



University of Dundee

'Stick them to the cross'

Mendel, Jonathan; Sharapov, Kiril

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Table 1. Key Characteristics of the Analysed Anti-Trafficking Apps

Variables	N (%)
Platform Availability (n = 63) Android Apple's iOS Both	 (37%) (19%) (44%)
National Origin (n = 56, where national origin can be identified) Targeted at USA-based users Targeted at UK-based users Non-specific	 (64%) (9%) (27%)
Number of Downloads (n = 51, including all Android apps; number of downloads is not provided for iOS apps) Less than 10 11 - 100 101 - 1,000 1,000 - 10,000 10,001 and above	 (45%) (31%) (14%) (8%) (2%) ¹
Download Cost (n = 44, where the cost of download could be identified) Free Paid	 (95%) (5% ²)
Developers (n = 63) Non-religious NGOs Religious organisations Government organisations Individual developers For-profit organisations Unidentifiable	 (59%) (14%) (7%) (3%) (2%) (15%)
Type of Human Trafficking (n = 62, where the type could be identified) Both sexual and labour exploitation ³	 (57%) (24%)

¹ Only 1 app in this sample (n = 51)

² 2 apps in this sample (n = 44), including an app to combat child trafficking (£0.89 to install) and an app “combat the human trafficking of kids” (both targeted at U.S. users) costing £81 to download. Both apps were available for downloading from the Google Play Store, which recorded the number of downloads, which in both cases were listed as 0.

³ The majority (51%, n = 35) were directed at the U.S. users.

“Sex trafficking” ⁴ Labour exploitation Trafficking in children	(3%) (16%)
Functionality (n=59, where the extent to which the app performed its stated purpose could be assessed) Functional Fully or partially broken	(83%) (17%)
Functionality by type (n = 62, where the purpose of the app could be ascertained) Awareness raising In-built reporting function ⁵ Fundraising/donate function Data-sharing ⁶ No clear purpose	(87%) (42%) (13%) (5%) (8%)
Funding ⁷ (n = 63) Public funding towards development ⁸ Private funding or unspecified	(25%) (75%)

⁴ The majority of sex trafficking apps (53%, n=15) were developed by non-religious NGOs and 20% by religious organisations; 75% (n=15) were directed at the U.S. users.

⁵ The majority of such apps with an in-built reporting function were developed by non-religious non-governmental organisations and, in most cases, it was unclear what happened to the reported data about the suspected cases of trafficking, and whether this information was sent directly to relevant law enforcement authorities, or retained and acted upon by a non-governmental organisation responsible for the development of the app.

⁶ Including the option of uploading photographs of hotel rooms to enable law enforcement authorities to use such photographs as evidence to find and prosecute traffickers who “regularly post photographs of their victims posed in hotel rooms for online advertisements” (see <https://traffickcam.com/about>)

⁷ In almost all cases it was not possible to identify the cost of app development and maintenance by looking at various documents (including annual report) on the organisational websites.

⁸ For the apps that received public funding, the approximate number of downloads was known for 13 apps (i.e. apps hosted by Google Play distribution service). Among these 13 apps, 10 were downloaded less than 100 times, 1 between 101 and 500 times, and 2 between 501 and 1,000 times.