

# Gender-Based Violence and Hate Speech Online: A Growing Crisis



**The rise of digital platforms in recent years has offered immense opportunities for connection and expression, but it has also amplified the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) and hate speech online. Of course, it is not the medium, but the way it is used, the ease and anonymity it provides. This issue disproportionately impacts women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and marginalized groups, recreating a toxic environment that stifles freedom of speech and undermines mental well-being.**

**Some current statistics**

- Prevalence: According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, 1 in 10 women in the EU has experienced some form of cyber violence since the age of 15.**
- Types of Abuse: Common forms met online include cyberstalking & doxing (publishing private information online). Hate speech often intersects with racism, homophobia, and other bias.**
- Youth Impact: A 2024 EU survey highlighted that nearly 58% of girls aged 15-24 have faced harassment online, particularly on social media platforms.**

## Interesting updates

- **EU Regulatory Framework: The Digital Services Act (DSA)**, implemented in 2024, obliges platforms to remove illegal content swiftly and to assess systemic risks of abuse, including gender-based hate speech. It imposes greater accountability for tech companies to ensure safer digital spaces.
- **AI in Moderation:** Social media platforms are increasingly deploying AI tools to detect hate speech and abusive behavior. However, critics argue that these tools often fail to account for nuanced and ambiguous cultural and gendered contexts, leading to inconsistent enforcement.

## **Need for steps forward**

- **Education and awareness:** Initiatives like the Council of Europe's "No Hate Speech Movement" aim to educate young people about online hate and the cultivation of a culture of respect.
- **Stronger policies:** Nations and platforms must adopt stringent measures to counteract abuse, such as implementing reporting mechanisms and offering solid victim support systems.
- **Collaborative efforts:** Governments, society, and tech companies must work together to develop holistic and applicable solutions, including enhanced moderation tools and inclusive community standards.

**In this context, the ScrollOff project, with its recent developments, aims to make it easier to detect hidden concepts on the web. The Scrolloff Reference Keybook, offers help on how to recognize covert expressions of violence and discrimination, in a variety of ways, which are only meant to go unnoticed by both the platforms' control mechanisms and the users themselves. Stay tuned for more!**

## Sources:

[European Institute for Gender Equality: Statistics and trends on cyber violence against women.](#)

[The Digital Services Act overview and its role in combating online hate speech.](#)

[EU's actions to tackle gender-based hate speech: Updates on legislative measures.](#)



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