CULTIVATING VIOLENCE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY?
Exploring the Connections between Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and
Violence Against Women (VAW) [*]

The Internet is not creating new forms of crimes against women and children, but it is creating new ways and means for crimes to be perpetrated. However, it is also creating new ways and means for people to organise, network, campaign and bring about social actions that may not be in the interests of governments and corporations.
– Banks, 2001: 163

I. CARTOGRAPHING THE ISSUES

Why a paper on information communications technologies (ICTs) and violence against women. Although communications technologies, particularly the internet, are heralded as the catharsis for today's 'information age', it seems like a privileged discourse to enter into because of the issue of unequal access. Lines of gender, ethnicity, class, and able-bodiedness, amongst others, are deeply implicated in this matter. The existence of a 'digital divide' in terms of infrastructure, accessibility, control of content and technological development translates into people who are positioned at different locations and with divergent and multiple identities having an unequal ability to benefit from ICT development. In a practical sense, even beginning with internet connectivity means investing a significant amount of money and time to acquire necessary apparatus and skills.

Women's movements may understand the potential and importance of emerging ICTs, but, with limited resources, may be unable to place this matter as a priority in our work. Obstacles such as technical problems, poor infrastructure, high usage costs, budgetary constraints, psychological barriers, inadequate skills and non-connectivity of national and local organisations are cited as some of the reasons for relatively low usage of ICTs by women's organisations in Asia and the Caucasus (Martinez & Wanasundera, 2001; Scott, 2001).

However, the impact of ICTs in shaping our sense of spatial, temporal and social relations with each other is undeniable. Technology-mediated communications inform us of cultural messages that are loaded with gendered, raced, and other discourses. These affect how we make sense of our place in the world and the context we are in conceptually.

The development of ICTs is deeply affected by the social context in which they are created and utilised. How technological advances evolve depends much on the needs and priorities of those who have influence over such decisions. With the concentration of ownership of these technologies and their subsequent usage through mass media in the United States of America (USA) and Western European countries, all of which is underlined by capitalistic interests[1], the power that motivates their development and usage deserves serious attention. As established by the compelling critiques raised by feminists and women's rights activists on the male-centric discourses of technology and the media as well as the historical exclusion of women in these fields, there is an urgency to examine the impact of ICTs on gender relations.

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[1] As seen at Phase I of the World Summit on Information Society (Phase I WSIS), Geneva, 2003, where government support for transnational ICT corporations seriously compromised the language of rights and civil society processes in the drafting of its Declaration (see Gurumurthy (2004)).

In many ways, this movement has already begun[2], but the speed with which new forms of ICTs develop and enable exchange leaves many dimensions that are only starting to be unravelled. Women's movements must now deal with issues of cyber-stalking, pornography on the internet, SMS (short message service) harassment and 'teledildonics' (as explained later). Although the underlying issue of unequal power in gender relations remains central to the understanding of these new and sophisticated permutations of VAW, the enabling role of the ICTs behind them must be surfaced, made visible and challenged.

Technology is not inherently masculine or even neutral. The increasing, creative and energetic application of ICTs by women's movements globally will affect the evolution of ICTs in unpredictable ways. For example, the invention and initial marketing of the telephone for the exclusive use of male businesses has been transformed to today's focus on the telephone as a device to maintain intimate connections. This transformation was significantly influenced by the subversion of women in Victorian times who used the telephone to overcome their isolation and multiply their contact with friends and relatives (Martin, 1991). As such, women's diverse contribution to the evolution of ICTs must be documented to ensure that contemporary creation of history does not, once again, erase women's indelible mark. Further, with each unfolding strategy, the mystique constructed around ICTs will start to splinter and, hopefully, the particular barriers to wider women's engagement will shatter in its wake.

> Box 1: **Locating Women in the History of Technology**
> *In her seminal book, "Mothers and Daughters of Invention: Notes for a Revised History of Technology" (1993) Autumn Stanley demonstrated the intimate relationship between technological advancement and gender relations. Based on available archeological evidence, Stanley mapped the flux and transformation of women's status and power in early societies that had a strong correlation to technological inventions. In the Neolithic period, for example, female deities were worshipped as a sign of recognition of women's advancement of agricultural techniques. Stanley marks the Bronze Age in Near Eastern cultures as the turning point where men began to dominate the social order. This occurred for a variety of possible reasons, including contact with nomads who worshipped male deities through newly-developing long-distance trade (Stewart Millar, 1998). This demonstrates the significance of technological advancement in augmenting or transforming existing gender relations, and the role played by the latter in shaping the progress of technology.*

The first section of this paper outlines what is meant by ICTs and the lens used to examine their implications on society. It also examines what is meant by VAW and offers an overview of the broad categories of VAW considered within this paper based on limitations of time and space. Section two examines the manner in which emerging ICTs facilitate or enable a culture of VAW through these categories, and how they materialise new ways of effecting such violence. The next section raises the common threads that rise from interrogating the specificities of the relationship, and the paper closes with some strategies that women working to end violence against women have implemented through the use of ICTs.

1.1 What is Meant by ICTs?
Information and communication are integral to human society. In many cultures today, information retrieval and presentation – the recording of wisdom and history – is still done with the use of speech, drama, painting, song or dance. The use of writing changed this enormously, and the invention of the printing press allowed communication on a massive scale, through newspapers and

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[2]   See, for example, the Bridge Cutting Edge Pack on "Gender and ICTs" (Gurumurthy, 2004), Stewart Millar (1998), and the Gender, Technology and Development Special Edition on ICTs (2002), Volume 6(1).

magazines. More recent technological innovations increased further the reach and speed of communication, culminating, for now, with digital technology.
- Gender Evaluation Methodologies (GEM) for Internet & ICTs, Association of Progressive Communications, Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP)[3]

Information communication technologies or 'ICTs' is a broad term that encompasses a range of technologies that meet our communication and information needs. This includes "a complex and heterogeneous set of goods, applications and services used to produce, distribute, process and transform information" (Marcelle, 2000: 5, quoted in Gurumurthy, 2004: 6). This paper will focus on what are sometimes called 'new' ICTs, which are digital technologies that include the internet, multimedia and wireless communications technologies.

This does not mean that the value of 'older' modes of ICTs (information transmitted in analogue format) is not recognised[4]. In fact, radio is one of the primary media used to reach a wide audience of women, and women's organisations have long harnessed the power of print media in their activism. It bears reminding that communications technologies need to be appropriate for the context and culture of their use, and are not an overriding solution to any issue in themselves. However, since women's engagement with more 'traditional' forms of ICTs has already been cogently – although by no means exhaustively – examined by feminists (particularly in the field of media studies), this paper aims to build from that knowledge and draw out the different dimensions of emerging ICTs and their relationship with VAW – a less expansively scrutinised field.

How can we understand the implications of emerging ICTs and computerised information resources? Based on their close relationship with the media as a social institution, as well as through their ability to reach a vast number of people with relative ease and speed, there are two ways to look at the effect or power of new ICTs:

i.   **Representation**
     ICTs have great potency to transmit dominant norms through representations. Culture as a way of structuring life and social relations is augmented by representations of ideas in our lives, and is diffused and disseminated via these technologies. Extensive studies have shown how media images reinforce notions of 'difference' between men and women by normalising stereotypes in gender roles as reality (Gallagher, 1995).

     However, this dynamic is by no means straightforward or simple. Particularly with the increased diversity of content producers facilitated by the internet, the array of representations affect gender relations in complex and multi-dimensional ways.

     In addition, cultures are not homogeneous or static. As stated by Susie Jolly (2002), "within each country, community or institution, there are many cultures. People have different relations to the cultures in which they live. Some aspects of culture are enabling for some and constraining for others. There are times when people go along with their cultural norms, and times when they resist. The going along with may reinforce those norms, and the

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[3]   <http://www.apcwomen.org/gem/glossary/index.htm> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

[4]   A complete distinction between old and new forms of ICTs cannot be drawn, since the latter evolved from communication processes that were already facilitated by the old, shifting them in speed, ease and breadth. The overlaps can also be seen through their effective and creative combination by women's organisations in their strategies.

resistance may challenge them. This process, combined with influence from outside forces, changes cultures."

The various strands of discourses in gender, sexuality, culture, race, etc., communicated through ICTs that give us a picture of life, need to be untangled to assess their role in affecting culture and norms. These are salient points in understanding and challenging VAW. Particularly with the existing inequities of new ICTs and the disequilibrium in loci of power in content production, the hegemonic discourses that underlie these representations must be rendered visible.

ii. **Communication**
The speed, vastness and relative ease of 'new' ICTs enable further shrinking of distance and time between people, which can have a great influence on social relations. This can be seen through the role of telephones in changing the prudish attitudes of 19th century women in the 'West'. Observed by Michèle Martin (1991: 66), "[the] contradictory effect created by the telephone of feeling nearby and far away at the same time seemed to embolden some people […and] permitted women to be bolder in their approach [in communication] than it had to be made face to face."

The anonymity provided by the internet can enable survivors of VAW to communicate their situation and seek help (Kee, 2004), as well as create new avenues to explore and understand gender relations (Turkle, 1995). However, the usage of ICTs can further endanger VAW survivors if utilised without a complete understanding of their dimensions (Kanz & Nakamura, 2002).

In connection with issues of representation above, cross cultural translation and the impact of dominant control over technological access, development and content production by the global economic 'North' require deeper assessment. Local strategies can sometimes be compromised through the ability of new ICTs to quickly transmit information at the click of a mouse to countless users[5]. The many-to-many, many-to-one and one-to-many ability of new ICTs in communication can sometimes lead to difficult issues of privacy, misrepresentation and misunderstanding (Friedman, 2003). On the other hand, women's organisations have utilised their capabilities to network across great distances and successfully mobilised instantaneous action on urgent situations of VAW.

The contradictory effects of ICTs can be better understood by examining the various ways in which they have been employed by users to communicate and connect with one another. Through this, women's movements can perhaps shape stronger solidarities with greater discernment of the potential and limitations of ICTs.

Broadly, these are the frameworks used to examine the relationship between ICTs and VAW in this paper.

1.2 Violence Against Women

Gender-based violence knows no colour and nationality. It devastates lives and fractures communities, impeding development in every nation. In every country, the well-being, promise and

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[5]   As in the case of the Amina Lawal international protest letter campaigns. For more information, see WLUML news report, available from: <http://wluml.org/english/newsfulltxt.shtml?cmd[157]=x-157-4556> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

gifts of millions of women and girls are destroyed by violence. To understand the causes of this destructive violence and how to eradicate it, we must view gender-based violence not only in terms of individuals, but in terms of relationships, within the context of families, communities and institutions. To work together to end it, we must understand that it can be stopped.
– Noeleen Heyzer in Spindel et al, 2000: 10

Violence and discrimination against women are global social issues, where abuses are afflicted systematically, relentlessly and are oftentimes tolerated, if not explicitly condoned. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (GA Resolution 48/104, 20 December 1993) defines violence against women (VAW) as "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."

Supplementing this is a range of international conventions that attempt to flesh out the various forms of violence that women face in divergent capacities and situations as they surface. Amongst them are the Convention on the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, which relates to trafficking of women and girls, and the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which relates to protection of women refugees. In addition, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) now recognises and prosecutes sexual and gender violence such as rape, sexual slavery (including trafficking of women), enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilisation as war crimes and crimes against humanity[6].

The usually cited document operationalised by women's movements is the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). General Recommendation 19 on that Convention states, "the definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence, that is, violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty" (CEDAW/GR/19/6). Importantly, it recognises VAW as impairing or nullifying the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms (CEDAW/GR/19/7).

The recognition of VAW as a violation of fundamental human rights is a fairly recent phenomenon. The United Nations General Assembly through the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (A/RES/48/104) effected this recognition only in 1993. Women's movements across the world are surfacing new instances and facets of VAW that were previously under-politicised, particularly in less privileged locations that the gaze of globalised mass media sometimes misses. Numerous world conferences on women's human rights, such as the Beijing Conference in 1995, also helped to create a platform for activists to meet, exchange and form networks for continued strategising. This enabled greater awareness and the building of new knowledge in relation to VAW.

