“It was everywhere all at once”: Exploring Digital Coercive Control in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence Through Mix-Method Research

by

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Abstract

This thesis adds to the growing body of literature expanding traditional conceptions of intimate partner violence (IPV) from purely physical harms to account for subtle, but equally harmful, patterns of coercive control (CC) that are imposed by a subset of men, to tyrannize and deny women of personal autonomy – even through digital technologies, in what is known as digital coercive control (DCC). It fills gaps in the literature by answering three questions: how have IPV survivors in Canada experienced and been impacted by DCC; what challenges has DCC created for Canadian IPV stakeholders; and how have these stakeholders utilized technology, including their organizational websites, to educate and respond to DCC? Employing mixed-method research, including a quantitative content analysis of stakeholder websites and qualitative semi-structured interviews with survivors and stakeholders, this thesis reveals broad implications. Calling for further research, education, and training initiatives on DCC, alongside the modernization of available tools to respond to DCC, including emergency protection orders, risk assessment tools, and the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the survivors who took the time to participate in this research. Your willingness to share your experience and at times distressing memories, to further the knowledge base of digital coercive control (DCC) and help others who may find themselves in similar situations, was nothing short of generous and courageous. I'd also like to dedicate this work to the handful of survivors who continued to contact me following the completion of this study to share their experience with DCC. You may have yet to share your story publicly, but you too shine a bright light on this growing manifestation of violence faced by women in their most intimate relationships and are evidence that additional research into the experience of DCC for survivors is awaiting far greater attention. Finally, I'd like to dedicate this work to all the survivors who have yet to recognize their own experience as DCC or have yet to have their stories of DCC believed. I believe you, and in due time, this growing body of research will lead others to believe you too.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CC	Coercive Control
DA	Danger Assessment
DCC	Digital Coercive Control
DV	Domestic Violence
EPO	Emergency Protection Order
GPS	Global Positioning System
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
IBSA	Image-based Sexual Abuse
IoT	Internet of Things
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IT	Information Technology
LGBTQ2+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirited, and other identities.
NNEDV	National Network to End Domestic Violence
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UK	United Kingdom
UNB	The University of New Brunswick
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

Chapter 1: Introduction

Gender-based violence is a significant social and economic harm worldwide, with intimate partner violence (IPV) representing one of the most common forms (W.H.O., 2012). The Statistics Canada *Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces* (2018) reflects this notion as 6.2 million Canadian women, 15 years of age and over, self-reported experiencing at least one form of IPV in their lifetime (Cotter, 2021). In a similar vein, homicide data indicates that women and girls are killed on average every 2.5 days in Canada (Dawson et al., 2018), and more frequently at the hands of intimate partners than any other perpetrator (Cotter, 2021). While IPV is traditionally thought of in terms of physical or sexual violence committed against an intimate partner, this is a surface level understanding of this grave social issue, as more nuanced manifestations of violence are recognized to reside at the core of IPV; including emotional and psychological abuse, along with coercive and controlling behaviour (W.H.O., 2012; Stark, 2009a). Reports indicate that approximately 60 to 80% of abused women who pursue support for IPV from social services, have experienced what is known as 'coercive control' (CC) in the context of IPV (Stark, 2009b). Scholars who are conscious of this behaviour warn that CC is used in several contexts, including with hostages and prisoners of war (POWs), but when it comes to IPV it is used by a substantial subset of men almost exclusively, to enforce their domination over their current and former female intimate partners (Stark, 2009a). Combining the serious harms of physical violence with reoccurring patterns of insidious micromanagement, harassment, intimidation, isolation, control, and the exploitation of longstanding gender norms and sexual inequalities that

continue to be faced by women at home and throughout greater society (Dragiewicz et al., 2021; Stark, 2009a).

Although still in its infancy, a growing body of research has further identified technology's role in facilitating CC in IPV situations. Several scholars have found that smart phones, mobile applications, GPS systems, the internet, and social media, among other technologies, have become avenues for which abusers can extend their efforts of CC in IPV with digital technology – resulting in cumulative effects that are equally as significant as physical violence and substantial evidence confirming its presence prior to several domestic homicides (Al-Alosi, 2017; Douglas et al., 2019; Dragiewicz, 2021; Hand et al., 2009; Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Stark, 2009a; Woodlock et al., 2020). Despite these serious harms, it should be noted that technology also serves as a powerful tool for assisting survivors of IPV. When technology is harnessed by survivors they are better equipped to seek, access, and share critical IPV or shelter and transition house information; maintain vital social support; alert emergency services; and can more readily collect evidence against their abusers for legal proceedings (Dragiewicz et al., 2018).

Given technology's increasing presence in our personal and professional lives, along with both its instantaneous and advancing nature, understanding its role in CC is critical; however, significant gaps remain in the existing body of literature on the topic. Of particular concern is the lack of research surrounding how this phenomenon unfolds from the perspectives of survivors, the lack of insight into the challenges it presents for key stakeholders involved, the lack of empirical research that incorporates digital technology itself into the research approach, and the lack of information concerning how

stakeholders utilize technology to respond to this matter and further educate survivors and the public.

To begin addressing these gaps and add to the existing body of knowledge concerning technology's role in CC and thereby IPV, this study employs mixed-method research utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, in the forms of a quantitative content analysis and qualitative semi-structured interviews. This manuscript begins with a presentation of the theoretical framework that underpins this research, followed by an in-depth literature review speaking to the current state of the research concerning survivors and existing responses to this phenomenon by key stakeholders. Afterwards, the methodology and chosen methodological approaches to the research will be detailed, followed by a chapter dedicated to the quantitative content analysis findings, and a chapter devoted to the qualitative semi-structured interview findings. A comprehensive discussion of all the research findings will interpret the study results and situate them amongst the literature on the phenomenon. The discussion will offer some generalization with practical implications for further research and planning of interventions by IPV academics, anti-violence workers, law enforcement, and policy makers. To bring this study to a close, these practical implications will be reiterated as suggestions to improve future responses to CC and thereby DCC, which will be followed by the acknowledgement of this study's limitations, recommendations for future research in the realm of DCC, and the lasting impression that succeeds this work.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

Theories play a significant role in shaping our understanding of the social world around us, particularly as we attempt to explain the occurrence of deviant or criminal behaviour. As such, various theories have emerged, been challenged, and expanded over the years to create a foundation for understanding intimate partner violence (IPV). This chapter will begin by guiding readers through the dominant theoretical frameworks that exist related to IPV. It will discuss the theory of coercive control (CC) in depth, including its historical roots, key proponents, along with its primary concepts and definitions. Finally, the theory of CC will be applied to its digital counterpart, to highlight why CC is the most applicable theoretical model to adopt for this study, and to justify the need for further investigation of this social phenomenon.

2.1 Dominant Theoretical Frameworks Related to Intimate Partner Violence

In contrast to early theories that focused on the individual actors – including their genes, psychopathology, and early social learning (Kelly, 2011) – as key explanations for IPV perpetration and victimization, contemporary IPV theories integrate a broader array of potential causes. For instance, as IPV became viewed a social issue as opposed to a private concern, attention was drawn to the family unit and family violence theories emerged (Lawson, 2012). Proponents of these theories postulated that IPV stemmed from a cumulation in family conflict within the home, which led them to claim that IPV is no different than any other expression of family violence nor is it gender specific in perpetration (Lawson, 2012; Straus & Gelles 1979). Distinct from family violence perspectives is Feminist Theory that is explicitly centered around gender and the remnants of larger societal and cultural notions of systemic patriarchy (Kelly, 2011).

Proponents of this perspective link historic social inequalities experienced by women to the sexual inequality, power imbalances, subordination, and control of women that exist in cases of IPV today (Kelly, 2011).

Building on both perspectives is Lori Heise's (1998) Social Ecological Model, that borrows the initial framework of Belsky's (1980) study on child abuse and neglect, to better understand and attempt to predict IPV. Heise (1998) acknowledges that while male dominance is at the core of all credible theories of violence, on its own, it is an insufficient explanation for IPV as IPV is "multifaceted" (p. 263) in nature with each dimension inseparable from its etiology. As such, Heise's four-layered model integrates theories from various disciplines to provide a comprehensive overview of the common individual factors at play in IPV perpetration and victimization - such as childhood abuse - along with larger factors at the relationship, community, and broader societal levels (Heise, 1998).

While these contemporary perspectives offer important insight into the root causes of IPV, Evan Stark (2009a) eloquently contends that they still "provide neither an accurate description of women battering and its effects nor a credible account of why abusive relationships endure" (Stark, 2009a, p. 121). According to Stark (2009a), a more fitting explanation of IPV has been found in Lundy Bancroft's (2002) ethnographic and clinical research with IPV offenders and their victims. Bancroft identifies countless control tactics employed by men in IPV, their effects on the women exposed, and the benefits and privileges offenders believe they derive from persistently enacting these behaviours. Such as securing access to money, sex, the fruits of domestic labour, or

simply increased leisure time – thereby reenforcing their desire to control their partners (Dobash & Dobash,1998; Stark, 2009a).

Johnson (2006) similarly looks beyond the narrow IPV models, proposing four distinct types of IPV and recognizing that each has its own causes and consequences. These types include "Situational Couple Violence", "Intimate Terrorism", "Violent Resistance", and "Mutual Violent Control" (Johnson, 2006, p. 1003). Rather than debate whether IPV is gender symmetric between women and men, he argues that we must acknowledge the diverse forms of IPV and the fact that under certain circumstances some forms of IPV are gender symmetric while others remain highly gendered, with women as the primary victims and men the primary perpetrators. Johnson (2006) points to data collected on what he considers 'Intimate Terrorism' – an early iteration of CC - to illustrate this point, as studies repeatedly find that it is primarily perpetrated by men, and while women will at times utilize violence against their partners, they rarely use the tactics of control that characterize intimate terrorism. Evan Stark (2009a) builds on the work of Johnson (2006) and Bancroft (2002), among other scholars, in his book *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life*, to provide one of the most influential and widely cited accounts of CC theory, and thereby a cornerstone to our collective understanding of IPV.

2.2 The Theory of Coercive Control

2.2.1 Historical Roots.

Following early family violence surveys that found women to be the primary victims of violence in the home and men the primary perpetrators, Evan Stark (2009a) observed the emergence of several important feminist accounts concerning IPV, that

connected patriarchy in marriage to “religion, law, and political institutions” (Stark 2009a, p. 119). According to Stark (2009a), patriarchy was the “governing political principle” in historical society influencing “economic, public, and family life” (p. 172) and thereby encouraging a husband’s dominance over his wife. He notes that this system of “female subordination” was widely accepted in “women’s families of origin, transferred to their marriage, and enforced across a broad political spectrum” by “male dominated institutions” such as “the monarchy, the feudal estate, and the Church” (Stark, 2009a, p. 172). Which acted as a form of compensation for existing “social hierarchies” experienced by men during this timeframe, that led to their own “inequalities, exploitation, and oppression...”(Stark, 2009a, p. 173).

At the onset of the industrial revolution - when the production of goods was moved from the family household to the public sphere – Stark (2009a) argues that the introduction of capitalism and democracy brought with it a new “system of sexual inequality” (p.174). Replacing institutional support for patriarchy with the widespread “discrimination” of women that was justified by their biology and perceived “separatism” from men (Stark, 2009a, p. 174). Despite a substantial number of single women and a handful of married women employed during this timeframe – often necessary for the working class to make ends meet at home – well into the late 19th and even early 20th century this ‘separatism’ persisted (Stark, 2009a). Where women continued to be denied basic individual rights, including, the right to enter contractual agreements; enter developing professions as doctors, lawyers, teachers, or engineers; were unable to vote; nor hold public office (Stark, 2009a). Women were also denied sole rights to their own earnings apart from their husbands; and, importantly, were further denied the right to own

or control property – which equated to their inability to hold equal "citizenship" to men (Stark, 2009a, p. 175).

According to Stark (2009a), the industrial revolution "widened the space separating home from productive labour" (p.175). With the popularity of the ideal bourgeoise family structure at this time, most women were encouraged to stay home to tend to family matters while men provided with "'real' work" (Stark, 2009a, p. 175). Resulting in women becoming materially dependant on their "husbands and their wages", while women's work at home was increasingly less visible and perceived as less valuable than men's (Stark, 2009a, p. 176). At the same time, the essence of 'femineity' and a woman's "being" during this timeframe, became viewed as dependent on her level of "service" to her husband and family, influencing some men to correct their wife's behaviour when it fell out of line with what they perceived to be the "ideal woman" (Stark, 2009a, p. 175).

Stark (2009a) argues that these ideologies not only increased the susceptibility of women to "violence, isolation, and control in personal life" (p.176), but they further resulted in anger and frustration experienced by men, due to "market competition and class exploitation" (p. 176), being displaced into the family home. Towards the end of the industrial revolution, as more women entered the workforce to support their families, giving rise to early feminist movements focused on workplace and voting equality, violence became a common tactic to keep women home and of a "subservient status" to men (Stark, 2009a, p.177). However, following the industrial revolution, as women continued to accept elevated status and freedoms in society, obtained greater access to outside resources, and were no longer viewed as the 'property' of men, Stark contends

that this resulted in a direct change in how men chose to oppress them in personal life to secure their dependence. Feminist psychologists in the early 1970's first observed this change in their women's shelters, as they repeatedly documented cases of clients who reported living like "hostages" in their own homes – a phenomenon which they began to refer to as "coercive control" (Stark, 2009a, p. 193).

2.2.2 Primary Concepts & Definitions.

Since the early identification of coercive control (CC), a handful of scholars, such as Lewis Okun and Ann Jones, have found techniques employed by abusers in situations of CC that are parallel to those used upon "hostages, inmates in concentration camps, and American POWs [Prisoners of War]" (Stark, 2009a, p. 201). In a similar fashion as these scholars, Stark (2009a) found an overwhelming number of women describing 'hostage like' scenarios in his own practice as a social worker. He recalls women explaining that they were "locked in closets, rooms, or apartments; barred from leaving the house; made to sit in their cars for hours; forced to sit without moving on a couch or on the floor; or forbidden to drive or to go out by themselves" (Stark, 2009a, p. 208). Moreover, Stark found CC commonly entailing the isolation of these women from key sources of support; restriction of their finances and spending; deprivation of necessities such as food or medical care; along with constraints on their communication, transportation, and other basic daily conduct (Stark, 2009a). On top of these restrictions, he details that physical assault is an ever-present threat in many of these cases, at times resulting in serious physical violence and even death (Stark, 2009a). Furthermore, Stark (2009a) reveals that his clients repeatedly spoke of everything their abusers "prevented them from doing for themselves by appropriating their resources; undermining their social support; [or]

subverting their rights to privacy, self-respect, and autonomy; and depriving them of substantive equality" (p. 13) as the most harmful cost of CC; illuminating the extent of the desire for female deprivation and male domination that underpin the theory of CC.

As Stark (2009a) states and CC's historical roots demonstrate, this phenomenon was "born in the microdynamics of everyday life" (p. 193). Just as feminist theory exposes, CC capitalizes on remnants of traditional sex stereotypes, structural sexual inequalities, and historical male dominance and privilege in society, to undermine the very rights and freedoms women have come to achieve over the years – thereby tapping into a larger discourse on basic human rights. Like many other theories then, CC appears to be built on both feminist theory and a broader human rights framework. It is with these frameworks in mind and the first-hand accounts of several CC survivors, that led Stark (2009a) to conclude that CC is a distinct form of IPV, representing more of a "liberty crime" (p. 363) than one of assault, with women's agency as the ultimate focus of control in attempt to deny them of a personal life.

Outside of Stark's work, a growing number of scholars are writing about CC, each providing their own take on the phenomenon, its primary components, and definition. While each account is unique, they all hold the same central tenets. Dutton, Goodman, and Schmidt (2005) for instance, consider CC to be "a dynamic process linking a demand with a credible threatened negative consequence for noncompliance" (p. 3). Similarly, Dichter, Crits-Christoph, Ogden, Rhodes, and Thomas (2018) outline that CC "refers to a systematic pattern of behaviour that establishes dominance over another person through intimidation, isolation, and terror-inducing violence or threats of

violence" (p.596). As one of the key proponents of CC theory however, Stark (2009a) provides the most comprehensive definition to date, as he considers CC:

> ... a malevolent course of conduct that subordinates women to an alien will by violating their physical integrity (domestic violence), denying them respect and autonomy (intimidation), depriving them of social connectedness (isolation), and appropriating or denying them access to the resources required for personhood and citizenship (control). (p. 15)

While a concrete definition such as that provided by Stark (2009a), is vital to keep in mind for any discussion of CC, there remain several important characteristics that make CC distinct from other forms of abuse and oppression that must be considered.

The "frequency and routine nature" (Stark, 2009a, p. 205) of CC is one such characteristic, serving to highlight its severity as a form of abuse that is repetitive, enduring, and insidious - often occurring in plain sight, amongst the course of everyday private and public life. The "privileged knowledge" (Stark, 2009a, p. 205) and access to victim's personal lives and belongings that abusers have at their disposal is another key characteristic of CC. Enabling the personal affairs, routine activities, sexual desires, account passwords, or previous wrongdoings, and other private information to be added to an abuser's toolbox for the tailored and personalized control of a partner (Stark, 2009a; DeKeseredy, 2020). CC is also known to be experimental in nature, fluctuating and evolving depending on the success of the abuse tactics employed (Stark, 2009a).

A characteristic of CC of particular interest, however, is what is recognized as its "spatial and temporal extension" (Stark, 2009a, p. 208). This is a growing subcategory of CC research today focused on ways abusers extend their coercive and controlling behaviour into other dimensions of personal life, such as school, work, or church (Stark,

2009a). Stark (2009a) is one of several academics who have found this extension of CC to be occurring with the assistance of digital technology, inflating both an abuser's accessibility and scope of control in a partner's personal life. While a variety of terms for this exist, this thesis adopts the language of Harris and Woodlock (2019), who effectively capture this phenomenon with the term "Digital Coercive Control" (DCC) (p. 533). Given the compelling nature of CC theory, they argue that the term 'DCC' best illustrates the *digital* methods abusers employ in such cases to extend IPV, the intention of the abuser being *coercive* behaviour, and its intended impact of *controlling* a current or former partner (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

2.3 Situating Theory in Digital Coercive Control

In the opinion of Dragiewicz (2021), DCC is merely a subcategory of IPV that is made possible with the assistance of both digital technologies and digital media platforms. In researching DCC, we can find several elements of the original CC theory expanded upon, specifically as it relates to remaining systemic sexual inequalities; sex stereotypes and historical ideologies concerning male domination, privilege, and the subordination of women; and broader violations of basic human rights.

2.3.1 Systemic Sexual Inequalities.

According to Elizabeth Yardley (2020), systemic sexual inequalities exacerbated in situations of IPV by digital technologies, are most apparent when considering the lack of formal response to DCC from the technology industry, government, and legal system. In our capitalist economic system that characterizes the Western world, consumers are accustomed to the steep prices of digital technology, translating into the tendency for male-dominated households to purchase the pricy digital technologies that enable our

everyday social and professional lives. This is problematic in situations of IPV, as Yardley (2020) highlights that many survivors are economically dependent on their abusive partners, are unable to purchase themselves a new phone or other technology and are therefore commonly subjected to their abuser's "privileged access", as primary owners, to their existing accounts and devices (p. 3). Moreover, many scholars recognize the technology industry's hand in IPV, speaking out about their strict online platform 'abuse' policies that prioritize freedom of speech, along with their toleration of the market for abuse - failing to regulate company sites who market their products or applications for 'spying on your wife' or 'catching a cheater' - in essence prioritizing consumers and profit over the safety and well-being of survivors (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Yardley, 2020).

This lack of response only serves to normalize DCC, further hindering response by governments and legal systems, who already tend to view DCC as "trivial" (Hand et al, 2009, p. 2), less serious than physical violence, and consequently give "blanket advice" (Harris & Woodlock, 2019, p. 540) to close online accounts or shut down devices. By failing to keep up with and adequately respond to evolving technology and its abuse, each of these social systems place an additional burden on survivors of DCC to protect themselves and consequently contribute to the continued control and domination of women through DCC.

2.3.2 Sex Stereotypes & Historical Ideologies.

As the historical roots of CC theory detail, women have long been regarded the 'property of men' and portrayed in "default and devalued roles as homemaker, caregiver, and sexual partner" to men (Stark, 2009a, p. 211). While women have made strides in the

public arena - gaining ‘equal’ rights, opportunities, and income as men - this historical imagery continues to shape expectations surrounding intimacy between partners, family life, basic gender roles and norms in society, and further infiltrates into today’s online environments for the entertainment and gains of men (Donovan & Barnes, 2021). For example, Yardley (2020) explains that men who engage in DCC frequently recruit the assistance of others in the online abuse, harassment, and humiliation of their partners. This is especially common in instances of ‘revenge porn’ - also known as the non-consensual distribution of intimate images - or ‘doxxing’, where abusers disseminate private information like their current or former partners’ personal addresses and cellphone numbers, for the purpose of degrading them and smearing their reputations, while attracting the online attention, support, and third-party abuse of strangers (Yardley, 2020).

The ‘Gamergate’ fiasco is arguably one of the most notorious examples of DCC to date, where an ex-partner of female game designer Zoe Quinn defamed her in a series of online blog posts, and further accused her of cheating to advance her career (Dewey, 2014). These posts sparked an enormous controversy in the online gaming community and led to “anonymous hackers” further harassing Quinn online; leaking personal information such as her address and nude photos; and sending Quinn “death and rape threats [that were] so specific, [and] so actionable, that she fled her house and called the cops (Dewey, 2014).” According to Moloney and Love (2017), these events evolved into an online “hate campaign” (p. 1) known as ‘Gamergate’. Which was led by “tens of thousands” of “outraged gamers” who were set on targeting any female game developers or female journalists that spoke out on the Quinn issue or critiqued the online gaming

culture (Dewey, 2014). Resulting in a handful of other women likewise receiving "online-taunts", "real-life rape and death threats", and photos of themselves photoshopped in degrading and derogatory ways (Moloney & Love, 2017, p. 1-2) – leading some of these women to announce their resignation from the industry entirely (Dewey, 2014).

A more recent, and perhaps controversial, example of DCC can also be seen in the highly publicized divorce of Kim Kardashian and Kanye (now known as 'Ye') West that began in 2021 and continued throughout 2022. Throughout this time period, 'Ye' has been seen to engage in bouts of public online harassment and threats following separation from his ex-wife. For instance, he used his expansive online platforms, including Instagram and Twitter, to publicly plea her to return to their relationship and profess his love for her to the world with photo evidence of his grand gestures, such as the truck he delivered to her residence on valentine's day overflowing with roses (Campoamor, 2022). He used these same tools to criticize her parenting and accuse her of keeping him from their children, provide decontextualized snippets of their private text messages, and to publicly berate her and her new partner online - encouraging his millions of followers to 'scream in their faces' in public (Campoamor, 2022; Sung & Wong, 2022). The release of his 2022 song and music video 'Easy' only further illustrates this quest for degradation and domination following the couples' separation, as he continued to critique her parenting through song; outright named her new partner in the song to describe his desire to 'beat his ass'; and used Claymation figures to portray this new partner's kidnapping, restraint, decapitation, and burying (Sung & Wong, 2022).

Both cases are examples of how technology and online social networking platforms are used to monitor, degrade, harass, oppress, and control the narrative and thereby dominate women, by intimate partners and their abettors. These cases further exemplify the inappropriate sense of entitlement that Yardley (2020) speaks of in abusers today, as they capitalize on technology to unjustly violate their current and former partners' basic human rights for their own personal entertainment and gains.

2.3.3 Violations of Basic Human Rights.

As aforementioned, amongst the underlying tenets of feminist theory that are fundamental to the theory of CC, exists a broader discourse on human rights. Stark (2009a) illustrates this as he shares his work with IPV survivors and concludes that CC is a "liberty crime" (p. 16), aimed at imprisoning women in their personal lives through deprivation and the destruction of personal autonomy. In DCC this can be seen through the various avenues in which abusers attempt to isolate and deprive their victims of social connection and support. Perpetrators of DCC are known to harass their victims until they withdraw from online environments, restrict access to or break victims' devices based on non-compliance with their rules, and engage in various forms of digital surveillance that invade their partner's personal privacy (Douglas et al., 2019; Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

According to a report by the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, "[u]niversal human rights apply equally online as offline" (UN, 2019, p. 16), making each of these actions to control survivors through DCC a direct violation of women's basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Including their rights to freedom of opinion and expression; rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; rights to be free from harassment, degrading treatment, and

discrimination; and rights to private and family life (UN General Assembly, 1948). The Canadian-led UN Human Rights Council Resolution, *Accelerating Efforts to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls: Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls in Digital Context (2018),* further warns that "all forms of discrimination, intimidation, harassment and violence in digital contexts" (p. 3) also "hinders [women's] full, equal and effective participation in economic, social, cultural and political affairs and is an impediment to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (p. 4)."

Another topic of note in the literature is the virtual 'omnipresence' commonly reported by survivors of DCC that is fostered by abusers, allowing them to secure control in digital environments, while instilling fear and subordination in their partners. Academics concerned with DCC have found that multiple technologies are exploited by perpetrators to achieve 'omnipresence' and detail the unique power digital technologies afford abusers to "swap between text, email, and social media" (Douglas et al., 2019, p 565) to harass and control a partner. Unlike traditional methods of IPV, in DCC the survivor is often literally "carrying the abuse with her" (Woodlock et al., 2020, p. 373). She is unable to physically or mentally escape reoccurring text messages, phone calls, and social media notifications that occur through her personal devices, without taking it upon herself to delete or block the sender, to delete personal accounts and applications, or to get rid of devices altogether. By establishing omnipresence through DCC, abusers evidently continue to violate these basic human rights of survivors, further inhibiting survivors' rights to freedom of expression and equality in online spaces. It appears then, that just as the theory of CC proposes, DCC may be a "liberty crime" (Stark, 2009, p.16)

and thereby human rights abuse, that denies women of a personal life even in online and other digital contexts.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

An abundance of information exists surrounding intimate partner violence (IPV); however, few studies cover coercive control (CC) and even fewer speak to the growing influence of digital technologies. This literature review will therefore provide an overview of some of the most significant research identified in the field today concerning digital coercive control (DCC) that occurs in the context of IPV. The evaluation, synthesis, and analysis of the literature provided by this review will serve to further contextualize the phenomenon of DCC that is occurring in situations of IPV, thereby exposing the gaps that remain in this field of inquiry and justifying further investigation into this evolving approach to IPV.

3.1 Overview of Digital Coercive Control & it's Occurrence in Intimate Partner Violence

While several sociological theories have been applied to IPV as earlier explored, the theory of CC emerges as one of the most subtle and thereby overlooked theories. Despite this, CC is found to be one of the most common ways in which women are abused (Stark, 2009b), with growing evidence warning of its further developments through digital technology as DCC.

According to Burke, Wallen, Vail-Smith, and Knox (2011), 93% of millennials between the ages of 18-28 regularly use the internet, while statistics on young adults reveal that 62-88% regularly text and that 72% utilize various social media platforms. As these statistics demonstrate, technology has no doubt brought with it an abundance of positive enhancements, attracting more users daily for both social and professional purposes. Nevertheless, as one of the most universal tools for facilitating social

interaction and access to information, digital technologies have repercussions. Burke et al. (2011) speak to this in their research with college undergraduate students, finding that use of communication technologies makes students "more accessible" and as a result, "more susceptible" to interpersonal violence, intrusion, and control (p. 1162).

Statistics Canada has likewise recognized the power of digital technologies in the context of gender-based violence, conducting a large-scale household survey in 2018 - the *Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS)* - intended to capture Canadian's "unwanted experiences [of gender-based violence] while in public, online, or at work (Cotter & Savage, 2019, p. 4)." Initial findings reported from the SSPPS reveal several important insights about unwanted public and online behaviours experienced by Canadians in the context of gender-based violence broadly, but do not discuss this online behaviour in the context of IPV. Rather, this report specifies that the data collected on "IPV has been excluded" so it can be "published separately (Cotter & Savage, 2019, p. 5)". Upon analysis of what appears to be this 'separate' report, entitled, *Intimate Partner Violence: Experiences of Young Women in Canada, 2018,* by Laura Savage (2018), vital data collected from the SSPPS on IPV is discussed at length; however, not once in the context of online or other digital spaces. Furthermore, the only variable listed in this separate report from the SSPPS questionnaire that captures digital technology as a form of abuse, is the question of whether said intimate partner "Harassed you by phone, text, email, or using social media (Savage, 2018)." The most recent cycles of the *General Social Survey on Canadian's Safety (Victimization) (GSS-V)* that occurred in 2014 and 2019, also intended to cover Canadian's experiences of IPV by current and former partners (Statistics Canada, 2021a). Although, upon review of both of these GSS-V

cycles' questionnaires, it is clear that they, too, predominantly capture more traditional experiences of physical or sexual violence in the context of IPV, and while the 2019 questionnaire notably incorporates behaviour that is indicative of CC – such as a partner who "tries to limit your contact with family or friends" (Statistics Canada, 2019) – it also misses vital questions concerning IPV that occurs online and in other digital context.

Despite the lack of large-scale data focused specifically on online harms or DCC in the context of IPV in Canada, several international scholars have found digital technologies exploited by abusers in IPV circumstances within their research; giving these individuals the power to extend their abuse into new contexts while efficiently monitoring, intimidating, isolating, threatening, shaming, and degrading their partners (Dragiewicz, 2021; Harris & Woodlock, 2019). According to these scholars, common tactics employed in DCC to achieve these harms include harassment through social media; verbal abuse and threats via text and video messages; GPS tracking to monitor and stalk partners; online doxxing[1], image-based sexual abuse, or impersonation; and hacking of personal or professional devices or accounts; with more recent evidence forming on the misuse of smart home technologies (Al-Alosi, 2017; Douglas et al., 2019; Dragiewicz, 2021;Yardley, 2020).

Following Australian research with various stakeholders of IPV, Woodlock, McKenzie, Western and Harris (2020) discovered that stakeholders believe technology has considerably altered the circumstances of IPV, specifically regarding its "duration, intensity, and invasiveness" (p.377). This sentiment is echoed in the work of several other

[1] See page 14 for an explanation of 'doxxing'.

scholars who emphasize that DCC does not constitute a new 'form' of IPV, but rather an "extension" (Harris & Woodlock, 2019, p. 534) and "amplification" (Dragiewicz et al., 2018, p. 614) of violence and CC that often pre-exist in these relationships. Other scholars highlight digital technology's ability to surpass geographical bounds and the private aspects of personal life (Hand et al., 2009). In doing so, they demonstrate this 'extension' and 'amplification' of abuse, that allows abusers to persistently and anonymously, monitor, intervene, and control women in varying settings in situations of IPV – effectively extending their own "sphere of control" over a partner with technology (Dragiewicz et al., 2018, p. 611).

3.2 Digital Coercive Control's Impact on Survivors

Just as technology has altered the circumstances of IPV, it has had significant short and long-term impacts on the lives of survivors. Studies that speak to the 'omnipresence' established by abusers in DCC also report survivors living in a constant state of fear, describing the task of always looking over their shoulders, and the sense of being trapped and unable to escape their partner's abuse (Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Woodlock et al., 2020; Yardley, 2020). Research by Hand, Chung, and Peters (2009) demonstrates the impact of 'omnipresence', as they discuss adverse effects that span almost every domain of a survivor's life, including personal and social life, work, along with impacts on survivors' emotional and physical health.

A survivor's social life is tainted in DCC cases because this extension of IPV can transcend the traditional limits of abuse in the home and repeatedly follow a survivor to work, school, and other social or online settings (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). Scholarship speaks to cases in which survivors disclose that their partners misuse various social

media sites to perpetrate abuse, sending friend requests to each of their online contacts (Douglas et al., 2019), tampering with work and personal email accounts or internet banking services (Hand et al., 2009), and defaming or 'doxxing' them on social media by sharing personal details or other information intended to damage their reputation (Douglas et al., 2019). As a result, survivors of DCC tend to retreat from these environments, isolating themselves further from vital social support (Douglas et al., 2019).

In terms of emotional health, DCC is associated with high levels of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), alcohol and substance use, paranoia, and hypervigilance leading to physical exhaustion (Al-Alosi, 2017; Woodlock et al., 2020). DCC is further found to at times co-occur alongside traditional forms of IPV, leading to several physical health implications for survivors resulting from sexual and physical abuse, and may even culminate in domestic homicide (Al-Alosi, 2017; Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Woodlock, 2019). A growing body of international research has explored the connection between DCC and homicide; however, reports closer to home have even begun to speak of this association. Such as the 2010 annual report by the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, where they warn that information and communication technologies are increasingly used to "harass, stalk and abuse domestic homicide victims, prior to their deaths" (Department of Justice Canada, 2012).

3.3 Challenges for Key Stakeholders

In addition to the extensive impacts DCC is known to have on survivors, existing research suggests that this extension of IPV presents unique challenges for the key stakeholders involved in assisting them. For instance, DCC appears to have exceeded

many stakeholders' extent of IPV knowledge and expertise, as service organizations report increased requests for supplementary information and education for practitioners (Woodlock et al., 2020), and disclose that there is simply not enough support surrounding DCC (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). Stakeholders also report their challenge of maintaining contact with clients that have experienced DCC, as survivors are reluctant to answer phone calls from private or unknown numbers (Woodlock et al., 2020), and tend to avoid technology altogether to escape or attempt to minimize the abuse (Douglas et al., 2019). The literature also demonstrates stakeholders concerns over balancing their clients' safe use of technology with their personal safety (Woodlock, 2019) and the need for further research into the positive uses of technology for survivors in the context of IPV (Dragiewicz et al., 2018).

Another challenge highlighted by stakeholders is the normalization of DCC amongst their clients and other stakeholders, as like other manifestations of CC, many individuals fail to initially recognize DCC as an extension of IPV (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). The subtle nature of stalking with technology for instance – by monitoring a partner's phone notifications or questioning their whereabouts – is behaviour that tends to be ignored in contemporary intimate relationships or brushed off as "average" behaviour (Harris & Woodlock, 2019, p. 542). This is especially true for younger generations, as demonstrated in an interview with a stakeholder who recalled it typical for their younger clients to receive "50 texts a day from all of their friends and their boyfriends" (Harris & Woodlock, 2019, p. 542). Repeated and obsessive contact is also commonly mistaken for romantic behaviour by clients of IPV stakeholders, further normalizing DCC (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). If only an isolated incident, Hand et al. (2009) advise that such

behaviour is of little concern; however, should it occur with each text or call, this is a "form of surveillance" (p.6) aimed at controlling a partner with the assistance of technology.

3.4 Available Legal Recourse & Current Stakeholder Responses to Digital Coercive Control

Despite the severity of CC and its implications on both survivors and the work of key stakeholders who assist them, today there remains no offence in the *Criminal Code of Canada* that adequately and effectively addresses the non-physical, "on-going", and "cumulative" harms brought about by CC (Gill & Aspinall, 2020; Stark, 2009a, p.12), let alone DCC. In Canada, we are currently limited to "incident-specific" (Stark, 2009a, p.12) criminal offences that catch behaviour that occurs as a singular event, is visibly identifiable, and capable of being clearly documented as evidence for legal proceedings in IPV cases (Gill & Aspinall, 2020). Including offences such as physical and sexual assault, trespassing, uttering threats, intimidation, and criminal harassment (Department of Justice Canada, 2003).

Regarding DCC, some of the most applicable criminal offences are voyeurism, counselling suicide, defamation, extortion, and intimidation; however, the Department of Justice Canada's *Handbook for Police and Crown Prosecutors on Criminal Harassment* (2012) indicates that the offence of criminal harassment – otherwise known as stalking - can also be applicable to instances of harassment that occur online. According to Stark (2009a), stalking represents "the most dramatic form of tracking and most common behavioural component of coercive control next to assault" (p.256). As such, this offence is particularly relevant to instances of DCC, with criminal conduct ranging from repeated

efforts of unwanted communication via email, text message or other means; to internet harassment, such as publishing offensive or threatening information about another online; to the unauthorized use, control, or sabotage of someone's personal devices (Department of Justice Canada, 2012). The official criminal harassment offence is outlined in section 264, subsection (1), of the *Criminal Code* and states the following:

> **264 (1)** No person shall, without lawful authority and knowing that another person is harassed or recklessly as to whether the other person is harassed, engage in conduct referred to in subsection (2)[2] that causes that other person reasonably, in all the circumstances, to fear for their safety or the safety of anyone known to them. (*Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46, s 264 (1))

Despite the existence of this offence in the *Criminal Code*, some scholars raise serious concerns surrounding its implementation. For instance, Crocker (2008) raises issue with the court response, pointing out several Canadian cases where judges have excused criminal harassment when the perpetrators have logical justifications for their behaviour, accepting criminal harassment that was argued to be an "honest expression of love" and "courtship" (p. 103). In the same wavelength, Isabel Grant (2015) takes issue with the legal definition of the offence of criminal harassment itself arguing that through this definition, the key elements of the offence, and its discretionary judicial interpretation, the "Canadian law on criminal harassment puts the responsibility on women to avoid criminal harassment and to ensure that the accused knows that his

[2] Subsection (2) of the offence lists broad examples of conduct that is prohibited, including following a person or someone known to them from one place to the next; repeatedly communicating with them, either directly or indirectly; "besetting or watching" their place of residence or work; and engaging in threatening conduct (*Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46, s 264 (2)). Anyone who engages in the above conduct is guilty of a hybrid offence, punishable by either a maximum of 10 years imprisonment on indictment or 6 months on summary conviction (*Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46, s 264).

behaviour is harassing...” (p. 598); a process she refers to as “responsibilization”, which similarly exists for women in other gendered crimes like sexual assault (p. 554).

Through her work, Grant (2015) provides a compelling argument that the reasonable fear requirement of the criminal harassment legal definition allows judges to be ‘subjective’ in their determination of whether the victim was “sufficiently fearful” (p. 579), while also ‘objective’ when determining whether that *fear* was ‘reasonable’. Often finding victims missing this threshold when they fail to take ‘appropriate steps’ to avoid the harassment – like changing phone numbers – or fail to display this fear in a way that is presumed of a ‘typical’ and ‘rational’ woman (Grant, 2015). She also highlights the controversial mens rea[3] element of the offence that requires the accused to “know that his conduct was harassing”, to illustrate - in the same nature as Crocker (2008) – that this definition has excused men who harass in “romantic pursuit” or who claim to be “resolving access to children” (p. 589). At the same time, Grant (2015) argues that this element of the definition, puts yet another responsibility on women to inform their abuser they are afraid, that their conduct is harassing, and that it is unwanted. Through the clear lack of response and inappropriate response to DCC that are available through existing criminal offences like Criminal Harassment, as illustrated by Crocker (2008) and Grant (2015), this appears to be another way in which DCC is trivialized and its survivors experience unwarranted revictimization by the legal system itself.

