

RPH report 2021: the rise of sextortion

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When intimate images are shared

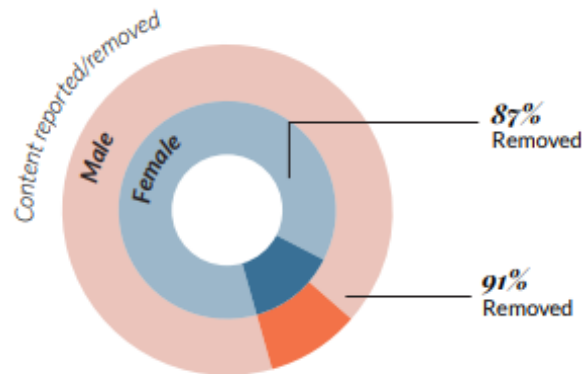
The Revenge Porn Helpline report content hosted anywhere; allowing clients to have practical support in taking control of their illegally shared content. In 2021, RPH reported over 27,000 pieces of content, and, as in previous years, there has been more content reported for women than men. RPH's success is persistent yearly with an approximately 90% success rate of removing content, though this is something we are content to work with industry contacts to improve on.

Average images per victim



over 80% of cases they suspect their perpetrator to be someone they know – with 60% of the reported perpetrator being a previous or current partner. Simply this means that in most cases where a woman is a victim, the act is perpetrated by someone they know personally, and most likely to be someone they have been romantically involved with.

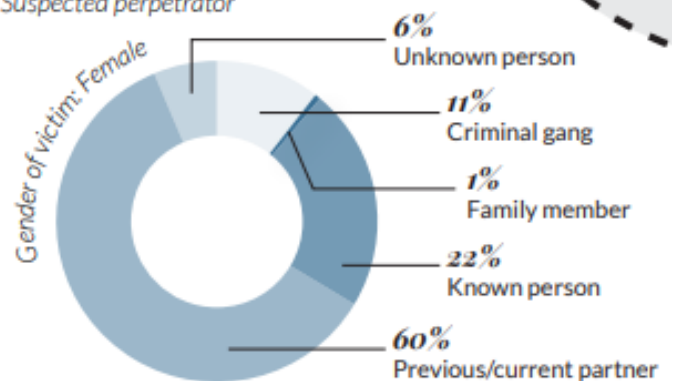
RPH is victim-focused and by design, we are reactive: content is shared and then we report it. Something we have not gained information on in our previous report is *how* the person was alerted to the content. We know people do indeed find out about their images being shared, but we know the delivery of this information can make a world of difference. For that reason, we retroactively looked into our cases for 2021 and asked this question: *how was the victim alerted to the content?*

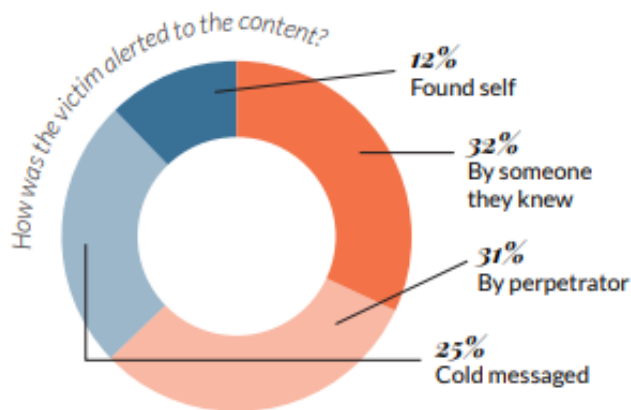


On average, per client, there is over 60 times more content of females reported than males - for females RPH report over 12 pieces of content per person, which can be on a range of platforms.

For female clients, those who are more likely to report intimate images shared, in

Suspected perpetrator





As shown by the graphic above, most clients who disclose their images have been shared are alerted to this by someone they know personally. This can be a friend, family member, or even a work colleague. In terms of *how* the content was shared, the “alerter” could have “stumbled across it”, had a message with the content or been shown by another person.

Secondary to that, another common alterer of content being shared is the suspected perpetrator themselves. This is something we thought we would see on the Helpline, as this crime has many ties towards elements of control and humiliation which is often orchestrated by the perpetrator, thus alerting the victim to content is another way of facilitating that.

Chillingly making up 25% of cases where content is shared is the victim being “cold messaged”, and I use this term to describe messages on social media or even emails regarding their content. These are people who have not had communication before and have sought to share the details of this content. This effect is hugely distressing and the alerter is rarely doing this out of common decency, the messages are usually added with sexual advances and/or humiliation towards the victim.

The last method is the least common one, which is searching for yourself online, which is not surprising as many people choose not to do this. Searching for yourself – and this type of content – is extremely mentally draining.