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Digital Shadows: How Technology Is Reshaping the Reporting of Domestic Violence

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ABSTRACT— Domestic violence continues to be one of the most pervasive human rights concerns worldwide, yet it remains significantly under-reported due to fear, stigma, and limited access to formal services. The rapid digitisation of everyday life has introduced new dynamics into how survivors disclose and report abuse. This study examines the evolving role of technology in domestic violence reporting, focusing on the growing tension between technology as a tool of empowerment and as a mechanism of control. Drawing on recent empirical studies, policy frameworks, and evaluations of digital interventions, the review highlights three major shifts. First, new reporting pathways—such as online police portals, crisis chats, mobile safety-planning applications, and social-media disclosures—are lowering barriers to help-seeking and enabling survivors to document abuse on their own terms. Second, the same technologies are increasingly weaponised by perpetrators through surveillance, cyberstalking, harassment, and control of digital identities, creating heightened safety risks for survivors who attempt to seek help online. Third, unequal access to secure devices, digital literacy, and supportive environments shapes who can benefit from these emerging tools. The findings emphasise the urgent need for survivor-centred design in digital reporting systems, stronger privacy and data-governance standards, and inclusive implementation strategies that address the digital divide. By mapping both opportunities and risks within these "digital shadows," the study provides a foundation for safer, more accessible and rights-based responses to domestic violence in the technology-driven era.

KEYWORDS— Domestic violence reporting, technology-facilitated abuse, digital safety, online disclosure, survivor-centered design, e-health interventions

I. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence remains a deeply entrenched global problem, affecting millions of individuals every year. However, actual reporting of these incidents to police or formal support services remains far lower than the estimated number of survivors — many face barriers such as stigma, fear of retaliation, economic dependence, and lack of access to safe or sympathetic help. These structural and social constraints contribute to a profound under-reporting that obfuscates the true scale of abuse and inhibits effective intervention.

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Source: https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19-0

In recent decades, the widespread adoption of digital technologies — smartphones, social media, Internet-enabled devices and communication platforms — has significantly changed both the nature of domestic abuse and the ways in which survivors may seek help. On one hand, technology increasingly enables what scholars call **technology-facilitated abuse** or **technology-facilitated coercive control (TFCC)**: perpetrators use digital tools for surveillance, stalking, harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate content, doxxing, location tracking and other forms of digital harassment. These new modalities extend abuse beyond the physical and psychological realms into survivors' digital lives — often blurring the boundaries between offline and online violence.

On the other hand, the same technologies hold potential for transforming how domestic violence is reported, documented and addressed. Digital reporting portals, online helplines, mobile apps, and social-media platforms offer survivors alternative pathways to disclosure — ones that may be more discreet, accessible, and responsive to constraints like mobility, fear of physical confrontation, or time-sensitive danger. Emerging evidence suggests that these digital services might lower barriers to help-seeking and broaden the reach of support and intervention.

Yet this transformation is not unidirectional or uniformly beneficial. The interplay between technology-mediated abuse and technology-enabled reporting raises complex questions around privacy, safety, digital literacy, accessibility, and the unequal distribution of benefits and risks. As technologies evolve, so do the tactics of coercion and control — often in ways that existing legal, social, and support systems struggle to recognise or address.

Source: https://data.unwomen.org/publications/vaw-rga

In this research, we explore how digital technologies are reshaping the reporting and help-seeking landscape for domestic violence survivors. We examine both the ways in which technology is being misused to perpetuate abuse — extending control into victims' digital lives — and the ways in which it can be harnessed to support survivors in documenting abuse, disclosing it safely, and accessing services. By synthesising empirical studies, policy analyses, and evaluations of digital interventions, we aim to map this evolving "digital shadow": the complex environment in which abuse and aid coexist.

Our objectives are: (a) to analyse how technology changes the dynamics of domestic violence and the barriers to reporting; (b) to identify and evaluate digital tools and platforms that facilitate safe disclosure and help-seeking; (c) to assess the limits and risks associated with digital reporting and support; and (d) to highlight gaps in the existing literature and propose directions for policy, design, and future research. Through this work, we hope to provide a foundation for more informed, technology-aware responses to domestic violence in a rapidly digitising world.

