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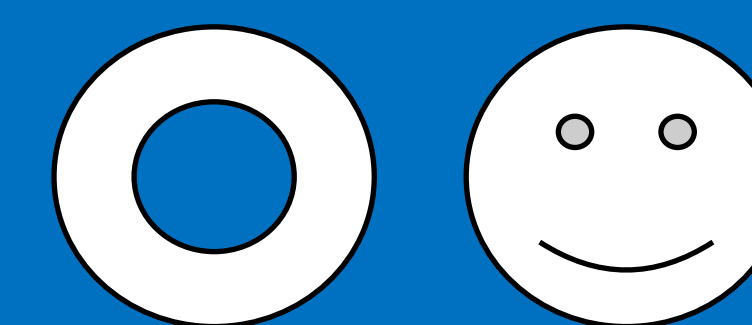


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Social Media



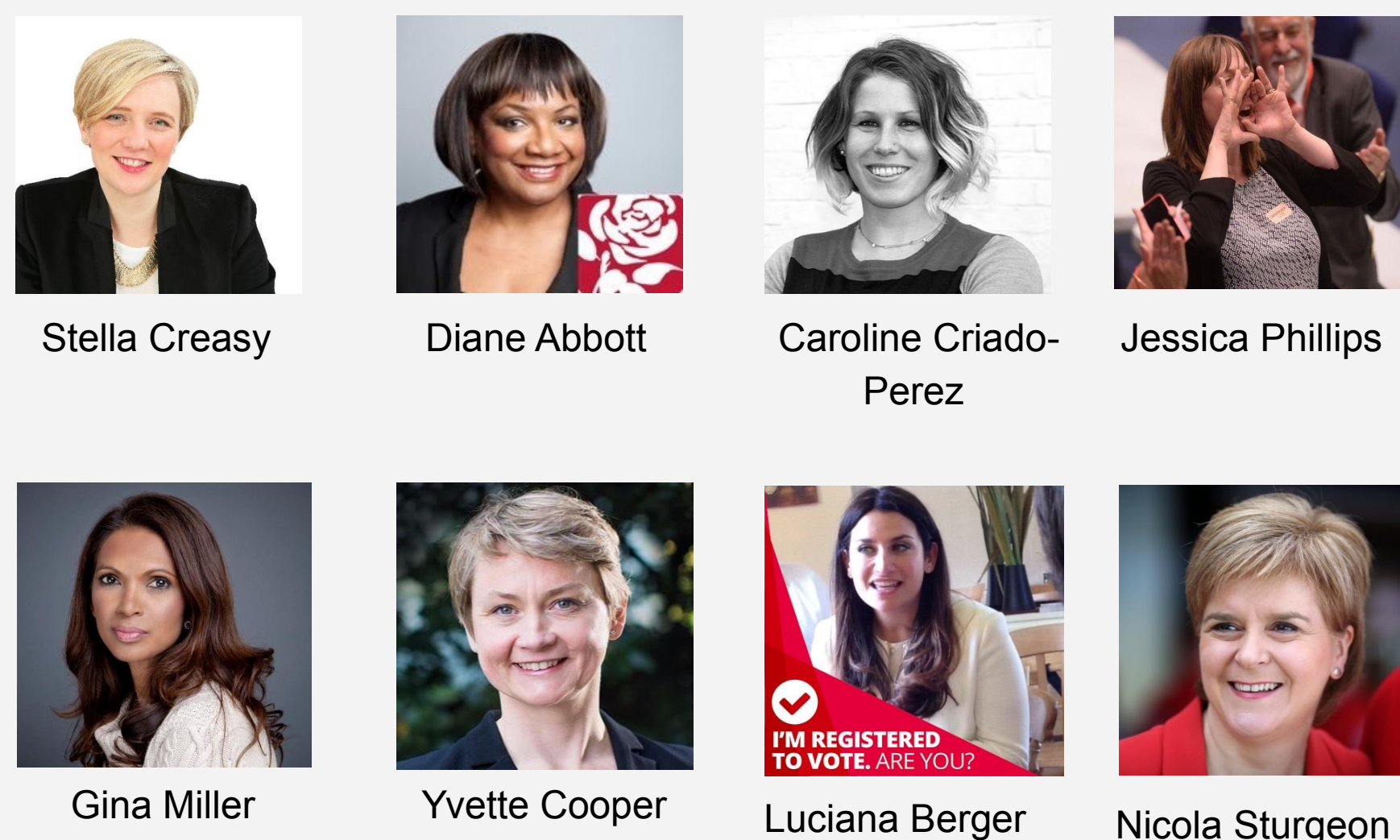
Aims

- Does the criminal law framework of the United Kingdom, paying reference to the recent Crown Prosecution Service Guidelines, adequately protect women from abuse online?
- With reference to women, what are the consequences of receiving abusive messages via social media networks?
- How can we further protect individuals from online abuse?

