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Revenge porn:
the concept and practice of combatting nonconsensual sexual
images in Europe

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Abstract

There have been numerous high profile instances of nonconsensual sexual images, or ‘revenge porn’, within the EU in recent years, and growing social and political awareness of its existence. However, previous research focusing on the online violations of human rights has included little emphasis towards the impact of a horizontal relationship, and the potential for response. This thesis attempts to rectify this omission by considering the defining aspects of revenge porn, impacts for those affected, how far we can consider revenge porn ‘gendered’ or an act of violence, and whether it is a violation of human dignity. Building upon this, national and possible regional responses are weighed in turn. The existing revenge porn laws in the UK are measured for efficacy and impact, in contrast to the current data protection laws in Italy and the recent case of Tiziana Cantone. We then turn to the potential for a regional response from the EU; data protection laws, the right to be forgotten, and ratification of the Istanbul Convention are analysed through the lens of a potential regional revenge porn response. These areas combine and lead us toward an overarching realisation of the actors required, and next steps needed, to combat revenge porn within the EU.

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