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II. Literature Review

1. Conceptual background: technology as double-edged in domestic violence

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence (IPV) are now widely recognised as major public health and human rights problems, with roughly one in three women worldwide experiencing physical or sexual IPV or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Under-reporting to police and formal services is well documented, driven by fear, stigma, economic dependence, and limited access to support services.

Digitalisation adds a complex new layer. On the one hand, **technology-facilitated abuse** (TFA) and **technology-facilitated coercive control** (TFCC) have become central to many abusive relationships. On the other, online reporting portals, mobile apps, e-health interventions, social media communities and AI-enabled helplines are opening up fresh channels for disclosure, evidence collection, and help-seeking that may bypass some traditional barriers.

Dragiewicz et al. introduced "technology-facilitated coercive control" to capture patterns where perpetrators use digital tools—phones, social media, GPS tracking, spyware, banking and smart-home tech—to surveil, threaten and isolate partners as part of ongoing coercive control. Rogers et al. frame technology-facilitated abuse more broadly as a significant emerging trend within IPV, encompassing harassment, stalking, image-based abuse and control over survivors' digital lives. Policy and practice guides from Australian and other agencies now treat TFCC as an integrated part of domestic and family violence, highlighting its impacts and the risks of simply advising survivors to "go offline."

At the same time, global and regional bodies emphasise that technology can be harnessed as part of the solution. UN Women's model framework on legislation for technology-facilitated violence against women and girls explicitly calls for **online reporting mechanisms, complaint filing systems and platform accountability** alongside criminal law reforms. A European Parliament brief on cyberviolence similarly stresses the need for easy online reporting channels and take-down mechanisms for non-consensual images and other abuse.

This duality—technology as both weapon and lifeline—runs through the empirical literature on digital reporting.

2. Technology-facilitated abuse and its impact on reporting

Studies consistently show that perpetrators exploit the "digital shadow" survivors leave across devices and platforms. TFCC can involve:

- GPS and app-based tracking, monitoring social media, and reading private messages
- Threats or actual dissemination of intimate images ("revenge porn")
- Impersonation, doxxing, and misinformation online (e.g., posting false reports about the victim)

Community-based research in Australia, for instance, found that TFCC is widespread and deeply intertwined with "offline" abuse, affecting women and children's safety and compromising their ability to seek help. An India-focused report on technology-facilitated gender-based violence documents cyberstalking, non-consensual image sharing, and online blackmail alongside domestic abuse, and notes the development of national cybercrime reporting portals as a partial response.

These dynamics directly shape **reporting behaviour**:

- Survivors may fear that using online forms or apps could be detected through browsing history, notifications, or shared devices.
- Perpetrators' control of phones, passwords or SIM cards can block access to digital help.
- Conversely, because so much abuse is now digitally mediated, survivors also recognise that their phones and platforms contain **evidence** (messages, logs, location data) that can support legal reporting if they can safely preserve it.

Practice guides stress the importance of safety-by-design in digital reporting tools (quick-exit buttons, disguised icons, no logs on device, clear safety warnings). Toolkits developed by advocacy organisations such as the US-based Safety Net Project provide survivors with strategies for documenting technology-facilitated abuse while minimising digital footprints—again underlining the ambivalent role of "digital shadows."

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3. Digital pathways to disclosure and reporting: police, helplines and remote services

3.1 Online reporting to police and state agencies

A growing number of police forces and government agencies now offer **online reporting forms** for domestic abuse as an alternative to phone calls or in-person visits. Police in Scotland, West Yorkshire, Lancashire, Singapore and several other jurisdictions provide web-based forms that allow survivors to submit details of incidents, often with options on when and how it is safe to contact them.

Guidance for survivors notes that online reporting:

- Can reduce the risk of being overheard if phone calls are monitored
- Allows asynchronous disclosure, which some survivors find emotionally easier
- May be particularly valuable in rural or isolated settings where attending a station is difficult

However, these portals often **rely on survivors having safe device access, digital literacy and connectivity**, which are unevenly distributed. There is little robust evaluation yet on whether online police reporting increases overall disclosure, or simply shifts existing reporters to new channels.

