

## Honey, you are so not in control - decrypting sextortion

In this age of Kardashian-feminism, freedom of expression for women often turns in freedom to show, or rather, expose yourself. Women and girls eagerly make use of new media to find an outlet for self-expression, posting provocative pictures and videos of themselves, defying so-felt conservative social norms. With these daring images, women want to show they are “strong, proud of who they are, in control, living in the now and full of confidence”.

The power and opportunity felt by women to express themselves in any way they want to, is certainly to be applauded. Society has come a long way from putting down any woman who dares to stand out, and seeks attention and even admiration for who she is and what she tries to accomplish.



However, advancements in technology also impose a risk of abuse of these images. Provocative images shared for reason of self-efficacy are being used as pornographic material, or for purpose the of cyber harassment, threats, identity theft, impersonation, doxing (just to mention some), even as revenge porn. Incidents of sex tortion, where women are coerced in payment of even performing sexual acts to prevent some privately shared delicate material such as a nude picture or sex video from being made public, are reported in increasing numbers. Remember Amanda Todd? As social norms are to this day different for men and women, women face a much larger risk of being a

victim of this kind of abuse. Due to the cross -jurisdictional nature of the internet, inadequacy of mechanisms and remedies available in online platforms such as structuring terms of services agreements around users’ right and responsibilities, the lack of clear taxonomies for online harms, and perpetrators frequently use the Dark Web makes successful prosecution of the perpetrators very difficult. Showing the extent to which online violence echoed violence in the offline spaces. If it even gets to that stage - sextortion cases are difficult to investigate due to the humility and shame felt by the victims. This is even more so in nations where the weight of humiliation is dictated by its culture and social values.

The Women in Cyber Security Foundation and its female hack lab, The Hague University and the Electronic Commerce Platform work together to bring the important questions to the table, from different perspectives.

Through a live social engineering hack, we will show participants how easy it is to fall victim to sextortion type of abuse. We discuss how the current approach to tackling sextortion is failing. Based on the fact that online safety and gender digital literacy is a shared responsibility, Government, tech industry, online networks and women interest groups need to work together to decrease these risks, that increasingly puts women in danger of being exploited. Participants are stimulated to help construct and advise on the much needed multi-stakeholder approach. We want women to feel free to share what they want, being able to choose those media and methods that allow them to stay in control of what they share. To not only feel in control, but be in control: the new age of digital feminism & citizenship.