[3] In Canadian criminal law the *mens rea*, which directly translates from Latin as ‘guilty mind’ and is known as the criminal intent or recklessness behind an act, is one of two parts to a crime that must be proven by Crown prosecutors beyond a reasonable doubt to find an accused person guilty of a criminal offence. For more information see, Grant (2015) or CLEO (2023).

Several states around the world are in the process of passing legislation to criminalize CC that occurs in the context of IPV, including in countries such as Australia, Northern Ireland, and the United States. The literature indicates that England, Whales, and Scotland within the United Kingdom (UK) are countries that are currently leading the way in their response to this phenomenon, being the first to implement official criminal offences relevant to CC in the *Serious Crime Act of 2015* and *Domestic Abuse Act of 2018,* respectively (Gill & Aspinall, 2020; Walby & Towers, 2018). Canada on the other hand, has been much slower to follow. The federal *Divorce Act* of 1985 was revised in 2018 to adopt coercive and controlling behaviour within its definition of 'family violence' (Gill & Aspinall, 2020), along with the Ontario *Children's Law Reform Act,* which came into force as of March 2021 (Nonomura et al., 2021). Outside of these efforts, two federal bills have reached their first reading in the House of Commons, Bill C-247 in 2020 and Bill C-202 in 2021. Which proposed to amend the *Criminal Code* to create a criminal offence for CC, resulting in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights to agree to undertake a study on coercive and controlling behaviours in the context of IPV, but as of the time this thesis was written, have since seen little progress.

Based on the available literature it is apparent that the greatest response to DCC thus far in Canada may be from various women's agencies and non-profit organizations working to eradicate IPV and gender-based violence broadly. Although some have criticized the technology industry for their limited response to the harms caused by their products and their strict online abuse policies, other scholarship indicates such organizations have started teaming up with the technology industry, targeting online

platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to improve the safety and privacy offered to women (Dragiewicz et al., 2018). According to Dragiewicz et al. (2018), The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) located in the United States is one such organization, now able to share informed online safety tips with clients through this partnership, and have taken it upon themselves to engage in their own promotion of women's safety and participation online; raising general awareness of DCC, sharing these safety tips, and ensuring women know the benefits technology can provide them in situations of IPV – offering a way to access critical resources, garner support, and secure evidence.

3.5 Limitations of the Literature & Future Directions

While the research on DCC covered in this review is highly informative, it still retains major limitations. The articles covered in this literature review primarily build upon insights from prior quantitative studies and interviews with stakeholders of IPV concerning the ways technology can be abused, failing to capture an adequate number of first-hand qualitative data on DCC or its impacts from survivors directly. Further, existing research has predominantly concerned the United Kingdom and Australia, inadequately accounting for variations in Canadian trends and experiences of DCC. Additionally, much of the existing research discussed in this review is already out of date, as technology is ever evolving and increasingly integrating into both personal and professional life. Analyses of the technology that DCC is occurring through are also rarely discussed within the literature. As these trends continue, so too will the various manifestations of DCC, followed by its many challenges and harms, as severe as domestic homicide.

To begin addressing these issues and aiding in the prevention of IPV, along with horrendous crimes like domestic homicide, it is critical that greater attention be paid to the diverse manifestations of DCC in situations of IPV. Further empirical research, from a Canadian perspective, that incorporates analyses of these technologies and greater insight into both survivors' and stakeholders' experiences, is therefore essential to enhance the collective understanding of DCC and better assist women faced with DCC in the future. Informed by the prior theoretical framework and literature review, this thesis aims to address these gaps and answer three fundamental research questions in the process:

1. How have IPV survivors in Canada experienced digital coercive control (DCC) and what effect has this had upon them?

2. What challenges has DCC created for Canadian IPV stakeholders who are involved in assisting survivors?

3. How have IPV stakeholders across Canada utilized technology to respond to DCC, and more specifically, what do they know and share about DCC on their online websites?

Chapter 4: Methodology & Research Methods

To answer the three research questions guiding this study and enhance our understanding of the role digital technology plays in situations of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Canada while expanding upon the existing research, this thesis employs a mixed-method research design (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Combining elements of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to strengthen the analysis, beyond what could be achieved by either approach on its own. The procedures undertaken to answer these questions are discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter, beginning with the quantitative approach, followed by the qualitative. Each detailing the research design and methodology behind the chosen approach, the specific methods of data collection and sampling, and the modes of data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical protocols followed throughout the study.

4.1 Quantitative Content Analysis

4.1.1 Research Design & Methodology

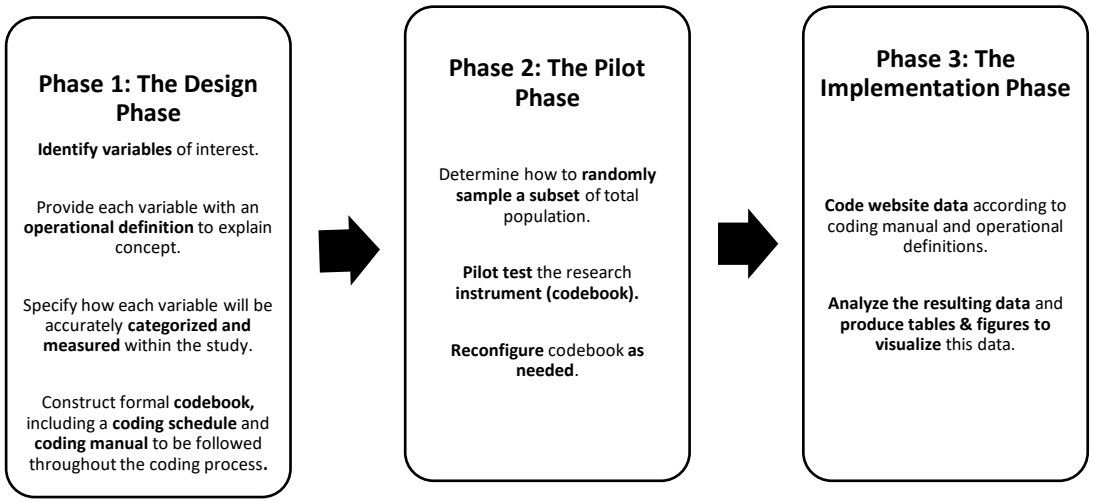
This thesis began with an online quantitative content analysis, sifting through IPV stakeholder websites available across Canada as if they were textual documents, for information concerning DCC that occurs in the context of IPV. According to Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2005), the content analysis as a research technique is known for its ability to provide a "systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication" (p. 25) – whether those symbols are particular words, phrases, topics, or simply the way in which a situation or concept is framed - by reducing this content to manageable numerical values based on predetermined "measurement rules" (p. 25), from which statistical procedures can be applied and conclusions can be drawn from the data. Researchers who

perform quantitative content analyses maintain that the method is similar to other quantitative research methods that follow the principles of the scientific method, as they involve observation of a problem and background research, that spawn research questions or hypotheses, leading to experimentation and testing, data analysis, and the sharing of results (Neuendorf, 2002). Notably, "the heart of a content analysis is the content analysis protocol or codebook" (Riffe et al., 2005, p. 59), that contains a "coding manual" to instruct researchers how to code the content, a "coding scheme" or form to record the codes in, and set of operational definitions to explicitly detail how concepts of interest are to be identified, classified, and coded (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 294).

To determine where to begin the content analysis, this study drew upon a 9-step flowchart developed by Kimberly Neuendorf (2002) and a similar model presented by Riffe et al. (2005) to guide researchers through conducting content analyses, adapting their suggestions to meet the needs of this study. The adapted flowchart and model have been reproduced and condensed into three primary research phases[4], representing the true evolution of the current content analysis: the Design Phase, the Pilot Phase, and the Implementation Phase, which are discussed below.

[4] See Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Content Analysis Research Phases (adapted from Neuendorf, 2022, and Riffe et al., 2005)*



4.1.2 Modes of Data Collection & Analysis (The Design Phase)

Phase One: The Design Phase of this content analysis began in October of 2021. With research questions already established to guide the analysis, this phase focused on designing the research instruments and operationalizing concepts to be used within the study. This involved applying knowledge gained from the literature review and theoretical framework to identify key variables related to DCC that should be of importance to both IPV survivors and stakeholders, and therefore discussed on IPV stakeholder websites. This task resulted in a total of 15 key variables[5], or topics, that one should find on stakeholder websites regarding DCC or the organization itself, and several subcategories[6] of the key variables that each could be classified and measured through. After consulting the literature, theory, and similar content analyses of websites, each key

[5] See Table 1 and Appendix A.
[6] See Appendix A.

variable and associated sub-category were operationally defined[7] to provide a consistent understanding of the concepts.

Table 1. *Key Variables for IPV Stakeholder Website Content Analysis*

Key Variables
V1. **Service Location** (e.g., Sub-categories: Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, etc.)
V2. **Organization Service Arena** (e.g., Sub-categories: Legal Service Arena, Social &/or Community Service Arena, etc.)
V3. **Targeted Website Audience** (e.g., Sub-categories: Survivors, Stakeholders, the General Public etc.)
V4. **Forms of Violence Identified on Website** (e.g., Sub-categories: Sexual Abuse, Digital Coercive Control, etc.)
V5. **Forms of DCC Identified on Website** (e.g., Sub-categories: Electronic Surveillance & Stalking, Cyber Sexual Abuse, etc.)
V6. **Types of Technology used to Perpetrate DCC Discussed on Website** (e.g., Sub-categories: Telephones, Computers, etc.)
V7. **Quantity of Pages Dedicated to Discussing DCC**
V8. **DCC Information Type** (e.g., Sub-categories: Definitions, Online Safety Tips & Safety Planning, etc.)
V9. **Positive Use of Technology Discussed** (e.g., Sub-categories: Digital Evidence Collection, Alerting Emergency Services, etc.)
V10. **Impact of DCC Discussed** (e.g., Sub-categories: Social Impact, Emotional Impact, etc.)
V11. **Terminology Most Often Used to Describe DCC** (e.g., Sub-categories: Digital Coercive Control, Cyber Abuse, etc.)
V12. **Tools & Resources Provided for DCC Support** (e.g., Sub-categories: Preserving Digital Evidence Toolkits, etc.)
V13. **Quantity of External Hyperlinks Related to DCC**
V14. **Quantity of Organization Produced PDFs/Documents Regarding DCC**
V15. **Safety Features Utilized by Website** (e.g., Sub-categories: Quick Escape Button, DCC Warning Upon Site Entry, etc.)

It was determined that nominal and ratio levels of measurement (Bryman et al., 2012) would be the most appropriate forms of measurement to quantify the key variables in the analysis, based on the objectives of the study. Meaning, nominal variables that were categorical in nature and their sub-categories[8] were either treated with a "single variable approach" (Riffe et al., 2005, p. 83), where each sub-category of the variable was assigned an individual number (e.g., 1 for a website originating in Ontario, 2 for

[7] See Appendix A.
[8] See Table 1 and Appendix A.

Nova Scotia, or 3 for Manitoba[9]) and only one of these sub-categories could be selected and treated as the variable for each case (or rather website) under analysis. Or, the sub-categories were treated with a "multi-variable approach" (Riffe et al., 2005, p. 83). Where the selection of multiple sub-categories were possible, with each sub-category either receiving a 0 to indicate its absence or a 1 to indicate its presence on the website under analysis (e.g. for the variable *forms of violence* and its sub-category concerning DCC, a 1 was recorded if the website discussed DCC to indicate the presence of that sub-category on the website, whereas if it did not discuss DCC it received a 0 indicating its absence). Careful consideration was attributed to these sub-categories and their levels of measurement to ensure each was "exhaustive"[10] and "mutually exclusive"[11], as per common content analysis standards (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Riffe et al., 2005).

Ratio levels of measurement were only appropriate for three variables in the analysis, as they required counting the total frequency of something that had occurred on the websites (e.g., the total frequency of pages each website had dedicated to discussing DCC in the context of IPV), but also accounting for a meaningful or "true zero point" (Hatcher, 2013, p. 36). Meaning that ratio measurement was chosen as the researcher

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[9] Note that only Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba were referenced here to exemplify the procedure of the 'single variable approach'; however, this content analysis did not focus on any specific regions or intentionally exclude any regions, as you will find in the website sampling procedures and explanation of website inclusion criteria below. See pages 45 - 48 for more information.

[10] Categories in a content analysis considered "exhaustive" (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 118), mean that there is a suitable code available for every possibility that could arise in the content under study. Since such a task is quite frankly impossible to pre-determine, Neuendorf (2002) suggests content analyses include "catchall" (p. 119) categories such as "other" and "unable to determine" (p.118).

[11] Categories in a content analysis that are considered "mutually exclusive" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 132), mean that only a singular code must be applicable to each content unit in need of coding. In Krippendorff's (2004) words, it must be possible to distinguish between the content, as "no recording unit may fall between two categories or be presented by two distinct data points" (p. 132) to avoid ambiguity in coding.

wanted to know the total quantity for each of the three variables, while still appreciating that it was possible for these variables to not be provided on the website under analysis at all (e.g., some websites may not dedicate a single page to the discussion of DCC and hence would be coded as a 'true zero', unlike variables that utilize an interval scale in a survey for instance, which may be coded as 'zero' to indicate a participant's 'strong disagreement' with a statement, but would not represent a 'true' or 'meaningful' zero with no value.)

With the key variables for the analysis identified, operationally defined, and standardized through the selection of sub-categories and levels of measurement, the final step to *Phase One* of this content analysis was to integrate these procedures into a formal codebook[12]. Acting not only as an instruction manual or rulebook for which the researcher could follow to create consistency in the coding process, but also as a written record for future researchers to potentially replicate. The first page of this codebook provides a brief introduction to the research and the purpose of the codebook, the unit of data collection (each webpage or document belonging to the website under analysis), and additional coding procedures to be followed to provide transparency in the coding process for any researcher wishing to replicate the study. The remainder of the codebook contains a table assigning an identification number (ID) to each website to be included in the analysis, a detailed coding manual to instruct researchers on how to reliably code each website, and a template of the coding schedule or form upon which the resulting data can be recorded (Bryman et al., 2012). The final pages of the codebook contain an

[12] See Appendix A.

additional table, thoroughly detailing the term and operational definition for each variable and sub-category mentioned throughout the coding manual.

4.1.3 Sampling Procedures (The Pilot Phase)

Phase Two: The Pilot Phase of this content analysis began by determining the sample of websites to be analyzed. The primary objects of interest for this study were IPV stakeholder websites, particularly, sites that pertained to IPV education or research; police or legal services related to IPV; women's shelters and transition houses; sexual assault and rape crisis centres; and non-profit IPV, family violence, and gender-based violence organizations. While it was originally proposed that a list of all IPV websites across Canada of this nature would be compiled to act as a set sampling frame (Bryman et al., 2012) from which a stratified random sample[13] could be selected, it was quickly determined such an undertaking would greatly exceed the time allotted for the purpose of this master's thesis, and that given the vast scope of the internet, there would be no definitive way of knowing that the entire population of stakeholder websites in Canada had been reached. In light of this knowledge and after some considerable trial and error, the sampling approach was altered, following the suggestion of Gerstenfeld, Grant, and Chiang (2003), who conclude that since the internet is always evolving and "there exists

[13] A stratified random sample is a type of probability sampling commonly used in quantitative research, where the total population of interest is divided into sub-groups or 'strata' based on a defining characteristic, such as province of location, and a simple random or systematic random sample is then selected from each sub-group to make up the final resulting sample for analysis (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 214).

no comprehensive directory" (p. 31) of websites, a purposive sampling technique[14] must be used for content analyses of websites.

To obtain the official website sample for the current content analysis, purposeful criterion sampling (Patton, 2002) was employed, where a list of 10 inclusion criteria were developed, that websites would have to meet to be included in the sample, in effort to obtain a quality sample that would be information rich (Omana, 2013). These 10 criteria included the following: (1) A website included in the analysis must be a *functioning website*, not solely a PDF, resource directory, news article, or advertisement, etc.; (2) A website included in the analysis must not only be a functioning website, but also an *active website with a minimum of five individual pages or tabs* that display content; (3) A website included in the analysis must be *Canadian in origin*, either clearly indicating that it serves Canadians or listing a Canadian address (Lee, 2021); (4) A website included in the analysis must *publish its content in the English* language (Lee, 2021); (5) A website included in the analysis must be *free and available for all to access*, without any membership fees or subscriptions (Lee, 2021), aside from voluntary donations; (6) A website included in the analysis must *display primarily, if not all, static content*, meaning that it does not change from day to day or between different website users, and therefore shouldn't be a blog, forum, news station, or social networking site; (7) A website included in the analysis *must not overlap with other sites*, for instance, it should not be a site for a chain transition house with multiple websites and the same content discussed on

[14] A purposive sampling technique is a form of non-probability sampling, commonly, but not exclusively used in qualitative research. With this technique, a sample is selected purposefully as opposed to randomly, often due to limited resources or sampling restraints, to ensure cases included in the analysis are still information rich (Palinkas et al., 2015).

each site; (8) A website included in the analysis must have a *minimum of one page or section dedicated to discussing intimate partner violence, domestic violence, family violence, abuse generally, or gender-based violence broadly*; (9) A website included in the analysis must *publish IPV related information and support material*, pertaining to topics like IPV definitions, tips, support services and organizations, and safety planning; and finally, (10) A website included in the analysis must be *primarily geared towards assisting IPV survivors, their friends and family, or IPV stakeholders*, not IPV perpetrators.

With these 10 inclusion criteria determined, six Google searches were subsequently performed to identify websites, using six key search phrases[15] that were intended to mimic common online search queries of IPV survivors in Canada. Google was chosen as the sole search engine for this analysis, as it is known to be the most popular online search engine and the "tool most used for problem-specific information seeking" (Jamali & Asadi, 2010, p.282, as cited in Lee, 2021), moreover, the inclusion of additional search engines, such a Bing or Yahoo!, generated far too many duplicate search results. Following procedures outlined by Lee (2021) in their content analysis of websites, all browsing history, cookies, and cache were deleted prior to performing the initial search, to ensure the search results were not skewed by the researcher's prior search history. Furthermore, parameters were set prior to the search to include only 'popular searches', and in line with Lee (2021), only 'Canadian' search results.

[15] See Table 2.

The first 10 websites that were listed in each of the six google searches, were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with their Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) and were then assigned an ID number. Duplicate sites that arose throughout the 6 searches were not included in the 10 websites extracted from each search, rather, duplicates were simply replaced with the next new site listed. With just 6 search phrases, website saturation (Bryman et al., 2012) was achieved, whereby no new websites would result from any further search phrases of similar structure. These procedures generated a total initial sample of 60 websites; however, after applying the 10 inclusion criteria discussed above to each site in this initial sample, the final resulting sample was reduced to an even 50 websites that met the criteria[16] to be included in the analysis.

Table 2. *Key Search Phrases*

Key Search Phrases
Search Phrase 1: Intimate partner violence support service websites Canada
Search Phrase 2: Domestic violence support service websites Canada
Search Phrase 3: Intimate partner violence resource websites Canada
Search Phrase 4: Domestic violence resource websites Canada
Search Phrase 5: Intimate partner violence help websites Canada
Search Phrase 6: Domestic violence help websites Canada

The next essential step in *Phase Two* of this content analysis was to pilot test the study instruments – namely, the codebook. According to Riffe et al. (2005), pilot testing

[16] See Appendix B for the list of 50 websites meeting the inclusion criteria.

is essential to a content analysis as it helps to ensure the categories specified to measure each variable are truly exhaustive, catching all content that could arise in the formal analysis, and giving researchers an opportunity to "adjust the classification system and fine tune definitions as they pretest" (p. 89). As such, a random number generator was used to select two websites from the final website sample (*N*=50) to pre-test alongside the codebook. All indicated procedures from page one of the codebook onward, were followed for coding the pilot websites. This pilot test was a success, as almost all pre-defined variables set out in the coding manual were both observable and measurable on the pilot sites. The pilot tests resulted in only a handful of *Phase Two* reconfigurations to the codebook, including clarifying definitions and sub-categories to existing variables, as anticipated, to ensure all concepts were clear and could be exhaustively measured. Given the detail of the codebook, the pilot test also revealed some additional procedures to be followed prior to coding. Specifically, that coders should complete a minimum of two thorough readings of the entire codebook prior to coding any website so they are well versed in its content, and that a printed copy of the codebook would be highly beneficial to coders to increase coding efficiency. As key terms, operational definitions, along with each variable, its sub-categories and their corresponding number codes would be readily available for quick reference while coding.

4.1.4 Methods of Data Collection & Analysis (The Implementation Phase)

The final phase of this content analysis was *Phase Three: The Implementation Phase*, where the content of each of the 50 websites included in the final resulting sample were coded into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing the coding schedule, according to the procedures, coding manual, and operational definitions outlined in the codebook.

Since websites can be overwhelming to code - especially those with a great deal of content or those lacking a sitemap or directory - it was determined that upon entering each website, the initial page of the website that the recorded URL displays would be the starting point for coding, as this page should have pertinent information related to the original search queries[17]. Once this initial page was coded, the researcher followed the pattern of coding any relevant material on the website homepage, followed by each webpage tab that had a label relevant to DCC (e.g., a tab labeled 'Online Safety'), and then moved on to subsequent tabs and attached documents produced by the primary website organization - scanning line by line for information to be coded regarding DCC. Finally, if the websites contained a search function, the keywords 'digital', 'online', and 'technology' were searched to ensure each individual webpage that discussed DCC on the websites had been identified and coded.

The final components to *Phase Three* of this content analysis were analyzing the data and producing tables and figures to be used as visuals to display the findings. Since each of the key variables included in this content analysis were nominal or ratio in nature[18], and the goals of the content analysis were to understand how IPV stakeholders use technology and determine what they share about DCC on their organization websites, these variables were analyzed through descriptive statistic[19] techniques on IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software; whereby frequency distributions,

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[17] See Table 2.
[18] See Table 1.
[19] Descriptive statistics are simply one way in which statistics can be analyzed and reported, where specific descriptive information about variables in a sample (e.g., their mean– or average) is provided in a summary format, without making any advanced probability related inferences about that sample (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019).

proportions, measures of central tendancy, and multiple response sets were used to reduce and summarize the information collected from the sample (Riffe et al., 2005).

More precisely, frequency distributions (Riffe et al., 2005) were developed for several variables in the analysis and displayed in a table or bar graph to summarize how frequently the specified topic or concept was addressed on the websites under analysis. Proportions (Riffe et al., 2005) - or rather, percentages - were also used to summarize, report, and compare the data, providing insight into what proportion of the entire sample the individual category would represent. Furthermore, the ratio variables included in this content analysis were analyzed with the measures of central tendancy (Riffe et al., 2005), where for instance, the ratio variable representing the total number of pages the website dedicates to the discussion of DCC, could be described in terms of its mean, median, and mode[20] (Bryman et al., 2012). These measures of central tendancy were calculated and displayed in a single table containing each ratio variable included in the analysis. Finally, multiple response sets were used with the majority of variables in this analysis in order to group and succinctly display dichotomous variables[21] with a shared topic or characteristics, in order to 'check all options that apply' during data collection (Kent State University Libraries, 2022). Without pairing these variables in a succinct multiple response set, each would be displayed in its own frequency table or graph upon analysis,

[20] For instance, the mean of this variable would be the average number of pages the websites in the sample dedicate to discussing DCC, the mode would be the middle value of the total number of pages the websites dedicate to discussing to DCC when the values are arranged from lowest to highest, and the mode would be the most frequently occurring number of pages a website dedicates to discussing DCC in the sample. See Bryman et al., 2012 for more information.

[21] A dichotomous variable is one which can only take on one of two values, such as 'yes' or 'no', or in the case of this study, '0' to indicate the absence of something and '1' to indicate its presence (Kent State University Libraries, 2022).

making reporting results unnecessarily lengthy and more difficult to summarize for the reader. Each multiple response set frequency table can be found in Appendix I but have been summarized in Pareto Bar Charts within Chapter 5 to display the data in a reader friendly format, that also allows the data to be sorted by the magnitude of the values, as opposed to merely the labels as seen with traditional bar charts. The results of this content analysis, along with several descriptive tables and figures, are provided and discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

4.2 Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews

4.2.1 Research Design & Methodology

The second portion of research conducted for the purpose of this master's thesis, took a qualitative research approach in attempt to answer the remaining research questions guiding this study:

> 1. How have IPV survivors in Canada experienced digital coercive control (DCC) and what effect has this had upon them?
>
> 2. What challenges has DCC created for Canadian stakeholders who are involved in assisting survivors?

To shed light on these questions, a set of 10 semi-structured interviews[22] were conducted with five survivors of DCC and five stakeholders across Canada, who either had direct experience assisting survivors of IPV and DCC, or indirect experience through their involvement in DCC response and prevention initiatives. This research approach was intended to compliment the quantitative content analysis, potentially corroborating,

[22] See appendices C & D.

extending, and/or challenging initial research findings concerning DCC. Moreover, the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews[23] would afford the researcher the best opportunity to probe informants for any needed clarification and would keep interviews in line with the research objectives should any have strayed. Additionally, this second methodological approach was implemented as it allowed the researcher to hear directly from survivors and stakeholders, giving them each a chance to share their personal experiences and use their voices to speak out on this matter – all while enabling the researcher to collect primary data in the process, and improve the overall triangulation[24] of the study and thereby validity[25] of its findings (Bryman et al., 2012).

4.2.2 Methods of Data Collection & Sampling

As aforementioned, for the qualitative semi-structured interviews, the populations of interest were survivors of DCC and the stakeholders who have assisted them either directly or indirectly with DCC support or response and prevention initiatives. The nature of this phenomenon, combined with the fact that these are human participants, renders both groups of informants 'vulnerable', requiring several steps to be taken throughout the research process to ensure their confidentiality and overall safety – beginning with the initial sampling method. While it is traditionally preferred that probability sampling[26] is

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[23] See appendices C & D.

[24] According to Bryman et al. (2012), 'triangulation' refers to the use of more than one research method or source of data employed in a study, for the purpose of testing the consistency of one's findings. In other words, the qualitative research in this study was partly intended to further develop the previous quantitative findings – by either confirming, challenging, or expanding them.

[25] Validity is a form of criteria used in the evaluation of research to determine the "integrity" (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 371) or "truthfulness" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 487) of a study's conclusions. Several forms of validity exist between the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms to adequately evaluate their validity, despite distinct research methods and objectives.

[26] Probability sampling can be described as the opposite of purposive sampling, where a sample is selected at random, ensuring each member of the population has an equal chance of selection (Bryman et al, 2012).

used for data collection to allow for generalizations to be made from the data to broader populations, this is often "not feasible" (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 225) for qualitative studies that lack a well-defined population. Ditcher et al. (2019) build on this contention, explaining that research involving IPV often "poses challenges to common recruitment and data collection strategies" (p. 441) due to heightened risk for abuser retaliation and public stigma when survivors participate in research. With these concerns in mind, along with the fact that IPV survivors are widely considered a 'hidden population' that can be challenging to access, non-probability sampling methods (Bryman et al., 2012) were primarily used in this portion of the research, to purposely select survivors and stakeholders for the sample that were highly knowledgeable and experienced with DCC or in providing DCC support (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Stakeholders.

The participant recruitment of stakeholders for the semi-structured interviews represented the "point of integration" (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017, p. 115) between the qualitative and quantitative research, that rendered this study a mixed-method design, as it borrowed the initial IPV stakeholder website sample identified in the quantitative content analysis, to further deduce into a sample for the qualitative IPV stakeholder interviews. This occurred through multi-stage purposeful random sampling[27], where the first stage of sampling relied upon a stratified random sampling[28] approach, and the

[27] According to Omana (2013), 'multi-stage purposeful random sampling' is a non-probability sampling approach that consists of two or more distinct stages of sampling, where the first stage involves the application of a random sampling method and all stages to follow involve purposeful sampling methods.
[28] See footnote 9.

following stages employed the purposeful sampling approaches of voluntary response sampling[29] and criterion sampling[30].

For the first stage of the multi-stage sampling approach, involving stratified random sampling, the initial IPV stakeholder website sample (*N*=60) was utilized (prior to the application of any website inclusion criteria) as the population to be divided into groups known as 'strata', based on a set of identifying characteristics (Bryman et al., 2012). As initially identified by Davenport et al. (2008) and operationally defined in the prior content analysis[31], the service "arena" (p. 905) for which IPV related websites typically fall under in terms of content they provide and services they offer, was chosen as the characteristic that would separate the total initial website sample into 5 individual strata – thereby capturing various types of stakeholders in the final interview sample. The service arena was determined by exploring the 'About Us' section of each site, and identifying who created the site (e.g., a police station), their purpose for creating it (e.g., providing legal education and services to the public), and the content they predominantly shared on the site (e.g., content related to legislation, criminal offences, or crime statistics). The resulting strata thereby included: (1) Government Service Arena, (2) Legal Service Arena, (3) Health Service Arena, (4) Social and/or Community Service Arena, and (5) Education or Research Service Arena (Davenport et al., 2008).

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[29] Voluntary response sampling, also known as 'convenience sampling', is a form of purposeful sampling where individuals are included in a study out of availability and willingness to participate (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, as cited in Omana, 2013).
[30] According to Patton (2002), 'criterion sampling' is the process of selecting cases to be included in a study based on a set of pre-determined criteria, to ensure these cases are of quality.
[31] See Appendix A.

A random sample was taken from each of the 5 strata, with effort made to ensure this resulting sample included websites from all 5 strata in the same "proportion" (Omana, 2013, p. 178) those strata existed in the initial IPV stakeholder website population. To ensure this, prior to drawing the random sample, each website separated amongst the strata were assigned a number beginning at one. The total number of websites belonging to each stratum (e.g., Strata 1: Government Service Arena contained 9 websites) was then divided by the total website population (*N*=60) and multiplied by 100, to determine the percentage of the total population represented by each stratum (e.g., 9/60 =.15 x 100 = 15%). Each percentage was then multiplied by the total number of websites desired for the final stakeholder interview sample (*N*=30)[32], to determine how many websites needed to be chosen from each stratum (e.g., 15% x 30 = 5 when rounded, therefore, 5 websites were chosen from Strata 1 for the final sample). A random number generator was subsequently used to randomly select the required number of websites from each stratum and was simply performed again if duplicate numbers were drawn within a stratum.

Each of the 30 IPV stakeholder websites in the sample resulting from these procedures, were contacted[33] via the email or phone number provided on their website to ask for their assistance in participant recruitment, by sharing an advertisement for the

[32] Due to the fact that IPV stakeholder website organizations were contacted with the hope they would share information regarding this study amongst their entire organization, the desired number of websites to contact for interviews was intentionally reduced to 30, as opposed to the original stakeholder website sample of 60. This decision was made to ensure the number of potential responses to the research request were manageable, and that all scheduled interviews and resulting data analysis could be successfully completed within the timeframe allotted for this master's thesis.
[33] See Appendix E.

study[34] and the need for participants amongst the professionals within their organization. Stage two of the multi-stage sampling approach was implemented here, as the use of voluntary response sampling (Omana, 2013) allowed professionals interested in the study, to voluntarily contact the researcher to express their interest in participating. Once prospective participants contacted the researcher to participate, they were each sent a research invitation package[35] containing a formal invitation to the study, an overview of the study, along with an eligibility screening checklist, confidential contact form, online interview consent form, and list of DCC related support resources.

The eligibility screening checklist attached to this research invitation package, represented the final sampling procedure – purposeful criterion sampling – as a list of 4 relevant screening criteria were included in this checklist, that prospective participants would have to answer 'yes' to, in order to be interviewed as an IPV stakeholder for the qualitative interviews. These criteria included being able to read and communicate in the English language, being at least 18 years of age or older, identifying as a stakeholder who was willing to discuss their professional experience working to support survivors of IPV, and having had professional experience dealing with some form of digital abuse in the context of IPV. These procedures resulted in the successful recruitment and interviewing of 5 IPV stakeholders from the 30 organizations contacted for the purpose of this research, one of which also spoke of their own experience as a DCC survivor.

[34] See Appendix F.
[35] See Appendix G.

Survivors.

IPV survivors for the remaining semi-structured interviews were recruited through several additional procedures, which also took account of social restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic over the last few years. Utilizing my own student status, I turned to surrounding educational institutions as the primary sites of participant recruitment of survivors. The University of New Brunswick (UNB) has two separate but collaborative campuses within the province, one within Fredericton, New Brunswick, and the other within St. John, New Brunswick. Both campuses are sites especially fruitful for participant recruitment because they are the study and workplaces of younger and older individuals who frequently use technology for personal and professional purposes.

The recruitment of survivors began in February 2022 with the researcher contacting the administrators for each faculty and department listed on the official UNB website for both campus locations, to inform them of the study and ask for their assistance in advertising it amongst their departments. This included all departments in 11 separate faculties, such as the Faculty of Arts, Business, Nursing, Law, Science, and Engineering, among others. Most faculties recognized the importance of this research and agreed to forward the advertisement calling for research participants to their students and staff. Following this request, the UNB Fredericton Faculty of Arts administrator in particular, also agreed to share the study advertisement on their e-newsletter, which was sent to Faculty of Arts students in Fredericton weekly, from February 2022 to July of 2022 when the research had concluded. Following approval, this advertisement was further shared on the official myUNB News page for students and faculty at both UNB Fredericton and St. John campuses. While the researcher had intended to also share the

advertisement to relevant UNB social media groups (e.g., Student Facebook or Twitter pages), this was unsuccessful as the social media administrators could not be reached. Furthermore, while creating a Facebook and Twitter page for the study itself generated some online views, this was also not a successful form of participant recruitment as anticipated.

To ensure equal access was provided to the study for those who may have had limited technology use or were less involved in online spaces, between February 15th and 16th, 2022, the researcher traveled to both UNB St. John and Fredericton campuses, to distribute traditional poster advertisements[36] for participants to self-refer themselves to the study. A total of 200 poster advertisements of the research study were distributed between each campus, detailing the format of the study and its objectives, content to be covered, participant eligibility criteria, and an image depicting what DCC may look like for a survivor in its various forms. Given the interview subject, the vulnerability of survivors, and their tendancy to hide their experience, special effort was made to not only place posters in high traffic zones throughout each campus, but also more discrete areas, including above water fountains and inside women's bathrooms, where the poster could be viewed in private. This approach was particularly fruitful for participant recruitment, and even led to the Editor and chief of The Baron, UNB St. John's Independent Student Press, coming across a poster, contacting the researcher, and offering to share the study advertisement on their official newspaper Facebook page.

[36] See Appendix F.

Once again, voluntary response sampling was employed in the survivor recruitment process, to allow those who were interested in the study to come forward and request to participate. The same procedures were followed here as in the stakeholder recruitment process. As once a prospective participant contacted the researcher, they were sent the research invitation package[37] containing the formal invitation to the study, an overview of the study, along with an eligibility screening checklist, confidential contact form, online interview consent form, and list of DCC related support resources. Once again, this invitation package contained a final criterion sampling procedure in the form of the screening checklist, to determine prospective participant's eligibility for participation in the study. Participants would only be included as a survivor in the study if they answered 'yes' to the following criteria: (1) that they could read and communicate in the English language; (2) that they were 18 years of age or older; (3) that they were a survivor who was interested in discussing their personal experience with IPV; (4) that they had personal experience dealing with some form of digital abuse in the context of IPV; and (5) that as a survivor, they were no longer involved in an abusive relationship. These procedures led to the successful recruitment and interviewing of 5 survivors of DCC.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers at UNB were required to follow additional protocols involving interviews that imposed only virtual interaction, as such, the qualitative research interviews with both IPV survivors and stakeholders were conducted solely through virtual formats, including Zoom and Microsoft Teams

[37] See Appendix G.

conferencing platforms. As aforementioned, each participant received a detailed research invitation package[38] prior to participating in the research that was accessible via phone or other devices, that also contained a formal consent form to obtain informed consent and digital signatures from each participant. Each interview lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. While the researcher gave each participant the option to turn the video feature off on each of these conferencing platforms prior to beginning the interviews, each participant agreed to have their interview video-recorded, apart from one survivor, who preferred the researcher transcribing the interview by hand. All remaining interviews were later transcribed verbatim. To compensate participants for their time and thank them for participating in the research, each was offered a $10 digital Starbucks gift card following their interview.

4.2.3 Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews were analyzed with a narrative analysis. This approach involved thematic content analysis, to view the data in terms of "what is said rather than how it is said" (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 267). This analysis explored how participants described and made sense of their experiences with DCC, and it began by reviewing each interview transcript and combing through this raw data to identify particular words, phrases, or sentences spoken by participants that could indicate underlying themes or subthemes were present in the text.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) argue that a 'theme' is an "abstract (and often fuzzy) construct that link[s] not only expressions found in texts but also expressions found in

[38] See Appendix G.

images, sounds, and objects" (p.87). They suggest that you have come across a theme "when you can answer the question, 'What is this expression an example of?'" (p. 87). Themes can emerge in two primary ways, either *a priori*, where the theme is influenced by the prior research and characteristics of a phenomenon that often become the topics a researcher covers in their interview schedule, or inductively, arising directly from the data analysis process (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Both approaches to theme identification were employed within this study, and 12 specific techniques, proposed by Ryan and Bernard (2003), were consulted to physically identify, and make sense of themes.

According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), eight *observational techniques* exist to assist researchers physically observe something within qualitative data, while four *manipulative techniques* allow for managing and organizing this data - at times through computer software - to uncover themes. Of the observational techniques, all eight were employed in this thematic analysis, beginning with the identification of *repetitions* in the data, as the more frequently a topic reoccurs across a qualitative data set, the more likely it indicates a theme is present (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Paying attention to *indigenous typologies or categories* was another technique used, as unfamiliar or "local terms" used by informants, such as slang words or "unfamiliar ways" in which a term is used, may also suggest the presence of an underlying theme (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 89). The use of *metaphors and analogies* by informants was another practical tool for identifying themes, as many people express their "thoughts, behaviours, and experiences" through these means (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 90). Additionally, natural *transitions* in speech were examined, as pauses, changes in tone, and the use of certain phrases in speech, or even new paragraphs in written text can indicate that a theme is present (Ryan & Bernard,

2003). Looking out for *similarities and differences* across separate units of data was another technique used, as comparing sentences or expressions used by different informants may point the researcher to common experiences and thereby themes amongst the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Furthermore, the *linguistic connectors* that are embedded within sentences to link an informant's ideas together, are another useful technique to identify themes, as terms like "because" or "as a result" can suggest a "causal relationship" between ideas in a sentence, whereas terms like "if" or "rather than" suggest a "conditional relationship" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 91-92). Moreover, the use of terms like "before" and "next" can point to a "time-oriented relationship", while terms like "not" or "none" can indicate a "negative relationship" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 91-92). Ryan and Bernard (2003) also suggest reflecting on *missing data* as a technique, potentially illuminating topics unintentionally or intentionally avoided by informants – and thereby possible themes. Finally, paying attention to any *theory-related material* that was addressed by informants was also a technique used, as certain discussions involving "social conflict", "cultural contradictions", or expressions of "social control" within relationships, are of interest to social scientists who aim to explain social experiences, and can therefore represent themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 93-94).

