

**TAKING BACK THE TECH: AN ANALYSIS OF TAKE BACK THE TECH!'S 2015
TWITTER CAMPAIGN DURING 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER
VIOLENCE**

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MBSSAM002

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Dissertation Title: Taking back the tech: An analysis of Take Back The Tech!'s 2015 Twitter campaign during 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

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ABSTRACT

The online abuse and harassment of women through hate speech is a growing problem. This study explores responses to abuse of women on Twitter, by analysing the tactics employed by the feminist network, Take Back The Tech! (TBTT) to combat online abuse through their global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign. This study employs various analytical frameworks including feminism, intersectionality, counterpublics, and agenda-setting to investigate TBTT's tweets and other Twitter users' responses to the campaign, as suggested by Twitter replies and mentions.

During their campaign, TBTT used online activism for both advocacy and mobilisation. Their campaign also worked to empower marginalised voices through the sharing of survivor stories while embracing global dialogue. Calls to action were a fundamental tactic employed by TBTT during the campaign. These calls to action encouraged both online and offline action. TBTT highlighted the need to share stories of strategies for countering violence against women (VAW), to organise offline by arranging meetings to discuss technology-related violence, to transform tools for digital safety, and to encourage followers to make their own digital safety roadmaps.

The majority of TBTT's tweets were original tweets and TBTT also frequently retweeted other users' tweets throughout their campaign. Through this act of agenda-setting, TBTT aimed to raise public awareness of technology-related VAW. Hashtags enabled TBTT to keep track of the discussion, gauge the progress and success of their campaign, and it also allowed Twitter users to follow and contribute towards the hashtagged conversation. Hashtags were also an effective method of network-building which connected TBTT to other Twitter campaigns dealing with similar issues. These hashtags linked specific TBTT campaigns to broader feminist concerns, while also building connections with feminist counterpublics.

TBTT used Twitter for agenda-setting by linking to external media in their tweets. Including these URLs was an effective way of pointing followers to additional information such as their own website, commercial media websites, and websites of feminist and women's organisations. Furthermore, TBTT overcame Twitter's 140-character limit and included additional information by using images such as pixel-art characters, memes, infographics, and photos of campaigners' work.

The majority of users who engaged with TBTT during 16 Days did so via mentions while only a few engaged via replies. Thus, despite the active campaigning by TBTT, the Twitter data suggests a relatively low level of active engagement. It is unclear from the available data whether this limited response reflects weaknesses in the campaign, the potentially stifling effect of online abuse or whether followers might have preferred private engagement. Thus, while empowering women, engaging with them and sharing information, tools, resources and tips in order to put online abuse on the public agenda, TBTT's campaign also highlights the continued importance of "safe" spaces for feminists.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

When Marion Bartoli won the 2013 Women's Wimbledon title, numerous Twitter users utilised the platform to congratulate her. However, at the other end of the spectrum, others tweeted derogatory, sexist, violent and abusive tweets about her and directed toward her. The majority of these negative tweets commented on her physical appearance and how she did not deserve to win the title because it seems these Twitter users did not find her attractive. Some of the tweets were: "Bartoli looks like she's a cross between man and ape", "Someone as ugly and unattractive as Bartoli doesn't deserve to win", "Female tennis is useless, I've never seen a disgusting champion like Bartoli" and "I want Lisicki to win because she is really fit. Bartoli wouldn't even get raped let alone fucked" (Public Shaming, 2013). This topic was trending globally on Twitter which means that, according to Twitter's "trending" algorithm, people all over the world were contributing towards the topic.

Caroline Criado-Perez, a feminist activist and journalist who convinced the Bank of England to make Jane Austen the new face of the £10 note, received rape and death threats from Twitter users. Criado-Perez's campaign began after the Bank of England announced in April 2013 "that social reformer Elizabeth Fry would be dropped from new £5 notes in favour of Winston Churchill, leaving no female presence on bank notes" (BBC, 2014). After the success of her campaign Criado-Perez received around 50 abusive tweets an hour for a 12-hour period and most of the tweets directed to Criado-Perez were threats of rape (Philipson, 2013). Some of the tweets were: "fuck off and die you worthless piece of crap", "Go kill yourself", "Rape is the last of your worries", "Shut up bitch" and "Ya not that gd looking to rape u be fine" (Best, 2014).

In the experiences above, the majority of the perpetrators were men. These examples of the ruthless and relentless harassment of prominent women online have come to public attention thus raising awareness about the abuse of women online. Although these well-known women receive media coverage and public support, the problem of online abuse also affects women who are not in the public eye. This gave rise to my dissertation's focus on TBTT's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (16 Days) Twitter campaign. TBTT was founded in 2006 by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC). The APC is both a network and an organisation made up of dedicated activists who want to use the Internet to make the world a better place (APC, 2014a). TBTT is

"a collaborative campaign to reclaim information and communication technology to end violence against women. The campaign calls on all ICT [information and communication technology] users – especially women and girls – to take control of technology and

strategically use any ICT platform at hand (mobile phones, instant messengers, blogs, websites, digital cameras, email, podcasts and more) for activism against gender-based violence. Take Back The Tech! plans several campaigns throughout the year, with the biggest being 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (November 25 – December 10 each year). Creative, strategic actions explore different aspects of violence against women and ICT” (TBTT, 2014a).

This study investigates the online abuse of women on Twitter by studying the strategies TBTT adopts to surmount this abuse through their 16 Days campaign. By analysing a sample of TBTT’s tweets, this research aims to provide some insight into how an activist network utilises Twitter to achieve its goals, and how other Twitter users are connecting and engaging with the network. This dissertation presents a content analysis of TBTT’s own tweets and retweets (320 tweets) and an analysis of public tweets which included TBTT’s username – @takebackthetech (1549 tweets), and the hashtag #takebackthetech (1773 tweets). The tweets were captured from 25 November 2015 – 10 December 2015, the duration of the campaign.

Various theoretical frameworks and concepts were useful in framing this study including feminism, intersectionality, online activism, counterpublics and networked publics. Research is considered feminist when it is based in the group of theoretical traditions that privilege women’s voices, issues and lived experiences which is what this study aims to do (Hesse-Biber, 2014:3). Several strands of feminism exist and I am also aware of my positionality in a South African context thus African feminism was also explored. I was drawn to intersectionality as a key concept as I recognise that feminism cannot speak universally for all women and that there are limitations of gender as a single analytical category (McCall, 2005:1771). boyd’s networked publics was utilised as a perspective as I found it beneficial in understanding social network sites (SNS).

I employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods and use three major strategies. First, by analysing the tweets disseminated by TBTT, second, by studying tweets by other users that included TBTT’s handle (username) – @takebackthetech in their tweets, and third by studying tweets published by TBTT and other users that included #takebackthetech. The primary research method that I adopted was content analysis and I also employ the insights of social network analysis.

The data, in this case tweets, for this research were captured by tracking the username @takebackthetech and the hashtag #takebackthetech during the 16 Days campaign from 25 November to 10 December 2015 using the tool NodeXL. In order to analyse TBTT’s tweets, I accessed TBTT’s

Twitter archive, with their permission. When analysing the tweets, I chose to separate tweets with images from those without. I wanted to discover whether or not making use of visual elements was a tactic employed by TBTT as images are an effective way of overcoming Twitter's character limit and can often encourage more engagement. I go in more detail in Chapter 5.

Furthermore, two interviews (a pre-campaign Skype interview and a post-campaign email interview) were conducted with a member of the TBTT team. The aforementioned interviewee's identity was anonymised as well as individual Twitter users' identities. The TBTT interviewee will be referred to as Mitchell throughout this dissertation. The reasons for this anonymisation will be explained under the ethical considerations section of this dissertation.

I participated in TBTT's 16 Days campaign by retweeting some of TBTT's tweets, retweeting other users' tweets partaking in the campaign and publishing my own tweets including #takebackthetech. I chose to participate and not simply observe because advocating for women's rights is something that I am passionate about and try to do daily both online and offline. I will elaborate on this further in the methodology section.

1.2. Research question

- What strategies were employed by TBTT to combat the online abuse of women through their 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign?
 - How do online activists utilise agenda-setting to achieve their goals?
 - How effective are hashtags for online campaigning?

This research aims to provide insight into how an activist network utilises Twitter to achieve its goals by conducting an analysis on TBTT. With the intention of exploring how TBTT is utilising Twitter as part of their campaign to reclaim ICT to end woman abuse online, this research will be divided into three sections. First, by analysing the tweets disseminated by TBTT, second, by studying tweets by other users that included TBTT's handle (username) – @takebackthetech in their tweets, and third by studying tweets published by TBTT and other users that included #takebackthetech.

1.3. Significance

In the past year or so online violence against women (VAW), #GamerGate in particular, has been discussed by the media, decision-makers and private sector, which is promising, however there is still room for development (Mitchell [TBTT team member], personal interview, 2015 October 16). This

study aims to contribute to this development by filling a gap in our knowledge of hateful discourse online. Although a considerable amount of research has been conducted on offline woman abuse globally, in comparison, there is arguably room for more research to be conducted on online woman abuse. Debatably, it has been established that online woman abuse is a critical problem and now that the problem has been recognised, more emphasis should be placed on finding solutions to overcome the issue. This research aims to provide insight into how an activist network, in this case TBTT, is utilising Twitter to achieve its goals – to reclaim ICT to end VAW. By analysing TBTT’s practices on Twitter and the strategies they employ to combat online woman abuse, this study could contribute to existing research on this subject and add to the comprehension of the practical techniques individuals, organisations and networks can use to surmount the online abuse of women.

1.4. About Take Back The Tech!

As mentioned above, the APC initiated TBTT as a campaign to reclaim ICT to end VAW. Before a discussion can commence on TBTT, an understanding of the APC and the APC’s Women’s Rights Programme needs to be established.

Founded in 1990, APC’s mission is

“to empower and support organisations, social movements and individuals in and through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to build strategic communities and initiatives for the purpose of making meaningful contributions to equitable human development, social justice, participatory political processes and environmental sustainability” (APC, 2014a).

The APC organises their work in three programme spheres: communications and information policy, women’s networking support, and strategic use of technology and capacity building (APC, 2014b). The Women’s Rights Programme (WRP) belongs to the women’s networking support sphere and is simultaneously a programme within APC as well as a network of women all over the world devoted to utilising technology for women’s empowerment (APC, 2014b). The work areas of the WRP are: gender and ICT policy advocacy, VAW and ICTs, gender evaluation and research in ICTs, and training and capacity building (APC, 2014b). Considering that a brief understanding of the APC and the APC’s WRP has been established, this dissertation will now focus its attention on TBTT.

TBTT was introduced after the APC WRP conducted and produced research papers in 2005 on the link between ICT and VAW – a concern that received minimal attention at the time. Upon distributing

and communicating the findings with women's rights and communication rights advocates in diverse spaces, APC WRP discovered what a crucial issue ICT-related VAW was – and arguably still is – and realised that it required additional attention and deeper engagement (TBTT, 2014a). Thus, TBTT was introduced and sets out to:

“Create safe digital spaces that protect everyone's right to participate freely, without harassment or threat to safety; realise women's rights to shape, define, participate, use and share knowledge, information and ICT; address the intersection between women's human rights and the Internet, especially VAW; [and] recognise women's historical and critical participation and contribution to the development of ICT” (TBTT, 2014a).

Inspiration for TBTT's name stemmed from Take Back the Night, “a historic and international feminist march and rally to take direct action against rape and other forms of violence against women” (TBTT, 2014a). According to the Take Back The Night Foundation (2016), the historic marches began in the late 1960s and today, occur in over 30 countries worldwide. The act of “taking back” the night promotes the belief that women have the right to walk around freely (at night) without fear of violence and rape. Although the origins and meaning of TBTT's name are not a focal point of this study, I acknowledge that the name TBTT implies that everyone has access to technology in the first place which is not the case. A report released by We Are Social (2016) shows that out of a global population of 7.395 billion people, 3.42 billion are Internet users (equalling 46% global penetration) and 2.31 billion are active social media users (delivering 31% global penetration). The regional Internet penetration figures illustrate that North America (88%) and West Europe (83%) dominate Internet penetration and Africa (29%) and South Asia (27%) have the lowest Internet penetration figures. According to the same report, there are 24.9 million active Internet users in South Africa, of a population of 54 million (Shezi, 2015). These figures highlight the levels of inequality when it comes to access to technology, in this case, Internet access. Although the name TBTT implies that everyone has access to technology (you cannot take back something you did not initially have), this study recognises that TBTT was initiated by APC (2014a) whose work focuses on improving people's accessibility to the Internet, especially in developing countries. Therefore, TBTT is aware of the inequality surrounding Internet access, even though this is not apparent from the name of the campaign.

In order to answer the research question, the subsequent chapters will discuss the following. Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework of this dissertation in greater detail, Chapter Three outlines the methodological groundwork of this study, Chapter Four provides an analysis of TBTT's tweets, Chapter Five examines TBTT's tweets with images, Chapter Six discusses tweets containing the

search terms @takebackthetech and #takebackthetech, and Chapter Seven concludes the study by summarising my findings of the tactics employed by TBTT to combat online woman abuse.

CHAPTER TWO: FEMINISM, ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for understanding the strategies utilised by TBTT during their 16 Days campaign to surmount online woman abuse. The chapter will begin by providing a discussion on woman abuse or VAW.

2.1. Violence against women

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines VAW to mean

“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (Women’s Legal and Human Rights Bureau [WLHRB], 2014:5).

Consequently, I refer to VAW and woman abuse interchangeably.

The epidemic of woman abuse is a global concern. The World Health Organization states that women are disproportionately the victims of violence worldwide (Women’s Networking Support Programme [WNSP], 2010:1). According to UN Women (2016), one in three women experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Furthermore, in many cultural practices abuse of women is normalised and/or entrenched and as such is deemed acceptable behaviour in several societies. In the same breath, it is taboo and often controversial to discuss (Fascendini & Fialová, 2011:15). Offline woman abuse is a worldwide problem and has stifling effects, can the same be said for online woman abuse and technology-related VAW?

2.2. Online woman abuse and technology-related violence against women

With the advancement of technology, woman abuse has also entered online spaces. “The United Nation estimates that 95% of aggressive behaviour, harassment, abusive language and denigrating images in online spaces are aimed at women and come from partners or former male partners” (WNSP, 2010:1). According to the WLHRB (2014:9), offline VAW and technology-related VAW are similar in terms of origin: “the historically unequal power relations between women and men in public and private life, patriarchy, and men’s desire to control women’s sexuality”. However, the medium and the mode by which the violence is committed – through virtual and digital spaces, cyberspace, ICT – is what makes technology-related VAW distinct from other forms of VAW (WLHRB (2014:9).

Jens (2014) argues that the online structure functions in a similar way to “offline” society. Stereotypes are still perpetuated and subsequently women and men are equally unequal online as offline. As a result of the disintegration of “time and space”, online harassment can become more omnipresent and continuous, as the harasser has the advantage of anonymity and can harass without being physically near the victim (Jens, 2014).

According to Citron (2009:373), the online abuse of women “impedes women’s full participation in online life, often driving them offline, and undermines their autonomy, identity, dignity, and well-being.” Additionally, Citron (2009:373) contends that the online abuse of women is often trivialised and overlooked and given the Internet’s “Wild West” norms of behaviour, some suggest that women who participate in online spaces should develop a tough skin and accept and tolerate this kind of behaviour. The failure to acknowledge harms exclusively affecting women has a significant social meaning – it suggests that abusive behaviour toward women is accepted and should be tolerated (Citron, 2009:373). Along with having a considerable negative impact on its victims, online VAW also has broader consequences. It harms women as a group and society as a whole by embedding gender hierarchy in cyberspace. Disparaging, sexualised comments and rape threats imply men’s dominance and superiority over women and reinforce gendered stereotypes (Citron, 2009:390). Bearing the above discussion in mind, I will now discuss how technology is being used to execute VAW.

2.3. How technology is being used to perpetrate violence against women

The APC WNSP’s *How Technology is Being Used to Perpetrate Violence Against Women – And to Fight it* draws on research conducted by the World Health Organization and the United Nations to provide statistics on VAW in order to establish a contextual foundation for its research (WNSP, 2010:1). It explores how technology is changing abuse by intimate partners. Such abuse involves “the abuse of power in a personal or family relationship, where one person attempts to control and dominate the other through physical, psychological and/or sexual violence or the threat of violence, or by controlling of the other person’s finances, mobility or social life” (WNSP, 2010:1). The study finds that technology is allowing intimate partners to execute their abuse through various channels such as email account control and mobile phone tracking (WNSP, 2010:1).

Additionally, the WNSP’s research explores how technology is changing sexual harassment. The WNSP addresses online harassment and cyberstalking in particular, and provides specific examples of cyberstalking or online harassment. For instance, a woman’s ex-boyfriend impersonated her online, posted an advertisement on Craigslist – an online network, which provides users with a central

database for classified ads and forums from across the world (Business Dictionary, 2015) – saying she was seeking a man to fulfil her violent rape fantasy. As a result of the advertisement, the woman was raped by a stranger who said he was answering her advertisement (WNSP, 2010: 2). The WNSP also examines the elements that make ICTs so convenient for abusers and finds that ICTs have numerous characteristics that make them ideal for committing crime. These characteristics include: action from a distance, ease of production and propagation, and automation (2010:3) – all relevant to Twitter.

The term “Twitter trolls” or simply “trolls” has been coined to identify users who harass, stalk and post negative comments on other users’ profiles. “Internet Trolls are an online subculture who participate in posting upsetting or shocking content, harassing users, and spreading false information for their own enjoyment” (Klempka & Stimson: 2013:2). Harassment perpetrated by trolls can be textual, visual or both. According to Raza (2013), trolls frequently use images and videos against women online because several women who do not get insulted by rape threats and explicit verbal abuse may feel uncomfortable with their pictures dispersed online.

Along with providing useful examples of how technology is being used to perpetrate VAW, the research compiled by the WNSP also suggests possible solutions for the aforementioned problem. According to the WNSP, “women’s rights activists use the Internet, mobile phones and other technologies to strengthen their campaigns and advocacy, expand their networks, prevent violations and support healing of survivors” (2010:3). Additionally, the WNSP proposes that ICTs can also be used for prevention, recognition and redress (2010:3-4). Although the WNSP’s does not specifically tackle how Twitter can be used as a platform to abuse women, it is useful in helping locate and provide a context for this dissertation.

Seeing that this study focuses on online activities, more detail is needed on information and communications technology (ICT) which will be discussed below.

2.4. Information and communications technology (ICT)

Under a determinist view of technology, it could be argued that “the information technology revolution and the introduction of the Internet in the last decade have transformed the life of individuals and groups across the globe” (Khoury-Machool, 2007:17). ICT has not only transformed political and economic systems and social interactions, but also culture. However, the introduction of ICT has not infiltrated the whole world, nor have its effects been entirely transformative. Nonetheless, in certain regions where ICT has been operating, it may be viewed as having had a vital cultural and political-economic impact (Khoury-Machool, 2007:17). According to Khoury-Machool (2007:17),

since the outburst of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, there has been an upsurge in the number of Internet users – especially youth – through connectivity at universities, youth centres, home and school. “Due to the socio-political conditions pertaining to Palestinian youth and students under occupation, the Internet now acts as a new medium between teachers, students and their peers, as well as a tool for intense politicisation and peaceful cyber-resistance in the public sphere” (Khoury-Machool, 2007:17-18). Although examples such as this show that the adoption of ICT has the power to bring about positive change, ICTs also provides an opportunity to perpetuate abuse.

Growing bodies of evidence demonstrate that the proliferation and mounting use of ICT is resulting in an increase in harassment of women online involving the use of ICTs such as computers, the Internet and mobile phones (WLHRB, 2014:4). “In more than 4,000 cases of cyberstalking reported to Halt Online Abuse since 2000, 70% of victims were female” (TBTT, 2014b) hence this dissertation’s focus on women. Furthermore, research conducted by the University of Maryland provided statistical evidence that over a period of two to four weeks¹, “users with female names received, on average, 100 “malicious private messages,” which the study defined as “sexually explicit or threatening language,” whereas users with male names received only 3.7” (Citron, 2009:379).

However, one cannot discount the positive impact that ICTs have had on women’s public participation, expression and empowerment. Over recent years, ICTs have demonstrated

“their potential as tools to bring about substantial changes in modes of citizen participation for political and social reforms, as exhibited by the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement, as well as by online campaigns and petitions supporting various causes with many of them for women. Online social networks may provide a supportive community comprised of others with similar experiences, values and beliefs that may be difficult to establish in a physical space” (WLHRB, 2014:4).

An essay by Newsom and Lengel (2012:31) analysed the “engagement of Arab feminist activists online, most notably during the citizen revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, and, specifically, women’s use of online social networking to aid social change.” Newsom and Lengel (2012:37-38) found that “Arab women’s activism functions as a type of contained empowerment; localized power restricted by social norms yet flourishing in a space customized for and welcoming that power” and that “ultimately, it is important to understand that for many repressed and isolated voices, social media are

¹ For the bots with female names, six bots (i.e., two per channel) were run for two weeks and three bots (i.e., one per channel) were run for four weeks. For the bots with male names, six bots (i.e., two per channel) were run for four weeks and three bots (i.e., one per channel) were run for another four weeks. For the bots with ambiguous names, three bots were run during four weeks (i.e., one per channel).

a primary way that needs and goals can be recognized to gain support from global institutions.” From transforming the socio-political life of Palestinians to providing Arab women with an alternative space to assert their rights and identities, ICTs have afforded humans a vast range of communication capabilities including social network sites.

2.5. Social network sites

According to boyd and Ellison’s (2008:211) definition, SNS are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.” The rise in SNS has attracted the attention of academic and industry researchers who examine these networks “in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as users’ engagement with them” (boyd & Ellison, 2008). boyd (2010:1) further contends that SNS are a genre of networked publics.

Network publics are publics that are reorganised by networked technologies. They are concurrently the space created through network technologies and the imagined collective that develops as an outcome of the intersection of people, technology, and practice. Like other kinds of publics, networked publics allow people to meet for cultural, civic, and social reasons and they help people connect with a world beyond their immediate family and friends (boyd, 2010:1). The ways in which technology constructs networked publics creates noticeable affordances that mould how people engage with these environments. “The properties of bits – as distinct from atoms – introduce new possibilities for interaction. As a result, new dynamics emerge that shape participation” (boyd, 2010:1). In light of the above, the Twitter community that TBTT has developed could be considered to be a networked public.

boyd (2010:4) argues that there are various features and functionalities across different SNS offering diverse public and private communication channels. However, she focuses on four particular features which she proposes play a prominent role in creating SNS as networked publics – profiles, friends lists, public commenting tools, and stream-based updates. Profiles are central to SNS. They are a representation of the individual and also serve as the point of interaction. Due to the “inherent social – and often public or semi-public – nature of profiles, participants actively and consciously craft their profiles to be seen by others” (boyd 2010:4). Another prominent feature of SNS is friends lists. Users “articulate who they wish to connect with and confirm ties to those who wish to connect with them. Most social network sites require connections to be mutually confirmed before being displayed. Each individual’s friends list is visible to anyone who has permission to view that person’s profile” (boyd

2010:4). Public commenting tools are identified as an additional feature of SNS. “Most social network sites provide various tools to support public or semi-public interactions between participants.” (boyd 2010:6). These tools include group features which allow participants to gather around shared interests, commenting features, and implemented features which permit users to broadcast content to friends on these sites (boyd 2010:6). The final fundamental feature boyd identifies is stream-based updates. Stream-based updates include a range of features which allow members to broadcast content to friends on the sites. Facebook does this in the form of “status updates” (boyd 2010:6). Collectively, friends lists, profiles, stream-based updates and various public commenting tools provide a platform for the ways in which SNS can be understood as publics. “In short, social network sites are publics both because of the ways in which they connect people en masse and because of the space they provide for interactions and information. They are networked publics because of the ways in which networked technologies shape and configure them” (boyd 2010:6).

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging site that was founded in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone and Evan Williams (CNBC, 2013). The site permits users to send and receive succinct messages called tweets. Tweets cannot exceed 140 characters, and can include links to images, videos, webpages, blogs and all other online material (Mollett, Moran & Dunleavy, 2011:1). Twitter has a variation of the four features which boyd proposes play a prominent role in creating SNS as networked publics. On Twitter, users are required to create a profile to share content on the platform, users are given the option to follow other users, however, the follower connection does not need to be mutually confirmed (unless the user one wishes to follow has privacy settings), Twitter has tools for public communication such as retweeting, and the stream-based updates are referred to as tweets.

According to Bruns and Burgess (2012:2),

“Twitter is the most prominent example of a recent shift in social media, which has seen the convergence of explicit networking practices (‘friending’, following’, interpersonal communication) with original content (‘broadcasting’ of updates), and large-scale information sharing and propagation. It is through the social network that news and information spreads: Twitter is both a social networking site and an ambient information stream”.

Twitter allows a user to “follow” another user in order to view that person or organisation’s tweets. What makes Twitter different to a platform like Facebook, for instance, is that it allows one to follow another account and have access to that account’s tweets without needing the account in question to follow one back or accept a request to follow them – unless the account has enabled privacy settings, which are not enabled by default. “Twitter’s sole privacy policy is a binary option that either allows

every message a user creates to be publicly available, or allows only a user's followers to see posted messages" (Cranor, Kelley, Meeder & Tam, 2010:1). Once a user follows other users, the followed users' tweets will appear on the follower's timeline in chronological order. In other words, "your home timeline displays a stream of Tweets from accounts you have chosen to follow on Twitter" (Twitter, 2016d). When the tweets from the accounts you have elected to follow appear on your timeline you have the option to "retweet" those tweets by clicking on the retweet button. A retweet (noun) refers to "a tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter" (Twitter, 2015a). Retweet (verb) to retweet, retweeting, retweeted is "the act of forwarding another user's tweet to all of your followers" (Twitter, 2015a). You also have the option of quoting a tweet, which is the same as retweeting, however you have the added option to insert your own content to accompany the original tweet. When quoting another user's tweet, your tweet will appear above the tweet you are quoting and retweeting. Twitter also gives you the option to share a tweet on various other platforms by clicking on the share button. These platforms include email, Facebook, Skype, WhatsApp, Dropbox, and Pinterest. However, if a user has privacy settings on their account, the functions for other users to retweet, quote, and/or share the tweet are disabled. If one follows a user with privacy settings enabled, one can only reply to or "like" that user's tweets. Twitter users have the option of "liking" another user's tweet by clicking on the "like" symbol which was originally a star icon but is now a heart icon. Twitter users also have the option to publicly post direct and indirect tweets. In order to direct a tweet to another user, one has to include the "@" symbol before the user's "handle" or username (e.g. @takebackthetech). "Even though direct updates are used to communicate directly with a specific person, they are public and anyone can see them. Often times two or more users will have conversations by posting updates directed to each other" (Huberman, Romero & Wu, 2008:3). Tweets can include text, location, video, tags, photos, links to URLs and polls. Polls were recently introduced on Twitter and allow users to create their own polls for users to weigh in on or to vote on other users' polls.

TBTT joined Twitter in 2008 and primarily utilises the platform to raise awareness about technology-related VAW. Besides raising awareness, the network finds other benefits to the online social networking platform. According to Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16), Twitter is not just an awareness raising tool but an engagement tool as well. The network has found the platform useful in getting responses to various topics. For instance, asking women for their opinion and thoughts about certain topics, asking them about their experiences surrounding technology-related abuse, whether they have censored themselves online, or whether or not they would report a certain technology-related abuse situation.

In light of the above discussion, one of the major benefits of being active on Twitter is that it provides activists with the possibility to establish counterpublics.

2.6. Counterpublics

Through their use of Twitter, TBTT arguably creates counterpublics – as defined by Fraser (1990) – for victims and/or survivors of technology-related VAW, feminists, and others who identify with their cause. The term subaltern counterpublics was conceptualised by Nancy Fraser as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (1990:67). The formation of subaltern counterpublics provides subordinated social groups support and collective resistance. According to Fraser (1996:68),

“In stratified societies, subaltern counterpublics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides. This dialectic enables subaltern counterpublics partially to offset, although not wholly to eradicate, the unjust participatory privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups in stratified societies”.

In the above statement Fraser proposes that the dual objectives of counterpublics are recognition and redistribution. First, the subordinated elements of a person’s identity – for instance, race, gender, sexual orientation and nationality – are valued as a fundamental organising principle (recognition). Second, counterpublics present a space “from which agitation and resistance against institutional and cultural hegemony is promoted and maintained (redistribution)” (Carducci & Nicolazzo, 2012). Although Twitter can be used to host counterpublics for subordinated social groups, is it globally inclusive enough?

2.7. Twitter and global connectivity

As discussed in Chapter One, a report released by We Are Social (2016) highlights how Internet penetration is biased towards the Global North. When looking at online feminist activist spaces one should bear in mind the relatively low Internet penetration in Africa and South Asia. In light of the above statistics, from a global perspective, online female populations consist mostly of relatively well-to-do and privileged women (Newsom & Lengel, 2012:33).

In relation to social media, the We Are Social report (2016) highlights that globally there are 2.31 billion active social media users. When looking at the highest and lowest social media use figures per region, the total active accounts on the top social network in each region, compared to population are North America (59%), South America (50%), West Europe (48%), East Asia (48%), Africa (11%), South Asia (11%), and Central Asia (6%). From a South African perspective there are 11.8 million active social media accounts (Shezi, 2015). We Are Social (2016) reports that Twitter is the fifth most popular SNS in the world in terms of monthly active user accounts. Twitter is preceded by Facebook (1,550 million users), QZone (653 million users), Tumblr (555 million users) and Instagram (400 million users). Twitter's statistics show that globally there are 302 million monthly active users, that 500 million Tweets are sent per day, that 80% of Twitter active users use the Twitter mobile apps, that 33 languages are supported, and that 77% of accounts are outside the U.S (Twitter, 2015b). According to World Wide Worx (2015) there are 6.6 million Twitter users in South Africa

Besides its global reach, this study focuses on Twitter for various reasons. The research was initially inspired by the abuse of Marion Bartoli on Twitter, as mentioned in Chapter One. Other motivations include the relative accessibility of Twitter data, and its importance as a platform for activists. From a researchers' perspective, content posted to Twitter is more accessible than that posted to other SNS. This accessibility is the result of powerful search features, and an extensive Application Programming Interface (API) which researchers can use to gather data. Furthermore, Twitter's default public settings for posts allow researchers to find information without necessarily having to follow or befriend someone (which other platforms such as Facebook require). In relation to the issue of woman abuse online, Twitter is a highly relevant platform for researchers interested in contemporary "articulation of social issues" (Mautner, 2005:809). This is because the Internet allows users to react immediately to social change and tweets are published in real time. Twitter has thus also become a popular online platform which activists use to challenge the abuse of women. Twitter accounts which aim to raise awareness about and combat online and offline woman abuse include @takebackthetech, @Stop_WomenAbuse, @womensaidorg, @endwomanabuse, and many more (Twitter, 2015c). As discussed above, Twitter has many features which make it a popular SNS, hashtags being one of them.

2.8. Hashtag networks

A key feature for activists who use Twitter is the hashtag which is a word or "tag" prefixed by the symbol "#". Bruns and Burgess (2011:1) describe a hashtag as a "short keyword, prefixed with the hash symbol '#' – as a means of coordinating a distributed discussion between more or less large groups of users, who do not need to be connected through existing 'follower' networks." Hashtags can

emerge organically from within the Twitter community or can be pre-planned offline (Bruns & Burgess, 2011:1). For instance, TBTT decided beforehand that they would use #takebackthetech for their 16 Days campaign (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Hashtags have several benefits. For instance, they allow Twitter users to follow and contribute towards a hashtag conversation. Thus, making it possible for them

“to communicate with a community of interest around the hashtag topic without needing to go through the process of establishing a mutual follower/followee relationship with all or any of the other participants; in fact, it is even possible to follow the stream of messages containing a given hashtag without becoming a registered Twitter user” (Bruns & Burgess, 2011:2).

Several networks like TBTT use hashtags during campaigns to keep track of the discussion, and to gauge the progress and success of their campaign (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). If a hashtag is very popular it could become a trending topic. “A Trend is a topic or hashtag determined algorithmically to be one of the most popular on Twitter at that moment” (Twitter, 2015a). Hashtags can also be used to help create counterpublics and encourage solidarity. Victims and/or survivors of technology-related VAW, feminists, and others who identify with TBTT’s cause can engage with #takebackthetech with the expectation that they will be connecting with like-minded people. However, that is not always the case.

Although hashtags have several benefits, one of the drawbacks is that users, often trolls, who may not agree with what is being discussed can attempt to hijack the hashtag for their own agenda. For instance, in October 2015, Twitter users who did not agree with the discussions surrounding #takebackthetech and #imagineafeministinternet decided to hijack the discussion by tweeting thousands of anti-feminist and misogynistic tweets and memes (APC, 2015b). This incident will be discussed later on in this dissertation. Keeping the above discussion on hashtag networks in mind, this study will now elaborate on online activism.

2.9. Online activism

There are several examples and studies of online activism – also known as cyber activism or Internet activism – such as Jones’ (2013) *Activism or Slacktivism? The Role of Social Media in Effecting Social Change* which examines three high-profile cases of activist groups’ online campaigns. Namely, the Iranian “Green” Revolution of 2009, Kony 2012, and Occupy Sandy. Alexander and Aouragh’s (2011) *The Egyptian Experience: Sense and Nonsense of the Internet Revolution* “is a contribution to the debate about the role of the Internet in mobilizations for political and social change, drawing on

interviews and observations during the Egyptian revolution”. Corresponding with the Egyptian revolution, Newsom and Lengel’s (2012) *Arab Women, Social Media, and the Arab Spring: Applying the framework of digital reflexivity to analyze gender and online activism* essay “analyzes the engagement of Arab feminist activists online, most notably during the citizen revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, and, specifically, women’s use of online social networking to aid social change”. The above are only a few examples of studies conducted on online activism but they highlight how it has become a recognised field of study. Newsom and Lengel (2013:32) propose that online activism varies from conventional activism in numerous vital ways.

“Online activism affords opportunities for issue-focused efforts that allow activists to identify with and support specific efforts, for promotion of goals and activities that can reach further and more quickly than is the case with traditional activism, potentially reaching beyond its contained status. In addition, online activism occurs in a liminal “third space”, a place where traditional rules governing society can be set aside” (Newsome & Lengel, 2013:32).

This study supports Newsom and Lengel’s (2013:33) argument that online activism offers the possibility to empower marginalised voices, the opportunity for cross-boundary dialogue, and affords a stimulus for social change. Newsom and Lengel argue that online feminist activist spaces endeavour to present the possibility for enacting the notions of gendered dialogue. Thus, online feminist activist spaces are an outstanding basis to develop a discussion of gendered identity and dialogue online. However, figures from We Are Social (2016), discussed in Chapter One, show that Internet penetration is dominated by the global north. Therefore, supporting the notion that online women populations consists mostly of privileged women (Newsom & Lengel, 2013:33).

I understand activists to be people and organisations who work to foster social or political changes and the Internet is one of several channels for activists’ work (Jones, 2013:1). Vegh (2003:71) defines online activism as a politically driven movement relying on the Internet and proposes that activists are utilising the advantage of the technologies and techniques presented by the Internet to achieve their traditional goals. Online activists’ strategies are either Internet-enhanced or Internet-based. For Internet-enhanced tactics, the Internet is utilised to augment traditional advocacy techniques. For instance, as a supplementary communication channel, by raising awareness beyond the scope possible before the Internet, or by organising action more efficiently. For Internet-based strategies, the Internet is used for activities that are exclusively possible online. These include virtual sit-ins or hacking into websites (Vegh, 2003:71-72).

Online activism can fall into three general categories: awareness/advocacy, organisation/mobilisation, and action/reaction. According to Vegh (2003:73), the fundamental uses of the Internet in online advocacy (awareness/advocacy) centre on executing action and organising the movement. The actors can either be members of a stringently defined group (for instance an NGO), a lobbying body, a civic advocacy group, or a freely defined group. When coordinating action, the Internet is valuable as it empowers activist groups and participants to create a time- and cost-efficient communication channel, and it allows for communication between countless people globally and can be accessed anywhere anytime (Vegh, 2003:74). Lobbying is identified by Vegh (2013:74) as a more traditional type of advocacy that has three different types characterised by the target of the action. The first and most traditional type of lobbying is targeted at one's own government's legislative body, the second focuses on influencing universal opinion, and the third targets the governments of oppressive regimes (Vegh, 2003:74). Secondly, Vegh (2003: 74-75) contends that the Internet is utilised for mobilisation (organisation/mobilisation) in three dissimilar ways. Firstly, it can be employed to call for offline action, secondly, it can be utilised to call for an action that typically occurs offline but can be accomplished more efficiently online, and thirdly, it can be used to call for an online action that can only be feasibly executed online. According to Vegh (2003:75), "the most successful online advocacy campaigns seem to be the ones that combine the different types of lobbying and mobilization". The final category (action/reaction) comprises online attacks perpetrated by "hackers". Vegh argues that there is a problem with the popular understanding of this category which Vegh describes as the more proactive and aggressive utilisation of the Internet to achieve a goal that can be simultaneously financially and politically motivated. TBTT utilised Internet-enhanced and Internet-based strategies during its 16 Days campaign. They used Twitter as an additional communication channel, to raise awareness and to coordinate action. They also used Twitter to coordinate and implement activities that can only be achieved online such as encouraging users to participate in tweet chats (Vegh, 2003:71-72). "A Twitter Chat or Tweet Chat is using Twitter to talk about a common interest with others during a preset time. It's like an online chatroom where you add to the discussion by tweeting" (Twubs, 2015).