New ICTs play an important function in communicating instances of systemic gender based violence in remote or hard-to-access locations such as conflict-affected areas, and facilitate the dissemination of information about such violations with unprecedented vastness and rapidity. With dialogues occurring over distances, whether within or across national boundaries, greater dimensions

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[6] http://www.un.org/law/icc/statute/99_corr/cstatute.htm [Accessed 25 March 2005]

of violence faced by women across the world emerge, together with strategic coalitions of women's organisations. Through their efforts, the terrain of recognised instances of VAW is constantly shifting.

This paper cannot comprehensively deal with every aspect of VAW, nor attempt to locate the boundaries of where VAW ends. Instead, recognised categories are presented as specific sites to explore the dynamics between ICTs and VAW. Broadly, this paper examines ICTs in relation to:

i.   Domestic Violence
ii.   Sexual Violence
iii.   Women in Areas Affected by Conflict

Initially, violence in women's reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, as well as harmful practices in the name of 'culture' and 'tradition', were also to be included in the paper. However, research yielded little information in these two areas, particularly information that directly examines their relationship with new ICTs. Nonetheless, some interesting questions and perspectives were raised in the process, which are threads that reverberate throughout the paper. As such, they are culled and positioned in the third section of the paper. It is hoped that this can help facilitate greater exploration and analysis into the issues and their connection with emerging ICTs.

Some Statistics on Violence Against Women

- *In Canada, the costs of domestic violence amount to $1.6 billion per year, including medical care and lost productivity. Estimates in the United States place this figure between $10 and $67 billion (Spindel et al., 2000).*
- *In countries where reliable, large-scale studies on gender violence are available, more than 20 per cent of women are reported to have been abused by the men with whom they live (United Nations Department of Public Information DPI/2035/D, May 2000).*
- *Around the world at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, often by a husband or family member (Heise & Gottemoeller, 1999).*
- *1 out of every 2 women in Canada has been physically or sexually assaulted at least once (from the age of 16). This figure represents 51% of 10 million women (Statistics on Violence Against Women, 2002).*
- *From 1996 to 1998, girls aged seventeen and under constituted approximately 40% of reported rape and attempted rape victims nationally in South Africa (Naylor, 2002).*
- *An estimated 200,000 women have been trafficked to Pakistan in the last 10 years, continuing at the rate of 200-400 women monthly (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific).*
- *A landmark study "Rape in America: A Report to the Nation" concluded that 1.3 women are raped per minute in that country (National Victim Center and the Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, 1992).*
- *During a cyber conference marking the International Social Violence Expulsion Week in Korea in 1998, Unitel, a PC (personal computer) communication service, sponsored a survey to determine the extent of online sexual violence. 30% of the respondents experienced sexual violence online.*

II. LOOKING AT VAW THROUGH ICTS

the word left unspoken
the word in the dark
the cancerous fire that starts with a spark

the word from the pulpit
the word in the news
the militant toxin distorting the truth
the word in the stomach
the word in the mind
the paralysing notion of what we might find
behind masks of the master
beneath cloaks of conceit
between veils of convention
beyond beckoning doors
the word
this word
i will not waste my life trying to ignore
this word
i embrace standing lonely in the light
this word
in its nakedness
powerless and small
no demon after all
- Malika Ndlovu[7]

2.1 Domestic Violence

Much of the violence faced by women happen within the walls of homes. This is unsurprising given the historical segregation of women into the 'private' spheres, where many women still remain as full-time (and oftentimes unpaid) carers and domestic workers[8]. Domestic violence is understood as an abuse of power, where predominantly a male intimate partner attempts to control and dominate the other through physical, psychological and/or sexual violence, or threat of such violence, or through control of her finances, mobility and social life.

2.1.1 Connecting Survivors with Help

With the severe control usually placed upon a survivor's mobility and her ability to access the public world, the internet can be seen as a way to circumvent her isolation. The culture of silence surrounding domestic violence can also make it difficult for survivors to inform anyone about the violence they face. This is even more true for survivors who are living some distance away from their immediate family network, or whose family members and friends are complicit in the silence by constructing the issue as a private matter between husband and wife. In this instance, there may be elements of shame involved for the survivor in admitting to herself or others that she is in a violent relationship.

In these situations, the internet can be a useful space to get further information about the dynamics of domestic violence, legal protection and available services for further help. Some organisations also provide email contact details for first instance counselling that can be followed up with telephone and face-to-face counselling (Kee, 2004). Email communication accommodates distance as well as relative anonymity, where only an email address needs to be disclosed. This can give survivors a sense of safety to disclose the violence they face, with less anxiety about 'shaming'. Such initial contact could help to make survivors feel that they are not alone and help validate their experiences. This and follow-up support may help enable survivors to take action and break the cycle of violence they are in.

Many women's organisations working on domestic violence responded to the possibilities presented by the internet by posting information on the

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[7]   **the word** <http://www.fito.co.za/april_2004/sub/fiction.htm> [Accessed 25 February 2005].

[8]   Forms of violence in the home include domestic violence and abuse of migrant domestic workers, who are primarily women. Due to lack of materials, this section will examine only the former in detail.

world wide web. A surge of materials on this issue on the web was documented by Jerry Finn (2000), who, using a popular search engine called 'HotBot', found that there were 24,880 websites indexed under 'family violence' and documented a 37% increase in these materials in just six months. The Violence Against Women Online Resources site that provides extensive information regarding VAW records around 1000 users per day and receives about 700 email requests for assistance per year, the largest section of which is related to domestic violence (Kranz, 2002).

Whether these materials actually reach survivors is uncertain. With women as a minority of internet users in almost all countries, and the lack of gender disaggregated data in developing countries (Gurumurthy, 2004), a conclusive outcome is hard to reach. The efficacy of posting materials on the web would also depend largely on the context in which these sites are accessed, whether women have the infrastructure and skills to utilise them or whether another form of communications medium would be more effective. For example, in the United States, Ann Kranz and Karen Nakamura (2002) postulated that since more than half of web surfers are female and one in three women are abused at some point in their adult life, there is – with more than 168 million households using the internet – a great potential for large numbers of survivors to be connected to information on the internet. Regardless, it is an encouraging sign that the internet is being increasingly populated by helpful resources for survivors or their support networks, such as friends of family members, who may be able to use them to seek information and other services.

Some organisations also provide digital (or sometimes known as cellular or mobile) telephones to their advocates and research staff so that they can be more accessible to survivors and thus increase safety (Kranz, 2002). This is to address concerns that survivors may not be able to reach staff when they are not at their desks and in recognition that safe times to call or opportunities for staff to return calls may be limited, particularly for survivors who are still living in the same house as abusers. With wireless telephones, staff can be mobile whilst at the same time remaining within reach.

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*Box 3: **Verizon Wireless** – **Hopeline Programme**[9]*
Verizon Wireless initiated a programme called 'Hopeline' that recycles old cellular telephones for organisations working with domestic violence in the U.S. The public is encouraged to donate their old or unused digital/mobile/wireless/cellular telephones. These telephones are then recycled and given to organisations that can provide survivors with free cellular telephones, complete with airtime and wireless voice mail. With these services, survivors have access to a private means of communication with no strings attached. In 2003 alone, this programme collected 900,000 telephones for recycling and donated more than $3.7 million to domestic violence shelters and advocacy organisations in the country.

2.1.2 Abusers' Use of ICTs

Despite these gains from the internet for survivors, there is increasing documentation on how new ICTs are opening up different avenues of control for abusers. Particularly in the U.S., where the percentage of

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[9]   <http://www.verizonwireless.com/b2c/aboutUs/communityservice/hopeLineFact.jsp> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

women online is relatively high (around 50%, Gurumurthy, 2004: 23), studies that provide such evidence have stimulated the development of programmes on technology risks in advocacy work on domestic violence.

Some of the dangers experienced by survivors include (Kanz & Nakamura, 2002; Southworth et al., 2002):

- Spy Software
  Survivors' use of ICTs to attain information or communicate for support may be compromised by features of the technology. For example, commercially available spy software (e.g. Big Brother, WinGuardian, CyberPatrol, Spy Agent, etc.) can be purchased and installed on a home computer, which enables abusers to have access to all keystrokes made on the computer. This includes all email correspondence, web surfing and internet communication. In Michigan, an abuser used this technique to monitor the survivor's internet activity. He was subsequently charged with four felony counts for using a computer to spy and intrude on another's privacy.

- Wireless Technology to Overhear Private Conversations
  Wireless (cellular or mobile) telephones can also be configured to pick up sounds within their proximity. A batterer can place a wireless telephone near the survivor and call the number throughout the day (with the volume turned off) to overhear her conversations and activities. Communication through cordless or wireless telephones or even through baby monitors can be picked up by a strategically positioned scanner (such as in a car on a nearby street).

- Disabled Users and Privacy
  Disabled survivors can be vulnerable to being overheard when using software that is designed to aid their use of the computer, such as voice-dictation programmes for typing and programmes that read text aloud from the screen. If an abuser is nearby, these software programmes do not allow privacy in communications that may be needed when a survivor is using ICTs to seek help or information.

- Instant Messaging Services
  Survivors sometimes use internet chat rooms or instant messaging facilities to dialogue with other survivors for mutual support. However, most of the programmes that support these forms of 'real time' communication keep a log and sometimes even a copy of the conversation. If the survivor is unaware of this feature and does not disable it, an abuser can access this log to monitor her conversations.

- Browser History
  Several web browsers, such as Explorer, Netscape and Mozilla Firefox, create a record of recent sites visited on the internet. This information is automatically stored in the computer's temporary internet or cache file and, if it is not cleaned after every use, can give abusers access to survivors' internet activity. Should a survivor be searching for information on the internet on domestic violence, the abuser would be able to gain information on this and subject her to further control, perhaps restricting her access to the home computer or gaining information about organisations that she may be looking to seek temporary shelter from.

- Email Tampering
  Survivors' use of email communication to seek information or support can be rendered insecure through use of technology. Abusers can intercept or redirect emails to their account or configure email software to place a copy of mail messages in other inboxes. Also, it is possible to check incoming emails remotely (via webmail facilities) before they are downloaded into the home computer without alerting the survivor that the messages have already been read. Also, email software often stores sent messages in the 'Sent Items' folder that survivors can neglect to delete. Even if they have been deleted, they are sometimes stored in the 'Deleted Items' folder, which requires an additional step of emptying to erase record of the correspondence.

- Visual Surveillance
  Web cams and other hidden surveillance cameras can be used by abusers to monitor their partners' activities. These devices are small, relatively low in price (USD30-50) and can be installed almost anywhere. The digital images are transmitted through the internet and can be viewed from a webpage, thus enabling abusers to monitor activities undertaken by survivors at home. Survivors are often unaware of the existence of these cameras because they are installed discreetly.

- Tracking Survivors
  Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is now commercially available for public use. It is a satellite-based navigation system made up of 24 satellites placed into orbit by the U.S. Department of Defense that can track the location of the user anywhere in the world. GPS can be installed in a car for less than USD300 and can log the location, time and speed of the vehicle at all times. There have been reports of GPS units being installed to track teenagers' and spouses' use of the family car. If a survivor is using the car to visit an organisation for counselling, advice or shelter, the abuser is able to locate its position and compromise her safety and the organisation's security.

Box 4: **Intercepted Email as a Catalyst for Homicide**
Joseph Sparacio, a computer programmer, reportedly intercepted his wife's email that stated her plans to leave him. His knowledge of this served as a catalyst for his murder of Valarie Sporacio the day before her appointment to apply for a protection order. Valerie had been dead for two days from brutal stabbing when her father turned up with a van to help her leave (Southworth et al., 2002).

2.1.3 Concerns Surfaced

Such innovative use of new ICTs by abusers raises grave concerns about the utility of these technologies in situations of domestic violence. Considering the gender imbalance in terms of access and development, it would appear that abusers might have a greater advantage in their application. Men who abuse their partners may also, and perhaps with greater ability, access online resources regarding domestic violence, then misuse information culled from these sites. For example, they could learn the language of rights and subvert it as justification for furthering their violence, or find out emergency escape plans posted online at domestic violence sites to better control their partner's ability to escape.

