

RPH report 2021: the rise of sextortion

Presented by Zara Ward

Sextortion: catfish for real money

Sextortion was our most reported issue in 2021 and saw a two-times increase in cases between 2020 and 2021. This is an issue commonly reported by males and occurs when a sexual relationship develops online, sexual images are exchanged, and/or sexual encounters occur within a video call. The victim is extorted for money and blackmailed by their intimate content, as during the interaction the scammers have taken details of followers, friends, and family lists and overall done a complete search on their target.

Sextortion (or webcam blackmail) is used by overseas scammers to make some quick cash, by threatening to share intimate content of the victim, usually to friends and family accompanied by derogatory terms. In many cases, these threats occur within private messages, with under 10% of total cases reporting social media cases for us to report. Platforms take this incredibly seriously and take action if threats are made. The platforms we see most reported are Facebook and Instagram accounting for around 50% of cases where threats are made.

The threats are very real, but the content is rarely released in only 1% of cases do we find that content is online to be reported.

You can find out more about sextortion on our website.

