

Presentation title:

The normalization of non-consensual intimate images within telegram groups

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The diffusion of non-consensual intimate images (NCII) is a largely debated topic in the study of Internet cultures. Among its many implications, it represents one of the main ways in which gender-based violence is currently perpetrated every day on the Internet. Through a data scraping of the main 10 Italian Telegram groups where such phenomena take place within the platform, this ongoing research aims at analyzing descriptively the messages exchanged throughout a whole week among the members of these communities. The incredibly high number of members belonging to these groups and messages occurring daily as well as the particular language, incomprehensible to most people, used for exchanging NCII material seem to suggest one of the most active and well-rooted cultural communities on the Internet. As such, the dissemination of NCII in Italy has become to an extent a normalized activity characterized as a gender-based abuse where the toxic masculinity and hyper-sexualization of the victims predominate. This research is carried out by PermessoNegato, one of the main affiliations at the European level providing technological, psychological and legal support to the victims of Non-Consensual Pornography. Besides the data scraping analysis, PermessoNegato has monitored these Telegram groups through a reporting channel on the platform during the last 3 years. From a preliminary analysis, PermessoNegato has seen an exponential increase in the phenomenon in the last years: the above-mentioned groups have grown from 29 to 231 in 2 years (2020 – 2022). In November 2022, the largest group taken into examination counted 540.000 unique users. Moreover, studying the keywords inside the groups, “rape” and “kids” are among the most used words, with a consequent increase in the demand for this type of content. In conclusion, policy implications and potential methods of intervention will also be discussed.