According to Cindy Southworth (2003), an advocate in ICTs and domestic violence in the U.S., "technology is becoming an integral part of battering

tactics". As such, would the development of new ICTs be affected and adapted based on their use by domestic violence perpetrators? With the increasing development of ICTs that support surveillance, this is an interesting point with which advocates against domestic violence must engage. Emerging ICT devices are becoming more commercially viable, partly facilitated by ease of application. They are also becoming smaller in size and less obtrusive. These innovations arguably could help women to gain access to their use. However, if the digital discourse continues to view its users as men (Stewart Millar, 1998; Rasmussen & Håpnes, 1991), then the advancement of these technologies might not reflect women's experiences and needs and, even worse, might be geared toward use by abusers. This is a dangerous oversight, since domestic violence is a reality for a large proportion of women at some point in their lifetimes.

The development of these technologies must take into account methods in which they can be exploited, and in turn, advocates against domestic violence need to understand and learn the risks of ICTs in their work. Survivors' safety is paramount in work related to domestic violence and the security implications of advocates against domestic violence using emerging ICTs must be discussed and revealed. Further, there are ethical and legal issues involved in online service deliveries such as email counselling or referrals to further information. These can include threats to personal safety, liability to the service provider, confidentiality breaches, lack of privacy and ineffective service delivery (Kranz, 2002). To better comprehend the ways that these risks can be mitigated and addressed, as well as to influence the development of ICTs that can benefit women's particular needs, advocates against domestic violence need to understand the implications of new ICTs.

This does not mean that all domestic violence organisations have to invest in emerging ICTs, since they may be irrelevant to intended beneficiaries or require too much effort to counter their limits, which may divert resources that could be better spent elsewhere. Technological expenditures have to be weighed against their benefits, potential harm, and the ability to overcome them within each context. Nonetheless, complete disengagement would be hard to sustain with the emphasis on new ICTs in other fields of social transformation such as social and economic development or poverty alleviation (Everts, 1998), which adds to the increasingly ubiquitous nature of new ICTs. A more powerful approach would be to remain aware of changes in the ICT arena, including their applications and shortfalls, and to influence the course of their development through this active participation.

Mitigating Risks Online
Finn (2001: 5) suggests taking these considerations to mitigate the risks involved in providing online services to domestic violence survivors:
- *"Email should be treated as formally as other client documentation.*
- *Organisations should take steps to prevent unauthorized access to their electronic records through using password protection of their computer and maintaining storage of back-up files in a secure place."*
- *"Victims and internet users should be informed if and for how long their messages are being preserved as part of their file, and organizations should obtain signed informed consent before any materials are forwarded to another party."*
- *"If messages are to be saved, there should be appropriate electronic and/or hard copy back up of all email messages. Alternatively,*

> *organizations may want to consider a policy in which all email from consumers is deleted after being read."*
> - *"Encryption software programs should be used to prevent messages from being read by anyone but the intended receiver."*
> - *"Survivors and internet users should receive education about online safety and privacy protection."*
> - *"Staff should receive training about maintaining secure electronic communications."*
> - *"To prevent access by hackers, electronic files containing victim or funder records should be kept on computers that are not connected to the internet."*
> - *"Organisations should not permit staff to access organisation email from their home computers."*
> - *"Finally, organisations should create written policies that establish how email is to be used, by whom, and what the sanctions are for violation of those policies."*
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> *Some organisations have also put up warnings on the main page of their websites to caution users against possible vulnerabilities they might face for accessing the site. For some examples, see:*
> - *Violence Against Women Online Resources :* http://www.vaw.umn.edu/mail/infoassist.shtml#internet*;*
> - *Women's Aid Federation:* http://www.womensaid.org.uk/warning.htm*;*
> - *The American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence:* http://www.abanet.org/domviol/internet.html

2.2 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is a broad term that ranges from forcible rape to non-physical types of pressure that compel women and girls to have sex against their will. Radhika Coomaraswamy (1995), Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, defines sexual violence as "all forms of sexual threat, assault, interference and exploitation, including 'statutory rape' and molestation without physical harm or penetration". The definition is deliberately expansive to accommodate modes of sexual violence that are being uncovered with time. Some currently recognised forms of sexual violence include rape, sexual harassment and intimidation, molestation, incest, child sexual abuse, trafficking, sexual assault against refugees, asylum seekers and women in prison and rape as a weapon of war.

In the context of this paper[10], the connections between sexual violence and ICTs will be examined particularly in relation to sexual assault and sexual harassment[11]. The former will be examined through pornography on the internet, which is an especially pertinent question in the context of representation: do

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[10]   Trafficking and ICTs are addressed in detail in a separate paper by Kathleen Maltzahn entitled Digital Dangers: Information & Communication Technologies and Trafficking in Women, available from <http://www.genderit.org/upload/ad6d215b74e2a8613f0cf5416c9f3865/digital_dangers_EN.pdf>, whilst sexual violence against refugees, asylum seekers and in the context of war are addressed in the next section.

[11]   It is difficult to comprehensively define sexual assault since different legal jurisdictions provide different understandings; similarly with sexual harassment where it is often context-specific and closely related to the effects of harm faced by survivors. Here, a broad understanding is adopted. Sexual assault includes violent sexual behaviour and/or penetration of the vagina by the penis, finger, tongue or objects, without consent or through coercion, intimidation and/or force (where objection will result in severe physical or social harm). Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to the knowing creation of a hostile, intimidating or offensive environment through unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour, resulting in fear, distress or harm to the survivor. Both are manifestations of unequal gender power relations and constitute forms of discrimination against women.

pornographic depictions of sexual relations result in rape or other forms of sexual aggression towards women? Is child sexual abuse affected by the availability of child pornography on the internet? Does the development of sexually-oriented games on the internet and other electronic platforms contribute towards violent and degrading treatment of women? On sexual harassment, questions addressed include: are new ICTs contributing to new forms of sexual harassment? Are women's abilities to use the emerging ICTs compromised by such harassment? As such, does online harassment narrow the space for women's participation in the development of an online communications culture?

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*Box 5: '**Virtual Valerie' as the Ultimate 'Safe Sex'?***
Virtual sex games are reportedly being developed for availability over the internet, and, in response to the fear of HIV/AIDs, are marketed as the ultimate 'safe sex' to protect against sexually transmittable diseases. The user, imagined as a heterosexual man, can wear specially designed suits "attached to computers and telephones studded with micro-vibrators [and] participate in the ultimate safe sex in cyberspace" (Fuller, 2003: 112). Termed 'teledildonics', games such as 'Virtual Valerie' that feature female characters who submit to the players' wishes are becoming available on the internet. What does this mean in terms of gender relations? Does this have to do with men and women's reproductive health, or is it merely another avenue for the dominant masculinist discourse on women's sexuality? With the control and production of these games resting primarily in the hands of men, the codes of desire reproduced often mirror offline sexist discourse. Further, through the marketing technique of these games, the notion that women are responsible for the spread of sexually transmittable diseases can be perpetuated. Nonetheless, the possibilities of this technology as an avenue for performing sexual roles could mean using digital spaces as a possible space to explore and destabilise the status quo. By performing alternative gender roles online, men and women can arguably use this spatial reality to expose and rupture the multitude of gendered discourses that exist in everyday life (Turkle, 1995).

2.2.1 Pornography on the Internet

Pornography is big business. In the U.S. alone, pornography was modestly estimated as a USD10 billion industry for 2001, with 21 million Americans (or 1 in 4 internet users) visiting one of the more than 60,000 sex sites on the web at least once a month (Nash, 2002). A commercial research company[12] estimates pornography as a USD57 billion industry worldwide, with 12% of total websites being dedicated to pornography. On average, each internet user receives 4.5 emails or spam that contains pornographic content per day, which makes them 8% of all emails received[13]. More disturbingly, roughly 100,000 websites offer child pornography, matching the demands of consumers. As an indicator of this demand, TopTenReviews recorded that 116,000 requests daily to a popular peer-to-peer file sharing network called Gnutella were for 'child pornography'[14].

Other forms of digital communications technology such as pay-per-view channels on satellite television are also extensively marketed for adult pornography, as well as older forms of ICTs such as videos. The companies that invest in pornography are established names such as

Comment: During what period?

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[12]   The period in which this study was conducted is not specified. **Internet Pornography Statistics (TopTenREVIEWS.com)**, available from: <http://www.internetfilterreview.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

[13]   Ibid.

[14]   Ibid.

General Motors Corporation, EchoStar Communications Corporation, whose chief financial backers include Rupert Murdoch, and AT&T Corporation (Nash, 2002), with revenues reaped from pornography by these companies superseding revenues by familiar names in the industry like Hustler and Playboy.

The ease of access, relatively low cost and good technical quality of digital television and the internet, as well as the privacy it arguably facilitates for users, make them attractive media for marketing pornography. No longer do consumers have to expose their consuming habits in public spaces such as newsagents or video stores. Now all he (and to a lesser extent, she) has to do is click on a mouse or press a button on the remote control and enter some billing details. Technological advancement in new cable and telephone lines can now carry unprecedented amounts of pornographic images at extraordinary speed to computer monitors in the homes.

Donna Hughes' comprehensive paper on "The Use of New Communications and Information Technologies for Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children" (2002) details the various forms of new technologies that have been used to sexually exploit women. They include: digital video disks that enable greater interactivity between users and the images; newsgroups for the exchange of information on how to locate and sexually exploit women; websites as a popular medium of distribution and marketing of pornographic materials and, to a lesser extent, sex workers; chat rooms as spaces for child sexual abuse; file transfer protocol (FTP) as a technological application for exchanging materials on child pornography; peer-to-peer networks and file swapping programmes that enable dissemination and exchange of pornographic materials; and finally, live video chats which can facilitate human trafficking for sexual purposes. In short, pornography is varied in kind and medium, and can be ubiquitous and easily accessible to those who are connected to the internet and other forms of digital technology.

Harm to Women?
The major proponents against pornography draw a causal link between pornography and sexual violence against women. With the overwhelming majority of pornography catering to dominant masculine perspectives of heterosexual desire, the images contained within have been argued as a form of sexual violence, since they often objectify and reduce women to passive bodies (or fragmented parts of bodies) that exist merely to satisfy men (Attwood, 2004). Further, violent sexual treatment of women in pornography has raised concerns that this may result in similar violence such as rape in material life. As powerfully critiqued by Catharine McKinnon (1985), "[w]hat pornography does goes beyond its content: It eroticizes hierarchy, it sexualizes inequality. It makes dominance and submission sex. Inequality is its central dynamic, the illusion of freedom coming together with the reality of force is central to its working."

However, research conducted for the purpose of drawing links between pornographic materials and sexual aggression towards women draws contradictory and inconclusive results (Zeb Babar, 2001). Distinctions made between sexually explicit and degrading versus violent representations in pornography largely demonstrate that it is actually the *violence* rather than the sexual explicitness that produces harmful results in attitudes about rape (Gossett & Bryne, 2002). Feminist advocates against pornography sometimes conflate the two to render all forms of

pornography as inherently sexist (Zeb Babar, 2001). In many research findings, violence actually figures as a small proportion of the overall representation, particularly in older forms of ICTs such as print media, film or video (Gossett & Bryne).

What does this mean in the context of the internet? As mentioned above, the method of delivery differs substantively from previous forms of pornography, primarily in accessibility, the proliferation of variety and dissemination. Research that concentrates on pornography on the internet is only beginning, and the initial research indicates that violence features more strongly in this medium (Barron & Kimmel, 2000; Gossett & Bryne, 2002). Further, some argue that the culture of silence and anonymity in the internet when it comes to pornography enables child pornography to flourish (Nash, 2002; Hughes, 2002). If there is a positive correlation between exposure to sexually violent representations and harmful attitudes about rape, there seems to be a strong case for regulating pornography on the internet.

However, such transposing of results can again conflate the different kinds of media, which limits a nuanced understanding of the impact of pornography on sexual violence against women. Firstly, what constitutes pornography is deeply contested. Generally, it is accepted that a quality of degradation or submission is present, but what this actually entails is again a point of debate. For example, erotic sadomasochistic representations are sometimes forwarded as a symbol of patriarchal power (Daly, 1978) and sometimes as a disruption of that same power (Wilson, 1991). Significantly, this form has been utilised by some producers of lesbian pornography to subvert heterosexist codes of desire (Scorgie, 1997).

