principles from the start.</i> ”
Key Findings	<p>CCDH researchers spent 11 hours on VR Chat—the most reviewed social app in Meta’s (formerly Facebook) VR Metaverse—and found that it was rife with abuse, harassment, racism and pornographic content. In fact, on average our researchers reported disturbing behavior every seven minutes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minors being exposed to graphic sexual content• Bullying, sexual harassment and abuse of other users, including minors• Minors being groomed to repeat racist slurs and extremist talking points• Threats of violence and content mocking the 9/11 terror attacks. <p>CCDH reported all of the disturbing incidents to Meta using their web reporting tool. All of CCDH’s reports about users who abused and harassed other users went unanswered.</p>
Media	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wired• NBC News• New York Times• The Sun (US)• Daily Mail• CNN• The Guardian

Endangering women for profit - abortion 'reversal' (August 2021)

Link to Research	Here
Purpose of Research	To show how, and the extent to which, Facebook and Google were profiting from ads promoting an unproven and dangerous procedure - the abortion reversal procedure.
Key Findings	<p>Facebook and Google, two of the wealthiest companies in the world, take money for ads that promote an unproven and unsafe medical procedure – so-called abortion “reversal”. Clinical studies show this procedure is dangerous, potentially causing severe hemorrhaging. In every case these ads violate the platforms’ own standards. Facebook ads for so-called abortion “reversal” deliberately target women and girls as young as 13 and have been shown to Facebook users up to 18.4 million times.</p> <p>Google places misleading and dangerous ads for so-called abortion “reversal” on 83% of searches for abortions. These ads can be seen by any user, regardless of their age, and sometimes carried deceptive headlines like “find abortion clinic near me”.</p> <p>Our analysis of data on Facebook’s Ad Library shows that these ads were shown to children aged 13-17 over 700,000 times. This is despite the company’s policy that ads “targeted to minors must not promote products, services or content that are inappropriate, illegal, or unsafe, or that exploit, mislead, or exert undue pressure on the age groups targeted.”</p> <p>So-called abortion “reversal” is not approved by health authorities such as the FDA. A 2019 study to test its effectiveness was abruptly halted when several participants experienced “dangerous hemorrhaging.” Facebook prohibits ads that promote the sale or use of “unsafe substances, products or supplements, as determined by Facebook in its sole discretion”, and Google prohibits ads for “non-government approved products that are marketed in a way that implies that they’re safe or effective.”</p>
Media	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BBC