Of the four manipulative techniques that were proposed by Ryan and Bernard (2003) to uncover themes amongst the data, including forming word lists from transcripts and noting key words in their context; paying attention to "word co-occurrence" (p. 97); and "meta-coding" that involves complex "theme matrixes" and analysis with statistical software (p. 99) – only the technique of *cutting and sorting* was deemed appropriate and fruitful enough for this thematic analysis. Cutting and sorting involved pulling key quotes

and expressions from the data with necessary context and systematically arranging them into groups based on their similarities. This was done in two ways. Firstly, by using NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software, where the researcher sorted through mass amounts of interview transcripts and colour coded passages line by line that suggested different themes, which were then automatically sorted into summary reports of all codes applicable to each theme. Secondly, following Ryan and Bernard's (2003) approach, the researcher quite literally cut out and attached evidence of different themes onto cue-cards, that were then hand-sorted based on their similarities. The addition of this second approach helped move past an overwhelming number of themes and associated codes that were generated through the NVivo software, combining them into even further condensed categories that could be organized in a hierarchy based on "higher-order and more abstract codes" (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 264).

4.3 Ethical Protocols

While all research with human participants has the potential to pose harm to those involved, research involving survivors of IPV and associated stakeholders can be particularly challenging, requiring additional considerations to ensure their protection. Harms resulting from a study of this nature could include retaliation from an abuser if they were to find out about the survivor participating in the study or hear of a stakeholder divulging information about their case, interview questions that elicit unresolved trauma and emotions from survivors or distress to stakeholders, and even public stigma experienced by a survivor or stakeholder should the study fail to adequately uphold anonymity for participants.

To minimize the potential for harm, several procedures were undertaken in this study, prior to it commencing. To begin with, the researcher carefully curated the digital invitation package[39] to be sent to prospective participants during the recruitment stage of the research. This invitation package contained a formal invitation to the study, once again formally inviting interested individuals to voluntarily participate in the research, informing them of the study objectives along with what could be expected by participating, detailing how their data and privacy would be upheld throughout the study, and providing the contact information for the researcher and study supervisor should they have had any further questions or concerns. As aforementioned, the invitation package also contained an eligibility screening checklist, intended to prevent individuals from participating in the study who did not have relevant personal or professional experience with DCC; who may have been too vulnerable to partake in research of this nature, such as those under the age of 18; or those who may be particularly sensitive or at risk by interview questions, such as those who were still involved in abusive relationships. Additionally, a confidential contact form was included in the invitation package, allowing prospective participants to list their preferred methods and times of contact, their interview preferences (e.g., whether they were comfortable with audio recording the interview or use of the conferencing software's video function), and to establish a personalized distress protocol that would be tailored to their unique concerns and safety needs, to avoid any confusion or delay in assisting them should they have experienced distress during the interview. This package also contained the formal digital consent form

[39] See Appendix G.

which was to be reviewed, completed, and returned to the researcher with the rest of the invitation package prior to each interview. Finally, a digital support pamphlet listing the contact information of various support services was included, to proactively bring attention to diverse support services available to survivors and stakeholders, should anyone have needed to debrief with a professional following the interview.

During the "COVID-19 Era" (Roberts et al., 2021, p.1) technology became a cornerstone to qualitative research, offering improved methods of participant recruitment and interviewing despite geographical limitations or government imposed social restrictions; nevertheless, virtual qualitative research gives rise to several new ethical dilemmas that must be considered by researchers to prevent harm to participants. Firstly, several technological concerns must be considered, such as barriers participants may experience that prevent them from participating in virtual research, including unequal access to devices or accounts, digital illiteracy, or connectivity issues (Roberts et al., 2021). To address this concern within the study, each participant was offered multiple methods of communication, ranging from a traditional phone interview to the use of various video conferencing software, allowing them to choose which method they were most comfortable with using for the purpose of the interview. Another major concern to surface in the practice of virtual research is the phenomenon of 'zoombombing', where video conferences have been disrupted by uninvited internet 'trolls' who intentionally derail the meeting by sharing inappropriate content with participants (Lorenz, 2020). To protect the interviews from such disturbances and therefore the privacy and anonymity of participants, each interview was accessible by direct invitation only that were sent securely to the participants alone, interviews using Zoom software were password

protected, and those using Microsoft Teams software were locked upon starting each meeting.

Each interview began by reviewing the purpose of the research and reminding participants of key points of their signed consent forms[40], with emphasis on the fact that the study remained completely voluntary, and that they had the ability to withdraw their consent during any point or choose not to answer any interview question. Pseudonyms, or code names, were used throughout the study to conceal participants legal names, including within transcripts, and any other sensitive information discussed in transcripts, such as local places, were replaced with generic descriptions. Any further demographic information asked of participants, such as age range or occupation, was summarized in the aggregate. All interview recordings, transcripts, and completed research invitation packages were stored as electronic records in a password protected file, on the researcher's password protected computer. Any paper records were immediately transferred to electronic records, all of which were either shredded or deleted upon completion of this research. As a final precautionary measure, the researcher performed two privacy checkpoints throughout the written process of this thesis. One occurring at the onset of the writing process, acting as a memory aid to ensure privacy issues were considered and security measures were weaved into each stage of writing, and a second, following the completion of the writing process, acting as a final scan for any privacy issues and an opportunity to address them prior to disseminating the final thesis.

[40] See Appendix G.

With each of these ethical protocols undertaken, this research fully complied with the Tri-Counsel Policy Statement "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (2018), and thereby the University of New Brunswick's University Policy on Research Involving Humans (2011). This research was reviewed and approved by the UNB Research Ethics Board and remains on file as REB 2021-136[41].

[41] See Appendix H.

Chapter 5: Content Analysis Findings

The following section presents the findings from the quantitative content analysis. The objective of this content analysis was to explore how intimate partner violence (IPV) stakeholders in Canada utilize technology to respond to digital coercive control (DCC) that occurs in the context of IPV situations, and of particular interest, how they use their online websites to share their knowledge and services related to DCC. The sample selected for the purpose of this content analysis consisted of 50 IPV stakeholder websites across Canada, that provide online information and support services to survivors of IPV, fellow stakeholders involved in eliminating IPV, and the public. The content of interest on these sites that were coded, included any webpage or organization produced document on the site, that allowed for line-by-line textual analysis.

As such, this chapter begins by providing a brief profile of the websites under analysis, reviewing findings related to the website service locations, website service arenas, and the targeted website audiences. Subsequently, results capturing how stakeholders use technology to respond to DCC are presented, followed by those that reflect what stakeholders know and share about DCC on their websites. The chapter concludes by providing readers with a summary of the most pertinent information garnered from the content analysis.

5.1 Profile of Websites Under Analysis

Of the 50 Canadian websites coded for the purpose of this content analysis, most websites (46%) had a service location in Ontario, as seen in Figure 2, while 16% originated from Alberta, and 10% from British Colombia. A combined 16% of websites were located across Manitoba, Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Furthermore,

6% of websites provided their services Canada wide, and the remaining 6% of websites targeted Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, and Yukon Territory.

Figure 2. *Distribution of Website Service Location (N=50)*

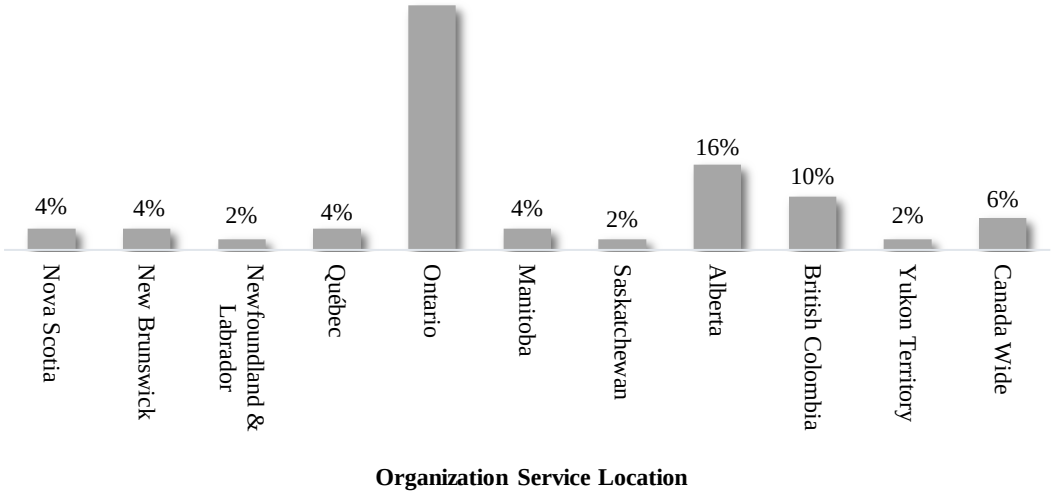


Figure 3 shows the distribution of websites across the five-website service 'arenas' originally proposed by Davenport et al. (2008). Unsurprisingly, 52% of websites provided content and services related to the Social and Community Service Arena, which was operationally defined in the codebook[42] as any website providing social services of benefit to greater community well-being, such as shelter and housing services, women's centres, or IPV support groups and crisis services. About a quarter of websites analyzed (26%) fell under the Legal Service Arena, providing IPV content and support in the forms of policing, victim services, legal practice, or public legal education. The

[42] See Appendix A.

remaining sites were categorized as 16% Government Service Arena, 4% Health Service Arena, and 2% Education and Research Centre Service Arena.

Figure 3. *Distribution of Website Service Arenas (N=50)*

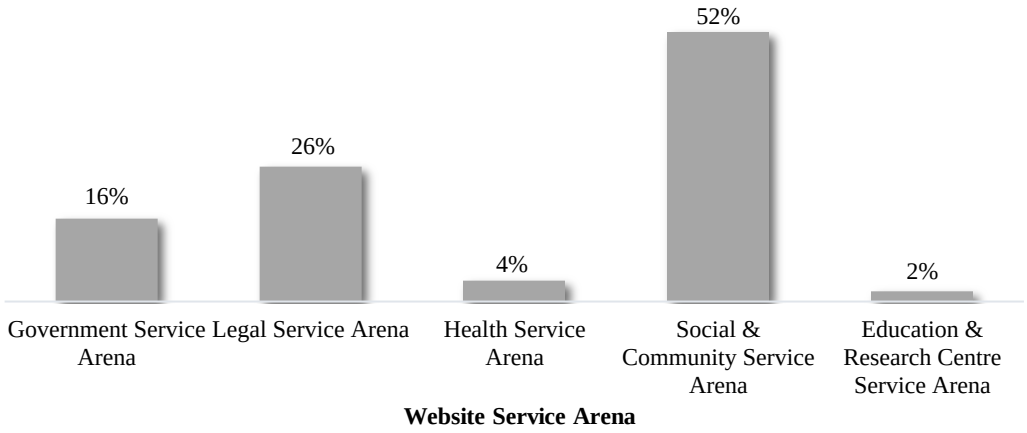
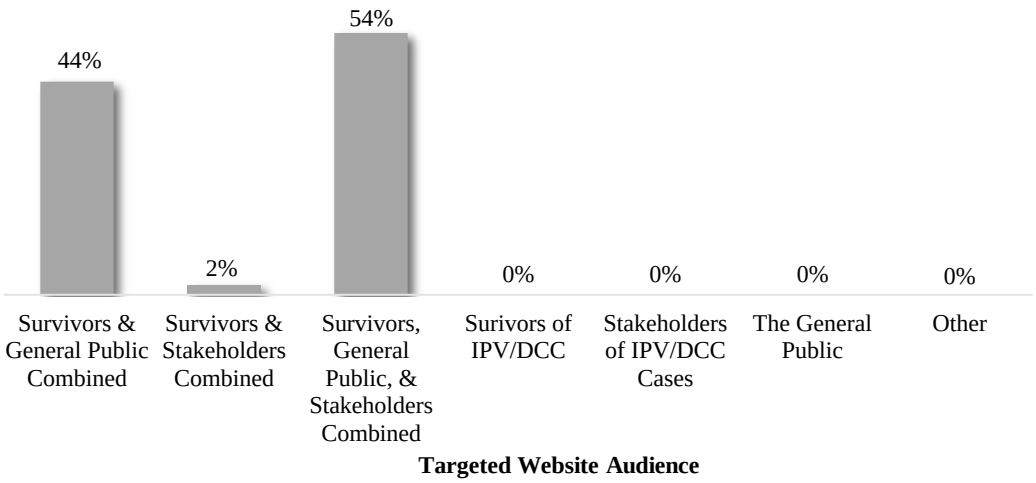


Figure 4 presents the frequency distribution of the targeted website audience for each website included in the sample (*N*=50). As seen within this figure, all websites included in the analysis catered their content to multiple audiences, as opposed to focusing on targeting one individual audience such as survivors of IPV or DCC alone. In particular, 22 websites (44%) targeted their content to both survivors and the general public, while 27 websites (54%) specified that they provided content for survivors, the general public, and stakeholders alike. Only 2% of websites included in the analysis explicitly expressed that their content aimed to support survivors and stakeholders exclusively. There were no *other* targeted audiences identified in this analysis (0%).

Figure 4. *Distribution of Targeted Website Audience (N=50)*



5.2 How Stakeholders Respond to DCC with Technology

The results of the current content analysis revealed that websites themselves are a valuable form of technology used by some IPV stakeholders to respond to DCC, allowing them to provide support, critical information, and a variety of resources to DCC survivors online.

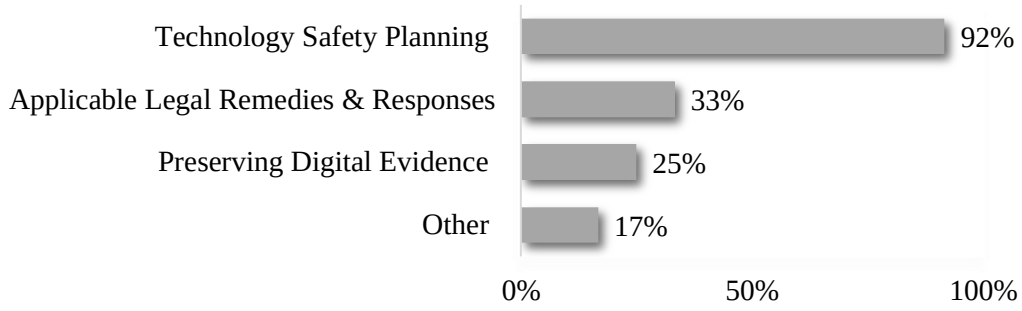
Looking at the multiple response sets[43] used within this analysis[44], we can see that of the 50 websites included in the sample, 24% (12 websites) provided users with tools and resources for DCC support. Figure 5 shows that of these 12 websites, almost all (92%

[43] As detailed in the prior methodology section, (see Chapter 4, p. 48) a 'multiple response set' is a grouping of two or more dichotomous variables combined based on a shared overarching topic or characteristics (Kent State University Libraries, 2022). In this instance, four individual dichotomous variables were added to this multiple response set because they each pertained to the types of tools and resources that are used by IPV stakeholders for providing DCC support to survivors online. As opposed to checking only one applicable characteristic, the multiple response set allowed for the researcher in the current study – but could also apply to a respondent in a questionnaire for instance – to check off multiple characteristics that apply to them or the sample of interest (Kent State University Libraries, 2022).

[44] See Appendix I for the multiple response set frequency distribution tables.

of cases) provided their users with downloadable tools and resources directly on their websites that offered DCC support in the form of technology safety planning. These safety planning items ranged from specific internet, cellphone, and social media safety toolkits to general tips intended to increase online safety and privacy. Moreover, 33% of these 12 sites provided tools and resources on applicable legal remedies and responses, such as guides to Peace Bonds[45] and Civil Protective Orders[46] or details on the few sections of the *Criminal Code of Canada* that are applicable to instances of DCC, such as Defamation or Criminal Harassment. Tools and resources for preserving digital evidence were also provided on 25% of sites, detailing topics like best practices for evidence preservation, device specific evidence collection guidelines, and even templates for systematically logging occurrences of DCC.

Figure 5. *Tools & Resources for DCC Support (n=12)*

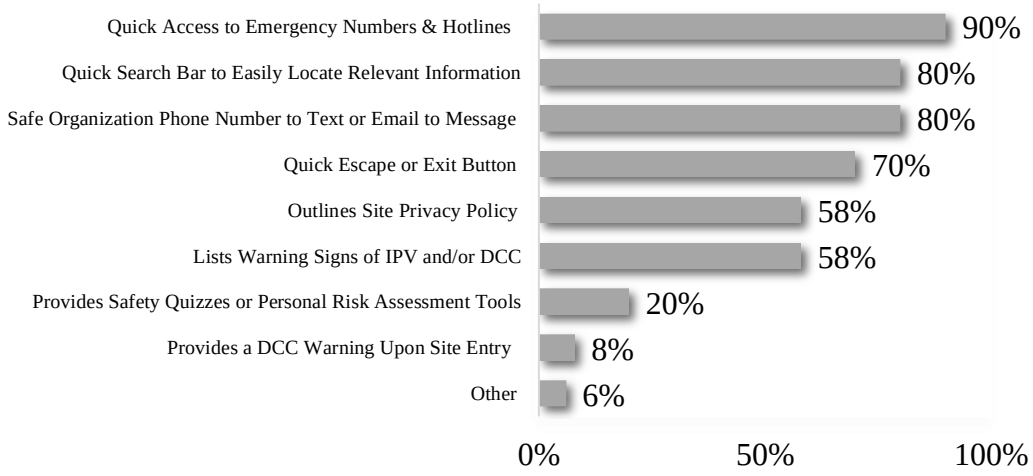


[45] A 'Peace Bond' is a criminal court protection order, outlined in section 810 of the *Criminal Code*, that is intended to protect individuals, their family, or their property from a defendant (accused) - whether they are an intimate partner or not - who "appears likely to commit a criminal offence" when there exists no current "reasonable grounds" to believe an offence was indeed committed by said defendant (Government of Canada, 2021, p.1).

[46] A 'Civil Protective Order' is a less serious protection order and hence obtained via civil statutes and issued provincially, to protect an individual's' safety. Civil protective orders tend to vary slightly by province or territory, but commonly include 'restraining orders', 'emergency intervention orders', and 'emergency protection orders' that will outline specific behaviour the defendant (accused) must abide by (PLEIS-NB, 2020). Unlike Peace Bonds, Civil Protective Orders typically require a domestic relationship between the parties involves, whether that means they are spouses, romantic partners, or relatives (PLEIS-NB, 2020).

Given the nature of DCC, each stakeholder website included in the analysis was also assessed for their use of online safety features, as a means of harnessing technology itself to offer survivors added protection from DCC while exploring their website. Results from these measures show that all 50 (100%) of the websites included in the analysis provided some form of indicated safety feature to protect their viewers while browsing their site. As seen in Figure 6, 90% of these 50 websites provided users with quick access to emergency numbers and hotlines; additionally, 70% provided users with a quick escape or exit button, should they need to conceal their website browsing in a hurry; 58% explicitly listed warning signs for IPV and/or DCC; and concerningly, only 8% of these websites provided their users with a DCC warning upon site entry, to alert them of the potential for someone to monitor their devices or internet browsing history.

Figure 6. *Safety Features Offered on Websites (n=50)*



Since websites vary in content and format, several variables included in the analysis allowed for further assessment of the volume of content shared on each website regarding DCC. For instance, Table 3 shows that while the websites included in the

sample (*N*=50) ranged from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 14 pages dedicated to the discussion of DCC, on average the sampled websites dedicated at least two pages of their sites to discussing DCC related matters. Additionally, the websites in the sample (*N*=50) provided an average of three organization produced PDFs and other documents containing DCC content, with some sites sharing up to 140 PDFs or documents they had produced regarding DCC. The quantity of external hyperlinks the websites utilized to refer users to outside information that was concerning DCC was also coded, with results showing that an average of 6 external hyperlinks were used on websites in the sample (*N*=50), despite some sites providing a maximum of 106 external hyperlinks to direct their users to additional DCC related content. With such exceptions, it is no surprise that the sites each had a significant standard deviation from the mean, but this variation also serves to illustrate the fact that some sites are putting far greater emphasis on the discussion and resources available to support survivors of DCC than others at this time.

Table 3. *Volume of DCC Content on Websites (N=50)*

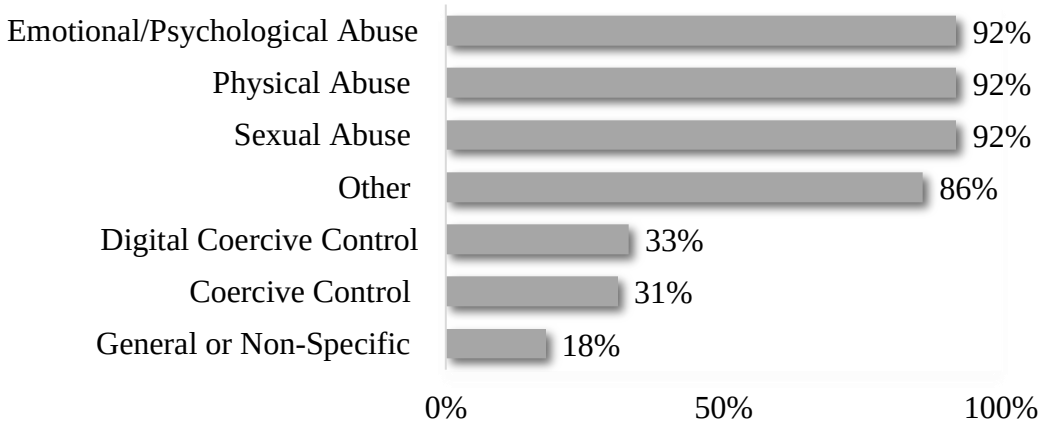
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quantity of Pages Websites Dedicate to DCC Discussion	0	14	1.6	2.6
Quantity of Organization Produced PDFs or Docs re. DCC	0	140	3.3	19.7
Quantity of External Hyperlinks Related to DCC	0	106	6.1	17.9

5.3 What Stakeholders Know & Share About DCC on Websites

The remaining variables included in the content analysis intended to tap into what IPV stakeholders across Canada know and share about DCC on their online websites.

The findings revealed that of the 50 websites included in the sample, all but one site (98%, 49 sites) identified at least one form of violence that can occur in the context of IPV. Unsurprisingly, of these 49 sites identifying one or more forms of violence, Figure 7 shows that 92% (45 sites) explicitly identified sexual, physical, and emotional/psychological abuse as forms of violence that can occur in the context of IPV. Interestingly, 33% of sites explicitly identified DCC, while 31% of sites identified coercive control (CC)[47], and 86% of sites identified 'Other' forms of violence – often recognizing financial abuse as a distinct type of violence to occur in cases of IPV.

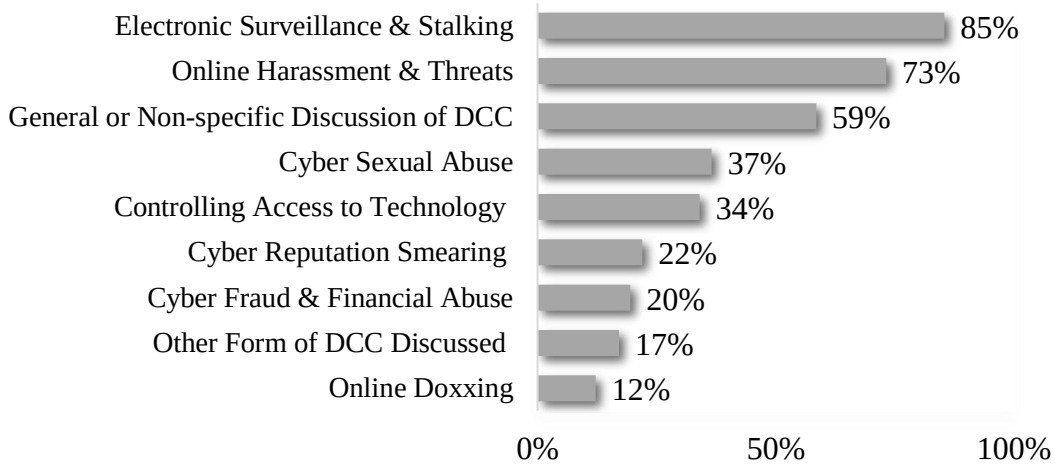
Figure 7. *Forms of Violence Identified on Websites (n=49)*



[47] It should be noted that both DCC and CC were intentionally selected as potential forms of violence to be identified on IPV stakeholder websites. Although this researcher views DCC as one of several manifestations of CC, it too must be acknowledged as distinct. This is the case for a number of reasons, beginning with the fact that several websites cover CC with no mention of DCC, and therefore entirely miss the opportunity to educate and pre-emptively alert people who may be experiencing this form of IPV. Moreover, separating these forms of violence helps survivors and stakeholders understand that DCC is an equally serious form of abuse, not something to be normalized, trivialized, or romanticized. As such, it was imperative to separate the two into distinct forms of violence that websites discussed to capture their coverage of IPV, CC, and DCC with the most accuracy.

Despite the last measure revealing that only 33% of websites explicitly recognize DCC as a form of IPV, 41 websites (82%) included in the sample (*N*=50) discussed one or more *forms* of DCC they were aware of occurring in the context of IPV. As seen in Figure 8, 85% of these 41 websites identified 'electronic surveillance & stalking' as a form of DCC, 73% identified 'online harassment and threats', 59% covered DCC 'generally or non-specifically' without naming any precise forms, and 37% discussed 'cyber sexual abuse' as a form of DCC. Of note, 'controlling access to technology' was another noteworthy form of DCC discussed on 34% of websites. Additionally, 'cyber reputation smearing' was identified on 22% of websites, 'cyber fraud and financial abuse' on 20% of sites, 'online doxxing'[48] on 12% of websites, and *other* forms of DCC were discussed on 17% of sites.[49]

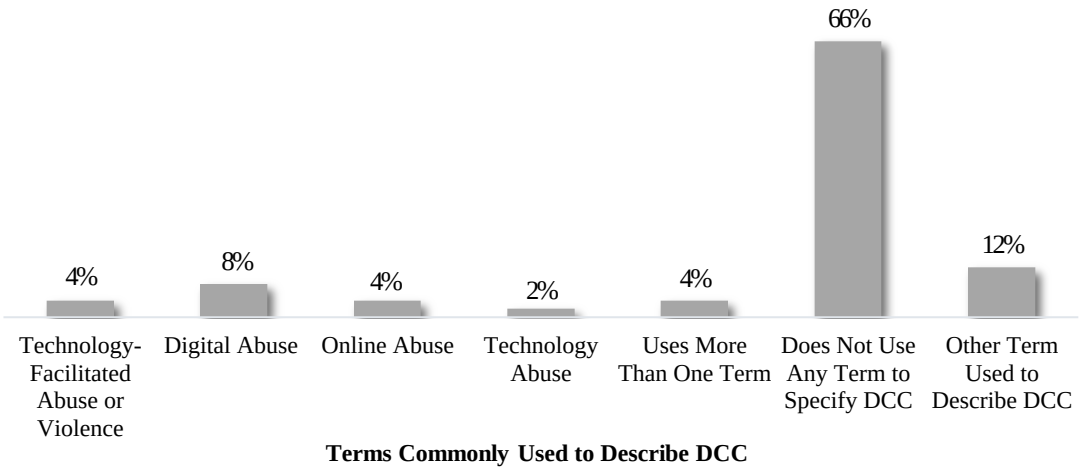
Figure 8. *Forms of DCC Discussed on Websites (n=41)*



[48] As outlined in the Key Terms and Operational Definitions Table of the Codebook, 'Doxxing' is the act of releasing personal information about someone online without their consent, often in the context of DCC, such as their home address, phone number or place of employment, for the purpose of encouraging their online or in-person harassment or harm. See Appendix A or Yardley, 2020 for more information.
[49] See Appendix A for remaining operational definitions of each form of DCC recognized in the study.

Of the IPV stakeholder website sample (*N*=50), Figure 9 highlights that 66% of websites did not use any specific term to specify the phenomenon of DCC, rather they would simply describe what it could look like in the context of IPV. Interestingly, no site included in the sample referred to the phenomenon with the terms Digital Coercive Control (DCC), Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC), Technology-Facilitated Intimate Partner Violence (TFIPV), Technology-Facilitated Domestic Violence (TFDV), or Cyber Abuse (CA). The terms sites primarily used included, Digital Abuse (8%), Online Abuse (4%), Technology-Facilitated Abuse or Violence (4%), or Technology Abuse (2%). An additional 4% of sites were inconsistent with the term selected to describe DCC, using more than one term throughout their sites, and 12% of sites used *other* terms to describe DCC.

Figure 9. *Distribution of Terms Commonly Used to Describe DCC (N=50)*



In terms of the technology that is used to perpetrate DCC, 11 IPV stakeholder websites (22%) included in the sample (*N*=50) did not provide users with any insight into the matter. The remaining 39 sites (78%) discussed one or more forms of technology commonly used to perpetrate DCC. Figure 10 illustrates that this discussion involved

computers and laptops, including the internet, email, or internet based-social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter in 97% of these cases; telephones, cellphones, and mobile applications in 85% of these cases; and smart home appliances, such as smart TVs, speakers, thermostats, and alarm systems in 21% of these cases. Surprisingly, 10% of the 39 websites, mentioned video games and consoles in the context of DCC; 8% discussed the use of smart home assistants in cases of DCC, such as Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant[50]; and only 5% of these websites discussed wearable smart devices, such as Apple AirTags[51], Apple Watches, or Fitbits[52] as technology used for the purpose

[50] A 'Smart home assistant' is a form of AI-driven software (commonly found on a smart phone or smart speaker) that allows you to remotely control systems in your home/office or perform daily tasks, much like a traditional office assistant (Government of Australia, n.d.). Some of the most popular smart home assistants include Amazon's Alexa, Google Assistant, and Apple's Siri. Such software is able to answer questions posed by the user; play music upon voice or phone command; provide recommendations; place calls on your behalf; provide home automation, adjusting smart lighting systems, smart TVs, or smart thermostats; and can even set basic reminders (Government of Australia, n.d.). For more information, see the eSafety Commissioner website hosted by the Government of Australia at https://www.esafety.gov.au/.

[51] An 'AirTag' is a small button-sized device created by Apple Inc. and advertised to assist users "track down [their] Apple devices and keep up with friends and family (Apple Inc., 2023)." According to the official Apple website, these trackers are sold on the market for approximately $30, are water-resistant, and contain a battery designed to last more than a year (Apple Inc., 2023). If your AirTag-attached item goes missing – such as your keys, wallet, or backpack – you can locate the item through Apple's 'FindMy' App. These tiny devices will transmit a Bluetooth signal to your devices and provide you a map detailing the distance and directions to your item. If you are beyond 30 ft of your item, you can use 'Find My Network' where other Apple devices in proximity to your item will ping its most recent location. For more information, see the Apple Inc. website at https://www.apple.com/ca/.

[52] A 'wearable smart device', such as an Apple Watch or Fitbit, links to apps on your phone and other devices, collecting data on your "day-to-day life, such as the number of steps taken, your heart rate or sleep patterns (Government of Australia, n.d.)." In addition to these tasks, such devices often allow for location tracking and sharing; women's menstrual cycle tracking; and further allow for traditional smart phone functions, including the use of debit and credit cards, and composing or receiving text messages and phone calls (Government of Australia, n.d.). For more information, see the eSafety Commissioner website hosted by the Government of Australia at https://www.esafety.gov.au/.

of DCC. Other forms of technology used for DCC perpetration were covered on 8% of these sites, such as smart toys or baby monitors intended for children and pets.

Figure 10. *Types of Technology Used to Perpetrate DCC Identified on Websites (n=39)*

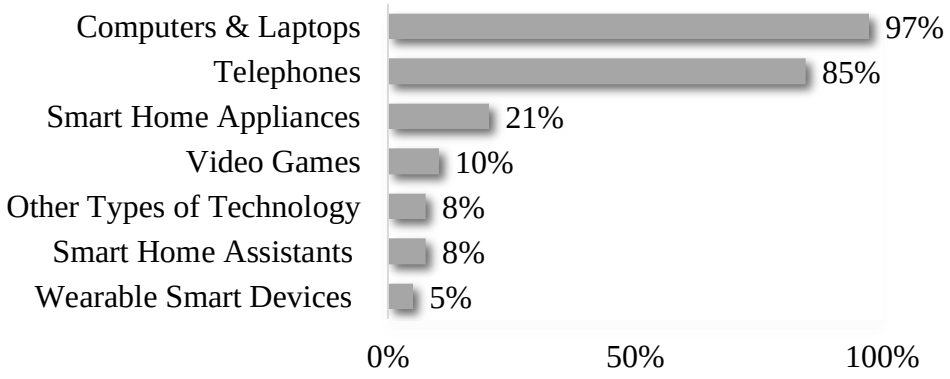
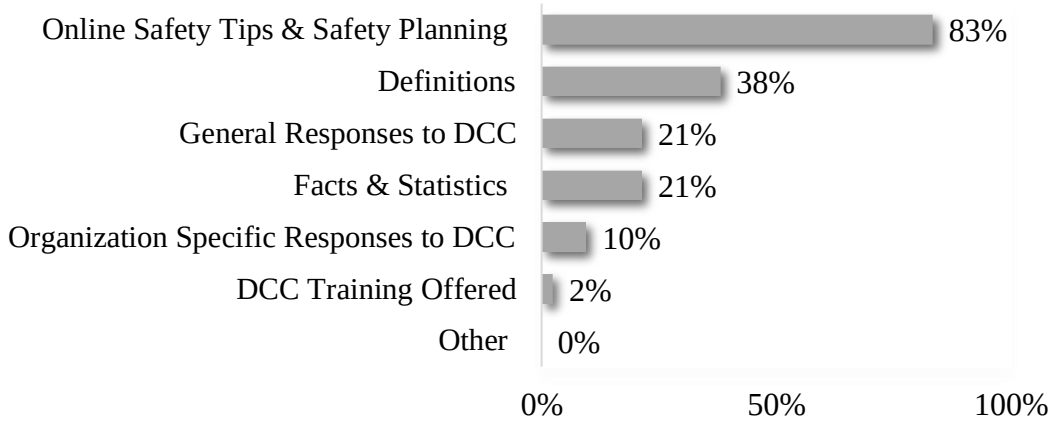


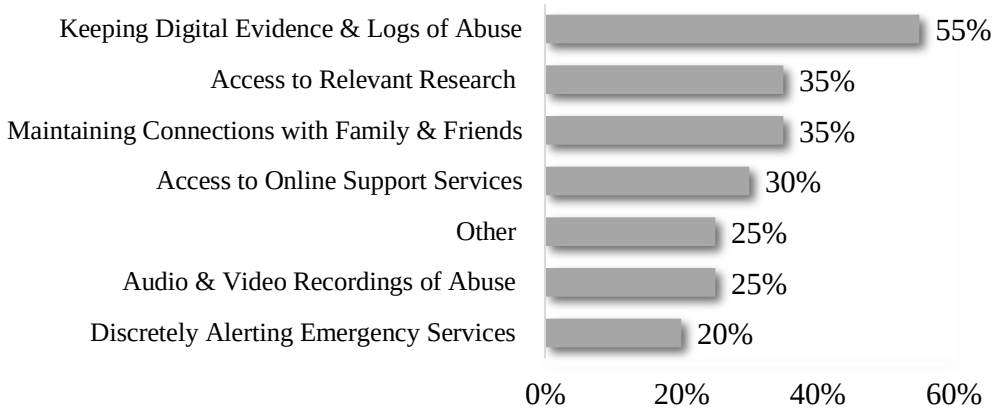
Figure 11 presents the multiple response set frequency distribution for types of DCC information discussed on the websites within this study. Out of the original sample of 50 websites, 42 sites (84%) offered one or more distinct type of DCC information. Of these 42 sites, 83% covered online safety tips and safety planning, while 38% provided definitions for DCC and/or its various manifestations. Approximately 21% of these sites provided facts and statistics on DCC, and further discussed general responses that can be taken by individuals or groups to minimize the chances of DCC, such as the general need for improved online safety features on social media sites. Only 10% of the sites provided users with information on the actions taken by their own organization to respond to DCC, and just 2% of the sites offered DCC training for anti-violence workers and other stakeholders such as first responders, or the general public. There were no *other* types of DCC information discussed on websites in this analysis (0%).

Figure 11. *Types of DCC Information Discussed on Websites (n=42)*



Furthermore, this study found that 30 websites (60%) of the original sample (*N*=50) did not inform users of important advantages technology can offer survivors of DCC and IPV. Of the remaining 20 sites (40% of the original sample, *N*=50) that did discuss these advantages, 55% recognized that technology can be a useful tool for collecting and keeping digital evidence or logs of incidents of abuse, as seen in Figure 12. Within Figure 12 it is also clear that 35% of the 20 sites, discussed technology's ability to help survivors maintain connections with family or friends, along with access relevant research regarding DCC. Additionally, it was found that 30% of these sites discussed how technology can be used to access online support services that may otherwise not be accessible to individuals, such as those living in rural communities with limited resources. Moreover, 25% of these sites discussed the ability to obtain audio or video recordings of abuse as a positive to technology, and 20% discussed the potential for technology to discretely alert emergency services.

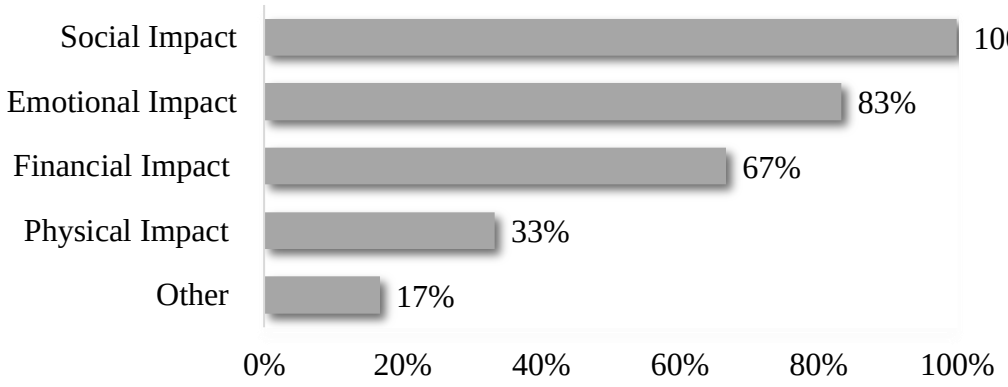
Figure 12. *Positive Use of Technology Discussed on Website (n=20)*



The impact DCC is known to have on survivors in situations of IPV was also coded on each website under analysis and is presented below in Figure 13. The findings from this measure reveal that 44 websites (88%) of the original website sample (*N*=50) did not discuss any impacts associated with DCC for survivors on their websites. Of the six sites (12%) that did discuss DCC's impact on survivors, all six (100%) mentioned it in terms of its social impact - hindering friendships and familial ties, and effectively isolating survivors from other social groups and commitments. On 5 of these sites (83%) the emotional toll of DCC was discussed, informing users of the high potential for increased anxiety, depression, PTSD, and substance use - among a plethora of related impacts – to result from cases of DCC. The financial cost of DCC was only recognized on 4 sites (67%), where they discussed the tendancy for outstanding debt and damaged credit to result from DCC cases, and even loss of jobs or stable housing due to the disruptive nature and distressed caused by DCC. Sadly, the potential for minor and even severe physical impacts in cases of DCC, that could result when technology is utilized to impose in person harm – such as sexual assault or in some cases domestic homicide - was

only discussed on two (33%) of the six websites that covered the impacts of DCC in cases of IPV.

