

SURVEY: 1 in 5 Women Have Personally Experienced Sexual Harassment on Social Media

Submitted by: SellCell

Friday, 12 May 2023

Survey Reveals how 40% of women have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment on social media platforms...

FULL REPORT & GRAPHS - (<https://www.sellcell.com/blog/social-media-sexual-harrassment-survey-2023/>)

Key Findings:

- 1 in 5 women, 20.8% have personally experienced sexual harassment on social media.
- 4 in 10 (39.7 %) of women have either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment online, on social media.
- 57% of those female social media users who experienced sexual harassment did so on Facebook and Facebook Messenger.
- Of those women who experienced sexual harassment on social media, 79% said they had received unwelcome messages and/or sexual comments.
- 68.2% of the 3000 women who use social media polled do not believe that social media companies do enough to protect people.

Introduction & Purpose of Survey

Leading online mobile phone price comparison site, (<https://www.sellcell.com/>), has conducted a survey about online sexual harassment of women on social media. The survey—conducted by OnePoll on behalf of SellCell, collecting answers from 3000 UK women who actively use social media and related apps—attempts to discover how many women have experienced sexual harassment, or have witnessed sexual harassment.

As the UK House of Lords is pushing through amendments to the Online Safety Bill, designed to further protect women from online sexual harassment and abuse, SellCell's survey will cover the following:

(Please note that the questions and answers contain sensitive topics)

- How many women have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment via social media platforms or applications.
- If they haven't experienced this, what actions are they taking to protect themselves.
- Which social media apps have the worst record for those who experienced sexual harassment.
- What forms of sexual harassment took place on social media.
- The action taken by those who were victims of sexual harassment on a social media platform or app.
- The effects of sexual harassment on those who were victims.

- Whether the victims of sexual harassment feel that social media companies are doing enough to protect people from abuse online, via their platform or app.

Main Findings

- Of the 3,000 UK women who use social media, who responded to the survey, 40% have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment on social media platforms or apps.
- Of the 3,000 respondents, 21% of them have personally experienced sexual harassment on social media platforms or apps.
- 57% of the 624 respondents who have personally experienced sexual harassment on social media state it was via Facebook or Facebook Messenger.
- 79% of those who have experienced harassment online say it took the form of unwelcome sexual comments or messages.
- 76% of women who experienced sexual harassment on social platforms or apps took action by blocking the offender or offenders.
- 32% of victims of social media sexual harassment state that the long-term effects included feelings of violation and/or intimidation.
- Of the 2342 who have not experienced sexual harassment via social media, the majority of respondents (69%) state this is because of their diligence in selecting who to follow or accept friend requests from.
- 68.2% of the 3000 female social media users polled agree that social media platforms do not do enough to protect people from online sexual harassment.

Summary of Survey Questions

- SellCell and OnePoll asked 3,000 UK women who use social media the following questions regarding sexual harassment through applications or platforms for social media. Content warning: some questions and answers in this survey contain wording of a sensitive and/or sexual nature.

1. Which of the following statements best describes your experience of sexual harassment through a social media platform/ app?

The survey asked 3000 UK women who use social media, "Which of the following statements best describes your experience of sexual harassment through a social media platform/ app?"

Of the respondents, 39.7% (1190) stated that they had either personally experienced sexual harassment or had witnessed sexual harassment, online, on social media platforms or apps.

Of the 3,000 respondents, 20.8% (624) stated that they had personally experienced sexual harassment on a social platform or application.

This leaves 79.2% who have never had experience of sexual harassment personally, while using a social media platform or app.

2. (If you have never personally experienced sexual harassment through a social media platform or application). Why do you think you have avoided personally experiencing sexual harassment on social media? [Select all that apply]

In answer to this question, 69% (1605) of 2342 women who haven't personally experienced social media sexual harassment said it was because they are selective about who they follow or accept friend requests from.

42% of respondents keep their social media account private to avoid harassment, and 41% avoiding posting much about themselves as they do not trust the platforms to keep them safe.

