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Regardless of your opinion on sexting, it is undeniable that the unauthorised distribution of nude images of others is problematic and damaging. Whilst some people may feel ok with sending an explicit photo of themselves to a trusted person, there is always a risk that the image will be shared much more broadly. In this issue of the ThinkUKnow e-newsletter we will look at the distribution of “selfies” and how we might minimise the occurrence and associated harms.

“Selfies” and “Someone Elsie’s”

Studies on teenage sexting vary in terms of prevalence but the majority reveal that many more people receive these images than send them. This may indicate that images are being sent to others without the permission of the creator. Our focus should perhaps not be on the “selfies”, but the “someone elsies” being distributed for malicious purposes.

“Selfies” are images which people have taken of themselves, often posed and provocative. In relation to sexting, these “selfies” are usually of the creator in a state of undress, or completely naked. These “selfies” are taken and posted/distributed by the creator. On the other hand, “someone elsies” relate to the posting and distribution of “selfies” by someone other than the creator. Whilst the creator may feel a sense of control and power in making a “selfie”, that control and power is lost when their image is being used without their permission, becoming a “someone elsie”.

Revenge Porn and “leaks”

Distribution of someone else’s private images and videos is not new, these privacy

Time2Talk

In this section we look at ways to start talking with children and young people about their use of technology.

How common do you think naked selfies/sexting is?

Why do you think people share “someone elsies”?

How can we prevent the unauthorised sharing of images?

Who has the responsibility for preventing the unauthorised sharing of images?

What can we do about this?

Minimising the harms caused by “selfies” and “someone elsies” requires a collaborative and multi-faceted approach. There are a number of programs which have been developed to combat the exploitation of women and, seeing as the distribution of “someone elsies” is a very gendered issue, lessons could be learned from such approaches. The most important is to ensure that men are used as positive role models to other men and boys about respectful relationships with women and girls (see, for example, White Ribbon Australia’s programs).

Education and awareness on how images and videos can be distributed, even in apps

violations have occurred for decades but the digital nature of this material means that it can be shared more easily and more broadly. Often referred to as Porn 2.0, user-generated and posted pornography is increasingly being shared online, often without the permission of all parties in the material. So-called “revenge porn” is where material is deliberately distributed without the consent of the parties involved, normally by a disgruntled ex-partner.

This is linked to the “leaking” of private images either for revenge purposes or to gain notoriety (remember the Kardashian sex tape and the Rihanna photos?). However, celebrities are much better placed financially to turn a “leak” into publicity or income. For the average citizen, the consequences can be much more disturbing.

In 2011, “[The brocial network](#)” page on Facebook caused scandal as men uploaded private images of their female friends and partners, without their knowledge. In 2013, it appears that “Snapchat Leaked” pages are picking up where “The brocial network” left off. Users are encouraged to share the photos they have received using Snapchat with an unknown and invisible audience. Not only do users have the ability to keep a private image of someone else, but a broad audience with which to share it.

such as Snapchat which claim to give the creator control, can help young people to make informed choices. Digital literacy is important in empowering young people to make ethical decisions with their use of technology.

Awareness of the impact of unauthorised distribution on young people is also important. Too many young people, both in Australia and overseas, have suffered terrible, if not life-ending, consequences of having their images sent to others. Young people, as well as adults, need to see the human face of their digital actions.

In terms of legal action, those who distribute “someone elsies” often receive harsher penalties under child pornography and harassment laws. This is not only in recognition of the harms they have caused, but also as a deterrence to others who might think this type of behaviour is appropriate.

Finally, “selfies” and “someone elsies” don’t only take place in the online realm, they are often embedded in broader social and relational areas. Any education which encourages respectful relationships should also include the digital space as an important component.

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