At the other end of the spectrum of online activism is slacktivism. Slacktivism is defined as "actions performed via the Internet in support of a political or social cause but regarded as requiring little time or involvement, e.g. signing an online petition or joining a campaign group on a social media website" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). It can also be described as the substitution of effectual real-world activism with ineffectual online activism (Christensen, 2011). Users of this term dispute the potential of online activism to bring about social and political change. According to Breuer and Farooq (2012:2), advocates of online activism insist on its positive contribution to participatory democracy while critics dismiss it as a "slacktivist" activity – a tactic of lazy or "slack" online activist – that has

little societal benefit. TBTT acknowledges that online campaigns run the risk of encouraging passive support or slacktivism. Therefore, the network believes it is crucial to incorporate offline activism into their online work and not to separate the two (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Essentially, TBTT wants to avoid people talking and behaving one way about the issue of technology-related VAW online and not be consistent about the issue in their offline lives. Regarding TBTT's Twitter strategies, the network encourages people to do more than just retweet. They acknowledge that amplifying messages in this way helps to raise awareness but they are also aware that a retweet alone is a very limited action.

In an interview with me, Mitchell² (a TBTT activist) stated that slacktivism can be a problem but all online activism does not have to be (personal interview, 2015 October 16). Mitchell contends that social media campaigns can be and have been truly effective. Mitchell has seen numerous women say that they learned about feminism on Twitter and became feminists because of what they discovered on Twitter, which to Mitchell is an amazing thing. What such women were seeing about feminism offline was not appealing to them but when they saw people talking about feminism on Twitter they were able to embrace that as they shared similar sentiments and could relate to their perspective. Mitchell suggests that conversations are had through social media and social media campaigns that would not necessarily happen any other way because sometimes people feel like they have a little anonymity so they are willing to say things that they might not be willing to say in a room full of people. However, Mitchell points out that at the other end of the scale, some people do not feel safe saying things online so it works both ways (personal interview, 2015 October 16).

For example, Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) recounted the #ShoutYourAbortion, campaign as an illustration of how effective social media campaigning can be. The campaign was launched in September 2015 by American activists Lindy West, Amelia Bonow, and Kimberly Morrison, in response to the US House of Representatives efforts to defund Planned Parenthood – a non-profit that provides a broad range of healthcare services, including pelvic exams, STI screenings, contraception and abortion (West, 2015).

“#ShoutYourAbortion is working to broaden existing discourse on abortion by creating platforms where discussing abortion is as normal as the procedure itself. By creating a digital space for abortion narratives to exist and facilitating events that encourage authentic dialogue and community, #ShoutYourAbortion is transforming the conversation by placing real experiences and voices at the center of the conversation” (Shout Your Abortion, 2015).

² Not their real name. Mitchell was used as a pseudonym to protect the interviewee's identity for ethical reasons

Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) recounted further that numerous people who had never shared their abortion stories before, offline or online, were doing so during the #ShoutYourAbortion campaign. Thus, this dissertation proposes that online activism and online campaigns have the potential to provide people with a platform to participate in, show their support for and add their voices to a cause that they believe in. Some campaigners may prefer to participate in online campaigns instead of offline ones, especially if the matter they are showing support for is considered to be a sensitive one. Mitchell suggests that there is a sense of solidarity that comes through with social media campaigns. According to Mitchell, “one witnesses all these other people saying this happened to me, here is how I feel about it, and this is how I dealt with it. One can feel empowered to debate, engage and take action” (personal interview, 2015 October 16). Further benefits of online activism are that it happens in real time, it is not limited by geographical barriers and it connects people all over the world. TBTT takes advantage of the aforementioned benefits of online activism by ensuring that they share local campaigning that is transpiring in different countries with their Twitter connections and other online networks. This ensures that when people join TBTT’s campaigns they feel a part of a much bigger cause – they feel connected globally. Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) proposes that this helps to keep campaigners motivated, it gives them ideas, and it provides them with an opportunity to connect with each other and grow their network which is very powerful.

Although Twitter campaigns have several benefits they do have their shortfalls. One of the biggest challenges of a Twitter campaign, as highlighted by TBTT’s Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) is the difficulty of measuring the success of a Twitter campaign. TBTT does both online and offline campaigning however, they find it a lot easier to measure the success of an offline campaign. As Mitchell explains:

“we can get the good anecdote stories about what has happened in workshops, or marches or presentations and we can get feedback from the people who participated, do surveys, we can know exactly what actions these people took and it is a lot harder when we are campaigning online because there is a lot more going on than we can keep track of. There are certainly people who are participating in the campaign online that we never see. Perhaps they have shared our information but they are not using the hashtag or are not communicating with us directly. So, we have always imagined that the campaign is bigger than it is because we simply cannot follow that.”

Given this understanding of online activism it is important to discuss Twitter and activism.

2.10. Twitter and activism

Similar to TBTT, numerous organisations and individuals have utilised Twitter to help raise awareness about campaigns, whether they be socio-political, environmental, or other. Recent campaigns that have gained significant following, support and traction on Twitter, and other online and offline platforms in South Africa and globally, include #BringBackOurGirls – a campaign that saw the world uniting in outrage over the abduction of 276 girls in Chibok, Nigeria by Boko Haram and raising awareness for their safe return (The Guardian, 2015), #SaveTheRhino – a global campaign that “works to conserve viable populations of critically endangered rhinos in Africa and Asia” (Save The Rhino, 2009), #BlackLivesMatter – “a call to action and a response to the virulent anti-Black racism that permeates our society. Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes” (Black Lives Matter, n.d), and #FeesMustFall – a South African protest movement led by students in response to an increase in university fees (eNCA, 2015). Although Twitter campaigns can help raise awareness and encourage dialogue, how does one measure their success? Does the number of followers, retweets or whether or not the topic is trending determine the campaign’s effectiveness? Is it tangible, on the ground results, or a combination of both?

Platforms such as Twitter allow the public to voice their opinions and provides them with the power to bring about positive change. However, they also provide people with a tool to abuse and bully one another. Considering that women are often the victims of online abuse it is important to discuss feminism and the role it can play in combating online VAW.

2.11. The F-word: Feminism

Given this dissertation’s topic, it was appropriate to adopt feminism as a perspective. Feminism has a variety of definitions and strands which emanate from it. For instance, multiracial feminist theories (Harnois, 2005:809), liberal, radical, Marxist, cultural, eco-feminism, and many more (University of Alabama in Huntsville, n.d). At its core, feminism contends that there is inequality between sexes. Gallagher (n.d:11) advocates that the central concerns at the core of feminist media scholarship are: power, rights, value and representation.

Although this is an online study, I was based in South Africa at the time of this research. Thus I felt it was necessary to include a discussion of African feminism to position myself. African feminism is a contested term. According to Amina Mama, a Nigerian writer, academic and feminist, there are three schools of thought that challenge the notion of feminism in Africa (Essof, 2001:124). First, Mama

proposes that it is argued by some that “feminism is not African and thus has no relevance to Africa’s political, social and economic realities” (Essof, 2001: 124). Instead, feminism is viewed as an invention of the West that possesses no real value or meaning for African women. The second school of thought, illustrated by Mama, “acknowledges the importance of feminism as an ideology that recognises that women’s inequality has to be overcome, but suggests the need to name it differently” (Essof, 2001:124). Mama argues the third school of thought by raising a challenge: “to retain the concept of feminism and make it our own by filling the name with meaning” (Essof, 2001:124). This challenge still remains and a universal definition of African feminism may not exist. Similarly, Gaidzanwa argues that the concept of feminism is complex, that various feminist strands exist within and outside Africa today and that it is not possible to refer to a single “African feminism” (2010:7).

Race is vital in an African feminist approach. Mary Hames succinctly provides some insight, “there is no shared oppression merely on the basis of gender. Therefore, avoiding the race classification inscribed on us in fact underscores the negation of our differential experiences” (2010:54). I recognise the importance of intersectionality – “the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations—as itself a central category of analysis” (McCall, 2005:1771). By adopting intersectionality as a lens, this dissertation acknowledges that there are intragroup differences such as race and class (Crenshaw, 1991:1242). Additionally, I recognise that the term “women” is not a homogenous one (Frank, 2004:274).

I acknowledge that numerous definitions of feminism exist however, for the purposes of this dissertation Barbara Smith’s definition of feminism will be utilised as this is the definition that I identify with most as a (South) African feminist. According to Smith, feminism is “the political theory and practice that seeks to free women of all colours, classes, abilities, sexual orientations and ages from all forms of oppression. Feminism is political, seeking to influence, shape and exercise a degree of power over events in order to further the interests of different types of women” (Gaidzanwa, 2010:7).

Although this dissertation will not enter an in-depth discussion on sex and gender, a brief definition will be provided to clarify how I understand the difference between sex and gender. According to Xue (2008:54),

“gender is a complex issue, constituents of which encompass styles of dressing, patterns of moving as well as ways of talking rather than just being limited to biological sex. Over the years, the perception of the issue ‘gender’ has been changing and developing from essentialism to social constructionism. Essentialism suggests that gender is a biological sex,

by contrast, social constructionism suggests that gender is constructed within a social and cultural discourse”.

I have adopted the latter definition of gender suggested by social constructionism. I believe that unlike sex – which is biologically assigned – gender is learnt, arguably taught (Butler, 2004:1).

This research recognises as significant “the gains and contributions that feminist researchers and activists have made toward overcoming widespread gender stereotypes and improving women’s rights and equality across the globe” (Hesse-Biber, 2014:2). However, it is vital to note that a great deal more needs to be achieved thus, toward this end, feminist research plays a critical part (Hesse-Biber, 2014:2). This study also recognises that “within “feminisms” there is no single or monolithic method, methodology, or theoretical base of feminist scholarship; in fact, there are competing theoretical foundations and varied methodologies” (Reid, 2004:4).

In an attempt to focus this research further, this dissertation applied feminist media research theories.

“Feminist media research raises and provides answers to questions about patterns of gender within mediated texts. The patterns can be simple or complex, concrete or more abstract; but whatever their form, feminist media research provides a method of delimiting, analysing, and explaining the power and significance of these patterns” (Cuklanz & McIntosh, 2014:265).

Given the nature and facets of technology-related VAW, I argue that a feminist intervention is required to end woman abuse in online spaces (WLHRB, 2014:11). Seeing that representation is one of the principal concerns at the core of feminist media scholarship it will be expanded on below.

2.12. Women and representation

Gender, Race, and Media Representation by Dwight E Brooks and Lisa P Hébert played a formative role in the conceptualisation of this research. Brooks and Hébert recognise that gender and race are social constructions and postulate that the media has a significant impact on our understandings of these social constructions. In this article Brooks and Hébert explore the representation of Asian, Latina and Native American women as well as the media representations of racialised masculinities. However, the focal point of this article is the media representation of black women. Brooks and Hébert’s argue that “media images of black women result from dominant racial, gender, and class ideologies” (2006:299) and that stereotypes of black women represented in the media disfigure the way black women view themselves, each other and the way they are viewed by others (Brooks & Hébert, 2006:299). I found Brooks and Hébert’s article beneficial as it provided insights into how the

media represents certain kinds of women. Although this article focuses mainly on the representation of black women in television, these insights are helpful to my study because the way women are represented in the media often manifests itself in everyday life and human interaction, online and offline. Over the years, feminist scholars have contended that the intensely entrenched nature of gender-based judgements and assumptions imbue the media, both old and new forms, as well as economic, social and political institutions. This dissertation echoes the view of Gallagher who challenges the assumption that “media and other information systems exist beyond the realm and beyond the influence of gender relations” (WLHRB, 2014:8).

Brooks and Hébert’s article highlights the role agenda-setters have on how women are perceived. Agenda-setting is “a theory about the transfer of salience from the mass media’s pictures of the world to those in our heads” (McCombs & Ghanem, 2008:67). In other words, “the media’s agenda sets the public’s agenda” (McCombs & Ghanem, 2008:67). When looking at agenda-setting it is beneficial to look at framing as well. “To frame a communicating text or message is to promote certain facets of a “perceived reality” and make them more salient in such a way that endorses a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or a treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993:51). Essentially, framing theory proposes how something is shown to the audience (known as “the frame”) “influences the choices people make about how to process that information” (Davie, n.d). By taking on the role of agenda-setters and embracing framing theory, TBTT can portray women as multidimensional beings and not minimise them to stereotypes such as sexual objects, for example. Nonetheless, by making their voices heard in online publics, such activist women often find themselves the target of online hate speech.

2.13. Hate speech

According to Daniele (2013), hate speech is “speech or expression which is capable of instilling or inciting hatred of, or prejudice towards, a person or group of people on a specified ground including race, nationality, ethnicity, country of origin, ethno-religious identity, religion, sexuality, gender identity or gender”. Daniele’s *Regulation of the Media: Hate Speech Essay* explores Australia’s hate speech laws by analysing the country’s legal and political landscape. Although Daniele’s research focuses on the Australian context, the findings are beneficial towards building a foundation for this research. Other sources that this dissertation has drawn from to establish a better understanding of hate speech include *Speaking Back: The free speech versus hate speech debate* (Gelber, 2002) and *Hate speech: the history of an American controversy* (Walker, 1994).

Any person, regardless of age, gender, race or sexual orientation can fall victim to hate speech. Nonetheless, activists point out that, in online spaces, women are predominantly the victimised group. According to TBTT, women journalists and bloggers receive a disproportionate cut of hateful comments and threats irrespective of what they are writing about. “Women who write about anything to do with women or tackle seemingly male-dominated subjects, such as gaming or politics, receive an even bigger share” (TBTT, 2015a). #GamerGate, an online movement, is a prime example. Initiated in 2014, the #GamerGate campaign claimed it was targeting corruption in gaming journalism and challenging ethics in the gaming industry. However, the campaign had its roots in hate speech towards women who make and talk about video games and resulted in widespread arguments about gender in gaming. The online movement took a pivotal turn when feminist commentator Anita Sarkeesian was forced to cancel a speech at a college after receiving an anonymous threat on her life (Dockterman, 2014). TBTT argues that women online are most attacked on the basis of their sexuality and physical appearance and not on the merit of their ideas. A study conducted by non-governmental organisations Internet Democracy Project and Point of View found that women who voice their opinions online face uncompromising adverse reactions and “are subjected to sexist statements that range from harassment to rape and even death threats” (Boga, 2013).

Because this study focuses on ICT-related VAW, it is important to discuss the challenges this form of woman abuse presents.

2.14. The challenges of ICT-related VAW

Arguably, certain features distinct to ICTs, such as borderlessness, intractability, the nature of virtual and digital spaces, as well as the anonymity offered by digital personhood have comprehensively transformed the manner by which VAW is being perpetrated. These features have completely altered the effects of VAW, its consequences and its consequent prosecution or non-prosecution (WLHRB, 2014:9). Digital and virtual spaces offer anonymity which has made ICT-related VAW a difficult terrain to navigate. Perpetrators can adopt a fictitious identity, making it challenging to identify them and prosecute them. The anonymity offered by virtual and digital spaces is one of the fundamental distinctions between ICT-related VAW and offline VAW (WLHRB, 2014:10).

A fundamental issue within the context of ICT is the notion of disembodiment or the absence of physicality. How does one go about establishing what is violated in online spaces when there is no physical body to speak of? According to the WLHRB (2014:11) “the absence of physicality raises questions on what constitutes bodily integrity: a woman’s fundamental rights to control her body, identity and sexuality, including the freedom to decide on her body and on matters related to her

sexuality”. Feminist researchers contend that when investigating how sexual harassment is committed online, the physical body is replaced by language. It is also through language – hate speech, harassment, flaming – that the virtual body is or may be diminished (WLHRB, 2014:11).

This dissertation supports the WLHRB’s (2014:17) view that ICT-related VAW violates an array of women’s rights – including a woman’s right to bodily integrity – it impacts women’s freedom to express themselves, their freedom to navigate freely online and enjoy online communities, and their access to information. It has been established that ICT-related VAW presents challenges that online VAW does not but despite these challenges, is it possible for women to “take back the tech”?

2.15. How to “take back the tech”

The digital and online space is a site of power. Structures and mechanisms of power and patriarchy are entrenched, embroiled and strongly connected in all spaces of society and all its institutions. Therefore, a feminist intervention is required to end VAW in such online spaces (WLHRB, 2014:11). I propose that online VAW is a continuation of offline VAW. To elaborate on this, gender power relations already existing in society are being reproduced online. Therefore, the fundamental core of VAW, that of structural inequality between men and women in society, is the same source that informs the VAW committed online (WLHRB, 2014:12).

The WLHRB (2014:12) argues that gender power relations can be illustrated by instances such as intimate pictures or videos of women being posted online by discontented former partners, a woman getting raped by a stranger due to a fake advertisement, or the circulation of rape through social media. The act of sharing images of sexual assaults through social media or other online platforms is a way of asserting power and dominance. It is a way to hurt women repeatedly. The uniqueness of ICT-related VAW – the way in which ICT transcends time and space, the numerous platforms provided by it for gathering and distributing information – raises questions on what constitutes harm in online spaces, its severity and ferociousness (2014:12).

According to Raza (2013), some of the non-legal strategies that women employ to tackle online abuse include “ignoring the abuse, moderating comments, blocking abusers, reporting abusers, naming and shaming, self-censorship and taking the trolls head-on.” Other non-legal remedies comprise women curtailing their online activities, assuming gender-neutral pseudonyms, and/or going offline completely, even if it costs them work opportunities (Citron, 2009:375). A study conducted by Kovacs, Padte and SV (2013) found that another solution women utilise is online support networks. “Support was considered crucial, but was usually drawn from an online community and took the form

of public tweets, private messages and sometimes even phone calls, when friendships move to offline lives as well” (Raza, 2013). The abovementioned study revealed that non-legal remedies were preferred over legal ones for reasons such as delayed justice, victimisation and anonymity of abuser (Raza, 2013).

I propose that VAW perpetuated through ICT requires an empowerment approach to combat it. Generalisations that all women are passive victims must be avoided and instead, I support the notion that different situations of women in different contexts should be explored as well as how these women exercise and negotiate their agency in these contexts (WLHRB, 2014:4). I acknowledge that “women react, women respond and women can choose to respond by empowering themselves” (WLHRB, 2014:4). Therefore, this research posits that it is against this backdrop that “women’s experiences in accessing justice for violations perpetrated through the use of ICTs need to be addressed” (WLHRB, 2014:5).

Combating technology-related VAW is not an easy feat. WLHRB (2014:4) argues that there is a major lack of “corresponding recognition of ICT-related forms of violence against women by states, intergovernmental institutions and other actors responsible for ending violence against women.” The APC has expressed that “ICT-related violence against women is not prioritised in prevention and response strategies, budgeting and evidence-based policy making, and women who experience these violations have little or no redress” (WLHRB, 2014:4). Technology-related VAW needs to be better recognised by states, intergovernmental institutions and other stakeholders responsible for ending VAW. In order to take back the tech, gender justice, online and offline, relies on widespread “social transformation, in which women’s rights – and women’s right to communicate – are respected and implemented” (Gallagher, n.d:11). Furthermore, Citron (2009:277) proposes that “viewing cyber harassment as gender discrimination could become part of our cultural understandings and practices. As with workplace sexual harassment and domestic violence, changing the norms of acceptable conduct may be the most potent force in regulating behavior in cyberspace.” This study has discussed how women can “take back the tech” using non-legal remedies and now attention will be paid to the legal ways to “take back the tech”.

2.16. Legal ways to “take back the tech”

According to Citron (2009), the law has a vital role to play in halting the online abuse of women. “It can deter online harassment’s harms by raising the costs of noncompliance beyond its expected benefits. Law can also remedy such harm with monetary damages, injunctions, and criminal convictions” (Citron, 2009:377). Furthermore, Citron (2009:377) proposes that “the application of a

cyber civil rights legal agenda would reveal online harassment for what it truly is – harmful gender discrimination. It would recognize the distinct suffering of women, suffering that men ordinarily do not experience or appreciate as harmful.” In light of the aforementioned, I question the availability of legal remedies for ICT-related VAW. ICT-related VAW is very distinct in its nature, therefore calling into question the adequacy of current laws and of legal systems to render justice for such cases (WLHRB, 2014:13). From a global perspective, access to justice is an indispensable right guaranteed under Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law” (WLHRB, 2014:13). Additionally, other international human rights instruments that guarantee the right to access justice include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (WLHRB, 2014:13).

“Particularly for women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), together with its Optional Protocol and General Recommendations 19 and 25, assures the right to access to justice. CEDAW mandates states parties to condemn all forms of discrimination against women and to this end to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. (WLHRB, 2014:13).

This dissertation acknowledges that SNS like Twitter are not bound by geographical barriers. For instance, a woman in India could be harassed by a perpetrator in Russia and this makes legal redress unlikely. The abovementioned is supported by an article by Kathambi Kinoti, *ICTs and Violence Against Women*, which proposes that it is difficult to prosecute technology-related VAW because of the borderlessness of the Internet (WLHRB, 2014:8).

Although ICT-related VAW may be similar to other forms of VAW, “the medium, mode and place of its commission make it a distinct phenomenon, and this has implications for women’s access to justice” (WLHRB, 2014:15). Survivors/victims of technology-related VAW frequently face difficulty when seeking justice and claiming their rights mainly because law enforcement bodies are often unsure of what laws to apply in these cases. Certain laws such as anti-VAW laws, hate speech laws, cyber crime bills and laws on privacy rights may be adaptable enough to apply to cases of ICT-related VAW, however, the applicability of these laws to these cases remains uncertain. The abovementioned laws present possibilities as well as limitations in providing redress for victims/survivors of ICT-related VAW (WLHRB, 2014:15). Thus given that legal redress is challenging, online campaigners such as APC’s TBTT take on even greater significance.

2.17. Take Back The Tech!’s 16 Days of Activism Twitter Campaign

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (also known as 16 Days of Activism or 16 Days) is a worldwide campaign that aims to “galvanize action to end violence against women and girls around the world” (UN Women, 2015a). The campaign runs annually from 25 November, International Day of No Violence against Women, to 10 December, International Human Rights Day. 16 Days of Activism “originated from the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute coordinated by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership in 1991” (UN Women, 2015a). Different organisations, governments, NGOs and individuals around the world commemorate 16 Days of Activism by raising awareness on various platforms, creating their own local or regional campaigns, hosting events, influencing behaviour change and much more (Gender Links, 2015).

Every year, TBTT chooses their own theme for 16 Days because they require a theme that is related to technology. In 2013 their theme was privacy and in 2014 it was freedom of expression. In 2015 they wanted to get back to privileging women’s narratives, encourage women to share counter-narratives and to share their voices. According to Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16), in the past year or so online VAW has been picked up and talked about by the media, decision-makers, and the private sector, which is great and is what TBTT have been partly aiming for. However, individual women’s voices get lost when all these big players are talking about it. Therefore, in 2015, TBTT wanted to get back to individual women’s stories and the importance of addressing women directly, and asking women what they want when making decisions about these different online platforms. Additionally, for the 2015 campaign TBTT worked with women’s rights organisations and activists on decision-making around Internet governance. In light of the above, TBTT’s theme for 16 Days of Activism was “Strengthen solidarity: Share your strategies for countering violence against women” (TBTT, 2015b).

Through the campaign, TBTT acknowledged that technology-related VAW and girls has finally reached the mainstream, that “media outlets are writing about it, state actors are debating it and Internet platforms are exploring ways to address it” (TBTT, 2015b). Although this progress is valuable and illustrates that technology-related VAW and girls is finally being taken seriously, TBTT argues that the most vital conversations happen “between women who engage with the Internet and those who have faced such violence. The most valuable insights and ideas come from you” (TBTT, 2015b). Through the campaign, TBTT contended that although technology-related VAW is gaining global attention, it remains minimised and misunderstood. TBTT argue that conversations frequently concentrate on hate speech and harassment instead of women’s agency, autonomy and safety. TBTT has witnessed developers design safety apps without seeking advice from women who have experienced online violence or those who work with them. TBTT has also seen solutions that focus on

issues specific to one region of the world, rebuffing the diversity of women's experiences (TBTT, 2015b). TBTT also proposes that there are a number of stories and strategies, from women and girls, which could have a significant effect on policies and norms, however, these stories are often unheard. Thus, TBTT's 16 Days of Activism campaign aimed to

“amplify the voices of women and girls who live in contexts deprioritised by social media platforms, who identify as queer and transgender, who don't fit the media's picture of the “ideal victim.” We want women and girls shaping the conversation for each other and for decision-makers” (TBTT, 2015b).

TBTT had four fundamental calls to action during the 16 Days of Activism Campaign: share stories, organise offline, transform tools, and chart the way forward.

2.17.1. Share stories

TBTT collected and shared stories of strategies for countering VAW. These stories were submitted by participants from all over the world including Kenya, Philippines, Denmark and India. The stories were presented in different formats including videos, poems, digital comics, blog posts, cartoons and more. Additionally, they were expressed in various languages including Spanish, English, and French. TBTT posted the stories on their website and encouraged online users to share them. Along with sharing the stories that TBTT collected, they also encouraged users to share their own individual stories. Users were encouraged to tweet @takebackthetech or to submit their story anonymously on TBTT's website. This particular call to action came with a note of caution, “keep in mind that people who do not support survivors may be watching our Twitter handle and hashtags” (TBTT, 2015b). In light of the abovementioned, TBTT provided strategies for knowing what to expect, how to respond, and how users and participants can stay safe.

During the campaign, TBTT endeavoured to share stories that emphasised the steps women took in responding to technology-related violence. According to Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) this could be a wide range of things: reporting the situation to authorities and platforms, taking digital security precautions, locking things down, being more private, self-care activities – reaching out to your support system, getting emotional support, and taking care of your mental and emotional health, and getting involved in advocacy – talking about your experience in public, sharing that information with other people, and getting involved in your community. When TBTT states that they are sharing survivor strategies and stories they do not just mean “here is how these survivors and

victims tried to get justice,” or “here is how they tried to keep themselves safer,” they also mean “here is how they countered violence” (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16).

According to Mitchell, (personal interview, 2015) a prime example of a survivor who took back the tech is Emma Holten from Denmark, whose story is included in TBTT’s 2015 campaign. In 2011, Holten was a victim of revenge porn which is defined as “the sharing of private, sexual materials, either photos or videos, of another person without their consent and with the purpose of causing embarrassment or distress” (UK Government, 2015). I acknowledge that TBTT finds the term revenge porn problematic and prefers to identify revenge porn as sexualised blackmail (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). After Holten’s nude images were leaked online, her response was to do a nude photo shoot capturing her doing mundane, everyday things (such as reading) so she could take ownership of her body again. This was her way of saying, this is my body, I am totally comfortable with it and you cannot take that away from me (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). According to Mitchell, people found Holten’s response controversial but it was a very unique strategy to take, it was very empowering for her. She no longer had to be controlled by those leaked images being out there without her consent because she countered by creating her own images. Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) argues that it is a powerful response and a great example of what TBTT is talking about when they say they want to emphasise women’s strategies of how they are taking back the tech. Holten’s story was included in TBTT’s campaign and will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

Along with encouraging participants to share stories, TBTT also urged them to organise offline.

2.17.2. Organise offline

In order to illicit further stories of women’s strategies to counter online harassment, TBTT asked “what does it mean to create safe spaces to discuss strategies for a broader space that is unsafe and insecure?” (TBTT, 2015b). The network encouraged participants to arrange meetings in their communities to discuss the dynamics of technology-related violence and get strategising. Additionally, participants were encouraged to inform TBTT about their actions via email and/or Twitter. Although TBTT’s 16 Days campaign is hosted online, the network believes it is crucial to continue campaigning offline, to work on the ground and not have people transfer their entire activism and advocacy online (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). TBTT views the online and offline spaces as equivalent, therefore, they encourage people to embrace the two spaces. For instance, TBTT encourages campaigners to tweet pictures of work that is happening on the ground and to share key points that were learnt at an event. Sometimes videos are made on the ground and

TBTT encourages people to share those online as well. The network believes that it is vital for people to see what is happening in offline spaces and sharing content online is an easy way to achieve that. They also support and emphasise local campaigning and if local campaigning is going on as part of a global campaign then they want people to see those local campaigns and get ideas from them and be inspired by them (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Sometimes at offline events TBTT incorporates online work. For example, one of their partners in the Philippines hosted an event in 2014 with forty young people where they were teaching them about the online abuse of women. During the session, the participants were encouraged to go online and “live-tweet” while they were there (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Live-tweeting is the act of posting comments about an event on Twitter while the event is taking place (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a).

Together with organising offline, partakers were also given the option to participate in the campaign by rating different safety apps.

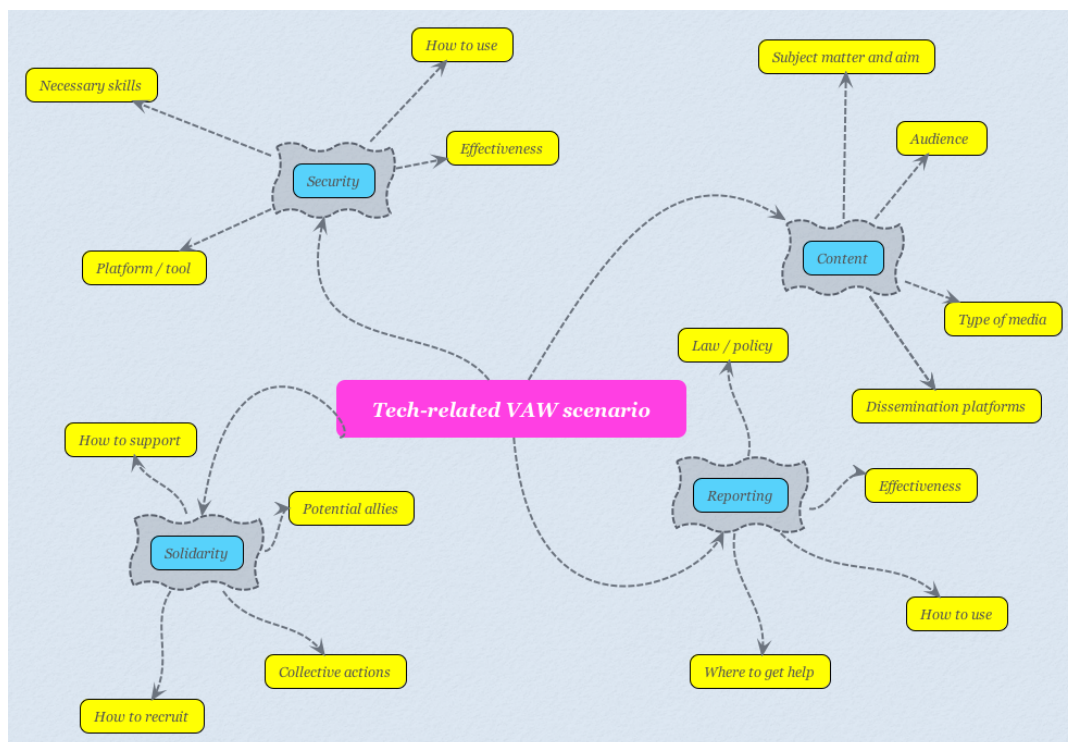
2.17.3. Transform tools

Throughout the campaign, TBTT encouraged partakers to share their opinions with them. In particular, TBTT urged participants to rate various safety apps by answering questions on TBTT’s website. TBTT provided a list of different safety apps and tools that were hyperlinked thus making it easy for participants to be directed to the app’s website. Once partakers answered their questions, they were invited to contribute their insights and feedback via Twitter or email (TBTT, 2015c). Some of the questions included, “Does the app ask you to keep GPS and location settings turned on at all times?” “Does the app make you feel empowered to do something about violence against women?” and “Is there a risk that information you input could get into the hands of an abuser/harasser?” (TBTT, 2015c). This research proposes that the questionnaire was beneficial for both the participants and the network. Participants benefited as answering the questions helped them discover which apps they believe best respond to women’s real concerns and thus helped determine which safety app is the right one for them. TBTT benefited by possibly receiving valuable feedback from participants which they could use to improve their own safety tools and feedback to other safety app developers.

For those participants who wished to get involved in the campaign in an alternative way, they also had the option of creating a digital safety roadmap.

2.17.4. Chart the way forward

In an attempt to encourage more women to participate in the campaign, TBTT encouraged partakers to make their own digital safety roadmaps on TBTT’s website by downloading a template provided by the network. TBTT supplied a context of what a digital safety roadmap is by providing a hyperlink to roadmaps that they had created in the past. The purpose of creating the roadmap was to “address experiences, strategies and resources specific to your community” (TBTT, 2015b). Participants were encouraged to share their maps by email or Twitter. I understand these maps to be digital or hardcopy visual representations, created by participants, which provide information and resources on digital safety to benefit members of their communities. For example, if you are a teacher you could plan a lesson on online safety and use the safety map as an activity during the lesson. You could either create a map with the whole class or you could task learners with creating their maps individually or in groups. Depending on what is discussed in the lesson, the map could include things like not meeting up with people you have only met online without informing your parent or guardian. Below is a template of the map.



Under the four different calls to action, TBTT repeatedly encouraged participants to engage with the network on Twitter by tweeting @takebackthetech. Whether by submitting a story, sharing offline community action, providing feedback on safety apps or sharing digital safety roadmaps. This is an effective method of network-building and monitoring the success of the campaign as TBTT could

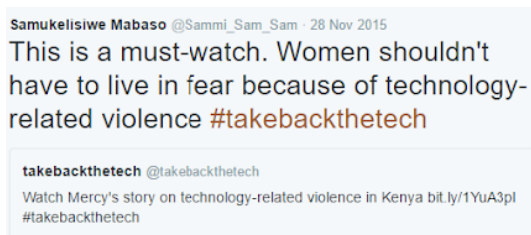
keep track of the reach and engagement they received during 16 Days. TBTT utilised various online platforms along with Twitter for their 2015 16 Days Campaign, including websites and Facebook. However, given the nature of this discussion and for the purposes of this research, this dissertation will focus on Twitter.

During our interview (2015 October 16), Mitchell expressed how being active on Twitter has created a two-way channel of communication between them and women users. This has resulted in TBTT learning from women users and she hopes women users are learning from TBTT. Unlike mass communication, which is considered a one-way channel of communication between communicator and audience, new media – like SNS – enable communicators to receive immediate feedback from an audience therefore creating and encouraging a two-way dialogue that fosters an environment of engagement and knowledge sharing (Johnson, 2010).

This study incorporated a variety of frameworks (for instance, feminism, intersectionality, counterpublics, and agenda-setting) to provide a firm foundation for investigating the tactics employed by TBTT during their 16 Days campaign to defeat the online abuse of women. Considering that a discussion on these frameworks has been provided, this study will now focus on its methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methods used to explore how TBTT utilised Twitter as part of their campaign to reclaim ICT to end online woman abuse. It also provides a discussion on this study's ethical considerations. This study adopts a mixed methods approach and is divided into three sections. First, by analysing the tweets disseminated by TBTT. This was done to analyse how TBTT communicates with their followers and to gain an understanding of the kind of tactics they employed during the 16 Days campaign. Second, by studying tweets by other users that included TBTT's handle (username) – @takebackthetech in their tweets. This was chosen in order to investigate how Twitter users engage with TBTT. Lastly, by studying tweets published by TBTT and other users that included #takebackthetech. This was done to explore how TBTT and other Twitter users utilised #takebackthetech and to establish the effectiveness of the hashtag. As part of my methodology, I chose to participate in the campaign and not just observe because advocating for women's rights is something that I am passionate about and try to do daily both online and offline. I only retweeted tweets that resonated with me and that I wanted to share with my followers. I sometimes added my own comments to the retweets. For instance:



3.1. Qualitative and quantitative research methods

This study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2013:117) there is no commonly accepted definition of the term qualitative. Nevertheless, qualitative methods were employed in this study as this method “relies mainly on the analysis of visual data (observations) and verbal data (words) that reflect everyday experience” (Wimmer & Dominick 2013:117) thus making it a beneficial method for this research. Additionally, qualitative research utilises a flexible questioning approach which provides the researcher with the flexibility to alter questions or ask follow-up questions at any stage. However, even with this flexibility, it is essential that a basic set of questions is designed to commence the project (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013:120). In line with qualitative research methods, two interviews, one via Skype (16 October, 2015) and one via email (21 February, 2016) were conducted with a team member from TBTT (Mitchell) to contribute towards and supplement the findings of this research.

On the other hand, “quantitative research requires that the variables under consideration be measured. This form of research is concerned with how often a variable is present and generally uses numbers to communicate this amount” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013:48). Quantitative research has several advantages. This dissertation proposes that one of the fundamental benefits of quantitative research is that the use of numbers allows greater accuracy in reporting results (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013:49) hence its use for this research. Considering that the fundamental focus of this research is tweets published by TBTT, the primary research method that this dissertation adopts is content analysis which will be discussed below.

3.2. Content analysis

Content analysis was chosen for this dissertation because it could help identify how TBTT communicates with their followers as well as ascertain what strategies TBTT employs to combat the online abuse of women during their 16 Days campaign – whether by acting as agenda-setters, creating counterpublics or utilising hashtags. Through the use of content analysis, researchers can delineate what has been tweeted by a broad campaign or with a particular hashtag. For the purposes of this discussion, content analysis “is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013:159). According to Joffe and Yardley (2004:56) “content analysis is the accepted method of investigating texts, particularly in mass communications research”. Utilising content analysis allowed TBTT’s tweets to be classified and for popular trends to be identified. Once all of the data, in this instance tweets, were captured and categorised, the analysis could begin (Joffe & Yardley, 2004:63). One of the several benefits of content analysis is that numerous tweets can be counted and classified over a fairly long period of time, hence its selection for the first part of the data analysis (Joffe & Yardley, 2004:56). For the purposes of this research, the individual tweets were the unit of analysis.

Like any method, content analysis has its strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths include that it is comparatively easy to gain access to the content you want to study (in this case TBTT’s tweets), it is relatively uncomplicated and low-cost to build a sample, and it is an unobtrusive method – the researcher does not have to interact with the people being studied. Therefore, the researcher cannot influence the behaviour of the people being studied (Sociology.org, n.d). Conversely, some weaknesses include that it may be time-consuming, it is limited by the availability of material, and it is purely descriptive (Sociology.org, n.d). For instance, while studying the use of hashtags suggests how the intended (feminist) audience participated, content analysis cannot tell us why they responded or did not respond. Although content analysis has its strengths, it also has its limitations thus this research also conducted interviews to strengthen its findings.