This is especially important since the relative ease and cost of producing pornography – or erotica, a distinction sometimes made between sexual content for male audiences and female ones – on the internet mean that more sites now cater to female sexual desires. This includes erotica that is specifically directed to lesbian, bisexual, female-to-male transgender or queer (LBTQ) women, usually 'made by women for women'. The internet then becomes a significant space for rendering visible codes of desire that are usually silenced in dominant discourses on sexualities.

Further, erotica that are starting to emerge from (heterosexual) women's perceptions can also be interpreted to mean there are now stronger assertions of active female sexuality. Chat rooms catering to dialogue on the issue of sex may be an important space for women to openly express themselves on a subject that is usually obscured under various disempowering labels (e.g. 'shame', 'loose morals', 'slut' etc.). These spaces are also sometimes crucial social or political spaces for LBTQ women to connect, particularly when physical spaces are heavily policed. Further, the internet is also a more economically accessible space to produce subcultural representations of aesthetics and sexualities.

Is Censorship the Answer?
Concerns about the dominance of phallo-centric and heterosexist pornographic content on the internet are valid and difficult to dispute. Markedly, huge corporations with strong financial backing own most of the pornographic sites, and as demonstrated at WSIS Phase I, governments seem to be abiding by their profit-driven interests (Gurumurthy, 2004). How will such a context interact with the issue of pornography? This is a

question that deserves greater attention and analysis. Critiquing pornography and advocating for censorship merely from the perspective of representation will be inadequate without considering the larger power relations at play, especially if the analysis fails to take into account the perspectives and experiences of groups who are already marginalised and silenced in the larger society[15].

Censorship is often a double-edged sword that must be treated carefully. Karen Banks (2001: 162), Association of Progressive Communications' Advocacy and Networking Director, cautions against automatically advocating censorship on the internet for the following reasons:

▪   "As a response to dealing with the dangers of children using online 'chat rooms', companies are developing filtering software which can, by voluntary means (self-regulation of code and conduct) be installed on computers and configured by parents to protect their children from potential harm […] But filters are developed by private companies with possibly other agendas. How can we ensure that we are not quite innocently providing our children with a 'filtered' perspective on the world over which we have no control?"

▪   "As a response to dealing with organised crime utilising the internet, or at least censorship of child pornography on the internet, international agreements must be struck between governments and security services whereby they would all agree to prevent the existence of 'data havens' and agree to cooperate in the sharing and exchange of information – regionally and internationally. But what about other situations where, for example a state may request cooperation and information from a foreign government, on the activities of a citizen who has fled the country for reasons of personal safety and refuge?"

Important spaces and communication possibilities opened up by the internet could be compromised by an unyielding advocacy of censorship in response to the fear of pornography. Privacy can be eroded through such regulations, as well as the vital functions played by the internet as a digital space for civil society movements to discuss, communicate and mobilise for transformative action. States have employed the discourse of pornography and harm towards women (often coupled with child pornography) to justify policing and censorship of digital spaces without actually engaging with the issue on a deeper level (Kee, 2005).

Internet software filters have been demonstrated as ineffective, and in fact sometimes block feminist-related content (Hunter). The push for such filtering software also opens up another avenue for profit-making on the internet that is related to sexuality. Perhaps corporations that are currently profiting from the dominant forms of pornography will respond to this

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[15]   There has been interesting content analysis on internet sites that feature rape as their primary pornographic content (Gossett & Bryne, 2002). Gossett & Bryne found that the discourse had strong racial lines within its images and narratives, with a predominance of Asian women accentuated as the victims. This contradicts earlier findings of Black women as hyper-sexualised in representations (i.e., Hill Collins, Patricia (1991) **Black Feminist Thought**, New York, Routledge). One of Gossett & Bryne's conclusions was to advocate for more debates and research into the dynamics and content of pornography in new technologies to better understand their implications on sexual violence against women.

need in the future by simultaneously creating subsidiary branches to market filtering software!

The internet may be enabling greater dissemination of discriminatory discourses that already exist in offline cultures, and, as such, may be amplifying their volume. It must be recognised, however, pornography is merely one of the many mainstream discourses that operate on the same paradigm. For example, representations of women's sexuality in advertisements and news reports also help to perpetuate myths surrounding women's sexuality, violence and rape (Merskin, 2003; Carll, 2003). These divergent discourses amalgamate to subjugate, dehumanise and exclude women, and advocates against sexual violence should examine all of them as a cohesive and dynamic network that must be challenged.

One compelling approach in relation to pornography and sexual violence on the internet is to increase the spaces for counter-hegemonic representations of women and sexualities instead of further narrowing the space through censorship. As stated by Zeb Babar (2001: 298), "it would seem to make more sense if feminists insist […] that the problem with 'sexist pornography' is not that it is 'explicit, kinky, anti-family' but that, like sexist representations in other cultural forms and practices, it erases alternative representations. In fact, there is little difference between sexist pornography and religious fundamentalisms as both discourses naturalize women's subordination. Feminists should instead demand a space that helps articulate women's pleasure, desire, and fantasies."

In addition, the role of corporations in perpetuating dominant patriarchal discourse surrounding sexuality through masculinist and heterosexist pornographic materials needs to be exposed. Their monopoly over digital spaces and the principle of profit-driven economy that underpins much of the current debate around ICTs need to be challenged on national and international platforms to help shape the direction of ICTs and VAW policies.

The capacity for internet spaces to either destabilise or concretise existing discourses around women's sexuality in gender relations depends greatly on access to the development and population of these spaces. To enable women's and other marginalised groups to inflect, shape and produce content on the internet that disturbs the hegemonic discourse of sexuality, questions of affordability, skills and culture surrounding ICTs need to addressed. With this in mind, it is crucial that advocates for ICTs and against sexual violence work in tandem to ensure the greater democratisation of this space to enable alternative and counter-hegemonic discourses to flourish.

> Box 6: **Yahoo! Removes Pornography after Internet Activism**[16]
> In April 2001, Yahoo! changed its long standing policy and removed pornographic content from its shopping areas. It also stated that it will no longer allow advertising for pornographic materials and will make it more difficult for its search service to look for such content. This move was prompted by newspaper articles that exposed this practice and instigated a flood of response by users. The company received 100,000 emails

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[16]   BOLD: Violence Against Women on the Internet Series. Available from:
<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/vaw02/mod4-1.htm> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

complaining about this issue, the majority of which were prompted by a campaign by a coalition of anti-pornography groups led by the American Family Association of Tupelo, Mississippi. At the very least, this demonstrates the responsiveness of web-based corporations to the demands of internet users. By making more users aware of practices and policies that are detrimental, more action can be taken to insist on accountability and change.

2.2.2 VAW in Video Games

Digital technologies have also led to an increase in video games, which have exploded into a multi-billion dollar commercial industry. In 2002, estimated sales of electronic games worldwide exceeded USD20 billion dollars, and online gaming continues to grow at 50% annually (Walsh, 2002). Most of this revenue is from boys and men, with 25% more boys than girls between the ages of two to seven, and 49% more teenage boys than their female counterparts engaged with this medium (Children Now, 2000).

Concerns have been raised about the possible impact of violence depicted in some of these games, particularly against female characters. In 2004, the Spain Chapter of Amnesty International produced a report entitled "You Can't Play With Violence Against Women" that examines the violent, discriminatory and stereotypical representations of women in some popular video games. For example, a best-selling game called 'Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas' positions sex workers as objects of aggression and murder; previous editions sold over 1.4 million copies in 2 days (Walsh, 2002). In another game called Benki Kuosuko, the players are encouraged to introduce different objects into a woman's vagina and anus. The Amnesty report describes her as "a young woman, with Asian features, has her legs open on a toilet. She's almost naked and the player before the screen is invited with this sentence: 'You've got to make the most of this Japanese girl, with all sorts of tricks'" (2004: 24).

Other games surveyed yielded similar results: the protagonists are usually male whilst female characters are usually depicted as passive sexualised objects to be used, possessed or brutally killed. The games are usually in what is known as 'first-person-shooter' format, where the player advances in the game by killing other characters. Understandably, the question is raised whether games that are vastly becoming a large part of youth (and even some adult) entertainment cultures are contributing to a discourse of hegemonic masculinity that is framed around violence and misogynistic attitudes toward women.

Hegemonic Masculinities

Does participation with these games increase violent treatment towards women? In an online survey of 517 adolescents by The Gallup Organization, it was found that 71% of teenage boys had played the 'Grand Theft Auto' game, and twice as many boys (34%) who had played this game reported being in a physical fight than those who had not (17%) (MEDIAWISE eNews, 2003). Similarly, Golde et al. (2000) found that exposure to degrading representations of women in video games can result in expression of attitudes that are more supportive of rape. However, other research has been less conclusive. A report released by the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General on Youth Violence (2001) states that there is no correlation between exposure to media violence and long-term aggression. In terms of video games, it states that although some

small link is found between aggressive behaviour and violent representations, more study needs to be conducted specifically in this area before any inference can be drawn.

In addition, there are multiple factors at play in determining the response of players in their interpretation of the games. To imagine an uninterrupted impact between playing the games and subsequent violent behaviour towards women not only reduces the idea of active agency in the gamers, but can also miss important alternative analyses of the issue at hand.

Mia Consalvo (2003: 39) argues that the internet and video games are "structured spaces to experiment and enact alternative gender roles". In the context of developing masculinities, where boys are bullied or otherwise disempowered in their peer groups and contexts (like schools), these spaces can serve as prostheses or extensions of their bodies to extend their abilities. Bearing in mind that masculinities are also varied and hierarchical, those who occupy less powerful positions in material life are able to enact different versions of masculinities through these digital, make-believe spaces. Consalvo also cautions against making video games scapegoats in targeting blame for violent behaviour demonstrated by young men. This allows other institutional structures (such as schools) that support harmful hierarchies of masculinities – usually appended to violence – to elude accountability.

Nonetheless, even as groups of men struggle between themselves to gain dominance, men as a group still retain power over women in general. Dangerously, those with subordinate masculinities may seek to establish their power through the subjugation of women. The overwhelming dominance of a hegemonic masculine discourse that rests upon subordinating treatment of women in the video games culture needs to be addressed and challenged. This discourse can support the normalisation of women as passive, sexual objects and in turn, contribute towards continued inequity in gendered power relations.

How then can advocates against sexual violence challenge the dominance of such representations in the gaming industry? There are some similar arguments between this and the debate on internet pornography. The control in the design, development and production of both formats are predominantly controlled by men, thus in turn reflect men's perspectives and fantasies. Robin Hunicke, a renowned gamer, describes her trip to the Game Developers Conference as "there were cutouts of barely-dressed, large-breasted women everywhere. 'I walked the show floor for two days, equally exhausted and depressed. I thought about doing my own awards for the most offensive displays –the boobie awards.'"[17]

Some feminist networks and gamers such as Grrlgamer.com[18] are already advocating more gender aware and equal forms of video games. More active engagement and participation in the construction of video games, as well as exposure of the phallo-centrism in existing video games, are necessary to offer counter-discursive understandings of gender relations in these spaces. For reasons articulated in the previous section, caution is advised against censorship. Instead, a more thorough study into the

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[17]   Feministing.com, 7 June 2004, available from: <http://feministing.com/archives/000170.html>.
[18]   http://www.grrlgamer.com/fragem/grrlpower.html [Accessed 23 January 2005].

dimensions of sexual violence and gender relations in video games is urged for greater understanding of what is at stake.

Women's rights advocates looking at education and employment issues need to examine the barriers to entry into the electronic games industry, including skills required in complex technological areas such as artificial intelligence, and link this to the subsequent messages they send out. Creation of video games that do not solely cater to boys will also increase girl gamers, which can lead to familiarity with digital technologies and have a positive impact on women's participation in technological fields as adults[19]. This will subsequently bring about greater equity in the area with time.

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*Box 7: **Feminist Gamers Weblog Community**[20]*
In response to the lack of recognition of the gender imbalance in spaces for gamers, a weblog community was built specifically for feminist gamers. The creator of the community stated that her impetus came from noticing that "a) there's a fair amount of sexism remaining in the gaming world, b) there are a fair amount of feminist gamers hanging around LJ [live journal, which is where the community is hosted], and c) that even in the vast majority of online female-oriented gaming communities, posters generally get torn apart if they dare to suggest that something in a game might be sexist or unfair to female players." With 47 members, this community has created a space that not only demands visibility and recognition, but also enables conversations, networking and a sense of identity.