Figure 13. *Impact of DCC Discussed on Websites (n=6)*



5.4. Summary of Content Analysis Findings

This content analysis set out to shed light on the third research question guiding this study, aiming to understand how stakeholders in Canada use technology to respond to DCC and determine what they know and share about DCC on their websites. In other words, this content analysis intended to describe the key characteristics of a sample of IPV stakeholder websites relative to DCC, and in turn, report what characteristics and content are common and those that are seldomly discussed on these websites. The results of this content analysis have illuminated several insights about the IPV stakeholder websites in the sample and should therefore be recapped to emphasize their significance.

This content analysis was comprised of a sample of 50 IPV stakeholder websites originating from various provinces and territories across Canada. Of this sample, most websites were connected to a service location originating in Ontario (46%) or Alberta (16%). The sample was primarily comprised of sites that produced content related to the

Social and Community Service Arena (52%) and Legal Service Arena (26%). Most sites in the analysis (54%) targeted survivors, the general public, and stakeholders as the primary audience, although 44% of sites catered their content to survivors and the general public exclusively.

The IPV stakeholder websites in the sample produced little insight into the diverse ways in which stakeholders in Canada use technology to respond to DCC; however, it was determined that websites themselves can serve as a valuable tool for DCC response when adequately harnessed by IPV stakeholders. Of the websites in the sample (N= 50), it was found that only 12 sites provided users with tools and resources for DCC support, the most popular of which were related to technology safety planning (11 sites, 92% of the 12 cases). It was also found that all 50 websites included in the analysis provided their users with some form of safety feature while browsing their website, the most common being listing emergency numbers and hotlines (49 sites, 90%), but interestingly, only 29 sites (58%) listed the warning signs of IPV and/or DCC and only 4 sites (8%) provided users with a DCC warning upon site entry. The websites included in the analysis varied greatly in terms of the volume of DCC content shared on their sites; however, most sites shared an average of two pages dedicated to the discussion of DCC, three organization produced PDF's or documents regarding DCC, and six external hyperlinks to connect users to external DCC content.

In terms of what stakeholders know and share about DCC on their websites, this analysis revealed that of all 49 sites that identified different forms of violence that occur in the context of IPV, only 33% outright identified DCC. Most sites (45, 92%) identified the more traditional forms of IPV, such as physical, sexual, and emotional/psychological

abuse; and surprisingly, 86% of sites identified *other* forms of IPV – typically distinguishing financial abuse as its own type of violence in the context of IPV. The findings from this analysis also illustrated that of 41 websites (82%) that discussed diverse forms of DCC, the most common forms were Electronic Surveillance and Monitoring (35, 85% of cases), Online Harassment and Threats (30,73%), and discussed DCC generally and non-specifically (24, 59%) without naming precise forms. Cyber sexual abuse and controlling access to technology were also frequently discussed on websites in the analysis, with the former recognized on 15 of these websites (37%) and the latter discussed on 14 of these websites (34%). Interestingly, this study revealed that 33 websites in the sample (66%) did not use any term to specify DCC. Of the terms that were used on websites, the most common was 'Digital Abuse' used on 8% of websites. Additionally, 39 sites in the analysis were able to specify the various types of technology they were aware of perpetrators using in the context of DCC, of these technologies, the most common were computers and laptops (97% of cases), telephones (85% of cases), and smart home appliances (21% of cases).

Of the types of DCC information provided on 42 websites in this analysis, the most common was found to be online safety tips and safety planning (35, 83%), followed by definitions of DCC (16, 38%). The least common form of information provided on these sites was unfortunately DCC training for stakeholders and the general public (1, 2%). Of 20 sites in the original sample (N=50) that highlighted the positive uses of technology, it was found that 55% of these cases (11 sites) discussed the ability to use technology to keep digital evidence and logs of abuse. Furthermore, despite the various forms of DCC and types of technology used to perpetrate these harms in IPV situations,

only six websites included in the analysis paid tribute to the substantial impacts DCC is known to have on survivors. Each of these six sites (100% of cases) recognized the considerable social impact of DCC; however, only 2 of these sites (33%) mentioned the high potential for DCC to coincide with physical violence, whether that be in the form of technology assisted sexual or physical assault - with the potential for domestic homicide.

Chapter 6: Interview Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative semi-structured interviews[53] that were conducted for the purpose of this study. The first set of interview participants included five intimate partner violence (IPV) stakeholders located across Canada, that had either direct experience supporting survivors of digital coercive control (DCC), or indirect experience supporting these survivors through various DCC response and prevention initiatives. The second set of interview participants included five individuals who self-identified as survivors of DCC and were willing to share their personal experiences. Both sets of interviews were intended to answer the first two research questions guiding this study – namely, how survivors in Canada have experienced DCC and its effect upon them, and further, illuminate the challenges DCC has created for Canadian stakeholders who aim to assist survivors. However, the interviews as a research technique also unintentionally added to the third research question guiding the study, shedding even greater light than the prior content analysis on how IPV stakeholders in Canada use technology to respond to DCC.

First, this chapter will begin by providing a brief snapshot of the participants involved in this study, summarizing their individual profiles and demographic makeup in the aggregate. Foremost, this chapter will dive into how DCC is unfolding across Canada; presenting types of technology and harm intended in cases of DCC, tentative explanations for why perpetrators engage in DCC from the perspectives of participants, and the first-hand accounts of DCC's impact from the survivors involved in this study.

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[53] See Appendices C & D.

Subsequently, challenges that DCC has presented for stakeholders and thereby survivors in Canada will be discussed. Finally, insight into how stakeholders in Canada are responding to DCC and a summary of the qualitative research findings will conclude the chapter.

6.1 Profile of Participants

Of the 5 stakeholders interviewed for this research, four identified as female and one as male. Most stakeholders ranged between 35 and 44 years of age, while one indicated that they were between 18 to 24 years old. Two stakeholders included in the study spoke of their experience while residing in Ontario, one in British Colombia, one in Alberta, and one in Newfoundland and Labrador. In terms of the IPV organization service arenas[54], one stakeholder included in the sample represented the Legal Service Arena, while the remaining four represented the Social and Community Service Arena - with one stakeholder also speaking of their prior experience in both the Legal and Education or Research Centre Service Arenas.

In terms of occupations, the stakeholder sample comprised of one police officer who was a designated Detective Constable in an IPV police unit in Canada. Additionally, one stakeholder worked as a Technology Safety Project Manager and Technology Safety Lead between one national and one provincial organization, who both aim to support women, children, and frontline workers in shelters and transition houses within Canada, with the development of technology-based resources and training opportunities. The

[54] See Appendix A for the definition of 'Service Arena', outlined in the 'IPV Stakeholder Website Content Analysis Codebook', under 'Glossary of Key Terms & Operational Definition'.

Chief Operator of a registered Canadian charity was also interviewed, who's organization – made up of primarily former military, law enforcement, and security personnel - supports police, shelters, and survivors of IPV by providing personal protection with cutting-edge security devices and software, and advising on issues of harassment, physical violence, stalking, and threats in cases of IPV. Furthermore, one stakeholder worked as a violence prevention support staff member, educating, and advocating for survivors of IPV frontline. The final stakeholder interviewed for the study was a former Victim Witness Worker within the criminal justice system, and works as an advocacy member of a survivor led anti-violence organization, and a community of practice member with a university led IPV research centre - working frontline to support survivors of IPV and their children, presenting IPV education and advocacy material to the public, and contributing to preventative education and academic research on IPV through these roles. Stakeholders varied in the number of years they spent at these organizations, some indicating they have only worked with the organization for three years, while others suggested upwards of 15 years with their organization. To uphold their confidentiality throughout the research, each stakeholder included in the study was assigned a pseudonym and are henceforth known as Charlie, Tegan, Tessa, Whitney, and Winnie.

The survivors of DCC that participated in this research all identified as female. They varied slightly in age, with one survivor between 18-24 years old, three survivors ranging in age from 25-34 years old, and one survivor indicating they were between 35 to 44 years old. In terms of ethnic diversity of the sample, two survivors identified as white /Caucasian, another two identified as South Asian Indian, and one survivor had not provided her ethnicity. While not all survivors experienced DCC in their current province

of residence, it is interesting to highlight that DCC and its effects are felt across Canada, with one survivor presently residing in British Colombia, another in Newfoundland and Labrador, and three survivors in New Brunswick. All survivors in the sample had completed post-secondary education, nearly all of which mentioned in general conversation that they too were pursuing graduate studies. All survivors involved in this study spoke of their experience in heterosexual relationships, which ranged in duration from two to four years in length. For many of these survivors, this relationship was their first, nevertheless, most survivors still spoke of the lingering impacts of these relationships today. Each survivor included in the study was also assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity, and are henceforth known as Beth, Maria, Sophia, Paige, and Rayna.

When asked why they chose to share their personal or professional stories of DCC, each participant involved in this study indicated that they wanted to contribute to research and expand knowledge and understanding of the topic. Paige, Tessa, and Charlie similarly recognized that technology is only advancing, and although survivors of IPV may physically escape their abusers, technology offers abusers a surplus of ways to harm their targets, with Charlie emphasizing that increasingly "minimal expertise" is required. While some participants acknowledged that research is underway in this line of work, Whitney suggested that this research is largely unpublished or inaccessible to date with little information or concern arising at the national level, as she exemplified that there remains "no national... Canadian statistics on this". Consequently, almost all survivors included in this study admitted to questioning their own experience of DCC prior to participating in the research. Maria expressed she had never seen the concept "laid out

like that or called that before" and only realized this was her experience after consulting Google. Likewise, Paige said, "It never occurred to me that people would be interested in this sort of subject, but now I realize that it is common." When Sophia was asked why she participated, she said she would "never want somebody to be stuck in the same kind of situation and think that that's okay" like she once had. Ultimately, Tegan stressed that she "overcame it, so [she] can help other people overcome it", which was the primary reason she agreed to participate.

6.2 How Digital Coercive Control is Unfolding Across Canada

The survivors interviewed for the purpose of this research each told a story of prior abuse they had experienced at the hands of a former intimate partner. Similarly, most stakeholders interviewed were able to reflect upon cases of abuse they had personally worked or advised upon. Typical to many stories of abuse, several of these cases involved varying degrees of physical, emotional, and at times, sexual abuse. The underlying thread uniting each of the cases discussed however, was the extent of coercive control deployed through diverse forms of digital technology, to harm women intentionally and continuously in situations of intimate partner violence (IPV). The following sections provide a raw presentation of how DCC is unfolding across Canada from the perspectives of these survivors and stakeholders. At times this content is disturbing, distressing, and for some may even be triggering, but is nevertheless imperative to gather, report, acknowledge, and aim to address. This section details the most common types of technology employed in such cases and the harm intended by abusers when they do so, tentative explanations for why perpetrators engage DCC from

the perspectives of participants, and the resulting implication such actions have had upon survivors of DCC throughout Canada.

6.2.1 Type of Technology & Harm Intended in Cases of DCC

Cellphones & Social Media Applications.

When survivors were asked which *types* of technology were used against them for harm by their abusers, all six – including the stakeholder who identified as a survivor of DCC - indicated that cellphones and social media applications were by far the most common forms of technology used in their experience. According to the survivors, this encompassed the use of text messages, phone calls, voicemail, and social media application such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. Throughout interviews with Sophia, Rayna, and Maria for example, they shared several instances in which their abusers used these technologies to engage in repeated harassment and threats. Making derogatory remarks that these survivors were "stupid" (Maria), a "whore" or a "slut" (Sophia, Maria and Rayna); in Sophia's case, that her abuser was going to "fuck [her] like [her] mother on some sort of red-light street[55]"; and in the case of Rayna, left threatening voicemails like one she vividly recalled where "he said that... he was gonna kill [her]."

In addition to these harassing or threatening remarks, most survivors described how their abuser would overwhelm them via this technology in attempt to maintain contact. Sophia described how her abuser "kept blowing up [her] phone" calling her until

[55] Red light streets or 'districts' are well known throughout the world as areas, often in urban centres like Amsterdam or Thailand, that are associated with prostitution and other businesses related to the sex trade, such as sex shops, strip clubs, and adult theatres. For more information see, Aalbers & Sabat (2012).

she was forced to block him and then proceeded to call and text her from a friend's phone. Likewise, Rayna explained that once she "broke things off with [her abuser] and... started seeing someone else" things began to "escalate". Rayna said he would "call me like 30 times in an hour, over and over. Send me like 100 text messages a day." Similarly, Tegan said,

> [I]f I didn't answer [the abuser] quick enough or if I was in class...he was sending multiple text messages, he would message me on Facebook, he would call me on Facebook, he would call me on Snapchat... and then, you know, would post some pretty nasty, like, Snapchat stories up about me...to the point where it was like... he was just trying to do anything to hurt me.

Maria experienced similar behaviour over social media after ending things with her abuser, explaining that she "had to delete and block him off of everything, but he would create fake accounts, like on Instagram" to talk to her and "used friend's Instagram accounts to... comment weird things on [her] pictures or... send [her] messages". Sophia also received unwarranted comments on her social media photos from her abuser following the dissolution of their relationship. As she explained, she had changed her Facebook profile picture, and following a friends comment that she had looked nice and had lost weight, and her own response that it was just "the angle the pictures been taken from", she said, "[the abuser] commented saying... 'would you like to know the kind of angles that I have seen her from?'" Not only was Sophia taken back by this comment, but she expressed valid concern over the fact that this was on "a public post", that her "family's on Facebook", and that such provocative behaviour is "pretty inappropriate in [her] culture" to begin with.

The survivors described several other ways in which their phones or social media applications were utilized by their abusers to monitor, threaten, and control them. Tegan

said, “he [the abuser] would go on my Facebook and block everyone that he didn’t want me to have on it and restrict what I was able to post and what I was able to go on.” In a similar vein, Beth said that there were “...two people that I had to remove from my [Facebook] friend list, just to prove that, you know, that I was listening to him. To prove my loyalty...” Maria similarly stated, “he was just completely controlling all my social media...he had all my passwords” and was “monitoring every single thing I did and if anyone talked to me.” Beth also explained that her abuser had threatened to distribute intimate images on more than one occasion if “things weren’t going his way.” Two participants - Sophia and Tegan, while detailing different circumstances, similarly described situations where DCC had crossed over from purely digital abuse via phone and social media, to in person demonstrations of control and power. For instance, Sophia illustrated her abuser’s desire to control her and withhold her technology as punishment when she stated that “[h]e [her abuser] broke multiple phones of mine when he found text messages from older friends that I had when I was in high school.” While quite a different context, Tegan explained that her abuser would use the global map function in the Snapchat social media application, to physically locate her and thereby control her. Tegan said that “there were a couple times when I was at university, and I didn’t have my snap maps on, and he actually showed up to the university and tried to find where I was in the building.” She further explained that it got to the point where “I would have to have snap maps on [for him] to know where I was at any point.”

When the stakeholders involved in this study were asked to reflect upon the *types* of technology that they have seen used by perpetrators of IPV in cases of DCC, they each provided responses consistent with the survivors, with Tessa detailing that “the most

common is definitely through their personal cell phone through text, voicemail, and then of course, some... social media that's common on phones." Winnie furthered this statement and confirmed the experiences of the survivors when she said the following,

> ...a lot of it [DCC] revolves around either slandering the person, trying to make them look bad, either – in a lot of instances it's calling them like a "whore" or "slut", trying to shame them... other times it can be... the threat of posting or distributing intimate images.

In a similar vein, Tessa said that she sees a lot of cases where "they [the abuser] use social media to... to ridicule and embarrass their partners", typically when the survivor expresses interest in or tries to physically leave the relationship, often resulting in instances where "...they've [the abuser] posted naked pictures [of the survivor]... on Facebook and different things like that", or videos, that were once shared by the survivor "in private and in the context of the relationship..." In Winnie's experience, she explained that she has worked cases where intimate images and other content have even been shared by the abuser out of spite on "specific communities" such as "a sexual fetish website." Tessa reflected upon her experience working with several of these cases, claiming that she often hears survivors struggle with the thought of "'[t]his video is always going to be out there, people are always going to see me, you know, having intercourse'" or the notion that multiple friends and foes may have screenshots of those images or videos. Tessa eloquently stated that "...instead of the abuse just happening at that time or happening when [the survivor's] in the relationship, it continues on for the rest of their lives, and that's really, really unfortunate." She expanded this point to say that,

> ... I've had examples where, you know, a partner... posted naked pictures on a woman's business site and... this is her business, and this is what her customers

> see. And so, he's destroyed her - or attempted to destroy her career. Those are long lasting effects, right?... So, instead of it just happening that once, the same with photos, sexual videos or anything embarrassing, those are on the internet forever. And if somebody has a file or a picture of them, those are forever.

In a slightly different scenario, Tessa recalled a case where "the mother lost custody of her children because her partner had falsified information... through her email account", saying that the mother had "said and did, what she had not [done] and deemed her not a good parent." According to Tessa, this particular case was "heartbreaking", as it took many years for the mother to collect evidence and prove what the abuser had done, meanwhile, the children grew up in "a house of abuse." She continued to say, "[s]o now we've got another set of children who were traumatized and who will relate to these experiences as being normal."

Two stakeholders, Charlie and Tessa, agreed that another common way in which survivors are experiencing abuse in the context of DCC is through online dating sites. Charlie explained that in his work he has had clients "whereby all of a sudden their ex's will have three or multiple different [dating] profiles and they'll start communicating that way." Likewise, Tessa said that many survivors she has assisted have "tried to move on and... go on dating sites... and [the abuser's] just been waiting for them to join, and been looking for them, and pretending to be somebody else to talk to them."

Outside of threats, harassment, and the distribution of intimate images that are occurring commonly through phones and social media applications, several stakeholders involved in this study spoke of other distinct ways in which cellphones are used to harm survivors in situations of IPV. Echoing the experience of the survivor Sophia, Tessa discussed the issue of abusers controlling access to their partner's technology when she

stated, "...sometimes it's [about] taking away that technology as well. There's – I can't tell you how many broken phones. The first thing that happens when there's an argument or something... I always hear victims [say], 'he smashed my phone', 'he took my phone', 'he damaged my phone', 'he won't give it back'." Charlie also spoke of ways in which abusers control access to their partner's technology when he described the phenomenon of "spoofing."[56] He explained that there's been a lot of cases of "spoofing" where an abuser will actually call into their partner's cellphone provider impersonating them, "...and say, 'Oh, I lost my SIM card, I need a new SIM card' or whatever and [the cellphone provider will] send them that, but now they've literally spoofed [the survivor's] phone, and the [survivor] won't even know."[57]

Three stakeholders (Charlie, Whitney, and Winnie) agreed that shared family phone plans seem to be another common issue to arise with cellphones in cases of DCC. Winnie stated that "...in a lot of my work it's the man that's abusive. So, if the man pays for that phone plan, then he continues to watch [the survivor's] phone or watch the

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[56] The Government of Canada's "Get Cyber Safe" campaign (2020) explains that "Spoofing" is a tactic commonly used in cyber security scams where scammers attempt to trick their targets into divulging sensitive information, such a credit card information, by "disguising malicious communication or activity as something from a trusted source (GCS)." Common examples of spoofing include emails sent to the target resembling their "trusted baking institution", emails from trusted friends or colleagues, or phone calls that claim to be from "a legitimate company or government agency" (GCS, 2020).

[57] According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) (2020), such behaviour is also known as a "sim card swap", whereby scammers report that your phone has been lost or stolen to the cellphone provider and upon receiving a new SIM card, can link this to a new device that they control. Since your SIM card provides the connected device with the original phone number and mobile service, scammers can simply download applications - such as your email or banking app - select 'Forgot Password' on these applications and receive a verification code to the associated phone number or email address to confirm ownership, change passwords, and take over the account (CAFC, 2020). Sim card swaps are commonly used by scammers to invade your personal "email, social media, and financial accounts" in attempt to drain your accounts of money, apply for credit in your name, or impersonate you in a variety of scenarios to defraud others (CAFC, 2020).

children's phone..." Likewise, following training and research conducted with frontline workers at her organization, Whitney made a similar comment when she stated,

> ...one form of abuse that keeps happening is that... in relationships in general - a lot of times people have...family phone plans, and they are stuck to some kind of term contract. And so, when... a woman leaves their relationship, he [the abuser] has control over that account. So, that's a form of continued control... [I]n a lot of cases... women don't necessarily have the financial means to continue to pay for... wireless services. I know here in Canada our phone plans are... quite expensive compared to some in other countries and so that's a form of coercive control.

Whitney continued to explain that "the cost to change a phone number is a huge barrier, especially to [survivors] who are receiving those harassing or threatening messages." Charlie shed even further light on the issue with cellphones and family phone plans in cases of DCC when he stated,

> ...what we're really finding is, I'd say in 90% of our clients, the offender[58] has set up all of [the survivor's] accounts. They set up their internet, they set up their phone, a lot of times it's a family plan, so [the offender] can see everything, and clients think that if they just change their number that's fine, and it's just not the case.

iCloud & Internet Routers.

In addition to cases where cellphones have been used to harm survivors in situations of IPV, Charlie spoke extensively of cases where he has witnessed the power that lies behind iCloud and basic internet routers. Charlie indicated that the real problem lies outside of mere phone plans, stating that even if you change your cellphone number "[i]f [the offender] had the iCloud information, they can just do anything, it's like having the key to your backdoor basically." He added that "once you get on the phone you can

[58] For clarification, the terms "offender", "perpetrator", and "abuser" are used interchangeably throughout the accounts of the survivors and stakeholders interviewed for the purpose of this research.

activate the camera, you can activate the audio, you can activate any kind of messaging – it becomes [the offender's] phone." Charlie explained that if survivors don't realize this, recall other devices they may still have logged on their iCloud and "secure their Apple ID" then all of "those devices are still in the possession of the offender". He continued to say, "they [the offender] can actually go in there... and basically lock [the survivor] out of their iCloud... they can use Find my iPhone [and] they can locate and read any kind of messages... and that doesn't require any malware, that just requires a little bit of knowledge." He provided an example of one case he worked where he said, "I was literally sitting with police and a client, we look at the phone, we started to log into the iCloud and it literally – the camera went on – and it started deleting files."

Another common, yet widely overlooked issue Charlie has come across, pertains to basic home internet routers. He explained that "we've had a number of clients that – and unfortunately a lot of people in general – don't realize the router is essential to your security in your home..." He clarified that some internet providers tend to provide the client with an administrative password upon set up, which is typically "the word 'password'". He stressed that, "unless you go in and actually change that, if you got any kind of offender that's... even remotely tech savvy, when they're in the house, they just have to take a picture of that and now they can have access to anything that's logged in on there." In addition to basic home internet routers, Charlie also discussed cases he has seen where the offender has utilized what is known as an invisible "ghost router" to tap into the survivor's personal home network to monitor their internet activity, prevent the survivor from accessing certain content, or attempt to steal their data and personal information. He explained that "the client will think that they're connected to the regular

home router, but then when... the offender leaves, it's actually their ghost router that their attached to. So, they can't actually ever disconnect."

In addition, Charlie has even seen cases where internet-based TV streaming apps are used against survivors. He gave the example of the 'Blue Curve TV App' that can be purchased alongside a Shaw internet package "whereby you can actually control the internet and you can control who gets allowed on, you can block devices, you can pause devices, you can do all of that." He stated, "I'd say [in] 10% [of our clients] that also had Shaw [internet], we we're finding that all of a sudden their internet wouldn't work, but their kids iPad would work... [a]nd it would be right in the middle of a custody hearing... and it was because the offender still had access via the app." Charlie concluded to advise that "if the offender controls the account for the internet, then that's where the big problem lies", suggesting in such cases its best to just "go get a new router or a new [internet] provider..."

Smart Home Technology & Other Internet of Things (IoT) Devices.

When asked about the technology used by abusers in cases of IPV, three stakeholders involved in this study repeatedly raised the issue of smart home technology and other Internet of Things (IoT)[59] devices. For instance, Winnie mentioned that she

[59] According to International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) - one of the world's largest information technology companies known for the their historic achievements in the creation of "the world's first floppy disc" used to store data, the first demonstration of AI, and even the computers and software used to take Neil Armstrong to the moon in 1969 (For more information, see IBM (n.d.)) – the Internet of Things (IoT) is "the concept of connecting any device (so long as it has an on/off switch) to the Internet and to other connected devices (Clark, 2016)." It is essentially a "giant network of connected things and people – all of which collect and share data about the way they are used and about the environment around them (Clark, 2016)." Today, IoT is all around us. It takes the form of smart cars; smart home appliances and assistants, such as Google Assistant or Amazon's Alexa; smart home security; smart activity trackers; along with a plethora of commercial IoT products that make manufacturing and other commercial businesses more efficient and responsive to consumer needs (Clark, 2016). For more information, see Clark, 2016.

sees the misuse of smart technologies often in her work and said, “as much as they’re nice to have in the house, when one spouse leaves or is forced to leave the house, they’ll often use [these technologies] to harass... the other spouse that’s still in the home.” Tessa held a similar opinion as she reflected on a case where she said, “I had one situation where [the abuser was] using the smart home technology to... shut off the lights or shut off the power.” She added that in another case she had worked, “the client told me that her abuser was using Alexa in her home...” and in addition to unlocking the door or shutting off lights, in this particular case the abuser was “even playing certain songs...” through Alexa to harass the survivor. Similarly, Charlie explained that in his line of work,

> Another big one is the smart home, especially over the winter. We were seeing – at least two cases, I think we might’ve even had three – but whereby the offender moved out [of the family home] according to the EPO [Emergency Protection Order], but then in the middle of the night would shut off the heat from the remote thermostat... [and] [t]hey’d set off the alarm, so the police would have responded.

Charlie continued to touch on issues arising in his organization with smart home technology, mentioning that the use of “remote garage door opening”, “smart locks”, and even “smart doorbells” are common in cases of IPV. He explained that “[t]hey’re great when they work in terms of for your security... [but] if you don’t realize how at risk you are, then that’s an easy problem.” He indicated that his organization takes extra precaution to ensure the clients they work with aren’t talking to them near “compromised” devices. He said, “[i]f [the clients] think that there’s any kind of compromisation on [a device], we tell them to find a different phone, call from a landline, or call from a friend’s phone... and make sure [they’re] not in the same room as [that] phone, and they’re not talking outside on their front porch with the smart doorbell...” In a similar vein, Winnie mentioned, “[I]’ve had a specific case.... where [the abuser has]

turned phones into listening devices" and even mentioned that she has heard of cases where headphones have been used, indicating that "if you leave like a headphone, one of... one of the AirPods [on the table or in another room], you can actually produce transcription to your phone."

Charlie mentioned several other scenarios he has come across where various smart home and other IoT devices have been exploited for harm in cases of IPV, stating that, "I've seen stuff where, you know, kids come home from visitation with dad and they've got a new build-a-bear, great! And inside the build-a-bear is either a GPS or audio recording [device]..." He also mentioned the use of smart vehicles in cases he has worked, explaining that while their team includes a mechanic who has the ability to "bring [a] vehicle in, put it on [a] hoist, and fully scan that vehicle [for tracking devices and listening bugs]", smart vehicles have changed the game. He stated that,

> ...any smart vehicle, if they are under the title of the offender, they can track that vehicle from their phone. They can start it, they can stop it, they can unlock it, you know, and that's just for a mediocre tech savvy offender. If you have somebody, like we've actually had a couple offenders that have been... they actually work as a Department of Defence Contractor in IT [information technology]... so like, stuff like that – it can get ugly.

Moreover, Charlie explained that "a big [issue] now for example, showing new tech is AirTags." He explained that they are relatively inexpensive only costing "like 40 bucks", that they are subtle as they can "slide down into anything", and are fairly inconspicuous, as your cellphone "can alert you [to the AirTag] if you have an apple device. If you don't have an apple device, you actually have to scan for [the AirTag]." Even if you have an Apple device, Charlie warned that "it won't alert you" to the AirTag for at least "24 to 48 [hours]... depend[ing] on your refresh rate. So, I mean even in 24 hours, think about

where you go in a 24-hour period, right? You're gonna go home and go to work, at least..." While not in reference to a specific case, Whitney also expressed concern over AirTags in her interview while discussing how technology has altered IPV, as she explained,

> I belong to a mom's planning Disneyland group... [a]nd so, before people would...would be talking about putting... like a leash or something... on [the hand of] their child so they don't get lost in Disneyland. Now everybody is talking about putting an AirTag... on their child in some form... so we have all these technologies that have good intentions like the tiles [or AirTags] ... their intention was 'never lose your keys again!'... but it's the way that people misuse it, right? Like somebody just has to be like, 'oh, well... I have all these AirTags. What if I put one here instead?'

Outside of AirTags, and in contrast to the other stakeholders that were interviewed, when Whitney was asked what forms of technology she has seen used in cases of IPV to harm survivors, she did not feel that smart home technology nor IoT devices were common. Interestingly, in Whitney's experience she has come to believe that "it depends on where people are located and where what's happening." She said, "I think folks in certain communities may not have access to or know about...some of these... like Internet of Things [IoT] smart home technologies, whereas folks in more like urban areas... have more experience with that..." She clarified to say, "I'm not saying that it doesn't happen... [b]ut most of the time it is monitoring through their iCloud or something like that."

6.2.2 Tentative Explanations For Engaging in DCC from the Perspectives of Participants

Throughout the course of several interviews within this study, it became apparent that many participants held tentative explanations for DCC – involving the perpetrator's

fear of the survivor moving on and the perpetrator's own demons that influenced their desire to appear as the victim.

Fear of the Survivor Moving On

In her interview, Tessa explained that "quite often [abusers engage in DCC] because they don't want you to move on without them, and so if they can remain in your life, they don't care whether that's for good or bad reasons." She said that as part of the tactic of "isolation", abusers in such positions want you and everyone around you to doubt that you can move on and have a better life without them, adding that it's just as the typical abuse saying goes, "'If I can't have you, nobody can.'" This fear of the survivor moving on was particularly present in the survivor Paige's case, as she disclosed that "whenever [she] said [she] wanted to end it, [her abuser] would threaten suicide." In a similar fashion as Tessa had explained, Paige detailed that "[h]e'd say, over and over, if it's not you, then there's nothing for me." Tessa clarified that in most situations of abuse, it's rarely one method used to harm the survivor. She explained that it could be as simple as an abuser seeing their former partner "happy on Facebook", disliking that, and asking themselves "what can I do to ruin her day? Can I go by her house and break a window, and she'll have to pay for that?"; however, she believed that "...when [abusers] don't have something else that they can take from you or control you with" then digital abuse provides quite the "toolbox" for the abuser. According to Tessa, abusers will use "everything at their disposal" to harm their partners, they will "abuse you physically, emotionally, they're going to isolate you... they want you financially destitute, because if you have nothing and nobody... then you might need them again...". In a similar vein to both of these participants, Whitney explained that through her work, she has come to

understand that DCC really seems to occur "when [the survivor's] leaving or... after she's left [as a means] to still maintain control over her."

The Perpetrator's Own Demons

In terms of the abuser's personal demons, Tessa held the opinion that "it comes down to rejection and... [the abuser's] own self-loathing, their own self-worth." This statement was echoed in almost each interview with survivors, as they repeatedly suggested that their abusers' demons centered around jealousy – reflecting the abuser's own deep seeded insecurities, that prompted irrational fears that their partner would cheat on them, an overarching distrust of other men, and tearing down the survivor to lift themselves up and appear as the one who was victimized.

Two survivors, Maria and Tegan, both discussed this characteristic of their abusers, openly admitting that their abusers were insecure that they would cheat on them without any tangible evidence. In Sophia's experience, she explained that she attended a very "conservative" university, so much so that they were not even allowed to wear shorts. Despite this, her abuser would criticize her every time she "put in extra effort to dress up." She said, "instead of complimenting me, he would tell me that... I was [dressing up] ... to attract other men..." Tegan described a parallel experience when she stated, "he would shame me if I went out... showing my shoulders off because... I was dressing a certain way, and apparently, [in doing so] I was asking for different things [from men]." Similarly, in conversation with Maria, she said, "[h]e didn't like if I was wearing makeup or... wearing certain things, so I kind of had to change all of my... behaviours... in order to kind of avoid an outburst or fight with this person." Adding to this behaviour, Sophia illustrated her abuser's distrust of other men when she explained

that her abuser would wait around her place and that she was “only allowed to be outside when he was outside” as this was “his way of telling [her] that he was protecting [her] from all the other men...” Rayna reflected upon a similar experience she had while visiting her abuser’s family, explaining that,

> ... his stepdad offered to take me for... a motorcycle ride because I had never been on a motorcycle. And... [the abuser] wouldn’t let me go because he thought like, you know, he just wants... this stepdad of his, just wants to... have my hands around his waist... [the abuser] just made it something it wasn’t, you know.

Despite trying to ‘protect’ the survivors from other men, several statements made throughout the interviews with survivors, suggested that these abusers were really attempting to tear down the survivor to lift themselves up and paint themselves as the real victims in the process. For instance, Sophia said,

> I lost my virginity to him, and he sort of took that as... as a form of control, where he told me that, you know, nobody else would actually like me, because I... I am slightly overweight... [and he would] tell me that, you know, I’m not really that attractive. But in the same breath, he would tell me that there were so many people on campus who’d just, you know, like fuck me on the streets...”

Likewise, Maria explained that her abuser was “constantly putting [her] down” and stated that “there [were] specific things, specific insecurities, I feel like he would just continually target.” She added that when her abuser said, “hurtful things”, they were “very meant to hurt me, like it wasn’t just generic.” In Tegan’s case, she explained that

her abuser would continually "gaslight"[60] her and said, "[he would] try to manipulate me into making me always feel like I was a bad person." Likewise, Beth explained that her abuser would continually use "guilt trips" to manipulate her and said, "I felt lucky that he would be with me, at the same time, I felt sorry for him and that I should be doing more for him." In a similar manner as both Tegan and Beth, Sophia explained how she internalized her abuser's statements, stating that it became "normalized to a point, because he would say it so often that it just felt like, you know, maybe I am unattractive..." When Winnie described what she believed to be the primary purpose behind DCC occurring in the context of IPV, she provided an especially insightful account, as just as the survivors had unknowingly described, Winnie believed that "the form of control... [abuser's] are trying to elicit is either... a fear response, shame, or guilt." In her work, Winnie explained that abuser's typically use DCC when they are "trying to pressure [the] victim to having charges dropped" or "to have that case ended". Another scenario she often sees is abusers "trying to force... victim['s] back into the relationship." Interestingly, Winnie explained that often it also has to do with "the accused's reputation and the family reputation, [as] they want to make sure that they are seen as the victim... [t]hat things happened in that relationship that the [survivor] caused, so they're the one to blame."

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[60] According to the Newport Institute, a nationwide institute located across the United States that offers several mental health and rehabilitation treatment centres to young adults, 'gaslighting' is a serious form of "psychological manipulation", that often occurs in the context of IPV where abusers intentionally try "to sow self-doubt and confusion into their victim's mind" usually to exert power and control over them "by distorting reality or forcing them to question their own judgement and intuition." Examples of gaslighting may look like an abuser who repeatedly tells you that you are misremembering events or conversations, minimizes your feelings by accusing you of being 'over sensitive' or 'crazy' or telling you a hurtful comment was 'just a joke', or outright lies and denies things they said or did even if there is proof of their actions. See Newport Institute (2021) for more information.

6.2.3 DCC's Known Impact on Survivors

Each survivor interviewed for the purpose of this research was asked to speak to the overall impact that their experience of DCC has had on their lives. While participants collectively agreed that their experiences thankfully had little financial or physical impact, they each detailed significant social and emotional impacts – with Sophia going as far as saying "I never realized that this [experience] could have such a permanent impact on me as a person."

Financial Impact.

As aforementioned, most survivors in this study could speak little to a financial impact that followed their experience with DCC. Those that were impacted in this manner described "sending [the abuser] money for living expenses" (Beth), that they were "picking up a lot of the slack" financially in the relationship (Tegan and Sophia), and that they were unable to secure employment as they had "no energy" since DCC and the looming threats of suicide by their abuser had drained them (Paige). Maria had the most obvious financial impact following her experience, as she indicated that she had sent her abuser upwards of "$1,000" for something he needed at the time - despite being a full-time student - and detailed how she felt that she couldn't ask for her money back as she was, "just trying so hard not to aggravate him" and that "asking for that money back might... have started something..."

Physical Impact.

Regarding the physical impacts of DCC, most survivors in this study were thankful there was no physical element in their experience; however, some survivors did discuss substantial physical impacts of DCC, despite downplaying or not initially

recognizing its impact on their lives. For instance, Tegan said that while she experienced some physical abuse, it was "never to the [point]... I had to go to the hospital or anything like that" but "people were noticing there were marks and stuff left on me..." In a similar vein, Sophia described the remanence of several "scars"; however, she also detailed one evening that did lead to a trip to the hospital and a broken foot. She explained that it had been her birthday and she had wanted to spend time with friends, which her abuser opposed of, and so in response to this he became angry and told her "he was gonna go out and crash his bike...". Reasonably, Sophia did what she could to "calm him down" and ultimately agreed to going with him so they could "talk it through". Sophia said, "I still remember... he was speeding... like at 120 inside the campus. And he crashed the bike, and... I know like somewhere deep inside – I know that he did it intentionally." Rayna also spoke of physical impacts that accompanied DCC when she explained that her abuser would "psychologically" torment her. She said,

> I would come into the apartment and all the lights would be off like he wasn't there, and then he'd like jump out and scare me and like... kick me and... throw me in a closet... he would act like he was just joking around. But, you know, it really did scare me and sometimes it did hurt me... I'm only like 4 foot, 11 inches in height and like under 100 pounds, and he was 6 foot, 2 inches and over 200 pounds. So, like, when he would do those things, it... it would hurt me.

Outside of these physical actions that resulted in lasting injuries for these survivors, two participants both spoke of instances in which DCC became sexual in nature. For example, one survivor described sexual abuse following her experience with DCC in the form of rape, and another disclosed an aborted pregnancy.

Social Impact.