3.3. Interviews

I had a Skype interview and email interview with a representative from TBTT, referred to as Mitchell, to supplement my research. The Skype interview (pre-campaign) occurred on 16 October 2015 and the email interview questions were sent to Mitchell on 11 February 2016 (post-campaign). The Skype interview questions can be found in Appendix E and the email interview questions and answers can be found in Appendix F. Interviews can be an effective qualitative research tool as they can provide context to other data thus providing a more complete understanding for the researcher (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). Interviews can occur in different formats – focus groups, one-on-ones, in-person, telephonic, online and more. Skype was chosen as one of the interview formats as Mitchell and I are based in different locations, it is free (all you need is to have an account and internet access) and the calls are in real-time. When we conducted the interview it was 3PM in South Africa and 9AM in America. “The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys” (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). However, interviews also have limitations. For instance, they can be prone to bias (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). If a campaigner (the interviewee) wants to prove that their methods are effective, their interview responses might be biased. In order to avoid this pitfall, I compared the information I received via the interview with the data collected using other methods. Additionally, interviews can be time-intensive. It takes time to conduct, transcribe and analyse the results of interviews (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3).

Since this study focuses on Twitter – a social network site – this research also made use of social network analysis to supplement its findings.

3.4. Social network analysis

This dissertation employs the introductory insights of social network analysis (SNA). According to Marcus, Moy and Coffman (2007:443), SNA is an approach to the study of human social interactions. SNA can be employed to explore community structure, kinship patterns, or the organisation of formal and informal social networks. “Social network analysis seeks to understand networks and their participants and has two main focuses: the actors and the relationships between them in a specific social context” (Serrat, 2009). Adopting SNA assisted in ensuring that TBTT’s engagement with other users was investigated in terms of who they communicate with on Twitter, how they communicate with them as well as what these users’ interactions with TBTT are. The tweets including @takebackthetech and #takebackthetech were identified as ties connecting users to TBTT and one another (Granger, 2013). As beneficial as SNA is for this study, it does have some inherent strengths

and weaknesses. Some of the strengths of SNA are that the approach provides an explanation of how people are connected, it is helpful in the study of large groups of people and understanding how their affiliates relate to others in the group, and it offers insight into viral phenomena such as viral content. Weaknesses of SNA include its difficulty to scientifically replicate and that the interpretation of relationships or ties can be subjective (Claywell, n.d).

The core of this study is the analysis of tweets therefore sampling and data collection were crucial for this dissertation.

3.6. Sampling and data collection

The data, in this case tweets, for this research were captured by tracking the username @takebackthetech and the hashtag #takebackthetech during the 16 Days campaign from 25 November to 10 December 2015 on NodeXL. Additionally, in order to analyse TBTT's tweets, I accessed the network's Twitter archive, with their permission. TBTT downloaded their Twitter archive directly from their Twitter profile and once Twitter emailed them their archive – which provides you with a history of all your tweets from your very first tweet in Microsoft Excel format – the network emailed the archive to me.

Data from SNS, such as tweets, “generally pre-exist their collection rather than having to be produced through surveys” (Gerlitz & Rieder, 2013:2) and “they come in formats specific to platforms, with analytical features, such as counts, already built into them” (Gerlitz & Rieder, 2013:2). Keeping the aforementioned in mind, I applied an adaptation of the sampling method utilised by Gerlitz and Rieder (2013:3) who propose that “the most common Twitter sampling technique is topic-based sampling that selects tweets via hashtags or search queries”. Topic-based sampling is founded upon the theory that content will cluster around shared use of hashtags or topical words (Gerlitz & Rieder, 2013:2). All tweets in languages other than English were removed from the data set as I conducted this research in English and could not provide an analysis on a language I do not understand.

25 November to 10 December 2015 was selected as the time period for data collection as this is when the 16 Days campaign ran. NodeXL Basic, the SNA tool, was utilised to capture the @takebackthetech and #takebackthetech data and was collected every evening during the specified dates between 5 P.M. and 8 P.M. South African time (Greenwich Mean Time +2). “NodeXL Basic is a free, open-source template for Microsoft® Excel® 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016 that makes it easy to explore network graphs. With NodeXL, you can enter a network edge list in a worksheet, click a button and see your graph, all in the familiar environment of the Excel window” (Social Media

Research Foundation, 2015). In other words, downloading data like this allows the researcher to capture an extensive set of tweets as links between Twitter users (nodes in a network), and to visualise the connections or “edges” between the users. This study, however, used NodeXL primarily to quantify strategies used by the campaign rather than SNA. NodeXL Basic was selected for a number of reasons – it is free, easy to navigate as it is built on a familiar spreadsheet paradigm (Microsoft Excel), it includes powerful automated features, it integrates metrics, visualisation and statistical methods and it provides an easy-to-use tool for non-programmers (Chakraborty & Mohan, 2012:3). Although Twitter’s Application Programming Interface (API) – “an interface which is designed predominantly for use by Twitter clients, but can also be used for tracking current activity by users, or on specific keywords and hashtags” (Bruns & Burgess, 2012:4) – provides substantial levels of access to data on user activities, there are significant limitations to what is accessible and available directly through the API. Furthermore, as Twitter seeks further revenue, these limitations have been progressively constricted (Bruns & Burgess, 2012:4). Considering the aforementioned limitations of Twitter’s API and the advantages of NodeXL discussed above, NodeXL was selected as the preferred tool to capture the data.

It was discovered in the initial stages of this research that the laptop that was going to be used to capture the data was not compatible with NodeXL thus an alternative laptop at a different location had to be used hence the data collection time ranging from 5 P.M. to 8 P.M. Once manually reviewing the data it was discovered that collecting the data between 5 P.M. and 8 P.M. did not result in the data being skewed. It should also be noted that because the TBTT Twitter account is managed in the United States of America (Eastern Standard Time) and not in South Africa (Greenwich Mean Time+2), there was a time zone difference. During the period of this study South Africa was six hours ahead. Keeping the aforementioned in mind, this dissertation acknowledges that the data captured on the final day of the campaign could have been slightly skewed. The reason being is that on the last day of data collection (10 December, 2015), the data were captured at the end of the day South African time which means there is a possibility that not all of the data from that date was collected because of the time zone difference. NodeXL’s maximum amount of 2000 tweets per search were captured during the specified period and once the data were collected each day, they were manually saved into individual folders. At the end of the data collecting process, all of the individual folders were merged into one folder so that all of the data from the period 25 November to 10 December 2015 could be viewed and analysed in one spreadsheet. On some days, due to a lack of new tweets, NodeXL captured the same tweet more than once. Therefore, when reviewing the data, the duplicate tweets were eliminated to certify each tweet only had one opportunity to be entered into the final data set (Granger, 2013).

Although NodeXL was selected as the preferred platform for the data capturing purposes, the system does have its limitations and it is unable to provide one with all of the requested tweets because of factors such as volume limits imposed by the Twitter API. Considering that this is a keyword-based study, this research cannot claim to have collected a representative collection of all discussions about TBTT on Twitter because users may have discussed the campaign without using #takebackthetech or mentioning TBTT's username. Furthermore, the prevalence of what has been termed "subtweeting" – when you tweet about someone without mentioning their Twitter username (Love, 2012) – could mean that TBTT may have been discussed or referred to implicitly by users in tweets which would not have been captured by NodeXL. The simple act of not mentioning TBTT's username or hashtag #takebackthetech in their tweets resulted in these users' tweets being excluded from the study (Granger, 2013).

In light of the aforesaid, this research is chiefly representing a hyperlink connection between one user and another, through the inclusion of @takebackthetech in their tweets, and any supplementary offline or online relationships cannot be identified (Granger, 2013). Bearing in mind that this was solely a Twitter analysis, it was not achievable to examine any additional (online or offline) interactions between TBTT and Twitter users, or wholly identify the kinds of relationships they may have and how that may have affected the connotation of the tweet (Granger, 2013). While the tweets including @takebackthetech and the users who tweeted them are not necessarily an illustration of all of TBTT's followers, they have a link to the network because of the direct mention of TBTT's username in their tweets. Therefore, the @takebackthetech data set can be considered a fractional network of Twitter users who are connected to TBTT through delicate ties which are characterised by a mention, retweet or reply (Granger, 2013). Regarding the #takebackthetech data set, this study comprehends and kept in mind that "competing hashtags may emerge in different regions of the Twittersphere (for example, #eqnz as well as #nzeq for coverage of the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011), or that the same hashtag may be used for vastly different events taking place simultaneously (for instance, #spill for the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico during the first half of 2010, as well as for the leadership challenge in the Australian Labor Party)" (Bruns & Burgess, 2011:2). For the purposes of this study, #takebackthetech was the hashtag search term entered into NodeXL. Once the data were collected they needed to be coded.

3.7. Coding

The separate codes used in studying TBTT's tweets stemmed from existing literature and were customised to answer the specific research question (Franzosi, 2004). This coding system was only utilised for the analysis of TBTT's tweets and not for the analysis of tweets captured under

@takebackthetech and #takebackthetech on NodeXL. The coding structure describes various conversational strategies on Twitter and is only applied to describe the tweets authored by TBTT. The reason being that this dissertation’s fundamental purpose is to discover the strategies employed by TBTT on Twitter during their 16 Days of Activism campaign to end online woman abuse.

These conversational strategies are hard-coded into the Twitter data which distinguishes between retweets (retweeted from another Twitter user) and tweets (authored by the Twitter user). There were two layers to the coding scheme. First, TBTT’s tweets were classified as retweets: tweets in this group needed to be labelled with “RT”, or original tweets: original tweets were classified as tweets that were authored and published by TBTT. Original tweets might reveal tactics which attempt to assume an agenda-setting role by TBTT. Secondly, once the differentiation between retweets and original tweets was made, all of the original tweets were individually allocated to categories depending on whether the fundamental communication aligned with the criteria elaborated on below. Figure 1 below expands on and hopefully simplifies the classification system discussed above.

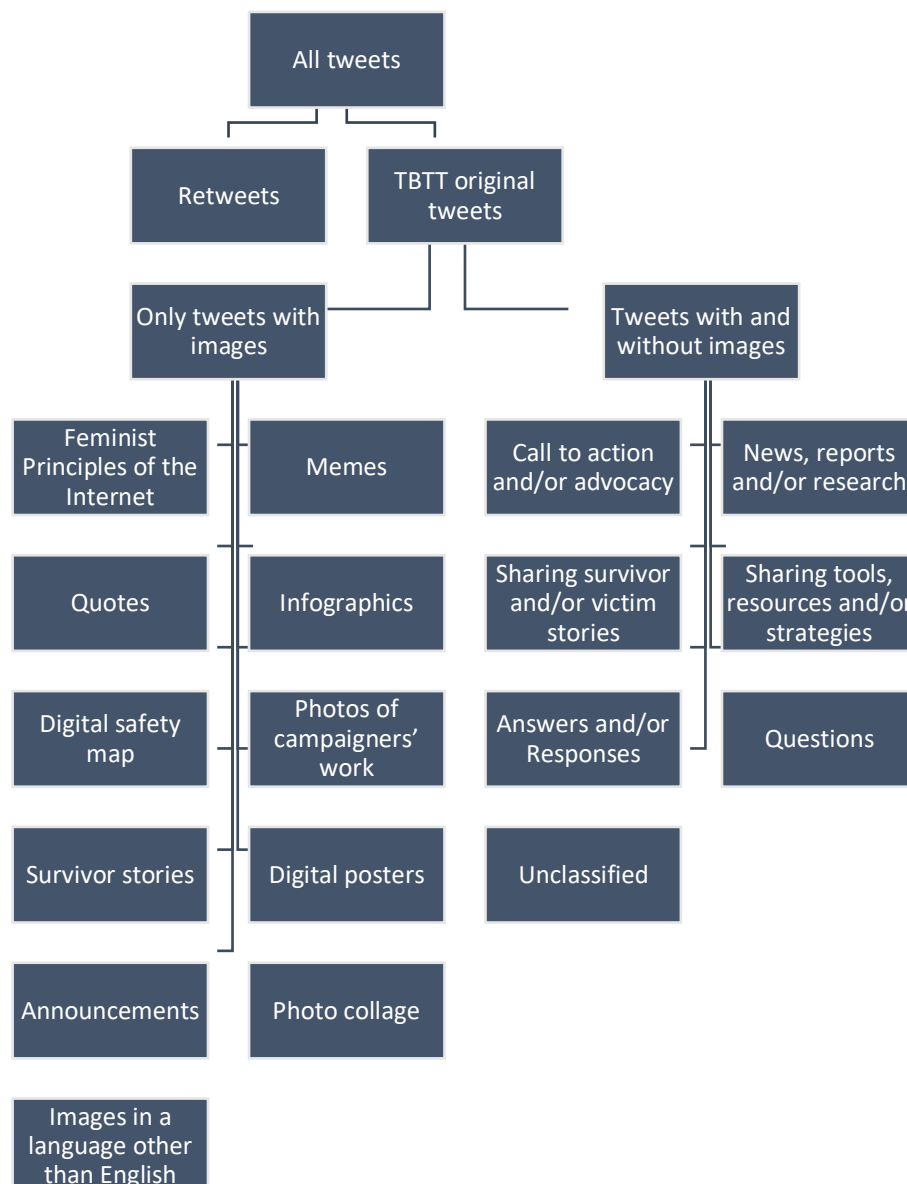


Figure 1: Coding system for TBTT’s tweets

3.7.1. Call to action and/or advocacy

The first coding category describes tweets which included a call to action or advocacy dimension. Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweets were classified as tweets that encouraged Twitter users to act, whether it be by supporting a proposal or petition or retweeting a tweet to help raise awareness. This also included tweets that fell under TBTT's four fundamental calls to action for the campaign: share stories, organise offline, transform tools, and chart the way forward. Note: in this category, share stories refers to TBTT encouraging users to share their personal stories with TBTT, not sharing other participants' stories already included in the campaign. As discussed in Chapter Two, Vegh (2003:73) suggests that online activism can fall into three general categories: awareness/advocacy, organisation/mobilisation, and action/reaction. My codes for Call to Action and/or Advocacy describe tweets which fall within Vegh's awareness/advocacy group. Vegh (2003:73) contends that the fundamental uses of the Internet in online advocacy rotate around executing action and organising the movement. Additionally, this study's call to action/advocacy category is related to Vegh's (2003:74-75) organisation/mobilisation sphere. In this sphere Vegh suggests that the Internet can be used to call for offline action, call for an action that characteristically transpires offline but can be achieved more efficiently online, and call for an online action that can only be effected online. Along with sharing tweets which were classified as Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweets, TBTT frequently shared News, Reports and/or Research tweets.

3.7.2. News, reports and/or research

Tweets that shared news articles, information about other campaigns, blog posts, reports and research about women and ICTS as well as online and offline woman abuse were coded as News, Reports and/or Research. Therefore, this category aligns with Vegh's (2003:73) category of awareness/advocacy. Furthermore, within the awareness/advocacy group, Vegh (2013:74) identifies lobbying as a more traditional kind of advocacy and proposes that there are three types of lobbying – discussed in Chapter Two. Of the three kinds, the News, Reports and/or Research category can be considered lobbying that concentrate on influencing universal opinion. By investigating the extent to which TBTT shared News, Reports and/or Research tweets about technology-related VAW, this analysis can quantify the degree to which the campaign aimed to influence universal opinion on VAW. Sharing News, Reports and/or Research tweets was important for TBTT's campaign but so was sharing survivor stories.

3.7.3. Sharing survivor and/or victim stories

TBTT also shared survivor or victim stories hosted on their website as well as others. In Vegh's (2003:73) classifications of online activism, the Sharing Survivor and/or Victim Stories category falls under the awareness/advocacy cluster. This category also aligns with Vegh's (2003:74-75) organisation/mobilisation group. By sharing these stories, TBTT is using narrative to mobilise users to join their movement. Empowering women is one of TBTT's core beliefs and this can be achieved by exposing women to tools, resources and/or strategies that can help them with challenges related to online abuse.

3.7.4. Sharing tools, resources and/or strategies

Tweets where TBTT shared tools, resources and/or strategies with their users to assist them with issues associated with technology-related VAW were coded as Sharing Tools, Resources and/or Strategies tweets. In light of Vegh's (2003:73) categorisations of online activism, this category falls under the awareness/advocacy group. Additionally, the sharing of tools, resources and/or strategies can also be included in Vegh's (2003:74-75) organisation/mobilisation group. By sharing these resources, TBTT is equipping users with tools that could assist them with carrying offline or online action related to combating technology-related VAW.

A key feature of Twitter is that it allows users to respond to one another in real-time no matter where they are physically based which can benefit online activists during their campaigning efforts.

3.7.5. Answers and/or responses

Tweets where TBTT responded directly to a user's tweet were categorised as Answers and/or Responses. According to Vegh's (2003:73) categorisations of online activism, this category belongs to the awareness/advocacy group. Furthermore, this dissertation's Answers and/or Responses category can also be included in Vegh's (2003:74-75) organisation/mobilisation sphere. The reason being is that through the act of responding to user's tweets TBTT could also use this opportunity to call for offline action, call for an action that characteristically transpires offline but can be achieved more efficiently online, and call for an online action that can only be effected online (Vegh, 2003:74-75). Along with answering and/or responding to users' questions, TBTT also asked questions of their own

3.7.6. Questions

Tweets coded as Questions were tweets where TBTT posed a general question to their followers to encourage discussion and engagement, or tweets where TBTT posed a question directly to a user by

“@” mentioning them or replying to them. Bearing Vegh’s (2003:73) categorisations of online activism in mind, the Questions category fits into Vegh’s awareness/advocacy classification. Additionally, this study’s Questions category can also be included in Vegh’s (2003:74-75) organisation/mobilisation sphere as TBTT could use questions to organise and mobilise online and/or offline action.

If TBTT used a question in a tweet that had to do with sharing a story, call to action or any of the other categories it was coded more specifically (as a story or call to action for example) and not under the Questions category. This was decided as it was found that TBTT often used questions to draw their audience in. This dissertation interprets that the fundamental purpose of these questions was not necessarily to get people to answer but rather to get them to engage with the other part of the tweet whether it be watching a survivor story or reading a news article. For instance, the following TBTT tweet falls under the Questions category because it is a straightforward question: “Women’s rights activists, how critical is the internet to your work? #imagineafeministinternet”. Another tweet, although it includes a question, was coded under the Sharing Tools, Resources and/or Strategies category because the tweet shared a resource to help deal with hate speech: “Are you a woman writing online and facing hate speech? Learn about rights & strategies from #takebackthetech <https://t.co/CZn44Ay2d1> #16days”. It is acknowledged that the decision to categorise such tweets this way resulted in the Questions category having less tweets and therefore influenced the findings.

In order to provide a thorough investigation of TBTT’s tweets, an additional differentiation was made to classify tweets with images.

3.7.7. Tweets with images

A further distinction was made in the original tweets category to identify tweets that included images. These tweets with images were broken down further into sub-categories:

- Feminist Principles of the Internet
- Memes
- Quotes
- Infographics
- Digital safety maps
- Photos of campaigners’ work
- Survivor stories
- Digital poster

- Announcements
- Photo collage
- Images in a language other than English

I acknowledge how important ethics are in research thus the ethical considerations of this dissertation will be elaborated on below.

3.8. Ethical considerations

No set of guidelines or rules for research is static and the fields of Internet research are dynamic and heterogeneous (Markham & Buchanan, 2012:2). This research project involved computerised data collecting from Twitter, through NodeXL and TBTT's personal archive, and the content analysis of web text which was produced in a wide range of circumstance by authors, some anonymous, others identifiable. This produced some of the common challenges associated with ethics in Internet research.

Markham and Buchanan (2012:6) suggest that there are "three major issues that arise repeatedly in discussions about ethical practice in Internet research: Human subjects, private/public, and data/persons". Since this study concentrated principally on the text of tweets rather than the human subjects who authored and/or published them, this study should be exempt from in-depth ethical review as it is fundamentally concerned with published information that is already available publically (Markham & Buchanan, 2012:5-11).

According to Markham and Buchanan (2012:4) the principles of ethics in human research are centred on basic tenets such as "the fundamental rights of human dignity, autonomy, protection, safety, maximization of benefits and minimization of harms, or, in the most recent accepted phrasing, respect for persons, justice, and beneficence." However, the notion whether or not this research classifies as research with human subjects is disputed and debatable. In fact, Markham and Buchanan (2012:6) contend that "in Internet research, 'human subject' has never been a good fit for describing many Internet-based research environments. We agree with other regulatory bodies that the term no longer enjoys the relatively straightforward definitional status it once did." Additionally, the capturing and examination of Twitter data does not involve communicating with or interacting directly with human subjects and does not disclose private information. This study involves already broadcasted texts which are potentially available to anyone on the Internet (Granger, 2013).

Furthermore, Twitter's terms of service agreement (2016c) reads:

“Basic terms

You are responsible for your use of the Services, for any Content you post to the Services, and for any consequences thereof. Most Content you submit, post, or display through the Twitter Services is public by default and will be able to be viewed by other users and through third party services and websites. Learn more here, and go to the account settings page to control who sees your Content. You should only provide Content that you are comfortable sharing with others under these Terms”.

“Your Rights

“You retain your rights to any Content you submit, post or display on or through the Services. By submitting, posting or displaying Content on or through the Services, you grant us a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free license (with the right to sublicense) to use, copy, reproduce, process, adapt, modify, publish, transmit, display and distribute such Content in any and all media or distribution methods (now known or later developed)”.

It is debatable as to whether or not this kind of research truly involves human subjects. However, it is essential that this dissertation considers the different viewpoints as ultimately the information, in this instance tweets, is produced by humans. Thus, additional ethical issues should be discussed (Granger, 2013).

Another issue that is frequently debated when it comes to ethical considerations for Internet research is perceptions of what is public and private (Markham & Buchanan, 2012:6). In order to utilise Twitter, all users need to agree and accept Twitter’s terms. Thus, ideally, those with public profiles (Twitter’s default option) should be aware that their tweets are publicly archived and searchable. However, as pointed out by Markham and Buchanan (2012:6) users “may acknowledge that the substance of their communication is public, but that the specific context in which it appears implies restrictions on how that information is -- or ought to be -- used by other parties”. Moreover, often users do not read or understand terms of service documentation which adds further complications.

Although I acknowledge and respect the principles of autonomy, it was impractical to fully comply with the notion of obtaining the informed consent of every individual Twitter user whose tweets were included in the data capture. The reason being is that I only had access to the users’ tweets and usernames thus, the only way of contacting them would have been via Twitter. Although it was possible to compose separate tweets to individual users to notify them of the research, and request additional contact information to explain the research and obtain their consent, there was no assurance

that all the users would have actually been reached (Granger, 2013). Furthermore, due to the number of users involved in the study it would not have been feasible for me to make individual contact with all of them especially considering time limitations and resources.

Additionally, Twitter does not allow users who do not follow each other to send each other direct private messages, and majority of users do not provide supplementary contact information on their profiles. Moreover, some users may not frequently check their accounts or may have become inactive, usernames can change, and some users may see the tweets from the researcher as spam or merely choose not to reply (Granger, 2013). Therefore, while TBTT was contacted via email and informed of the nature and purpose of the study on their Twitter activities, the other users could not be afforded the same opportunities owing to the medium and method of data collection.

TBTT was contacted and informed about the study and agreed for one of their team members to be interviewed by me. Information about me (the researcher), my background, location and research intentions were given to the interviewee via email communication. Additionally, consent to conduct the interview was obtained in writing from the interviewee via email communication. This can be found in Appendix D. Considering the nature of TBTT's work and that they have been on the receiving end of online attacks, I decided to anonymise the interviewee. Other individual users' identities were also anonymised for similar reasons related to safety. Although anonymity makes it difficult to identify perpetrators of online abuse, anonymity can also be used as an effective tool for women to be able to exercise their rights online (GenderIt.org, 2016).

This research did not intentionally involve children. However, this did pose a challenge as it was an online study thus it was not easy to exclude any demographic from the sample. In an attempt to ensure that children were not included in the sample and the study overall, no one under 18 was interviewed, and any Twitter data from someone who appeared to be or said they were under 18 years of age was excluded. Overall, my practice was informed by the questions and principles suggested by The Association of Internet Researchers to guide ethical decision making in online research. Additionally, I acknowledge that TBTT often works with victims and survivors and respect the network's policy regarding their privacy.

This chapter has provided a rationale for my chosen methods of data collection and analysis. I utilised a mixed methods approach – qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis, interviews, and social network analysis – in an attempt to make it a thorough investigation. Seeing that a discussion has been provided on the methodological underpinnings of this study, an analysis of TBTT's tweets will now be discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: AGENDA-SETTING AND NETWORK-BUILDING IN A TWITTER CAMPAIGN

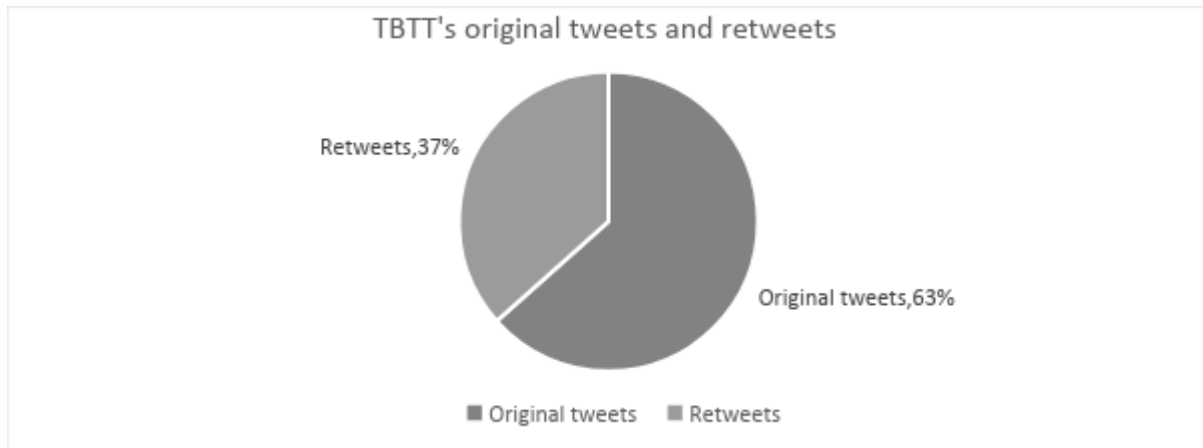
This chapter examines TBTT's tweets. The content analysis revealed that the most common activity in TBTT's campaign was sharing original tweets. The balance of the tweets (just over a third) were retweets, which repeated and amplified tweets created by other Twitter users. The original tweets most often highlighted important news, reports and/or research which related to the key concerns of the TBTT campaign. Such tweets were mostly accompanied by links to the source of the news or research. As discussed in Chapter Two, sharing news in this way can be seen in relation to agenda-setting, in that TBTT is trying to set their followers' agenda. TBTT shared articles and blog posts, reframed them with original commentary, and addressed particular networked audiences, drawing them into a conversation.

First, to the extent that the campaign amplifies news from other sources, it is responding to the agenda-setting function of mass media, which by transferring salience from media producers to the public, influences what people are likely to be talking about (McCombs & Ghanem, 2008). By linking to commercial news articles, TBTT is exposing their followers to these particular stories and sources and encouraging a discussion about them. By suggesting alternative sources to commercial media, TBTT appears to be trying to gain some power to set the agenda. Second, the campaign may be highlighting information which is not accorded sufficient information by dominant publics, and thus reframing or suggesting new ways to think about the news. Thirdly, by connecting a feminist network to particular information, and by publicising feminist sources, and by amplifying other feminists through retweeting them, it is thus facilitating future conversations and perhaps helping to build a feminist counterpublic in ways similar to the activists discussed in Chapter Two.

4.1. Tweets and retweets

A Twitter campaign both responds to and adopts its own agenda-setting strategies. A first lens on this can be provided by investigating the balance between tweeting and retweeting. The decision to tweet original tweets draws attention to the Twitter user or account. It also claims the power to set agendas by sharing original information and by using the retweet to reframe information received from other sources. By contrast, the decision to retweet tweets created by other Twitter users foregrounds other sources of information. It can also be seen as a network-building activity since retweeting someone alerts the Twitter user who tweeted the original tweet, as well as drawing the attention of followers to the retweeted account. This may be used to establish solidarity or spark a conversation.

Although TBTT retweeted tweets from other users during the campaign, Figure 2 shows that TBTT's primary strategy involved sharing content via original tweets (63% of tweets). Their secondary strategy, in the remainder of the tweets involved retweeting (37%).



Thus, overall, TBTT appear to be taking on the role of agenda-setters by ensuring that their primary messages were prioritised and communicated to their followers. Composing their own tweets, rather than simply retweeting others' content, could have also been a strategy to position themselves as thought leaders in a global network of feminist activists and as a way to build connections and awareness of technology-related issues within a broader network that is spearheading activism during 16 Days. This can also be viewed as a way for TBTT to create their own counterpublic of feminist activists, for example. Prioritising their own tweets could have also been a tactic to reach more followers. For instance, if TBTT retweeted a tweet from another user, that retweeted user would gain exposure and reach to TBTT's followers. This also creates a connection between TBTT and that retweeted user. One of the primary ways that TBTT fostered network-building was through the use of hashtags which will be discussed below.

4.2. Hashtags: fostering network-building

Including hashtags in their tweets was a fundamental network-building strategy implemented by TBTT. As discussed in Chapter Two, hashtags have several benefits including the ability to coordinate a discussion between large groups of people. Utilising hashtags enables TBTT to keep track of discussions, to gauge the progress and success of their campaign, and it also allows Twitter users to follow and contribute towards the hashtag conversation. As shown in Table 1, TBTT utilised hashtags in 178 (88%) of their original tweets.

Original tweets		
Category	Number of tweets	Percentage
Tweets with hashtags	178	88%
Tweets without hashtags	25	12%
Total	203	100%

Table 1: Breakdown of TBTT’s use of hashtags in their original tweets

In total, TBTT shared 324 hashtags in their original tweets. As shown in Figure 3 below, the top three hashtags that TBTT published were #takebackthetech, #16days, and #imagineafeministinternet. The remaining hashtags were individually shared fewer than 10 times each.

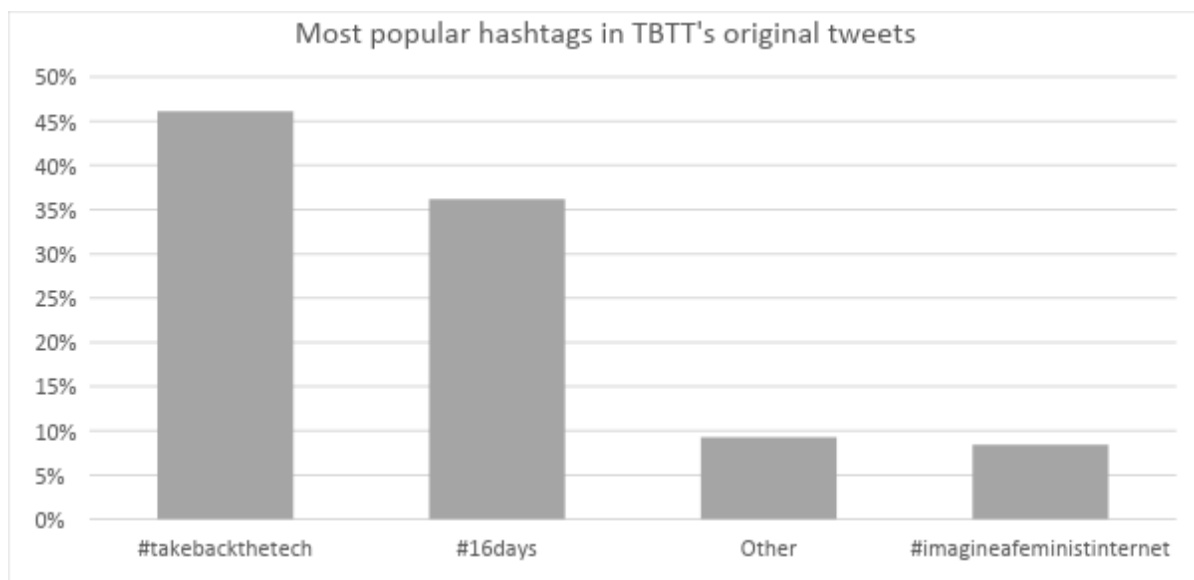


Figure 3: Most popular hashtags used in TBTT’s original tweets

#takebackthetech is a hashtag initiated and utilised by TBTT during their campaigns. The hashtag #16days is a shortened version of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence and is promoted and used by a number of individuals and organisations including the United Nations Foundation, TBTT, HealthRight International, UN Women India, and many more. #imagineafeministinternet is a hashtag used in an ongoing campaign, Feminist Principles of the Internet, which GenderIT.org (2014) describes as “a global conversation on how the Internet can strengthen and better facilitate feminist activism”. Hashtags are an effective method of network-building, tracking conversations, gauging progress of a campaign and creating counterpublics hence TBTT’s use of them during their campaign. Along with including hashtags in their tweets, TBTT also frequently incorporated URLs.

4.3. Linking to additional information

Including URLs in their tweets was another one of TBTT's core strategies. 75% of TBTT's original tweets included URLs to some external media and 25% did not. By including links, TBTT could encourage users to visit external sources for additional information that could not be included in the 140-character word limit of a tweet. By sharing links to their own website, TBTT could also increase traffic to their platform. Once directed to the website, users might stay on TBTT's website to browse other sections of the site. In light of the above, this discussion will now turn its attention to TBTT's original tweets.

4.4. Take Back The Tech!'s original tweets

Table 2 categorises TBTT's original tweets and reveals the strategies most frequently used in the Twitter campaign.

TBTT's original tweets		
Category	Number of tweets	Percentage
News, reports and/or research	90	44%
Call to action and/or advocacy	37	18%
Sharing survivor and/or victim stories	21	10%
Questions	17	9%
Answers and/or responses	16	8%
Sharing tools, resources, and/or strategies	13	6%
Unclassified tweets	9	4%
Total	203	100%

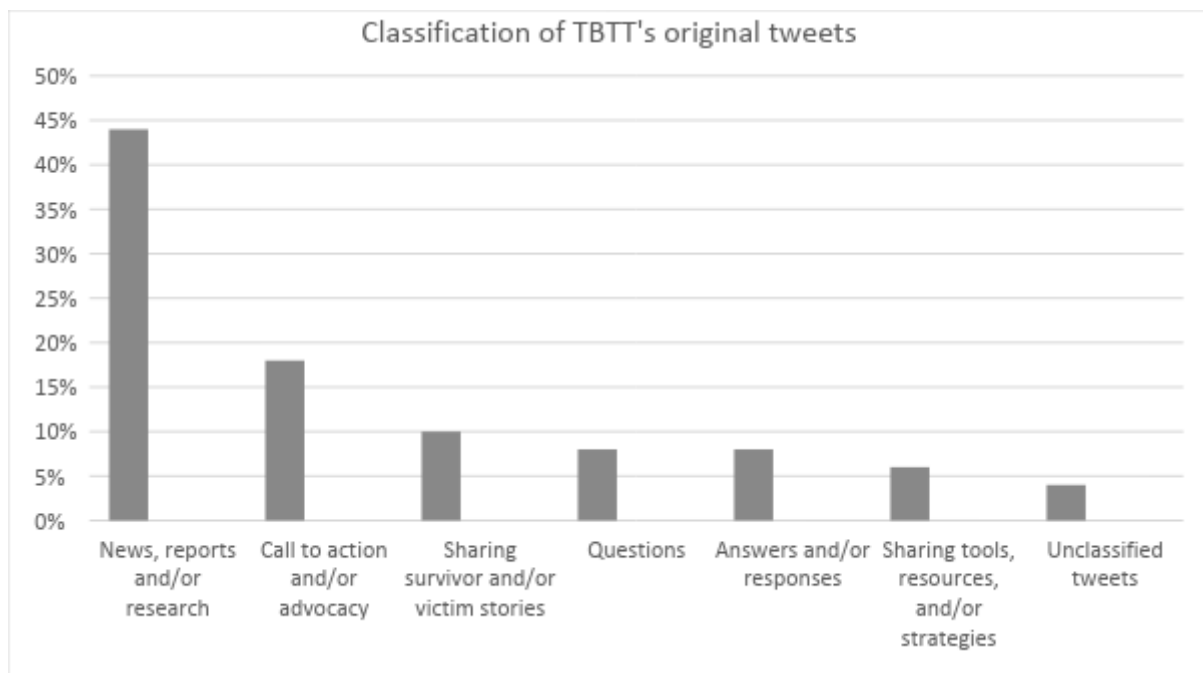
Table 2: Breakdown of the categories TBTT's original tweets were classified as

As Table 2 highlights, by sharing original tweets, TBTT aimed to raise awareness about 16 Days, and other issues related to women, women abuse, and technology. They also aimed to provide their followers with information, news, research, and other forms of knowledge. The campaign responded to the need to share survivor and victim stories and recommended a variety of tools, strategies and resources for action. Furthermore, a large number of tweets involved a call to action or encouraged advocacy, which suggests the importance of inspiring their followers to act against both online and offline gender-based violence. To a somewhat lesser extent, the campaign sought to foster a dialogue, both by asking questions, and by answering or responding to tweets by others. The above findings

remind us of what Jones (2013:1) said about activists using the Internet to foster social or political changes and shows us that TBTT has chosen Twitter as one of their channels to reach their goals through online activism.

Since TBTT frequently amplified alternative sources throughout the campaign, more detail is needed on this.

4.4.1. Amplifying alternative sources



As illustrated in Figure 3 above, 44% of TBTT’s tweets were classified as News, Reports and/or Research. Of the 90 tweets (44%) categorised as News, Reports and/or Research, seven included a link to TBTT’s website, 39 had a link to other websites and 44 included no links to a website but may have included a link to an image or PDF file. Of the 39 tweets that included a link to other websites, nine were links to commercial media platforms including: *Fortune*, *BBC News*, *Tech Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent* (UK). Thus, in a tenth of these “news” tweets, the TBTT campaign can be seen to be responding to and propagating a commercial media agenda. Furthermore, the agenda is primarily Northern in origin.