2.2.3 Digital Voyeurism

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*Box 8: **MMS 'Scandal' in India**[21]*
In November 24 2004, a video clip of a two teenagers engaged in intimate sexual acts was put on sale in a popular Indian auction site, Bazee.com. Later, it transpired that this clip was originally a multi-media messaging clip that was recorded by a 16-year-old schoolboy of him and his girlfriend, using the built-in camera on his digital telephone. He circulated the image in school through multi-media messaging (MMS) and both students were expelled when found out. However, a 23-year-old engineering student who obtained a copy of this allegedly put it on sale in the auction site. As word spread and the story hit the front pages of Indian newspapers, the student, the schoolboy and the owner of the Internet site were all arrested. The case is still on trial.

The development of digital cameras and wireless or mobile telephones with built-in cameras mean that making short clips or films is relatively easy and cheap for those who can afford theses devices. The integration of various multi-media formats from these devices with the internet and home computer platforms means that digital information can be copied and transmitted easily and quickly. As the technology develops, the cost of purchasing this equipment will fall and become more available to a wider range of consumers.

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[19] "Games", **Gendered Techno-Culture Page**, compiled from Cassell, Justine & Jenkins, Henry, "Chess for Girls? Feminism and Computer Games", available from: <http://www.tcnj.edu/~keohane3/WGST-games.htm> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

[20] <http://www.livejournal.com/userinfo.bml?user=feminist_gamers>

[21] OutlookIndia.com: Wired, available from: http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_coverage.asp?gid=334 [Accessed 23 January 2005].

Theoretically, this should be good news since more people can gain access to the benefits of new technologies and utilise them for their individual purposes. However, as already demonstrated, existing social relations and discourses around sexuality and gender roles do not disappear with the introduction of new technology. The MMS case cited above is not unique. There have been other reported cases of women being filmed in sexually compromising and oftentimes humiliating circumstances without their knowledge, and these clips being disseminated and sometimes sold in public spaces (Shah, 2005).

Not all cases have the same dimensions – some involve personal breach of trust, some involve lack of knowledge by the person filmed, some involve deliberate placement of devices in obscured locations specifically for peeping, some are accidental clips which turn out to be sexually titillating for a section of society, hence circulated, and so on. These clips can also be used as blackmail or leverage for other forms of harassment and intimidation.

The fact is that *individuals* now have the ability and power to create such images, sometimes clandestinely, and abuse them should they choose to do so. Is this a new form of sexual assault, or is it, in fact, a type of 'privatised' (in terms of circulating between individuals) pornographic economy? From the perspective of sexual assault, voyeurism is not a new phenomenon; the main distinction is that perpetrators are utilising new ICTs to greater effect. Whether or not this constitutes an extension of pornography into the micro level, the issues at hand remain the same: women are objectified, sexualised and rendered as passive bodies for the male gaze and male consumption. The difference is that now everyone who owns a digital recording device is capable of becoming a producer instead of just a consumer. This potential needs to be addressed. The MMS case for example, sparked discussions about the inadequacies of national laws regarding new ICTs, the circulation of 'obscene' materials on the web, as well as the issue of privacy.

Danger of Privacy Compromised
News reports about such cases are usually combined with messages of moral indiscretion and panic over boundaries and the fear that the private can no longer be secure. Although the survivors themselves are mainly women, their opinions or experiences are rarely solicited in terms of policy or legal responses. In the main, the women involved are only featured in terms of the actual images of the violations (Shah, 2005).

The effect of this is two-fold: 1) women's participation in the public sphere regarding this issue is only as voiceless victims, who are presented in a sexualised manner; 2) the concern over digital technology's ability to transcend, thus, compromise boundaries of authority is played out on women's bodies. The first effect echoes images of women in news reports dealing with rape, which are less about transmission of information than a re-sexualisation of the violation for heterosexual male consumption[22]. This needs to be addressed in tandem with strategies that seek to challenge sexualised representation of women in general.

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[22]   For instance, the Sun newspaper in the UK used to put rape reports near their 'Page 3' section, which infamously displays a large half-page image of a featured topless woman. After outraged lobbying by women's rights activists, this practice has been discontinued.

Secondly, digital spaces are presenting States with a new challenge of surveillance of communication that can easily and quickly transcend national boundaries. With the increasing accessibility of these technologies to members of the public, the capacity to quickly and easily transmit large amounts of information on a vast array of subjects becomes extended to civil society. Recognising the potential of this to subvert institutional control over channels of communication and information exchange – something that is crucial in management of citizenship and social behaviour – governments are using ICTs as an avenue for debate over rights to freedom of expression, privacy and censorship. In the MMS case, the situation undermined the authority of the school to control its students' behaviour. In the larger discussions, it became an issue of national legislation. In all arenas, the women involved and the harm they faced disappear under a larger discourse of communication management.

This is notably disconcerting for advocates of women's human rights. We cannot afford to allow our experiences be appropriated to further narrow the spaces for civil liberties under the paternalistic rhetoric of protection. The perspectives of women who have been harmed need to be highlighted, and the issue of **security and privacy** – as opposed to censorship and banning – has to be stressed. This is where the right to not have personal information be interfered with, used or disclosed without express and prior consent must be protected. Representations that allow further sexualisation of women must be unpacked and challenged to prevent further perpetuation of harm. Emphasis on commercialisation of technologies has to be countered with an equal need for examining the impact of those technologies on existing social relations, and women must be full participants in their development to ensure the impact is transformatory, not regressive.

2.2.4 Creation of Hostile Digital Spaces through Sexual Behaviour

Studies have demonstrated that sexual harassment in the workplace restricts women's full participation in that arena. Whilst digital communications do not constitute as workspaces, they still remain an important method for women to communicate and participate socially and/or politically in cyber as well as physical communities. As noted by Karen Banks (2001: 154), "If we wish to retain the spaces we have created and ensure that they remain or become spaces that are 'gender just' and 'women-focused', women must continue to work to defend our human right to communicate – and extend that right to the internet."

However, the phenomenon of harassment on the streets and in the office seems to have extended and evolved into digital or cyber spaces through the ability of new ICTs in tracking, overhearing, recording and spying on users. Does this result then in a hostile environment that restricts women's full participation in such spaces? Fear can impact significantly upon women's sense of safety and ability to confidently access a particular environment (Yeoh & Yeow, 1997). Such fears can stem from many places, one of which is the discourse of possible violence that women may face. As more instances of online harassment, cyberstalking and the multiple varieties of digital voyeurism arise, this might affect perceptions of female users of new ICTs about their ability to freely maneuver in online spaces.

Online Harassment

Working to Halt Online Abuse (WHO@)[23], an anti online-harassment movement, explains online harassment as: "the intentional crossing of [a person's] emotional or physical safety boundaries [that] usually involves repeated communications via email or some sort of instant messaging program after the harasser has clearly been told to go away." This is not unlike the definitions of sexual harassment in physical spaces, where a sense of safety is breached. Interestingly, it also recognises emotional distress as a factor in harassment. As mentioned above, fear plays a significant role in arranging spatial relations. What this means is that should an environment hold the potential to emotionally harm someone, the person would imagine herself to be in a less powerful position in relation to the abuser, thus constricting her ease of engagement with the context.

In a U.S. report on online victimisation of young people through sexual harassment or aggression (Finkelhor, 2000), 25% of the youths interviewed stated that they experienced at least one of the stress symptoms of online harassment, which include staying away from the internet, feeling jumpy or irritable, not being able to stop thinking about the harassment and losing interest in things. In another incident in 1992, a middle-school girl in Korea committed suicide as a result of sexual humiliation in an internet chat room, whilst another survivor of online sexual harassment equated her experience of shame with rape (Soto, 1999). Evidently, sexual harassment online can result in grave consequences to the survivor involved.

Some examples of online harassment include (Soto, 1999; Finkelhor, 2000):

▪   Messages with sexual undertones: where sexually graphic text or visuals are sent to survivors via email; or where a survivor is identified by the harasser through her online name in chat rooms and is barraged with sexual comments and innuendos.
▪   Unwanted sexual solicitations and approaches: requests for sex, whether cyber or physical, where it is unwelcome or unwanted. Refusal could mean being harangued with abusive language or additional harassment via memos or email bombing[24]. Sometimes this could escalate to aggressive solicitations, where the harasser contacts or attempts to contact individuals offline through regular mail, telephone or in person.
▪   Posting an individual's personal information on public electronic bulletin boards: where information about an individual's real name, contact details and personal letters is posted on bulletin boards such as open dating sites or on pornographic sites.

Cyberstalking

This is usually a more specific form of online harassment, where the internet, email or other forms of electronic communications devices are used to track and repeatedly harass an individual. Such harassing behaviour could include following the target individual around the net and frequenting chat rooms, message boards, online forums, newsgroups or mailing lists in which the target participates. At times, the harasser may

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23   <http://www.haltabuse.org/help/isit.shtml> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
24   Email bombing is where an abuser repeatedly sends an email to a particular address. Usually, the size of these emails are large, consisting of meaningless data to consume additional system and network resources.

become acquainted with the target's network of friends online to become closer to him/her. With social networking sites such as 'Friendster' that work to facilitate connections between people online, this may not be difficult to achieve. Sometimes online stalking may escalate into offline threats. According to WHO@'s survey of the cases reported to them, offline threats have increased from 34% in 2002 to 38% in 2003.

Stalking is not an unknown phenomenon, although the utilisation of new digital technologies can make it hard to precisely identify who the harasser is. Some software programmes mask the stalker's IP (Internet Protocol[25]) address or utilise anonymous remailers[26] which make it hard to link the harassment to one particular individual. Wireless or digital telephone service that is non-contractual sometimes does not require any personal information about the person purchasing the SIM (subscriber identity module) card. In these cases, the card can be loaded with credit at a relatively low cost and can be used to make and receive telephone calls without the telecommunications company holding any information about the user. Stalkers can then utilise this communications facility to obscure their identity and pursue their target through anonymous repeated and unwanted telephone contact.

Most countries do not even have laws related to stalking, and often legislative protection is hard to attain, particularly when the identity and location of the stalker is difficult to pinpoint. Some survivors file complaints with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in an attempt to take action against the stalkers and harassers. However, responses received by ISPs are ad-hoc, sparse and often inadequate. There is also a further question of who should be responsible for safety against sexual violence or harassment online (Soto, 1999): the State because it is a form of crime, ISPs and telecommunications companies because it is an abuse of service, or private individuals negotiating their own communication?

This lack of legal protection means that victims' ability to use the internet for communications is severely curtailed, sometimes permanently, since every online presence could be used by the stalker to retrace the victim (even after she has changed telephone lines or moved houses) or be distorted to suit his purpose[27]. As such, the mobility of victims is not only affected online, but the harassment can also spill over to her offline communicative and social needs.

Violation of the Right to Communicate
Online sexual harassment and cyberstalking constitute real barriers to victims in their communication lives. As new forms of ICTs become a greater reality for more people, the threat posed by these offensive and harmful sexual behaviours online requires serious attention. In addition to questions of infrastructure, resources, skills and time, the creation of hostile digital spaces through sexual behaviour can be read as another form of obstacle to women's ability to access and engage with new ICTs.

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[25]   Every computer connected to the internet is assigned a unique number known as an internet protocol (IP) address. Since these numbers are usually assigned in country-based blocks, an IP address can often be used to identify the country from which a computer is connecting to the internet.
[26]   Wikipedia explains anonymous remailers as "a server computer which receives messages with embedded instructions on where to send them next, and which forwards them without revealing where they originally came from." < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anonymous_remailer > [Accessed 23rd January 2005]
[27]   Visit Cynthia L. Armistead's page on her continued experiences of cyberstalking, available from: <http://www.technomom.com/harassed/> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

In fact, online harassment (sometimes also by the State) has been a known tactic to restrict and control women's organisations' usage of the internet for their work (Banks, 2001; Newsom & Lengel, 2003).In Latin America, for example, 15% of women's groups have faced some kind of harassment – from entrapment to targeted viruses – as a deliberate strategy to obstruct their work (Friedman, 2003).