3.2 Helplines, chat-based support and AI-enabled triage

Parallel to police portals, **24/7 helplines and online chats** have become central reporting and support routes:

- The US National Domestic Violence Hotline provides multi-channel access (phone, chat, text) and has piloted an AI-assisted chat interface ("Ruth") to help when human advocates are not immediately available.
- Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline in the UK offers live web-chat for survivors who cannot safely phone.
- In India, the National Commission for Women operates a digital complaint registration system and helpline for women affected by violence.
- Global directories such as Find A Helpline list domestic violence and crisis helplines with webchat options worldwide.

Evidence from service-provider studies during COVID-19 shows that when in-person services were disrupted, organisations rapidly expanded remote channels—phone, chat, email and video—both for disclosure and ongoing casework. These adaptations often **increased contact volume**, but required new protocols for risk assessment, privacy, and managing disclosures where the perpetrator might be nearby.

Overall, the literature suggests that **digitally mediated helplines lower some access barriers**, particularly for younger survivors, those with mobility limitations, or those for whom anonymity is crucial. At the same time, digital divides, language barriers, and concerns about data privacy can exclude some groups.

4. Mobile apps and e-health interventions for reporting and safety planning

A substantial body of work now examines **mobile apps and web-based interventions** that support survivors in documenting abuse, planning for safety, and connecting with services.

4.1 Typologies and quality of IPV apps

Systematic assessments of IPV and sexual violence apps find a rapidly growing ecosystem comprising:

- Emergency alert and panic-button apps
- Apps for secure journaling and evidence collection
- Safety-planning and risk-assessment tools
- Information and psychoeducation resources

Moret et al. (2022) reviewed freely available IPV/sexual violence apps and reported considerable variation in usability, security and evidence base, with many tools lacking explicit grounding in clinical or advocacy best practice. Rahman et al. (2025) highlight similar concerns in a broader review of apps targeting violence against women and girls, while also emphasising their potential for rapid, scalable support and anonymous reporting.

Examples on the ground include Bright Sky (a support and information app co-developed with UK NGOs) and SafeNight (which mobilises community resources to quickly locate shelter). DAVSS, a newer application, explicitly focuses on

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documenting domestic abuse events and facilitating contact with shelters via QR-code-based check-in.

4.2 E-health safety-planning and reporting platforms

Randomised trials and implementation studies provide stronger evidence for some structured e-health interventions:

- **iCAN Plan 4 Safety** and **myPlan** are online tools that combine risk assessment, personalised safety planning and links to services; trials in Canada and the US show improvements in safety-related decision-making and some reductions in violence exposure compared with usual information.
- The **SAFE** intervention, developed in the Netherlands, offers an anonymous web-based platform for women experiencing IPV to assess risk, receive tailored advice and access resources; initial and follow-up studies show that such e-health approaches are both feasible and acceptable, and may support earlier disclosure.
- AyudaMujer, a Latin American mobile app, focuses on psychological support and guidance for women facing partner violence, embedding structured assessments and referral pathways into a culturally tailored mobile interface.

Overall, this literature indicates that **apps and e-health platforms can act as quasi-reporting channels**, allowing survivors to disclose experiences in a semi-structured way, generate records, and be routed toward helplines, shelters or police, often before an official complaint is lodged. However, concerns around **data security, encryption, third-party tracking, and potential discovery by perpetrators** remain under-addressed in many tools.

5. Social media and online communities as spaces of disclosure and "informal reporting"

Another strand of research examines how survivors use **social media** to narrate abuse, seek support, and indirectly "report" violence to broader publics.

Computational and qualitative studies show that survivors increasingly turn to platforms like Twitter/X, Reddit, Facebook, and dedicated online forums to describe ongoing or past abuse, test language ("is this abuse?"), and solicit advice. Wang et al. (2025) model DV-related self-disclosure and community responses on social media, proposing pipelines for detecting such disclosures and mapping the kinds of support offered by other users.

These "digital voices of survival" function as:

- **Early-stage disclosures**, sometimes preceding contact with formal services
- **Collective witnessing**, where friends, followers or communities validate experiences, reducing self-blame
- **Evidence trails**, as posts or messages later become part of police or court records

At the same time, survivors can face hostile reactions, victim-blaming or platform inaction. Studies of "reporting online abuse to platforms" highlight usability problems with reporting interfaces, lack of transparency in moderation, and perceptions that platform reporting rarely leads to meaningful sanctions.