Nonetheless, the majority of the news tweets amplified a diverse range of non-commercial sources. Thus the campaign can be seen as not only “taking back the tech”, but taking back the agenda-setting function from commercial media by curating a particular version of news for TBTT followers and supporters. By covering and amplifying specific issues related to feminism, TBTT is thrusting these

issues into the public agenda. This argument aligns with Newsom and Lengel's (2013:33) suggestion that online activism provides an opportunity to empower marginalised voices which TBTT can be seen as doing by promoting non-commercial sources.

Additionally, a campaign such as TBTT is an attempt to build a counterpublic which promotes and links voices contesting certain dominant agendas set by both commercial and social media. For example, patriarchal ideas about women in commercial and social media often represent women exclusively as sexual objects or domestic goddesses. TBTT's creation of a counterpublic reminds us of Fraser's (1990:67) argument that counterpublics allow subordinated social groups, in this case women, to develop their own counter discourses.

Within the News, Reports and/or Research category, 21 tweets shared articles or blog posts where TBTT routinely reworded the headlines. While rephrasing is often necessary to shorten headlines to fit Twitter's 140-character limit, TBTT also included commentary on the linked article or connected with broader networks by "@" mentioning Twitter users or adding hashtags. This act of rewording headlines is another method of agenda-setting embraced by TBTT in that it may involve a certain level of reframing or editorial commentary or simply alerting feminist networks to the source or story.

In Tweet 1, shown below, TBTT shared a link to an article headlined "This is the No. 1 Career Young Girls Want When They Grow Up". When TBTT shared the link they created their own content to accompany the link and elected not to use the existing headline. The content of TBTT's tweet below challenges conventional thinking about why certain fields such as STEM – science, technology, engineering and math (Lindzon, 2015) – are dominated and/or exclusive to certain genders. TBTT also included the hashtags #imagineafeministinternet and #takebackthetech in their tweet to foster network-building.

1.
takebackthetech: Think boys dominate STEM simply b/c¹ girls aren't interested? Think again.
<https://t.co/wO20ES5IUA> #imagineafeministinternet #takebackthetech

2015-11-26 21:15

1. because.

In Tweet 2 below, TBTT shares a link to an article about how to counter online VAW, and uses the tweet to advocate that online platforms should employ more women to counter online VAW. Instead of using the article's headline, TBTT created their own content instead. Tweet 2 supports the notion that employing more women on online platforms is a solution to combating online VAW. The original headline for the article read: "Facebook's New Diversity Numbers Are Still Pathetic". By not

repeating the headline verbatim, TBTT was simultaneously creating awareness by directing their followers to the article, and sharing their own comment and opinions on the subject. By providing their own “headlines” TBTT is providing a different frame for the article. As discussed in Chapter Two, framing theory proposes how something is shown to an audience and “influences the choices people make about how to process that information” (Davie, n.d).

2.

takebackthetech: To counter online VAW, platforms must hire more women <https://t.co/GMqVIiPON3> #16days #imagineafeministinternet <https://t>.

2015-11-28 15:35



4.4.1.1. Hashtag networks

Hashtags were used in Tweet 2, and other tweets, to connect TBTT to other feminist Twitter campaigns. These hashtags functioned to link specific TBTT campaigns to broader feminist concerns, while also building connections with feminist counterpublics. For example, Tweet 2, displayed above, includes two hashtags, #16days and #imagineafeministinternet. The first hashtag #16days was one of the central hashtags that TBTT used during the campaign. Although #imagineafeministinternet was not used as frequently by TBTT during the campaign, it still carries significance.

4.4.1.2. Imagine a feminist Internet

The second hashtag used in Tweet 2, #imagineafeministinternet, was included to contextualise the tweeted image, which features a pixel-art character and the following text: “We believe in challenging the patriarchal spaces that currently control the internet and putting more feminists and LGBTQI people at decision-making tables”. Both the image and hashtag had been created for an ongoing campaign – Feminist Principles of the Internet. In Tweet 2, the image is being used creatively to appropriate more space than Twitter’s 140-character limit allows. The inclusion of a quote in the form of an image is a common strategy by Twitter users who want to convey additional information and grab the reader’s attention through the visual salience of the message in image form. The hashtag #imagineafeministinternet was also used to link the TBTT campaign and network to an existing network of feminist thinkers.

Tweet 3 below includes a quote from Nigerian-born feminist and award-winning novelist, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and links to a news article headlined “Every 16-year-old in Sweden to receive copy of We Should All Be Feminists” (Wagner, 2015). By sharing Adichie’s quote, TBTT are

linking to African feminist networks and endorsing Adichie's statement. The inclusion of #imagineafeministinternet in their tweet links Adichie's broader feminist manifesto to online feminist campaigns focused more narrowly on women and technology. Additionally, it promotes network-building by linking to Adichie, a prominent feminist with African roots.

3.

takebackthetech: "I want to live in a world where men & women are truly equal...that's why I'm a feminist." <https://t.co/R1Ad9HiC2o> #imagineafeministinternet

2015-12-05 20:55

In Tweet 4 TBTT shared an article headlined "He Called Her a Slut. He Got Fired". Instead of simply retweeting the headline which arguably frames an article about sexual harassment from a sexist perspective by including the word "slut", TBTT elected to quote a line from the article.

4.

takebackthetech: @tauriqmoosa: "For harassers, free expression doesn't exist for targets" <https://t.co/WmAU7VLVwm> #takebackthetech #imagineafeministinternet

2015-12-09 23:01

The writer of the article, @tauriqmoosa, is mentioned to give him credit for the article, to notify him of the tweet (when a user is mentioned in a tweet they receive a notification), and to provide TBTT's followers with the writer's username should they wish to follow him or contact him. Along with this act of network-building, TBTT embraced their role as agenda-setters by reframing the news story from the "slut" angle, which frames the article from a man's perspective, to reframing it around the sexist belief that "free expression doesn't exist for targets" in an attempt to arguably challenge this sexist belief. The hashtags #takebackthetech and #imagineafeministinternet were included in Tweet 3 to raise awareness about the respective campaigns, to contribute towards their discussions, to foster network-building and create counterpublics. In this case, mentioning a journalist from a commercial media publication might alert him to both the campaign and the network. By sharing this article TBTT is raising awareness about the online abuse of women as well as empowering their followers with knowledge of what they can do if they experience a similar situation.

Of the 90 tweets in the News, Reports and/or Research category, 16 tweets featured academic articles or other research reports. These tweets included links to the following research and/or reports: "Mexico: Exploring technology-related violence against women" (GenderIT.org, 2015), "Global Media Monitoring Project 2015 Reports" (Who makes the News? 2016), "A framework to underpin

action to prevent violence against women” (UN Women, 2015b), and “Virtual World, Real Fear: A Women’s Aid report into online abuse, harassment and stalking” (Women’s Aid, 2014).

Through their use of Twitter, TBTT is able to share information and build feminist knowledge and networks.

4.4.1.3. Building feminist knowledge, building networks

When sharing reports and/or research conducted by other organisations, TBTT made an effort to include the usernames of these organisations as illustrated below. This was possibly yet another method of network-building as the organisations were given credit for their reports/research, were linked to the TBTT network and notified of the tweet. Upon receiving a notification of TBTT’s tweet, these organisations could have decided to respond to TBTT, retweet, like the tweet or not act. Mentioning the organisations could thus be considered a strategy by TBTT to encourage engagement and dialogue, build relationships and increase reach. Including the username also provided TBTT’s followers with the opportunity to follow or contact these other organisations through their usernames. By sharing reports and/or research, TBTT also spread awareness about technology-related VAW and empowered their followers with knowledge so that they understood the scale of the problem of online VAW. Examples of tweets sharing reports and/or research can be seen below in Tweets 5-6.

5.

takebackthetech: @genderit & #takebackthetech report on tech-related violence against women in Mexico is out! 4 in-depth case studies <https://t.co/ba8rVGP144>

2015-11-29 01:31

6.

takebackthetech: Virtual World, Real Fear: @womensaid report into online abuse, harassment & stalking <https://t.co/BcS6gNuRow> #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-06 22:10

The remaining 53 tweets in the News, Reports and/or Research classification were identified as informative tweets as they did not distinctly fit within the News, Report and/or Research group but they were still informative. This group included tweets which: informed users about tweet chats, included infographics, explained what the 16 Days campaign is about, provided definitions for technology-related violence, informed users about the activities of other campaigners, notified users of significant days such as Women Human Rights Defenders Day, International Human Rights Day and World AIDS Day, and shared statistics for instance, “Nearly 46% of victims of tech-related

violence reporting on #takebackthetech map knew the abuser”. In this group of informative tweets TBTT also shared 15 Feminist Principles of the Internet (see Tweets 7-9 below).

7.
takebackthetech: 2) A feminist Internet is a continuation of our work elsewhere. We decide which aspects of our lives go on the Internet. #takebackthetech

2015-12-10 05:00

8.
takebackthetech: 5) Many want to silence feminist voices online; we must use the Internet to amplify diverse narratives of women's realities #takebackthetech

2015-12-10 08:01

9.
takebackthetech: 9) We must protect the Internet's role in enabling access to critical information #takebackthetech #imagineafeministinternet #16days

2015-12-10 12:01

The News, Reports and/or Research category is the largest of TBTT’s original tweets. This suggests that providing their followers with information, news, research, and other forms of knowledge is crucial to the campaign. When sharing links, TBTT mainly shared links to non-commercial media websites thus amplifying a diverse range of non-commercial sources. Furthermore, TBTT often reworded the headlines of articles before sharing them. Therefore, the 16 Days campaign can be seen as not only “taking back the tech”, but taking back the agenda-setting function from commercial media by curating a particular version of news for TBTT followers and supporters. The News, Reports and/or Research category also revealed that TBTT included hashtags in their tweets to connect to other feminist Twitter campaigns and build connections with feminist counterpublics. When sharing reports and/or research conducted by other organisations, TBTT included the usernames of these organisations – another method of network-building. Along with sharing News, Reports and/or Research tweets, TBTT also has the ability to mobilise action.

4.4.2. Mobilising action

The second largest category of TBTT’s original tweets was the Call to Action and/or Advocacy classification which comprised 18% of TBTT’s original tweets (37 tweets). Seeing that TBTT can be considered an activist network, it is not surprising that this was the second largest category. The tweets classified as Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweets share similarities with Vegh’s awareness/advocacy category. For instance, the TBTT campaign utilises the Internet to execute action

and organise their movement, they use the Internet to communicate between innumerable people globally and they lobby to influence universal opinion (Vegh, 2003:73-74).

The Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweets can also be seen in relation to Vegh's (2003:74-75) organisation/mobilisation category of online activism. Again, this study's categorisation shares similarities with Vegh's. For instance, Vegh (2003: 74-75) identifies organisation/mobilisation as a category that employs the Internet to firstly, call for online action. For example, signing an online petition to encourage social network developers to implement more safety features on their platforms. Secondly, to call for action that typically occurs offline but can be achieved more efficiently online. For instance, an organisation might want to organise a global conference on combating VAW however, it could be difficult for participants to attend physically. Therefore, hosting the conference online would enable participants to join virtually. Lastly, to call for online action that can only be viably implemented online. For example, hosting and/or participating in a tweet chat.

Seven tweets in the Call to Action and/or Advocacy category related to safety apps. Safety apps are mobile applications which can be used to aid personal safety. In five of these seven safety app related tweets, users were encouraged to use the reviewing tool developed by TBTT by following a URL which took users to TBTT's website. The reviewing tool was created to assist users with finding the safety apps and tools that work best for them. One of these seven tweets, Tweet 14, asked users if they had tried a specific safety app and another, Tweet 15, asked users to tweet TBTT their tips for developers of safety apps. By asking their followers for feedback on safety apps and tools, TBTT is empowering them, making an effort to engage with them and communicating to their followers that they value their opinions and feedback. Furthermore, TBTT is acting as an intermediary between users and developers of safety apps.

14.

takebackthetech: Have you tried @LetEmbrace safety app? How do you rate it? Tweet your thoughts to us <https://t.co/CkyVVQRXYw> <https://t.co/h8mb7zIjQB> #16days

2015-12-03 14:40

15.

takebackthetech: Tweet us your tips for developers of safety apps. What are they missing? What do you need? What would work better? <https://t.co/h8mb7zIjQB>

2015-12-01 06:30

In other tweets which were categorised as Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweets, TBTT also encouraged users to create their own campaigns within their communities. Such tweets occurred four

times within the sample. Two of these four tweets provided URLs to TBTT's campaign kit which included advice on organising a local campaign, how to go about spreading the word about campaign activities and how to build on the global movement. Another tweet encouraged users to discover what was happening in their communities or to start their own action. This tweet shared a URL directing users to a calendar which allowed them to filter global campaign activities via region or country/location. Users also had the option to filter between offline and online campaigns. This option aligns with Vegh's (2003:71-72) proposal that when it comes to online activism, strategies can either be Internet-enhanced or Internet-based. In this case, the online feature in question would be considered an Internet-based strategy as it provided users with information about activities that could only be performed online such as tweet chat, relays and webinars. They could also choose to use the calendars to focus on offline activities which would be an Internet-enhanced strategy. The fourth tweet in this subgroup, Tweet 16 below, asked users what they were planning to do for 16 Days and provided a URL which linked to a page of campaign action ideas:

16.

takebackthetech: Still time to plan & implement a #takebackthetech #16days campaign action. What will you do? Here are some ideas! <https://t.co/E0iVkjywnu>

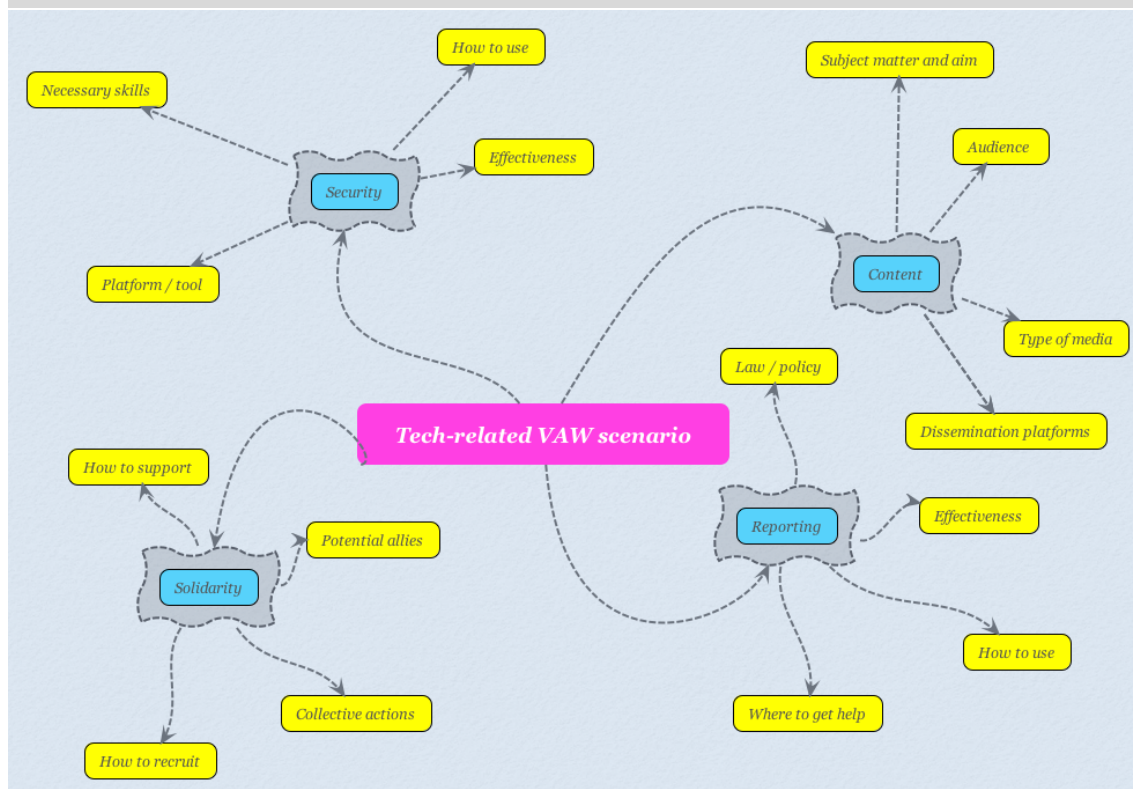
2015-12-01 12:40

In addition to encouraging users to create their own campaigns and thus broaden the network of activists, TBTT also encouraged participants to create their own digital safety roadmaps. Thus one of TBTT's strategies is encouraging users to act. As discussed in Chapter Two, the digital safety roadmap is a digital or hardcopy visual representation, created by participants, which provides information and resources on digital safety to benefit members of their communities. Two of the five tweets (see Tweet 17 for an example) which encouraged the creation of digital safety roadmaps shared the same content in the body of the tweet and included two URLs which respectively linked to an image/template of the digital safety roadmap (see the template below in Tweet 17) and to TBTT's webpage – "Chart the way forward. Make your own digital safety roadmap!" – which allowed users to download the template.

17.

takebackthetech: Make a #takebackthetech digital safety roadmap for your context!
<https://t.co/18IuCsI8WF> <https://t.co/oZkbPue011>

2015-11-26 11:35



According to Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) one of the key reasons TBTT utilises Twitter is to amplify the voices of women:

“We have a lot of partners in various countries and when they are campaigning we try and retweet a lot on what they are doing, on their research, their campaigns, their advocacy, and try to get their voices out there as well as individual women’s voices. So that’s another real benefit we see with Twitter. It allows these women who maybe normally don’t have any way for people to hear them to suddenly be heard and help to amplify that by retweeting them and by directing people to what they’re doing.”

Within the Call to Action and/or Advocacy category, TBTT only once asked users to share or submit their survivor stories (see Tweet 20 below). Seeing that the campaign’s foundation was based on survivor stories, this is somewhat surprising. However, considering the sensitivity and privacy factors regarding survivor stories, there is a possibility that TBTT could have utilised platforms other than

Twitter to obtain stories. The URL³ in Tweet 20 presented below links to a Twitter user's status whose story had been featured as one of TBTT's survivor stories. The user's tweet read: "O.M.G My #IAmNotMyVagina #StoriesOfTriumph campaign was featured on #takebackthetech site cc @WorldPulse". By sharing this tweet TBTT is encouraging women to own their stories and share them thus empowering these women.

20.

takebackthetech: Campaigners, submit your stories on gender-based violence and use of tech to perpetrate or prevent! #takebackthetech (link)

2015-11-30 22:23

According to this study's sample, TBTT published three tweets (Tweets 21-23 below) encouraging users to report technology-related VAW on the TBTT map. This map is different to the digital safety roadmap. Unlike the digital safety roadmap, which is essentially a template, this map allows users to access reports, news, pictures, and videos from all over the world about technology-related VAW by hovering over the map and clicking on a region. It also allows users to submit a report. In Tweets 21-23, the URLs linked to the aforementioned map on TBTT's website. These tweets illustrate that TBTT embraced the strategy of encouraging participants to get involved and act.

21.

takebackthetech: Use the #takebackthetech map to report tech-related violence against women. Build evidence, share stories! <https://t.co/fl23S3vWHd> #16days

2015-11-28 21:31

22.

takebackthetech: Document your story of tech-related violence anonymously on the #takebackthetech map. Make violence visible! #16days <https://t.co/PPHqjVrLI9>

2015-12-02 04:50

23.

takebackthetech: Add your report of tech-related violence to #takebackthetech global map. Document your story in your own words. <https://t.co/PPHqjVrLI9>

2015-12-04 05:40

³ The URL was excluded to protect the user's identity

Tweet 22 above acknowledges the sensitivity surrounding technology related VAW and how some campaigners may be reluctant to participate because of privacy fears. Therefore, TBTT assured campaigners that they could submit their stories anonymously. In Tweet 23 above, TBTT encouraged participants to document their stories in their own words. This was a way of empowering participants as technology-related VAW “invokes women’s sexuality and gender in ways that interfere with their agency, livelihood, identity, dignity and well-being” (Citron, 2009:384).

Seven tweets in the Call to Action and/or Advocacy category encouraged users to support the campaign and show solidarity. These tweets, encouraged users to take back the tech, to occupy the Internet and take action against gender-based violence, to counter VAW by amplifying women’s voices online, to come together and show solidarity for women human rights defenders, and to tweet support to feminist activists, writers and artists. All seven of the tweets that encouraged users to support the campaign and show solidarity included URLs, one tweet shared two URLs and the remaining six shared one URL each, thus eight URLs were shared in total. Two of the eight URLs linked to TBTT’s 2015 campaign webpage which provided information on the 16 Days campaign. The remaining six URLs linked to images which will be elaborated on under the discussion on TBTT’s tweets with images category. Six of the seven tweets were addressed to non-specified groups. This suggests that TBTT wanted these tweets to be inclusive and target a wide range of their followers.

By contrast, Tweet 24 below was directed specifically to Internet rights and sexual rights activists. Thus TBTT’s Twitter campaign shares a range of messages which target various different members (and potential members) of the broader network.

24.

takebackthetech: Internet rights and sexual rights activists come together for #16days and #takebackthetech! <https://t.co/fBZWn9KhrZ>

2015-11-26 04:10

Two tweets (Tweets 25-26 below) within the Call to Action and/or Advocacy classification, encouraged users to share photos of their offline activities. Tweet 25 provided a URL which linked to the article “Trafalgar Square fountains dyed blood red as Sisters Uncut demonstrators protest against women’s refuge cuts”. In the abovementioned article, Sisters Uncut demonstrators dyed the fountains in Trafalgar Square, London, red to resemble the blood of women killed by domestic violence⁴.

⁴ Please note that the image in Tweet 25 will not be discussed under the tweets with images category as the image was shared with the article and not in TBTT’s tweet. However, it was included with Tweet 25 as TBTT made direct reference to it in their tweet.

Tweet 26 encouraged users to share stories and images to change media perceptions. Here TBTT appears to encourage users to change media perceptions about survivors of gender-based violence as weak or as passive victims.



25.
takebackthetech: Share photos of offline action like this creative solidarity w/ domestic violence victims/survivors <https://t.co/gIQUIpm5jI> #takebackthetech

2015-11-30 22:05

26.
takebackthetech: Tweet us images/stories of women survivors taking action, showing strength & solidarity. Change media perceptions! #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-08 11:40

Tweets 27-30 below exemplify those tweets belonging to the Call to Action and/or Advocacy group which invited women journalists to either register for journalist security training (Tweet 27), invited users sign up for or join discussions about violence women face online (Tweets 28-29), or encouraged users join tweet chats on technology-related violence (Tweet 30).

27.
takebackthetech: Women journalists, deadline for @IWMF security training is Dec 1. Apply now! <https://t.co/smZ0mnQawM> #takebackthetech #16days

2015-11-30 18:33

28.
takebackthetech: This Thursday @CALAdvocacy is hosting a day-long discussion about violence women face online. Sign up now! <https://t.co/qW7pdhbVI5> #16days

2015-12-02 18:04

29.
takebackthetech: Violence against Women and Girls: It's Everybody's Business, a conversation w/ @WorldBank. Join online Dec 7 <https://t.co/nSHT9SQXwj> #16days

2015-12-05 18:00

30.
takebackthetech: Follow @womensaidorg & #InternetKita on 9 Dec for chat on tech-related violence. #16days #takebackthetech <https://t.co/AfG1E0eVyD>

2015-12-09 00:01

All of these activities promoted in Tweets 27-30 were organised by groups other than TBTT. Thus, along with promoting their own work and activities, TBTT was actively involved in network-building. This involves supporting other organisations and campaigners who work within the field of women and technology-related violence. TBTT linked to more information and mentioned the necessary parties in their tweets as indicated in Tweets 27-30 above. By including the different parties' usernames in their tweets, TBTT alerted them to their inclusion in the campaign, while also making it easier for TBTT followers to identify the groups organising the activities, to attend events, to communicate with them if need be, and for other users to follow them on Twitter if they wished to do so.

Lastly, two tweets (see Tweet 31 below) in the Call to Action and/or Advocacy category invited users to share resources on gender violence from their respective communities with World Pulse – “a growing social network connecting over 25,000 people from 190 countries with one mission: to create a world where all women thrive – one click, one comment, one connection at a time” (World Pulse, 2016). TBTT included a URL which linked to World Pulse's website and also mentioned the network. By including the network's username in their tweet, TBTT made it easier for their users to identify the network, to communicate directly with the network, and to follow them on Twitter if they so desired – all elements of network-building. The two tweets had the same content as illustrated in Tweet 31.

31.

takebackthetech: Share resources on gender violence from your community w/ @WorldPulse. Local knowledge! <https://t.co/0LdMMvX8xr> #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-07 15:05

The Call to Action and/or Advocacy category was the second largest of TBTT's original tweets. These tweets share similarities with Vegh's (2003:73-75) online activism categories of awareness/advocacy and organisation/mobilisation. TBTT's tweets in the Call to Action and/or Advocacy classification encouraged users to get involved in the campaign in a number of ways. For instance, users were urged to rate safety apps, to create their own campaigns within their communities, to make their own digital safety roadmaps, to report technology-related VAW, and to support the campaign and show solidarity. Some of TBTT's tweets in this category encouraged users to get involved in activities arranged by other organisations, supporting the notion that TBTT is actively involved in network-building. The third most frequently used strategy by TBTT during their 16 Days Twitter campaign was sharing survivor and/or victim stories.

4.4.3. Sharing survivor and/or victim stories

The content analysis identified 21 (10%) tweets that shared survivor and/or victim stories. Of the 21 tweets TBTT published in this category, one provided no link, 13 were hosted on TBTT's website and seven survivor stories were shared from other websites. As mentioned in Chapter Two, online activism offers activists an opportunity to empower marginalised voices (Newsom & Lengel, 2013:33). By sharing survivor stories, TBTT can be seen as doing that. This discussion will now provide more detail on the survivor stories hosted on TBTT's website.

4.4.3.1. Survivor stories shared by TBTT linking to their own website

Tweets 32-34 below are examples of stories hosted on TBTT's website. In Tweets 32-33, TBTT did not "@" mention the authors of the stories. This could be because the users are not on Twitter or they did not wish to have their identities revealed.

32.

takebackthetech: Read "Blue" a poem from a woman in India, written for #16days
<https://t.co/7bYnuTy9ox> #takebackthetech

2015-11-27 02:30

33.

takebackthetech: Watch Alejandra's true story of tech-related violence through a cartoon created for #16days <https://t.co/7bYnuTy9ox> Share & #takebackthetech

2015-11-27 14:50

In Tweet 34 below, TBTT mentioned @radhika_arp who at the time of conducting this research did not have a Twitter about section but the user's Twitter cover photo was an image that included the following wording: "Alternative Representation Project altreproject.org". This suggests that the user is associated with the aforementioned organisation. Since this user is affiliated with an organisation, they could have been more comfortable with having the story attributed to them. The Alternative Representation is "a media literacy initiative, dedicated to provide realistic portrayals of Indian women using media as a catalyst for cultural transformation" (Alternative Representation Project, 2015). As part of their network-building strategy, TBTT mentioned @radhika_arp. Mentioning @radhika_arp notifies them of the tweet, credits them for the video and provides TBTT's followers with @radhika_arp's username should they wish to follow her or make further contact.

34.

takebackthetech: Watch Check Your Privilege to see how gender, violence, sexuality are treated in Indian media & culture <https://t.co/7bYnuTy9ox> @radhika_arp

2015-11-30 03:10

In Tweets 35-38 TBTT shared four different women’s stories, all hosted on TBTT’s website. Tweet 35 below links to a digital comic story created by the Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA). Based in the Philippines, the FMA is

“a nonprofit service institution whose mission has been to assist citizens and communities—especially civil society organizations (CSOs) and other development stakeholders—in their strategic and appropriate use of the various information and communications media for democratization and popular empowerment” (FMA, 2016a).

35.

takebackthetech: A comic from the Philippines with Ana's strategy for dealing w/ blackmail. <https://t.co/HZ3LdQneDA> #takebackthetech <https://t.co/6xusx5UWGS>

2015-11-28 03:30

The digital comic is based on a true story and shares Ana’s strategy for dealing with blackmail. In the comic, Dino, Ana’s intimate partner, asks her to send him nude photos of herself. Ana agrees to send him the photos only if he promises not to share them with anyone. He promises not to share them however, a few hours later, Ana discovers that Dino has shared her photos online and they have been viewed by a number of people. Comments on her photos include: “Woah! What a whore!” Ana confronts Dino about sharing the photos and he threatens to post more unless she pays him a sum of money. Ana approaches the mayor for assistance who contacts the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to deal with the situation. The NBI issue a warrant of arrest for Dino and file a case against him for Robbery Extortion, violation of Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children, anti-Cybercrime Prevention Act, and Anti-Trafficking in person. Although it is unclear whether or not Ana is a fictional name, sharing the story as comic could have been chosen to protect the survivor’s identity and/or to allow a wide range of women to identify with Ana.

Tweet 36 below links to a video about Mercy Wambui’s experience of technology-related violence. The video was produced by the International Association for women in Radio and Television (IAWRT):

“a global organization formed by professional women working in electronic and allied media with a mission to strengthen initiatives towards ensuring women’s views and values are integral part of programming and to advance the impact of women in media” (IAWRT, 2011).

36.

takebackthetech: Watch Mercy's story on technology-related violence in Kenya
<https://t.co/uKWsdVX9UN> #takebackthetech

2015-11-28 13:31

Wambui, a community leader based in Kenya, narrates the video and shares how she is harassed daily with anonymous prank calls, threatening text messages and stalking. The video is not in English but provides English subtitles. Wambui communicates that she lives in fear and has been enduring the harassment for 10 months. Wambui records all of the insults in a book and although she reported everything to the police and the Criminal Investigation Department nothing was done to prosecute the harassers or investigate the case. The video ends with Wumbai saying, “Every time my phone rings, my heart skips a beat! I always wonder if my day has finally come. I live in fear” (IAWRT, 2015).

Ana and Wambui’s stories illustrate how technology-related violence is dealt with in different countries and communities and thus shows how TBTT worked to extend the campaign to women and activists in the Global South. Ana dealt with her situation by contacting law enforcement which resulted in Dino being charged. However, Wambui followed a similar path by alerting the police and nothing came of her report. Wambui and Ana’s stories support Citron’s (2009) argument that the law has a vital role to play in halting the online abuse of women. Their experiences also highlight the availability or lack thereof of legal remedies for ICT-related VAW. Although access to justice is an indispensable right guaranteed under Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (WLHRB, 2014:13), Wambui’s story highlights that international laws alone are sometimes not enough and local laws are required to combat technology-related violence.

Tweet 37 below links to a video interview with Emma Holten made by WhyHate – “a digital platform that observes and tracks gender based harassment on the internet” (Why Hate, 2014). In the video, Holten shares her experience of being a victim of sexualised blackmail and how she responded to the violation by posting her own nude photos to take back ownership of images that were used without her consent. Holten identifies as an activist and advocates that eradicating technology-related violence requires collaboration from individuals and organisations. Additionally, Holten argues that women are deciding not to be active on the Internet out of fear of technology-related violence which in turn becomes a democratic issue. Women’s lack of participation online means their voices are not being represented (Holten, 2015).

37.

takebackthetech: An interview with Emma Holten on consent & solidarity. Share #16days survivor stories! <https://t.co/olMZS5Tirw> #takebackthetech

2015-11-30 13:40

Tweet 38 below links to a written entry by Kanika Mishra describing why she created Karnika Kahen – an Indian female cartoon character who tackles Indian social and political issues and raises the voice of everyday Indian women on these issues (Mishra, 2015). Mishra created the cartoon character in August 2013 when she was feeling outraged “after reading the news about the Asaram, an Indian Godman who sexually abused a minor girl” (Mishra, 2015). Mishra posted the cartoons on her Facebook and Twitter accounts and faced a number of threats from Godman’s followers for making cartoons depicting him. In Tweet 38, TBTT mentioned @Karnikakahen – the username for the cartoon series created by Kanika Mishra – thus network-building, notifying the user of the tweet and enabling other users to contact @Karnikakahen or follow them. An example of one of the cartoons is presented below in Figure 4 (Mishra, 2015).

38.

takebackthetech: Read the survivor story of a cartoonist in India who won't be silenced. <https://t.co/s3MTPD5aub> @Karnikakahen #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-01 10:50



Figure 4: Cartoon of Karnika Kahen by Kanika Mishra⁵

The four different stories, Tweets 35-38, shared by TBTT on Twitter originated from different parts of the world (Philippines, Kenya, Denmark and India), highlighting TBTT’s attempt for their campaign to be globally relevant and have global reach. The women in these stories all faced different kinds of technology-related violence thus illustrating that this kind of violence can take shape in many forms. The range of stories also highlights the different routes the respective women took to address the abuse. Thus by sharing these stories TBTT informs users that if they are victims of technology-related violence, they can address the abuse in a number of ways. However, the stories also illustrate how

⁵ Source: <https://www.takebackthetech.net/survivor-stories/india-karnika-kahen>

some areas (Ana in Phillipines) are better equipped to deal with technology-related violence than others (Wambui in Kenya).

By sharing these stories, TBTT is helping ensure that these women do not remain voiceless. Something that arguably occurs in commercial media (Shahwar, 2013:5). The way women are represented in online and offline media – nameless, voiceless, faceless – has a significant impact on how they are viewed and treated. As Nnaemeka’s (1997:1) argues, key issues in feminism include voice, agency, victimhood, sisterhood and subjectivity. By sharing these survivor stories in the survivor’s words, TBTT aimed to help women (re)claim their agency and ensure they are not voiceless.

Taking into account that 23 stories were published on TBTT’s website, it is surprising that only eight of the 23 stories were tweeted, according to the data set. Considering that sharing stories formulated the foundation of this campaign, it is a pity that more, if not all, of the survivor stories were not shared on Twitter. In addition to sharing survivor stories hosted on their own website, TBTT also shared survivor stories published on other websites.

4.4.3.2. Survivor stories shared by TBTT linking to other websites

In light of the above, I will now discuss the survivor stories TBTT shared linking to other websites. As mentioned previously it was found that this group comprised seven out of the 20 survivor story tweets. The following links were shared:

- “Threats on her phone and footsteps behind her back”, “End violence: Case studies from Democratic Republic of Congo”, and “End violence: Case studies from Kenya”. All hosted on GenderIt.org
- “16 girls, 16 stories of resistance” published on United Nations Population Fund website
- “The Story Behind the Story” featured on ABAAD’s YouTube page
- “Cyber abuse: ‘My boyfriend tormented me online’” published on Telegraph.co.uk
- “Violence against women: testimonies from around the world” hosted on the United Nations Development Programme website.

Sharing stories from these other websites supports the notion that TBTT is a global campaign which embraces collaboration and knowledge sharing in an attempt to reach women globally. The websites TBTT shared stories from were GenderIT.org – “a project of the Women’s Rights Programme of the Association for Progressive Communications” (GenderIT, 2016a), United Nations Population Fund –

“the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled” (United Nations Population Fund, n.d), ABAAD’s YouTube channel – “an independent civil association that aims to achieve gender equality in the MENA [Middle East and North Africa] region” (ABAAD, 2012), Telegraph.co.uk – an online UK commercial media website (Telegraph Media Group Limited, 2016), and United Nations Development Programme – “UNDP works in nearly 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion” (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

Linking to a variety of websites resulted in stories being shared in different formats including video, articles, blogs and case studies. It also resulted in stories being shared from different regions in the world including Niger, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Kenya, United Kingdom, Lesotho, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Ukraine and more. The aforementioned supports the notion that TBTT aims to amplify the voices of different women globally.

Tweet 39 below was published by TBTT to inform their followers of the 16 stories shared on the United Nations Population Fund’s (@UNFPA) website. TBTT mentioned @UNFPA thus ensuring that the user received a notification of the tweet and mentioning them also ensured that other users had access to their username and could therefore make contact with @UNFPA and/or follow them on Twitter. The act of “@” mentioning UNFPA is also a method of network-building and also lends authority as the United Nations can be considered a reputable organisation.

39.

takebackthetech: From @UNFPA: 16 girls, 16 stories of resistance to gender violence. Share stories, change minds <https://t.co/QYpL36xeAa> #takebackthetech

2015-11-27 13:15

Lastly, TBTT shared one tweet (Tweet 40) about survivor stories without including a URL to encourage users to browse the survivor stories. This study proposes that TBTT should have included a link so their followers could access the stories easily.

40.

takebackthetech: Have you browsed the #takebackthetech gallery of survivor stories for #16days? Essays, poems, videos, cartoons and more. Look and share!

2015-11-27 06:05

Sharing stories is a significant aspect of TBTT’s campaign as these stories assure survivors that they are not alone, they build empathy for diverse experiences and they give survivors a voice. The

discussion above revealed that TBTT shared survivor stories hosted on their own website and other non-commercial media websites thus TBTT is amplifying alternative sources. Furthermore, TBTT would often “@” mention the author or source of the story, suggesting that TBTT is actively involved in network-building. The survivor stories were presented in different formats including poems, articles, cartoons, case studies and videos, and they originated from different parts of the world including Kenya, India, Denmark, Ukraine, and Philippines. Thus highlighting TBTT’s attempt for their campaign to be globally relevant and have global reach. The stories are also a source of information as they inform users that if they are victims of technology-related violence, they can address the abuse in a number of ways. Along with allowing TBTT to share survivor stories, one of the key features of Twitter is that it allows for two-way conversations to occur. To make the most of this, TBTT utilised questions to ignite conversations between them and their followers.

4.4.4 Facilitating conversations

In total, the Questions category made up 9% (17 tweets) of TBTT’s original tweets. TBTT asked general questions to their followers, addressed questions to particular groups, and also directed questions to specific users. Of these 17 tweets, 10 were addressed to users in general, four were directed to particular groups – women’s rights activists, feminists and campaigners in Asia – and three were directed to specific users – @FMA_PH and @iawrtk, @FeminismInIndia, and @womensaidorg. Arguably, directing tweets to specific users was done strategically by TBTT. If these users retweet TBTT’s tweet, it would increase TBTT’s exposure and reach to these users’ followers.

