Goals, Risks, and Safety Practices in Online Labor Abuse Disclosures

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Presented by **Tarini Saka**









Need: Safer informal abuse reporting tools

Security = 

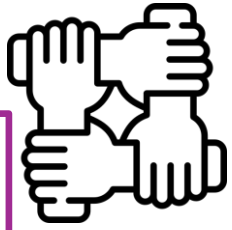
Prevention/detection

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Support/recovery

Informal abuse reporting



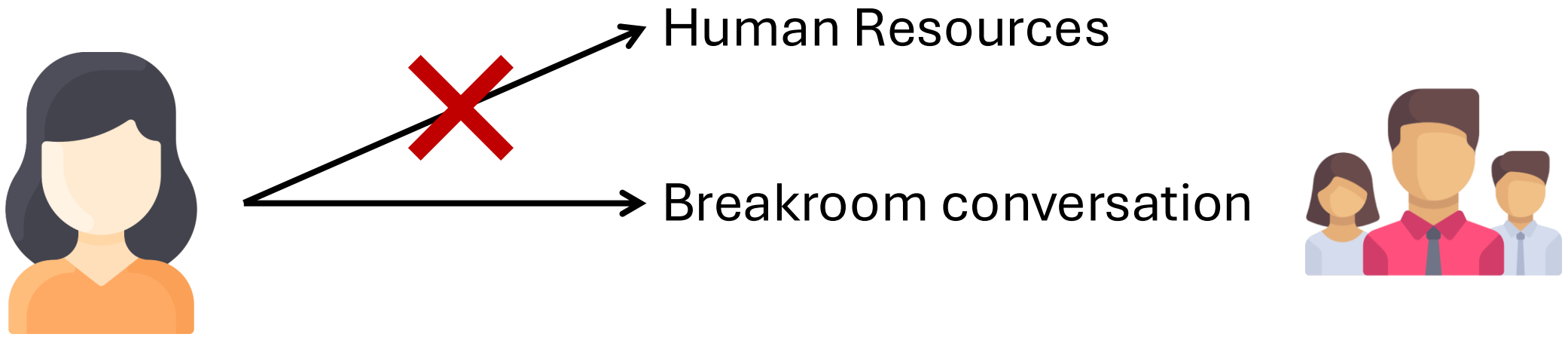
Goal: Safer informal abuse reporting for labor abuse



Labor abuse includes:

- Economic exploitation
  - Wage theft
  - Non-payment
  - Breach of contract
  - Financial scam
- Discrimination
- Health and safety violations resulting in injury or illness
- Sexual misconduct
  - Harassment
  - Unwanted touching

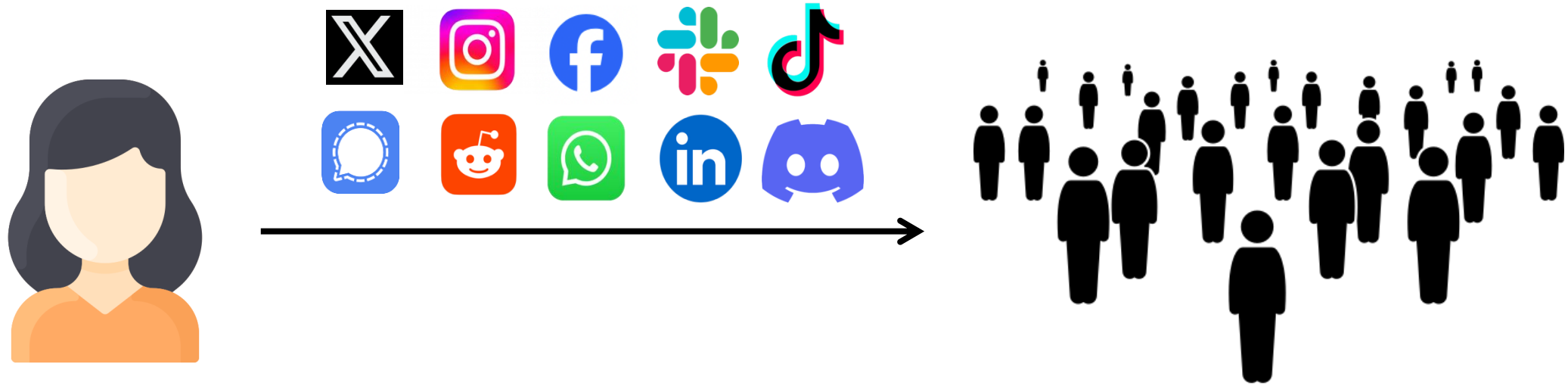
Goal: Safer informal abuse reporting for labor abuse



