

TRAPPED, TORMENTED AND TERRORISED

THE INTERNET OF THINGS AS A TOOL OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



BACKGROUND

Home is not a safe place for everybody.

Domestic violence (DV) is deeply damaging. It can have long-lasting physical and psychological impacts.

The use of emerging technologies to perpetrate DV is rising.

Internet-connected technologies such as home assistants, smart watches and security systems are increasingly popular in everyday life.

These devices, together with the networks and services they connect to, are known as the Internet of Things (IoT).

IMPACT OF IOT

Exploiting IoT may exacerbate existing patterns of control and power imbalances.

Seemingly harmless capabilities, such as audio and video recording, can be repurposed as malicious tools of coercion and surveillance.

Perpetrators can gaslight victims by remotely controlling utility and security systems.

THE PROBLEM

Scale and scope of abuse is not yet fully understood.

Limited knowledge of how perpetrators use IoT as a method of abuse.

Victim-blaming solutions and guidance, which implicitly minimise the abuse.

MY QUESTIONS

How do users perceive and respond to risks of IoT technologies in the home?

What is the role and impact of IoT on victims and survivors of DV?

Can IoT play a supportive role in the context of DV and minimise associated risks?

MY OUTCOMES

Improve our understanding of evolving privacy, safety and security risks of IoT in the home.

Inform, develop and future-proof DV and internet security legislation.

Create a field guide, reflecting the needs and insights of survivors.

CALL TO INDUSTRY

Together, stakeholders can help to combat risks of DV associated with emerging technologies.

Design for safety - prioritise your most vulnerable users while working against the goals of those who seek to weaponise IoT for harm.

Profile perpetrators and their methods to ensure IoT is resistant to tactics of DV.

Consider risks to children.

Develop policy and legislation in response to emerging technologies and potential harms.

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