There is a need for advocates against sexual harassment to examine the changing methods of harassment employed through innovative use of these technologies so as to better understand how fundamental objectives of intimidation and control are perpetrated at a different level. This can be used to expand education about safety skills online and better support survivors or potential victims. Calls for legislation also need to take into account the distinctive challenges posed by online harassment and cyberstalking, particularly the difficulty of identifying the harasser and the many methods he can employ to cover his tracks. This is particularly important as harassers become increasingly adept at technological skills to augment their violating behaviour.

Online spaces are increasingly becoming important spaces in contemporary life. To ensure that these spaces do not become narrower for women's rights to movement, assembly and association, online sexual harassment and cyberstalking must be unpacked and challenged at all fora related to ICTs and VAW.

Online Safety Tips[28]

- *Primary email addresses should be kept private and used only with people who are known and trusted. For all other email communication, set up a free web-based account.*
- *Personal information should not be given simply because it is requested. If a website requires registration, minimal information should be given; if the request seems unreasonable, leave the site.*
- *If chat rooms and instant messaging allow for 'block or ignore' as an option, this can be used on users who send unwanted and persistent messages.*
- *Huge arguments online in chat or discussion areas could encourage a harasser, although this may mean not defending oneself against personal attacks. If the situation seems sexually aggressive, obscene, threatening or a deliberate lure into conflict, it is sometimes better to ignore it. If it becomes too stressful, then leave.*
- *Company name, title, contact details, etc., should only be put in the email signature file when required by company policy. Such email accounts should strictly be used for work purposes, not for participation in public forums.*
- *Be cautious about putting pictures online since harassers can become fixated on a particular image.*
- *Passwords should never be revealed or given to anyone.*
- *Develop skills in technology. Most targets of electronic harassment are unskilled internet users or beginners. The more learned about how to use this technology, the better one is able to avoid online harassment problems.*

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[28]   This information was compiled from http://www.safetyed.org and WHO@ <http://www.haltabuse.org/help/isit.shtml> [Accessed 23 January 2005]

2.3 Women in Areas Affected by Conflict

Over the past decade armed conflict has killed 2 million children, disabled 5 million and left 12 million homeless. Every month more than 2,000 people are killed or maimed by mine explosions. Although around 100,000 mines were removed in 1994, two million more were planted the following year. The number of refugees alone has increased dramatically. In 1960 there were 2.5 million refugees. By 1996 there were more than 16 million refugees around the world, 80 percent of them women and children.
– Sajor, 2001: 75

The history of the internet as we currently know it has an indelible root in militarism, its inception being a U.S. Defense Department project in 1969[29]. Today, communications technology continues to play a vital role in the arena of armed conflict. In particular, media of mass communications that are able to transmit images and text to the targeted public are crucial in creating 'truths' for propagating war, or, alternatively, are heavily censored to enable control of the population in conflict. Wireless communications technologies are crucial for connecting soldiers with information required to implement strategies or respond to emergency situations. The U.S. Defense Department is spending billions of dollars on technological innovations to have a fully digitised military that can better effect warfare by the year 2010[30]. Clearly, to successfully enact war, one needs ICTs.

How does this relate to women who are in situations of conflict? Discord relating to national or identity-based boundaries is often played out on the bodies of women (McClintock et al., 1997). This is exemplified through the usage of systematic rape as a weapon of war and in the images of women military officials that are used to engage patriotic feelings in citizens whose country is at war (Magor, 2002). In this sense, women become important signs and repositories of national rhetoric, men's desire and community morals. In particular, women's sexualities are removed from individual agency and placed into the purview of public discourse to contest and control. This is effected primarily through popular mass media institutions that can reach a vast audience that is contextually implicated and affected.

2.3.1 'Propaganda' Tool

The ability to control channels of mass communication is crucial in the propagation or justification of organised conflict. The recent genocide in Rwanda was directly aided by hate broadcasts through firstly print media ('Kangura' or 'Wake Up' in Kinyarwanda), then national and supposedly private radio stations like Radio Mille Collines or RTLM radio. In campaigns supported by the government and military, Hutus were urged by the radio programmes to "Take your spears, clubs, guns, swords, stones, everything. Sharpen them, hack them, those enemies, those cockroaches…Hunt out the Tutsi" (Shawcross, 2000: 139, cited in McKay & Mazurana, 2001). The propaganda that consistently portrayed Tutsi women as "calculated spies who were beautiful seductresses bent on dominating and undermining the Hutu" contributed largely to the widespread rape of Tutsi women during the genocide (Nowrojee, 1996).

Images of women are mobilised to construct a particular discourse of nationality and collective identity. For the war against Afghanistan, the image of a veiled Muslim woman was used to sustain the rhetoric of

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[29]   "Internet History", **Connected: An Internet Encyclopedia**, available from:
<http://www.freesoft.org/CIE/Topics/57.htm> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[30]   mpulse Magazine, December 2001, available from:
<http://www.hpbazaar.com/cooltown/mpulse/1201-military.asp> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

'Islamic' barbarism and backwardness under the Taliban regime. This imagery was necessary to position the Coalition invaders as justified agents engaged in a 'heroic' act of liberalism. Notwithstanding the very real brutality that existed during the Taliban rule, the reliance on this symbol easily slipped from the confinement of that context to a culture of 'Islamophobia' in general (Cere, 2002). Individual women, their experiences and relationship with wearing of the veil were swallowed under narratives of the 'War on Terror' (Shirvani, 2002). With the completion of their function as the impetus for war, Afghan women have virtually disappeared from media spaces in the U.S. (Friedman, 2002).

Just as the institutions of mass media are used to operationalise particular discourses, their censorship and control also play a significant role in shaping information and knowledge of an event in public spaces. For example, the Persian Gulf War in 1991 was presented as a clinical and 'clean' event through the heavily militarised process of news coverage (McKay & Mazurana, 2001). Images of suffering and destruction were barred and military personnel had to be present at every interview. This representation of a clinically precise war was arguably meant to placate any anxieties in the invading public about possible ethical quandaries arising from the action.

Further, the mechanisms of capitalism that underpin huge media institutions continue to profit – perhaps even more so – during such conflict. As put by Maggie Magor (2002: 142), "The events of September 11, 2001 sold copy. Newsstands around the world were empty as the public looked to their media for whatever reason – explanation, clarification, voyeurism […] [D]espite these supposed attacks on capitalism [due to the speculation of a world war], the economic machine was still rolling, and for media industries this meant selling newspapers and winning the ratings war." With the control of media institutions resting at almost all levels on men, the appropriation or evaporation of women's experiences become even more apparent.

2.3.2 New ICTs as an Alternative?

Women in situations of conflict, where access to mainstream media is heavily censored or controlled, have utilised new ICTs ingeniously to publicise their perspectives and experiences. For example, during the Taliban regime, the Revolutionary Women's Association of Afghanistan (RAWA) used hidden cameras to document abuses of women, working with partner organisations that were able to provide them with both the cameras as well as a virtual space to disseminate these images. RAWA also transmitted these video clips and appeals for action through a 'viral marketing strategy', where emails are sent with a request to forward them to the recipients' network so that knowledge of a particularly urgent issue can be multiplied.

Online petitions that enable quick and easy action for those with access to ICTs can also apply pressure on governments and international human rights bodies to take notice and respond. One example is where the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Sexual Slavery by Japan launched a worldwide campaign in 2005 to collect signatures from one million people to apply international pressure in demand for accountability and reparation[31]. The capacity of email to reach from one to many also

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[31]   <http://www.womenandwar.net/english/sign_en.php> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

magnifies and proliferates obfuscated issues and enables networking amongst those whose mobility is restricted and organisations outside of affected areas.

A Croatian women's human rights group, B.a.B.e. (Be active, Be emancipated) used the internet and email to keep women's and human rights groups informed during the Serbian invasion and subsequent war in Kosovo. Acting as an electronic relay station, B.a.B.e. sent messages out of Serbia from Serbian feminists critical of the Milosevic regime, the Serbian invasion of Kosovo, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) bombing of Serbia (McKay & Mazurana, 1999).

Communities of refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons sometimes have sophisticated communications infrastructures to connect with similar groups in other host countries. This enables them to keep informed with what is happening in their country of origin or conditions faced by their peers elsewhere or to do cross-border organising of local demonstrations (Wathshlah Naidu[32], interview, 13 February 2005). Whether international attention and support for refugees and displaced persons can be raised relies significantly on the ability of communications technologies to transmit news quickly and widely. For example, the Kosovo crisis in 1999 received unprecedented international attention and support largely due to "[t]he ability of the global media and communications networks to instantaneously broadcast news of these and other crises to people across the world [which] undoubtedly led to a greater awareness of the plight of refugees and the displaced" (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

Alternative news websites that can provide information from the ground are also important to ensure that people's needs are made visible, particularly for marginalised people within the displaced communities themselves. Some alternative news media websites are run primarily on a voluntary basis, such as 'Indymedia'[33].Such sites can provide information that counters 'propaganda' sent through mainstream media without being committed to a profit-driven agenda. This is made possible through the low cost of posting information on the internet as opposed to running a 'traditional' mass media institution. Efforts have also been made to harness the communicative powers of the internet to enable dialogues between communities in conflict, in addition to being a site of resource and information. For example, 'Technology for Peace'[34] aims to "[complement] the need for a structured, organized and lasting communication between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in Cyprus" (Hattotuwa, 2003: 7), while the 'Centre for Policy Alternatives'[35] website is an important channel to disseminate information, non-partisan research and advocacy on the peace process in Sri Lanka.

There is also a growing trend of combining new and old communications technologies in activism. Internet radio, video streaming and, more recently, podcasting[36] technology enables transmission of visual and audio

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[32]   Eligibility Officer, Refugee Status Determination Unit, UNHCR Malaysia.
[33]   <http://www.indymedia.org/en/index.shtml> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[34]   <http://www.tech4peace.org/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=1> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[35]   <http://www.cpalanka.org/> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[36]   Wikipedia defines podcasting as "the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio programs or music videos, over the Internet using either the RSS or Atom syndication formats, for playback on mobile devices and personal computers." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting> [Accessed 23 January 2005]

information across great distances at relatively low costs. This presents an immediacy of representation in events, supporting credibility through the reduction of layers in interpretation. A notable success of this strategy is by the Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE)[37], which combines radio and internet technologies to "[Give] voice to the voiceless" and create programmes that promote women's human rights and peacebuilding[38]. Radiqradio.com (now temporarily halted due to funding issues) attempted to circumvent strict transmission regulation in Malaysian laws by partnering with an Indonesian independent radio organisation, 68H[39], to produce internet radio programmes. Working with local NGOs, Radiqradio.com provided journalism and technical training and facilitated the uploading of radio content on local news produced by the community.

Films as a genre have been shifted and adapted to produce information in the style of documentary, and are complimented by websites which provide links to further resources as well as action that can be taken by viewers (e.g., Fahrenheit 9/11[40]). In addition, women peacebuilders throughout the world are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of utilising communications technologies in their efforts to promote community rebuilding and peace (McKay & Mazurana, 2001). For example, a video directed and produced by Lilibet Foster working with Sierra Leonean activist and WITNESS partner Binta Mansaray, called "Operation Fine Girl: Rape Used as a Weapon of War in Sierra Leone", investigates the strategic use of rape against women during the decade-long war in Sierra Leone. The video is then used, *inter alia,* as a catalyst for dialogue amongst affected women to begin a reintegration process of child soldiers who were forced to rape during the conflict (Ronit Avni[41], interview, 31 January 2005).

In short, the utility of ICTs in situations of conflict – whether before, during or after – is hard to dispute. However, there are also limitations which need to be surfaced as a caution.

2.3.3 Some Caveats and Limitations

Mary Martínez, the president of the social development organisation Fundación Siglo 21, Argentina, explains that before the internet, "if one wanted to lend support to a cause it was hard to show it. Now you can support something and sign on and there it is. […] [W]hat happens is that suddenly [the ability to respond] has become part of us, something so daily that we perceive it like something normal" (cited in Friedman, 2003: 357). However, it can become easy to cease activism at the level of forwarding emails or signing an online petition because of the simplicity of interactivity afforded. It must be remembered that transformation also needs to take place beyond cyberspace, especially because such efforts cannot be compromised by disengagement through news fatigue in email users, or reliance on convenience that does not have follow-up action. For example, although the internet was crucial in rendering the issue of Comfort Women in Korea widely visible, it was primarily the indefatigable physical pickets

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[37]   <http://www.fire.or.cr/indexeng.htm> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[38]   Peacebuilding is defined by McKay & Mazurana (1999) as including gender-aware and women-empowering political, social, economic, and human rights. It involves personal and group accountability and reconciliation processes which contribute to the reduction or prevention of violence. It fosters the ability of women, men, girls and boys in their own cultures to promote conditions of nonviolence, equality, justice, and human rights of all people, to build democratic institutions, and to sustain the environment.
[39]   <http://www.radio68h.com/index.php> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[40]   <http://www.fahrenheit911.com/soldiers/> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[41]   Founder of Just Visions and formerly Associate Producer at WITNESS.org.

outside of the Japanese Embassy every Wednesday since 1992 that succeeded in putting the issue in textbooks (Sajor, 2001).