**whisper network: an informal chain of information passed privately between people*

*Johnson, Carrie Ann. "The purpose of whisper networks: a new lens for studying informal communication channels in organizations." *Frontiers in Communication* 8 (2023): 1089335

Labor abuse survivors seek targeted visibility



Targeted visibility: to be widely believed and acted on by supporters, while staying hidden from adversaries.

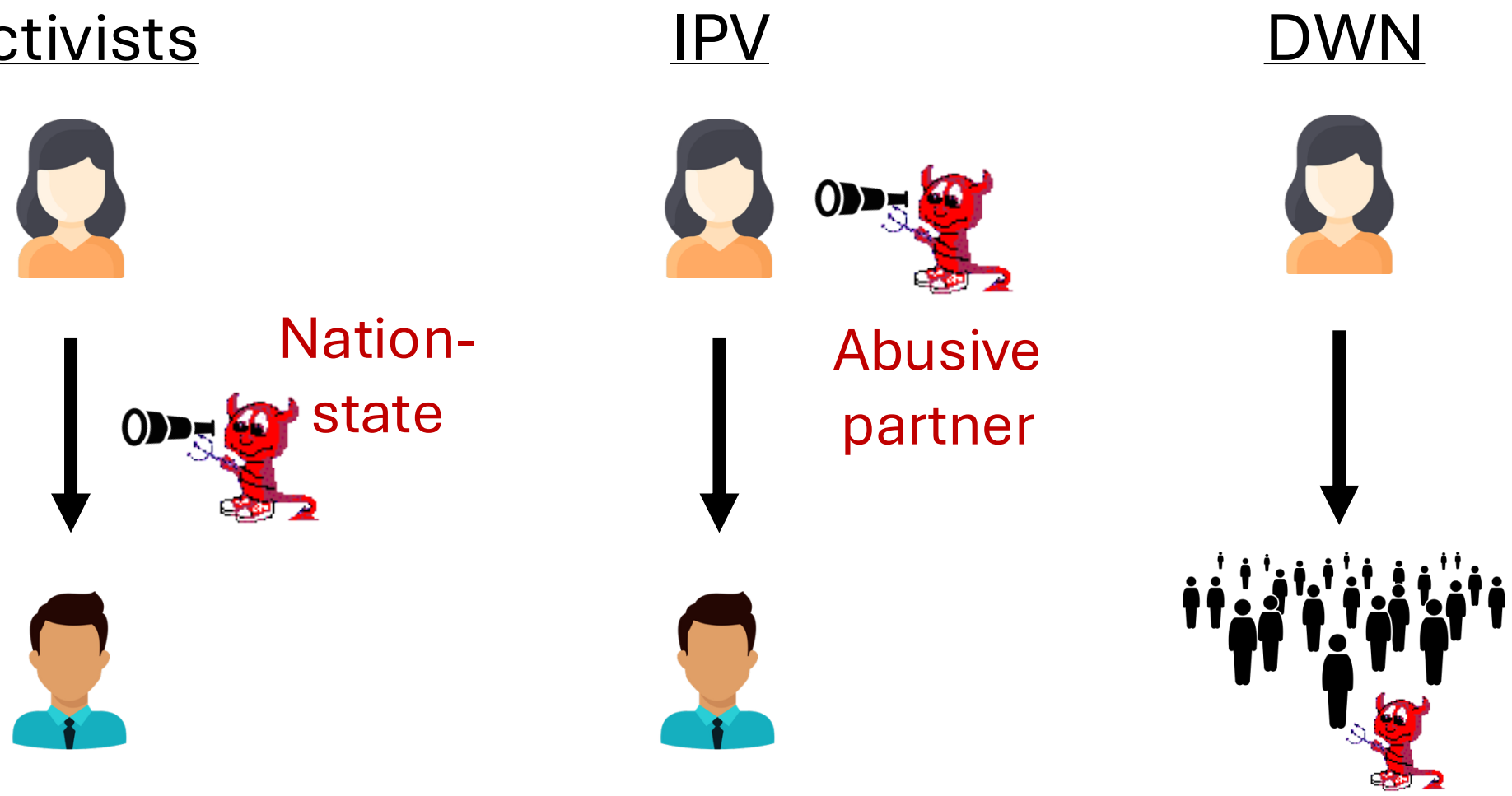
Digital whisper networks (DWNs)