The Law, Social Media and the Victimisation of Women

Laura Bliss GTA Law

Targets



Abstract

With the growth of the internet, a new form of attack has developed known as online abuse; this is often facilitated via the use of social media networks. Anyone can become a victim of abuse online, but it is apparent that certain behaviours are gender specific.

For instance, women are more likely to have comments aimed at them threatening rape and other forms of sexual violence. This research project will critically evaluate how the law governs social media and the victimisation of women online. It will be argued that the current criminal law framework, in the United Kingdom, does not adequately protect individuals from conduct carried out via the use of the internet.

To enhance this research project, it is proposed that interviews will take place with high-profile women who have been subjected to online abuse. This will create a contextual element, exposing the issues with the current criminalisation of abuse online. By critically examining the law's response to online behaviour and how women are treated on the internet, suggestions will be put forward as to how we can better protect individuals from online abuse.

Case Study Example

Name: Caroline Criado-Perez
Occupation: Feminist Campaigner
Background: In 2013, Caroline Criado-Perez launched a campaign to have the author Jane Austen printed on banknotes in the United Kingdom.



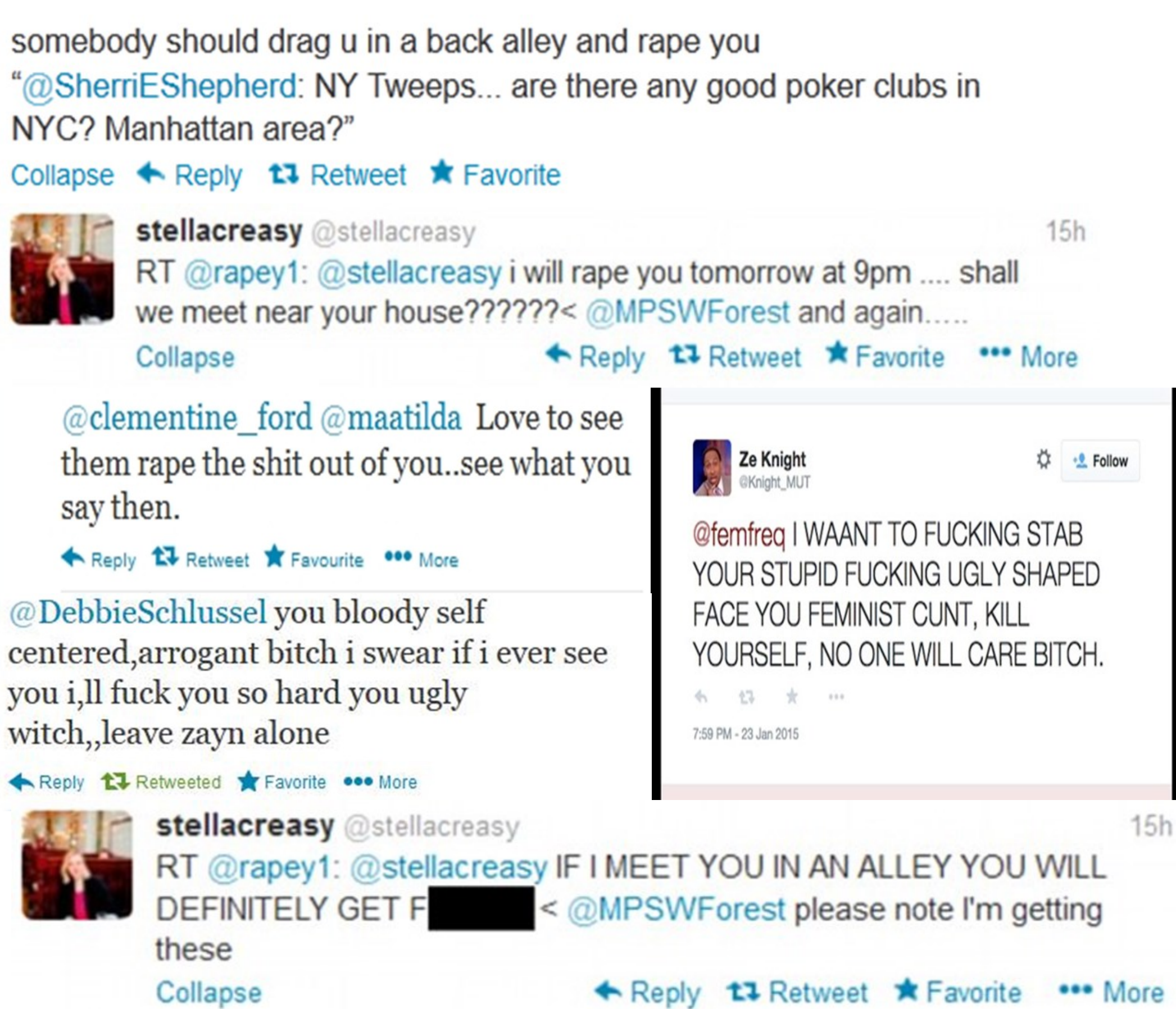
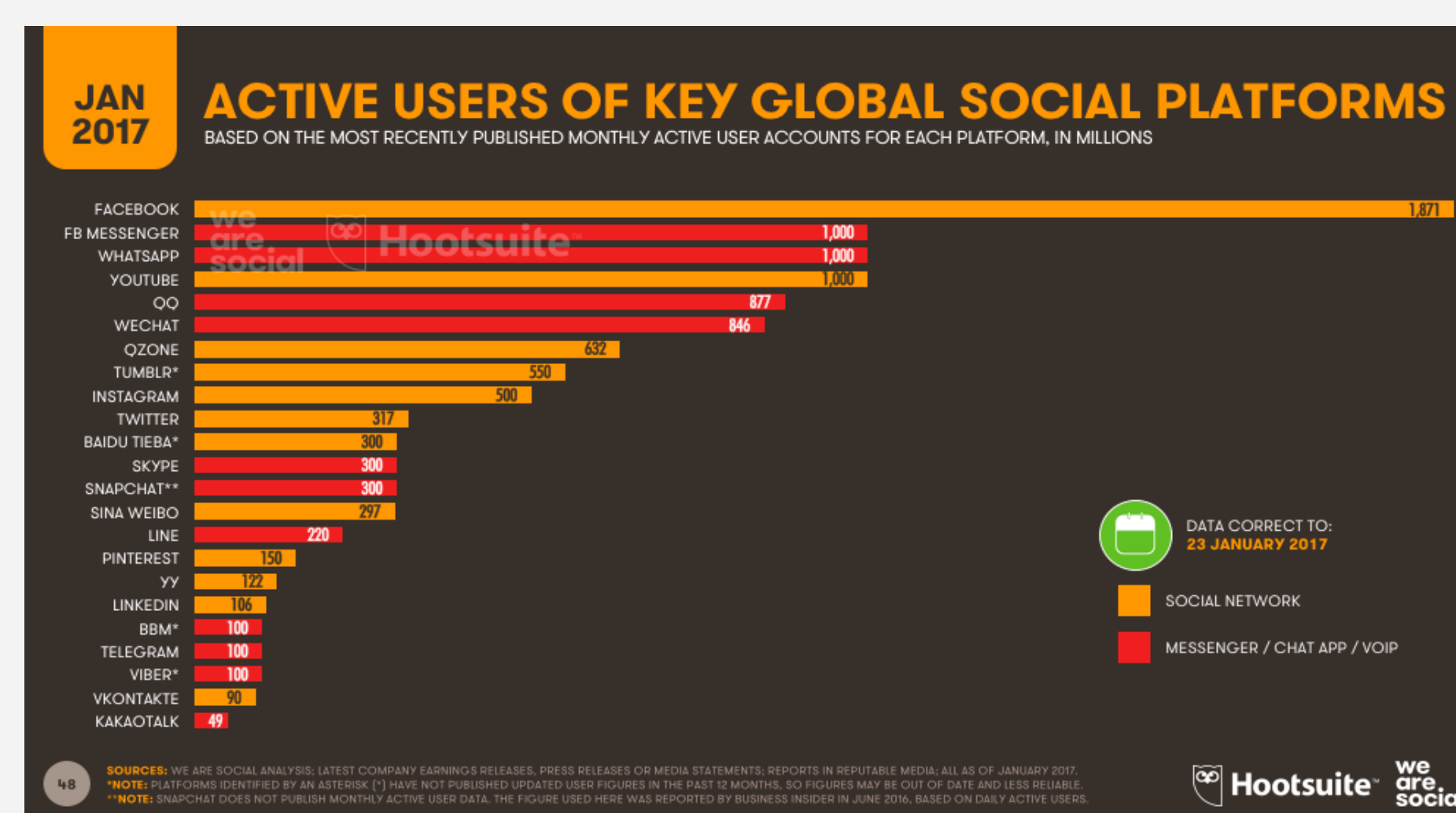
Online Abuse:

- "Stop Breathing"
- "No Means Yes"
- "Rape her nice arse"
- "Good smashing up the arse"
- "I'd do a lot worse than rape you. I've just got out of prison and would happily do more time to see you berried [sic]"

Method

- Interviews will take place with high-profile women who have been subjected to online abuse
- Semi-structured approach
- Narrative research question to begin
- Followed by open ended questions
- Feminist methodology

Dominance of Social Media



Social Media Prosecution Concerns

- No one Act governing conduct carried out online
- Issues with the term "grossly offensive" in the Communications Act
- Prosecutions not always under the most appropriate Act of Parliament
- Lack of police cooperation
- The law is struggling to keep up with technological advances in society
- Social Network companies are not being sufficiently held to account for abuse carried out on their platforms

The Criminal Law Framework

- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Communications Act 2003
- Criminal Justice Act 2015
- Equal Franchise Act 1925
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Serious Crime Act 2007
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Public Order Act 1986

References

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