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The analogue and digital world have become one and the same. The common use and rapid development of new media are providing fresh challenges when it comes to online personal spaces, our concept of privacy, the Internet of Things, but also with respect to human trafficking. In 2012 the researcher Latonero wrote: 'Our understanding of technology's role in human trafficking, while improving, is still in its infancy, while technology without a doubt *facilitates* trafficking'.

Internet and mobile devices have altered the way society operates entailing that we are living much more exposed lives. One consequence is that traffickers have greater access to potential victims, both in terms of numbers and type.

While human traffickers previously looked for potential victims at the school gates or in a sports club now internet, mobile telephones and social media are increasingly being used to specifically search for potential prey. Though pundits predict that the shift will continue in the future, obviously, human traffickers will continue recruiting their candidates in person as long as that proves worthwhile.

Human traffickers use technology as an instrument for keeping victims under control. We know that webcams are used for keeping an eye on victims and that they are used to make films and photographs that can later be used for blackmail purposes. We know how Snapchat is used to set up mobile brothels that can rapidly change location; how WhatsApp is used to threaten victims and we are aware that it has never been easier to reach potential "customers". As Bill Gates said: 'The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village tomorrow'. This applies equally to human trafficking. Advertisements for paid sex are being placed online and trafficking victims are the ones on offer. Appointments are made through social media and transactions are even being paid for in some cases with bitcoins.

Technology has also changed the concept of human trafficking. Whereas in the past exploitation was through physical contact these days it is perfectly possible for exploitation to take place entirely through digital means. Europol has warned of criminal groups forcing people to sexually abuse children in front of a webcam so that this can be broadcast live through Skype. Allowing the human traffickers to collect the money from people who pay to watch. Bitcoins are usually used as currency for reasons of anonymity; and the live stream could also be hosted in the Deep web or potentially on the Darknet. Too grim for words.

Where human traffickers are learning inventive tricks with technology it is up to us to do the same and to do it better. We owe it to all those victims who day in day out are exploited in the most degrading of circumstances. President Obama hit the nail on the head in 2012: 'We are turning the tables on traffickers. Just as they are now using technology and the internet to exploit their victims,

we are going to harness technology to stop them'. Microsoft asked researchers in 2012 to focus on the role of technology in human trafficking, earmarking $185,000 for this purpose. Since then the number of studies has grown alongside the realisation that there are opportunities for tracking, stopping and prosecuting human traffickers at an early stage.

Human traffickers who use technology like the internet, social media and mobile telephones repeatedly leave behind their digital footprints. Footprints that constitute a trail of information and evidence that can be a powerful tool in identifying, tracking and prosecuting them. But technology offers many more opportunities than simply looking to see how human traffickers have operated in retrospect. Technology can be deployed for prevention, for discovering new trends and developments and for spotting and stopping human trafficking situations.

As far as prevention is concerned vulnerable groups can be reached through internet and mobile phones. The World Bank estimates that 75% of the world population has or has access to a mobile phone. Besides reaching victims in this way we can also reach vulnerable groups who are being smuggled. Think of the Syrian refugees who are being smuggled into Europe and who are proving to be vulnerable to trafficking. This group can be warned of the hazards of the trade by mobile telephone and internet. Information about where they can find help and protection can also be passed on in a rapid and simple way.

In the analogue society we have worked with 'barrière models' but there are ways of doing this digitally as well. For example, people who place sex adverts could be required to pay with a credit card or show their ID. People who are being groomed by a trafficker can be asked to take snapshots from the chats and pass them on to the police so that they can intervene quickly. Technology allows us to see fast whether a passport is real or counterfeit or whether the person being checked by the police is on a list of missing persons or is registered as a possible victim.

Research shows that technology can be used in many ways for spotting victims and finding them. In the United States for example the database of missing children was linked to websites where people offered paid sex. And what happened? Some children who had been reported missing were found. Technology, led by Google and Microsoft, is becoming increasingly better at linking photos, even when these are photos taken in different places and in which the child for example has a different colour of hair. It is also possible in the case of a missing victim of human trafficking to convert the entire country into one huge tracking poster using an Amber Alert. Advertising hoardings, highway signs, apps, text messages and email can all be used to find the victim. Of course we have to look in each case to see whether the moment for intervening is opportune.

We can also use 'web crawlers' using an algorithm for filtering sex adverts to see if they point to possible human trafficking. In America self-learning algorithms have been used for looking, for one thing, at the style in which adverts are written, the prices that are listed and what sexual services are being offered. Experiments have been carried out and the most suspicious adverts have been placed with the police so that they can investigate further. Those who placed the adverts have also been scrutinised, notably their credit card details. In this way investigators in America have discovered that there are prostitution rings operating. Prostitutes establish themselves for a certain period in a city and then move on to the next. The data that have been gathered would seem to imply that these switches are coordinated, a fact that could point to human trafficking networks.

Technology can also gather data on the nature and scope of human trafficking, compare these data with those in other countries and share best practices. Technology allows us to stand up to human

trafficking not only nationally but internationally. In combating human trafficking the world has also become a huge village and these days we are only a mouse click away.

Let me come to a close. Technology is nothing other than a new tool, a tool offering us unlimited possibilities which can be used but also abused. It is up to us to combat human trafficking in the analogue and digital society. For that we need a new mind-set, new research and a digital approach. This meeting demonstrates that we have taken up the gauntlet. Let me close with Latoneros words:

> *'As technology, and mobile in particular, continues to spread across the globe, policymakers and stakeholders will need to acknowledge the threats and embrace the positive opportunities of technology in matters of social change, human rights and human trafficking'.*