The blurring of genres in the film or video medium may result in urgent issues being consumed by users as mere entertainment or voyeurism. The act of watching a film about war in the distanced comfort of a cinema or at home through a computer screen can also give the viewer an illusion of already making a material difference. Without further resources or a campaign strategy that requires further action, the production of visual documentation is rarely sufficient to either provide a comprehensive account of an issue or result in subsequent activism. Further, as viewers become more accustomed to sophisticated visual editing and special effects in films, images transmitted through email viral strategies can result in skepticism of their authenticity. As such, visual narratives in emails should be accompanied by links to additional resources or official websites to ensure a chain of accountability in their production and dissemination.

Some of these images can also be appropriated by mainstream media or government agencies to advance a rhetoric of war. This is exemplified through the images highlighted by RAWA on the violence faced by Afghan women during the Taliban regime, and their subsequent cooptation by U.S. mainstream media (Ronit Avni, interview, 31 January 2005). This possibility is hard to circumvent apart from destabilising the concentration of power at large media institutions through the production of more alternative news sources, especially enabled by new ICTs. However, this has its own limitations related to the audiences that can be reached – namely, those who occupy the privileged locations of having access and skills to engage with ICTs.

Further, governments are responding to the threat of independent media organisations using new ICTs with surveillance and regulation, as seen throughout Australia, Great Britain, India and Pakistan (McKay & Mazurana, 2001). The Human Rights Watch Report (2000) details a global monitoring system known as ECHELON, where emails, faxes and telephone conversations are intercepted indiscriminately; China explicitly prohibits the transmission or posting of 'anti-government propaganda' with possible repercussions of imprisonment if violated.

2.3.4 Raising Women's Voices
To resist being used by governments and mainstream media as mere passive imagery that signifies community or national boundaries, women in situations of conflict have to take control of communications technologies to present their own narratives and participate in the negotiation of peacebuilding processes. New ICTs may not necessarily be the most appropriate tool for women in particular situations of conflict to raise their concerns, engage in peacebuilding efforts or document their perspectives. Communications technology is predominantly in the control of men, and sometimes documentation of women's human rights violations are merely tools to propagate additional violence, as in the case of the conflict in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh and Kashmir (McKay & Mazurana, 2001). Utilisation of communications and media technologies need to be relevant to the context and efficient in reaching the intended beneficiaries. If the information is directed at women, the lack of access is a particularly pertinent issue that needs to be considered.

Putting communications technologies in the hands of women instead of those of their male counterparts will yield a different perspective. As seen by the efforts of Tamara Gordon, a British Broadcasting Corporation freelancer who provided an Albanian woman the power to tell her own story through a video camera, "the results are fantastic and imaginative. … The woman filmed NATO troops (during the recent Kosovo war) amidst their comfortable and, by Albanian standards, luxurious accommodations. She next took the camera home and recorded images of the crowded quarters occupied by Albanian refugees living with her family. The woman's story, produced for BBC television, was far more eloquent than what a foreign correspondent could have conveyed" (ibid: 9-10).

When women have the power and capacity to tell their own stories, and do so in voluminous amounts, the diversity in their experiences and priorities will be evident. ICTs are able to facilitate the telling of these experiences, whether by documentation or organisation, only if they can meaningfully be owned by women. This means the ability to access, develop and control the technology. The dissemination of these important perspectives has to be safeguarded from infringement on the right to private communications by State institutions, particularly in situations of conflict where safety is of paramount concern. This is also necessary to uphold the role of media and communications as safeguards against State action and to hold the State accountable to the public.

Weblogs, often known as blogs, have become an effective platform for communication during times of crisis. For example, during the recent Tsunami that hit South East Asia, blogs were a useful source of timely information and first-hand accounts. According to a site that analyses blogs on the internet, BlogPulse, "unlimited by geography and powered by easy blog-publishing tools, bloggers quickly sprang into action to provide information that was otherwise impossible or extremely difficult to find or disseminate.… In a remote part of the world, where traditional news crews wouldn't arrive for several days, bloggers provided some of the first eyewitness accounts, news of relief efforts, videos, still photographs, lists of victims and missing persons, and other helpful disaster aid and coordination information"[42]. Blogs can enable women to speak out in contexts where they usually are voiceless. This is a finding of Newsom and Lengel (2003: 363) in their study of women's blogs in the Middle East North Africa region, where weblogging "give(s) women in the MENA region a place to speak: it provides a means by which women can gain a voice in the public sphere in a part of the world which might otherwise silence them".

The ability to use new ICTs to collaborate, network and strengthen actions between women working on peacebuilding, as well as develop forms of resistance to dictatorship and military rule, is something that requires urgent attention. It is vital that women are not left out of the process for rebuilding their own lives and communities. Media communications not only inform but structure social relations. In the period of civil disturbance, where loss, violence and devastation follow in the wake of conflict, women should be able to utilise and engage in all forms of communications technology relevant to their individual contexts, possibilities and creativity so they can help reshape a more equitable society.

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[42] <http://tsunami.blogpulse.com/> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

The efficacy of these platforms and technologies to enable a proliferation of women's narratives is directly related to women's ability to access them, in terms of skills and infrastructure as well as culture. For example, what kinds of content become recognised in public spaces as 'valid', 'legitimate' and 'newsworthy' often discursively privilege the activities of a subset of adult male bloggers (although there are as many, if not more, female than male bloggers) (Herring et al., 2004). Further, the relevance of power relations between women at different locations need to be taken into account in spaces like these. Particularly in relation to the culture of communication as well as unequal access to new ICTs, those engaging with cyberspace have to consciously create an enabling milieu for challenging the audibility of voices at all levels.

> Box 9: **Two Strategic Uses of ICTs in Times of Conflict**
> *WITNESS.org works with partner organisations across the globe to document, disseminate and campaign against violations of human rights. Providing the partner organisations with video cameras and training, some of their endeavours include "Present but Absent" with Association of FORTY that documents the plight of Arab residents living in village communities that the Israeli government has not recognised, as well as a video by Zahn Hajdini who interviews a Kosovar woman and her sons about their experiences on the realities of refugee life. The organisational website (http://www.witness.org) provides a rich resource about effective video camera use, and they have produced a training manual and video, Witness Video for Change (2000), which illustrates strategic use of video and internet technologies.*

III. SURFACING THE THREADS

Interrogating the relationship between some facets of VAW and new forms of ICTs raises some recurring tensions. Although new ICTs can tremendously facilitate organisation, communication and networking, they can also reflect, perpetuate or amplify social inequities caused by existing imbalances in power relations. The implications of this on advocacy against VAW in an age that increasingly emphasises digital connectivity needs to be scrutinised. This section attempts to provide an overview of some of the threads in this area.

3.1 Privacy, Security, Surveillance & Communication

This is a complex issue that affords no easy solution. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) protects the rights to communicate (Article 12), expression, seek, receive and impart information (Article 19), association and assembly (Article 20), participate in cultural life (Article 27) and governance (Article 21). Fundamentally, everyone has the rights to equality and nondiscrimination (Article 1), liberty and security (Article 3), as well as to be free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (Article 5). Working together, these rights and others ensure that all human beings can live in dignity and freedom.

However, the debate that circulates around sexual violence on/through the internet raises moments of conflict which are not easily resolved. What does it mean to protect the right to information and communication when content that is harmful to women is being produced and disseminated? What happens when the right to be safe and free from violence means a curtailment of another person's right to form communities and ideas that help create damaging images of women? When civil society proposes restrictions and regulations, these

proposals can be appropriated by governments to control the capacity for civil society to use ICTs in realisation of their rights. On the other hand, the harm faced by women through degrading portrayals of sexualities is very real. Not only that, newer forms of technology are increasingly being utilised by private individuals to compromise the physical safety and security of women.

Although the debates are not new, digital communication technologies present an additional challenge "since they allow open communication outside of state regulated and licensed media channels, and beyond national borders." (Nicol, 2003: 97) Clearly, there is a need to engage with this complex and contradictory terrain in advocating for rights under the rubric of new ICTs. Thus far, the debates around communication rights, privacy and security emphasise civil rights that narrowly take into account women's specific experiences and vulnerabilities in digital communications. The discourse often emphasises 'public' political rights, such as resistance to neo-liberalistic and capitalistic paradigms and democratic participation in governance through issues of access and development.

As noted by Anita Gurumurthy about WSIS Phase I (2004: 15), "Despite active lobbying by gender advocates, the draft documents did not incorporate gender equality in their basic framework (a characteristic that remains true for the final WSIS Declaration). At one point, during the preparatory processes prior to the Summit, in July 2003, all references to women suddenly disappeared in the draft documents. With protests from gender advocates, these were restored. However, the fundamental principle of gender equality in the information society debate had by then been lost. The negotiations were subsequently to be conducted over a sentence here or a paragraph there on gender." Violence against women, an issue that is often reduced to the private spheres of society, faces an uphill struggle to be recognised as something to be protected against under this framework of 'public' rights.

To a certain extent, this reflects the history of the language of human rights. When the UNDHR was drafted, it implicitly assumed its subjects as men who were engaged in public political life. The exclusion or disregard of women's perspectives and experiences took many years and much effort by women's movements to render visible, and then as many, if not more, to challenge. It is therefore crucial that communication and media rights advocates work together with advocates against VAW to inform each other's politics. Sharing diverse perspectives and expertise will not only enrich knowledge of the multiple dimensions of the impact of ICTs on VAW, but also allow activists to avoid tokenism and appropriation of each others' experiences.

3.2 Power, Culture & Digital Spaces

Linked to the question of access, unequal power relations exist in the reality of digital spaces today. Radhika Gajjala (2002, cited in Newsom and Lengel, 2003: 361) notes, "the power structures of the Global North dictate the way the internet is structured, which therefore disenfranchises women (and men) in the South because the knowledge formation on the internet is rooted in perspectives from the North". This effect is also reliant largely on the ability to represent experiences and people from less powerful locations, particularly in 'Third World' or 'developing' countries.

With the capacity of new ICTs to disseminate information from and to vast and relatively powerful and connected audiences, great care needs to be taken to ensure that less powerful perspectives are not submerged. The issue of language and what is lost through translation is especially significant when English

dominates digital spaces. Technical difficulties in publishing non-Latin based language content online presents not only a problem of communicating with diverse audiences, but also in portraying narratives of reality. As questioned bluntly by Annapurna Mamidipudi (Gajjala & Mamidipudi, 1999: 14), "the Internet reflects the perceptions of Northern society that Southern women are brown, backward and ignorant. An alternative, kinder, depiction of them which is also widespread is that they are victims to their cultural heritage. Is being exposed to images of themselves going to help Southern women by encouraging them to fight in dignity and self-respect, or will it further erode their self confidence in their fast-changing environment?"

When voices of women's rights advocates in privileged locations overwhelmingly direct the construction of knowledge in distant areas and customs, many of the nuances can be lost. Related dialogues will effectively exclude those directly affected because of issues of access, control, content and language. This is a significant factor to take into consideration when engaging with ICTs for advocacy. For example, harm to women justified in the name of 'tradition' or 'culture' is recognised in the Outcomes Document of the Beijing + 5 Review[43] as a 'new' form of violence against women (68e, A/RES/S-23/3: 22). But it can be extremely problematic for women's movements from the economically privileged North to name and define another practice in a less powerful location as harmful. This can freeze women in the latter locations as passive victims who need rescuing, without a sense of agency (Mohanty, 1986). In turn, this will reduce the ability of women within those contexts to define and shape their own cultural meanings and significance.