In Tweet 41 below, TBTT did not direct the question to a specific user by using the “@” symbol, however, they did direct it to women’s rights activists in general, see Tweet 41 below. By directing the question to women’s rights activists, TBTT is network-building and creating a counterpublic for this group of people. The creation of this counterpublic allows people who identify as women’s rights activists to “invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser, 1990:67).

41.

takebackthetech: Women's rights activists, how critical is the internet to your work?
#imagineafeministinternet #takebackthetech

2015-11-25 12:31

By including #imagineafeministinternet and #takebackthetech in Tweet 41, TBTT is embracing the tactic of engaging feminist hashtag networks. In this way, TBTT contributed towards those broader

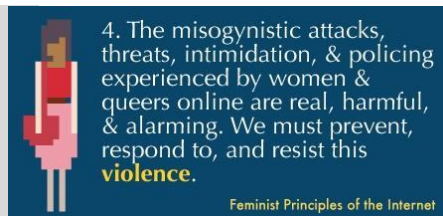
conversations. Including these hashtags helped TBTT keep track of the conversations and potentially capture users' answers to the question. These users could have responded to the question by including one or both hashtags in their response.

Much like Tweet 41, Tweet 42 below was not directed to a particular user by using the “@” symbol, however, it is addressed to feminists. This is an illustration of network-building, creating a network of feminist information, and creating a counterpublic for people who identify as feminists. It constructs an imagined audience of feminists much as Tweet 41 addresses an imagined counterpublic of women's rights activists as well as a network of activists. Fraser (1996:68) proposes that counterpublics have dual objectives: recognition and redistribution. First, recognition ensures that the subordinated components of one's identity – for example, gender, race and sexual orientation – are valued as a core organising principle of the counterpublic. In this case the organising principle would be identifying as a feminist. Second, counterpublics present a space “from which agitation and resistance against institutional and cultural hegemony is promoted and maintained (redistribution)” (Carducci & Nicolazzo, 2012). In this instance, misogyny and patriarchy could be considered the systems which feminists in this counterpublic are resisting against. The explicit targeting of feminists and activist networks also implies that other Twitter users (and particularly Twitter trolls) are not necessarily invited to the conversation or needed in the network. A possible downside is that Twitter is not necessarily a “safe space”, people who reply are “exposing” themselves as feminists and could face abuse or harassment because of that.

42.

takebackthetech: Feminists, how is your digital security?
<https://t.co/mRv3yaooyA> #16days #imagineafeministinternet
<https://t.co/PU1JfbugVp>

2015-11-27 18:31



TBTT also included URLs in Tweet 42, a tactic employed extensively by the network. The first URL linked to TBTT's safety toolkit and the second one linked to the accompanied image which will be discussed in more detail under the “tweets with images” category. I propose that TBTT's intentions were twofold in Tweet 42. Firstly, they wanted to receive a response from feminist users about their digital security. Secondly, by including the link to their safety toolbox, they also wanted users – arguably feminist or not – to visit the link and engage with the network's safety toolkit.

Tweet 43 was directed to campaigners in Asia. I can only make educated assumptions as to why campaigners in this particular region were singled out. For instance, it could be that one of TBTT's strategies is to engage more with activists in Asia and to increase their reach and impact in that region.

Alternatively, in the past, activists in Asia might have had successful campaigns and TBTT is reaching out to them to share their work with the rest of their followers. Along with asking these activists what activities they had planned for 16 Days, TBTT also offered to provide them with any resources they may need. This tweets suggests that TBTT makes an effort to assist activists in their endeavours, particularly those who may be lacking resources in the Global South.

43.

takebackthetech: Campaigners in Asia, what are you doing to #takebackthetech for #16days? Share your activism with us. Let us know if you need resources.

2015-12-03 06:20

In addition to the tweets which specifically targeted activists and feminists, 10 questions were addressed to users in general. Some of the questions asked were: “In the past week since #16days started, how much #VAW have you seen on television, online, on the street?”, “How do you #imagineafeministinternet?”, “Have you censored your digital behaviour due to violence or fear of violence?”, “What would a feminist safety app look like?”, “Have you thought about connections between gender-based violence, tech & HIV?”, and “Is the Internet an empowering force for you despite risks/realities of violence?” In this way, TBTT utilises questions as a way to encourage engagement between them and their followers.

It was not uncommon for TBTT to ask more than one question in a tweet as depicted in Tweets 44-45. Arguably, TBTT asked more than one question to increase the possibility of engagement with their followers and to avoid the probability of one word answers.

44.

takebackthetech: In the past week since #16days started, how much #VAW have you seen on television, online, on the street? How many stories? #takebackthetech

2015-12-01 15:03

45.

takebackthetech: Do you use safety apps? Do they do work? How could they be improved? Help us crowdsource tips for developers! #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-03 10:50

TBTT also used the strategy of asking questions to inform their followers about campaigns organised by other organisations as shown in Tweet 46. By including the username of the organisation that was coordinating the campaign (@SayNO_UNiTE) TBTT ensured that the mentioned organisation saw the tweet and made it possible for other users to connect with or contact the organisation. Thus

sharing information about other campaigns is a way for TBTT to show solidarity to the cause and engage in network-building.

46.

takebackthetech: Have you seen #orangeyourworld activities & photos of orange-lit cities dedicated to #16days for @SayNO_UNiTE? Very powerful global action.

2015-11-30 01:01

As stated previously, three questions were directed to specific users (Tweets 47-49 below). These questions were asked to @FMA_PH – a non-government organisation that “assists individuals and groups in their strategic and appropriate use of various means of information and communications technology” (FMA, 2016b), @IawrtK – “a global organization of professional women working in electronic and allied media” (IAWRT-Kenya, 2014), @FeminismInIndia – “an award-winning digital intersectional feminist platform to learn, educate and develop a feminist sensibility and unravel the F-word among the youth in India” (Feminism in India, 2013), and @womensaidorg – “an NGO that provides shelter & counseling for abused women, & advocates for women’s human rights” (Women’s Aid Organisation, 2012). Unfortunately, a Twitter search suggests that none of the abovementioned users responded to TBTT’s questions. Besides the possibility of them not having seen TBTT’s tweets, it is not clear why the questions did not spark a response. That being said, it is unclear what kind of relationships TBTT has with these organisations but nonetheless this shows that it takes more than a question on Twitter to build a strong network of activists. These organisations are all fighting for a similar cause thus network-building and collaboration would only strengthen the cause.

47.

takebackthetech: @womensaidorg Will you have a Storify of your chat?

2015-12-09 17:30

48.

takebackthetech: @FMA_PH @iawrtk What are you doing for #16days? Share your activism.

2015-12-04 14:05

49.

takebackthetech: @FeminismInIndia Would more women reporters/editors/producers change coverage of #GBVInMedia? #GenderInMedia #16days <https://t.co/j9srTCasFd>

2015-12-07 23:45

The above discussion on TBTT’s Questions category has revealed that TBTT asked general questions to their followers, addressed questions to particular groups, and also directed questions specifically to users. Directing tweets to specific users was done strategically by TBTT. If these users retweet

TBTT's tweet, it would increase TBTT's exposure and reach to these users' followers. It was also uncovered that by directing questions to particular groups such as women's rights activists, TBTT is network-building and creating counterpublics for these groups of people. TBTT often included URLs and hashtags in their Questions tweets, two tactics employed extensively by the network. Together with providing online activists with a platform to ask users questions, Twitter also affords online activists the opportunity to respond to users' questions and/or comments.

4.4.5. Answers and/or responses

In addition to asking questions, TBTT fostered discussion by providing answers and/or responses which comprised 8% (16 tweets) of TBTT's original tweets. These were tweets where TBTT directly responded to users and were identified by the "@" symbol before a user's username. The 16 tweets that were answers involved TBTT being in conversation with 18 different users. It is important to reiterate that victims and survivors do not always feel comfortable sharing what they have experienced on a public platform such as Twitter. As a result, victims and survivors often message TBTT privately – whether on Facebook, email or Twitter (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). This would result in TBTT having to answer these questions in private. Such conversations cannot be included in this research for privacy and ethical reasons but it is important to note that they exist and that they suggest the need for safer platforms for counterpublics.

Sometimes TBTT engaged with the same user more than once. For example, in the thread below (Tweets 50-54) TBTT engaged with @anna_32x (not the user's real username) twice in order to answer a question this user had asked. It appears that @anna_32x's question was in response to a question that TBTT had asked. Although @anna_32x did not "@" mention TBTT in the question, the user did include #takebackthetech which could be how TBTT managed to track down the question and respond to it. The time stamps of the tweets in question also confirm that @anna_32x was responding to TBTT's question. The thread below resulted from the interaction:

50.

takebackthetech: Have you censored your digital behaviour due to violence or fear of violence? #takebackthetech #16days <https://t.co/HkitfFJ5NA>

2015-12-07 11:01

51.

@anna_32x: Yes I have in trying to avoid online harassment. But I would not call it violence. Is harassment and violence the same? #takebackthetech

2015-12-07 11:07

52.

takebackthetech: @anna_32x 1) Harassment is part of the continuum of VAW (compare to street harassment) but can certainly be at various levels of seriousness

2015-12-07 13:01

53.

takebackthetech: @anna_32x 2) But women also change their behaviour to avoid stalking, images shared w/out consent, hate speech (writers leaving Internet)

2015-12-07 13:02

54.

@anna_32x: .@takebackthetech Agree with all this, but my question was whether it is helpful to equate "online violence" and "online harassment".

2015-12-07 13:08

In Tweet 54 above, @anna_32x asked TBTT a question which they did not respond to directly. Rather, TBTT responded to @anna_32x's question in a separate tweet from the thread and included a link to Tweets 51, 52 and 54. TBTT's tweet in response to Tweet 54 reads: "Online sexual harassment is part of violence against women that also takes place online. So yes, it encompasses this (link to tweets 51, 52 and 54)⁶". It is unclear why TBTT did not respond to @anna_32x's tweet directly. By responding in a separate tweet, @anna_32x would not have been notified of their response. Although @anna_32x and TBTT did not agree on whether or not online violence and harassment are the same thing, their exchange is a prime example of how Twitter can be used to engage in respectful dialogue.

Sometimes TBTT would respond to users' questions on Twitter and continue the conversation in an alternative space. See Tweets 55-59 below between TBTT and @nicky_09 (not the user's real username). The thread below is a prime example of how TBTT's network-building strategies can result in them collaborating with individuals and/or organisations on projects.

⁶ The link is excluded to protect the user's identity

55.

nicky_09: @takebackthetech I work as a DV advocate in Boston & at a social media startup. Can we collaborate on a project?

2015-12-08 21:57

56.

takebackthetech: @nicky_09 That would be great! Please DM² us.

2015-12-08 22:34

2. "Direct Messages are the private side of Twitter. You can use Direct Messages to have private conversations with Twitter users about Tweets and other content" (Twitter, 2016a).

57.

nicky_09: @takebackthetech Your DM doesn't appear to be active. My email is xxx@gmail.com. Where should I contact you?

2015-12-09 14:43

58.

takebackthetech: @nicky_09 We are following you now, so you can try DM, but you can also email info@takebackthetech.net.

2015-12-09 14:47

59.

nicky_09: @takebackthetech Awesome! I just sent you an email. :)

2015-12-09 21:50

In one instance, more than one user was included in a question which resulted in a longer discussion. In the thread below (Tweets 60-65), four tweets were sent before TBTT joined the discussion and ultimately eight different users, including TBTT, were included in the discussion. @jasmine_x_321 (not the user's real username), the user who initially asked the question, only received a response from two other users, TBTT being one of them. So, although eight different users were tagged in the conversation only three engaged in the discussion. In the thread below, @jasmine_x_321 asked whether or not there is an app for one to protect themselves from cyber violence. TBTT responded by introducing @jasmine_x_321 to @heartmobber from @iHollaback. @heartmobber is "a platform that provides real-time support to individuals experiencing online harassment and empowers bystanders to act" (HeartMob, 2015). @iHollaback is "a movement to end harassment powered by a network of local activists around the world" (Hollaback, 2016). In their response, TBTT is network-building and providing @jasmine_x_321 with resources to assist them with their query.

60.

jasmine_x_321: Is there an app to protect ourself against #cyberviolence ? @Lauriwest @takebackthetech

2015-12-10 14:07

61.

jasmine_x_321: @Lauriwest @takebackthetech @jezzomo @Andilejuma

2015-12-10 14:12

62.

jezzomo: @jasmine_x_321 o @Lauriwest @takebackthetech @Andilejuma not to my knowledge in #Cameroon, definitely needed #womensrightsonline @webfoundation

2015-12-10 14:34

63.

jasmine_x_321: @jezzomo @Lauriwest @takebackthetech @Andilejuma @webfoundation So till now, we just have preventive tools or denunciation methods...

2015-12-10 15:04

64.

takebackthetech: @jasmine_x_321 @jezzomo @Lauriwest @takebackthetech @Andilejuma @webfoundation @heartmobber from @iHollaback is in pilot phase, good model

2015-12-10 15:10:34

65.

jasmine_x_321: @takebackthetech @jezzomo @Alexikhuzwayo @webfoundation @heartmobber Wow @iHollaback great hub about safety guide on social network!

2015-12-10 15:55

In a few of TBTT's tweets that were classified as Answers and/or Responses, the network thanked their users for different reasons as illustrated below in Tweets 66-71. By taking the time to thank users TBTT is demonstrating that they value the relationships they have with their Twitter community. By responding to users, TBTT is engaging in network-building, promoting engagement, fostering relationships, raising awareness and spreading useful information.

66.

tutahog: Wordcloud of the top words used in #takebackthetech tweets. So delighted to see the strength and warmth winning.

2015-12-01 13:06



67.

takebackthetech: @tutahog Very cool! Thank you.

2015-12-01 13:06

68.

chitaskforce: @takebackthetech @FeminismInIndia We wrote an entire guide on this! Please see & share widely: <http://bit.ly/1fwZKxA> #RapeCulture

2015-11-26 05:41

69.

takebackthetech: @chitaskforce Truly an excellent guide. Thank you!

2015-11-26 13:37

70.

qanitamos: No fear, there are great social media campaigns to @takebackthetech #cyberviolence #16days @OCTEVAW #yql @SACPA @uoflwomnscentre @lpirg

2015-11-26 03:22

71.

takebackthetech: @qanitamos Thanks of including us!

2015-11-26 13:39

The above discussion has uncovered that TBTT fostered conversations by providing answers and/or responses to users' tweets. These were tweets where TBTT directly responded to users and were identified by the "@" symbol before a user's username. Under the Answers and/or Responses category, TBTT sometimes engaged with the same user more than once, responded to users' questions on Twitter and continued the conversation in an alternative space, engaged in conversations with more than one user, and responded to users by thanking them for various reasons. By responding to users, TBTT is engaging in network-building, promoting engagement, fostering relationships, raising

awareness and spreading useful information. In conjunction with being able to respond to users' questions, a benefit of Twitter is that it allows online activists to share helpful tools, resources, and/or strategies with their followers.

4.4.6. Sharing tools, resources, and/or strategies

Tweets dedicated to sharing tools, resources and strategies made up 6% (13) of TBTT's original tweets. An additional strength of Twitter as a network-building tool is that it allows activists to share digital tools and online resources with relative ease. When sharing tools, resources, and/or strategies, TBTT always included a link in their tweet. Of the 13 tweets, each with one link, seven linked to TBTT's website and six linked to other sources of information. The URLs that linked to TBTT's website were always to different landing pages which offered tools, resources and tips including: "How to take back the tech when trolls appear", "Self-care: Coping and healing", "How to talk to survivors", "Be safe: Safety toolkit", and "Know more: Hate speech". The non-TBTT sources of information included: "Reporting On Rape and Sexual Violence: A Media Toolkit for Local and National Journalists to Better Media Coverage" – developed by the Chicago Taskforce on Violence Against Girls & Young Women (2012), "ICTs for Feminist Movement Building: Activist Toolkit" – created by APC (2015a), and "Speak Up & Stay Safe(r): A Guide to Protecting Yourself From Online Harassment" – produced by Jaclyn Friedman – "a writer, speaker and feminist troublemaker" (Friedman, Sarkeesian, and Sherman, 2015), Anita Sarkeesian "a media critic and the creator of Feminist Frequency" (Friedman et al, 2015), and Renee Bracey Sherman "a reproductive justice activist and the author of *Saying Abortion Aloud: Research and Recommendations for Public Abortion Storytellers and Organizations*" (Friedman et al, 2015). By sharing tools, resources, and/or strategies – one of the campaign's fundamental tactics – TBTT is aiming to empower their followers with knowledge and resources to overcome and deal with online VAW.

Sometimes TBTT would address tweets in the Sharing Tools, Resources, and/or Strategies category to particular groups of people. In Tweets 74-75, TBTT specifically addressed journalists and women who write online. TBTT directed these tweets to women journalists and online writers because female journalists are increasingly being singled out and attacked online. They experience approximately three times as many abusive comments as their male counterparts on Twitter (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2015). By specifically addressing journalists and women who write online, TBTT is network-building with the members of these groups and creating a counterpublic for people who identify as journalists and women who write online. Additionally, TBTT is providing them with resources and strategies to extend the network of information from Twitter activists to broader publics.

74.

takebackthetech: Journalists, use this guide when reporting on sexual violence. #takebackthetech <https://t.co/N9tlW5z8oO>

2015-11-26 13:38

75.

takebackthetech: Are you a woman writing online and facing hate speech? Learn about rights & strategies from #takebackthetech <https://t.co/CZn44Ay2d1> #16days

2015-12-02 07:01

TBTT also understands the importance of ensuring that people who make contact with survivors and victims are equipped with the knowledge and tools to assist them accordingly. This is supported by Tweets 76-77 below.

76.

takebackthetech: #takebackthetech resources for employers, schools, individuals helping victims of tech-related VAW <https://t.co/WQzdyBDVKi> #16days

2015-12-04 16:10

77.

takebackthetech: Check out #takebackthetech tips on how to talk to survivors <https://t.co/gvzsnEdKaN> #16days #imagineafeministinternet

2015-12-06 11:50

In Tweets 78-79, TBTT provides users with tools and strategies to deal with trolls, suggesting that trolling is a concern recognised by TBTT. Tweets 78-79 also show that sharing tools, resources, and/or strategies is a tactic employed by TBTT to empower their followers to #takebackthetech.

78.

takebackthetech: Share this w/ trolls: "What we show is that there are multiple ways to be male and female" <https://t.co/i4Zpb4s2Dj> #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-03 02:05

79.

takebackthetech: Trouble with trolls while campaigning for #16days? #takebackthetech has strategies for dealing. <https://t.co/t3iXaz0ENu>

2015-12-05 05:20

Coping with trolls is a major challenge for TBTT. In an interview for this research, Mitchell (2015 October 16) pointed out that the problem with trolling is a recent one. In the past, TBTT would come across an occasional tweet which was clearly not in agreement with TBTT. Mitchell said such tweets could include a user asking an obnoxious question but did not constitute trolling. On the ninth of October, 2015 that all changed, when Gamergate trolls targeted TBTT:

“On 9 October 2015, misogynists, trolls and a variety of people who associate with the #Gamergate hashtag decided to occupy and corrupt the #takebackthetech and #imagineafeministinternet hashtags by posting thousands of anti-feminist and misogynistic tweets and memes. This attack is the response to a tweet chat organised by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Best Practice Forum on Countering Online Violence and Abuse, to discuss the impact of such violence. The volunteer who was organising the tweet chat also received an email in her personal inbox declaring the launch of the attack to “destroy” the campaign. This online attack against feminist activism online is deliberate, planned and coordinated, and it is only one example of the attacks that feminists face online” (APC, 2015b)

According to Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16), the goal of the trolls mentioned above was to hijack the hashtag and to prevent the tweet chat from happening. The trolls even made videos about TBTT and used intimidation and misinformation to try and silence TBTT, their partners and supporters. The tweet chat – which encouraged users to give examples of how women and girls are affected by online woman abuse – continued however, not at the level that the organisers were hoping for. In an attempt to prevent the trolls from dominating the conversation, TBTT asked users and supporters to retweet TBTT’s tweets to help spread TBTT’s messages and information about who they are and the work they do. During this attack, TBTT’s strategy was focused on keeping their work going, protecting their supporters and asking partners and supporters to tweet in support of the network. The attack shows how trolls try use silencing as a tactic and it also highlights the “downside” of a successful campaign – once activists attract (good) attention, they also have to deal with forms of “bad” attention such as trolling.

The attack began on Thursday night and by Sunday #takebackthetech had received 25,000 tweets (Mitchell personal interview, 2015 October 16). None of the tweets published during the attack were included in this study’s data as they were published in October and the tweets for this research were captured from 25 November – 10 December 2015. The trolls also saw #imagineafeministinternet (a hashtag that TBTT uses several times a year for different campaigns) and they attempted to hijack that hashtag as well. As the trolling gained momentum, the tweets that they were sending became

increasingly misogynistic, racist, violent, homophobic, transphobic and sexual. A reporter asked to see the tweets that TBTT received from the trolls so, TBTT collected screenshots of all of the tweets that they received and Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) described having to look at all of them at once as terrible. TBTT had planned to host tweet chats during their 16 Days campaign however, due to this attack, TBTT opted not to host tweet chats during their campaign to prevent something similar from happening. TBTT's decision to not host tweet chats during their campaign as a result of the October attack highlights how online abuse and trolling are a form of silencing and can result in online activists, and individual users, restricting their online activities and participation.

Throughout the attack, TBTT's strategy was to not respond to any of the negative tweets. They chose not to engage with the trolls on Twitter as they do not find it useful. TBTT did not want to give the trolls more attention than they were already getting, and they also did not want to spend too much time on the attack and responding to it because it would derail the rest of TBTT's work which is partly what the trolls want, according to Mitchell. TBTT is also of the belief that responding could encourage the trolls to continue trolling as they are receiving attention and engagement. Some individual TBTT staff members decided to engage directly with the trolls but not from any of the official accounts – they used their personal handles. The official accounts were used to publish public statements which were TBTT's only form of response to the trolls (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) proposes that there is no perfect solution to dealing with trolls. She explains that the attack involved a combination of persistence (which could be described as being a common trait of trolls) violence and harassment.

“We do not want to conflate what trolls do with online violence because it is different and if we call violence trolling or call people who commit violence online trolls then we minimise that violence. But I think there is something interesting going on here and we have seen it with some of our partners recently who have complained about being sort of mobbed by this misogynistic trolling. So I think there is an interesting element that's important to discuss when trolling is not just trolling but when it is misogynist or racist that is a little bit different” (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16).

Although TBTT may face negativity online, they refuse to allow trolling or any other form of abuse or intimidation to derail them from achieving their goals. Overall, when it comes to surmounting technology-related VAW, TBTT proposes a number of strategies. Firstly, the network would like to see intermediaries take more of a role in understanding how this kind of violence happens on their platforms or through their service and figure out ways how to minimise it and make their products safer. Such intermediaries include social media companies and Internet service providers (Mitchell,

personal interview, 2015 October 16). Furthermore, Mitchell adds that research conducted by TBTT and some of their partners has highlighted how the needs of women outside of America, Canada and Western Europe are being ignored on these platforms. These women tend to face numerous problems when it comes to reporting online abuse because of language and cultural barriers.

“Social media companies do not have reporting mechanisms in all user languages. Other times, even when the reporting form is in the user’s language, the platform lacks staff who can read the language, or who fully understand slang or complex cultural dynamics. For instance, an employee based in the US or the Philippines may not understand that accusing a woman of blasphemy in Pakistan can be the same as calling for her death” (Mitchell, personal communication 2016 September 12)

Thus, an additional focus of TBTT is to ensure that these women’s concerns are heard and that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and internet intermediaries do something to improve women’s safety online.

“We encourage these companies to take responsibility for their users and platforms and not ignore the violations that occur on the platforms they provide. Especially given that these companies make money off of users producing content. That means they are making money off of online violence too. They need to take action” (Mitchell, personal communication 2016 September 12).

Another core strategy for TBTT, at the time of conducting this research, is getting private sector, such as ISPs and internet intermediaries, to understand their role in technology-related VAW and getting them to take action. In the past two years TBTT has focused increasingly on Facebook and Twitter. Ultimately, TBTT would like to see the private sector embrace women’s rights as part of their policy.

TBTT’s ultimate strategy when it comes to battling technology-related VAW is to focus on building women’s capacity to use technology, to promote women’s rights and counter violence. Instead of being victims of things that happen on the Internet, TBTT wants to empower women to be content creators who are making things happen on the Internet and not just having things happen to them. Whether that is achieved by becoming developers, getting involved in Internet governance, writing online, or building campaigns online – that kind of action is the most important strategy (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16).

TBTT’s Sharing Tools, Resources, and/or Strategies tweets highlight that a further strength of Twitter as a network-building tool is that it allows activists to share digital tools and online resources with

relative ease. When sharing tools, resources, and/or strategies, TBTT always included a link in their tweet – a fundamental tactic used by TBTT. The URLs shared by TBTT linked to their website and to other non-commercial media websites thus amplifying alternative sources. The tweets in this category dealt with different issues such as dealing with trolls, hate speech, and how to talk to survivors. These tweets also provided links to guides and toolkits on reporting on rape and sexual violence, and protecting yourself from online harassment, for example. By sharing various tools, resources, and/or strategies – one of the campaign’s primary tactics – TBTT is aiming to empower their followers with knowledge and resources to overcome and deal with online VAW. This study endeavoured to classify all tweets into a category, however, some tweets did not fit into one and were therefore pooled into a category of unclassified tweets.

4.4.7. Unclassified tweets

Tweets which did not fall into any of the above categories comprised the smallest count of TBTT’s original tweets – 9 tweets (4%). These were tweets that did not distinctly fall into any of the coding categories. Three of these tweets involved TBTT sharing a URL to three other users’ tweets. These three users’ tweets read: “Twitter is all about hashtagging, short ways for communication, feminism about strengthening each other that’s the way of #takebackthetech”, “No fear, there are great social media campaigns to @takebackthetech #cyberviolence #16days @OCTEVAW #yql @SACPA @uoflwomnscentre @lpirg” and “#takebackthetech”. The rest of the unclassified tweets included, “We want security, not censorship!” a tweet about International Day of Persons with Disabilities and a tweet thanking campaigners for participating in 16 Days – see Tweet 80 below.

80.

takebackthetech: Thank you to all of the campaigners--that's you!--who made this #16days campaign possible. Stay online, keep speaking up! #takebackthetech

2015-12-10 22:10

The above discussion reveals that the majority of TBTT’s tweets were original tweets. Of these original tweets, the most popular categories the tweets fell under – in ascending order – were News, Reports and/or Research, Call to Action and/or Advocacy, Sharing Survivor and/or Victim Stories, Questions, Answers and/or Responses, Sharing Tools, Resources, and/or Strategies, and Unclassified tweets. The above analysis shows that TBTT’s fundamental strategies during the campaign included creating counterpublics, network-building, empowering their followers with tools and resources, agenda-setting, sharing survivor stories, encouraging conversations and using hashtags. In light of the above discussion, the following chapter will provide more detail on TBTT’s tweets with images.

CHAPTER FIVE: TWEETS WITH IMAGES (SAY IT WITH A PICTURE)

Of all the original tweets shared by TBTT on Twitter, 38 tweets (18%) included a visual element. These tweets comprised a small percentage of the total and thus including images in their tweets was not a fundamental strategy employed by TBTT. These tweets with images were always accompanied with text in the body of the tweet. This study recommends that TBTT should use more images during their online campaigns, especially on SNS. Images allow Twitter users to overcome the platform's 140-character limit and online content with relevant visuals gets 94% more total views than content without (Hall, 2015). Research also shows that tweets with images get 313% more engagement, they can make data more accessible (for example, graphs, charts or infographics), up to four images can be included in a single tweet, and that images expand automatically in a user's timeline so that users can consume the content seamlessly (Stecyk, 2015).

Once the 38 tweets with visual elements were captured, they were segmented into categories. See Table 3 below.

Classification	Number of times tweeted	Percentage
Feminist Principles of the Internet	11	29%
Memes	4	10%
Quotes	4	10%
Infographics	4	10%
Digital safety roadmaps	3	8%
Photos of campaigners' work	3	8%
Announcements	3	8%
Images in a language other than English	2	5%
Survivor stories	2	5%
Photo collage	1	3%
Digital poster	1	3%
Total	38	100%

Table 3: Breakdown of the categories TBTT's original tweets with images were classified as

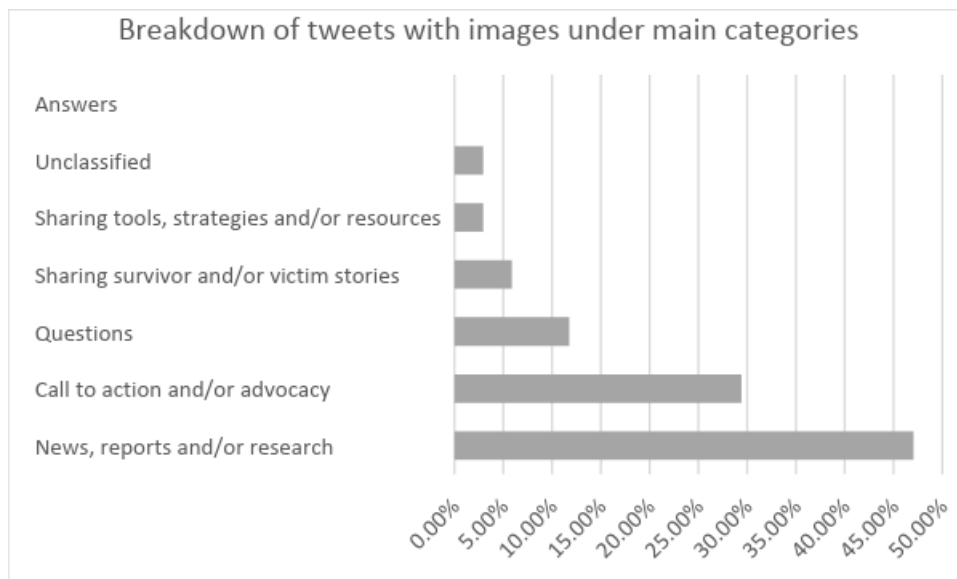


Figure 5: Classification of TBTT’s original tweets with images under main categories

Figure 5 illustrates that TBTT predominantly utilised tweets with images when sharing tweets that were classified as News, Reports and/or Research (47%), followed by the Call to Action and/or Advocacy category (29%), and the Questions group (11%). A full gallery of the images tweeted by TBTT can be found in Appendix A.

5.1. How do you #imagineafeministinternet?

The most common tweets with images published by TBTT included a graphic of Feminist Principles of the Internet (FPOTI). TBTT tweeted different FPOTI images a total of 11 times (29%). These tweets highlight key principles by presenting them as images (see example Tweets 81-83 below). The visual salience of text is heightened in these tweets and they provide space for additional words (beyond Twitter’s 140-character limit). The 11 FPOTI images can be found in Appendix A1.

The FPOTI images included text and pixel-art characters. The pixel-art characters differed in each FPOTI image to portray diversity. Of the 11 images shared, six of the pixel-art characters had pale skin colour and five had darker skin colour. The characters all wore different clothing and had varying hairstyles and the sex and/or gender of the characters was not always distinct. Besides the clothing they wore, it was difficult to establish if the characters were men or women. The ambiguity of the characters’ genders may be another feminist strategy embraced by TBTT, which recognises that gender “is constructed within a social and cultural discourse” (Xue 2008:54). Thus, indicators such as the way a person dresses, the way they talk, the way they move and the way they style their hair are not definitive identifiers of a person’s gender but rather social constructions. This research finds the

ambiguity of the characters' genders an attempt for FPOTI to be more inclusive as women who do not identify as women in the socially constructed sense could identify with the pixel-art characters. I argue that the use of pixel-art characters in the FPOTI images was a conscious one. Research shows that “the creative use of cartoon spokespeople in print ads leads to more positive consumer advertising outcomes” (Heiser, Sierra & Torres, 2008:75) in comparison to the use of a human spokesperson. Although the FPOTI images are not print advertisement, they are visual illustrations sharing information in the hopes that people will act after viewing them. In an attempt to be more inclusive, the inclusion of pixel-art characters with disabilities could support #imagineafeministinternet message of being a diverse feminist movement.

Tweet 81 below falls within the category of News, Reports and/or Research as it is sharing information about FPOTI. The URL in this tweet links to the supplemented graphic. As discussed in Chapter Four, these FPOTI graphics were initially created for the ongoing #imagineafeministinternet campaign. In all of the FPOTI graphics, the text “Feminist Principles of the Internet” is placed in the bottom right-hand side of the image to indicate that the image belongs to the FPOTI campaign. The FPOTI graphic featured in Tweet 81 reads: “A feminist internet is more women and queers – in all our diversities – having universal, affordable, unfettered, unconditional & equal access to the Internet.” The background of the image is green and majority of the text is in white. The word “access” is in yellow and is bolded to make it more prominent than the rest of the text. This indicates that access to the Internet is the key message of this image. The image also includes a pixel-art character with shoulder-length brown hair, pale coloured skin, wearing a white t-shirt with a yellow-faced emoticon on it, black knee-length shorts and grey shoes.



Tweet 82 below is a Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweet. Although it is sharing information about FPOTI, the FPOTI image was utilised as a means to encourage people to share the stories from TBTT’s 16 Days campaign. The first URL in the tweet directs users to TBTT’s “Survivor Stories” page on their website. The second URL is the inserted visual. Although phrased as a question, the question was used as a means to engage users.

The FPOTI graphic used in Tweet 82 reads: “The internet is a transformative public and political space. It facilitates new forms of citizenship that enable individuals to claim, construct, and express

ourselves, genders and sexualities.” The background of the image is burnt orange/brown and majority of the text is in white. The word “transformative” is in yellow and is bolded to make it more prominent than the rest of the text. This indicates that the Internet being transformative is the key message of this image. The image also includes a pixel-art character with pale skin, tied up brown hair, wearing a skirt, a t-shirt and red shoes.



Tweet 83 below was also identified as a Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweet. Although it is sharing information about FPOTI, the image was utilised as a means to encourage people to visit the URL on safety apps. The first URL in the tweet directs users to TBTT’s “Transform tools: Rate safety apps to find what works for you” page on their website. The second URL in the body of the tweet is the supplemented image. Arguably, TBTT employed a question as a means to engage their audience. The FPOTI graphic published in Tweet 83 reads: “Feminists are politically committed to creating, supporting, promoting, and experimenting with technology using free & open source tools and platforms.” The background of the image is a burnt orange/brown and majority of the text is in white. The words “open source” are in yellow and bolded to make them more prominent than the rest of the text. This indicates that open source tools and platforms is the key message of this image. The image also includes a pixel-art character with pale skin, shoulder-length brown hair, wearing grey stockings and shoes, a pink skirt and a blue long-sleeved top.



The above discussion uncovers that the most common tweets with images published by TBTT included a FPOTI graphic. The FPOTI images incorporate text and pixel-art characters who differ in each FPOTI image to portray diversity. Portraying the characters as pixel-art, racially diverse, and gender ambiguous could have been done to appeal to a wider audience and for diverse individuals to be able to identify with the characters. The FPOTI images deal with various issues such as equal

Internet access, the Internet being a transformative public and political space, and open sources and tools. When sharing FPOTI images TBTT also included hashtags in their tweets to foster network-building. Along with sharing FPOTI images on Twitter, TBTT also shared memes.

5.2. Using memes to mobilise

The second most popular kind of tweets with images published by TBTT were those which included memes. A meme is “an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by Internet users, often with slight variations” (Oxford Dictionaries: 2016b). Memes were shared four times (10%) by TBTT during their 16 Days campaign. All the memes shared by TBTT during the campaign can be found in Appendix A2.

TBTT made use of the same meme in two separate tweets, Tweets 84-85 below. Both of these tweets belong to the Call to Action and/or Advocacy group. By making use of a humorous meme, TBTT is not opposed to being light-hearted even though they are tackling a serious issue. The URL in both tweets links to the accompanied graphic. The meme in Tweets 84-85 could be considered a popular one as it has been used in various situations, see Appendix C. The main cartoon image appears to be in support of something, in this case it is the mobilisation of Internet and sexual rights activists. This is supported by the cartoon’s depiction of an activist waving a fist and shouting or cheering, while the text reads “Internet and sexual rights activists come together!”

84.

takebackthetech: Internet rights and sexual rights activists come together for #16days and #takebackthetech! <https://t.co/fBZWn9KhrZ>

2015-11-26 04:10



85.

takebackthetech: Come together & show solidarity for women human rights defenders! #takebackthetech #imagineafeministinternet <https://t.co/8aC8yiuxi>

2015-11-29 07:40

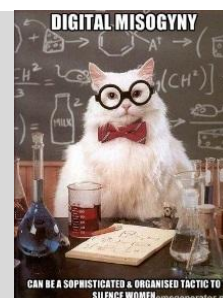


Tweet 86 below can be classified as a Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweet as it encourages users to support feminist activists, writers and artists. TBTT does not specify how users should go about showing their support for feminist activists, writers and artists – this is left for the reader to interpret. This support could be online and/or offline action.

86.

takebackthetech: Today tweet support to feminist activists, writers & artists
#takebackthetech #imagineafeministinternet #16days <https://t.co/oduTpHjFQC>

2015-12-02 13:31



The meme in Tweet 86 is an image of a cat in a classroom wearing a bow tie and glasses. In front of the cat there are various scientific instruments, like test tubes, thus portraying the cat as a scientist or professor. Behind the cat there is a blackboard with equations written on it. The images included in the equations include cheese, mice and milk – things associated with a cat. The text in the meme reads: “digital misogyny can be a sophisticated and organised tactic to silence women”. Although the image of the cat is humorous, the message being delivered is a serious one about digital misogyny. TBTT’s use of humour to address a serious issue could be an attempt to appeal to their followers by expressing themselves in an amusing manner. Additionally, it challenges misogynistic ideas of “humourless” feminists. Recently, Internet cats have gained significant popularity and so has this meme, see Appendix C. The URL in the tweet is the accompanied meme and not a link to an additional source of information.