Prior work: targeted visibility within single platforms



Our work: targeted visibility **across multi-platform audiences**

A new threat model: locally-powerful adversaries



Research questions

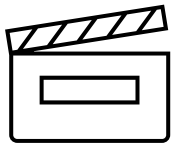
Structure: What types of technologies do participants use to disclose their experiences?

Goals: What goals do participants have when sharing their experiences? How do these shape which technologies they use?

Risks: What risks do participants experience or perceive when using DWNs? How do these relate to the disclosure and/or the tech used?

Mitigations: What decisions do participants make during the process of disclosure? How do they intersect with disclosure goals?

Approach: interviews & thematic analysis



Entertainment



Law



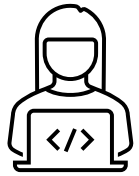
Healthcare



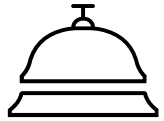
Journalism



Gig work



Technology



Hospitality



Academia

Participants' have three goals for sharing in DWNs

Solicit support

"**I was looking for, has anybody else had these experiences, like am I crazy?** Just kind of looking for validation". (P16)

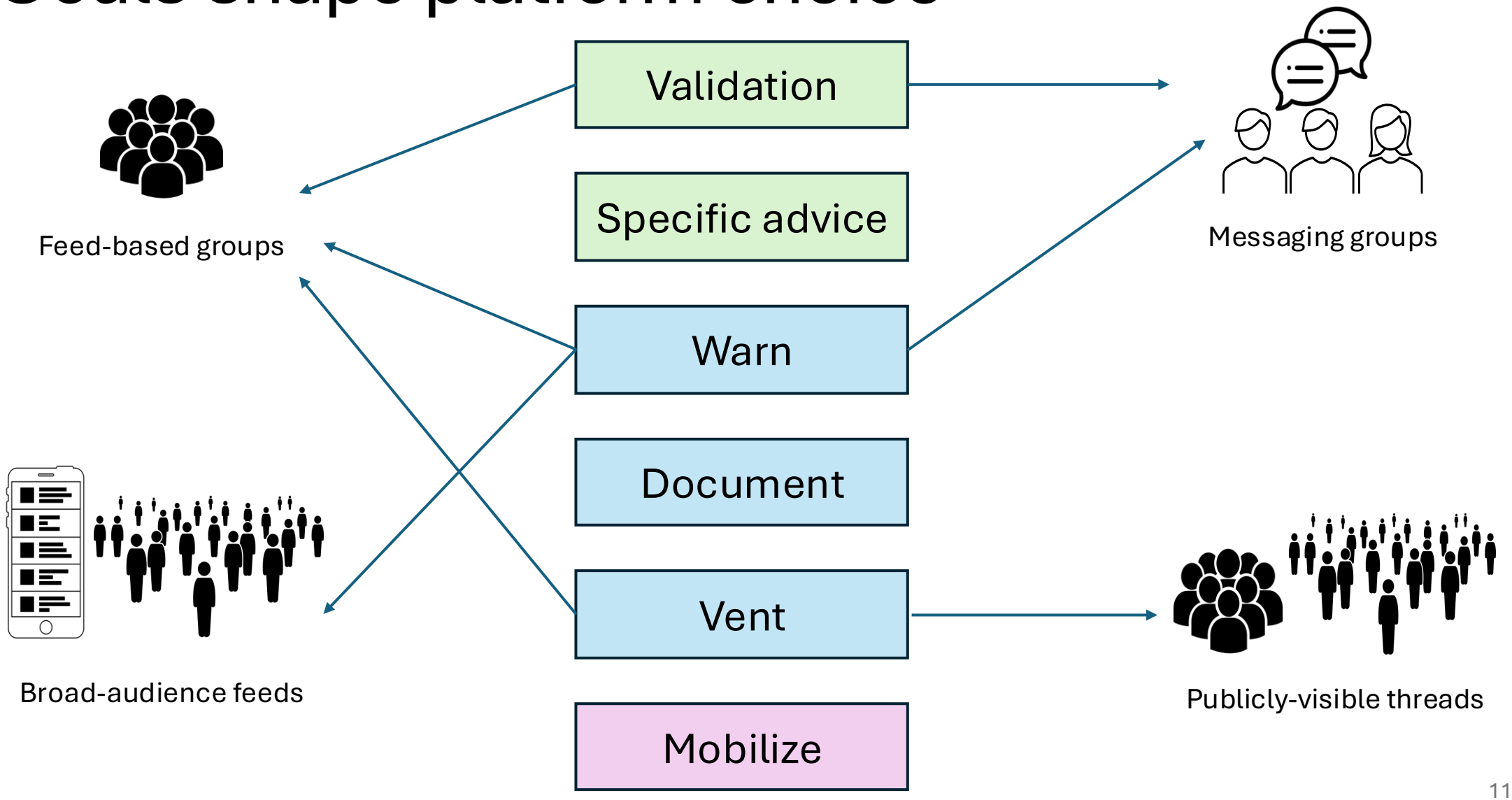
Broadcast experience

"I was super connected with a lot of other models and photographers online. **If people were to work with this person in the future, at least they would be aware**". (P15)

Organize community

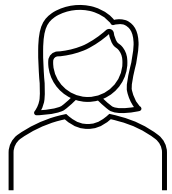
"[I was looking to make] the department and organization **a better and safer place for all of us**". (P9)

Goals shape platform choice



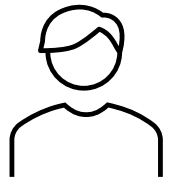
Participants face risk from platforms & goals