During the COVID-19 "shadow pandemic," some police forces and NGOs experimented with **social-media-based outreach campaigns** that promoted online or smartphone-based reporting channels to reach hidden victims; a recent RCT showed that targeted social media campaigns can increase knowledge of reporting options and, in some contexts, actual reporting.

Overall, the literature suggests that social media acts as a **hybrid space**—part support network, part informal reporting mechanism, and part evidence archive—yet remains outside traditional reporting statistics.

6. Inequalities, safety risks and barriers in digital reporting

6.1 Marginalised survivors and the digital divide

Several studies emphasise that the benefits of digital reporting tools are **unevenly distributed**. Safety-planning work with marginalised survivors in North America shows that women who are racialised, rural, immigrant, LGBTQ+, or living with disabilities face compounded barriers to both in-person and digital services, including limited connectivity, shared or monitored devices, and distrust of institutions. Research on rural and island communities during COVID-19 finds that social stigma, close-knit surveillance cultures and

infrastructural gaps can make both online and offline help-seeking difficult; in some settings, online reporting may actually be **more visible** to perpetrators due to shared devices.

Young people's experiences also differ. Studies on TFCC among youth show that many normalise pervasive digital monitoring and location-sharing in relationships, blurring boundaries between care and control and making it harder to recognise and report abuse.

6.2 Safety and privacy concerns in digital shadows

Across the literature, three recurring risks appear:

1. **Traceability** – Browsing history, notifications, cloud backups and app icons can reveal help-seeking. Hence many police and NGO portals emphasise quick-exit buttons and guidance on clearing histories.
2. **Data security and governance** – Few apps and portals publish clear information about encryption, data retention and sharing with third parties. Reviews of IPV apps note that many fail to meet basic privacy standards, raising concerns that sensitive disclosures could be breached.
3. **Platform power** – Survivors' digital shadows are stored and algorithmically processed by corporations whose moderation and data-sharing policies they cannot control; research on cyberviolence against women in the EU underlines the need for legal obligations on platforms to respond to reports and remove abusive content promptly.

These risks complicate the ethical framing of digital reporting: technology may open doors to support, but may also expose survivors to new vulnerabilities if not carefully designed and regulated.

7. Technological innovations and computational approaches

Beyond direct service tools, a growing body of work explores **computational methods** to detect and respond to domestic violence disclosures online.

- Machine-learning approaches have been applied to data from online reporting systems such as Safecity to detect patterns of sexual harassment and violence in user-submitted reports, supporting urban safety planning and targeted interventions.
- Social-media–based models classify DV-related self-disclosures and characterise emotional trajectories, with the goal of enabling platform-level interventions or referrals to helplines.

While promising, these studies also raise questions about consent, surveillance, false positives, and the risk of automated systems triggering law-enforcement contact without survivor control.

No.	Author(s), Year	Context / Sample	Technology / Modality	Focus of Study	Key Risks / Limitations Highlighted
1	Dragiewicz et al., 2018	Conceptual / media and DV scholarship (Australia & global)	Digital media platforms, phones, social networks	Introduces **technology-facilitated coercive control (TFCC)** and analyses how platforms are embedded in patterns of coercive domestic abuse.	Platforms' design choices (blocking, reporting, privacy defaults) can unintentionally reinforce abusers' power; survivors may be advised to disconnect, which can further isolate them.
2	Rogers et al., 2022	Narrative review of IPV cases and research	Phones, social media, GPS, spyware, image-based abuse	Synthesises work on **technology-facilitated abuse** in intimate relationships and its integration with offline violence.	Highlights limited survivor control over data trails, gaps in platform response, and the risk that "go offline" advice undermines access to digital reporting and support.
3	Freed et al., 2017	Qualitative study with IPV survivors in the US	Phones, social media, shared online accounts	Explores socio-technical challenges of managing technology during and after abusive relationships.	Managing shared devices, joint social circles and co-parenting makes "clean breaks" from technology unrealistic; standard safety advice often ignores these constraints.