Tweet 87 below falls under the Questions category as TBTT is asking users to feedback on how they imagine a feminist Internet. TBTT included three hashtags in this tweet: #imagineafeministinternet, #16days and #takebackthetech. By utilising three different hashtags TBTT is network-building and contributing to three different yet similar conversations as they are related, in some way or other, to activism, women, women’s rights, and online and/or offline woman abuse. By sharing #imagineafeministinternet in this tweet TBTT is also raising awareness about FPOTI. The URL included in the tweet links to the accompanying meme. The meme in Tweet 87 includes an image of SpongeBob SquarePants, a cartoon character, holding a rainbow between his hands. The rainbow could symbolise gay pride or an environment that is inclusive of all people regardless of their sexual orientation, religion, race and/or class. The rainbow could also symbolise hope and how happy a feminist Internet would be. This is also supported by SpongeBob’s excited facial expression. The meme reads: “#imagineafeministinternet where rape threat wasn’t the go-to method of strongly disagreeing with a feminist”. Although the meme is colourful and fun, the messaging is serious and carries a sad irony of how feminists are threatened with rape by those who disagree with them. This meme has also been used in different situations, see Appendix C.

87.

takebackthetech: Wouldn't it be nice? How do you #imagineafeministinternet? #16days #takebackthetech <https://t.co/HkGiJ1BdDs>

2015-12-07 06:30



As discussed above, the second most popular kind of tweets with images published by TBTT were those which included memes. TBTT made use of popular memes which have been used in different scenarios. By sharing memes, which tend to be humorous in nature, TBTT is not opposed to being light-hearted even though they are tackling a serious issue. The use of images in tweets is an effective strategy. Images attract more attention, they allow humour, and they can be retweeted and shared without being changed. Of the four memes which were shared, Tweet 85 could be considered the most popular as it received the most retweets – seven. Tweets 86 and 87 each received five retweets and Tweet 84 was retweeted twice. I recognise that humorous communications vary in different regions and cultures (Alden, Hoyer & Lee, 1993:64). The aforementioned could have had an impact on the engagement levels TBTT's tweets with memes received. TBTT also included hashtags in these tweets, a strategy often employed by them. In conjunction with sharing memes, TBTT also published quotes as images.

5.3. Quotes

Sharing quotes by well-known women can have a positive impact on a feminist network's Twitter campaign. Quotes were shared equally as much as memes by TBTT during the 16 Days campaign – four times (10%). Larger versions of these four quotes as images can be found in Appendix A3. This research classified Tweet 88 below as a Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweet as TBTT was encouraging users to occupy the Internet and take action against gender-based violence.

88.

takebackthetech: Occupy the Internet & take action against gender-based violence! Show solidarity! #takebackthetech #GBVInMedia <https://t.co/60SYt0i4UH>

2015-11-29 20:45



The URL included in the body of Tweet 88 above links to the accompanying image which includes a quote. The quote by Jac sm Kee, Manager, Women’s Rights Programme at APC, in Tweet 88 reads: “Don’t be afraid of technology. Insist on your presence and occupy online spaces. Facing an online attack can be exhausting and sometimes frightening. Reaching out to your allies and friends for support is an important strategy, both for solidarity as well as to strengthen your shared actions.” The image depicts two blue birds – resembling the Twitter bird/logo – both perched on separate branches. One seems to be angry and “shouting” at the other, this is illustrated by a speech bubble with symbols such as “!@!” in it, and the other seems to be saying something but their demeanour appears to be timid. The shouting bird suggests how women are often on the receiving end of online abuse. Feminism In India.com’s logo is featured in the image accompanied in Tweet 88, suggesting that the image was designed for their #GBVInMedia campaign. “Feminism In India.com is a social movement to learn, educate and develop a feminist consciousness among the youth. It is required to unravel the F-word and demystify all the negativity surrounding it” (Feminism in India.com, 2016). #GBVInMedia is included in the image as well as in TBTT’s body of the tweet. #GBVInMedia was a campaign led by Feminism In India.com during 16 Days. The campaign’s focus was on media representation of gender-based violence. It provided an analysis of how different types of mainstream media (mis)represents/reports gender-based violence and broadened “the conversation from violence against women to violence against people from the queer community, caste-based violence and violence against people with disabilities” (Feminism In India.com, 2015). By including #GBVInMedia in their tweet, TBTT was showing support for other 16 Days campaigns run by different organisations and contributing towards the larger conversation on 16 Days of Activism’s global campaign to end gender-based violence. This also contributes to (global) network-building.

Tweet 89 below belongs to the Sharing Tools, Strategies and Resources category. The quote attached as an image was also part of Feminism In India.com’s 16 Days campaign. The image quotes Shruti Saxena – “a feminist development practitioner with a strong interest in education and gender issues” (Saxena, 2015). The quote reads: “A more direct form of violence occurs when some user (troll/right wing fundamentalist) is offended by an (any) opinion a woman has and tries to remind her of her place and threaten her into backing down. Sagarika Ghose, Kavita Krishnan, Rega Jha and Meena Kandasamy are a few examples”.

89.

takebackthetech: We won't back down. If you're facing threats online, contact us for support and strategies. #takebackthetech #16days <https://t.co/LcckIgEdcQ>

2015-12-01 02:01



The Indian women Saxena refers to in Tweet 89 all faced some kind of technology-related abuse. For instance, Ghose, a top Indian journalist, news anchor and author was threatened regularly with gang rape and stripping on Twitter because of her views (Arya, 2013). As a result of the abuse, Ghose decided to no longer share her own views on Twitter and only tweets about programmes on her channel (Roy, 2014). Ghose's situation highlights Citron's argument discussed in Chapter Two of how technology-related VAW hinders women's full participation in online life and can lead to women silencing themselves and withdrawing from online conversations. Similarly, Krishnan, a prominent Delhi-based women's activist was attacked during an online chat on VAW. During the chat, a user began posting abusive comments and even asked Krishnan where he could come to rape her using a condom (Arya, 2013). As the abuse continued, Krishnan decided to leave the chat. Comparable to Ghose's experience, Krishnan's ordeal illustrates that technology-related VAW can lead to women not participating in online discussions. Krishnan's situation also highlights how important it is for platforms (for example, websites and SNS) who host chats to ensure that people facilitating the discussions are given a safe environment. This can be achieved by ensuring that chats are moderated and if need be, abusive users being blocked from participating.

Continuing the discussion on Tweet 89 above, the URL in the tweet links to the accompanying image. The background to Shruti Saxena's quote, discussed above, is an image depicting a blue bird (Twitter's logo), a clenched fist – symbolising power or freedom and three speech bubbles. In two of the speech bubbles, the Twitter bird is locked in a cage and in one speech bubble the Twitter bird is being told to keep quiet. This is illustrated by a person holding up their finger to their mouth to indicate silence. The three scenarios in the speech bubbles could symbolise how technology-related VAW is a way of silencing and trapping women. The fist could symbolise how organisations like Feminism in India.com and TBTT are encouraging women to fight back and not allow online abuse to

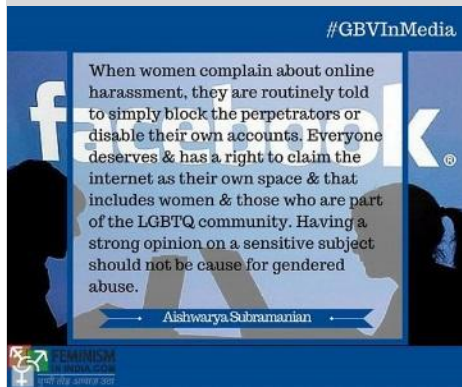
silence them. Arguably, Feminism In India.com used Twitter’s logo to correspond with the theme of the quote. The image also includes Feminism in India.com’s logo and #GBVInMedia. Additionally, in Tweet 88 TBTT encouraged users to contact them for support and strategies but they did not provide contact details, suggesting that users should contact them on Twitter in this instance.

Tweet 90 below shared another image from Feminism In India.com’s #GBVInMedia campaign. The quote in the image is by Aishwarya Subramanian, a corporate communications professional who is “used to a fair share of abuses on a daily basis for her views on women’s rights and LGBTQ issues” (Iyengar, 2015). Subramanian’s quote reads: “When women complain about online harassment, they are routinely told to simply block the perpetrators or disable their own accounts. Everyone deserves & has a right to claim the Internet as their own space & that includes women & those who are part of the LGBTQ community. Having a strong opinion on a sensitive subject should not be cause for gendered abuse.” This quote implies that blocking perpetrators or disconnecting from online communities is not the solution to combatting online woman abuse. This notion coincides with Citron’s arguments discussed in Chapter Two.

90.

takebackthetech: A threat is a threat no matter the method of transmission. #takebackthetech #16days <https://t.co/qRzsKSDc9K>

2015-12-01 13:02



In the image accompanying Tweet 90 above, Feminism In India.com used Facebook’s logo and two silhouettes of people. The people appear gendered as a man and a woman to visually represent an online confrontation between the genders. The two figures are sitting behind laptops in the background of the quote. The image also includes Feminism in India.com’s logo and #GBVInMedia. The URL in the body of the tweet links to the accompanying image.

In Tweet 91 below, TBTT asked a direct question to Feminism in India.com therefore classifying this tweet as a question. By directing this question to a user, TBTT is encouraging dialogue and network-

building. The image quotes prominent female journalist, Christiane Amanpour – Chief International Correspondent for CNN, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Freedom of Expression and Journalist Safety. “I see more and more women in the field as journalists... and what I see is that it is making a big change in the way stories are covered.”

91.

takebackthetech: @FeminismInIndia Would more women reporters/editors/producers change coverage of #GBVInMedia? #GenderInMedia #16days <https://t.co/j9srTCasFd>

2015-12-07 23:45



Tweet 91 highlights gender bias in media but also connects with a well-known female reporter – Amanpour. Amanpour’s quote implies that journalism is a traditionally male-dominated field and that the increased presence of women in journalism is having a positive impact on how stories, arguably women’s stories, are told. TBTT’s question in the body of the tweet corresponds with Amanpour’s quote. The network is attempting to broaden and continue the conversation by including women reporters, editors and producers in the discussion. If women journalists have the power to change how stories are being told, according to Amanpour, TBTT is questioning if women reporters, editors and producers can change how gender-based violence is covered in media. The image also includes #GenderInMedia and the logo for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Therefore, linking to another campaign and network-building. The URL in Tweet 91 links to the corresponding image. Unlike the three previous images with quotes, which were illustrations, the image in Tweet 91 above includes a photograph of Amanpour, the CNN reporter being quoted, and it also has more of a corporate look and feel.

The above discussion shows that TBTT shared four images containing quotes. The quotes focused on various issues including the kind of violence that occurs when trolls attack women online, and the positive impact women journalists have on how stories are reported. When asking a direct question to a user, TBTT “@” mentioned them thus encouraging dialogue and network-building. TBTT also included hashtags from other organisations in some of these tweets, showing support for other 16

Days campaigns run by different organisations and contributing towards the larger conversation on the 16 Days of Activism global campaign to end gender-based violence. Furthermore, all of these images with quotes were created by organisations other than TBTT. This also contributes to (global) network-building. In addition to sharing images with quotes, TBTT also published tweets accompanied by an infographic.

5.4. Information + graphic = infographic

Infographics were disseminated four times (10%) by TBTT during the campaign. These four infographics can be found below and in Appendix A4. According to Techopedia (2016),

“an information graphic (infographic) is a visual representation of a data set or instructive material. An infographic takes a large amount of information in text or numerical form and then condenses it into a combination of images and text, allowing viewers to quickly grasp the essential insights the data contains. Infographics are not a product of the Web, but the Internet has helped popularize their use as a content medium”.

Infographics are an effective and efficient tool for organisations to disseminate information to their followers on Twitter, and various other online platforms. According to NeoMam Studio’s (2016), infographics are effective because they are accessible, persuasive, are easy to digest, fun to share, and engaging.

In Tweet 92 below TBTT mentioned @WGNRR – Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights – which is a method of giving credit to WGNRR for the infographic and network-building. The infographic highlights the types of violence that sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) defenders encounter – sexual, physical and psychological.

92.

takebackthetech: From @WGNRR: The types of violence sexual & reproductive health rights defenders face #takebackthetech #SRHRvoices <https://t.co/tk6DxGz4TJ>

2015-11-29 16:15

NOVEMBER 25

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As recognized by Human Rights Bodies, WHRDs who work on sexual and reproductive rights issues are at particular risk of facing violence because of the nature of their work.

The advocacy efforts of SRHR activists are often shunned, ignored or feared by broader society, and as a result, SRHR defenders commonly find their own lives and well-being under threat.

SRHR DEFENDERS FACE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE:

1 PHYSICAL



SRHR defenders might be violently detained at demonstrations; beaten because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; or even killed in hate crimes.

2 SEXUAL



The gender-based nature of violence against SRHR Defenders places them at great risk of being subjected to sexual violence, including sexual harassment, assault, and rape, among other forms of sexual violence.



3 PSYCHOLOGICAL

The most prevalent type of violence. It happens through the delegitimization, rejection and stigmatization of the work of SRHR activists, their lives and their personal choices; threats of violence against SRHR activists and their families; and increased violence and threats through online and digital media, including verbal violence, violent images and explicit death threats.

SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST SRHR DEFENDERS!

Join us during the #16Days of Activism and share your stories as #SRHRheroes, speak out for the recognition of SRHR defenders as Women Human Rights Defenders and demand their protection!

WWW.WGNRR.ORG



Along with providing information on the violence, WGNRR's infographic in Tweet 92 above urges people to say no to violence against SRHR defenders, to join WGNRR's 16 Days campaign by sharing their #SRHRHeroes stories, to speak out for the recognition of SRHR defenders as Women's Human Right Defenders and demand their protection. Tweet 92 is thus a Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweet. The infographic makes use of different colours and includes icons to support the written text. For instance, an icon of a globe in an Internet tab (Figure 6) was used beside the text about psychological violence to illustrate how the internet is being used to psychologically abuse SRHR activists and their families. The infographic also includes @WGNRR's website URL (contact information), their logo (brand identification marker), and #SRHRHeroes and #16Days (hashtags to

encourage network-building and involvement in the campaigns). The provided URL in Tweet 92 links to the infographic.



Figure 6: Icon from Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights infographic

Tweet 93 below shared an infographic created by TBTT entitled, “Mapping technology-based violence against women: Take Back The Tech! Top 8 findings”. The infographic provides a succinct definition of technology-based VAW and shares findings such as “Facebook (26%) and mobile phones (19%) are the platforms where most violations were reported”. The infographic is presented in English, Spanish and French thus TBTT is attempting to build a global network that embraces different languages to reach people in diverse regions. The core image in this infographic, Figure 7 provided below, is a map of the world with the traditional icon of women, in pink, placed on different regions with dotted lines connecting all of them. The women represent women in different parts of the world and the dotted lines connecting them could symbolise that even though they are separated by geographic locations, technology breaks down those barriers and allows them to connect. The connection between the women could also symbolise unity and support among women and how collaboration could help “take back the tech”. Along with TBTT’s logo the logos for APC, genderIT.org and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands are included in the infographic to symbolise their involvement. Logos and the use of brand colours are effective for network-building because they identify an organisation and if the logo belongs to a reputable organisation they can indicate credibility.

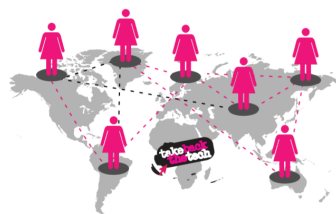


Figure 7: Image from TBTT's “Mapping technology-based violence against women: Take Back The Tech! Top 8 findings” infographic

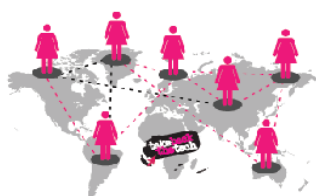
93.

takebackthetech: This infographic shows targets, harms, platforms, responses related to tech-related #VAW <https://t.co/O4PvF9viRp> #takebackthetech #16days

2015-12-03 00:01

MAPPING TECHNOLOGY-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
TAKE BACK THE TECH! TOP 8 FINDINGS

WHAT IS TECHNOLOGY-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?



Technology-based violence against women (tech-based VAW) encompasses acts of gender-based violence that are committed, abetted or aggravated, in part or fully, by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The findings are from **1126** cases reported on the Take Back the Tech! online map from **2012 to 2014**.

- 1** Women **18-30 years old** and younger are the **most vulnerable online**.
- 2** The majority (**40%**) of cases are perpetrated by **someone known** to the survivor.
- 3** **3 general categories of women who experience tech-based VAW:**
 - Someone in an **intimate relationship** whose partner has become abusive
 - A **professional with a public profile** involved in public communication (e.g. writers, researchers, activists and artists)
 - A **survivor of physical assault** – often from intimate partner abuse or rape.
- 4** **Emotional harm (33%)** impeding women's full participation in online and offline life has been reported in a majority of cases.
- 5** **11%** of cases reported **physical harm**, which means the internet is used to **facilitate offline violations and violence**.
- 6** **Facebook (26%)** and **mobile phones (19%)** are the platforms where most violations were reported.
- 7** **In less than 1/3** of the cases reported, action has been taken by the service provider.
- 8** **Less than 1/2 of the cases (41%)** reported to the authorities **have been investigated**.
 - **49%** of cases were reported to authorities

As well as:

- Harm to reputation (18%)
- Invasion of privacy (18%)

It's our right to live a life free from violence in all the spaces we occupy. Take action, end violence against women. Take Back the Tech!

www.takebackthetech.net/mapit | www.genderIT.org/VAWonline-research

The Take Back the Tech! online map is part of the APC 'End violence: Women's rights and safety online' project funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGB) and is based on a strong alliance with partners in seven countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan and the Philippines



genderIT.org



Tweet 94 below shared an infographic created by @webfoundation – World Wide Web Foundation – entitled, “Is the web really empowering women? A Web Foundation survey of poor men and women in nine cities in the developing world”. In the body of the tweet, TBTT mentioned @webfoundation thus crediting them for the infographic, ensuring that they receive a notification of the tweet and providing users with @webfoundation’s username should they wish to contact them or follow them. Mentioning them was also a method of network-building.

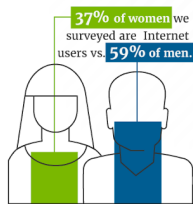
94.

takebackthetech: @webfoundation: "More work needs to be done to make the Web truly empowering for women" #16days #takebackthetech <https://t.co/PZOJoVJgYG>
2015-12-04 18:15

IS THE WEB REALLY EMPOWERING WOMEN?

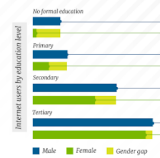
A Web Foundation survey of poor urban men and women in nine cities in the developing world

WOMEN ARE ABOUT 50% LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO USE THE INTERNET IN POOR URBAN COMMUNITIES

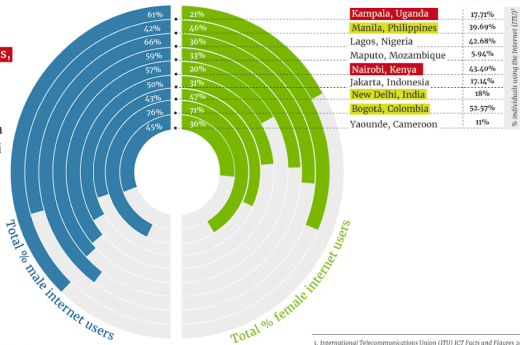


Women who are politically active offline are twice as likely to use the Internet.

Access to higher education narrows the gender gap in Internet access

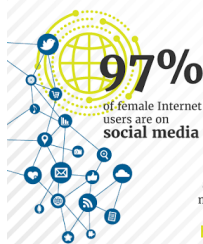


Kampala and Nairobi have the widest gender gaps, while almost the same number of men and women use the Internet in Manila, New Delhi and Bogota.



DOES ACCESS = EMPOWERMENT?

More work needs to be done to make the Web truly empowering for women

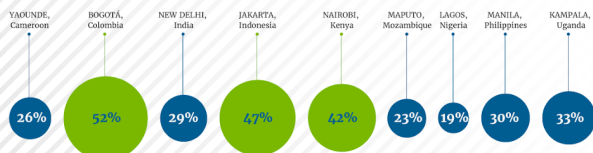


but only 48% are expanding their networks by making new friends and connections online

Only 21% of connected women have on average searched for critical information on topics like:

- Health
- Legal rights
- Transport information

Percentage of female Internet users who have used the Internet to look for a job



Nine cities surveyed: Yaounde (Cameroon), Bogotá (Colombia), New Delhi (India), Jakarta (Indonesia), Nairobi (Kenya), Maputo (Mozambique), Lagos (Nigeria), Manila (Philippines) & Kampala (Uganda).

For more information and download the report, go to: <http://webfoundation.org/about/research/womens-rights-online-2015/>



The quote that TBTT uses in the body of Tweet 94 above is included in the infographic. Key findings highlighted in the infographic include “Women are about 50% less likely than men to use the Internet in poor urban communities”, and “Women who are politically active offline are twice as likely to use the Internet.” The infographic also provides a reference for the information – a Web Foundation survey of poor urban men and women in nine cities in the developing world. The nine cities are Yaounde (Cameroon), Kampala (Uganda), Lagos (Nigeria), Jakarta (Indonesia), Nairobi (Kenya), Maputo (Mozambique), Bogotá (Colombia), New Delhi (India), and Manila (Philippines). This infographic includes @webfoundation’s logo, and a link to get more information and download the report. It also made use of several diagrams and various icons. For instance, a stethoscope was used to symbolise health. Graphs were also used to present findings and to heighten the impact of numbers – see Figure 8 as an example.

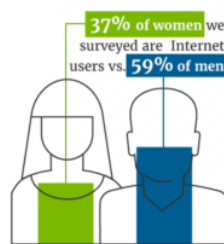


Figure 8: A graph from World Wide Web Foundation’s infographic entitled, “Is the web really empowering women? A Web Foundation survey of poor men and women in nine cities in the developing world”

Tweet 95 below was classified as a question as TBTT asked users whether or not they have censored their digital behaviour due to violence or fear of violence. By asking this question, TBTT was attempting to engage with their followers and gain vital information about women’s behaviour online. The URL in the body of the tweet linked to the infographic. Unlike the other three infographics, which included a great deal of information, this infographic only shared one finding. This supports the notion that infographics allow for flexibility and creativity in terms of how one wishes to present it, how much information to include and how to design it. However, the infographic in Tweet 95 can be considered less effective as it relies on numerical processing and knowledge of percentages. The visual representation of percentages, in the form of graphs for examples, could help overcome this. The infographic makes use of different colours and fonts. The text in the infographic reads: “79% of women have censored themselves or changed their behaviour because of/in fear of online harassment”.

95.
takebackthetech: Have you censored your digital behaviour due to violence or fear of violence?
 #takebackthetech #16days <https://t.co/HkitfFJ5NA>
 2015-12-07 11:01

79%

of women have censored themselves or changed their behaviour because of / in fear of

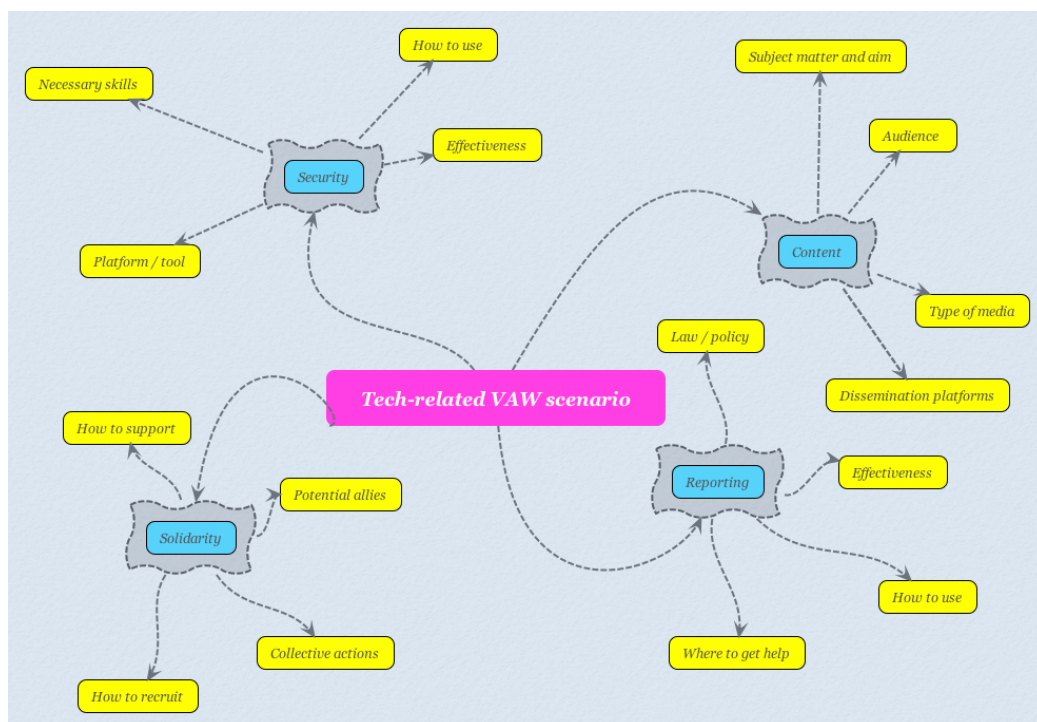
ONLINE HARASSMENT

The above discussion has shown how effective infographics can be when used during an online activism campaign. The infographics shared by TBTT include ones created by them and other organisations. When sharing an infographic created by another organisation, TBTT “@” mentioned the creators of the infographic. This was a method of giving credit to the designers of the infographic and network-building. The infographics published by TBTT focused on different issues such as the types of violence that sexual and reproductive health rights defenders encounter, findings on technology-based VAW and whether or not the web is empowering for women.

Since encouraging users to create their own digital safety roadmaps was one of TBTT’s call to actions, TBTT used Twitter to share these maps as images.

5.5. Localising digital safety

The same digital safety roadmap was published three times (8%) in different tweets by TBTT during the 16 Days campaign. As discussed in Chapter 2, the digital safety roadmap is a template created by TBTT to encourage users to create their own maps to address experiences, tactics and resources specific to their communities (TBTT, 2015b). These maps can be digital or hardcopy visual representations, created by participants, which provide information and resources on digital safety to benefit members of their communities. Examples of users’ digital safety roadmaps can be found in this chapter under the discussion “Photos of campaigners’ work”. The digital safety roadmap template can be seen below and in Appendix A5.



Although the network promotes digital security, this is not a strategy that TBTT believes they and others should have to implement. TBTT is cautious when they talk about and promote safety because they want to refrain from putting too much onus on women, victims and survivors to avoid conflict, since this resonates with a common victim-blaming discourse. Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) argues that placing the onus of digital security solely on women is the same as saying to a woman that she should not wear a short skirt or walk down a certain street. Emphasis is being placed on what women should do to prevent themselves from being harmed instead of emphasis being placed on the perpetrators not doing the harming in the first place. Mitchell (personal interview, 2015 October 16) contends that women should be able to do what they want online and offline.

TBTT was encouraging users to create their own digital safety roadmaps, and thus Tweets 96-98 (see below) were categorised in the Call to Action and/or Advocacy category. For Tweets 96-97, TBTT used the same content in the body of the tweet. The network invited users to create digital safety roadmaps for their contexts. In Tweet 98 below, TBTT encouraged users to create a digital safety roadmap for women and girls in their communities and also mentioned that they could do so by using TBTT’s template. In Tweets 96-97, TBTT provided two URLs – one linked to an image of the map and the other one linked to their webpage – “Chart the way forward. Make your own digital safety roadmap”. This webpage explains what the digital safety roadmap is, how participants can go about creating their own and provides users with a downloadable template of the map. In Tweet 98, TBTT only provided a link to an image of the template and not to the abovementioned webpage. This study recommends that TBTT should have provided a link to the webpage in Tweet 98 as well so users could get a better understanding of what the digital safety roadmap is. In all three tweets, TBTT used #takebackthetech thus supporting the argument that utilising hashtags was one of TBTT’s fundamental campaign tactics.

96.
takebackthetech: Make a #takebackthetech digital safety roadmap for your context! <https://t.co/18IuCsI8WF>
<https://t.co/oZkbPue011>

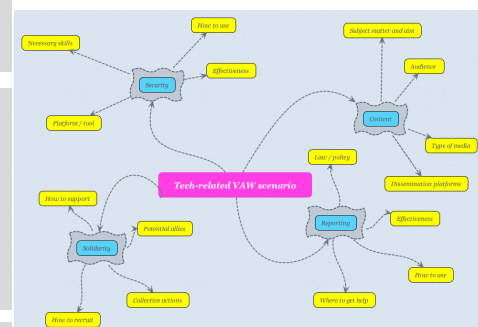
2015-11-26 11:35

97.
takebackthetech: Make a #takebackthetech digital safety roadmap for your context! <https://t.co/18IuCsI8WF>
<https://t.co/znBdA32ZU0>

2015-11-26 19:45

98.
takebackthetech: Create a digital safety roadmap for women & girls in your community with the #takebackthetech template <https://t.co/ac0ib6pt8D>

2015-11-27 22:02



In light of the above, tweets with images of the digital safety roadmap were categorised as Call to Action and/or Advocacy tweets as TBTT is encouraging users to create their own digital safety roadmaps. When sharing such tweets TBTT included #takebackthetech to foster network-building. TBTT used Twitter not only to encourage users to create their own digital safety roadmaps but also to share participants’ activities.

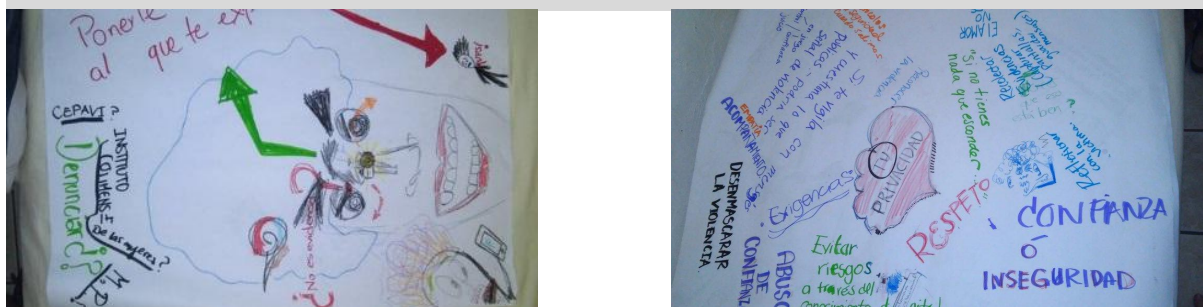
5.6. Bringing campaigners’ work to light

Tweets with photos of campaigners’ work were shared three times (8%) during the campaign. The photos originated from participants in Mexico, Philippines, Fiji, South Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, supporting the notion that TBTT endeavours to have a global presence and impact. The photos can be found below and in Appendix A6. In Tweet 99, TBTT shared two photos of digital security roadmaps made by campaigners in Colima, Mexico. The URL in the tweet linked to the aforementioned photos. In the tweet, TBTT gave credit to Feria Cultural Feminista, the creators of the roadmaps, by hashtagging their name and including their location. This kind of public acknowledgement encourages engagement and could encourage more people to get involved in the campaign. Additionally, the inclusion of #takebackthetech encourages network-building and the creation of a counterpublic for campaigners.

99.

takebackthetech: Fantastic roadmaps to digital security made by those at #FeriaCulturalFeminista in Colima. #takebackthetech <https://t.co/HvtRWdQ3Ga>

2015-11-28 16:40



“@” mentioning Feria Cultural Feminista instead of using a hashtag would have been a more effective method of network-building. However, through the basic search function on Twitter, I could not find users with the name Feria Cultural Feminista nor could I find any other users – besides TBTT – who used #FeriaCulturalFeminista on Twitter. This suggests that Feria Cultural Feminista, at the time of conducting this research, did not have a Twitter profile and this possibly explains why TBTT did not “@” mention them. According to their Facebook page, Feria Cultural Feminista is a feminist

community organisation based in Colima, Mexico (Feria Cultural Feminista, n.d). This Facebook page is in Spanish therefore Google translate was utilised to translate the organisation's "About" section into English. Considering that Tweet 99 shares information about campaigners' activities, this tweet falls under the News, Reports and/or Research category. By sharing this news, TBTT's followers might be encouraged to get involved in the campaign after seeing what other campaigners are doing. As previously discussed, one of TBTT's calls to action was to encourage participants to create their own safety roadmaps. Thus Tweet 99 suggests that some participants were implementing these calls to action.

TBTT encourages people to take the campaign, localise it, make it theirs and use it to work on whatever trends or issues are critical in their communities. This means people could also be coming up with their own hashtags in their own languages. According to Mitchell (personal communication 2016 September 12), for the 2015 16 Days campaign,

"local campaigns ranged from a game jam in the Philippines to a Take Back the Tech! festival in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This year campaigners in Turkey led a new social media campaign with the hashtag #thisisviolencetoo (#budasiddet in Turkish), which trended on Twitter and especially encouraged people who identify as LGBTQI to share their stories of technology-related violence."

The above is evidence that TBTT's efforts to encourage participants to localise the 16 Days campaign are having an impact. To ensure that they do not lose track of this important data, one of the things TBTT does when they know that global organisations or key partners are participating in a campaign is to ask them to track what they are doing and share that information with TBTT especially if they are using other languages and hashtags. This helps ensure that TBTT can incorporate these activities into their overall outcome and campaign report (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16).

In Tweet 100 below, TBTT shared the below three images of campaigners who made a solidarity quilt for human rights defenders. They also shared two URLs, the first linking to TBTT's quilt webpage and the second linking to images of the solidarity quilt. Considering that TBTT was sharing information about campaigners' activities, Tweet 100 falls under the News, Reports and/or Research category.

100.

takebackthetech: #takebackthetech #16days campaigners made a solidarity quilt 4 women human rights defenders <https://t.co/y8EHjEDFGE> <https://t.co/y2AWajT5s6>

2015-11-29 13:19



TBTT's digital quilt "speaks of our collective act of solidarity, recognition and refusal to let the voices and struggles of Women Human Rights Defenders be silenced" (TBTT, n.d). Throughout the year, participants are encouraged to display their support for women human rights defenders by contributing towards TBTT's digital quilt via a message or picture that represents hope, strength and solidarity. The webpage has an upload feature which allows participants to upload their material to the digital quilt (TBTT, 2006). A visual representation of TBTT's digital quilt can be seen in Figure 9 below.



Figure 9: A visual representation of TBTT's digital quilt

In Tweet 100 above, TBTT did not mention where the campaigners were based or who they were, as they did in Tweets 99 and 101. Upon clicking on the first URL – which links to TBTT's quilt webpage – it was discovered that the photos originated from campaigners in South Africa, Fiji and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mentioning the campaigners who contributed to the quilt would have been an ideal opportunity for TBTT to engage in network-building and encourage engagement. However, similar to Feria Cultural Feminista, it is possible that the abovementioned campaigners are not active on Twitter. Given the nature of TBTT's work, privacy is another factor to consider.

Lastly in Tweet 101, TBTT shared a photo of campaigners in the Philippines. TBTT “@” mentioned the campaigners, @FMA_PH, and included #16days thus encouraging network-building and engagement with the “@” mentioned user. TBTT stated that the campaigners are taking back the tech but does not specify what the campaigners are doing in the photo to achieve this. The campaigners are holding up pieces of paper with TBTT’s logo and other illegible text. They also appear to be standing next to a banner which is also unfortunately illegible. Their website states that @FMA_PH is “a non-government organisation based in Quezon City that assists individuals and groups in their strategic and appropriate use of various means of information and communications technology” (FMA, 2016b).

101.

takebackthetech: #16days campaigners taking back the tech in the Philippines! @FMA_PH <https://t.co/cmGWia7LEE>

2015-12-05 15:25



The photos shared by TBTT originated from participants in Mexico, Philippines, Fiji, South Africa and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This suggests that TBTT’s aims to have a global impact are materialising. The photos shared included photos of participants’ digital security roadmaps and solidarity quilts for human rights defenders. When publishing tweets accompanied by images of campaigners’ work, TBTT “@” mentioned the participants (if they knew their username) and included hashtags which encourages network-building and the creation of a counterpublic for campaigners. All of these tweets sharing photos of campaigner’s work were classified as News, Reports and/or Research tweets as they share information about campaigners’ activities. By sharing the work of campaigners from different parts of the world, TBTT is sharing their global reach with their followers and by publishing photos of other campaigners’ work, hopefully other campaigners would be encouraged to send their photos to TBTT too thus increasing and encouraging engagement, and building a global network. Together with publishing images of campaigners’ work, TBTT also shared tweets with images containing announcements.

5.7. Announcements

Images categorised as announcements were published three times (8%) by TBTT during the campaign. Larger versions of the images can be found in Appendix A7. Placing announcements in images is an effective way to combat Twitter’s 140-character limit. Images also allow for announcements to be visually captivating. TBTT shared the same announcement twice in Tweets 102 and 103 below, and in both instances the URLs included in the tweets link to the accompanied image. In Tweets 102 and 103, TBTT informed users about a tweet chat hosted by @FeminismInIndia to

discuss how the media reports gender-based violence. The user organising a tweet chat can facilitate and/or keep track of the discussion by monitoring their mentions and/or the hashtag affiliated with the chat. In this case, participants would have had to “@” mention @FeminismInIndia and/or include #GBVInMedia in their tweets to participate in the tweet chat. The image used in Tweets 102 and 103 reads: “#GBVInMedia. Join us for a Tweetathon: How does mainstream news media report gender-based violence. Saturday, 28th Nov 2015 12 PM IST @feminisminindia”. The image is greyscale and has newspapers as a background, thus corresponding with the tweet chat’s media theme. #GBVInMedia and @feminisminindia are both in bold thus making them slightly more prominent than the rest of the text. The topic “How does mainstream news media report gender-based violence” is in uppercase letters and in bold thus making it stand out from the rest of the text. Feminism In India.com’s logo is included in the image as a brand identifier and to show that they are the creators of the image and hosts of the tweet chat.

