

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN
TECHNOLOGICALLY STALKED BY A PAST INTIMATE:
A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY THROUGH
A COMMUNICATION PRIVACY MANAGEMENT THEORY LENS

Elaine L. Davies

Dr. Colin Hesse, Dissertation Supervisor

Dr. Coleen Colaner, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

According to the 2006 Supplemental Victimization Survey, over half of the estimated 1.7 million technological stalking victims in the United States have had a previous intimate relationship with the aggressor (Baum et al., 2009). Despite growing evidence that this crime is growing in scope and severity, researchers know very little about this phenomenon. Therefore, this current hermeneutic phenomenological study examines the lived experiences of individuals who have been technologically stalked by a past intimate. A Communication Privacy Management Theory lens is used to investigate the participants' narratives for privacy boundary modifications following relational dissolution, but prior to technological stalking, incidents of privacy violations during technological stalking, and reports coping mechanisms used following privacy boundary turbulence. The results indicate (a) victims report contextual factors, such as contact with the aggressor and abuses enacted during the intimate relationship, as key reasons for modifying privacy boundaries with their past partners, (b) aggressors use data-transmission devices in order to commit privacy violations (c) victims' attempts to cope with boundary turbulence are often frustrated by the aggressor, as well as by third parties.