

Explainer: what are 'creepshots' and what can we do about them?

Written by Andrea Waling, Research Officer, La Trobe University



The role 'creepshots' have in the denigration of women, and broader questions concerning privacy, the body, and public spaces, need to be considered. Shutterstock

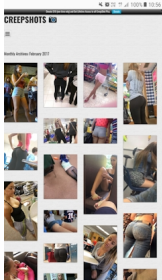
The ['creepshot'](#) is the [latest trend](#) concerning the non-consensual image-sharing of women.

A creepshot – a photo taken discreetly of [women in public](#) by men – is provoking questions concerning [rights to privacy in public](#), and ethical concerns about [technology](#) and [bodily autonomy](#).

What are 'creepshots'?

[MetaReddit/Creepshots](#) defines creepshots as:

... the natural, raw sexiness of the subject without their vain attempts at putting on a show for the camera... Use stealth, cunning and deviousness to capture the beauty of your unsuspecting, chosen target.



A screenshot of a 'creepshot' archive available for free public viewing. Candidfashionpolice

A [creepshot](#) is focused on women's clothed bodies. Images are sexually suggestive rather than sexually explicit, and are different from other forms of [technology-facilitated](#)

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[sexual violence](#)
[evenge pornography](#)

like [r](#)

,
[upskirting](#)

, and

[unsolicited dick pics](#)

. However, the term may be used interchangeably with sexually explicit practices.

The advent of technology has paved the way for devices like the [shoe spy camera](#), [camera pens](#), and

[Goo](#)

[gle Glass](#)

. These have made it easier for men to photograph unsuspecting women and share those images widely.

There are creepshot [websites](#) where men [share and compare](#) their images with other men.

Why do men do it?

There is limited research that looks at why men engage in this practice. However, [a recent study](#) exploring men's sexual street harassment found that men felt it was a harmless and fun activity, that women enjoyed it, and that women deserved it.

Research has also found men engage in [masculine bonding activities](#) involving the [sexual denigration](#)

of

[women](#)

. Such activities allow men to demonstrate [hegemonic masculinity](#)

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At this time we can only speculate why men might choose to take a creepshot. Perhaps it is a way they can bond with men and demonstrate masculinity. Perhaps they view it as harmless, or they have [sexual entitlement](#) to women's bodies.

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Or, perhaps it is another way to [limit women's access](#) to public spaces.

Is it legal?

As [MetaReddit/Creepshots](#) contends:

... there is nothing here that breaks any laws. When you are in public, you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy. We kindly ask women to respect our right to admire your bodies and stop complaining.

Creepshots are not illegal in Australia. The [reasonable expectation to privacy](#) does not include public spaces, nor are they considered sexual violence unless involving people under 18.

Discussion of a recent reddit controversy concerning creepshots.

The secretive nature of the creepshot also means women do not have the opportunity to confront perpetrators, and may [put themselves at risk](#) of aggressive retaliation.

Current legal options are limited, but include:

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asking/reporting websites to take material down; or

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demonstrating that the image is defamatory, has violated reasonable expectation to privacy, is an image of a person under 18, or is harassing and offensive.

Despite what some men say, the [creepshot is harmful](#) and not a [victimless crime](#). Effort should be made to consider the role creepshots have in the denigration of women, and

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[broader questions](#)

concerning privacy, the body, and public spaces.

The claim that admiration is the motivation seems wholly undermined by the effort that goes into hiding the practice.

Andrea Waling received funding from La Trobe University in 2016 to explore the cultural framing of 'Dick Pics' in contemporary online publics. She is affiliated with The American Men's Studies association.

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Read more <http://theconversation.com/explainer-what-are-creepshots-and-what-can-we-do-about-them-80807>