102.

takebackthetech: How does media report gender violence? @FeminismInIndia #GBVInMedia tweet chat Nov 28, 12 pm IST #takebackthetech <https://t.co/XcovPhvZUr>

2015-11-26 05:10

103.

takebackthetech: @FeminismInIndia tweet chat on #GBVInMedia starts in one hour! #16days #takebackthetech <https://t.co/eKHHW2XpAB>

2015-11-28 05:30



TBTT has promoted tweet chats for several years, and also participates in tweet chats hosted by other organisations. The network has found that participating in tweet chats led by organisations that have large followings is very beneficial (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). One year TBTT participated in a tweet chat that *Marie Claire* magazine was involved in. *Marie Claire*, who had around one million followers at the time, retweeted TBTT a few times which was very helpful. This resulted in TBTT expanding its reach and gaining new followers from an audience they possibly may

not have reached on their own (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). From that experience TBTT learnt that when they do tweet chats, they need to involve Twitter users who have many followers in order to reach more people and therefore be more effective (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Organising, participating in and informing their followers about other organisations' tweet chats is an effective method of network-building embraced by TBTT.

In Tweet 104, displayed below, TBTT encouraged users to follow @womensaidorg and #InternetKita for a tweet chat. Considering that tweets are limited to 140 characters, TBTT included the vital information in their tweet and utilised the image to provide more information on the chat. The accompanying graphic is segmented into three parts of text. The first part reads: ““Just as women face risks offline, in the streets and in homes, women can face specific dangers and risks on the Internet such as online harassment, cyber stalking, privacy invasions with threat of blackmail, viral rape videos” – Take Back The Tech, 2015”. The inclusion of a quote by TBTT suggests that Women’s Aid Organisation is familiar with TBTT’s work and it is possible that the two may have collaborated on previous projects. The second part of the text is: “Follow Women’s Aid Organisation @womensaidorg and #InternetKita on Twitter this 9 December 2015 for a conversation on technology-related violence against women.” The word “follow” is the biggest font size in the image thus making it the most prominent word in the image. This suggests that getting users to follow @womensaidorg was an important call to action. The rest of the text in the image reads: “#InternetKita is a program by EMPOWER, in partnership with SUARAM, AI Malaysia, UndiMsia! and Women’s Aid Organisation.” The image also includes Women’s Aid Organisation’s logo suggesting that the image was designed by them and that the tweet chat was being arranged by them.

104.

takebackthetech: Follow @womensaidorg & #InternetKita on 9 Dec for chat on tech-related violence. #16days #takebackthetech <https://t.co/AfG1E0eVyD>

2015-12-09 00:01

**"Just as women face risks offline,
in the streets and in homes,
women can face specific dangers
and risks on the internet such as
online harassment, cyber stalking,
privacy invasions with the threat of
blackmail, viral 'rape videos' "**

Take Back the Tech, 2015



#InternetKita is a program by EMPOWER, in partnership with SUARAM, AI Malaysia, UndiMsia! and Women's Aid Organisation.

Keeping the above discussion in mind, it was found that placing announcements in images is an effective way to combat Twitter's 140-character limit. Images also allow for announcements to be visually captivating. All of the tweets containing announcements encouraged users to participate in tweet chats hosted by organisations other than TBTT. This shows support for other 16 Days campaigns run by different organisations and contributes towards the larger conversation on 16 Days of Activism's global campaign to end gender-based violence. This also contributes to (global) network-building. Furthermore, TBTT "@" mentioned the hosts of the tweet chats, included hashtags associated with the hosts, and encouraged users to follow the hosts – further illustrations of network-building. Several images reinforce the importance of a global network and the need to embrace intersectional feminism but these strategies will be limited if they do not leverage languages other than English.

5.8. Images in a language other than English

Images in a language other than English were published twice (5%) by TBTT during the campaign. Although tweets in any language other than English were excluded from the overall data set (as this research was conducted in English – see further discussion under the sampling section), these images in languages other than English were included because the tweets that accompanied them were in English. While the use of different languages on Twitter is one of the challenges TBTT faces, this does not stop them from making an effort to reach a diverse group of people (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). For instance, their website is available in English, Spanish and French, and they also make an effort to retweet tweets in different languages from their global partners. For instance, TBTT endeavours to retweet one of their campaigners who is based in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although these tweets are in Bosnian TBTT retweets them because this campaigner is very active and retweeting their work is an effective way for TBTT to spread this work. TBTT's use of different languages encourages network-building, provides support to local TBTT campaigners and helps to target a diverse audience. Sometimes TBTT will decide to only use English hashtags but in an attempt to be as inclusive as possible they sometimes use hashtags in different languages that will work better for particular projects. Using English hashtags makes it easier to keep up with English conversations and the English reach than it is in some of the other languages because of not being fluent in these languages (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16).

Although I may not understand the non-English text in the images, the English text in the tweets is understood. In Tweet 105 below, TBTT shared two URLs. One links to the image below and the other links to an article written in English: "Technology-related violence against women in Colombia: Sociocultural imaginaries and access to justice." Since Tweet 105 shares an article, it is classified as a

News, Reports and/or Research tweet. In Tweet 105, TBTT shares the title of the article and used the image accompanying the article. The only differences between the headline and TBTT’s tweet are that TBTT used “#VAW” instead of “violence against women” and used “&” instead of “and”. This could have been to avoid Twitter’s 140-character limit and/or to promote the hashtag #VAW. Although the article and tweets are written in English, Spanish may have been used in the image to support the fact that the article focuses on Columbia where Spanish is the primary language (Ethnologue, 2016).

105.

takebackthetech: Technology-related #VAW in Colombia: Sociocultural imaginaries & access to justice
<https://t.co/S8Hft6FmUk> #16days <https://t.co/szv5liz4Dc>

2015-12-08 19:45



The image used to accompany Tweet 105 is a Someecard. “Someecards launched in 2006 as a uniquely voiced ecard site, and has grown into one of the most widely shared and trusted humor brands on the Web” (Someecards, 2016). In this Someecard, there is Spanish text accompanied by a person who appears to be “traditionally” gendered as a woman, sitting in front of a computer and laughing. When inserted into Google Translate, the Spanish text roughly reads: “He says if I do not give him the password to my email address he will end the relationship. That is not love!” Examples of other Someecards can be found in Appendix B.

In Tweet 106 below, TBTT shared a new TBTT icon from campaigners in Colombia. TBTT also mentioned @colnodo and expressed their support by exclaiming that they love the new icon. @colnodo’s about section is in Spanish but according to Google Translate it reads: “We facilitate communications, exchange of information and experience between local and global organizations using low-cost electronic networks.” By mentioning @colnodo, TBTT encouraged network-building, ensured that @colnodo received a notification about the tweet and provided users with the ability to follow @colnodo and/or contact them on Twitter. The image features a cartoon woman who appears to be opening up her shirt to reveal the logo for Wi-Fi, similar to how Superman reveals his “S”. According to Google Translate, the Spanish text next to the woman translates to: “take back the tech”. By displaying the woman this way, @colnodo could be symbolising how women in Colombia are superheroes who are taking back the tech.

106.

takebackthetech: New #takebackthetech icon from @colnodo, campaigners in Colombia. We love it! #16days #dominemoslastic <https://t.co/LPjtSzH23G>

2015-12-09 18:32



According to the above discussion, TBTT uses different languages during their Twitter campaigns to encourage network-building, provide support to local TBTT campaigners and to help target a diverse audience. When sharing tweets including images in a language other than English, TBTT “@” mentions users associated with the image and also includes hashtags – two methods used frequently by TBTT to foster network-building.

Because survivor stories are such an important component of TBTT’s campaign we need to pay specific attention to tweets which published images linked to survivor stories.

5.9. Survivor stories

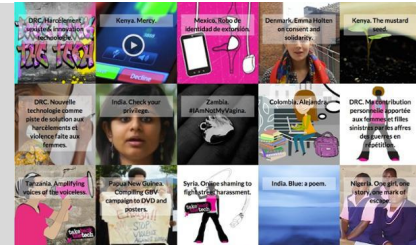
Tweets accompanied by images associated with survivor stories were shared twice (3%) by TBTT during the campaign. Both of these tweets were classified as Sharing Survivor and/or Victim Stories. Tweet 107 below is accompanied by an image which combines images of 15 of the 23 survivor stories shared on TBTT’s website. The first URL in the tweet linked to TBTT’s survivor stories landing page on their website and the second linked to the accompanying image in Tweet 107. The text in the individual square images provides the country the story originated from and the title of the stories. From top left to right the text reads:

1. DRC. Harcèlement sexiste & Innovation technologie
2. Kenya. Mercy
3. Mexico. Robo de identidad de extorsión
4. Denmark. Emma Holten on consent and solidarity
5. Kenya. The mustard seed
6. DRC. Nouvelle technologie comme piste de solution aux harcèlements et violence faite aux femmes
7. India. Check your privilege
8. Zambia. #IAmNotMyVagina
9. Colombia. Alejandra
10. DRC. Ma contribution personnelle apportée aux femmes et filles sinistres par les affres des guerres en répétition
11. Tanzania. Amplifying voices of the voiceless
12. Papua New Guinea. Compiling GBV campaign to DVD and posters
13. Syria. Online shaming to fight street harassment
14. India. Blue: Poem
15. Nigeria. One girl, one story, one mark of escape.

By sharing the image, TBTT gave their followers a sneak peek into the survivor stories. The presence of different languages, photos, women, countries, titles, and the combination of real-life photos and cartoons, also gives users an indication that the survivor stories are diverse.

107.
takebackthetech: Women's experiences with violence, #takebackthetech stories from around the world
<https://t.co/7bYnuTy9ox> <https://t.co/D9bJVLjVXg>

2015-11-26 07:00



Tweet 108 below also shared an image associated with survivor stories. Unlike Tweet 107 above which linked to the survivor story landing page and shared an image of several survivor stories, this tweet linked to Ana's story (discussed in Chapter Four) and used the image associated with her story which was presented as a digital comic. The use of comics or cartoons is an effective way of sharing victim and/or survivor stories as the victim and/or survivor's identity is protected but they are still able to share their experience.

108.
takebackthetech: A comic from the Philippines with Ana's strategy for dealing w/ blackmail. <https://t.co/HZ3LdQneDA>
 #takebackthetech <https://t.co/6xusx5UWGS>

2015-11-28 03:30



When sharing tweets with images associated with survivor stories, TBTT included #takebackthetech and linked to the survivor stories hosted on their website. The images used to accompany these tweets represented the diverse range of survivor stories included in TBTT's campaign. Along with sharing images associated with survivor stories, TBTT also published a photo collage.

5.10. Photo collage

A tweet accompanied by a photo collage was published once (3%) by TBTT during the campaign, displayed in Tweet 109 below.

109.
takebackthetech: It's Women Human Rights Defenders Day. @awid honours those lost this year. <https://t.co/mYRK7cdqmM> #takebackthetech
<https://t.co/vQWLDVcu9P>

2015-11-29 05:30



The photo collage, created by AWID – Association for Women’s Rights in Development, who were mentioned and therefore credited, displays the photos of feminists and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) who have died. The first URL links to AWID’s website where users could see photos of the WHRDs who were being remembered and honoured, and read their stories. The second URL links to the photo collage. The photo collage is in black and white or greyscale against a black background suggesting mourning of the women who are no longer alive. Along with sharing a photo collage, TBTT also shared a digital poster.

5.11. Digital posters

A digital poster was shared once (3%) by TBTT during the campaign (Tweet 110). The URL linked to a tweet by @bytesforall who shared the poster and tweeted: “What would a feminist Internet look like in Pakistan? #takebackthetech #16DaysofActivism #imagineafeministinternet”. From my perspective, the poster includes people of different races, genders, religions, cultures, and sexual orientations. It also makes use of different colours which one could interpret as being an adaptation and/or representation of gay pride. This poster promotes inclusivity of all people, regardless of gender, race, religion, culture, and sexuality. The poster also includes cell phones, a computer and what appears to be a tablet/iPad thus symbolising technology. The poster is a visual representation of a feminist internet, so imagined by Bytes for All, Pakistan – “a human rights organization and a research think tank with a focus on Information and Communication Technologies” (Bytes for All, n.d).

110.

takebackthetech: We love, love, love this poster! <https://t.co/VNSkHfuw9I>
2015-12-09 13:18



This chapter has discussed TBTT’s use of images in their original tweets. These tweets comprised a small percentage of TBTT’s original tweets, thus including images in their tweets was not a fundamental strategy employed by TBTT. This study recommends that TBTT should make more use of images during their online campaigns, especially on SNS. Research shows that tweets with images get more engagement and they can make data more accessible. Furthermore, incorporating images can assist TBTT in overcoming Twitter’s 140-character limit. When sharing images with their tweets, TBTT frequently included hashtags and “@” mentioned the creators of the image to foster network-building. To encourage global network-building and expand their global reach, TBTT also shared images from all over the globe and also included images in languages other than English. The images

shared by TBTT were predominantly cartoons, illustrations or pixel-art characters. This was possibly done to appeal to a wider audience, for diverse individuals to be able to identify with the characters, and to protect survivors' identities. This study has discussed the findings uncovered from TBTT's Twitter archive and will now turn its attention to those tweets published by users who engaged with the TBTT campaign by using the @takebackthetech username and #takebackthetech in their tweets (as captured by NodeXL).

CHAPTER SIX: CHARACTERISING ACTIVIST CONVERSATIONS

This chapter will discuss those tweets published by users who engaged with the TBTT campaign by using the @takebackthetech username and #takebackthetech in their tweets (as captured by NodeXL). Studying the search term @takebackthetech can help establish how Twitter users engaged with TBTT during the campaign. Analysing the search term #takebackthetech can help determine how Twitter users utilised the hashtag and gauge the hashtag's effectiveness.

6.1. Tweets containing the search term @takebackthetech

The NodeXL search captured 1549 tweets which included @takebackthetech. TBTT was the top contributor in this category. They were not tweeting themselves, but rather retweeting other users' tweets that included their username. The data captured via TBTT's Twitter archive covered TBTT's tweets therefore, this study excluded TBTT's retweets from the @takebackthetech data set. Once TBTT's retweets were removed, 1486 tweets remained in the data set. Despite the attack by trolls that TBTT endured in October, the data revealed that TBTT did not experience any attacks during the 16 Days campaign. This is corroborated by Mitchell (Personal interview, 2016 February 21). Mitchell adds that although TBTT did not face a troll attack during the 16 Days campaign, the experience in October was good practice for the activists in case anything similar happens in the future. Fortunately, none of TBTT's hashtags were hijacked by trolls during the campaign but how did other users engage with the hashtags?

6.1.1. Hashtags

Figure 10 below illustrates that users included hashtags in the majority of their tweets – 81%. This supports the argument that TBTT's strategy of promoting hashtags to foster network-building and create counterpublics during their campaign is effective – for these tweets which refer to @takebackthetech at least.

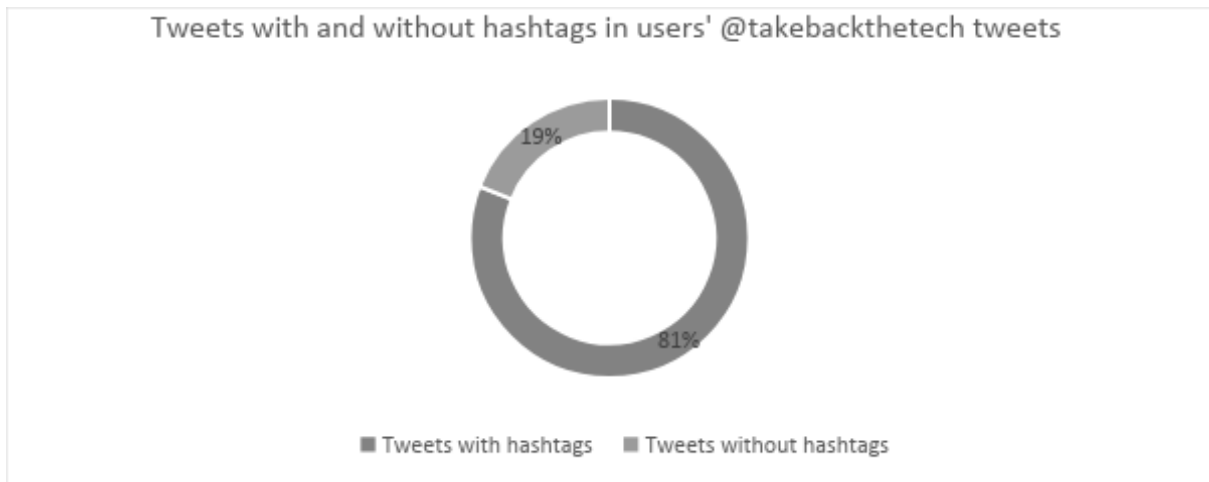
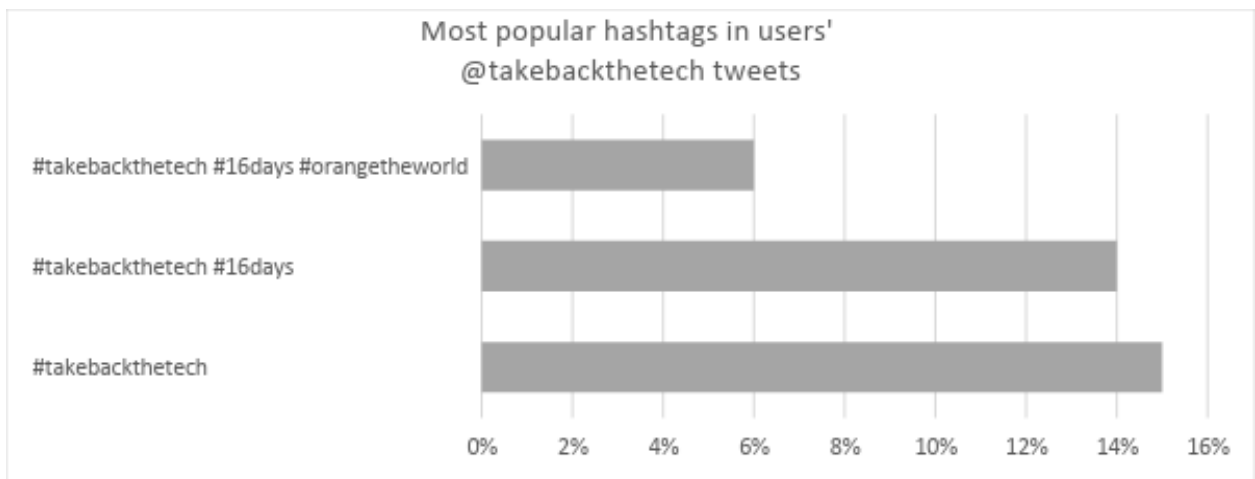


Figure 10: Breakdown of tweets with and without hashtags in users' @takebackthetech tweets

The most popular hashtags included in the search term @takebackthetech are illustrated below in Figure 11.



#takebackthetech and #16days have been discussed previously in this dissertation thus they will not be elaborated on again. #orangetheworld on the other hand, was not one of the top three hashtags used by TBTT but it was one of the most popular hashtags used by other users. #orangetheworld was the hashtag that the United Nations Women initiated for their 16 Days campaign. The campaign invited people to “Orange the world” by “using the colour designated by the UNiTE campaign to symbolize a brighter future without violence” (UN Women, 2015c). Campaigners were encouraged to wear orange, make their spaces orange and to share the hashtag #orangetheworld. Although TBTT and UN Women were running their own campaigns, they were both advocating for the same cause hence the overlapping of the hashtags.

Figure 11 also shows how users often include more than one hashtag in their tweets. This intersection of campaigns – #takebackthetech, #16days and #orangetheworld – highlights how effective Twitter can be to facilitate network-building and create counterpublics. Network-building was central to TBTT’s campaign thus it is important to discuss TBTT’s relationships with other users in the form of mentions and replies to.

6.1.2. @takebackthetech’s relationships: mentions and replies to

Of the 1486 tweets where users mentioned @takebackthetech, 1440 (97%) were mentions and 63 were replies to them (3%) as shown in Figure 12 below.

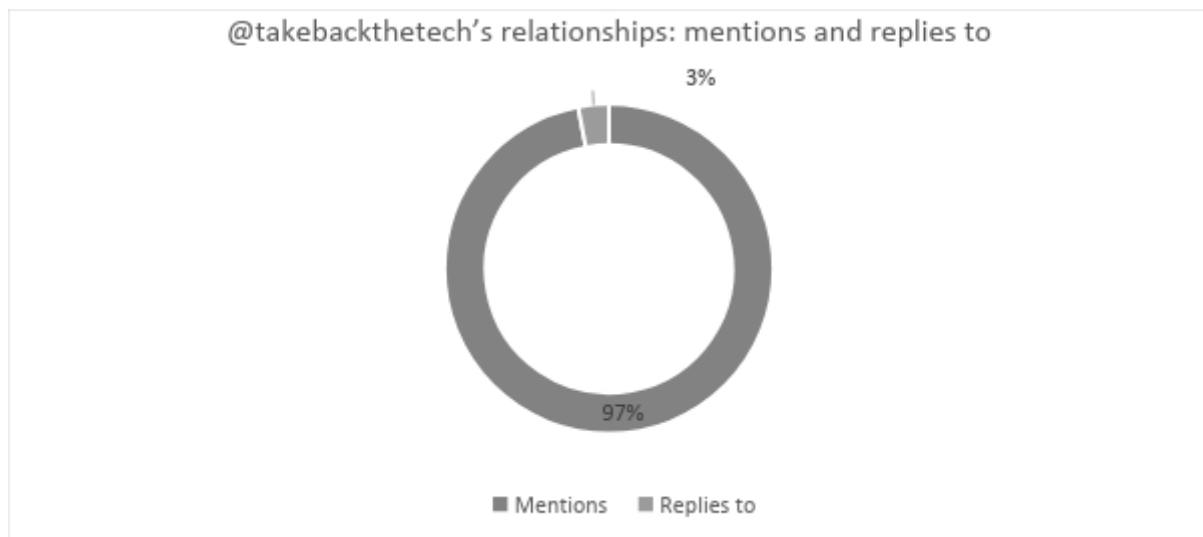


Figure 12: Categorisation of @takebackthetech’s relationships: mentions and replies to

Although TBTT endeavoured to get users to engage with them by asking them questions, very few users did so. There could be various reasons for this. As discussed previously, users might fear that if they respond they could become victims of trolling, some users might not have identified with the questions and some users may have responded to the questions in private via email, direct message or offline by attending events. TBTT could consider asking question via the poll method on Twitter. This could allow participants to respond to TBTT's questions without having their identities revealed. However, the drawback of Twitter polls is that TBTT would not be able to see who participated in their poll or how they responded which could be useful data for them. “When you vote in a poll, your participation is not shown to others: neither the poll creator nor other participants can see who has voted or how they voted” (Twitter, 2016b). It is well-established that most web and social media users do not actively participate and in order to encourage participation, campaigns often need a strong

popular reaction. For instance, outrage over #blacklivesmatter and #bringbackourgirls moved Internet users to participate. Along with discussing TBTT's relationships with other users in the form of mentions and replies to, it is also essential to provide detail on TBTT's relationships with other users in the form of retweets and direct mentions.

6.1.3. @takebackthetech's relationships: retweets and direct mentions

Of the 1440 mentions, 1243 (86%) were retweets and 197 (14%) were direct mentions as shown in Figure 13 below. The results highlight that users are engaging with TBTT's content in the form of retweets, which is promising, far more than are engaging with the network directly in the form of direct mentions. The reasons for this could be similar to the ones discussed above. Nonetheless, considering that getting users to retweet their content is something that TBTT aims to do, this research finds TBTT successful in this endeavour.

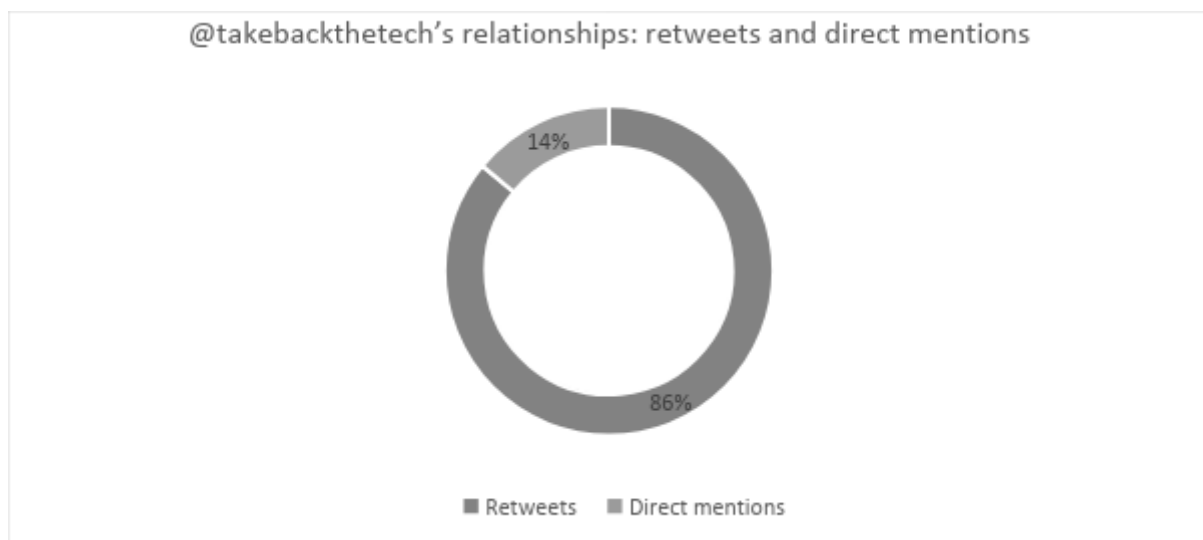


Figure 13: Categorisation of @takebackthetech's relationships: retweets and direct mentions

It has been established that including URLs in their tweets was a primary tactic employed by TBTT but was this tactic embraced by other users as well?

6.1.4. URL usage in users' @takebackthetech tweets

As shown in Figure 14 below, URLs were included a total of 1099 times (76%) by users in their @takebackthetech tweets. The majority of the tweets in this group were retweets suggesting that the URLs were initially shared by TBTT. Therefore, TBTT's strategy of including URLs in their tweets

was effective as users retweeted these tweets and essentially assisted TBTT in expanding their reach and building a wider network.

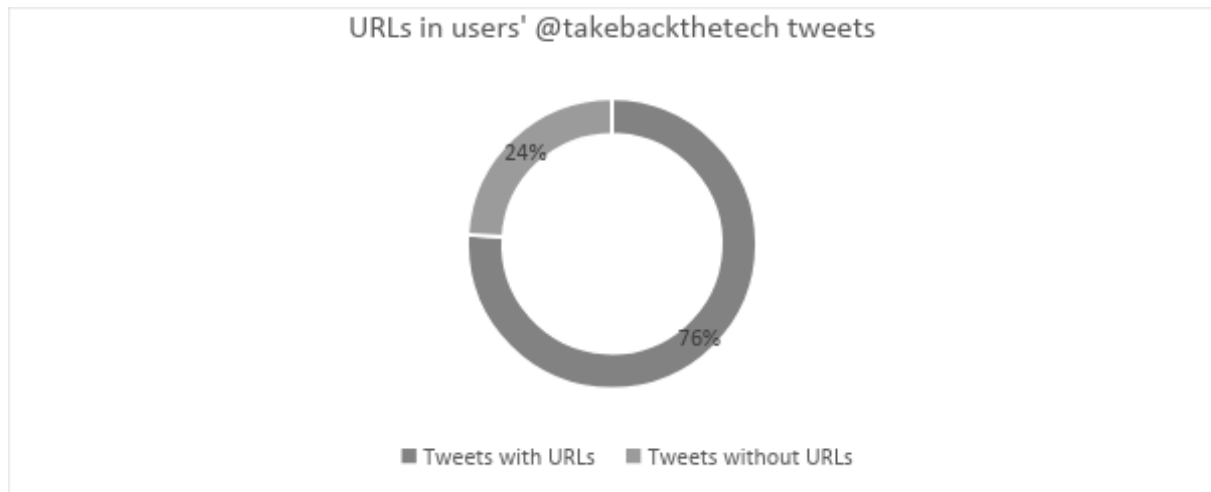


Figure 14: Breakdown of URLs included in users' @takebackthetech tweets

Table 4 below identifies the top three URLs shared by users in their @takebackthetech tweets. TBTT was successful in including links to their own website as their website was the first and second most popular URL. This highlights how effective agenda-setting can be for activist networks on Twitter. According to the table below, users were mostly interested in learning more about and/or sharing (via retweeting) information on the kind of campaigns TBTT runs and they were also interested in learning more about and/or sharing information about hate speech. The third most popular URL linked to an article that highlighted 16 activists and organisations who have been at the forefront of digital anti-VAW activism.

<i>Website</i>	<i>About</i>	<i>No. of times tweeted</i>
takebackthetech.net	A webpage that provides information on different campaigns – related to technology-related VAW, LGBTIQ rights, women empowerment, gender equality etc. – that are occurring globally in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North America.	81
takebackthetech.net	A webpage that provides information on hate speech – definition, how people experience it and attachment for download: “Know more about hate speech”	49

16days.thepixelproject.net	An article on 16 activists and organisations who have been at the forefront of digital anti-VAW activism in the last decade	48
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Table 4: Top three URLs shared by users in their @takebackthetech tweets

Considering that a discussion has been provided on tweets containing the search term @takebackthetech, attention will now be paid to the search term #takebackthetech.

6.2. Tweets containing the search term #takebackthetech

In total there were 1773 #takebackthetech tweets. TBTT (10%) was the biggest contributor of #takebackthetech tweets followed by an individual user (3%). The rest of the #takebackthetech tweets were made up of individual users and organisations each contributing less than 3% each. Including hashtags in their tweets is one of TBTT’s primary tactics as it allows them to keep track, at least to some extent, of the conversations occurring, the number of people involved, and the reach of campaign messages (Mitchell, personal interview, 2015 October 16). Additionally, hashtags are an effective method of network-building and creating counterpublics. A breakdown of users who included #takebackthetech in their tweets has not been provided because of privacy issues. The most popular hashtags under the search term #takebackthetech are illustrated in Figure 15 below. Understandably, #takebackthetech was the most popular hashtag used. The second most popular hashtag was #16days. Figure 15 illustrates that NodeXL recognised the order that hashtags were placed in as distinct groups. The data also reveals that users frequently include more than one hashtag in a tweet. This supports the notion that Twitter allows for the intersection of different campaigns and network-building.

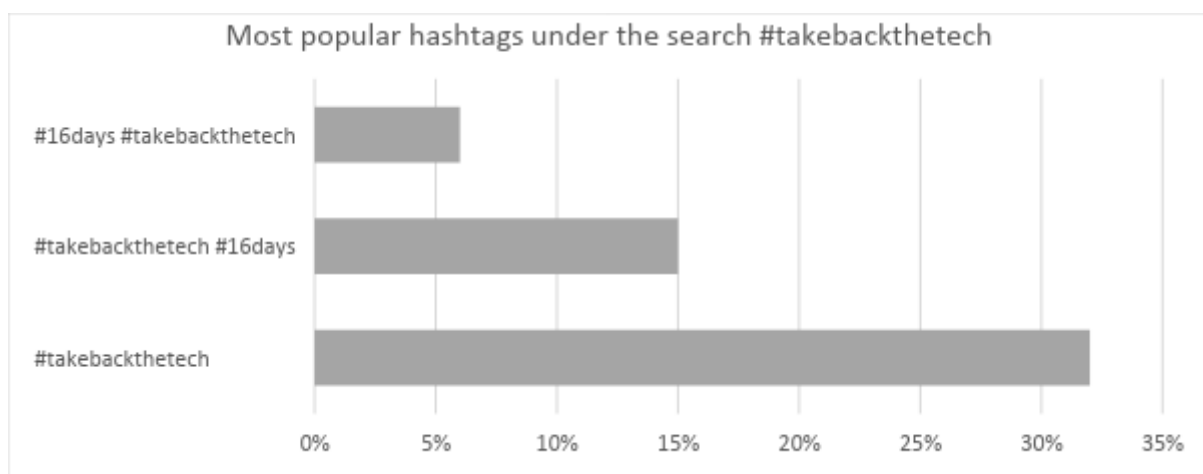


Figure 15: Most popular hashtags used under the search #takebackthetech

When investigating the tweets under the search term #takebackthetech, it is vital to discuss whether these tweets were mentions, original tweets or replies to others.

6.2.1. Type of tweets

Figure 16 illustrates that majority of the tweets including #takebackthetech were mentions (79%), followed by original tweets (19%) and replies to other users (2%).

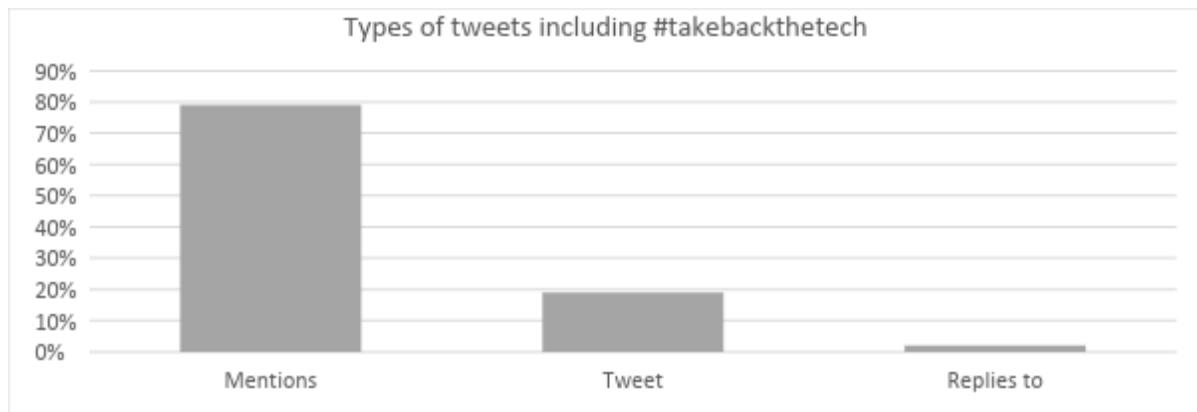


Figure 16: Classification of tweets including #takebackthetech

The mentions in this group were made up mostly of retweets (91%) and the remaining 9% were tweets published by TBTT and other users who included #takebackthetech. The majority of the retweets were TBTT tweets (44%), followed by @APC_News (7%), and @UN_Women tweets (6%). The aforementioned figures support the argument that the use of hashtags is an effective tactic utilised by TBTT as majority of the retweets in the #takebackthetech search term were published by TBTT. Furthermore, organisations like APC and UN Women included #takebackthetech in their tweets which was retweeted by their followers. This is a prime example of how effective Twitter can be for network-building. By including #takebackthetech in their tweets, APC and UN Women are assisting TBTT in reaching users they may not ordinarily reach through their own network. When analysing the search term #takebackthetech, it was noticed that some users created their own tweets where they included #takebackthetech but did not @ mention TBTT. Even though these users did not include TBTT's username in their tweets, they still assisted in expanding the reach of the campaign by including the hashtag.

Because URLs played a crucial role in TBTT's campaign we need more detail on whether or not users included URLs in their #takebackthetech tweets.

6.2.2. URL in users' #takebackthetech tweets

As shown in Figure 17, URLs were included in 68% of users' #takebackthetech tweets. Therefore, reinforcing the notion that including URLs in tweets is favoured by users as it allows for linking to additional information.

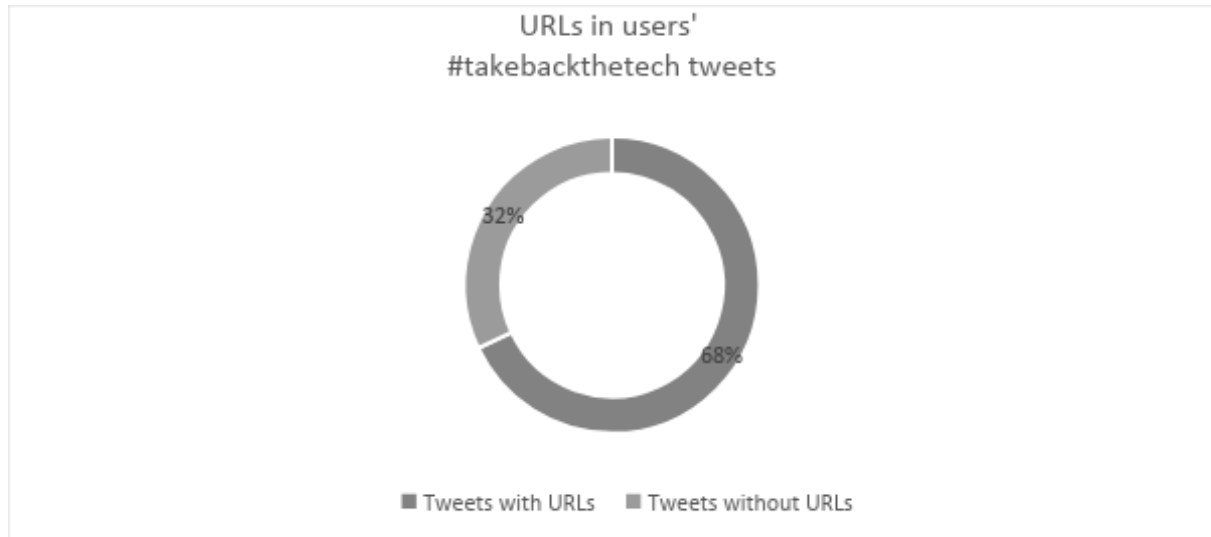


Figure 17: Breakdown of URLs included in users' #takebackthetech tweets

According to Table 5 below, the three most shared URLs all linked to TBTT's website. This illustrates that TBTT's strategy of sharing URLs is effective and one that they should continue implementing. Table 5 illustrates that users are interested in learning more about campaigns related to women's and LGBTIQ issues, the campaign's survivor stories and gaining more information on the 2016 16 Days campaign.

