



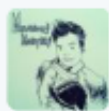
#PeepApp puts actual people at risk of harassment, abuse, stalking and violence.

We woke up this morning to a Twitter feed full of women raising serious concerns about a new app called Peep, which gives you [the opportunity to rate people](#) from 1-5 and write reviews. If this weren't concerning enough when considering cyberbullying, users can upload profiles for other people using their mobile number. The owner of the profile will then receive a text stating that someone had uploaded a review on their profile. You can not opt-out of the system. Other people can create a profile for you and there is NOTHING you can do to prevent it or have the profile taken down.

According to the [Washington Post](#), "to review someone, you must be 21 and have an established Facebook account, and you must make reviews under your real name." As numerous people have been pointing out for the past 24 hours, this idea of a 'yelp for people' will make it easier to stalk, harass, intimidate and threaten vulnerable people. The use of Facebook as a secondary guarantee of identity is easily circumvented. Facebook cannot control the number of children under the age of 13 who use the site. Using it to assess the authenticity of its users is simply not an appropriate safe-guarding technique.

The fact that this app can be used to abuse co-workers, ex-partners, and neighbours is easy to foresee. Twitter, Facebook and every other social media platform are already used to do this. Creating an app where people have no ability to opt-out will simply make it easier for abusive men to continue harassing women online. It will make it easier for violent men to track their former partners. It will be yet another tool in a stalker's arsenal. It will be used by bullies to target vulnerable people - particularly those with mental illnesses and anxiety disorders. These are the kinds of programs that can increase an individual's risk of self-harm or suicide by isolating them completely.

Unfortunately, the creators of Peep, like Facebook and Twitter, fail to understand the consequences of their product:



Melissa McEwan @Shakestweetz · 24m

Clearly there's no way #Peep has a way to assess "positive" reviews that contain potentially harmful disclosures masked as compliments.

← ↻ 32 ★ 18 ...



Melissa McEwan @Shakestweetz · 1h

I am rage-exhausted with privileged tech developers who never investigate how their apps might be used against marginalized people. #Peep

← ↻ 56 ★ 86 ...



They have gone so far as to delete negative comments on their Facebook page. More importantly, they are ignoring the experiences of people living with domestic and sexual violence and abuse. They are refusing to recognise how stalkers can use their technology or how the average 16 year old can create a profile to engage in cyber bullying of a classmate.

There are certainly a number of legal questions to be raised vis-a-vis data protection regulation in Europe.



Whether or not this app will be classed as violating that law by storing the information in its Canadian base remains to be seen. We'd certainly like to see what legal experts think of the harassment laws concerning two unwanted communications constitute apply to this type of tech.

Women, men and children have the right to live their lives free from cyber-bullying, harassment and violence. This app is dangerous because it proves that logging off is simply not enough to prevent cyber-harassment. One person logging off will not stop abusive individuals. It just makes it easier for them to continue the harassment.