Care must be taken to **not** create discursive spaces that essentialise or fetishise non-dominant sections of women online by transforming not only the ability to be connected, but also how technology can enable conversations that destabilise embedded hierarchies. From language, metaphors, assumed rules and roles, to the operative logic of digital communication, the complex issue of whose story can be heard and whose can possibly be appropriated has to be raised. Otherwise, new ICTs may serve to increase the capacity for violent appropriation of women's experiences in less powerful communities by feminists who are online and connected, the very fact of which discloses their material and cultural privileges (Gajjala, 2002).

Therefore, the challenge is creating solutions and environments that can allow women from all parts of the world to "use technologies under conditions that are defined by them, and therefore potentially empowering to them", as issued by Radhika Gajjala (ibid: 15). A further pertinent question she raises is, "within which Internet-based contexts will women of lesser material and cultural privilege within 'global' power relations be able to develop collaborative work, and coalitions, to transform social, cultural, and political structures?"

3.3 Drawing Contestable Lines
Although new forms of ICTs and the expanding nature of the digital discourse are important to engage with, it is equally crucial to not over-emphasise their utility. The various imbalances that cut across lines of gender, race, class, nationality, sexuality, able-bodiedness and so forth in questions of access as well as the capacity to influence and impact upon the technologies' development means that not everyone will benefit from their usage.

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[43]   <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/ress233e.pdf> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

The attempt to pin down the dynamics of the relationship between ICTs and VAW is vital, but there is also a reticence to over-accentuate the importance of ICTs. The digital discourse that constantly stresses movement and the inability to finally 'catch up' can sometimes leave the majority of people who are not directly in control of the development of ICTs overwhelmed (Stewart Millar, 1998). This can propel the investment of much energy and attention to the increasingly complex applications of ICTs, thus diverting resources that could be better spent elsewhere. There are points where although new forms of ICTs have bearing on the issue at hand, the implications are not of utmost priority.

This is particularly evident in questions of strategic use, where focus on new forms of ICTs can undermine other methods of communication. For example, in the issue of new reproductive technologies (NRT), for women to regain and retain control over their own bodies and have meaningful choices, comprehensive, adequate and accurate information needs to be accessible. The internet is a useful platform for the creation, dissemination and culling of such information. However, since the question of access to new ICTs also reflect imbalance in terms of class and geographical location, there is little likelihood that the most vulnerable groups of women subjected to harmful new NRTs can access this information. Instead, other forms of activities that can encourage greater participation in knowledge construction and dissemination such as role-playing or focus groups discussions might be more useful here (Chapman & Gordon, 1999).

This does not mean that there needs to be no engagement in ICTs, but emphasis needs to be taken on questioning the reasons why, who is involved and to what ends? In short, advocates against VAW need to be aware of the developments in ICTs to check their impact on their work as well as to influence their progression, but not necessarily be experts in their specific permutations. The line, nevertheless, needs to be a contestable one. As civil society groups and governments push for greater rights to access and control, particularly under the paradigm of development and poverty alleviation, the spaces which are unaffected by new ICTs will become narrower. Advocates against VAW need to have an informed say in how these spaces should operate so that they do not perpetuate or worsen existing unequal power relations.

IV TAKE BACK THE TECH

I am sick and tired of Virtual Reality technology and cyber space being toys for the boys. […] I, as one of the riot girls, of the bad girls, want my own imaginary, my own projected self; I want to design the world in my own glorious image.[…] Yes, the girls are getting mad; we want our cyber dreams, we want our own shared hallucinations […] what's at stake for us is how to grab cyber-space so as to exit the old, decayed, seduced, abducted and abandoned corpse of phallo-logocentric patriarchy; the death squads of the phallus, the geriatric, money-minded, silicon-inflated body of militant phallocracy and its annexed and indexed feminine other. The riot girls know that they can do better than this.
– Rosi Braidotti[44]

The crucial question remains: how can we approach new forms of ICTs in a way that transforms social relations? Women's rights advocates have recognised the potency of new ICTs and have been engaging with them in creative ways in their activism. This final section outlines some of the ways in which feminists have begun the process of re/claiming digital communication technologies as part of our own living histories.

4.1 Unearthing Forgotten Names

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[44]   Braidotti, Rosi, **Cyberfeminism with a Difference**, available from: <http://www.let.uu.nl/womens_studies/rosi/cyberfem.htm#bmimes> [Accessed 25 February 2005].

Women's participation in the development and construction of technologies has largely been excluded, obscured or undervalued in the dominant narratives of their histories. For example, the contributions of Ada Lovelace, who played a significant role in the development of the Difference Engine and the Analytical Machine (early predecessor of the computer), have been obscured by those of Charles Babage, who is credited with being the 'father' of modern computers. Grace Hopper, who invented the first computer language composed of words (FLOW-MATIC), has also largely gone unrecognised (Stewart Millar, 1998). These muted contributions are now being revealed and commemorated, such as through the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing conference series that is designed to "bring the research and career interests of women in computing to the forefront"[45]. Books such as Autumn Stanley's "Mothers and Daughters of Invention: Notes for a Revised History" are importantly reconstructing technological histories to include the vital and active role of women.

In the words of Melanie Stewart Millar (1998: 17), "[i]t is important to recognize that women have not simply been the passive victims of technological change [...] Women have invented, adapted, theorized and even protested against technology throughout history". Websites such as Webgrrls[46] and Linuxchix[47] are creating spaces online to speak directly to the perspectives and needs of women in computing. In addition to circumventing the exclusive and masculinist online cultures, these sites are also important spaces to document the continuous involvement of women in various aspects of technology.

4.2 Sharing Information and Creating Collective Knowledge

VAW organisations and activists have used new ICTs to disseminate information and news about violations of rights and share strategies. Online discussions enabled by email, listservs, telnet and teleconferencing facilitate dialogues across national borders that are critical to further knowledge and understanding on the various dimensions of VAW (Hamm, 2001).

A notable example is the 'End Violence' Virtual Working Group[48], which used email technology to bring together more than 2,500 advocates on women's rights from all over the world to share information and create knowledge. The Global Reproductive Health Forum (GRHF) South Asia is also a dynamic, popular and regionally-focussed site that "seeks to bring together discourses on reproductive health and women's rights that are of particular interest and concern in the South Asian region"[49]. It has a well-resourced 'forum' section that includes research and legal documents on dowry issues, sati and child marriage, and its moderated electronic discussion list called BOL facilitates discussion and further exchange about relevant issues pertaining to South Asia. Another resource, CAVNET[50], provides a comprehensive listing, which can be accessed publicly on their website, of how modern technologies have been creatively used by a number of organisations to fight against VAW. These efforts effectively harness the power of new ICTs to quickly and widely disseminate information for building a deeper and stronger ability to counter VAW.

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[45]   <http://www.gracehopper.org/> [Accessed 25 February 2005].
[46]   <http://www.webgrrls.com/> [Accessed 25 February 2005].
[47]   <http://www.linuxchix.org/> [Accessed 25 February 2005].
[48]   UNIFEM held this event, which spanned the year of 2002, in partnership with the Education Development Center, Inc, the World Bank, and the Global Knowledge Partnership.
[49]   <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/SAsia/index.html> [Accessed 23 January 2005].
[50]   <http://www.cavnet2.org/IssueListing.cfm?Code=tc> [Accessed 23 January 2005].

4.3 Capacity Building and Education

The amount of resources and information on the internet also helps advocates working on VAW to develop capacity-building materials in their own contexts and locations. Further, some organisations have utilised the interactive capacity of new ICTs to develop online training modules. One such example is the Judicial Education Center's (JEC) Domestic Violence Virtual Trial[51], which is an online educational course for judges who handle domestic violence cases. Judges and court staff can register and log into the virtual trial, which presents video scenarios of parties engaged in proceedings from the point of view of the judge's bench. This introduces them to some of the issues and challenges typically arising in such cases. Each participant is then asked to enter her or his ruling, and the programme provides feedback suggesting whether the ruling may or may not have been the most appropriate. At the conclusion of the trial, participants who impose sentences may compare their decisions against a compiled summary of their colleagues' sentencing decisions. Such innovative use of communications technology in turn can be documented on digital platforms to enable advocates and organisations who have access to new ICTs in other locations to generate further creative strategies.

4.4 Media Alternative

Women's organisations are increasingly producing their own news and content for organisational websites. New ICTs play an important role in circulating these resources and offering alternative perspectives on issues and current events. Further, news on VAW may not be allocated space in the mainstream media when it is not identified as 'newsworthy'. Even when news of VAW is printed in mainstream media, it is important to still offer alternative representations of this news to counter sexist, racist or other discriminatory forms of narratives. New forms of ICTs can be useful platforms to enable the dissemination of this information at relatively low costs. For example, Grrl Activistas[52] is a global network of scientists, writers, students, mothers, lawyers and journalists who work to eliminate misrepresentations of rape and sexual abuse in the media, governmental and educational institutions. They seek to stop hostility, re-abuse and more injustice against victims. Inviting members of the public to "complain [to their network via email] of unjust, perpetrator biased laws, and misleading media portrayals, [Grrl Activistas] choose to make a difference in a cheap and simple way."

Campaigns and events organising have also been facilitated by ICTs, resulting in an expansion of their scope and increased visibility to a wider audience. For example, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence that grew out of the first Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1999 utilises the internet (through their website and an active listserv) to network with partner organisations, disseminate campaign materials and facilitate exchange in strategies and information. Since 1999, more than 800 organizations in over 90 countries have participated in the 16 Days campaign, and many of the materials conceived from the campaign form a substantial part of UNIFEM's catalogue on Media and Communications Strategies to End Violence Against Women (Drezin, 2001). The catalogue (available for download on UNIFEM's website[53]) is in fact a testament to the innovative ways in which advocates against VAW have worked with communications and media technologies to transform public attitudes around the issue.

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[51]   <http://jectrials.unm.edu/dvtrial/> [Accessed 25 February 2005].
[52]   <http://www.grrlactivistas.org> [Accessed 25 February 2005].
[53]   <http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=66> [Accessed 23 February 2005].

4.5 Networking and Building Solidarities

Women's organisations working on similar issues in distant locations use ICTs to facilitate coalitions and network. Digital communications enable quick and relatively cost-effective ways of exchanging information, organising, coordinating and mobilisation, as well as facilitating dialogues. Further, facilities such as mailing lists can create a 'safe' space for individuals to organise around an issue that might be 'risky' in physical spaces. For example, setting up a mailing list is relatively simple and is usually cost free. This can enable individuals who are affected by a particular issue to come together to form a sort of virtual community that can generate support, create a sense of collective identity, and facilitate conversations and strategising. Women Who Love Women (WWLW) is one such list in Malaysia, setting up a 'safe' digital space for lesbian, transgendered and bisexual women to gather and shape their diverse perspectives on what it means to live as a non-heterosexual subject in a country that does not recognise queer communities.

V CLOSING (FOR NOW)

real is real regardless
of what you try to say
or say away
real is real relentless
while words distract and dismay
words that change their tune
though the story remains the same
words that fill me quickly
and then are slow to drain
dialogues that dither down reminiscent
of the way it likes to rain
every screen
a smoke screen
oh to dream
just for a moment
the picture
outside the frame
- Ani diFranco[54]

This paper has attempted to draw out the specific ways in which new forms of ICTs have impacted some forms of violence against women, and, from that, to surface some of the tensions in their shifting relationships. It is difficult to avoid a sense of urgency in reflecting on how digital communications technologies are shaping news ways of harming women.

However, it is crucial to reflect on this connection as one that is deeply affected by existing social relations. Whether new forms of ICTs replicate, amplify or destabilise power relations depend largely on how intimate we can or want to be with their development and discourse. To make this decision, we need to first understand what digital technology means, interrogate the impact of technologies on society, and unravel the multiple and shifting strands of political discourse – from globalisation, neo-liberal capitalism, neo-colonialism, cultural imperialism, discriminatory nationalism to gender relations.

Promisingly, this process has already irrefutably begun with the efforts of many feminists and women's rights advocates who are consciously and deliberately 'taking back the tech', and thereby, indelibly changing what technology is and means.

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[54]   **the true story of what was** <http://www.righteousbabe.com/ani/educated_guess/l_true_story.asp> [Accessed 25 March 2005]

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