All five survivors that were interviewed in this study, along with the stakeholder who dually discussed their experience as a survivor, reported substantial social impacts that resulted from their experience with DCC, most of which centered on lost friendships and isolation, or ramifications that continue to tarnish their relationships today. For instance, both Tegan and Beth spoke of the sheer number of friends they had lost because of their abuser's actions, with Tegan specifying that this was due to rumors her abuser spread and "over 200 people" that he had blocked from her Facebook account as he tried to control her online presence. Likewise, Maria explained that she lost several friends when she was forced to remove her and her abuser's "mutual friends" off social media, to prevent him from contacting her via other people's accounts. Maria and Paige further detailed how they changed their own behaviour to accommodate their abusers' preferences, limiting socialization with their friends both online and in person. Furthermore, three survivors (Tegan, Rayna, and Maria) discussed how they experienced isolation when they chose to alter their online behaviour to avoid future instances of abuse. Tegan explained that she "kind of went silent for a while and nobody'd really seen or heard from [her]" as she withdrew her online presence because she knew "that's why [she] was attacked so often." Rayna explained that she "became a lot more... closed off about what [she would] post online" even for friends and family, as she said,

> It's always in the back of my mind now, like I changed all my privacy settings on Facebook... I don't think you can even see what my profile picture is because, even to this day, I feel like he's still... monitoring it every once in a while.

Similar to this experience, Maria explained that upon starting her program at university and making new friends, one of them said, "'I can't find you on any social media?'", to

which she responded, “Yeah, it’s made that way now” in attempt to deter her abuser from further contact.

Outside of strained friendships and feelings of isolation, several survivors spoke of the impact their experience with DCC had on future relationships and the residual effects that continue to impact their relationships today. For instance, Maria explained that this experience made her “more... careful and hesitant in terms of dating” than she had been in the past. In contrast, Rayna detailed how this experience diminished her “standard[s] for [her] next boyfriend”, explaining that instead of dating because someone was “compatible” with her or because they “share similar interests”, she had “just accepted the bare minimum” because they were “nice”. Paige suggested that she may have also held lower standards for relationships following her experience, as she stated, “I kind of ended up in another romantic relationship that was also abusive.” Moreover, throughout Beth’s interview, it quickly became apparent that her experience with DCC has prompted skepticism of her own romantic choices. This was particularly apparent in one statement Beth had made where she said, “I hope I’m not repeating my tendencies to be drawn to people that lead or have ambition and that take charge, because I need to know my own limits.” In a similar vein, another participant described how she “still struggle[s] from a lot of things that came with that relationship”, admitting that she still grapples with unlearning certain “toxic” behaviours, doubts, and self-sabotaging her present relationship. She disclosed that this self-sabotage has taken the form of cheating on the person she loves today, but through therapy has come to realize this behaviour shows its face “[s]omewhere on the anniversary of... the abortion” where she has identified a pattern of her own “reckless” behaviour.

Emotional Impact.

Each survivor that was interviewed in this study also detailed several emotional impacts that followed their experience with DCC, primarily surrounding their own mental health and well-being, their lost sense of self and autonomy, and overcoming self-blame. In terms of mental health and well-being, three survivors in the study (Maria, Rayna, and Sophia) disclosed that they sought out therapy following their experiences, Maria revealed that she tried antidepressants, while Rayna said she "struggle[d] with drinking... hard liquor... for probably at least a year after that..." for which she explained "was a lot of effort to... stop that habit." Both Rayna and Sophia also revealed that, following their experience with DCC, they had been considering suicide or engaging in self-harm.

Several survivors made comments throughout their interviews that suggested DCC had further impacted their own sense of self and autonomy. This was particularly clear in statements made by Maria and Tegan. Maria described how the experience "destroyed [her] self-esteem" and said, "I feel like I had opinions before... like you have to have boundaries with your partners..." but proceeded to explain that she felt she lost those beliefs as handing over her phone and passwords to her abuser was the only thing she could do to "get him off [her] back." Maria and Tegan also described several examples throughout their interviews of instances in which they altered their own behaviour, as Maria put it, to "appease" their abusers – limiting their makeup and clothing choices and minimizing their social circles to avoid upsetting their abuser. This lost sense of self and autonomy was especially apparent in one statement made by Tegan, as she said, "I think I've kind of changed myself as a person to try to fit into this mould of what he wanted, which was very hard."

Just as this chapter began, many survivors initially expressed uncertainty throughout their interviews surrounding whether their experience could actually be classified as 'abuse'. Two participant's accounts in particular shed light on this uncertainty, as they each suggested in ample statements that they were themselves, at one time or another, partly to blame. Beth's interview was lathered from beginning to end in statements holding an undertone of self-blame, as she repeatedly used terms like "sheltered", "gullible", "young", and "meek" to describe herself and how she ended up in her situation. Moreover, she plainly disclosed that the biggest challenge she has had to face throughout this experience has been "personal shame". Several other statements throughout her interview held this same undertone of self-blame, including where she explained she "didn't know where to draw the line", that she "shouldn't have done it in the first place" when explaining she had let her abuser take intimate images of her, and that she overcame this experience through "maturity" and simply "grew out of it". In the same vein, Sophia described herself as "naïve" and "young", and her situation as only the "tip of the iceberg" while repeatedly expressing that "[t]here are people who have it way worse". Self-blame was unmistakably present in one statement, where Sophia explained,

> ...if someone else were to tell me this story, I would freak out. But because it happened to me and I was there, I felt like maybe somewhere I deserved it, somewhere... I must be doing something to deserve something like this. You know, maybe I can make him happier.

6.3 Challenges DCC has Presented for Stakeholders and Thereby Survivors in Canada

When stakeholders were asked what challenges DCC has illuminated for their work personally or their workplace more broadly, two major areas of discussion arose

across all interviews, concerning *the evolution of technology* and *inadequate support* – which were echoed across many interviews with survivors.

Evolution of Technology.

Four stakeholders included in this study spoke extensively of the ways in which the evolution of technology itself has presented challenges in responding to DCC, all of which came down to the same notions that DCC has become easier to engage in, and arguably as effective as traditional methods of abuse. Charlie, Tessa, and Whitney agreed that technology has provided abusers more ways than ever to harm their targets, with Tessa emphasizing that "the abuser definitely has the upper hand." These opinions were supported in a statement made by the survivor Sophia, as she explained, "it was everywhere all at once, so... for me to be able to gauge which [form of technology] was... more disruptive than the other is kind of difficult." Additionally, several stakeholders discussed the fact that technology has become "cheaper" (Charlie) and therefore more "accessible" (Tessa and Whitney), enabling abuse to "happen so quickly" (Whitney) with "minimal expertise" required (Charlie). These ideas were compounded in a statement made by Whitney describing an abuser's thought process, as she said, "'I don't actually have to see her to threaten her. I'm just gonna send her 100 text messages every day telling her I'm gonna kill her.'" Charlie made a strikingly similar remark while explaining the diverse ways in which abusers can harm their targets, when he said,

> You [the victim] leave [the situation of abuse], you know, they [the offender] get successfully off [from charges], but then the offenders go 'No, go ahead, go away, that's fine, I've got you on my phone, I can track you, I can control your money, I

> control everything about your life still. So sure, I'll abide by all the conditions on an EPO[61] [Emergency Protection Order], 'cause I don't need to worry about it.

Not only did this statement shed light on the plethora of ways in which technology enables abusers to harm their targets, but it simultaneously speaks to the ease of DCC, its ability to enable abusers to harm their targets while remaining at a distance, and thereby its ability to keep the survivor in a situation of abuse. Whitney, Tessa, and Winnie corroborated these facts as they agreed that technology can make abuse even more destructive, with a "bigger realm of influence and a bigger audience" (Tessa) than what is typically achieved with traditional methods of abuse. Winnie provided a highly pertinent example of the extended reach technology affords abusers, when she explained that a number of cases she has worked have gone international, and that "if family is overseas, like parents or grandparents, [abusers often] start to... connect with them digitally to try and put pressure on that victim to do something here." She explained that the "anonymity" technology affords abusers presents an additional challenge as sometimes these family members will be outright threatened by said abuser, while other times they won't even know he is the one behind the message. Furthermore, all stakeholders included in this study agreed that above all, the biggest challenge they're faced with is the rate at which technology evolves, as Charlie said, "[w]e can think we have a handle on something... and then in six months..." it can be completely different with new devices, software, and updates to navigate.

[61] See footnote 40 for an explanation of 'emergency protection orders' (EPOs).

Inadequate Support.

The other substantial challenge to responding to DCC that arose in conversation with stakeholders pertained to inadequate support, that can be further distilled into *challenges obtaining funding* and *poor response from fellow stakeholders*.

Two stakeholders interviewed in this study discussed several challenges they have faced in an effort to obtain funding for their organization. Charlie explained that the "D.V. world can be very competitive" as everyone is competing for increased funding for their programs. He indicated that at one point he had to limit himself to part-time work for their organization during personal hours, since they were previously "volunteer based" and he "still [has] to pay the bills". Charlie explained that their organization has only recently been "able to do some contract work to be able to pay some of the contractors", as a result, he described their organization as "lean and mean", with two of their greatest challenges being "funding" and limited "manpower". Whitney described the same challenges in her interview, detailing that most funding her organization received was "time limited" requiring them to "find multiple funding sources", and that for quite some time, she was working on this project alone with only the help of "a few part-time folks". Explaining that other projects and "other countries have... 10 people on staff focusing on... just this", such as those occurring at "NNEDV [National Network to End Domestic Violence]" in Washington, DC and "WestNet Australia".

Three stakeholders (Charlie, Whitney, and Winnie) further described their common challenge of receiving poor support from fellow stakeholders while responding to DCC. Unsurprisingly, this poor support often took the form of either *not believing the survivor* or *outdated and insufficient tools used for response*. Charlie and Whitney agreed

that a major challenge they face in their work is other stakeholders who do not believe the survivor, whether those be shelter workers and other frontline support workers, lawyers, or law enforcement. Charlie explained that he often hears these sectors doubt clients' stories of DCC and say "'Well no... that couldn't be happening'", whereas his team in contrast say, "'That definitely can happen, whether it is happening or not, we don't know" and either attempt to "prove that it's happening" or not, and at least "[g]ive them a plan of action" to regain their safety and peace of mind. Whitney added that sometimes it's not only that these sectors don't believe the abuse is happening, but "because the violence... or abuse is done through technology, it's not seen as important or as high risk as physical or financial abuse..." This reality was echoed in the experience of the survivor Rayna, as she detailed a concerning experience with police following an incident report. She disclosed that after a bar fight between her ex-abuser and a new guy she had been seeing, and reporting this to the police alongside a voicemail left by the ex-abuser threatening to "rip this guy's eyes out" and "kill [her]", the police had "disposed of [her] file because they had... contacted him and that's all they could do". Rayna also said,

> But I felt like that just put me at risk because they basically gave [the abuser] a heads up that, you know, I had gone to the police and then I didn't even know that he had been contacted. So, that made me really just wanna like... I... I stopped kind of trusting the police and then I just kind of took it into my own hands...

As illustrated in Rayna's experience and stated by Whitney - among other stakeholders - "buy in" to DCC seems to be a particular challenge with law enforcement. Whitney continued to explain that while there may be work happening on this front from the "legal academic" arena, "there are huge gaps within current legislation or statutes about tech facilitated gender-based violence." Charlie likewise spoke of these gaps in

emergency protection orders (EPOs) and risk assessment (RA) tools. He detailed that regarding EPOs "the court system has not caught up" as they still fail to require that the abuser "logs out... from all of their smart home devices, issues passwords... transfers ownership of alarm systems, all that kind of stuff...". Similarly, when it comes to RA tools, Charlie indicated that "with the cyber side, none of those danger assessments or any of those [risk assessment tools], take this into account, and the threat can go from one to 100 overnight, if [the abuser] lose[s] that control." In a similar manner to these statements, Winnie acknowledged that "criminal law was written long before the internet was in focus" and "digital phones", and as a direct result, admitted that "there are not a lot of legal grounds for us to work with." She continued to say that while some existing "charges can be laid, regardless of what realm [of offence] it falls into" she doesn't believe it "holds... the degree of gravity" that ought to be placed upon abuse cases involving intimate partners. Another challenge discussed by Winnie was the "catch up" she felt she had to play to learn more about DCC, as she explained that despite regular training within their organization, "oftentimes our victims are the ones that are letting us know what's new" when it comes to digital abuse. Winnie eloquently concluded that it's a "digital world, [and] we gotta catch up."

6.4 How Stakeholders in Canada are Responding to DCC

When the stakeholders interviewed for the purpose of this study were asked to speak to the ways in which they themselves or the organization in which they work for were responding to cases of DCC, two primary forms of response surfaced, including *response through education and training initiatives* and *response through technology itself*.

Education & Training Initiatives.

All five stakeholders involved in this study spoke of education and training initiatives they have engaged in as a response to DCC. Tessa described how her organization assists survivors and other stakeholders "navigate the criminal justice system [and] the family law system", but when it comes to DCC she is primarily involved in more of a frontline "counselling" and advocacy role, providing advice and best practices to survivors to improve their safety. Similarly, Tegan discussed how she has taken it upon herself to become involved in schools in her community, educating youth on the potential harms of technology and ways of improving their online safety. Two stakeholders (Charlie and Whitney) discussed how much of their education and training on DCC revolves around supporting fellow stakeholders. Charlie explained that his organization will work alongside shelters and police agencies and provide presentations on the use of technology in situations of IPV. Including "walking [these stakeholders] through what they need to look for" in terms of technology abuse when new survivors come forward and even "introducing them to Faraday Bags", used to protect the survivor's devices from outside signals or hacking "until they can determine whether that phone [or other device] might be compromised." Likewise, Whitney explained that most of her work at her organization revolves around "enhancing [the] toolbox" of frontline workers, providing them with training and toolkits - among other resources - on "[s]afety planning... legal remed[ies]... preserving digital evidence resources. Resources for teenagers, [and] resources for agencies..." who use technology to assist survivors in their day-to-day work. In addition to this, Whitney mentioned that her organization has also provided quite a bit of education on DCC for schools within their community, including

recently joining a local university advisory board, to discuss topics like “media smarts”, “healthy relationships”, and “digital literacy” with students.

Harnessing Technology.

All five stakeholders in this study were also able to speak to various ways in which they harnessed technology itself to respond to DCC. For instance, outside of virtual training opportunities and the “technology-facilitated violence toolkits” provided on Whitney’s organization website, she explained that she has recently been involved in quite of bit of consulting, providing tech giants like Apple and Facebook, and even local cellphone providers with insight into DCC related concerns with their products, to provide improved services to survivors. Tessa discussed using webinars and podcasts as a means of harnessing technology to respond to DCC. Similarly, Tegan detailed that she has been using popular social media applications, such as TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to make educational material concerning DCC to appeal to younger generations.

Charlie provided a substantial account of the technology his team deploys themselves in response to DCC. He explained that his organization’s Domestic Violence Response Program “is probably the most unique program across Canada, if not the world” as it is made up of three primary specialities, including an “alarm program”, a “panic button program”, and a “cyber program”. In their alarm program, which he clarified involves more “physical interventions”, he said, “we have a full alarm system installed and we cover the cost of monitoring that system”, which is reviewed every three months to determine if it is still in use or whether more equipment is necessary should the risk of the case escalate. This alarm program includes “fully monitored cameras,

surveillance, [and even] escorts to and from essential life". He explained that often times this alarm program serves a dual function, capturing "physical evidence for police of... the offender actually showing up... [leaving] notes... [or causing] physical damage like tires being slashed..." and added that "it's essential that we get that on video as much as possible." With their panic button program, Charlie detailed that it will actually link to the client's smartphone, where it can either "connect to family or friends that you trust and will actually force [your] location" to show them where you are, or it "forces the phone to dial 911... I believe [automatically in]... 60 seconds." He added that, "we do know of at least one case that that has saved our clients' life..."

Furthermore, Charlie described several elements that make up their cyber program, detailing that they are "the only program that... can actually scan iPhones" while maintaining privacy of the client's phone and utilize software "that will actually identify any kind of spyware[62]" on that phone. He added that they will also "scan the [internet] router [to] see if there's any unknown devices... like cameras"; they can "do bug detection" and with the assistance of their mechanic, can "fully scan [a] vehicle"; and with the help of their IT specialists can have a complete analysis of a computer completed, which would usually cost someone "upwards of 3 to $400". In regard to compromised accounts such as social media or online bank accounts, he explained that

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[62] As detailed in a 2019 report by the Citizen Lab – A University of Toronto-based interdisciplinary research lab focused on "information and communication technologies, human rights and global security" (Citizen Lab, n.d.) - 'Spyware' is a type of software that "enables a remote user to covertly obtain data about another individual's activities on an electronic device" by secretly transferring data from the target device to the perpetrator's computer (Parsons, 2019, p. 10). When said software is used to "facilitate intimate partner violence, abuse, or harassment," this report specifies that the term 'Stalkerware' is most appropriate (Parsons, 2019, p. 6). For more information, see Parsons (2019) or visit the Citizen Lab website at https://citizenlab.ca/.

they will take the time to determine "how [any] breaches could happen" and will assist clients with "two-factor authentication[63]". Charlie mention that they will even help survivors get back on their feet after a move, guiding them in setting up utilities and internet services, and planning their day-to-day routes, including transit stops; safe spaces should they encounter the offender; and where they'll leave their car. Charlie emphasized that through "showing clients what to look for, how to check IP addresses[64], how to check all that stuff" their goal is to ensure that "by the time [survivors] leave [their organization], their knowledge base [of technology] is hopefully better than the offender's."

6.5 Summary of Interview Findings

Through interviews with IPV survivors and stakeholders, this chapter was able to provide an extensive account of how DCC is unfolding across Canada, the challenges DCC has presented for Canadian stakeholders who assist survivors, and insight into how these stakeholders are responding to DCC within Canada. While much of this resulting data is fascinating, some of the key findings from this research are especially worthy of reiterating.

In terms of how DCC is unfolding across Canada, this study revealed that cellphones and social media applications are the predominant form of technology

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[63] According to the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security's glossary, 'Two-Factor Authentication' is a form of "multi-factor authentication used to confirm the identity of a user. Authentication is validated by using a combination of two different factors including: something you know (e.g. a password), something you have (e.g. a physical token), or something you are (a biometric) (CCCS, n.d.)."

[64] The Government of Canada's Get Cyber Safe campaign's glossary outlines that an 'IP address' is a unique identification number, which is assigned to computers and other devices that are connected to the internet (GCS, n.d.).

employed by abusers to harm current or former partners in the context of IPV. Surprisingly, it was also found that iCloud and internet routers are common, providing abusers with unmatched access to their partner's personal and professional lives. Moreover, participants confirmed that smart home technology and IoT devices including smart assistants, doorbells and locks, ear buds, AirTags and even smart vehicles, have been utilized to harass, gain undesired access to survivors' homes and private conversations, or physically track survivors in cases of IPV. This study also revealed tentative explanations for why abusers engage in DCC from the perspectives of participants, including the abuser's own fear of the survivor moving on to a better life without them; and the abuser's own demons, that centered around low self-worth and fears of rejection, immense jealousy and distrust of other men, and inclined them to shame and degrade their partners to regain dominance while appearing as the true victim deserving of the sympathy and attention of others.

Results from this study also suggest that DCC had a substantial impact on the lives of survivors faced with it, including financial and physical impacts related to unpaid debt, minor injuries, an instance of rape, and one abortion. Survivors in this study also reported significant social and emotional costs; the former concerned lost friendships, heightened sense of isolation, and difficulties in future romantic partnerships; while the latter pertained to the survivors' deteriorated mental health and well-being, their lost sense of self and autonomy, and self-blame they tied to their experience of DCC.

It was further found that stakeholders face several challenges when providing DCC support to survivors. This included keeping up with evolving technologies that are becoming cheaper, more accessible, more user-friendly, and simultaneously reaching

larger audiences than traditional methods of abuse – making abuse easier, faster, and more inconspicuous than ever before and improving the capacity for perpetrators to keep survivors in situations of abuse. Stakeholders also revealed that navigating through inadequate support from fellow stakeholders was another major challenge they face. As funding is a constant challenge to obtain, while also having to regularly convince stakeholders this form of abuse is real and can happen in ways just as serious as physical violence. Furthermore, this study found stakeholders challenged with out of date and insufficient tools to support survivors of DCC, including EPOs and RA tools that fail to consider technology in situations of IPV; and a *Criminal Code* that provides few offences appliable to IPV, let alone DCC, and lacks adequate 'gravity' for holding offenders accountable to harms they bring upon intimate partners.

Finally, this study shed light on several ways stakeholders are responding to DCC, including delivering DCC education to survivors and youth, and training initiatives for fellow stakeholders. Along with various ways in which these stakeholders capitalize on the benefits of technology itself to expand their educational reach or offer services to physically improve the safety of survivors – be that the installation of physical alarm and camera systems, panic buttons to connect them to emergency services, or physically removing tracking devices and spyware from survivors' personal belongings.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This thesis aimed to shed light on how intimate partner violence (IPV) has been occurring in the form of digital coercive control (DCC) throughout Canada. In doing so, this thesis simultaneously intended to address several gaps in the literature on the issue. The first of which was the lack of research pertaining to Canadian trends and experiences of DCC, followed by the dearth of research incorporating the perspectives of survivors, limited information on the challenges faced by stakeholders assisting survivors, and the absence of research into the ways in which stakeholders use technology itself to respond to DCC. These gaps illuminated three fundamental areas of interest to be further explored in the realm of DCC research that directly informed the questions this study sought to answer, including:

1. How have IPV survivors in Canada experienced DCC and what effect has this had upon them?

2. What challenges has DCC created for Canadian stakeholders who are involved in assisting survivors?

3. How have IPV stakeholders across Canada utilized technology to respond to DCC, and more specifically, what do they know and share about DCC on their online websites?

In attempt to answer these questions, this study had two primary research objectives. The first of which involved engaging in a quantitative content analysis of a sample of IPV stakeholder websites across Canada, to better understand how stakeholders harness technology to respond to DCC and explore what they know and share about DCC online. The second was to interview a sample of both DCC survivors and stakeholders who have either had direct or indirect experience with DCC, to capture their accounts of the phenomenon, explore the impacts DCC has had upon survivors, understand the

challenges stakeholders face in addressing the issue, and ultimately determine how we can improve our current responses to better assist women faced with DCC in the future.

The remainder of this discussion chapter will unpack the key research findings, diving into the meaning of these findings and situating them amongst the literature in an effort to answer the research questions guiding this study, while exploring both the connections and variations in findings from the literature and possible explanations. The discussion will be structured in accordance with the research questions, beginning by unpacking *survivors' experience of DCC and its effects*, followed by the *challenges faced by stakeholders responding to DCC*, before moving into *harnessing technology to respond to DCC*. Afterwards, a discussion of the other critical but unanticipated findings of the research will be discussed, that likewise provide a substantial contribution to the academic literature on DCC. The chapter will conclude with a final summary of the research findings, consolidating the knowledge obtained from the literature on DCC, the key findings of this study, and the higher-level unforeseen findings identified through the analysis of this study's key findings that have broader implications for practice.

7.1 Unpacking the Research Findings Amongst the Literature

7.1.1 Survivors' Experience of DCC & it's Effects

The first question that this research study sought to answer, was '*How have IPV survivors in Canada experienced DCC and what effect has this had upon them*?'. Through semi-structured interviews with a sample of IPV survivors and stakeholders who have had either personal or professional experience with DCC, the study was able to satisfy this research question.

This study found that online harassment and threats with phones and social media applications – including text, voicemail and phone calls, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat – are the most common technologies and applications deployed to achieve DCC in situations of IPV within Canada, in the experience of all participants within this study. According to the stakeholders interviewed, other common technologies deployed in cases of DCC are iCloud and internet routers, along with smart home and other IoT devices - such as smart assistants, smart vehicles, or AirTags - that were used in the harassment, invasion of personal privacy, controlling access to technology, and tracking and monitoring of survivors of IPV in cases the stakeholders have worked or advised upon. These findings are consistent with the quantitative content analysis findings, as websites discussing the issue of DCC in the context of IPV predominantly listed cell phones and social media applications, along with smart home appliances, as the most common technologies used in cases of DCC; further indicating this technology's purpose for electronic surveillance and monitoring, online harassment and threats, and controlling access to technology.

The survivors involved in this study were also willing to speak of their first-hand experience of the effects of DCC. At times this involved financial or physical impacts, including a case of sexual assault; however, the most common implications of DCC, according to these survivors, pertained to long-term social and emotional impacts. Survivors in this study detailed serious social impacts such as lost friendships, amplified feelings of isolation, and adopting negative or self-sabotaging behaviour that harmed their future relationships. Most survivors experienced these impacts as a result of their abuser's efforts to segregate them from family and friends with rumours intended to

damage their reputation, tamper with their social media accounts to block or delete contacts they disapproved of, or manipulate them into limiting their socialization - either directly shaming them into altering their behaviour or indirectly causing them to withdraw from online spaces or previous commitments to avoid further abuse. Several survivors described how this withdrawn demeanour became a long-term struggle, trickling into future relationships and causing them to be more careful, hesitant, and unsure of their own choices than ever before. In contrast, other survivors explained diminished relationship standards following their experience with DCC, describing themselves as more 'reckless', accepting the 'bare minimum' from romantic partners, and even finding themselves in other abusive relationships.

Regarding emotional impacts, several survivors in this study described their strained mental health and well-being, leading some to engage in substance use, consider self-harm, or seek therapy or support from anti-depressants. Additionally, some survivors described their lost sense of self and autonomy as an emotional impact of DCC, emphasizing their 'destroyed self-esteem', their loss of previous relationship 'boundaries', and several daily behaviours they altered to please their abuser as personal as daily makeup and clothing choices. Other survivors suggested long-term emotional impacts following DCC in the form of lingering feelings of self-blame as they continued to minimize their own experience of DCC, questioned whether it was 'abuse,' and repeatedly attributed their experience to their 'youthfulness' and 'immaturity' at that time. The quantitative content analysis likewise supported these findings, as although stakeholder websites revealed limited coverage of the impacts of DCC, those that did cover this primarily focused on substantial social and emotional impacts for survivors.

While the existing research in this field of study covered the types of technology used for harm in DCC extensively, it did not provide insight into potential variations in a Canadian context. Nevertheless, in line with this study's findings, existing research suggested that the most common tactic used by abusers in situations of DCC was online harassment and threats via text and social media platforms (Douglas et al., 2019; Dragiewicz et al., 2018) and further advised that there is growing concern over smart home and IoT device abuse (Hand et al., 2009). Existing research also found common tactics of DCC to include GPS tracking and monitoring, and impersonation or hacking of personal accounts and devices (Al-Alosi, 2017; Douglas et al., 2019). Although within this study, GPS misuse, impersonation, and hacking were only found within stakeholder interviews, and were either not known or discussed in the experiences of survivors who were interviewed.

Furthermore, existing research into the effects of DCC upon survivors, primarily focused on the perceptions of these harms from the perspectives of stakeholders, with limited empirical evidence coming directly from survivors. Despite this, stakeholders involved in several existing studies have similarly found DCC's effects to span most areas of personal life, having not only a social impact upon survivors, but also an emotional, and at times financial or physical influence. Just as this study has found, existing research largely discussed social impacts of DCC that cumulated in damaged reputations and isolation of survivors who chose to retreat from certain environments to avoid additional abuse (Woodlock et al., 2020). Much of this literature also discussed emotional implications of DCC that were similarly identified within this study, including reports of high levels of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and substance use (Al-Alosi, 2017).

While this study notably found serious physical implications to follow DCC, much of the literature on the subject discussed physical impacts occurring more commonly and for some women, with greater severity – including cases as severe as domestic homicide (Al-Alosi, 2017).

When considered as a whole, the existing research on DCC and this study share many similarities, which only confirm that DCC is occurring in Canada and is thereby not a phenomenon unique to other countries. At the same time, there are several variations amongst the study's findings and existing findings on DCC, that ought to be further discussed. The first substantial variation relates to smart home technology and other IoT devices, as the literature found this to be a growing concern over the last decade (Yardley, 2020). Interestingly, while this study found stakeholders commonly discussing smart home technology and IoT devices in the context of DCC in their interviews and a handful of stakeholder websites concerned with DCC covering it, this manifestation of DCC was not discussed among any of the survivors within this study. While these technologies are certainly on the rise and becoming not only more affordable but also more accessible to the greater public, it is essential to reflect upon this finding, as the fact that all but one survivor involved in this study were recruited from a university setting, may have played a role in this variation. Arguably, survivors recruited from a university setting may still be in a very transitory phase of their lives. They are often of younger age, living apart from their family home, renting space on or near campus, and commonly living off savings and student loans or income from a part-time job. As such, university students may not have the financial means nor the desire for smart home technology and other IoT devices at this stage in their lives, which may explain why these

technologies were not found to be used in the context of DCC in the research with survivors. Alternatively, this variation could be explained by the stakeholder Whitney's insight that smart home and other IoT device abuse could be dependent on location, as she explained her belief that urban and rural settings may impact the type of abuse individuals are exposed to, and each survivor recruited for this study was identified from one of Canada's more rural universities.

Another variation of interest between the current and former research on DCC, lies in the fact that two stakeholders within this study spoke of DCC occurring through iCloud and internet routers as a significant concern, while the literature provided no such information. Making findings concerning iCloud and internet routers a vital additive to the literature. Nevertheless, its lack of existing coverage in literature outside of this research, may be due to it being a highly overlooked manifestation of DCC, as while most people utilize iCloud and internet routers within their daily lives, many do not understand the intricacies of this technology and their functions outside of mere storage or providing internet. Alternatively, this variation could also relate to differences in location, as the two stakeholders who expressed concern over the matter were similarly located within Western Canada, while the remaining stakeholders and survivors elsewhere expressed no such concerns.

Additionally, discussion of DCC in terms of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA)[65] was commonly found within the literature (Douglas et al, 2019); however, the stakeholders within this study only brought this concern up a handful of times within their interviews, few websites in the content analysis discussed IBSA, and no survivor involved in this study brought up IBSA in their interview - outside of one case of threats. While IBSA may certainly be a dimension of DCC that did not occur to most survivors in this study, it should be noted that this too may be a widely overlooked or unknown manifestation of DCC, even to survivors. For instance, IBSA is commonly associated with cases of cyberbullying - as seen in the high-profile Canadian cyberbullying cases of Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons that led to the criminalization of IBSA in 2015[66]- and overlooked when it comes to intimate partners, which may help explain this difference. It should also be acknowledged that the small survivor sample size could have impacted this finding, which would likewise offer alterative explanations for the prior variations discussed within this chapter.

Another interesting variation to consider is that the literature spoke extensively of the high potential for DCC to cumulate in physical impacts for survivors (Al-Alosi, 2017; Hand et al., 2009), which was not found to the same degree amongst interviews with survivors in this study. This is another finding of interest that is perhaps simply indicative

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[65] Image-based Sexual Abuse is also commonly referred to as 'Revenge Porn' (Al-Alosi, 2017) and officially recognized in Canada as the offence of non-consensual distribution of intimate images, outlined in section 162.1 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. See Al-Alosi, 2017 or *Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46, s 162.1 for more information.

[66] Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons were Canadian youth who experienced image-based sexual abuse and prolonged online harassment that led them both to take their own lives and are today held as stark reminders of the severe harms associated with the non-consensual distribution of intimate images and cyberbullying. For more information, see Macaulay, 2021.

of a small interview sample. However, it should be noted that the lack of physical impacts associated with DCC for survivors within this study, could also be tied to the survivor recruitment site. Posing the question of whether the recruitment of survivors from sites outside of a university setting, such as a women's shelter where individuals go to flee situations of violence, would have provided more findings consistent with the literature, that illustrate DCC's association to physical violence?

Considering the variations that exist in how survivors experience DCC and its effects between the findings of this study and the literature, is particularly useful. Taken together, these variations and potential explanations expose further results that are relevant to the field of DCC and IPV research, to science, and to broader society. First, these variations suggest that age, location, and income bracket may play a significant role in how DCC is experienced, and the impacts felt amongst survivors across Canada. Additionally, the variations speak to the need for future research to explore these potential factors in depth, with not only a larger sample size, but also diverse participant recruitment sites.

7.1.2 Challenges Faced by Stakeholders Responding to DCC

The second question that this study sought to answer, was '*what challenges has DCC created for Canadian stakeholders who are involved in assisting survivors*?' As with the previous research question, this question was also satisfied through the combination of IPV survivor and stakeholder interviews.

This study found that the *evolution of technology* itself, was a reoccurring theme present across all interviews discussing the challenges DCC has created for stakeholders

who are tasked with supporting survivors. Overall, stakeholders left the impression that this is one of their greatest challenges, as not only is more technology available than ever before, but this technology is constantly becoming more advanced, easier to use, cheaper, and therefore more accessible to a wider population. Thereby affording abusers in situations of IPV more options to harm their targets, with even less of a skillset, while simultaneously providing them greater anonymity, greater reach, and a greater audience – only serving to illustrate DCC's potential for far greater 'destruction' than traditional methods of abuse.

Moreover, *inadequate support* was identified as an overarching theme amongst participant interviews within this study, relating to the challenges stakeholders face while responding to DCC. According to stakeholders, this inadequate support was felt in their never-ending challenge of *obtaining funding*, in a competitive social service environment, where minimal and often restrictive time-limited funding, further hinder their organization's ability to retain support personnel. Additionally, inadequate support was felt regarding *fellow stakeholders*, as several interviews revealed that there remains a tendancy for some stakeholders to not believe the survivor coming forward with a case of DCC, or not treat such cases with the same degree of concern as other cases of abuse. Several stakeholders and survivors found this to be the case especially amongst law enforcement personnel. In addition to these findings, inadequate support also took the form of the *outdated and insufficient tools* at the stakeholders' disposal, with interviews repeatedly referencing gaps in current Canadian legislation when it comes to IPV and DCC, along with Risk Assessment Tools and provincial Emergency Protection Orders that fail to consider abuse via technology. This theme of inadequate support for

stakeholders was similarly identified within the content analysis of stakeholder websites, where it was found that no site in the analysis targeted stakeholders as an audience exclusively to educate, support, nor train them on DCC[67] and that only *one* out of the 50 websites analyzed provided any education or training opportunities on DCC for stakeholders, anti-violence workers, and the general public[68].

Existing research into the challenges stakeholders face while attempting to respond to DCC only corroborates this study's findings. As the most prominent themes within this area of existing research likewise pertain to the same concerns over the quick and advancing nature of technology that have physically 'extended' and 'amplified' IPV (Dragiewicz et al., 2018), the lack of support provided by fellow stakeholders - especially law enforcement members (Harris & Woodlock, 2018; Woodlock, 2019; Yardley, 2020) - and the inadequate or limited legislation for responding to IPV (Grant, 2015). Unlike this study, the inadequate support coming from fellow stakeholders that were discussed in the literature not only focused on fellow stakeholders not believing survivors or taking their accounts of DCC seriously but also on what was considered "blanket advice" (Harris & Woodlock, 2018, p. 540) and "safety work" (Harris & Woodlock, 2018, p. 539; Yardley, 2020, p. 1481) many of these stakeholders would assign survivors of DCC to avoid and delete technology. Thereby forcing survivors to take on a "disproportionate burden" (Douglas et al., 2019, p. 564) of protecting themselves from their abuser's harm.

[67] See Chapter 5, Figure 4.
[68] See Appendix I, Table 9.

This burden was also discussed in the literature as "responsibilization" by Grant (2015) as she pointed to the current offence of Criminal Harassment outlined in section 264 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, to argue that through the definition and key elements of this offence, women in Canada bear the responsibility of avoiding criminal harassment and ensuring the accused knows that his own behaviour is harassing (p. 554). Much like Grant (2015) has argued, literature on DCC has suggested that women who choose not to take steps to deter the online abuse and harassment by their current or former partners, tend to be viewed by stakeholders as "unwilling to help themselves" (Harris & Woodlock, 2018, p. 539) and are subsequently blamed for their experience of DCC by the stakeholders who are responsible for assisting them – constituting "new forms of victim-blaming" (Harris & Woodlock, 2018, p. 539) for survivors. In addition to these challenges, existing studies frequently spoke of the 'normalization' (Harris & Woodlock, 2018, p. 541; Yardley, 2020, p. 1483) of DCC amongst survivors themselves as a substantial challenge for stakeholders responding to DCC. As far too often the subtle and seemingly innocuous nature of repeated texts and phone calls, or the monitoring of devices and questioning of whereabouts that occur in cases of DCC, are mistaken for 'average' and 'romantic' behaviours, and therefore dismissed by survivors who are unaware that this too can constitute abuse (Harris & Woodlock, 2018).

There are some significant variations between the literature on the challenges experienced by stakeholders when responding to DCC and the findings of this research. Such as inadequate support felt by stakeholders this study, in terms of limited funding or gaps that exist in emergency protection orders and risk assessment tools – that were not found within any of the literature consulted. Although, looking at the similarities between

these studies also serve to reveal important insights. One such similarity pertains to the normalization of DCC amongst survivors. Much like the literature has explored, almost each survivor interviewed in this study admitted that they didn't initially recognize their experience as 'abuse'. This consistency appears to be indicative of the gap that lingers in IPV education in Canada, as while progress is being made to expand the understanding of IPV, it still appears to be predominantly viewed by the public in terms of its physical forms. This finding also appears to speak to the abusive behaviours of which society is tolerant. In addition to normalizing the abuse they experienced, some survivors in this study repeatedly minimized and blamed their experience upon themselves as opposed to understanding that they, too, have equal rights to their privacy, freedom of expression, and participation online, while remaining free from harassment, degrading treatment, and discrimination – even in online and other virtual contexts.

Another important similarity to point out lies in the mutual finding between the current and past research into DCC, that stakeholders – particularly law enforcement – are not believing survivors' accounts of DCC or treating their experiences as seriously and as high risk as other forms of abuse. Leaving survivors to engage in their own 'safety work' to protect themselves from harm. In the current study, this was particularly evident in the case of the survivor Rayna, as she revealed that after reporting harassment and threats made by her abuser to the police, the police called her abuser, tipping him off to her report of abuse, but did not take the case any further and claimed, 'that's all they could do'. Which only placed Rayna at a greater risk of harm with these efforts and forced her to resort to her own 'safety work' to protect herself from future instances of harm. These similarities also appear to be suggestive of the serious problem that remains

in greater society's understanding of IPV, outside of physical harms, and thereby speaks to the need for further education and training for stakeholders – and law enforcement in particular – who work frontline with survivors of IPV in its various forms.