<i>Website</i>	<i>About</i>	<i>No. of times tweeted</i>
takebackthetech.net	A webpage that provides information on different campaigns – related to technology-related VAW, LGBTIQ rights, women empowerment, gender equality etc. – that are occurring globally in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North America.	81
takebackthetech.net	A webpage that shares 23 stories of victims/survivors of technology-related violence from around the world. The stories	68

	come in the form of essays, videos, poems, cartoons, radio stories and are in different languages including English, Spanish and French.	
takebackthetech.net	A webpage that provides information on TBTT's 2016 campaign for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence	55

Table 5: Top three URLs shared by users in their #takebackthetech tweets

Chapter Six has discussed how users engaged with the TBTT campaign by using the @takebackthetech username and #takebackthetech in their tweets (as captured by NodeXL). Despite the attack by trolls that TBTT endured in October, the data revealed that TBTT did not experience any attacks during the 16 Days campaign under both search terms – @takebackthetech and #takebackthetech. When looking at tweets containing both search terms, participants included hashtags in the majority of their tweets. This supports the argument that TBTT's strategy of promoting hashtags to foster network-building and create counterpublics during their campaign is effective. The majority of users who engaged with TBTT during 16 Days did so via mentions while only a few engaged via replies. The above discussion also revealed that participants included URLs in the majority of their tweets. Therefore, reinforcing the notion that including URLs in tweets is favoured by users as it allows for linking to additional information. Overall, the number of responses from users did not reflect the effort TBTT put into the campaign.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has investigated the online abuse of women on SNS, particularly on Twitter, by analysing the strategies adopted by TBTT to overcome this abuse through their 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign. This study cannot claim to have uncovered and/or discussed all the solutions to tackle this issue. However, it presents a foundation for further studies by highlighting some insights into how an activist network is using Twitter to combat the online abuse of women. The methodology of this research involved qualitative and quantitative research methods, content analysis of tweets, interviews, the preliminary stages of social network analysis, sampling and data collection, and coding.

While this study is limited in size and scope, there are some points which can be noted for future research. This study did not investigate the global nature of responses to the TBTT campaign which could be an area for future research. Furthermore, NodeXL does have its limitations and it is unable to provide all of the requested tweets because of factors such as volume limits imposed by the Twitter Application Programming Interface. Considering that this is a keyword-based study, this research cannot claim to have collected a representative collection of all discussions about TBTT on Twitter because users may have discussed the campaign without using #takebackthetech or mentioning TBTT's username. Additionally, further research could gather data for a longer period of time to develop a deeper analysis. Considering that the 16 Days campaign ran for 16 days, this study only collected data for that period.

7.1. Twitter archive findings: TBTT's original tweets

During their campaign, TBTT embraced online activism in two primary ways: awareness/advocacy and organisation/mobilisation. Additionally, they used their campaign to empower marginalised voices – through the sharing of survivor stories – and embraced and encouraged cross-boundary dialogue. Furthermore, TBTT engaged in agenda-agenda setting, encouraged network-building, and created counterpublics. Calls to action were a fundamental tactic employed by TBTT during the campaign. These calls to action encouraged both online and offline action. TBTT highlighted the need to share stories of strategies for countering VAW, to organise offline by arranging meetings to discuss technology-related violence, to transform tools for digital safety, and to encourage followers to make their own digital safety roadmaps. TBTT used Twitter for agenda-setting by linking to external media in their tweets. Including these URLs was an effective way of directing followers to additional information such as their own website, commercial media websites, and websites of feminist and women's organisations.

Furthermore, TBTT overcame Twitter's 140-character limit and included additional information by using images such as pixel-art characters, memes, infographics, and photos of campaigners' work. Tweets with images comprised a small percentage of TBTT's tweets. Given that tweets with images get more total views than content without, I propose that TBTT should make more use of images in their tweets. As highlighted in Chapter 5, tweets with images also get more engagement and make data more accessible.

7.2. Responses to @takebackthetech and #takebackthetech

The majority of users who engaged with TBTT during 16 Days did so via mentions while only a few engaged via replies. Thus, despite the active campaigning by TBTT, the Twitter data suggests a relatively low level of active engagement. When looking at tweets containing both search terms (@takebackthetech and #takebackthetech), participants included hashtags in the majority of their tweets. This supports the argument that TBTT's strategy of promoting hashtags to foster network-building and create counterpublics during their campaign is effective. Participants included URLs in the majority of their tweets. Therefore, reinforcing the notion that including URLs in tweets is favoured by users as it allows for linking to additional information.

7.3. How I imagine a feminist world (wide web)

Ultimately, TBTT embraced a number of tactics in an attempt to overcome the online abuse of women. Through these various tactics and strategies, this study suggests that empowering women, by engaging with them and sharing information, tools, resources and tips with them, is one of TBTT's ultimate strategies to combating the online abuse of women. TBTT's campaign also highlights the continued importance of "safe" spaces. My desire is that this research will encourage other activist networks to incorporate Twitter into their online campaigns and embrace some of the various strategies discussed. Including: hashtagging, creating counterpublics, acting as agenda-setters and embracing network-building tactics. Additionally, my wish is that this study will encourage women to be visible online, avoid self-censorship and feel empowered by some of the tactics and strategies shared to overcome technology-related violence. Lastly, it is hoped that women will feel safer navigating online spaces by knowing that there are resources available to support them and activist networks like TBTT who are working to create safe, inclusive online spaces as this research has discovered that currently online spaces are not inclusive.

Like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, I too want to live in a world that is more just, where a woman is never told that she can or cannot or should or should not do anything because she is a woman. I too

want to live in a world where men and women are happier, where men and women are truly equal and not constrained by gender roles. The TBTT campaign shows that many others dream of such a world. My hope is that this research contributes in some way towards making this world a reality.

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<http://www.worldwideworx.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Exec-Summary-Social-Media-2015.pdf> [2016, March, 31].

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APPENDIX A: Images used in Take Back The Tech!'s original tweets

A1: Feminist Principles of the Internet




1. A feminist internet is more women and queers – in all our diversities – having universal, affordable, unfettered, unconditional & equal **access** to the Internet.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




2. A feminist internet is an extension of our **resistance** movements in other spaces, public & private. Our agency lies in deciding what aspects of our lives to politicize and/or publicize on the internet.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




3. The internet is a **transformative** public and political space. It facilitates new forms of citizenship that enable individuals to claim, construct, and express our selves, genders, sexualities.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




4. The misogynistic attacks, threats, intimidation, & policing experienced by women & queers online are real, harmful, & alarming. We must prevent, respond to, and resist this **violence**.

Feminist Principles of the Internet



5. We must claim the power of the internet to **amplify** alternative & diverse narratives of women's lived realities, resisting forces that monopolize claims over morality & silence feminist voices.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




6. We believe in challenging the patriarchal spaces that currently control the internet and putting more feminists and LGBTQI people at decision-making tables.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




8. Feminists are politically committed to creating, supporting, promoting, and experimenting with technology using free & **open source** tools and platforms.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




9. The internet's role in enabling access to critical **information** - including on sexual health, pleasure, risks - is essential, and must be supported & protected.

Feminist Principles of the Internet




10. Surveillance is a default tool of patriarchy to control & restrict rights both online and offline. The right to **privacy** is a critical principle for a safer, open internet for all.

Feminist Principles of the Internet



11. We have the right to access all our personal **data** and to be able to exercise control, which includes knowing who has access to the data & under what conditions, and being able to delete it forever.

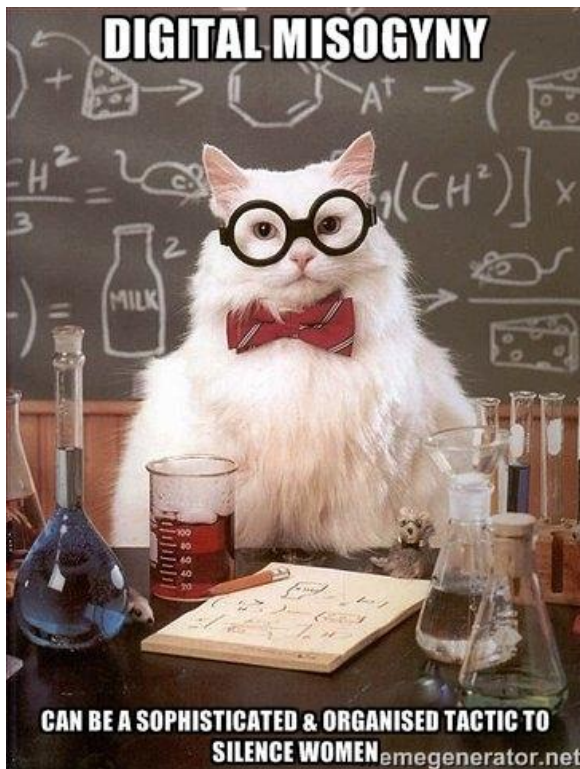
Feminist Principles of the Internet



15. It is our inalienable right to choose, express, and experiment with our diverse sexualities on the internet. **Anonymity** enables this.

Feminist Principles of the Internet

A2: Memes

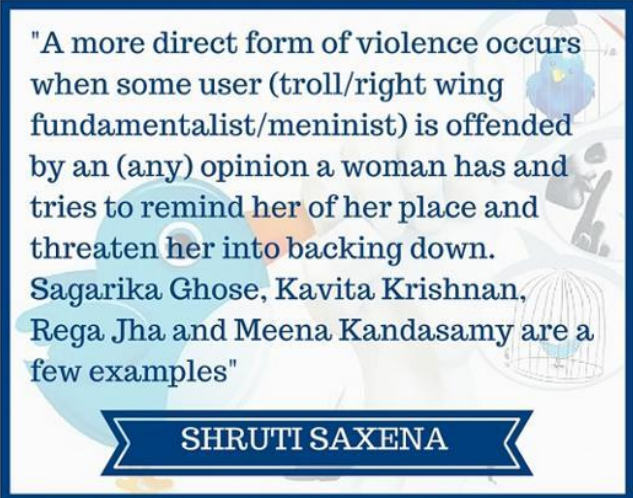


A3: Quotes

#GBVInMedia

"A more direct form of violence occurs when some user (troll/right wing fundamentalist/meninist) is offended by an (any) opinion a woman has and tries to remind her of her place and threaten her into backing down. Sagarika Ghose, Kavita Krishnan, Rega Jha and Meena Kandasamy are a few examples"

SHRUTI SAXENA



#GBVInMedia

"Don't be afraid of technology. Insist on your presence and occupy online spaces. Facing an online attack can be exhausting and sometimes frightening. Reaching out to your allies and friends for support is an important strategy, both for solidarity as well as to strengthen your shared actions."

Jac sm Kee, Manager, Women's Rights Programme at APC



“ I see more and more women in the field as journalists... and what I see is that it is making a big change in the way stories are covered. ”

- **Christiane Amanpour**
Chief International Correspondent for CNN,
UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for
Freedom of Expression and Journalist Safety



#GenderInMedia

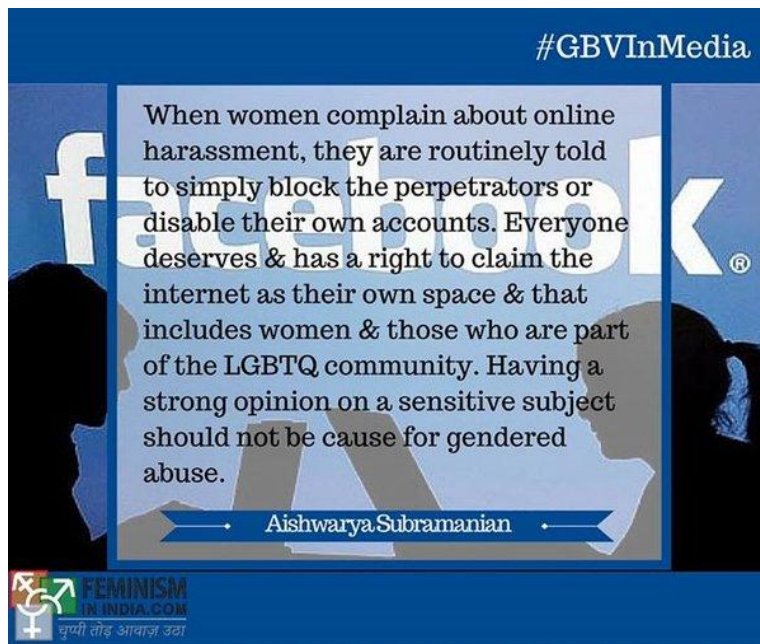


#GBVInMedia

When women complain about online harassment, they are routinely told to simply block the perpetrators or disable their own accounts. Everyone deserves & has a right to claim the internet as their own space & that includes women & those who are part of the LGBTQ community. Having a strong opinion on a sensitive subject should not be cause for gendered abuse.

Aishwarya Subramanian

FEMINISM IN INDIA.COM
चुप्पी तोड़ आवाज़ उठा



A4: Infographics



NOVEMBER 25

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As recognized by Human Rights Bodies, WHRDs who work on sexual and reproductive rights issues are at particular risk of facing violence because of the nature of their work.

The advocacy efforts of SRHR activists are often shunned, ignored or feared by broader society, and as a result, SRHR defenders commonly find their own lives and well-being under threat.

SRHR DEFENDERS FACE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE:

1 PHYSICAL



SRHR defenders might be violently detained at demonstrations; beaten because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; or even killed in hate crimes.

2 SEXUAL



The gender-based nature of violence against SRHR Defenders places them at great risk of being subjected to sexual violence, including sexual harassment, assault, and rape, among other forms of sexual violence.



3 PSYCHOLOGICAL

The most prevalent type of violence. It happens through the delegitimization, rejection and stigmatization of the work of SRHR activists, their lives and their personal choices; threats of violence against SRHR activists and their families; and increased violence and threats through online and digital media, including verbal violence, violent images and explicit death threats.

SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST SRHR DEFENDERS!

Join us during the #16Days of Activism and share your stories as #SRHRheroes, speak out for the recognition of SRHR defenders as Women Human Rights Defenders and demand their protection!

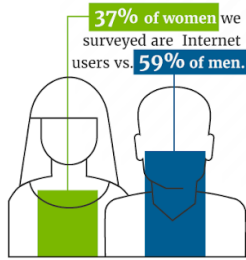




IS THE WEB REALLY EMPOWERING WOMEN?

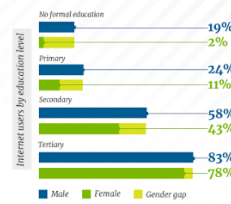
A Web Foundation survey of poor urban men and women in nine* cities in the developing world

WOMEN ARE ABOUT 50% LESS LIKELY THAN MEN TO USE THE INTERNET IN POOR URBAN COMMUNITIES

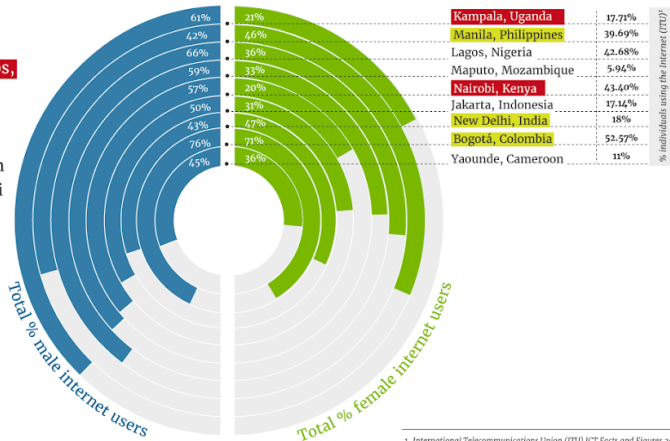


Women who are politically active offline are **twice** as likely to use the Internet.

Access to higher education **narrows** the gender gap in Internet access



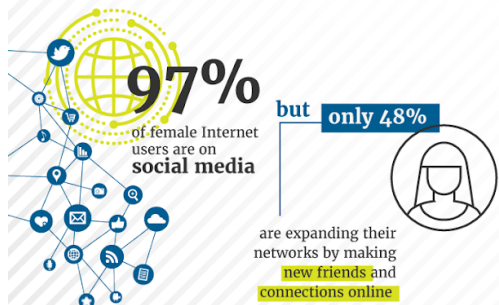
Kampala and Nairobi have the **widest gender gaps**, while **almost the same** number of men and women use the Internet in Manila, New Delhi and Bogota.



1. International Telecommunications Union (ITU) ICT Facts and Figures 2015

DOES ACCESS = EMPOWERMENT?

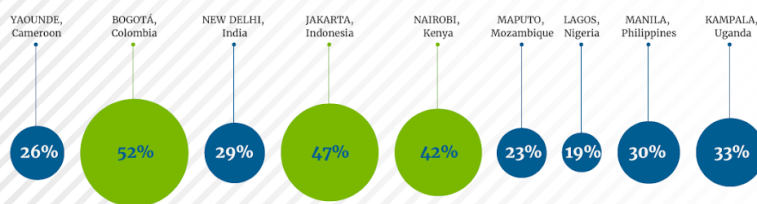
More work needs to be done to make the Web truly empowering for women



Only 21% of connected women have on average searched for critical information on topics like:



Percentage of female Internet users who have used the Internet to **look for a job**



*Nine cities surveyed: Yaounde (Cameroon), Bogota (Colombia), New Delhi (India), Jakarta (Indonesia), Nairobi (Kenya), Maputo (Mozambique), Lagos (Nigeria), Manila (Philippines) & Kampala (Uganda).

MAPPING TECHNOLOGY-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

TAKE BACK THE TECH! TOP 8 FINDINGS

WHAT IS TECHNOLOGY-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?



Technology-based violence against women (tech-based VAW) encompasses acts of gender-based violence that are committed, abetted or aggravated, in part or fully, by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

The findings are from **1126** cases reported on the Take Back the Tech! online map from **2012 to 2014**.

1 Women **18-30 years old** and younger are the **most vulnerable online**.

2 The majority (**40%**) of cases are perpetrated by **someone known** to the survivor.

3 **3 general categories of women who experience tech-based VAW:**

- Someone in an **intimate relationship** whose partner has become abusive
- A **professional with a public profile** involved in public communication (e.g. writers, researchers, activists and artists)
- A **survivor of physical assault** – often from intimate partner abuse or rape.

4 **Emotional harm (33%)** impeding women's full participation in online and offline life has been reported in a majority of cases.

As well as:

- Harm to reputation (18%)
- Invasion of privacy (18%)

5 11% of cases reported **physical harm**, which means the internet is used to **facilitate offline violations and violence**.

6 **Facebook (26%)** and **mobile phones (19%)** are the platforms where most violations were reported.

7 **In less than 1/3** of the cases reported, action has been taken by the service provider.

8 **Less than 1/2 of the cases (41%)** reported to the authorities **have been investigated**.

- 49% of cases were reported to authorities

It's our right to live a life free from violence in all the spaces we occupy. Take action, end violence against women. Take Back the Tech!

www.takebackthetech.net/mapit | www.genderIT.org/VAWonline-research

The Take Back the Tech! online map is part of the APC 'End violence: Women's rights and safety online' project funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) and is based on a strong alliance with partners in seven countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan and the Philippines.

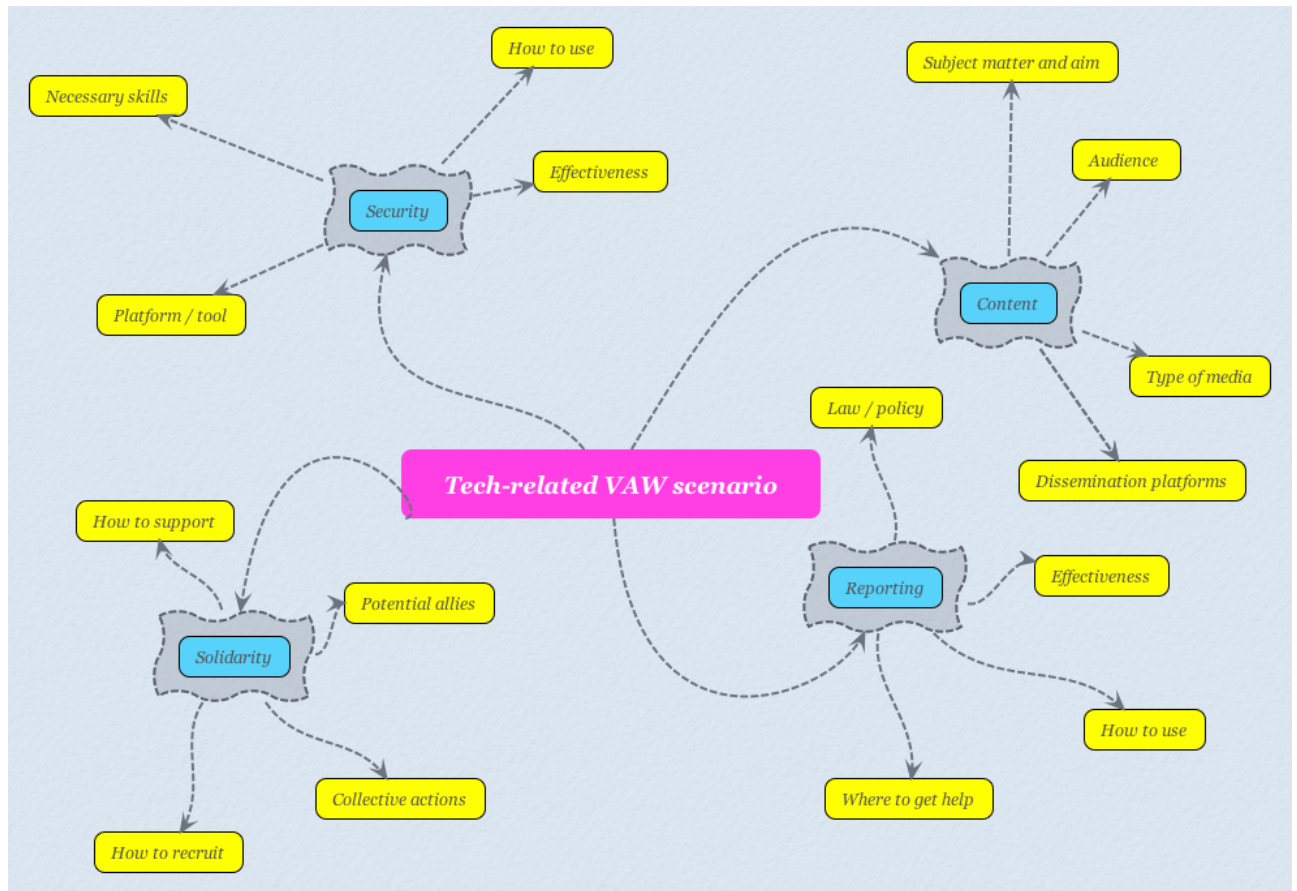


genderIT.org



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

A5: Digital safety roadmap



A6: Photos of campaigners' work



MICHELLE REDDY FIJI



"Just as women face risks offline, in the streets and in homes, women can face specific dangers and risks on the internet such as online harassment, cyber stalking, privacy invasions with the threat of blackmail, viral 'rape videos' "

Take Back the Tech, 2015

Follow
Women's Aid Organisation
@womensaidorg and
#InternetKita on Twitter this
9 December 2015
for a conversation on
technology-related violence
against women.



#InternetKita is a program by EMPOWER, in partnership with SUARAM, AI Malaysia, UndiMsia! and Women's Aid Organisation.

A8: Images in a language other than English



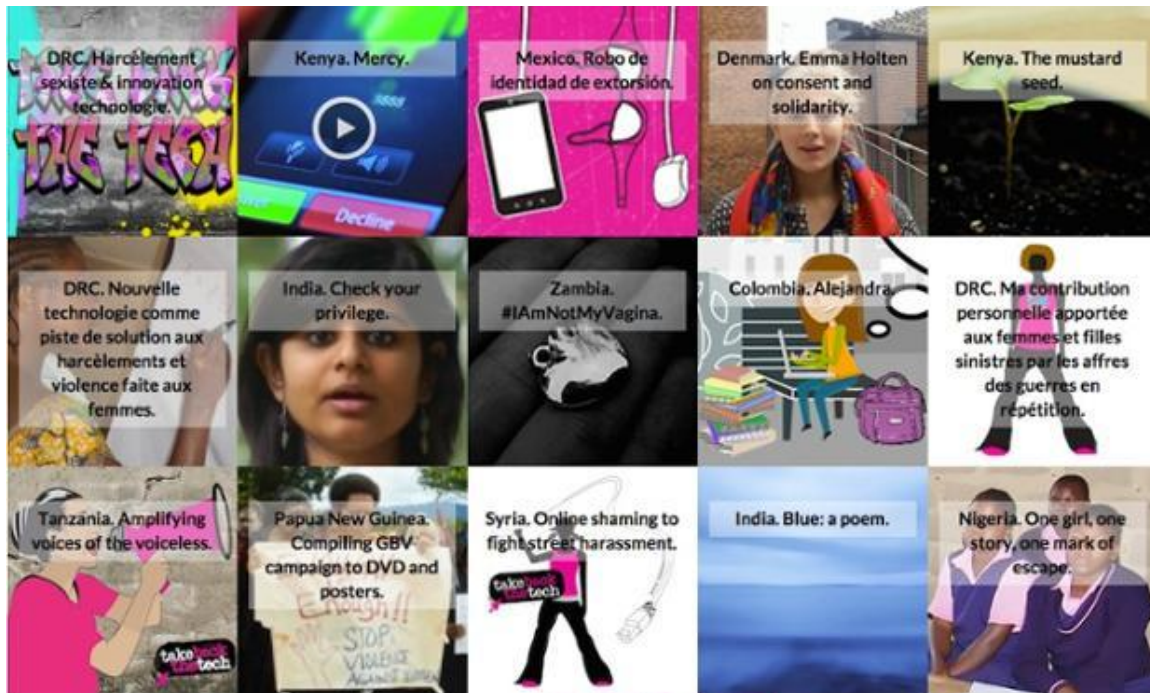
A9: Photo collage



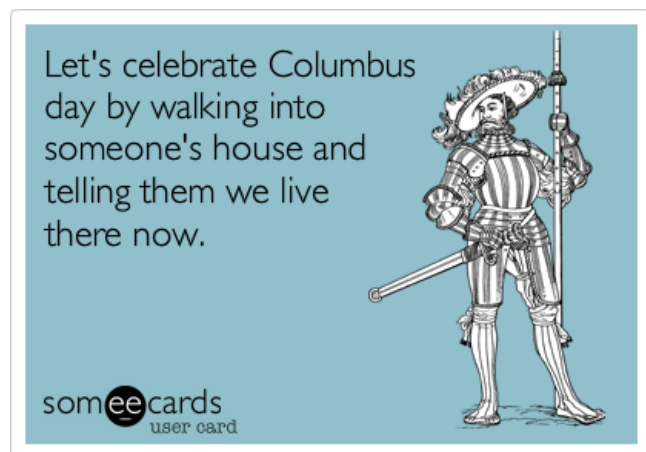
A10: Digital poster



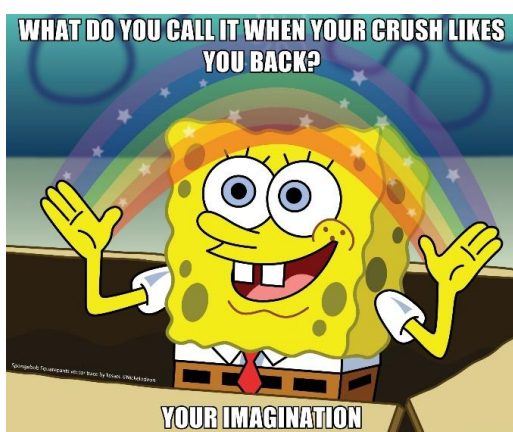
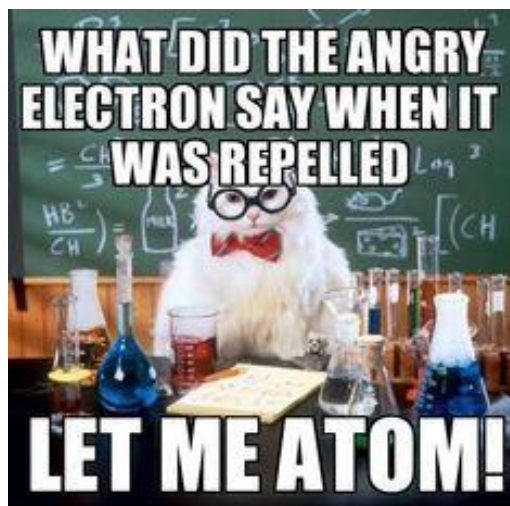
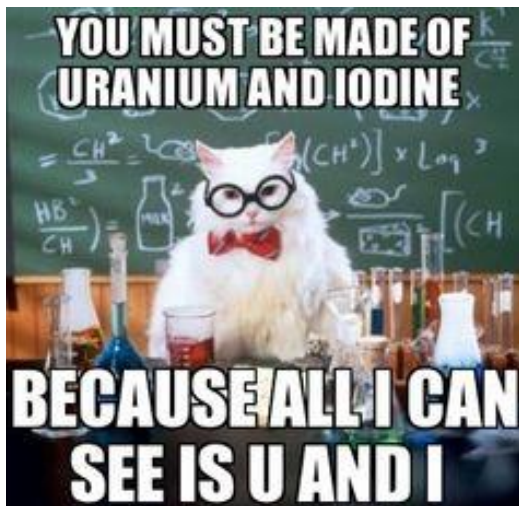
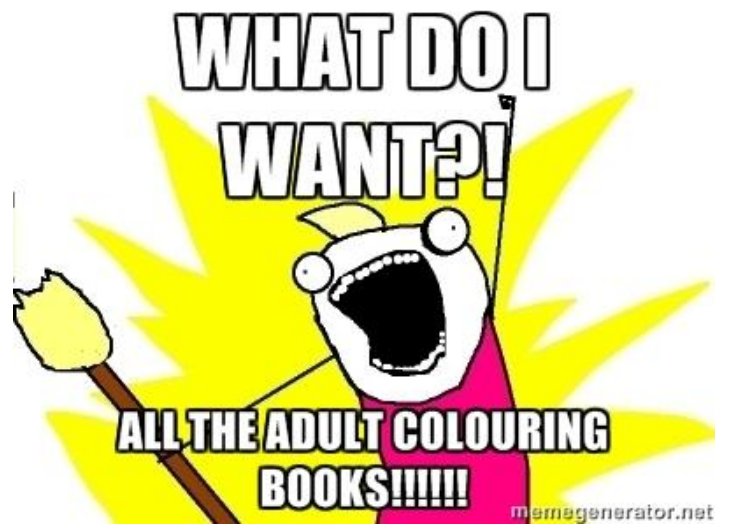
A11: Survivor stories



APPENDIX B: Someecards examples



APPENDIX C: Meme examples



APPENDIX D: Email exchange between me, APC and TBTT

Apr 21, 2015

Dear X

My name is Samukelisiwe Mabaso and I was wondering if you could please assist me. I'm working on my Master's in Media Studies at The University of Cape Town and I'm interested in researching some of the work the APC does in South Africa. Broadly, I want to investigate the abuse of women on social media networks by focusing on Twitter. My working topic at the moment is: "A study of the Association for Progressive Communications' approach against the abuse of women on Twitter."

I received your email address from Y and she advised that you were the best person to contact regarding my research. If your schedule permits, would you be interested in conducting interviews with me and possibly making certain resources available to me to assist me with my research? I would greatly appreciate your assistance.

I am more than happy to work around your schedule and commitments.

Regards,
Sam.

May 7, 2015

Hi Sam,

I'd be happy to help. I'm the xxx of Take Back the Tech!, which is our project on reclaiming technology to prevent violence against women. Would you like to tell me a little more about what you're looking for? And do you want to send me questions or set up a Skype chat?

Thanks for reaching out to us.

Best,
Mitchell

Sep 3, 2015

Hi Mitchell,

I finally presented my research proposal last week Friday which went very well. I'm still awaiting feedback from the board but so far so good. My research question is: "What tactics are employed on Twitter by Take Back The Tech! to combat online women abuse?" Thus part of my research will involve capturing and analysing Take Back The Tech's tweets. I'm in the process of establishing which programme/software will be the best way to capture the Twitter data. Would Take Back The Tech! be open to me having access to its Twitter archive to assist my research? Please see [here](#) for more info.

Sep 18, 2015 at 6:21 PM

Here's the archive!

Sep 21, 2015

Hi Mitchell,

Thank you for the Twitter archive as well as xxx's article and contact - these resources are really helpful!

I'm planning on meeting with my research supervisor soon. Once I've met with her, maybe we could arrange a date and time for a Skype chat? Please let me know what your schedule is like / when would suit you.

Oct 1, 2015

I could meet October 14, 15 or 16 if one of those days works for you.

Oct 2, 2015

Thanks Mitchell, the 16th would be perfect. Please let me know what time would suit you.

Oct 6, 2015

Would 9 am EST be fine? That's 13 GMT/UTC

APPENDIX E: Skype Interview questions for Mitchell

1. When did TBTT decide to join Twitter and why?
2. I've managed social media platforms for organisations before and it can get quite overwhelming. Do you have one person who handles TBTT's social media platforms or is there a team of people?
3. Do you have an internal Twitter policy or strategy in place? If yes, could you please elaborate on this?
4. Besides raising awareness about the online abuse of women, what other benefits do you believe a platform like Twitter presents?
5. How does TBTT measure the success of their Twitter campaigns?
6. Do your online campaigns feed into on the ground work?
7. TBTT sometimes hosts tweetchats, what is the purpose of these?
8. Besides tweetchats, are there any other strategies TBTT employs to encourage dialogue and participation on Twitter?
9. Has TBTT ever had a problem with trolls? If yes, how did / do you deal with them?
10. The term slacktivism has recently been introduced and is defined as "actions performed via the Internet in support of a political or social cause but regarded as requiring little time or

involvement, e.g. signing an online petition or joining a campaign group on a social media website”. Do you believe that online campaigns encourage passive support and have taken the action out of activism?

11. Do victims of online abuse reach out to TBTT via Twitter?
12. The theme for this year’s 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is Sharing Survivor Strategies, why was this theme chosen?
13. What does TBTT hope to achieve in this year’s campaign?
14. On 9th October TBTT, misogynists, trolls and a variety of people who associate with the #Gamergate hashtag decided to occupy and corrupt the #TakeBackTheTech and #ImagineAFeministInternet hashtags by posting thousands of anti-feminist and misogynistic tweets and memes. This attack was the response to a tweet chat organised by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Best Practice Forum on Countering Online Violence and Abuse, to discuss the impact of such violence. How does TBTT deal with situations like this?
15. What strategies do you think should be implemented to combat the online abuse of women?

APPENDIX F: Email Interview answers from Mitchell

Hi Sam,

1. What is your overall feeling of the Twitter campaign? Do you feel the organisation reached its goals?

Yes, I think each campaign is successful in its own way. The 2015 campaign had an increase in social media attention and interaction, which is great because people were taking action through platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

Twenty-three survivors and those who work with survivors shared their stories in the survivor story gallery through videos, essays, poems, radio shows and comics. The gallery represents 17 countries from Argentina to Zambia and gives a variety of perspectives on the intersection of technology and violence against women.

Local campaigns ranged from a game jam in the Philippines to a Take Back the Tech! festival in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This year campaigners in Turkey led a new social media campaign with the hashtag #thisisviolencetoo (#budasiddet in Turkish), which trended on Twitter and especially encouraged people who identify as LGBTQI to share their stories of technology-related violence.

2. Did you experience any challenges with trolls?

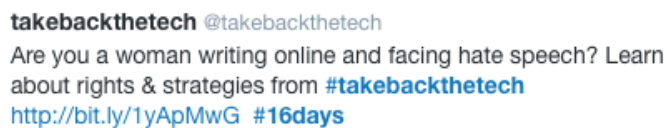
Fortunately, we did not have any problems with trolls. We were concerned about that since we faced a pretty intense troll attack throughout October. At that time, we were just about to publicize campaign plans, but we were concerned that these trolls would try to interfere with the campaign and attack some of the people and organisations we were including in our announcement. So we regrouped and reformulated our actions to improve safety for campaigners and ensure that we had a strong network of people ready to support the campaign and individual campaigners in the face of an attack. But by the time the campaign started, the attack had died down quite a bit and we ended up with only a few misogynistic tweets on the hashtags we normally use. Still, it was good practice for us to prepare like that.

3. Did anything stand out for you during the campaign?

We got some good feedback on safety apps, as was part of our plan, including;

- Either no safety apps are available in the Czech language or they aren't marketed well enough for many Czech users to be aware of them.
- Some new apps were introduced to us, such as iUDAME.
- Women are seeking apps that can protect them from violence that happens online.

From @takebackthetech, the highest Twitter reach during the campaign came from the following tweet, which reflects a belief in the importance of women writing online:



A screenshot of a tweet from the account @takebackthetech. The text of the tweet reads: "Are you a woman writing online and facing hate speech? Learn about rights & strategies from #takebackthetech <http://bit.ly/1yApMwG> #16days". The tweet is displayed in a light blue box with rounded corners.

4. How did the two tweet chats that you planned go?

Due to the Twitter attack in October, we canceled the tweet chats out of concern that trolls would try to hijack the conversation and the women we had asked to lead the chats would be attacked.

5. You had four fundamental calls to action during the campaign, which ones did people engage with the most and why do you think that is?

People engaged most with sharing stories, and I think it's because of the multimedia nature of our survivor story gallery. The stories were shared over and over again on Twitter and got a lot of attention and positive feedback. We had around 15 up to start the campaign and the rest were submitted once people saw the gallery during the campaign. What was already there really encouraged others to tell their stories in creative ways, and I think people were pleased to see so many different kinds of stories (in terms of media, voice, country, type of violence, etc.) in one place.

6. Will TBTT be doing anything differently for future Twitter campaigns after reviewing how the 2015 campaign went?

We've yet to discuss how 2016 campaigns will function, as we are still assessing our work from 2015 and discussing how we want to move forward on a variety of Women's Rights Programme activities. But we do know that we want to focus more on capacity building, that is, helping local individuals and organisations lead TBTT campaigns, rather than spending so much time on the global effort. Now that online VAW is regularly spoken of in the media, by corporations, and at development debate tables, we want to get back to our more grassroots beginning and support local voices and actions.