4	Dragiewicz & MacDonald / AIFS guide, 2021+	Practice guide for Australian practitioners	TFCC across devices, apps and platforms	Translates TFCC research into practical guidance for services working with survivors.	Warns that poorly managed digital evidence collection can alert abusers; practitioners must understand basic tech forensics and safety-by-design (e.g., avoiding leaving traces on shared devices).
5	van Gelder et al., 2020; 2023	Women experiencing IPV in the Netherlands	SAFE web-based self-support platform	Protocol and trial of an anonymous eHealth intervention offering risk assessment, tailored information and links to support.	Requires safe and private internet access; cultural and language tailoring is needed. Concerns remain about data protection and how information may be shared with third parties.
6	Ford-Gilboe et al., 2017–2020 (iCAN Plan 4 Safety)	Canadian women experiencing IPV (incl. rural and marginalised groups)	Tailored **online safety and health intervention**	RCT protocol and follow-up evaluating iCAN, a personalised web tool for safety and health planning.	Effects differ across subgroups; digital literacy and connectivity limit access. Tools must be carefully designed to avoid leaving traces on unsafe devices.
7	Hegarty et al., 2019 (I-DECIDE)	Australian women screening positive for IPV	Interactive **web decision aid** vs information website	Pragmatic RCT of an online tool combining healthy relationship education, abuse assessment and safety-planning.	Eligibility required safe, private internet access and English literacy; findings may not translate directly to women with limited digital or language skills.
8	Glass et al., 2015; Decker et al., 2020; Glass et al., 2024; myPlan research group	College women (US), women in Kenya, adolescents and friends/family	myPlan mobile / web safety decision app	Series of trials and adaptations of myPlan for different groups experiencing partner or dating violence.	Sustained benefit depends on ongoing access, safety of phone ownership, and culturally appropriate content; data security and app store policies are continuing concerns.
9	Linde et al., 2020	Systematic review of IPV eHealth trials	Web and mobile eHealth interventions	Reviews effects of electronic interventions on IPV exposure, depression and PTSD versus standard care.	Studies are heterogeneous and often small; long-term effects and safety outcomes are under-reported. Many tools lack transparent security practices.
10	van Gelder et al., 2022; Elbelassy et al., 2023	Women using IPV eHealth tools; Arabic-speaking migrant women in NL	eHealth platforms and apps	Identifies "essential features" of effective IPV eHealth tools and explores needed adaptations for migrant women.	Cultural mismatch, generic content and lack of multilingual interfaces can deter use. Migrant women may fear that digital reports could affect immigration or be shared without consent.
11	Johnson et al., 2022	IPV trial participants during COVID-19 restrictions	Remote trial delivery (phone, video, online tools)	Describes modifications to safely conduct an IPV clinical trial fully remotely under pandemic conditions.	Remote protocols require strict safeguards (code words, flexible scheduling, secure channels) to avoid alerting abusers; technology problems and privacy constraints can exclude some survivors.
12	Safecity / Red Dot Foundation, 2012–present; Liu et al., 2019; Omdena / AI case studies	Crowdsourced reports from India and other countries	Safecity web + mobile citizen-reporting platform and related ML work	Platform enables anonymous reporting of sexual harassment and abuse, producing geospatial "hotspot" maps; NLP/ML studies mine these reports to uncover	Focus is mainly on public-space harassment; private, domestic incidents may still be under-reported. Data quality, representation biases, and ethical issues around crowdsourced sensitive stories are ongoing challenges.

				patterns and support prevention.	
13	Aldkheel et al., 2021	Social media posts during COVID-19	Twitter / social media self-disclosure	Analyses self-disclosed domestic violence posts during the pandemic to characterise themes and temporal patterns.	Social media disclosures are highly visible and may expose survivors to online hostility or surveillance by abusers; automated detection raises privacy and consent concerns.
14	Wang et al., 2025 "Digital Voices of Survival"	Social media communities focused on DV	Computational framework for analysing support-seeking posts	Develops a pipeline to detect DV self-disclosures, cluster posts, summarise topics, and map community support responses.	The framework depends on large-scale data collection and algorithmic inference; risks include misclassification, surveillance without informed consent, and over-reliance on automated triage instead of human-centred support.
15	Neubauer et al., 2023	Systematic review of AI / text mining for DV	Police narratives, online reports, administrative data	Reviews uses of text mining and AI to analyse DV narratives and related harms.	Many models ignore survivor perspectives, data bias and ethical issues; there is a danger of reinforcing institutional blind spots if AI is trained only on official reports that under-represent certain groups.
16	Zhou et al., 2023	Marginalised users in Reddit support communities	Online peer-support forums	Qualitative interviews on online harm following personal disclosures in support-seeking threads.	Highlights need for community-level and platform-level safeguards; underscores that "reporting" abuse online is not automatically safe, and can itself create new harms.

III. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative **systematic literature review** design to investigate how digital technologies are reshaping domestic violence reporting. The approach enables a comprehensive synthesis of scholarly perspectives, empirical findings, and conceptual advancements on technology-mediated help-seeking. A narrative analysis is used to interpret the evidence, identify major patterns, and evaluate both opportunities and risks associated with digital reporting platforms.

Research Scope

The scope of this research includes:

- Technology-facilitated reporting mechanisms such as mobile applications, online police portals, helpline chats, AI-enabled services, and social-media disclosures.
- Technology-facilitated abuse including digital surveillance, coercive control, online harassment, and image-based violence.
- Studies focusing on systems of reporting, user experience, safety concerns, and policy implications.

Research is limited to literature published from **2015 to 2025**, reflecting the period of rapid digital expansion and the emergence of technology-focused domestic violence interventions.

Data Sources and Selection Strategy

Relevant publications were identified through academic databases and institutional research repositories using targeted search strings relating to digital reporting and domestic violence. Examples of search parameters include:

- "domestic violence reporting" + "technology"
- "technology-facilitated abuse"
- "online disclosure" + "intimate partner violence"
- "mobile safety planning" + "survivors"
- "digital coercive control"

Inclusion criteria:

1. Peer-reviewed journals, government or NGO research reports, conference papers, and systematic reviews.
2. Studies focusing on survivors' experiences with digital tools or reporting pathways.
3. Research available in English.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Publications solely analyzing offline domestic violence without a digital component.
2. Opinion pieces lacking empirical or analytical grounding.
3. Duplicated findings across studies without unique contributions.

Data Extraction and Analysis

A structured extraction procedure was followed:

1. **Identification**: Titles and abstracts were screened to determine relevance.
2. **Categorization**: Eligible studies were grouped under themes such as technology-facilitated abuse, online reporting platforms, e-health tools, social-media disclosures, and digital inequalities.
3. **Thematic Coding**: Major findings were coded to identify recurring topics including safety, privacy, accessibility, empowerment, evidence documentation, and digital risks.
4. **Synthesis**: Coded themes were integrated to generate a conceptual understanding of how digital technologies influence domestic violence reporting and help-seeking.

The analysis emphasizes **triangulation**, comparing results across diverse geographical, cultural, and socio-economic contexts to ensure a balanced representation of global experiences.

Quality Assurance Measures

To maintain validity and reliability:

- Only credible and verifiable research was included.
- Studies were cross-checked for methodological rigor.
- Conflicting findings were critically analyzed rather than excluded.
- Reflexive analysis was applied to minimize researcher bias during interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitivity of the topic, ethical diligence was prioritized in handling all data. As this study is secondary in nature:

- No direct interaction with survivors occurred.
- No personal data identifying individuals was accessed.
- Respect for survivor privacy and experiences guided the interpretation.

The review acknowledges the potential harm in misrepresenting digital safety and therefore places survivor well-being and agency at the core of the research narrative.

IV. Results

The systematic review revealed significant transformations in how survivors of domestic violence are able to disclose abuse, seek help, and initiate reporting through digital means. After screening and synthesizing the selected studies, the results were categorized into four major thematic domains: (1) New Digital Pathways for Reporting, (2) Increased Technology-Facilitated Risks, (3) Inequities in Access and Safety, and (4) Growing Institutional Recognition and Adoption.