Building on these similarities is the fact that the literature and this study both found that the tools currently available to stakeholders for responding to DCC are outdated, insufficient, and ineffective. This was demonstrated in the literature by Grant (2015) and Crocker (2008) with their critiques of the legislation on Criminal Harassment in the *Criminal Code of Canada*, given that Criminal Harassment is currently the most applicable offence to DCC. It was further demonstrated by several stakeholders in this study who acknowledged that "criminal law was written long before the internet" or phones (Winnie), that "there are huge gaps within current legislation or statutes..." concerning DCC (Whitney), and that existing Canadian offences lack suitable "gravity" when pursuing charges for harms that occur between intimate partners (Winnie). This consistency speaks to the need for expanding the *Criminal Code* to more adequately account for the non-physical harms that arise in cases of IPV, such as coercive control (CC) and its digital counterpart, DCC. It also speaks to the need to adjust existing legislation, such as the offence of Criminal Harassment. Both measures would give stakeholders such as police, courts, and prosecutors more applicable and, thereby, effective legislation to respond appropriately to such complex cases of IPV. At the same time, creating new or adjusting existing legislation could avoid further cases of survivors reporting IPV - just as Rayna had – only to be disbelieved and revictimized by a legal system that told them they 'cannot help'; told them that their experience is not 'serious' enough; or told them that they must protect themselves from their abuser's harm, by

taking ‘disproportionate’ steps to share less online, block or delete the abuser, or stay offline altogether. Or assigned them the ‘responsibility’ to ‘disproportionately’ prove in a case of Criminal Harassment, for instance, that they feared for their safety, that the fear they experienced was ‘reasonable’ in “all the circumstances” (*Criminal Code*, RSC 1985, c C-46, s 264.1) and that their abuser knew that his own behaviour was harassing[69] - without assigning this same responsibility to the abuser himself (Grant, 2015).

Comparing the similarities across findings from this research and that of the literature, serves to expose several additional insights into the challenges stakeholders face when responding to DCC, which only add to the field of DCC and IPV research and suggest broader implications for the Canadian legal system, anti-violence workers, and thereby greater society. In short, the findings of this study, paired with the literature, support the common notion in the literature that DCC is not a *new* form of IPV, but rather a distinct sub-category of CC, which enables abusers to physically ‘extend’ and ‘amplify’ their abuse to new contexts and new audiences, to keep women in situations of abuse. Furthermore, these findings confirm the remaining gap in IPV education amongst greater society, stakeholders, and particularly law enforcement, who must each engage in further education and training to expand their understanding of IPV from purely physical forms, along with their DCC training initiatives and resources that are available in person and on their online websites. Additionally, these similarities have illustrated the ineffective nature of existing *Criminal Code* offences that are applicable to DCC. Further suggesting that not only do they lack “gravity” (Winnie) in the context of IPV and thus minimize the

[69] See Chapter 3, p. 33-34, for the legal definition of Criminal Harassment within the *Criminal Code.*

experience of survivors and communicate to the public, and law enforcement personnel, that IPV is not serious unless it is physical, but they also place 'disproportionate' work upon survivors to avoid harm by their abuser or harm from the legal system itself if they fail to comply with this work. Importantly, the above findings further support the growing interest in expanding the *Criminal Code of Canada* to better account for non-physical forms of IPV. This expansion could follow in the footsteps of other successful countries - such as England and Whales, Queensland Australia, and a handful of states within the United States – by moving forward to legislate CC as a criminal offence in Canadian criminal law. Not only will this serve to expand Canada's collective understanding of IPV, but it will also increase the likelihood that law enforcement will believe survivors and take their accounts of non-physical forms of IPV seriously. Giving them the appropriate tools to effectively respond to CC and thereby DCC with in the process.

7.1.3 Harnessing Technology to Respond to DCC

The third research question this study sought to answer was 'How have IPV stakeholders across Canada utilized technology to respond to DCC, and more specifically, what do they know and share about DCC on their online websites?' This question was intended to be answered through the online quantitative content analysis of a sample of IPV stakeholder websites in Canada. While the content analysis certainly provided some important contributions to satisfy this research question – particularly what stakeholders know and share about DCC on their websites – the interviews within this study provided a far greater understanding of how stakeholders in Canada are using

technology to respond. With both the content analysis and the interview findings, this study was able to successfully answer this final research question.

Through the quantitative content analysis this study found that the sample of 50 IPV stakeholder websites originating from diverse locations within Canada, are not being utilized by the stakeholders to their full potential. As only a handful of sites are capitalizing on their platform and using it as a tool to not only educate and respond to IPV but also DCC. The findings of the content analysis did serve to support much of the existing research and interview data collected within this study, on how DCC is unfolding across Canada. More specifically, the content analysis found that of the 50 stakeholder websites that were sampled in this study and discussed DCC, the most common forms they covered were electronic surveillance and monitoring, online harassment and threats, and controlling access to technology. In terms of the type of technology the sites discussed being used in the context of IPV, computers and laptops, telephones and cell phones, along with smart home technology and IoT devices were identified as the most common. As aforementioned, the content analysis also revealed that there is a significant lack of DCC training offered for stakeholders and the public on these websites, which only reflect findings within the literature, and the lack of support discussed by stakeholders involved in the interviews within this study. Just as the survivors interviewed for this study described, the content analysis also revealed that DCC is primarily discussed on these websites in terms of its social and emotional impacts upon survivors, lacking in the discussion of its potential to coincide with financial or physical violence. Furthermore, this content analysis found that only four out of 50 sites in the sample utilized their website platform as a safety measure for users, offering them a

warning sign of the high potential for DCC to occur in situations of IPV - often in the form of monitoring online internet browsing activity - and how essential it is to clear their browsing history, cookies[70], or cache[71] after viewing the stakeholder site. Moreover, this study found that less than half of the sites in the sample provided users with insight into the potential benefits technology can offer survivors in the context of IPV.

The interviews conducted within this study produced findings that substantially contributed to the third research question guiding this study, highlighting how IPV stakeholders within Canada use technology to respond to DCC. For instance, it was found that some of the IPV stakeholders interviewed use technology to *expand their education and training initiatives*, capitalizing on technology's ability to host virtual conferences and webinars, provide downloadable safety toolkits and other resources online, and make use of popular social media platforms to create and share DCC content with youth. One stakeholder discussed his use of *Faraday Bags* with survivors in response to DCC, that are designed to protect devices from outside signals and hacking, to prevent potential evidence and other material from being erased on survivor's phones, or offenders tracking survivors via these devices. Another stakeholder explained how she is *partnering with technology companies* in response to DCC, consulting on their technology products and services to increase the future safety for survivors of IPV. This study also found a stakeholder *implementing various physical intervention services*

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[70] According to Google's online Help Center, 'cookies' are data files that are kept from websites that the user visits to enhance their online browsing experience, by saving this data and tracking their browsing preferences (Google, 2023).

[71] In a similar manner to cookies, 'cache' was designed to enhance the user browsing experience by remembering parts of the explored pages, such as images, to assist these sites load faster when revisited by the user (Google, 2023).

involving technology, to improve the safety of survivors and respond to DCC. Including an alarm program, that provides video surveillance of property for survivors, and captures images of harm or destruction caused by abusers as evidence for police. Along with a panic button program, that uses specially designed panic buttons to provide survivors at risk of harm by their current or former partners, a discrete but effective way to alert friends, family, and the authorities of an emergency or their need for assistance. This same stakeholder also discussed his cyber program, which employs various technologies to scan phones, vehicles, and other devices for unwanted spyware, unauthorized devices, and listening bugs; and walks survivors at risk of harm through technology safety practices, such as two-factor authentication, social media safety measures, setting up accounts, and securing the iCloud or device and account passwords.

Despite the growing body of literature accumulating on the topic of DCC, few existing studies focus on discussing the dual benefits that technology can offer survivors of IPV in addition to its harms. Those that do discuss these benefits, commonly reference technology's ability to allow survivors of IPV to seek out, access, and share information or support services online; maintain their social connections with family and friends; alert emergency services with developments in smart technology features on iPhones and smart watches; and record or store notes of abusive behaviour as evidence for legal proceedings (Douglas et al., 2019). Some studies, such as that conducted by Dragiewicz et al. (2018), have also begun to recognize how social media platforms can be harnessed as technology used to better regulate and respond to DCC by stakeholders. Outside of this function, a review of the literature illuminates the overwhelming absence of information on how IPV stakeholders involved in supporting survivors, can likewise capitalize on the

benefits of technology to improve their response to IPV, CC, and thereby DCC for survivors. This sentiment was echoed in the work of Dragiewicz et al. (2018), as they concluded that "a fuller understanding of the positive use of technology for domestic violence survivors and those who support them is... needed (p. 619)."

With all of this information in mind, it is apparent that there are significant benefits that technology can afford survivors and stakeholders in various situations of IPV, that both parties must be cognizant of. It is not enough to tell survivors in a situation of IPV that has evolved to include manifestations of DCC, that their best course of action is simply avoiding technology all together. Given the benefits stakeholders can likewise derive from technology in response to situations of IPV and thereby DCC, such 'blanket' responses are quite frankly unhelpful and inappropriate. It is further apparent that stakeholders in Canada ought to ensure they are utilizing their online websites to their full potential and recognizing these websites as a tool available to them for responding to IPV and DCC. The sample of websites examined for the content analysis revealed that additional training and professional development content concerning DCC are required for many IPV stakeholder websites in Canada. It also exposed the need for many of these websites to make better use of their safety features and implement a warning to their website users - who are often survivors seeking support for varying situations of IPV – of the potential for abusers to harm them through technological means, as simple as monitoring their online browsing history. Discussing the dual benefits technology can provide survivors, is another area many IPV stakeholders within Canada should consider incorporating into their online websites. Not only to support survivors' involvement and equal rights to participate in online and other virtual environments without harm, but also

to discourage fellow stakeholders from making assumptions that avoiding technology is the solution to DCC and a responsibility solely in the hands of survivors. These findings only graze the surface of how technology itself can be utilized by stakeholders to respond to DCC and thereby assist survivors. In line with the findings of Dragiewicz et al. (2018), it is apparent that more work can be done to expand this important, but still overlooked, area of DCC research.

7.2. A Discussion of Other Critical Findings

While this thesis intended to shed light on three specific research questions, it exceeded this intention, providing insight into several unanticipated findings in the process. Of particular interest, is the clear association between separation and DCC in the context of IPV, which will be explored in detail below.

Through the findings of this study, it quickly became apparent that DCC heavily revolves around abusers shaming, degrading, humiliating, isolating, and otherwise tearing down survivors in situations of IPV - forcing them to believe that they *need* the abuser, as a means of *keeping these survivors in a situation of abuse*. This was made clear in the interview with the stakeholder Tessa, as she stated that abusers will utilize "everything at their disposal" to harm their current or former partners, including physical and emotional abuse, tactics of isolation, and financial deprivation, "because if you have *nothing* and *nobody*... then you might need them again...". Each interview with the survivors involved in this study reflected this same goal of depriving the survivor of something or someone, to keep them dependant on the abuser and in a situation of abuse. Whether it was through the abuser's use of degrading language to shame and tear down the confidence of the survivor, as was the case for Sophia, Maria, and Rayna in this study, who were regularly

called a “whore”, a “slut”, or “stupid.” Or it was the abusers’ efforts to isolate them from family and friends through rumours (Tegan) intended to damage their reputation, intentionally blocking or forcing the survivor to delete specific contacts (Tegan and Beth), or withholding and breaking their devices (Sophia).

This goal was also evident in descriptions survivors made of the abuser repeatedly attacking “specific insecurities” (Maria), such as their weight (Sophia), and elements of their character, like their sexuality (Sophia, Tegan, and Maria). This was seen in the findings through numerous passages where survivors described their abuser accusing them of dressing up (Sophia), wearing makeup (Maria), or flaunting their shoulders (Tegan) all with the intention of “attract[ing] other men” (Sophia). Sophia’s account was particularly illustrative of this goal and the abusers’ intentions to target personal insecurities and her character, when she described her abuser telling her she was ‘overweight’, that ‘no one else would like her’, and that she is ‘unattractive’, while at the same time telling her “there were so many people on campus who’d... fuck [her] on the *streets*.” Paired alongside an earlier statement made by Sophia, explaining that her abuser said he would “fuck [her] like [her] mother on some sort of *red-light street*”, it becomes alarmingly clear that her abuser was tying her sexuality to prostitution, and repeatedly discussed the ‘streets’ in this context to suggest she was dirty, easy, and that nobody else would want her. In other words, attempting to break her down and convince her to stay with him in a situation of abuse. Several statements made by survivors reflected this same notion, and particularly the success of their abusers’ tactics to break them down and convince them to stay. This was clear when Sophia illustrated how she began internalizing her abuser’s statements and believing that she was ‘unattractive’, when

Maria admitted her experience deteriorated her self-esteem, and when Beth said, "I felt lucky he would be with me...and that I should be doing more for him". Furthermore, it was evident when Sophia explained she believed she deserved the abuse and revealed how at the time she thought she should be making him happier, and when Tegan described sacrificing who she was as a person to fit the "mould" of a women she believed he desired.

Just as Evan Stark (2009a) discussed in the rise of coercive control, it seems as though a subset of men of the 21st century have once again changed how they choose to oppress women in personal life to secure their dependence[72], when prior tactics of coercive control on their own fail to keep women in a situation of abuse. This change exists as the addition of digital technologies to the abuser's repertoire of abuse tactics, as not only a means of keeping women in a situation of abuse but allowing abuse to *perpetuate* - at times indefinitely - following separation.

The findings of this research have illustrated the diverse ways in which technology can be exploited by abusers in the context of IPV to harm their current or former partners, exposing ample evidence to support arguments in the literature that this tactic of abuse is 'easier' and 'as destructive' as traditional methods of abuse. With the assistance of technology, abusers can prolong their patterns of control and domination over survivors' lives. This was exemplified in the case of the survivor Maria, as she explained how her abuser leveraged technology to create fake social media accounts and convinced mutual friends to allow him to use their accounts to stay in contact with her

[72] See Chapter 2, subsection 2.2 on *The Theory of Coercive Control*.

and comment on her photos, following their separation. This was likewise illustrated in Sophia's case, as she explained how her abuser made a provocative comment about her sexuality on her Facebook profile picture to damage her reputation and character publicly, following their separation. The stakeholders Charlie and Tessa similarly spoke of technology's ability to prolong abuse, when they discussed cases they have seen where abusers create multiple fake dating profiles impersonating someone else, to communicate with survivors following separation.

Two cases discussed by the stakeholder, Tessa, were especially suggestive of technology's ability to prolong abuse after separation. Including when she described the abuser who attempted to destroy a woman's career and damage her reputation by posting her intimate images on her business site for all to see, and again, in the case of the woman who lost custody of her children after her abuser used her email account to 'falsify information' in order to damage her reputation and claim she was 'not a fit parent.' Tessa also unknowingly suggested the association between DCC and separation, along with technology's ability to indefinitely harm survivors, when she discussed the IBSA cases she has worked on, explaining that such cases extend abuse from one incident or timeframe to the rest of these survivors' lives.

The association between DCC and separation was unmistakable when stakeholders in this study discussed DCC that occurs through smart home technology and IoT devices, specifically when Winnie explained that in her experience, these technologies are commonly used when one spouse "...leaves or is forced to leave the house" as a means of harassing the person who remains in the home. This association was also evident in Charlie's explanation of smart home technology, particularly when he

explained that his organization had two or three cases where the abuser was forced to leave home on an EPO and used his remaining access to the couple's previously shared smart home appliances and accounts to "shut off the heat from the remote thermostat... [and]... set off the alarm" so police would respond. This particular example reveals two additional concerns worth pointing out. Firstly, that smart home technology enables abusers to easily and discretely surpass conditions imposed in current EPOs to continue to harm their targets following separation. Secondly, the deprivation of the 'basic necessities' required for daily life, such as heat or power in your home, is achievable through smart home technology, especially during separation – which is a hallmark of the theory of coercive control[73]. A second statement made by Charlie similarly conveys these concerns. It reinforces the power of technology to perpetuate abuse following separation when he explains an abuser's thought process regarding technology and the gaps in current responses to IPV. Revealing that a survivor may physically leave a situation of abuse and even obtain an EPO outlining conditions to be followed by their abuser, only for abusers to say, "...'No, go ahead, go away, that's fine, I've got you on my phone, I can track you, I can control your money, I control everything about your life still. So sure, I'll abide by all the conditions on an EPO, 'cause I don't need to worry about it.'"

While several unanticipated findings have surfaced throughout this research, it is evident that the capacity for digital technologies to perpetuate abuse, even following separation, is among the most profound. Although the initial literature review conducted for this study did not speak to continued abuse following separation as a concern with

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[73] See Chapter 2, subsection 2.2 on *The Theory of Coercive Control*, or Stark (2009a, p. 271), for more information.

DCC, this important observation – illuminated upon further analysis and discussion of the research findings – notably corresponds to a large body of literature on post-separation abuse. For instance, despite common assumptions that the solution to abuse is to leave the situation, it is well known in the anti-violence worker and research community that following separation, "abuse and the risk for lethality often escalates (Spearman et al., 2023, p. 1226)." Even without a specific focus on DCC, research has found 90% of women reporting post-separation violence in the forms of "harassment, stalking, or [other forms of] abuse (Davies et al., 2009; Hardesty et al., 2012; Mitchell et al., 2021, as cited in Spearman et al., 2023, p. 1226)", and further acknowledges technology's ability to surpass "geographical boundaries" that physical separation once provided (Spearman et al., 2023, p. 1226). Spearman, Hardesty, and Campbell (2023), for example, point to "[g]overnment sanctioned [co-]parenting-time arrangements" that are commonly imposed by family courts, to suggest these "create opportunities to force contact," often through technology, in situations of IPV following separation (p. 1229). Just as Grant (2015) and Crocker (2008) critiqued with the Canadian offence of Criminal Harassment, this, too, opens the door for abusers to be excused for exploiting technology to maintain contact and control post-separation, under the guise of 'resolving access to children,' or simply appearing as an "'involved' parent (Spearman et al., 2023, p. 1229)" - in other words, capitalizing on the power of technology to keep women in a situation of abuse, sometimes indefinitely, even following separation.

7.3 Summary of the Discussion of Research Findings

Existing research on the issue of DCC that is occurring in the context of IPV has made several influential contributions to the academic literature on the topic, and that of

CC and IPV research. It has shone a spotlight on advancements in technology that have given a new level of 'accessibility' to abusers in situations of IPV than previously achievable, making survivors more "susceptible" (Burke et al., 2011, p. 1162) to interpersonal violence, intrusion, and control, and arguably at greater risk of harm than ever before. With abuse that is often more 'invasive', 'intense', and longer in 'duration' than traditional methods of physical violence alone (Woodlock et al., 2020). Despite these contributions, gaps remain in the literature concerning potential variations in Canadian trends and experiences of DCC, first-hand accounts of DCC from survivors, insight into the challenges faced by stakeholders who assist DCC survivors, and ways stakeholders harness technology itself to respond to DCC. While generalizability to groups outside of the research was not the goal of this study, the findings from this thesis help address these gaps in the literature, providing preliminary understanding of many dimensions of DCC and first-hand experiences from stakeholders and survivors, that do extend to some degree outside of the scope of this research.

A diagram of a thematic map has been depicted in Figure 14[74] to summarize the key research findings identified within this thesis and the hierarchal coding of themes. The inner circle of the diagram represents the three research methods utilized to collect data on the topic – the quantitative website content analysis, the qualitative semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, and the qualitative semi-structured interviews with survivors. The first layer of spokes drawn from this inner circle represent the overarching meta-themes in the coding hierarchy, that were identified amongst all the

[74] See page 141.

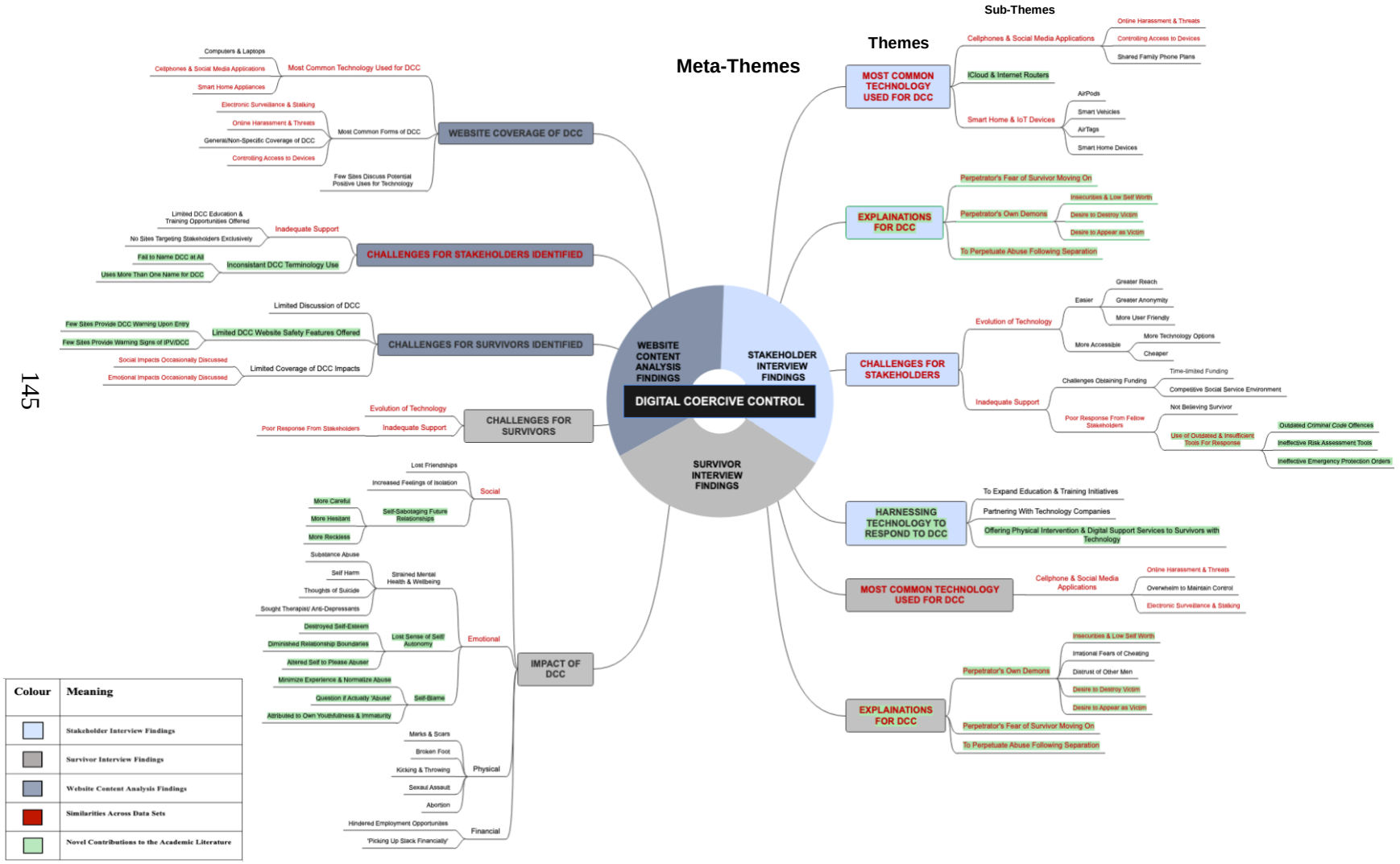
collected data. The second layer of spokes represent each theme in the hierarchy that the larger meta-themes could be distilled into, and the remaining layers represent further refined sub-themes within the hierarchy that are likewise important to distinguish and report. As seen in Table 4[75] situated above this diagram, the thematic map and initial meta-themes are colour coded to reflect the data collection method utilized. Importantly, the red colour coding used throughout the diagram illuminates the similarities that can be seen across all three datasets, while the green colour coding signifies novel contributions to the academic literature that have resulted from this thesis.

Table 4. *Legend for Thematic Map of Research Findings*

Colour	Meaning
	Stakeholder Interview Findings
	Survivor Interview Findings
	Website Content Analysis Findings
	Similarities Across Data Sets
	Novel Contributions to the Academic Literature

[75] See page 141.

Figure 124. *Thematic Map of Research Findings*



As this diagram illustrates, the three datasets formulated within this study revealed that:

- The most common forms of technology used for the purpose of DCC are *cellphones and social media applications*, *smart home and IoT device*s, *computers and laptops*, along with *iCloud and internet routers*.
- These technologies are predominantly used for the purpose of *online harassment and threats*, *electronic surveillance and monitoring*, and *controlling access to the technological devices* of the survivors directly involved or discussed within this study.
- Impacts associated with DCC at times include *financial* and serious *physical complications*; however, the most common impacts of DCC according to the survivors interviewed in this study and the information garnered from the website content analysis, relate to *social* and *emotional impacts*.
- The greatest challenges stakeholders face while responding to DCC include the rapid *evolution of technology* itself and *inadequate support* for DCC, which primarily involved *challenges obtaining funding* and *poor response from fellow stakeholders*.
- Despite the potential harms of technology, several stakeholders harness these same tools to respond to DCC; in this study, such technologies were primarily used to expand education and training initiatives or partner with technology companies to improve the services available to survivors.

As aforementioned, there are several novel contributions to the academic literature that have resulted from this thesis, either representing entirely new meta-themes in the realm of DCC research or building upon existing meta-themes and their lower-level themes already discussed within the literature. The novel contributions that this thesis adds to the academic literature on DCC include:

- The finding that ***iCloud and internet routers*** fall under the meta-theme of '*Most Common Technology Used for DCC'*, and as such represent a new area of DCC research urgently in need of further exploration.

- The identification of the meta-theme **'*Explanations for DCC from the Perspectives of Participants'***, that can be distilled into the ***perpetrator's fear of the survivor moving on***; the ***perpetrator's own demons*** (low self-worth, desire to destroy victim, desire to appear as the true victim); and the unique ability technology affords perpetrators to ***perpetuate abuse following separation***.

- The finding that a fundamental *challenge for stakeholders* tasked with responding to DCC - under the lower-level theme of *'Inadequate Support'* and sub-theme of '*Poor Response from Fellow Stakeholders'* - is the use of ***outdated and insufficient tools for response to DCC***. Which include ***outdated Criminal Code of Canada offences***, ***ineffective risk assessment tools***, and ***ineffective emergency protection orders*** that each fail to adequately account for developing technology.

- The finding that some stakeholders are *harnessing technology to respond to DCC* by ***offering physical intervention and digital support services to survivors with technology***.

- The identification of three important contributions to the *social* and *emotional impacts* felt by survivors of DCC: including the tendancy for survivors to ***self-sabotage future relationships*** as a social impact; along with the ***lost sense of self/autonomy*** and ***self-blame*** they experience emotionally, as further implications of DCC.

- The identification of the theme of '***Limited DCC Website Safety Features'*** and associated sub-themes revealing that ***few sites provide DCC warning upon entry*** and ***few sites provide warning signs of IPV/DCC*** at all, that can all be classified under the meta-theme *'Challenges for Survivors'* identified within the quantitative content analysis.

- The identification of an additional *challenge for stakeholders* responding to DCC that was derived from the quantitative content analysis, where ***inconsistent DCC terminology use*** resulted in the sub-themes of site ***'Failure to Name DCC at All'*** and sites using ***'More than One Name for DCC.'***

The current discussion chapter of this thesis took the key research findings from this study and compared them amongst the findings of the literature. Performing this analysis gave rise to several higher-level unanticipated findings that have practical implications and thereby represent suggestions for future research, stakeholder education and training, the development of survivor support services, future policy, and future legislation. These higher-level findings are as follows:

1. ***Age, location, and income may be factors*** that play a role in DCC and require greater exploration;

2. ***Further education and training concentrated on DCC*** is required for greater society and IPV stakeholders (particularly law enforcement personnel);

3. ***Existing tools available for stakeholders to respond to DCC in Canada are inadequate and outdated***, including current risk assessment (RA) tools and emergency protection orders (EPOs), along with the *Criminal Code of Canada*; requiring urgent reformations that better account for the use of technology and capture coercive and controlling behaviour that occurs in the context of IPV;

4. ***Greater focus on the benefits of technology*** for survivors of IPV and the stakeholders who assist them is necessary, highlighting technology's important role in improving the response to DCC and its capacity to preemptively alert and possibly protect survivors from the harms of DCC;

5. Finally, that 'DCC' is not a new form of IPV, but rather a contemporary means of coercive control intended to perpetuate abuse, to maintain control and domination of women in modern life. ***As such, the theory of coercive control is the most fitting theoretical framework for understanding technology's role in IPV, necessitating more stakeholders and IPV researchers to use a unified language of 'Digital Coercive Control (DCC)'*** for this phenomenon.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The central purpose of this thesis was to better understand how intimate partner violence (IPV) has manifested through technology in what is known as digital coercive control (DCC) throughout Canada. To do so, the researcher had the objectives of performing a quantitative content analysis of a sample of 50 IPV stakeholder websites and interviewing five IPV survivors and five IPV stakeholders, with either personal or professional experience with DCC. Doing so was inspired by three primary research questions. The first of which was 'How have IPV survivors in Canada experienced DCC and what effect has this had upon them?'; the second, 'What challenges has DCC created for Canadian stakeholders who are involved in assisting survivors?'; and the third, 'How have IPV stakeholders across Canada utilized technology to respond to DCC, and more specifically, what do they know and share about DCC on their online websites?'.

With the quantitative content analysis in tandem with qualitative semi-structured interviews, this thesis was able to successfully answer these research questions and shed light on how DCC is unfolding throughout Canada in the prior discussion chapter (Chapter 7), while simultaneously highlighting several unanticipated, but equally significant, findings. The previous three chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7) dove extensively into the findings of this research, analyzing these findings in-depth within Chapter 7 and comparing them against the literature, to determine their ultimate meaning and contribution to the academic literature on both IPV and DCC. As such there is no need to summarize these findings again. Instead, the unforeseen findings that arose from the analysis of the primary research findings shall be reiterated, to stress their broader and more applicable implications that prompt practical suggestions for fellow IPV academics

and relevant stakeholders, including anti-violence workers, law enforcement, and policy makers - who would each benefit from these suggestions.

8.1 Practical Suggestions & Other Contributions of the Research

While exploring how IPV survivors in Canada experience and are impacted by DCC, this thesis identified that age, location, and income may be factors that play a role in DCC. Exploring the challenges stakeholders face while responding to DCC, also led to findings that significant gaps remain in IPV education amongst greater society and IPV stakeholders themselves, especially law enforcement personnel, who would all benefit from expanded DCC education and training initiatives both in person and online. Exploring these challenges amongst the literature, also led to the notion that existing tools available to stakeholders in response to DCC are inadequate. It was demonstrated that the most relevant offence to DCC in the *Criminal Code of Canada* - namely, criminal harassment – needs adjusting, as it serves to minimize the experience of DCC for these survivors and places disproportionate work upon them to avoid further harm and revictimization by their abuser or the legal system itself. Likewise, EPOs and RA tools, must account for DCC to truly be comprehensive and effective. Furthermore, these challenges highlighted the need to expand the *Criminal Code* to better account for non-physical forms of IPV, and thereby suggest that the adoption of a criminal offence of Coercive Control, as carried out by other countries and states, would be highly beneficial; expanding our collective understanding of IPV and encouraging law enforcement to take these cases seriously, while providing them with the appropriate tools to respond.

Additional findings of significance were identified while exploring stakeholder responses to DCC. Of particular importance is the fact that there are numerous benefits

that technology can afford both IPV survivors and stakeholders, that each party needs to be aware of. The duality of technology's benefits as well as their potential for harm, must also be acknowledged on more stakeholder websites throughout Canada, to support survivors' involvement and equal rights to participate online, while also discouraging stakeholders from assuming avoiding technology is a solution and responsibility of survivors. From these findings, it can also be said that more stakeholders in Canada should ensure they are utilizing their online websites to their fullest potential, as not only a tool for educating, responding, and training fellow stakeholders on IPV and DCC, but also one that can pre-emptively alert and potentially protect survivors from the harms of DCC.

Looking at the other significant but unanticipated findings of the research also reveal several important implications. Firstly, that DCC is really about tearing the survivor down to a point they are convinced they need the abuser, in order to keep these survivors in situations of abuse. Secondly, that technology is merely a contemporary means by which abusers perpetuate this abuse – at times indefinitely - to maintain control and domination over survivors, while both 'entrapping' and 'denying' them of a 'personal life'. Finally, that the theory of coercive control is a particularly fitting theoretical framework for understanding the intersection of technology and IPV, which should sway more stakeholders and IPV researchers to use the language of 'Digital Coercive Control' - as opposed to other labels - demonstrating a unified understanding of the phenomenon, while also openly naming this behaviour as one of the many manifestations of coercive control that occurs in the context of IPV.

It is evident that several findings resulting from this thesis positively contribute to the academic literature on DCC, CC, and, thereby, IPV; however, it should also be noted that this thesis has paved the way for future research on DCC and IPV Stakeholder Websites, by providing a set of viable tools for future researchers to build off. Including detailed *interview schedules for DCC survivors and the stakeholders who assist them*; and a formal *research invitation package template* that offers researchers involved in conducting studies on sensitive topics - such as IPV - a professional, thorough, and supportive model for recruiting participants from vulnerable populations. Additionally, this thesis provides *a comprehensive codebook for analyzing websites in the form of online quantitative content analyses*, containing a detailed coding manual instructing researchers how to code the content, an exemplar glossary of key terms and operational definitions, and a versatile coding schedule template that can be used to record the codes by hand or through Microsoft Excel software. Among this thesis's key findings and practical suggestions, the tools developed for its successful implementation represent significant contributions to the academic literature in the field of DCC, CC, IPV, and broader sociological research.

8.2 Limitations of The Research

Having reflected upon the research it becomes clear that while there are several strengths, like all research, it is not without its limitations. In terms of the quantitative content analysis, these limitations primarily relate to coding manual decisions and sampling procedures. The first obvious limitation of the coding manual is the potential bias that comes with its construction, as the researcher determined – based on prior research and theory - what was important DCC information that should be of relevance to

both survivors and stakeholders and therefore coded on IPV stakeholder websites. This limitation could have been addressed with additional time to verify the required information from stakeholders or survivors themselves. Furthermore, with the coding manual developed *a priori* with a basis in theory and prior research, it can be said that another limitation of the content analysis was that overall, it left limited room for the discovery of innovative and new findings, outside of merely supporting prior research. Additionally, the content chosen to be coded and way in which this content was coded, hindered the ability to employ more advanced statistical techniques within this study – representing another limitation to the research. In terms of the content analysis sampling procedures, it is obvious that a major limitation was the relatively small sample size and use of a purposeful sampling technique in the form of purposeful criterion sampling. With this being said, while generalizability to populations outside of the study sample was not the goal of the content analysis, it should be acknowledged as another limitation to this study.

In terms of limitations of the qualitative semi-structured interviews, it can likewise be said that they primarily related to sampling procedures, including the chosen participant recruitment sites. As with many qualitative research studies, a clear limitation to the interviews conducted within this study was the small participant sample size. While this small sample size did not hinder this study from collecting rich and meaningful data – usually the intention behind interviews as a research technique – it was discussed within Chapter 7 that a larger interview sample of both survivors and stakeholders in this study could have offered additional insight into the findings that age, location, and income, may be factors that influence the experience and associated impacts of DCC for

survivors. Another limitation of the qualitative research was the fact that the participants were able to self-refer themselves to participate in the research, as voluntary response sampling is known for the potential selection bias it brings to research, since some people are more likely to volunteer than others – usually those who already care deeply about the issue (Statistics Canada, 2021b).

Furthermore, since voluntary response sampling is considered a non-probability sampling method, another limitation to the qualitative semi-structured interviews is its lack of generalizability to populations and groups outside of the research sample. Although it should be noted that generalizability was not the goal of this qualitative research, since the strengths of qualitative interviews are known to lie in their capacity for "understanding the processes" of a phenomenon and the "beliefs and perceptions" of the individuals involved (Firestone, 1993, p. 22). Despite this, significant effort was made to expand the relevance of these findings, with the suggestions of Firestone (1993) for including 'thick description' (rich detail), 'intentional sampling' (as seen with the multi-stage purposeful sampling), and 'multi-site sampling designs' (as seen with the inclusion of two recruitment sites for survivors and multiple recruitment sites for stakeholders). Additionally, while total generalizations could not be made, it can be argued that this research made "analytic generalizations" (Firestone, 1993, p. 17), whereby it intended "to generalize a particular set of results to a broader theory" (Yin, 1989, p. 44, as cited in Firestone, 1993, p. 17) of coercive control.

As alluded to in Chapter 7 of this thesis, another limitation of this study was the recruitment of survivors from only one university setting. Doing so limited the potential to identify variations in service setting (e.g., university vs. a shelter), university setting

(e.g., the University of New Brunswick vs. the University of Toronto), and provincial setting (e.g., universities in the province of New Brunswick vs. universities in the province of Ontario). Although it should be acknowledged that this limitation was really a product of the timeframe in which this study was conducted – at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when researchers had limited range of motion – which directly limited the recruitment sites available for this research to those in which my student status granted me access. Finally, it should also be acknowledged that limiting the recruitment of survivors in this study to Female, as detailed in the methodology section of this thesis - despite ample research indicating Females are the most common victims of IPV - is another limitation of this research. As it does not allow for any exploration amongst possible male victims nor the LGBTQ2+ community, and therefore does nothing to advance these potential areas of DCC knowledge.

8.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the limitations of this study, it has notably served to enhance the collective understanding of DCC that is occurring in the context of IPV in Canada. It is this researcher's hope that the current research will stimulate further investigation of this important area of IPV research. It is recommended that future research in the realm of DCC take a closer look at potential variations between age groups, particularly differences in adolescent and adult experiences. Potential differences in location could also be explored in-depth in future research, whether that is between the location of Canadian universities, provinces, or rural and urban settings. Future research would also benefit from exploring diverse survivor recruitment sites, as aforementioned, the inclusion of survivors recruited from shelters may produce considerably different

findings than those recruited from a university setting. While international research on DCC has commonly taken the form of surveys, future Canadian research should also consider exploring DCC on a national scale with the use of a large-scale survey focused on the topic, to derive a clearer understanding of the rate at which DCC is occurring across Canada. Alternatively, existing national surveys, including the SSPPS and the GSS-V in Canada, could consider incorporating additional questions focused on IPV into their questionnaires, particularly those which account for evolving forms of IPV in the 21st century as DCC that occurs online and in other digital contexts.[76] Despite this study's contributions to the area, future research could also explore further positive uses of technology by IPV stakeholders in response to DCC.

Finally, future research on DCC should consider exploring potential variations across different ethnic and cultural groups, historically marginalized groups, and/or recent immigrant populations. As attention to cultures that have had a history of more traditional patriarchal values, norms, and beliefs - and may continue to retain these - may provide important contributions to DCC research. Along with those that have been historically marginalized within society due to their race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, or sexuality - who are already widely recognized as being at higher risk for violence and harassment due to the existing barriers and discrimination they experience. Research into the experience of immigrant populations who may be more reliant on technology to initially integrate into Canadian culture, while remaining connected via

[76] See Chapter 3: Literature Review, pages 20-21, for more information regarding the GSS-V's and SSPPS's coverage of IPV.

technology to loved one's back home, may also prove to be fruitful for future research endeavours hoping to expand the knowledge base of DCC.

