

Tackling Online Gendered Disinformation: New Canadian Research and Resources Released

OTTAWA, ON [August 20, 2025] – A dangerous online threat targeting women and gender-diverse people in Canada is gendered disinformation. These harmful online activities silence voices, poison online spaces and even undermine our democracy.

A collaboration involving the [Community Safety Knowledge Alliance](#) (CSKA), [Sapper Labs Group](#) (SLG) and [Actua](#) is taking action with a groundbreaking new study and a set of resources for educators, youth and families, police and community-based organizations to understand, identify and address this issue. This work was funded, in-part, by the Government of Canada.

“Online threats that target women and gender-diverse people harm our communities and democracy”, says Nishan Duraiappah, Chief of the Peel Regional Police. “This study and its resources for police, families, educators and others will help us better understand and address this problem – supporting everyone affected.”

“With the digital revolution we have witnessed a surge in information distortion which can pose significant challenges to our national security, democracy, and public discourses. The impact of technology-enabled gendered disinformation is too often given short-shrift. This timely and informative on report on ‘Understanding Countering Gendered Information’ not only offers a unique and informed analysis of this weapon of division and social harm, but also practical tools for advancing the detection and countering it. It is essential resource.” – Jennifer Irish, Director, Information Integrity Lab, University of Ottawa

“Women and gender-diverse individuals are disproportionately targeted by a variety of actors using disinformation and deep fakes as a means personal attack or transnational repression,” explains Dave McMahan from SLG. “By enumerating actors and methods, we were able to throw light on the problem-set - allowing Canadian society to recognized maligned information distortion for what it is, build resiliency and adopt recommended countermeasures.”

“We are actively raising awareness of the urgent problem of gendered disinformation and, more importantly, providing actionable solutions,” says Jennifer Flanagan, CEO of Actua. “Through resources developed for educators, youth and families, we are equipping them with the knowledge to identify and counter this harmful content, empowering them to contribute to a safer and more equitable online society for all.”

Gendered disinformation is a deliberate and calculated attack intended to cause harm against women, girls and gender-diverse people. Alarmingly, gender itself is both a target and a tool in these malicious campaigns. For example, this could involve the spread of manipulated images online intended to humiliate a female politician or coordinated online harassment campaigns designed to silence women journalists. Gender is strategically exploited to inflict harm by using manipulated narratives, stereotypes or even AI-generated female personas to spread disinformation and achieve malicious objectives.

“This isn't a future problem,” says Dr. Janos Botschner, Senior Associate at CSKA and the study's principal investigator. “Gendered disinformation is actively causing harm now, with its impacts escalating from online harassment and the spread of damaging lies, to the erosion of trust and healthy public discourse. And it goes beyond the individual – some of these tactics also being employed by foreign nations to try to undermine the foundations of our democracy.”

Providing people with the right tools and knowledge is essential in countering gendered disinformation. The report and corresponding resources directly address this need by providing clear explanations of gendered disinformation and its tactics, real-world examples, and practical guidance on how to identify and counter harmful content before it takes hold.

“Technology offers incredible benefits for youth and our society,” notes Flanagan. “We are empowering young people to use it responsibly and for good. We want to build an AI-ready generation that can shape emerging technologies, navigate and counter online harms like gendered disinformation, and become the leaders Canada needs for its innovation future.”

To learn more about gendered disinformation and access learning resources, visit:

<https://cskacanada.ca/projects/understanding-and-countering-gendered-disinformation-a-framework-for-resilience-and-action/>

actua.ca/misinformation.

About The Community Safety Knowledge Alliance (CSKA)

The Community Safety Knowledge Alliance (CSKA) is a non-profit applied research organization that supports governments, police, public health and human service leaders in developing, implementing and assessing new approaches to enhancing community safety and well-being service delivery and outcomes. Over the past decade, CSKA has conducted interdisciplinary research and engaged with change-makers on some of Canada's most pressing social issues, including intimate partner violence, youth radicalization to violence, cybersecurity, food security, drug policy, human rights-based policing, and community reintegration initiatives. CSKA maintains an active posture on issues such as disinformation and artificial intelligence to support adaptive responses to these emerging challenges.

About Sapper Labs Group (SLG)

Sapper Labs Group conducts research to understand the methods and impacts of disinformation and influence campaigns and networks and as input to the development of processes to support effective countermeasures. SLG is supported by global partners and a comprehensive intelligence sharing network.

About Actua

Actua is creating a Canada where every child has the skills and confidence they need to achieve their full potential. As a leading science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) outreach organization, Actua includes over 40 universities and colleges, engaging 500,000 youth in 600 communities each year. For 25 years, Actua has focused on identifying and

removing the barriers for entry into STEM and now have national programs dedicated to engaging Indigenous youth, girls and young women, Black youth, those facing economic barriers and youth in Northern and remote communities.

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