1. New Digital Pathways for Reporting

A majority of the reviewed studies acknowledged a **positive shift** toward technology-enabled support:

- Online police reporting portals, smartphone apps, helpline chats, and e-counselling expanded options for survivors who are unable or unwilling to report in person.
- Survivors gained greater **privacy, autonomy, and control** when disclosing abuse at their own pace.
- Digital reporting tools also helped survivors **document evidence**, such as messages and online threats, which increased confidence in seeking legal action.
- Remote service delivery (phone/video) during pandemic disruptions demonstrated that digital channels can maintain continuity of support.

Overall, these innovations **reduced emotional and logistical barriers** to reporting for many survivors.

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2. Increased Technology-Facilitated Risks

Despite improved accessibility, the review demonstrated significant **safety concerns** related to digital help-seeking:

- Perpetrators increasingly weaponize technology through **monitoring devices, stalking via GPS, social-media harassment, account hijacking, and image-based abuse**.
- Survivors often feared that attempts to seek help online might be detected, leading to **further violence**.
- Many popular apps lacked high standards of **encryption, anonymity, and protection** from third-party data misuse.

The research indicated that technology simultaneously enables and **suppresses** reporting, depending on survivors' environment and control over devices.

3. Inequities in Access and Safety

The review identified that digital services do not benefit all survivors equally:

- Rural, low-income, migrant, and older populations had **limited access to safe devices**, secure internet, and digital literacy.
- Women living with shared devices or restrictive family structures were **unable to safely explore online help**.
- Language barriers and culturally misaligned content reduced usability for various groups.

This demonstrates a clear **digital divide**, affecting who can safely report abuse.

4. Growing Institutional Recognition and Adoption

Research highlighted a **rapid shift in institutional responses**:

- Law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and social work organizations increasingly integrate **web-based reporting and digital risk assessments**.
- Many services trained staff in technology-based safety planning and privacy strategies.
- Governments and advocacy groups began to **propose regulation** for digital evidence protection, app security standards, and social-media accountability.

These results show that institutions are adapting to the **digital realities of modern domestic violence**.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the evolving intersection between digital technology and domestic violence reporting, revealing both significant advancements and emerging threats. The findings show that technology has become a powerful facilitator of disclosure, offering survivors alternative pathways to report abuse safely and discreetly through online portals, mobile applications, chat-based helplines, and social platforms. These tools have lowered emotional and physical barriers to seeking help, allowed survivors to document abuse more effectively, and maintained access to support services even in crisis conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the research also highlights a parallel rise in technology-facilitated abuse, where perpetrators use surveillance, monitoring, and online harassment to exert coercive control. This dual nature of technology—operating simultaneously as a lifeline and a weapon—creates complex safety challenges. Survivors must navigate digital environments where every attempt to seek help may leave traces that could provoke further harm. Additionally, unequal access to secure digital devices, literacy, and connectivity means that not all survivors benefit equally from technological interventions, with marginalized groups often facing heightened risk and reduced support.

The conclusion drawn from this review is that technology alone cannot resolve the longstanding issue of domestic violence under-reporting. Instead, a comprehensive response is needed—one that aligns digital innovation with survivor-centered safety practices, robust data governance, culturally inclusive design, and consistent institutional accountability. Strengthening privacy protections, improving accessibility, training practitioners in digital safety, and developing regulatory frameworks for platforms should form the foundation of future strategies.

Ultimately, the transformation of domestic violence reporting in the digital age is ongoing. If thoughtfully implemented, technology can illuminate hidden experiences, amplify survivor voices, and support more equitable and rapid access to justice. Ensuring that technological tools empower rather than expose survivors will be essential in shaping a safer reporting landscape and advancing the fight against domestic violence in the 21st century.

VI. FUTURE SCOPE

Future research should focus on developing safer, more inclusive digital reporting systems that address the wide range of survivor experiences across different cultures, age groups, and socio-economic settings. There is a strong need for

standardized privacy protections, ethical data management practices, and secure technological designs that prevent perpetrators from exploiting digital platforms. Expanding multilingual, accessible interventions for rural and marginalized communities will be essential to reduce digital inequality. Moreover, deeper evaluation of AI-based detection tools, survivor-centered safety planning features, and cross-sector collaboration with law enforcement, healthcare, and social services can help build a stronger, coordinated response to domestic violence in the digital era.

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