8.4 Final Thoughts

Embarking upon this thesis has been nothing short of fascinating and fulfilling, exposing several essential contributions to the academic literature on IPV, CC, and DCC. Despite this work and the work of countless academics before this, one final impression remains. We can do a great deal of work to protect survivors and prevent instances of IPV that occur in more obvious physical forms, those which are visibly identifiable and can be easily documented as evidence for legal proceedings; however, if we fail to recognize patterns of coercive control and how this form of abuse can be executed through advancing technologies, and further neglect to put in the work to adequately prevent and respond to such cases – then we fail survivors. Survivors will continue to be trapped in situations of IPV by current and former partners, who will continue to exploit these technologies to sustain control and domination over them, over a prolonged and often indefinite duration of time, in a manner Stark (2009a) would suggest 'deny them of a personal life.'

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Appendix A

IPV STAKEHOLDER WEBSITE CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK

IPV Stakeholder Website Content Analysis CODEBOOK

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Introduction: This codebook was created to assist in the analysis of content covered by various intimate partner violence (IPV) stakeholders in Canada on their online websites that is relative to the growing issue of technology-facilitated intimate partner violence, or rather, what is formally referred to throughout this research study as 'Digital Coercive Control'(DCC). The dimensions of IPV websites that are of interest in this study are outlined below in a *coding manual* and operationally defined in a *Glossary of Key Terms & Operational Definitions Table* found at the end of this codebook. The procedures outlined in the coding manual, together with the key terms and operational definitions are vital to identifying, measuring, and analyzing the content under study.

Unit of Data Collection: For this content analysis, the unit of data collection is each individual ***webpage*** **or** ***document*** produced by the IPV stakeholder organizations that correspond to the websites under analysis, that cover the issue of digital coercive control (or any other name for digital abuse) in the context of IPV.

Other Coding Instructions to be Followed:

Coders should complete a *minimum of two thorough readings of this codebook* before beginning to code the websites under analysis.

Coders should *code the content of the websites under analysis directly into the coding schedule* (form) during analysis. A template of this coding schedule has been attached to this codebook. It is advised that the coding schedule be replicated in a Microsoft Excel document for ease of coding and data management.

Each website included in the analysis must be *assigned an ID number prior to coding* (e.g., Websites *1001* through *1050*). These ID numbers should be recorded alongside the official website name and URL in a separate document or separate Microsoft Excel sheet. As seen in the coding schedule template found at the end of this codebook, the *website ID will be the first item coded into the columns of the official coding schedule*.

Coders should *only use the information they have available to them as a viewer* of each individual website to code the websites under analysis. In other words, *do not* use priori

information you may have already learned or heard *about the website* or *organization under analysis* to code it.

It is recommended that each coder *print off* this *Coding Manual, including the Key Terms & Operational Definitions* pages of this document and the attached *Coding Schedule (unless the coding schedule is replicated in Microsoft Excel)*. This will increase efficiency in coding each website, as coders can easily locate the item to be coded and its corresponding number code, along with the key terms and operational definitions used throughout the manual.

Coding Manual: Dimensions of Websites to be Coded & Corresponding Number Codes

General Identifying Information

1. **Service Location:** Indicate the corresponding number code for the IPV stakeholder website's service location in Canada. The website service location can be determined by searching for a physical address on each website (i.e., The site provides the street number, street name, city, province, and postal code of their main organization's office or headquarters.) If the website caters its service to all of Canada broadly, code **[14] Canada Wide.**

    [1] ***Prince Edward Island***
    [2] ***Nova Scotia***
    [3] ***New Brunswick***
    [4] ***Newfoundland & Labrador***
    [5] ***Québec***
    [6] ***Ontario***
    [7] ***Manitoba***
    [8] ***Saskatchewan***
    [9] ***Alberta***
    [10] ***British Colombia***
    [11] ***Yukon***
    [12] ***Northwest Territories***
    [13] ***Nunavut***
    [14] ***Canada Wide***

2. **Organization Service Arena:** Adapted from the content analysis of Davenport et al. (2008), indicate the corresponding number code for the organization ***service "arena"*** (p.904) the website and its content reflects.

    [1] ***Government Service Arena***
    [2] ***Legal Service Arena***
    [3] ***Health Service Arena***
    [4] ***Social &/or Community Service Arena***
    [5] ***Educational Institution &/or Research Centre Service Arena***

[77] ***Other***
[99] ***Unable to determine***

3. **Targeted Website Audience:** Indicate the corresponding number code for the audience the website primarily targets and thereby caters much of its information and resources to.

[1] ***Survivors of IPV/DCC***
[2] ***The General Public***
[3] ***Stakeholders involved in IPV/DCC Cases***
[4] ***Survivors & General Public Combined***
[5] ***Survivors & Stakeholders Combined***
[6] ***Stakeholders & General Public Combined***
[7] ***Survivors, General Public, & Stakeholders Combined***
[77] ***Other***
[99] ***Unable to Determine***

Content Covered

4. **Forms of Violence Identified on Website:** Indicate which form(s) of violence the website identifies as commonly occurring in situations of IPV.

4.1 ***Violence in the Context of IPV Generally/Non-Specifically***: *(The website may identify violence in the context of IPV, but only generally/non-specifically, without detailing the various forms that may exist.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss violence generally and/or non-specifically.
[1] Yes, the website discusses violence generally and/or is not specific about the form of violence.

4.2 ***Sexual Abuse in the Context of IPV***

[0] No, the website does not discuss sexual abuse.
[1] Yes, the website discusses sexual abuse.

4.3 ***Physical Abuse in the Context of IPV***

[0] No, the website does not discuss physical abuse.
[1] Yes, the website discusses physical abuse.

4.4 ***Emotional &/or Psychological Abuse in the Context of IPV***

[0] No, the website does not discuss emotional and/or psychological abuse.
[1] Yes, the website discusses emotional and/or psychological abuse.

4.5 ***Coercive Control in the Context of IPV***

[0] No, the website does not discuss coercive control.
[1] Yes, the website discusses coercive control.

4.6 ***Digital Coercive Control in the Context of IPV***

[0] No, the website does not discuss digital coercive control.

[1] Yes, the website discusses digital coercive control.

4.7. ***Other Forms of Violence in the Context of IPV:*** *(The category 'other' can be used to catch all forms of violence discussed in the context of IPV not listed above.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss other forms of violence in the context of IPV outside of the above list.

[1] Yes, the website discusses other forms of violence in the context of IPV outside of the above list.

5. **Forms of DCC Identified on Website:** Indicate which forms of DCC the website identifies as occurring in the context of IPV**.** *Note* that the website can discuss DCC in its various forms but fail to actually identify DCC as a form of IPV.

5.1 ***DCC Generally/Non-Specifically***

[0] No, the website does not discuss DCC generally/non-specifically.

[1] Yes, the website discusses DCC generally/non-specifically.

5.2 ***Online Harassment & Threats***

[0] No, the website does not discuss online harassment & threats as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses online harassment & threats as a form of DCC.

5.3 ***Cyber Sexual Abuse***

[0] No, the website does not discuss cyber sexual abuse as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses cyber sexual abuse as a form of DCC.

5.4 ***Electronic Surveillance & Stalking***

[0] No, the website does not discuss electronic surveillance & stalking as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses electronic surveillance & stalking as a form of DCC.

5.5 ***Cyber Reputation Smearing***

[0] No, the website does not discuss cyber reputation smearing as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses cyber reputation smearing as a form of DCC.

5.6 ***Online Doxxing***

[0] No, the website does not discuss online doxxing as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses online doxxing as a form of DCC.

5.7 ***Cyber Fraud & Financial Abuse***

[0] No, the website does not discuss cyber fraud & financial abuse as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses cyber fraud & financial abuse as a form of DCC.

5.8 ***Controlling Access to Technology***

[0] No, the website does not discuss controlling access to technology as a form of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses controlling access to technology as a form of DCC.

5.9 ***Other Forms of DCC***

[0] No, the website does not discuss other forms of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses other forms of DCC.

6. **Types of Technology Used to Perpetrate DCC Identified on Website:** Indicate which type(s) of technology the website indicates are used in the perpetration of DCC.

6.1 ***Telephones*** *(i.e., Landline phones, fax machines, cellphones/smartphones, texting, mobile applications (apps), caller ID, voicemail, etc.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss telephones as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss telephones as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

6.2 ***Computers & Laptops*** *(i.e., Internet, email, social networking sites, etc.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss computers & laptops as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss computers & laptops as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

6.3 ***Wearable Smart Devices*** *(i.e., Apple Air Tag, Apple Watch, Fitbit, etc.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss wearable smart devices as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss wearable smart devices as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

6.4 ***Video Games*** *(i.e., Over an app, online, or through a gaming Console)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss video games as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss video games as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

6.5 ***Smart Home Assistants*** (*i.e., Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant, etc.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss smart home assistants as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss smart home assistants as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

6.6 ***Smart Home Appliances*** *(i.e., Smart TVs, speakers, thermostats, lights, doorbells and door locks, alarm systems, security cameras, GPS, etc.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss smart home appliances as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss smart home appliances as a type of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

6.7 ***Other Types of Technology Used to Perpetrate DCC.***

[0] No, the website does not discuss other types of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss other types of technology used to perpetrate DCC.

7. **Quantity of Pages the Website has Dedicated to DCC:** ***Count the total number*** of pages the website has dedicated to discussing the issue of DCC or topics related to online safety in the context of IPV. *Note* that websites may refer to the concept of DCC by various names (see operational definition of DCC) or in discussing its various forms (as mentioned above).

8. **DCC Information Type:** Indicate which type(s) of information are covered by the website in discussion of DCC.

8.1 ***Definitions***

[0] No, the website does not offer information on definitions for DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer information on definitions for DCC.

8.2 ***Facts & Statistics***

[0] No, the website does not offer information on facts & statistics for DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer information on facts & statistics for DCC.

8.3 ***General Reponses to DCC*** *(i.e., the website discusses the need to improve online safety features generally).*

[0] No, the website does not offer information on general responses for addressing DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer information on general responses for addressing DCC.

8.4 ***Organization Specific Responses to DCC*** (*i.e., the website discusses direct actions that the organization itself is taking in response to DCC, such as creating*

an app to provide survivors with a quick reference guide for online safety in various circumstances).

[0] No, the website does not offer information on organization specific responses for addressing DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer information on organization specific responses for addressing DCC.

8.5 ***Online Safety Tips & Safety Planning*** *(i.e., The website discusses or provides resources for online safety tips or safety planning in cases of online abuse.)*

[0] No, the website does not offer information on online safety tips & safety planning regarding DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer information on online safety tips & safety planning regarding DCC.

8.6 ***Training Offered*** *(i.e., The website offers training for anti-violence workers, first responders, or the public on DCC and online safety.)*

[0] No, the website does not offer information on training in response to DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer information on training in response to DCC.

8.7. ***Other DCC Information Type***

[0] No, the website does not offer other types of information regarding DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does offer other types of information regarding DCC.

9. **Positive Use of Technology:** Indicate whether the website discusses any positive uses of technology for survivors in the context of IPV.

9.1 ***Maintaining Connection with Family & Friends*** *(i.e., through Facebook and other social media platforms, by phone, by email, or by video conferencing software.)*

[0] No, the website does not discuss maintaining connection with family and friends as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

[1] Yes, the website discusses maintaining connection with family and friends as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

9.2 ***Access to Online Support Services*** *(i.e., support groups or hotlines related to DCC or IPV more generally).*

[0] No, the website does not discuss access to online support services as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

[1] Yes, the website discusses access to online support services as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

9.3 ***Access to Relevant Research:*** *(i.e., any research that is related to DCC specifically or IPV more generally*.)

[0] No, the website does not discuss access to relevant research as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.
[1] Yes, the website discusses access to relevant research as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

9.4 ***Discretely Alerting Emergency Services*** *(i.e., police, paramedics, etc.)*
[0] No, the website does not discuss discretely alerting emergency services as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.
[1] Yes, the website discusses discretely alerting emergency services as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

9.5 ***Video & Audio Record Abuse***
[0] No, the website does not discuss the ability to video/audio record abuse as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.
[1] Yes, the website discusses the ability to video/audio record abuse as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

9.6 ***Keep Digital Evidence/Logs of Abuse*** *(i.e., documenting the occurrences of abuse in an excel file or documenting pictures of physical or digital abuse)*
[0] No, the website does not discuss the ability to keep digital records/logs of abuse as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.
[1] Yes, the website discusses the ability to keep digital records/logs of abuse as a positive use of technology in the context of IPV.

9.7 ***Other Positive Uses for Technology***
[0] No, the website does not discuss other positive uses for technology.
[1] Yes, the website does discuss other positive uses for technology.

10. **Impact of DCC:** Indicate whether the website discusses any associated impact(s) of DCC upon survivors, such as *social, emotional, physical, or financial impacts*.

10.1 ***Social Impact of DCC***
[0] No, the website does not discuss any social impacts associated with DCC.
[1] Yes, the website discusses social impacts associated with DCC.

10.2 ***Emotional Impact of DCC***
[0] No, the website does not discuss any emotional impacts associated with DCC.
[1] Yes, the website discusses emotional impacts associated with DCC.

10.3 ***Physical Impact of DCC***
[0] No, the website does not discuss any physical impacts associated with DCC.
[1] Yes, the website discusses physical impacts associated with DCC.

10.4 ***Financial Impact of DCC***

[0] No, the website does not discuss any financial impacts associated with DCC.

[1] Yes, the website discusses financial impacts associated with DCC.

10.5 ***Other Impacts***

[0] No, the website does not discuss any other impacts associated with DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does discuss other impacts associated with DCC.

11. **Terminology Most Often Used to Describe DCC:** Indicate which terminology the website primarily uses in reference to DCC.

[1] ***Digital Coercive Control (DCC)***
[2] ***Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control (TFCC)***
[3] ***Technology-Facilitated Intimate Partner Violence (TFIPV)***
[4] ***Technology-Facilitated Domestic Violence (TFDV)***
[5] ***Technology-Facilitated Abuse (or) Violence (TFA or TFV)***
[6] ***Digital Abuse (DA)***
[7] ***Online Abuse (OA)***
[8] ***Technology Abuse (TA)***
[9] ***Cyber Abuse (CA)***
[10] ***Uses more than one term***
[11] ***Does not use any term to specify DCC***
[77] ***Other***

12. **Tools & Resources for DCC Support**: Indicate whether the website provides any tools & resources to support survivors, stakeholders, or the public prevent, intervene, or respond to DCC.

12.1 ***Technology Safety Planning*** (*i.e., internet safety guides, cellphone safety guides, social media safety guides, general steps to increase online safety & privacy).*

[0] No, the website does not provide any tools or resources on technology safety planning as a form of DCC support.

[1] Yes, the website does provide tools or resources on technology safety planning as a form of DCC support.

12.2 ***Preserving Digital Evidence*** *(i.e., tips, resources, and tools/templates.)*

[0] No, the website does not provide any tools or resources on preserving digital evidence as a form of DCC support.

[1] Yes, the website does provide tools or resources on preserving digital evidence as a form of DCC support.

12.3 ***Applicable Legal Remedies and Responses*** *(i.e., guides to Peace Bond, Civil Protective Orders, and relevant laws that could apply to instances of DCC – some with explicit sections detailing the use of technology.)*

[0] No, the website does not provide any tools or resources on appliable legal remedies and responses as a form of DCC support.
[1] Yes, the website does provide tools or resources on appliable legal remedies and responses as a form of DCC support.

12.4 ***Other Tools and Resources for DCC Support***.
[0] No, the website does not provide any other tools or resources as a form of DCC support.
[1] Yes, the website does provide other tools or resources as a form of DCC support.

13. **Quantity of External Hyperlinks Related to DCC:** ***Count the number*** of external hyperlinks the website has used to support its discussion of DCC.

14. **Quantity of Organization Produced PDFs/Documents Regarding DCC:** ***Count the number*** of Organization Produced PDFs/Documents the website/stakeholders themselves have provided regarding DCC.

15. **Safety Features Utilized:** Indicate which safety feature(s) the website utilizes as a means of assisting IPV survivors protect themselves while exploring their webpages online.

15.1 ***Quick Escape or Exit Button***
[0] No, the website does not offer users a quick escape or exit button.
[1] Yes, the website does offer users a quick escape or exit button.

15.2 ***Quick Access to Emergency Numbers & Hotlines***
[0] No, the website does not offer users quick access to emergency numbers & hotlines.
[1] Yes, the website does offer users quick access to emergency numbers & hotlines.

15.3 ***A Safe Organization Phone Number to Text or Email to Message***
[0] No, the website does not offer users a safe organization phone number to text or email to message, if they are unable to speak safely.
[1] Yes, the website does offer users a safe organization phone number to text or email to message, if they are unable to speak safely.

15.4 ***Quick Search Bar to Easily Locate Relevant Information***
[0] No, the website does not offer users a quick search bar to easily locate relevant information.
[1] Yes, the website does offer users a quick search bar to easily locate relevant information.

15.5 ***Lists Warning Signs of IPV &/or DCC***
[0] No, the website does not list the warning signs of DCC.

[1] Yes, the website does list the warning signs of DCC.

15.6 ***Provides Safety Quizzes or Personal Risk Assessment Tools***

[0] No, the website does not provide users with safety quizzes or personal risk assessment tools to gauge their level of risk.

[1] Yes, the website does provide users with safety quizzes or personal risk assessment tools to gauge their level of risk.

15.7 ***DCC Warning Upon Site Entry***

[0] No, the website does not provide users with a DCC warning upon site entry of the potential for online abuse, computer activity monitoring, or the importance of clearing browsing history in situations of IPV.

[1] Yes, the website does provide users with a DCC warning upon site entry of the potential for online abuse, computer activity monitoring, or the importance of clearing browsing history in situations of IPV.

15.8. **Outlines Site Privacy Policy**

[0] No, the website does not outline its privacy policy for users.

[1] Yes, the website does outline its privacy policy for users.

15.9 ***Other Safety Features are Utilized***

[0] No, the website does not provide users with any other safety features.

[1] Yes, the website does provide users with other safety features.

Glossary of Key Terms & Operational Definitions

This glossary represents a master list of the key terms and operational definitions used throughout this content analysis. It is organized in alphabetical order to maximize key term & definition search efficiency. As aforementioned, it is recommended that this glossary is printed out alongside the rest of the coding manual to maximize coding efficiency when searching for terms and definitions used throughout the coding manual.

Term	Operational Definition
Coercive Control (CC)	In the context of this study, ***Coercive Control (CC)*** is defined as a pattern of conduct used to control and abuse a current or former intimate partner by evoking fear. This behaviour includes acts of *coercion* (e.g., Using force or threats to alter behaviour; or depriving someone of respect and personal autonomy to intimidate them) and acts of *control* (e.g., Controlling who someone is in contact with to isolate them from family and friends; or restricting them access to daily activities or necessities such as employment and education, medical care, or even food and water (Stark, 2009a; WAGE, 2020).
Controlling Access to Technology	In the context of this study, ***Controlling Access to Technology*** is defined as a form of DCC that involves a current or former intimate partner deliberately preventing their partner from accessing personal or shared technology. This could look like someone simply imposing limits to their partner's technology use, physically limiting them from accessing the technology by hiding it or throwing it away, breaking their technology, or controlling access to personal or professional accounts (WESNET, 2018).
Cyber Fraud & Financial Abuse	In the context of this study, ***Cyber Fraud & Financial Abuse*** is defined as a form of DCC that involves a current or former partner utilizing digital technologies to defraud and financially abuse their target, or others while posing as the target of the abuse. This may look like an abuser engaging in *social engineering attacks* on their (ex) partner directly or while posing as their (ex) partner to create false emergencies and trick people into revealing sensitive information (Clevenger & Navarro, 2019). It may also look like

	identity theft with someone's personal data (e.g., Pin numbers, bank accounts, date of birth, etc.) for the purpose of defrauding the target for personal economic gain or defrauding a third party while posing as the target to make the target face legal consequences (NNEDV, 2016). Additionally, this form of DCC encapsulates abuse via *economic pressure* intentionally placed upon an (ex) partner, such as an abuser "...denying them access to online accounts or manipulating credit information to create negative scores..." (WMC, n.d.).
Cyber Reputation Smearing	In the context of this study ***Cyber Reputation Smearing*** is defined as instances in which a current or former intimate partner attempt to intentionally damage their targets public reputation online or through digital means. Cyber Reputation Smearing may involve the *sexual objectification* of the target through manipulated photos, videos, or 'memes' with sexually explicit or derogatory descriptions; *personal or professional defamation* to deliberately flood social media or review sites with negative and false information about the target; and even the *leaking of private correspondence or documents* to damage the target's personal or professional reputation (NNEDV, 2016).
Cyber Sexual Abuse	In the context of this study, ***Cyber Sexual* Abuse** is defined as a form of DCC involving the actual creation or distribution of non-consensual (or previously consensual) intimate images, videos, or private messages between current or former partners – distinguishing it from cyber reputation smearing - for the purpose of shaming, degrading, defaming, and controlling them. Cyber Sexual Abuse also commonly takes the form of *Revenge Porn* intended to 'get back at' an ex-partner (Al-Alosi, 2017) or *Sextortion*, where an (ex)partner is sexually extorted for the purpose of coercing money or other benefits out of them (Clevenger & Navarro, 2019). According to Clevenger & Navarro (2019), Cyber Sexual Abuse can be facilitated through email or text messages, public sites dedicated to sexual abuse or pornography, social media sites, among other digital technologies and platforms.

Digital Coercive Control (DCC)	In the context of this study, ***Digital Coercive Control (DCC)*** is defined as an extension of CC (see definition of CC above), where the exploitation of everyday digital technologies (e.g., computers, cellphones, social media platforms, or smart home appliances) are used to "facilitate virtual or in-person harm" (WAGE, 2020) to a current or former intimate partner for the purpose of coercing and controlling them. The term DCC is used interchangeably throughout the literature with the terms "Cyber Abuse" (Douglas et al., 2019), "Technology-Facilitated Coercive Control" (Dragiewicz et al., 2018), "Digital Abuse" (Al-Alosi, 2017), etc. DCC may include online harassment, image-based sexual abuse, stalking via GPS tracking, doxxing, fraud, hacking of personal or professional devices, among many other forms of online abuse. (Clevenger & Navarro, 2019; Dragiewicz et al., 2021; Harris & Woodlock, 2019).
Digital Technology	In the context of this study, ***digital technology*** refers to all electronic devices or systems that create, store, and process information and data, such as computers, the internet, and websites; smartphones; mobile applications (apps); social media platforms; Global Positioning Systems (GPS), digital cameras, smart home automation systems, etc.
Educational Institution &/or Research Centre Service Arena	In the context of this study, a website classified as ***Educational Institution &/or Research Centre Service Arena*** refers to any websites related to educational institutions and/or research centres, such as the website for the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research associated with the University of New Brunswick.
Electronic Surveillance & Stalking	In the context of this study, ***Electronic Surveillance & Stalking*** is defined as a form of DCC that involves the use of digital technology by a current or former intimate partner to intentionally stalk or monitor their targets online or offline activities and whereabouts. It may take the form of *voyeurism or sexual surveillance* (NNEDV, 2016) facilitated through digital technology to monitor, track, extort, or control an (ex)partner either in **public spaces** (i.e., hacking security cameras

	in public bathrooms, changerooms, gyms, or workplaces); **private spaces** (i.e., hacking of personal devices such as home security systems, smart locks, nanny or pet cameras, and basic smart home appliances or entertainment systems); or **online spaces** (i.e., monitoring online activity and correspondence over social media, email, etc.). It may also involve *spyware or GPS monitoring and tracking* (i.e., through cellphones, social media applications, laptops, or car navigation systems); *recording of personal telephone, online, or in-person conversations* (NNEDV, 2016); or *in-real-life (IRL) attacks/trolling*, where online stalking and abuse transitions into the real world to harm, intimidate, or threaten an (ex)partner (BWSS, 2023).
Emotional Impact of DCC	In the context of this study, the ***Emotional Impact of DCC*** refers to emotional implications the survivor may endure due to their experience with DCC. Emotional impacts of DCC upon survivors may include the survivors experiencing high levels of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol and substance use, self-harm, and hypervigilance leading to physical exhaustion (Al-Alosi, 2017; Woodlock et al., 2020).
Emotional/Psychological Abuse	In the context of this study, ***Emotional/Psychological Abuse*** is defined as a current or former intimate partner using insults; belittling; humiliation; intimidation; or threats of harm to you, your family, your friends, or your pets (WAGE, 2020).
External Hyperlink	In the context of this study, an ***external hyperlink*** is defined as a link that is provided on one webpage that connects you to another webpage located on a different website.
Financial Impact of DCC	In the context of this study, the ***Financial Impact of DCC*** refers to financial implications the survivor may endure due to their experience with DCC. These financial implications or damages can be both short and long-term in nature for the survivor (Hand et al., 2009). They may be as simple as the survivor experiencing dual victimization from the abuser in the form of stolen money or substantial amounts of outstanding debt; or as complex as disrupting the

	survivor's ability to work and earn a living, due to ongoing fear or distress; damaged credit from unpaid bills on joint accounts or loans taken out in the survivor's name; and may even impact the survivor's ability to pay off legal fees related to the abuse or obtain safe and affordable housing in the future (NNEDV, n.d.).
Government Service Arena	In the context of this study, a website classified as ***Government Service Arena*** refers to any official government websites at the Federal, Provincial, or Municipal Levels in Canada. Examples would include the Government of Canada Website, the Government of New Brunswick Website, or the City of Toronto Government Website.
Health Service Arena	In the context of this study, a website classified as ***Health Service Arena*** refers to any websites that provide information and public education related to healthcare organizations or services, such as hospitals, medical clinics, or independent counselling services.
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)	Following the definition provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), in the context of this study ***Intimate Partner Violence*** is understood as "behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours." (WHO, 2021).
IPV-Related Information	In the context of this study, ***IPV-Related Information*** refers to any information, resources, or services related to the issue of intimate partner violence in its various forms.
IPV Stakeholder	In the context of this study, an ***IPV Stakeholder*** refers to any individual person, organization, or service that works to support survivors and help eradicate intimate partner violence in its many forms.
IPV Website	In the context of this study, an ***IPV Website*** refers to any website that displays static content (content that is fixed and does not change from user to user) related to intimate partner violence education or support information. Blogs and social networking sites that

	display dynamic (changing) content, are not considered IPV websites for the purpose of this study.
Legal Service Arena	In the context of this study, a website classified as ***Legal Service Arena*** refers to any official policing, victim services, or legal practice websites in Canada that post information on IPV. Websites simply focused on providing legal information, education, and support to the public would also be classified as Legal Service Arena. Examples would include the websites of Toronto Police Services; New Brunswick Victim Services; Local Legal Practices such as Healey Law in Edmonton, Alberta; and Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick (PLEIS-NB).
Online Doxxing	In the context of this study, ***Online Doxxing*** is defined as one of many manifestations of DCC, where digital technology is utilized by abusers to release a personal information on the survivor online to embolden others to harass and harm them (Yardley, 2020). Cases of online doxxing have involved the release of personal home addresses; phone numbers; places of employment; and in the case of the LGBTQ2+ community, have even involve 'outing' a partner's sexual orientation or gender identity online without their consent, in effort to scare, humiliate, and blackmail them (Donovan & Barnes, 2021).
Online Harassment & Threats	In the context of this study, ***Online Harassment & Threats*** is defined as the misuse of digital technology (often email and messaging services, or social media platforms) to repeatedly contact, threaten, offend, humiliate, and harass a current or former intimate partner (NNEDV, 2016). It may also include deliberate *cross-platform harassment*, where an abuser uses multiple online spaces or technologies at once, sometimes with the assistance of multiple harassers, to abuse their target (WMC, n.d.).
Physical Abuse	In the context of this study, ***physical abuse*** is defined as the intentional or threatened use of physical force by a current or former intimate partner, which may include "pushing, hitting, cutting, punching, slapping, shoving, [and/or] strangulation (WAGE, 2020)."
Physical Impact of DCC	

	In the context of this study, the ***Physical Impact of DCC*** refers to physical implications the survivor may endure because of their experience with DCC. Physical impacts of DCC upon survivors may begin with physical or sexual violence experienced by a survivor and later lead to a plethora of further complications, including lasting physical injuries or chronic pain, unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy complications or miscarriages, and even domestic homicide (Al-Alosi, 2017; Woodlock, 2019).
Quick Escape/Exit Buttons	In the context of this study, a ***quick escape or exit button*** is defined as a safety feature included on many IPV stakeholder websites, allowing the user of the site to immediately escape the page should they need to conceal their browsing session from an incoming abuser or other bystanders.
Quick Search Bar	In the context of this study, a ***quick search bar*** is defined as a safety feature available during website design that allows users of the site to quickly search for the content they desire. In the context of IPV, such features are vital for those who may have limited time to search for information or resources necessary to ensure their safety.
Safety Features	In the context of this study, ***safety features*** are defined as various tools that IPV stakeholders have either developed or adopted from other stakeholders, and often utilize on their online websites to increase the level of safety they can offer survivors of violence online.
Safety Quizzes & Personal Risk Assessment Tools	In the context of this study, ***safety quizzes and personal risk assessment tools*** are defined as safety features commonly provided to clients of IPV stakeholders and the public, for gaging their personal safety and risk of violence in suspected situations of IPV with a current or former intimate partner.
Service Arena	According to Davenport et al. (2008), website ***service arenas*** are categories that IPV survivor support services typically fall under (e.g., Government Services, Legal Services, Health Services, and Social/Community Services). Since these service

	arenas remain pertinent to many of the organizations working to support IPV survivors across Canada, these service arenas have been adopted and tailored to meet the needs of the present content analysis. As such, in the context of this study, a ***service arena*** also includes 'Educational Institutions &/or Research Centre Services'.
Sexual Abuse	In the context of this study, ***sexual* abuse** is defined as forcing or attempting to force an intimate partner to engage in sexual activity, sexual touching, or non-physical sexual events (e.g., sexting) when the partner does not or cannot consent (CDC, 2022). Additionally, sexually degrading language, threats of repercussions for refusing sexual activity, and belittling sexual comments are considered 'sexual abuse' (WAGE, 2020).
Social Impact of DCC	In the context of this study, the ***Social Impact of* DCC** refers to social implications the survivor may endure due to their experience with DCC. This may include survivors experiencing *social isolation* from friends and family; *retreating from digital technology* or *online communities* previously considered safe, for fear of continued abuse; or *retreating from social institutions* previously considered safe, such as work, school, or church, for fear of continued abuse (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).
Social &/or Community Service Arena	In the context of this study, a website classified as ***Social &/or Community Service Arena*** refers to any websites related to social services that aim to benefit the community and its well-being. These may include websites for housing and shelter services, women's centres/organizations, IPV support groups and crisis services.
Warning Signs	In the context of this study, ***Warning Signs*** are defined as a safety feature in the form of a list provided by many IPV stakeholder websites. This list is intended to help educate people on the key signs of abuse, help them identify abuse, and potentially prevent abuse and controlling behaviour from occurring in their own lives or others close to them.
Website	

	In the context of this study, a ***website*** is defined as a collection of online public webpages located under a single domain name, that are typically centered around common topics or services. These pages typically contain various hyperlinks connecting the internal webpages on the site, along with links to external webpages or content of relevance.

Coding Schedule

Content to Be Coded:	Website ID:	Website ID:	Website ID:
1. **Service Location**			
2. **Organization Service Arena**			
3. **Targeted Website Audience**			
4. **Forms of Violence Identified on Website:**			
4.1 General or Non-Specific			
4.2 Sexual Abuse			
4.3 Physical Abuse			
4.4 Emotional/Psychological Abuse			
4.5 Coercive Control			
4.6 Digital Coercive Control (DCC)			
4.8 Other			
5. **Forms of DCC Identified on Website:**			
5.1 General or Non-Specific			
5.2 Online Harassment & Threats			
5.3 Cyber Sexual Abuse			
5.4 Electronic Surveillance & Stalking			
5.5 Cyber Reputation Smearing			
5.6 Online Doxxing			
5.7 Cyber Fraud & Financial Abuse			
5.8 Controlling Access to Technology			
5.9 Other			
6. **Types of Technology use to Perpetrate DCC Discussed on Website:**			
6.1 Telephones			
6.2 Computers & Laptops			
6.3 Wearable Smart Devices			
6.4 Video Games			
6.5 Smart Home Assistants			
6.6 Smart Home Appliances			
6.7 Other			
7. **Quantity of Pages the Website has Dedicated to Discussing DCC (Frequency Count)**			
8. **DCC Information Type Discussed:**			
8.1 Definitions			

8.2 Facts & Statistics			
8.3 General Responses to DCC			
8.4 Organization Specific Responses to DCC			
8.5 Online Safety Tips & Safety Planning			
8.6 DCC or Online Training Offered			
8.7 Other			
9. **Positive Use of Technology Discussed:**			
9.1 Maintaining Connections with Family & Friends			
9.2 Access to Online Support Services			
9.3 Access to Relevant Research			
9.4 Discretely Alerting Emergency Services			
9.5 Audio & Video Recordings of Abuse			
9.6 Keeping Digital Evidence & Logs of Abuse			
9.7 Other			
10. **Impact of DCC Discussed:**			
10.1 Social Impact of DCC			
10.2 Emotional Impact of DCC			
10.3 Physical Impact of DCC			
10.4 Financial Impact of DCC			
10.5 Other			
11. **Terminology Most Often Used to Describe DCC**			
12. **Tools & Resources for DCC Support:**			
12.1 Technology Safety Planning			
12.2 Preserving Digital Evidence			
12.3 Applicable Legal Remedies and Responses			
12.3 Other			
13. **Quantity of External Hyperlinks Related to DCC (Frequency Count)**			
14. **Quantity of Organization Produced PDFs/Docs Related to DCC (Frequency Count)**			
15. **Safety Features Utilized:**			
15.1 Quick Escape or Exit Button			
15.2 Quick Access to Emergency Numbers & Hotlines			
15.3 A Safe Organization Phone Number to Text or Email to Message			
15.4 Quick Search Bar to Easily Locate Relevant Information			
15.5 Lists Warning Signs of IPV/DCC			
15.6 Provides Safety Quizzes or Personal Risk Assessment Tools			

15.7 DCC Warning Upon Site Entry			
15.8 Outlines Site Privacy Policy			
15.9 Other			

Appendix B

FINAL WEBSITE SAMPLE (*N*=50) MEETING INCLUSION CRITERIA

Website ID	Official Website Name	Website URL
1001	Government of Canada	https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/fv-vf/index.html
1002	Government of Ontario	https://www.ontario.ca/page/domestic-violence
1003	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/relationship-violence/intimate-partner-violence-and-abuse
1004	Interval House	https://www.intervalhouse.ca/
1005	Government of New Brunswick	https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/public-
1006	Battered Women Support Services	https://www.bwss.org/
1007	Domestic Abuse Services	https://domesticabuseservices.ca/
1008	Sagesse	https://www.sagesse.org/
1009	BC Society of Transition Houses	https://bcsth.ca/
1010	Legal Info Nova Scotia	https://www.legalinfo.org/family-law/family-violence#what-is-abuse
1011	Greater/Grand Sudbury Police	https://www.gsps.ca/en/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/victim-support-
1012	Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre	https://tbrhsc.net/programs-services/emergency-critical-care-services/sexual-assault-domestic-
1013	Halton Regional Police Service	https://www.haltonpolice.ca/en/staying-safe/intimate-partner-violence.aspx
1014	Peel Regional Police	https://www.peelpolice.ca/en/safety-tips/family-and-intimate-partner-violence.aspx
1015	Violence Against Women Learning Network	https://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/index.html
1016	Stop Violence Against Women	https://www.domesticviolenceinfo.ca/
1017	Nova Vita	https://novavita.org/
1018	Ontario Women's Justice Network	https://owjn.org/
1019	Region of Waterloo	https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/domestic-violence.aspx#Technology-safety
1020	Winnipeg Police Service	https://www.winnipeg.ca/police/protection/domestic.stm
1021	Gouvernement du Quebec	https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/violence/conjugal-violence
1022	SOS Violence Conjugale	https://sosviolenceconjugale.ca/en/resources
1023	Women's Resources	https://womensresources.ca/
1024	Women Abuse Council of Toronto (Women-ACT)	https://womanact.ca/

1025	Ending Violence Association of British Columbia	https://endingviolence.org/
1026	Luke's Place	https://lukesplace.ca/
1027	Social Supports New Brunswick	https://socialsupportsnb.ca/en/simple_page/intimate-partner-violence
1028	Government of Yukon	https://yukon.ca/en/support-victim-domestic-violence
1029	Violence Prevention Avalon East	https://violencepreventionae.ca/
1030	Bryony House	https://www.bryonyhouse.ca/
1031	Willow Net: Abuse and the Law in Alberta	https://www.willownet.ca/what-is-abuse/
1032	Providing Avenues to Hope Society	https://www.pathsociety.com/community-partners
1033	Hiatus House	https://hiatushouse.com/
1034	Naomi's Family Resource Centre	https://naomiscentre.ca/
1035	Ending Violence Across Manitoba Inc.	https://www.endingviolencemanitoba.org/
1036	The Today Centre	https://www.thetodaycentre.ca/
1037	A Safe Place	https://www.asafeplace.ca/
1038	WIN House	https://winhouse.org/
1039	Domestic Violence Action Team	https://dvat.ca/
1040	Saskatchewan Health Authority	https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/your-health/conditions-diseases-services/healthline-
1041	Toronto Police Service	https://torontopolice.on.ca/
1042	Ottawa Police Service	https://www.ottawapolice.ca/en/safety-and-crime-prevention/Violence-Against-Women--
1043	My Sister's Place	https://mysistersplace.ca/
1044	Canadian Women's Foundation	https://canadianwomen.org/
1045	Calgary Police Service	https://www.calgary.ca/cps/community-programs-and-resources/crime-
1046	Government of British Columbia	https://www2.gov.bc.ca/
1047	Ending Violence Association of Canada	https://endingviolencecanada.org/
1048	Ontario Network of Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres	www.sadvtreatmentcentres.ca
1049	Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women	https://www.octevaw-cocvff.ca/
1050	Waterloo Regional Police	https://www.wrps.on.ca/en/staying-safe/intimate-partner-violence.aspx

Appendix C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR IPV SURVIVORS

OPENING STATEMENT & INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH:

Initial Attempt to Establish Rapport
Good morning/afternoon, I'd like to start off by thanking you for taking the time to talk to me today. My name is Mackenzie Jones, and I am the principal investigator for the present study. Today I'd like to talk to you about your experience with intimate partner violence (IPV) - specifically violence that has been facilitated by a previous partner through the use of digital technology (also referred to throughout the interview as digital abuse) – whether this was done to harass, threaten, stalk, or simply control you and your daily activities.

Nature of Questions & Purpose
I would like to ask you these questions to grasp a better understanding of your story, for the purpose of painting a larger picture of digital abuse that is increasingly occurring within situations of intimate partner violence in Canada today, and hopefully add to this growing area of research. These questions primarily concern the technology you use; the technology that has been used against you for harm; how this has impacted you; any specific challenges you have experienced as a result of technology's misuse; how technology has potentially assisted you during such a difficult time; and how you have worked to overcome these experiences?

Now that we have covered the general content of the interview, I would like to move onto the consent form.