32% only use social media to keep up with news and activities rather than to be sociable, and 5% only use social media for work or business purposes.

3. (If you have personally experienced sexual harassment through a social media platform or application)
Which social media platforms/apps have you personally experienced sexual harassment on? [Select all that apply]

57% of the 624 women who answered that they had experienced sexual harassment on social media state that Facebook and/or Facebook Messenger is the platform or app where they were most likely to be harassed. 37% of those 624 state that Instagram was the app or platform, while 26% state dating apps like Tinder or Hinge have been the culprits for experiencing sexual harassment.

4% of the respondents who have faced online sexual harassment fell victim to offenders on LinkedIn, a platform designed for professional networking.

4. (If you have personally experienced sexual harassment through a social media platform or application)
What type(s) of sexual harassment have you ever personally experienced on social media platforms/apps? [Select all that apply]

The majority (79%) of those who have experienced sexual harassment on social media state that it came in the form of unwelcome sexual comments or messages.

59% of victims said it was in the form of friend requests or invitations from strangers that made them feel uncomfortable.

48% of those who have fallen prey to offenders said the offender sent them pornographic photos or videos.

9% of victims of online social media sexual harassment said it took the form of threats of sexual violence.

5. (If you have personally experienced sexual harassment through a social media platform or application)
When you personally experienced sexual harassment on social media, did you report this to anyone/take any action? [Select all that apply]

Of the 624 women who answered that they had been sexually harassed on social media, 76% of them took action by blocking the individual who was sexually harassing them.

42% of the respondents state that they reported the offender to the social media app or platform on which they were victim to abuse.

5% took the matter to the police, but unfortunately 11% of respondents did nothing as they knew the platform, app, or police would take no action against the offender.

6. (If you have personally experienced sexual harassment through a social media platform or application) Which, if any, long-term effects have you experienced/do you experience as a result of the online sexual harassment you experienced? [Select all that apply]

Of those women who answered yes to question one, 32% say that the experience left them feeling violated and/or intimidated.

21% say the sexual harassment has made them doubt their personal appearance, and 19% of the respondents say that the sexual harassment has left them suffering with anxiety.

The sexual harassment has affected 10% of victims' current intimate relationships, while 3% have had their careers suffer as a result of the offender's actions.

7. (All respondents) Which of the following statements best describes your experience of sexual harassment through a social media platform/ app?

Of the 3,000 women surveyed, an overwhelming majority of 68.2% (2045 women) state that social media companies don't do enough about sexual harassment on their platforms or applications.

Only 7.8% think social media companies are doing enough, while 24.0% of respondents were unsure whether companies do enough to protect their female users from sexual harassment.

Conclusion

It is very clear from the survey results that not only are a lot of women (39.7%) either victims of or have witnessed sexual harassment on social media, but the platforms they are using are simply not doing enough to protect their female users from abuse, and when abuse arises, they don't do enough to stop the offender and their behaviour.

Clearly, significantly more needs to be done by brands in order to make social media platforms and applications a safe space that women can enjoy without the threat of sexual harassment.

Methodology

SellCell conducted a survey of 3,000 UK women who use social media through OnePoll to ascertain how many women have suffered sexual harassment on social media platforms or applications. It took into account the ages of victims, the platforms used by the victims, the forms of harassment, the action taken by the victims, the long-term effects of harassment, and whether those surveyed thought platforms did enough to protect women from sexual harassment online. SellCell then analysed this data. No personal details were collected or stored during the surveying process.

What Is SellCell?

SellCell.com is the number one smartphone price comparison service and trade-in site, working in the online and mobile space, offering consumers a safe and convenient way to trade in old devices and tech.

SellCell regularly conducts data analysis and surveys across US and UK markets to understand the interactions between humans and technology and how the use of digital technology has an effect on everyday lives.

SellCell has featured in multiple authority publications such as TechRadar, The Daily Mail, Apple Insider, CNBC, Tech Crunch, Business Insider, and more, and regularly features in news.