(Following completion of consent form) Do you have any questions before we begin?

(Following any questions posed) To give you my full attention, would it be alright with you if I began recording our interview now?

Let's get started.

<u>Interview Guide:</u>

Transition/Ice Breaker: *To start us off, I'd like to ask you what led you to contact me to participate in this research?*

Transition: *Now if you don't mind, I'd like to move right into some background questions related to your technology use and the abusive relationship(s) you experienced?*

SECTION 1: SCREENING QUESTIONS/BACKGROUND OF THE RELATIONSHIP(S)

Can you tell me a little about your current (or former) use of technology?

1. Can you share with me what types of technology you own (or owned), and which you use(ed) on a regular basis for personal or professional purposes?
   Probe for the following examples:
   a) Cell phones, landline phones, pagers, text messages, watches.
   b) Desktop computers, laptop computers, tablets/iPads, TVs.
   c) The internet of things: internet, GPS, Apple AirTag, and other various data sharing or tracking devices.
   d) Social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.).
   e) Smart home assistants: Siri (Apple), Alexa (Amazon), Google Assistant (Google).
   f) Smart home appliances: smart lights, locks and security systems, thermostats, fridges, speakers, cameras, doorbells, vacuums, etc.

2. Can you tell me a little about your experience with digital abuse by an ex/intimate partner? More specifically, which forms of technology have been used against you in the abusive relationship for the purpose of harming you?
   Probe for:
   a) Whether some technologies were more commonly used than others?
   b) Whether it was common for their partner to use multiple technologies at once to harm them (i.e. Social media, email, cell phone)?

Can you tell me a little about the nature of the abusive relationship(s) you have experienced?

3. Can you tell me what your relationship status currently is and previously was with the abusive partner you're here about today? (Are you divorced, separated but still married, common law but now separated, dated but now broken up, were only casually together but never dated, etc.)

4. How long were you involved with this person?

5. Do you have any children as a result of this relationship? If so, how many children do you have, and do they currently live with you or your ex/partner?

Transition: *If you don't mind, I'd like to dive into some of the harder questions now.*

SECTION 2: EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE

Can you tell me more about your story and the abuse you experienced within your relationship?

6. Firstly, how would you describe the abusive relationship you were in?
   Probe for:

a) What worked well in the relationship generally speaking?
b) What didn't work well in the relationship generally speaking?

7. Could you describe to me the abuse you experienced in this relationship?
   Probe for:
   a) Whether physical violence was present in the relationship?
   b) Whether sexual violence was present in the relationship?
   c) Whether financial abuse was present?
   d) Other forms of abuse present?

8. Were there times in your relationship that you felt controlled by your partner? If so, can you give me some examples of what you felt controlled over?
   Probe for the following examples:
   a) Personal life/ daily activities (ie. Whereabouts, eating, sleeping, transportation, housework/chores?)
   b) Social life & contacts (ie. Who you could and couldn't speak to or visit? Friends, family, coworkers, ex-partners?)
   c) Intimate life/ romance?
   d) Children/parenting?
   e) Financial/employment/property matters?

9. In your experience, were one or more of these areas of your life controlled or monitored by your partner with the assistance of digital technology? If so, which areas?

SECTION 3: DIGITAL COERCIVE CONTROL

I'd like to now focus on your experience of digital abuse. Can you elaborate on these experiences from your past relationship(s)?

10. Can you explain how the devices, appliances, or software you owned/used were also used to harm and control you?
    Probe for the following examples:
    a) Harassing: ie. Negative or harassing comments, threats, repeated phone calls, emails or other messages.
    b) Monitoring & Stalking: ie. Stalking social media or other personal profiles to monitor activity and contacts.
    c) Impersonation & Fraud: Impersonating you on personal or professional accounts (ie. Social media or email); engaging in fraud by tricking you into providing account security or other confidential information (also known as social engineering); engaging in fraud via online identity theft (ie. opening credit cards, loans, or mortgages in your name).
    d) Defaming: ie. Doxxing and disseminating personal information online (ie. 'Revenge porn', 'Sextortion'); or making false statements or rumors online to intentionally damage reputation.

11. In your experience with digital abuse, did your abuser recruit the assistance of any external individuals to assist them in the abuse, harassment, or control of you?
    Probe for:
    a) Abuser recruiting the assistance of their own friends
    b) Abuser recruiting the assistance of survivors' friends (potentially without their full knowledge of the purpose of his actions)
    c) Abuser recruiting the assistance of his family
    d) Abuser recruiting the assistance of survivors' family (potentially without their full knowledge of the purpose of his actions)
    e) Abuser recruiting the assistance of either his own, the survivors own, or their shared children (likely without their knowledge of the purpose of his actions)

12. Can you speak to the overall impact digital abuse by an ex/partner has had on your life?
    Probe for:
    a) Emotional Impact (ie. Developed PTSD, anxiety, substance use issues)?
    b) Physical Impact (ie. Experienced physical or sexual violence as a result of DCC)?
    c) Social Impact (ie. Work life, school life, relationships with family and friends)?
    d) Financial Impact (ie. Experienced financial hardship related to DCC. Perhaps due to ID fraud and social engineering attempts; as a form of harassment; or in person theft made possible with the hacking or abuse of personal smart home or GPS tracking devices).

13. Are there any additional challenges that you can think of that you may have endured while faced with digital abuse in the context of intimate partner violence?
    Probe for:
    a) Personal challenges experienced
        - Escaping the abuse (perhaps a indication of abuser 'omnipresence')
        - A new fear of technology
        - Difficulty collecting evidence or proving the abuse
        - Shared social lives and family circles between survivor and the perpetrator
        - The general reach, severity, and permanency of digital coercive control
    b) Challenges experienced with key stakeholders
        - Stakeholders how have a lack of or outdated expertise, training, or general insight into new and advancing technologies
        - Abuse experience treated as trivial by stakeholders or not as significant as physical violence
        - Stakeholders who give blanket advise to stop using technology or delete accounts

14. Have you chosen to report or disclose your experience of abuse to any stakeholders, friends, or family?
    If they indicate they have reported/disclosed, Probe for:
    a) Whether they formally or informally reported this information.
    b) The reaction they received from each of these individuals or organizations.
    c) The response they received as a result of reporting/disclosing or lack thereof.
    d) Whether or not this response was effective in either stopping the abuse or assisting the survivor in other ways (ie. Access legal services, or the appropriate health or counselling services, etc.)

15. Can you speak to any measures you may have personally taken on your own to stop or at least minimize the abuse you were experiencing through technology?
    Probe for the following examples:
    a) Getting rid of or selling devices.
    b) Deleting accounts.
    c) Restricting online use to professional or emergency use only.
    d) Withdrawing from previous online engagements, partially or all together.
    e) Engaging in training courses or personal learning related to technology use and digital privacy.

16. Despite the hardships you have experienced as a result of technology's influence on intimate partner violence, can you speak to any ways in which technology assisted you throughout this time?
    Probe for:
    a) Whether technology helped the survivor maintain social connections.
    b) Whether technology became an asset to the survivor when needing to quickly access information regarding IPV or discover and potentially contact IPV support or emergency services.
    c) Whether they were able utilize the technology at their disposal to record or collect other evidence for legal proceedings.

17. As a survivor of digital abuse that has occurred in the context of intimate partner violence, are there any ideas you may have in relation to how we can improve our response to this phenomenon for other survivors that may be faced with similar experiences in the future?

18. Is there anything you would like to add to our conversation that we did not have the chance to cover here today?

Transition: *Now that we have covered the hard stuff, would you mind if I asked you a few more basic questions concerning your background, so I can get a fuller picture of your story?*

SECTION 4: DEMOGRAPHIC & BACKGROUND INFORMATION
Can you tell me a little more about yourself?

19. What age group best describes you? 18-24 years old? 25-34 years old? 35-44 years old? 45-54 years old? Or 55+ years old?

20. What gender do you identify with?

21. What Canadian Province or Territory do you currently reside in?
    Probe for: Whether they have always lived there or whether their move was relevant to their experience of digital abuse?

22. Would you be able to share with me how you overcame your experience with digital abuse, or how you are continuing to work on overcoming it today?

CLOSING REMARKS: It has been a pleasure speaking with you today and hearing more about your story. I appreciate the time you took for this interview and want to compensate you for your time with a $10 virtual gift card to Tim Horton's. If you have any further questions following our time here today, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Appendix D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR IPV STAKEHOLDERS

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC & BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background of the stakeholder:

1. What age group best describes you? 18-24 years old? 25-34 years old? 35-44 years old? 45-54 years old? Or 55+ years old?

2. What gender do you identify with?

3. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Employment Information:

4. What is your current occupation?

5. How long have you been working at this position for?

6. Can you describe the nature of the work your place of employment engages in, specifically in relation to intimate partner/ domestic violence?

7. Can you describe your role in this workplace with respect to survivors of intimate partner violence/domestic violence?

8. During the course of your career, have you worked with survivors who have experienced coercive or controlling behaviour?
   Probe for:
   a. Whether this is more or less common than other forms of intimate partner violence?
   b. How coercive and controlling behaviours impacted those survivors' lives.

SECTION 2: DIGITAL COERCIVE CONTROL

Professional Experience with Digital Coercive Control

9. During the course of your career, have you worked with survivors who have experienced coercive or controlling behaviour that was facilitated by technology - otherwise known as digital coercive control?

10. What forms of technology have you seen used by perpetrators of intimate partner violence, in cases of digital coercive control?
    Probe for:
    a. Whether some technologies are more commonly used than others?
    b. Whether it is common for perpetrators to use multiple technologies at once to harm their partners?

11. What did the perpetrators use the technology for? (i.e., To harass, control, defame, or stalk their partner?)

Professional Response to Digital Coercive Control

12. How are you/your workplace currently responding to instances of digital coercive control that you come across and assisting those survivors?
    Probe for:
    a. Whether they are utilizing any popular technology to do so?
    b. What technology or platforms have been of use to them?

13. Can you speak to any challenges that digital coercive control has illuminated for you or your workplace more broadly?
    Probe for:
    a. Level of comfort/expertise with various technology/platforms?
    b. Normalization of digital coercive control?
    c. Romanticization of digital coercive control?
    d. The shared social lives/circles between survivors and abusers?
    e. Difficulty maintaining contact with survivors?
    f. Challenges with legal response or securing evidence of digital coercive control?

14. Are there any ways in which you or your workplace have attempted to address these challenges?
    Probe for:
    a. Any technology focused training workshops/other opportunities?
    b. Any technology advice or assistance they have received?
    c. What approaches are working?
    d. What approaches are not working?

15. Can you speak to any ways in which you believe technology can benefit survivors of intimate partner violence, or your work in particular?
    Probe for:
    a. Any strategies survivors have developed to protect themselves with the assistance of technology?

16. As a frontline worker with survivors, are there any ideas you may have in relation to how we can improve our response for survivors faced with digital coercive control?

Appendix E

STAKEHOLDER RECRUITMENT EMAIL SCRIPTS

Good afternoon,

My name is Mackenzie Jones, and I am a Master of Arts graduate student at the University of New Brunswick (UNB) in the Department of Sociology. I am currently conducting a research study exploring digital abuse and control within intimate partner violence (IPV), more formally known as digital coercive control (DCC) or technology facilitated IPV. As part of my research, I have explored the content shared by various anti-violence stakeholder websites across Canada and have interviewed survivors of digital abuse, to investigate the existing state of knowledge concerning DCC and the experiences of those who have survived it firsthand. In addition, **I am currently conducting virtual interviews with several anti-violence stakeholders across Canada**, to further grasp their knowledge of the issue, their current responses to it, and better understand the challenges they face when tasked to support survivors of DCC in situations of IPV.

I am emailing your organization today in hopes you, as stakeholders involved in the fight against IPV who share IPV information to the public on your organization's website, may be willing to assist me with my participant recruitment process by sharing my advertisement and need for participants amongst the professionals within your organization. This study has received clearance by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-136. Should you be willing to share the information regarding my study, I have provided a brief invitation/summary of my research below and have attached the official research poster advertisement to this email.

Invitation/Summary:

SEEKING ANTI-VIOLENCE WORKER/STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS FOR M.A. THESIS RESEARCH ON DIGITAL ABUSE IN IPV! SHORT ONLINE INTERVIEW INVOLVED (POSTER ATTACHED).

Hello! My name is Mackenzie Jones, and I am a Master of Arts graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick. I am currently inviting **anti-violence workers and other stakeholders involved in the fight against intimate partner violence (IPV) across Canada, to participate in my research study on digital abuse and control** (also known as Digital Coercive Control (DCC)), which is increasingly occurring in situations of IPV. DCC may look like: image-based sexual abuse, stalking online or offline with the assistance of technology, threats, harassment, attempts to impersonate the individual online, or simply controlling who the individual engages with online or how they use digital technology. The purpose of this study is to capture the existing knowledge, experiences, and challenges faced by DCC survivors and the stakeholders involved in DCC cases, while bringing greater attention to this growing form of IPV and ultimately learning how we can better support survivors of

DCC in the future. Participation in this study involves a **one-on-one online interview**, through your choice of conferencing medium (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype) or by phone. The interview will last approximately **30 minutes in length**.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and confidential. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Requirements for participation include speaking **English**, being **18 years of age or older**, having **current or former professional experience working as an anti-violence worker/stakeholder in IPV and DCC cases**, and returning a **completed invitation package** which includes a consent form. Compensation will be provided for your time and participation. **If you are interested in participating, would like more information, or have any questions regarding the study, please contact Mackenzie Jones at Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca.** This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-136.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mackenzie Jones
M.A. Graduate Student
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick

Appendix F

SURVIVOR RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT (POSTER)

ARE YOU A SURVIVOR OF *DIGITAL* ABUSE BY AN INTIMATE PARTNER?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU!

This study aims to understand the experience of women who have faced digital abuse in the context of intimate partner violence. Specifically I hope to understand:

- The technology you use(d) personally & that which has been used against you for harm
- How this has impacted you
- Any challenges you have faced as a result of technology's misuse
- How technology may have assisted you during such a difficult time
- How you have worked to overcome these experiences
- How you believe the current responses to digital abuse can be changed to better meet the needs of survivors

Participation involves one **30 minute virtual** or **phone** interview.
Compensation will be provided for your time and participation.

All participants must read and communicate in the English language; be over 18 years of age; be no longer involved in the abusive relationship; and consent to participate in a one-on-one interview.

If you are interested in participating, have any questions, or would like more information about this reserach study, please contact the principal investigator Mackenzie Jones, M.A. Candidate at the University of New Brunswick, at **mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca**.

This study has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board & is on file as REB-2021-XXX

Appendix G

RESEARCH INVITATION PACKAGE

Research Invitation Package: Exploring Digital Coercive Control in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence

Mackenzie Jones, M.A. Graduate Student (Principal Investigator)
Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick (UNB)

Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca
*Please contact should you have any questions regarding the research.

Invitation to Participate in Online Interviews

You are invited to participate in an online individual interview regarding your experience with digital abuse and control, also known as 'Digital Coercive Control' (DCC), that has occurred to you directly in the context of intimate partner violence or someone you have supported while working as a key stakeholder. This behaviour could include instances in which an intimate partner has utilized technology to intimidate you; isolate you; shame, threaten, or harass you; surveil you; or simply control you or those you come into contact with. During the interview, questions will be asked in which you may elaborate on general non-identifying demographic information; the technology you use in everyday life; the technology that has been used against you for harm; the impact this has had upon you; how you have responded to these harms; and any further challenges you may have faced as you have worked to overcome these experiences. The information collected from this individual interview will help create an understanding of how technology is increasingly playing a role in situations of intimate partner violence in Canada, and hopefully provide insight into how we can better address this growing concern and better support more women faced with DCC in the future. Your participation will assist in the completion of Mackenzie Jones' master's thesis.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and participant information will remain anonymous. You may withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions included in the interview. Questions in the interview may be sensitive for certain participants, please consider how your involvement in this study will affect you before participating. If you or someone you know needs help concerning intimate partner violence, a digital pamphlet listing the contact information of skilled support services can be found at the end of this invitation package.

If you are interested in participating in the interviews or have any questions or concerns regarding the research project and your involvement, please contact Mackenzie Jones (Principal Investigator) at Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca. Inquires may also be made to Dr. Carmen Gill (Supervisor, Professor in the Department of Sociology) at cgill@unb.ca or 506-452-6367. This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-136.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mackenzie Jones
Graduate Student
Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick

Overview of Study

Title of Study: Exploring Digital Coercive Control in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence
The University of New Brunswick (UNB)
Research Ethics Board File Number: REB 2021-136

Objective of Research: This research is intended to shed light on the growing issue of digital abuse and control (or rather 'Digital Coercive Control'(DCC)) occurring in cases of intimate partner violence (IPV). DCC entails the exploitation of everyday digital technologies to intentionally intimidate, isolate, shame, surveil, and control women predominately, in situations of IPV. Through online interviews with both survivors of DCC and stakeholders who are involved in assisting DCC survivors across Canada, the principal investigator intends to capture the experiences and challenges faced by these individuals; in hopes of bringing greater attention to this widely overlooked issue, highlight the need for additional training of stakeholders confronting cases of DCC, and ultimately better assist the women faced with this insidious form of IPV firsthand.

Who Can Participate in the Research: This research study is open to survivors who have personally experienced DCC and stakeholders who have been professionally involved in DCC cases with their clients. Participants must be at least 18 years of age, must be able to read and communicate in the English language, and if they identify as a survivor - must no longer be involved in an abusive relationship.

Participant's Role in the Research: If you agree to partake in this study, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one *online interview* via your choice of conferencing medium (i.e., Microsoft Teams, Zoom, etc.) with the principal investigator, lasting no more than *30-minutes in length.* During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions regarding your personal experience, opinion, and ideas surrounding DCC. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. Keep in mind, participation in this study is completely voluntary. While your data will remain anonymous, you may choose not to answer any question and withdraw from the study at any time.

Principal Investigator:

Mackenzie Jones - Graduate Student in the Department of Sociology, UNB.
Contact Information: Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca
*Please contact should you have any questions regarding the research.

Eligibility Screening Checklist for Participant Inclusion in the Research Study

To participate in this research study, each participant is asked to complete the following eligibility screening checklist.

This eligibility screening checklist was designed to minimize the potential impact and risks associated with this research study by preventing individuals from participating in the study who:

- Do not have relevant experience (i.e., Those without personal or professional experience related to digital abuse).
- May be too vulnerable to partake in the study (i.e., Those under 18 years of age).
- May be particularly sensitive to or at risk by interview questions (i.e., Those still engaged in an abusive relationship).

Please complete the following checklist:

Eligibility Screening Checklist for Participant Inclusion in the Research Study		
	Yes	No
I can read and communicate in the **English** language.	☐	☐
I am currently **18 years of age or older.**	☐	☐
I am a survivor who is interested in discussing my personal experience with intimate partner violence (i.e., Physical or sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, online or digital abuse).	☐	☐
I am a stakeholder who is interest in discussing my professional experience working to support survivors of intimate partner violence (i.e., Assisting survivors of physical or sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, online or digital abuse). **(*Survivors can leave this question blank)**	☐	☐
I have had **personal or professional experience** dealing with some form of **digital abuse** in the context of intimate partner violence. (i.e., You or your client have experienced digital abuse by an intimate partner for the purpose of intimidating you, threatening you, controlling you, or harming you in one or more of the following forms: online harassment, threats, or stalking; blackmailing or distribution of personal photos, or audio/video recordings; private information shared online without your consent (i.e., address or phone number), reputation intentionally damaged online; identity or personal security information stolen or hacked.)	☐	☐
As a **survivor of digital abuse,** I am **no longer involved in** an **abusive relationship.** **(*Stakeholders can leave this question blank).**	☐ (Yes i'm still invovled)	☐ (No i'm no longer invovled)

Please return completed form to the principal researcher at Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca.

Online Interview Consent Form

You are invited to participate in an online individual interview regarding your experience with digital abuse and control (also known as 'Digital Coercive Control' (DCC)) that has occurred to you directly in the context of intimate partner violence or someone you have supported while working as a key stakeholder. This behaviour could include instances in which an intimate partner has utilized technology to intimidate you; isolate you; shame, threaten, or harass you; surveil you; or control you or those you come into contact with. I, Mackenzie Jones, am conducting the research as part of my master's studies in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick under the supervision of Dr. Carmen Gill.

The individual interview will take no more than 30 minutes to complete online, through your indicated choice of conferencing medium (i.e., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype), or more traditionally by phone. With your permission, audio from the interview will be digitally recorded for the purpose of transcription. In the event that you do not wish to be audio-recorded, a signed electronic consent form will be requested, and the principal investigator will take handwritten notes and transfer the information to a password-protected computer following the interview.

All research has the potential to pose some form of risk to participants, whether it be as minor as embarrassment or as serious as physical harm; however, research involving topics of violence can be particularly challenging for those involved. While no serious risks are anticipated with participation in the present study, it is common for participants who have experienced intimate partner violence to be emotionally triggered by interview questions concerning those events, as such, this study, and its potential effects on you should be given adequate consideration by you before agreeing to participate.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You may also choose not to answer any question that you do not want to answer. If you wish to withdraw from the study altogether, all audio information and data that has been collected from you will be deleted and will not be used in the analysis.

All collected data will be securely stored. Digital files and electronic transcripts will be stored on a password protected computer and accessible only

to Mackenzie Jones (Principal Investigator) and Dr. Carmen Gill (Supervisor) at the University of New Brunswick. All digital files and interview transcripts will be saved under a pseudonym. No identifying information or direct narratives from the interview will be included in the dissemination of findings that might allow others to deduce a participant's identity or agency in which they are employed. Employing these techniques will maximize the anonymity of information and ensure confidentiality to the best of our ability.

If you wish to receive the final results of the study, the principal investigator may disseminate the findings via mail or email (as per the participants preference). Individual results will not be available as all information will be summarized in the aggregate to protect participants identity and location. As the study is part of the principal investigators master's dissertation, the results may also be shared with academic journals and conference presentations.

If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact the principal investigator, Mackenzie Jones at Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca, or Dr. Carmen Gill, Professor in the Department of Sociology at cgill@unb.ca or 506-452-6367.

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board of the University of New Brunswick and is on file as REB 2021 – 136. Related concerns should be directed towards Dr. Lucia Tramonte (Chair, Department of Sociology) at 506-458-7257.

Participant's Name: **Date:**

Please return completed form to the principal researcher at Mackenzie.jones1@unb.ca.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
PO BOX 4400
Fredericton, NB
Canada E3B 5A3

Department of Sociology
9 Macaulay Lane
Tilley Hall, room 20
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5A3

National Emergency Numbers & Hotlines

Police/RCMP..... 9-1-1
Call if you are in an emergency.

Canadian Suicide Prevention Service.....1-833-456-4566
Text 445645 (4pm-12am ET)
A national phone and text service available for Canadians in crisis or considering suicide.

Hope for Wellness Help Line.....1-855-242-3310
www.hopeforwellness.ca
A free, 24/7, phone & online helpline for indigenous peoples across Canada, offering immediate mental health counselling & crisis intervention. Available in English & French, along with Cree, Ojibway, & Inuktitut upon request.

Kids Help Phone.....1-800-668-6868
Text CONNECT to 686868
www.KidsHelpPhone.ca/Messenger
A free, 24/7, nationwide helpline for young people up to 20 years of age, offering services in English & French, by phone, text, online, & Facebook messenger services.

Crisis Text Line..... Text HOME to 686868
A free, 24/7, nationwide crisis line created by Kids Help Phone that you can text to quickly connect with a live Crisis Responder in Canada.

Youth Space.....Text 1-778-783-0177 (6pm-12am PST)
www.Youthspace.ca
A free crisis & emotional support service accessible online or by text for Canadian youth up to 30 years of age.

Trans Lifeline.....1-877-330-6366
www.translifeline.org
A free, 24/7 transgender-led hotline, that offers crisis services, peer & community support, & resources to transgender people in Canada.

Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline.....1-833-900-1010

www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca

A free, 24/7, multilingual hotline, available to connect victims & survivors of human trafficking with social services, law enforcement, & emergency services.

Online Resources for Survivors & Stakeholders on Digital/Technology Abuse & Online Safety

- Crash Override Crisis Helpline..... Email @ crashoverridenetwork.com
  www.crashoverridenetwork.com

  A crisis helpline (available over email), advocacy group, and resource centre working to eliminate online abuse, developed by game designer Zoë Quinn and Alex Lifschitz following their own highly publicized experiences as targets of severe online abuse and harassment. The website's resource centre offers information on protecting your online life, DIY security guides, educational material for employers, third party guides for various forms of online abuse, and several tools and services aimed at protecting your privacy and passwords, locking down devices remotely, or finding and deleting old accounts.

- Online Intimate Image Removal Guide: www.cybercivilrights.org/online-removal/

  An online guide developed by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) in collaboration with various web companies, to assist victims of Image-Based Sexual Abuse report and remove nude images posted without consent to major technology platforms.

  CCRI Image Abuse Helpline..... 1-844-878-2274

  A free, 24/7 helpline, developed by CCRI to assist victims of image-based sexual abuse.

- NeedHelpNow: www.needhelpnow.ca

  An online resource developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to assist teens with the removal of sexual pictures/videos from the internet, assist with cyberbullying, support youth who are in crisis, and help concerned parents or friends support their loved one.

- Technology Safety (The Safety Net Project): www.techsafety.org

  A blog created as part of the Safety Net Project by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV), intended to support survivors of technology abuse (in the context of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and violence against women) and stakeholders. The website offers a series of toolkits curated for survivors, agencies, and the legal system to increase awareness, educate, and provide privacy and safety tips concerning technology use.

- Technology Safety Project: www.bcsth.ca/technology-safety-project-resources/

  A project developed by the BC Society of Transition Houses to assist women and stakeholders from various anti-violence organizations across Canada, who are faced with experiencing or responding to technology-facilitated abuse. The website provides toolkits on safety and privacy, teen digital dating, utilizing digital support services, and preserving digital evidence - among other safety planning information and resources.

- Tech Without Violence: www.techwithoutviolence.ca

  An online hub offering critical information to young social media users and key recommendations to social media platforms for addressing and preventing cyberviolence. The project pays particular attention to some of the most popular social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Tumblr.

- The Cybersmile Foundation: www.cybersmile.org
  An international non-profit organization that works to address all forms of bullying, harassment, and online abuse. The website's help centre defines and explains an extensive list of online abuses, while also discussing the associated effects, signs of abuse, and preventative measures available for each situation.

- Online Abuse and Internet Safety: www.bwss.org/why-safety/internet-safety
  An online resource developed by Battered Women's Support Services in BC, to help women plan for their safety online. The webpage offers information on how to clear your internet browsing history, defines online abuse and the various tactics involved, offers victims and survivors support, and provides suggestions on how to plan for safety in different online spaces.

- Technology-Facilitated Abuse: www.vawnet.org/sc/technology-assisted-abuse
  An online resource developed as part of the VAWnet project by the National Resource Centre on Domestic Violence, to shed light on the issue of technology-facilitated abuse. The webpage provides information and resources on the specific issues of online harassment, sexting/revenge-porn, stalking/surveillance, human trafficking, and child sexual abuse/exploitation.

- Take Back the Tech: www.takebackthetech.net
  A global campaign fighting to reclaim safe digital spaces for women and girls in the wake of tech-related violence. The campaign's website offers information on the various forms of tech-related violence, discusses the basic human rights that are violate by each of these, and provides strategies and safety roadmaps for preventing or overcoming tech-related violence.

Mobile Applications (Apps) for Survivors & Stakeholders

The Tech Safety App - www.techsafetyapp.org/home
A free mobile app designed to help people recognize and respond to the signs of technology-facilitated abuse, harassment, or stalking. The app covers 6 categories, including: cellphone safety, device safety, harassment, impersonation, location safety, and online safety. The types of abuse/harm that fall under each category are explained, safety suggestions for each are provided, and further recommendations are offered regarding the involvement of law enforcement.
***Download on your mobile device via the App Store or Google Play.**
Developed by: The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV).

DocuSAFE Evidence Collection - www.techsafety.org/docusafe
A free mobile app that allows survivors to discretely collect, store, and share evidence of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, online harassment, and dating violence. It also provides information to better understand abuse, safety planning, and evidence/documentation collection. If survivors choose to pursue legal action this evidence can be shared with law enforcement, an attorney, or a judge during a legal proceeding. The app is PIN protected to increase security and privacy.
***Download on your mobile device via the App Store or Google Play.**
Developed by: The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV).

myPlan Canada – www.myplanapp.ca
A free mobile app designed to assist survivors and stakeholders/service providers identify abuse, assess the risk of danger and available options for safety and well-being, and access information and support resources to develop individualized safety plans.

***Download on your mobile device via the App Store or Google Play.**
***New app to be released in early 2022.**
Developed by: A research team from Western University, The University of British Columbia, and The University of New Brunswick, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.

EVO Staying Safer - www.nbvictimservices.ca/en/evo/

A free mobile app designed to assist women who experience abuse in New Brunswick, Canada, create a plan to stay safer – especially those located in rural areas. The app connects victims/survivors with appropriate services and offers them guidance in deciding to tell someone about the abuse, identifying situations that put them at risk for abuse, and creating an individualized safety plan to reduce risk to themselves, their children, pets, or property.

***For women in New Brunswick only.**
***Download on your mobile device via the App Store or Google Play.**
Developed by: Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick (PLEIS-NB), New Brunswick Department of Public Safety, Victim Services, and the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC).

Online Resources for Survivors & Stakeholders on Intimate Partner Violence

- Government of Canada – Get Help with Family Violence: www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/fv-vf/help-aide.html

- RCMP – Intimate Partner Violence & Abuse: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/relationship-violence/intimate-partner-violence-and-abuse

- ShelterSafe: www.sheltersafe.ca
  An online resource to assist women and children seeking safety and shelter from situations of violence and abuse. The website offers an interactive map to quickly direct users across Canada to the nearest shelters and transition houses in their area, and even those that accommodate pets.

- DomesticShelters.org: www.domesticshelters.org
  This website is one of the largest online directories for domestic violence programs and shelters across the US and Canada. It also provides information and resources for survivors and stakeholders on identifying various forms of abuse, safety planning, and healing after abuse.

- Shelter Movers: www.sheltermovers.com
  A national charitable organization that provides free moving and storage assistance to women and children fleeing situation of abuse across Canada.

- Ending Violence Association (EVA) of Canada: www.endingviolencecanada.org
  A non-profit organization that educates and responds to gender-based violence at the national level in Canada. EVA works in collaboration with criminal and family justice, health and social service systems, educational institutions, corporations, and provincial or territorial organizations to increase efficiency in the response to gender-based violence.

- Canadian Women's Foundation: www.canadianwomen.org

A non-profit organization in Canada that works to support women, girls, and gender-diverse people, overcome situations of violence and poverty. This website also supplies various information and resources for stakeholders/ non-profit organizations to improve their knowledge and programs.

- VAWnet: www.vawnet.org/

  A US-based online network, developed by the National Resource Centre on Domestic Violence (NRCDV), providing a collection of electronic resources on domestic violence, sexual violence, and related issues. While this website covers various topics related to gender-based violence, the information and resources shared are primarily intended for educating and supporting stakeholders, including anti-violence advocates, human service professional, educators, faith leaders, and others involved in the fight against domestic and sexual violence.

Resources for Survivors in Fredericton, New Brunswick

Crisis Lines & Emergency Numbers:

Women in Transition House Inc. 24hr Crisis Line.....1-506-459-2300

Chimo Helpline .....1-506-450-4357 (Fredericton Helpline)
www.chimohelpline.ca

Beauséjour Family Crisis Resources Centre Inc. 506-533-9100
www.healingstartshere.ca

Sexual Violence New Brunswick.....506-454-0437
www.svnb.ca

Looking Out for Each Other
(Missing & Murdered Indigenous Families in Need of Direction).....1-833-664-3463
www.nbapc.org/programs-and-services/lofeo/

After-hours Emergency Services Line:
Department of Social Development.....1-800-442-9799

Free Shelters/Transition Houses for Women & Children:

Women in Transition 1-506-459-2300
www.womenintransitionhouse.ca

Gignoo Transition House, Inc. 1-800-565-6878
506-458-1224
www.gignoohouse.ca

Second Stage Housing for Women & Children:

Liberty Lane 506-451-2120
www.libertylane.ca

Other Resources:

Women's Equity Branch
Violence Prevention and Community Partnerships Initiatives (Unit).....506-453-8126

Domestic Violence Outreach Services (Fredericton) 506-458-9774

Public Legal Education and Information
Service of New Brunswick (PLEIS-NB) 506-453-5369
www.legal-info-legale.nb.ca

New Brunswick Legal Aid Services Commission (Fredericton).....506-462-2777
www.legalaid-aidejuridique-nb.ca

Family Law Information Line (PLEIS-NB) 1-888-236-2444

Appendix H

ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

Mackenzie Jones, Graduate Student
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick Fredericton

To Mackenzie Jones:

As Chair of the Research Ethics Board (REB), I have reviewed your ethics application for the project entitled "Exploring Digital Coercive Control in the Context of Intimate Partner Violence." which has been assigned the file number REB #2021-136. On the basis of the review, I consider your project to be eligible for delegated review, since any risk to participants that might exist appears not to exceed the "minimal risk" outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement, 2nd edition (TCPS2). I am also pleased to inform you that, in my opinion, your project is in compliance with TCPS2 and the University Policy on Research Involving Humans (UPRIH). Accordingly, please consider this E-mail to represent official notification of REB approval of your project for a period of three years from the date of this E-mail.

NOTE 1: In each of your Recruitment Notice (Appendix C), Invitation to Participate in Interviews (Appendix D), and Online Interview Consent Form (Appendix E), would you please insert the assigned REB Project number into your phrase "This project has been reviewed by the UNB Research Ethics Board and is on file as REB 2021-136." Then, would you please email to me (cc to <ethics@unb.ca>) a copy of each of those modified documents for our records? There is no need to send a revised version of the whole application.

Please note that, in the future, if you find that you must make any changes to your protocol, those changes must be considered and approved by the REB before they are implemented. Please submit the REB Case Modification Request form, available online through the Research Ethics page of the Office of the VP (Research).

Annual Reports for this project are due on the 15th of January each year, provided that this date is at least six months after the date of project approval. Final reports are due 90 days after project completion. Form templates for both of these reports can be found on our website at https://www.unb.ca/research/vp/ethics.html.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research project.

David Coleman, Chair
Research Ethics Board
Professor Emeritus
UNB Fredericton

Appendix I

MULTIPLE RESPONSE SET FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLES FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

Table 5. *Tools & Resources for DCC Support on Websites*

Tools & Resources Used for DCC Support	*n*	% of websites (*n*=12)
Technology Safety Planning	11	91.7%
Preserving Digital Evidence	3	25.0%
Applicable Legal Remedies & Responses	4	33.3%
Other	2	16.7%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 6. *Safety Features Offered on Websites*

Safety Features Offered	*n*	% of websites (*n*=50)
Quick Escape or Exit Button	35	70.0%
Quick Access to Emergency Numbers & Hotlines	45	90.0%
Safe Organization Phone Number to Text or Email to Message	40	80.0%
Quick Search Bar to Easily Locate Relevant Information	40	80.0%
Lists Warning Signs of IPV and/or DCC	29	58.0%
Provides Safety Quizzes or Personal Risk Assessment Tools	10	20.0%
Provides a DCC Warning Upon Site Entry	4	8.0%
Outlines Site Privacy Policy	29	58.0%
Other	3	6.0%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 7. *Forms of Violence Identified on Websites*

Forms of Violence	*n*	% of websites (*n*=49)
General or Non-Specific	9	18.4%
Sexual Abuse	45	91.8%
Physical Abuse	45	91.8%
Emotional/Psychological Abuse	45	91.8%
Coercive Control	15	30.6%
Digital Coercive Control	16	32.7%
Other	42	85.7%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 8. *Forms of DCC Discussed on Websites*

Forms of DCC Discussed	*n*	% of websites (*n*=41)
General or Non-specific Discussion of DCC	24	58.5%
Online Harassment & Threats	30	73.2%
Cyber Sexual Abuse	15	36.6%
Electronic Surveillance & Stalking	35	85.4%
Cyber Reputation Smearing	9	22.0%
Online Doxxing	5	12.2%
Cyber Fraud & Financial Abuse	8	19.5%
Controlling Access to Technology	14	34.1%
Other Form of DCC Discussed	7	17.1%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 9. *Type of Technology Used to Perpetrate DCC Identified on Websites*

Types of Technology Used to Perpetrate DCC	*n*	% of websites (*n*=39)
Telephones	33	84.6%
Computers & Laptops	38	97.4%
Wearable Smart Devices	2	5.1%
Video Games	4	10.3%
Smart Home Assistants	3	7.7%
Smart Home Appliances	8	20.5%
Other Types of Technology Discussed	3	7.7%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 10. *Types of DCC Information Discussed on Websites*

Types of DCC Information Discussed	*n*	% of websites (*n*=42)
Definitions	16	38.1%
Facts & Statistics	9	21.4%
General Responses to DCC	9	21.4%
Organization Specific Responses to DCC	4	9.5%
Online Safety Tips & Safety Planning	35	83.3%
DCC Training Offered	1	2.4%
Other	0	0%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 11. *Positive Use of Technology Discussed on Websites*

Positive Use of Technology Discussed	*n*	% of websites (*n*=20)
Maintaining Connections with Family & Friends	7	35.0%
Access to Online Support Services	6	30.0%
Access to Relevant Research	7	35.0%
Discretely Alerting Emergency Services	4	20.0%
Audio & Video Recordings of Abuse	5	25.0%
Keeping Digital Evidence & Logs of Abuse	11	55.0%
Other	5	25.0%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Table 12. *Impact of DCC Discussed on Websites*

Impact of DCC Discussed	*n*	% of websites (*n*=6)
Social Impact	6	100.0%
Emotional Impact	5	83.3%
Physical Impact	2	33.3%
Financial Impact	4	66.7%
Other	1	16.7%

**Note. This table represents a dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.*

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Mackenzie Jones

Post-Secondary Education & Degrees:

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
2015 - 2019 Bachelor of Arts Honours, Criminology & Criminal Justice, Concentration in Law, Minor in Psychology

The University of New Brunswick
Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada
2020 – 2023 Master of Arts in Sociology

Academic Awards:

Carleton University Entrance Scholarship - valued at $1000 per academic year
Carleton University, September 2015

Nels Anderson Graduate Student Field Research Grant - valued at $411.50
The University of New Brunswick, February 2022

Publications:

Jones, M. (2022). The Dark Side of Technology: An Editorial on Coercive Control in the Digital Age. *Academic Journal of Criminology X Journal Universitaire de Criminologie,* 1(1). https://doi.org/10.21428/58a8fd3e.648c6e3a

Related Work Experience:

Graduate Teaching Associate
The University of New Brunswick
September 2021 – December 2021

Graduate Research Assistant
The University of New Brunswick
January 2022 – Present