- Uncontrolled re-sharing
- Retaliation
- Reputational damage
- Harassment

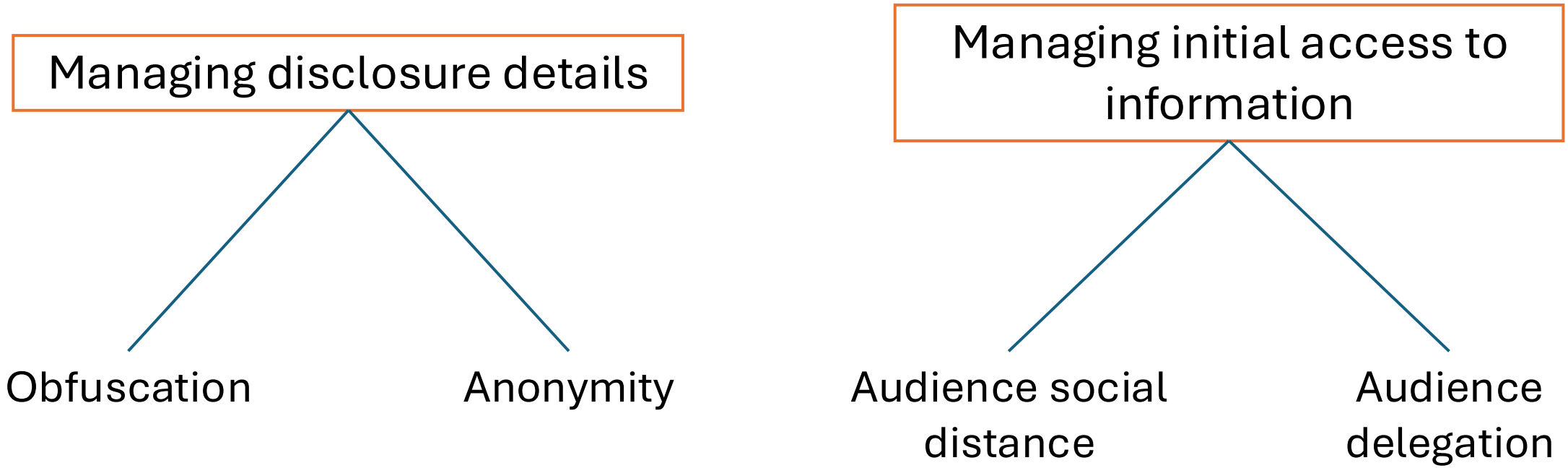


"**They might take the whole text, screenshots, and everything**, and send them back to whoever you had a disagreement with." (P10)

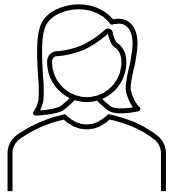
"Someone said I was lying, that the **admins should take me out of the group**, and that maybe I am the scammer". (P4)



Participants take two types of mitigative steps



Disclosure details: obfuscation & anonymity

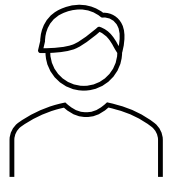


"I try not to share geographically locating information, identifiable information, or names and places". (P8)

Obfuscation & anonymity reduce retaliation …

… but increase other harms.

"You don't have that level of detail about these things unless you are truly going through them". (P17)

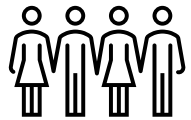


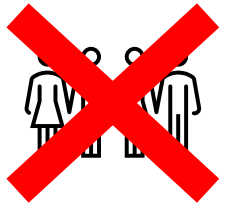
Audience management: distance & delegation

Participants sought an audience at the "Goldilocks" distance:



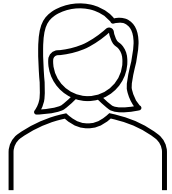
close contacts





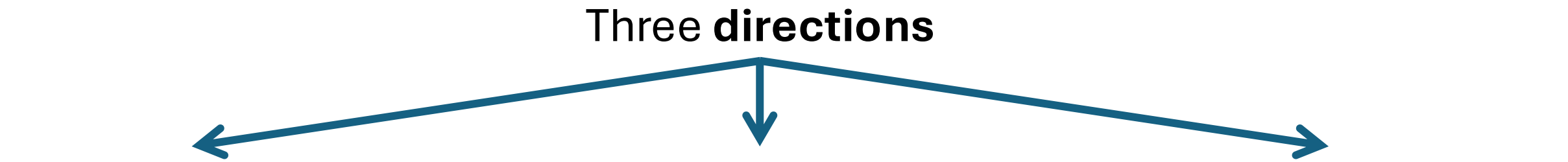
no context

Many delegate to **group** admission policies:



"you have to drop your name, your number, your home address. You have to submit a 360 degree picture to show you're a real person. [And] a video introducing yourself and telling them what you do." (P4)

Recommendations



Navigating privacy tradeoffs

Socially-informed audience management

Mitigating screenshots

NLP-base disclosure guidance?

Helping admins delegate admission decisions?

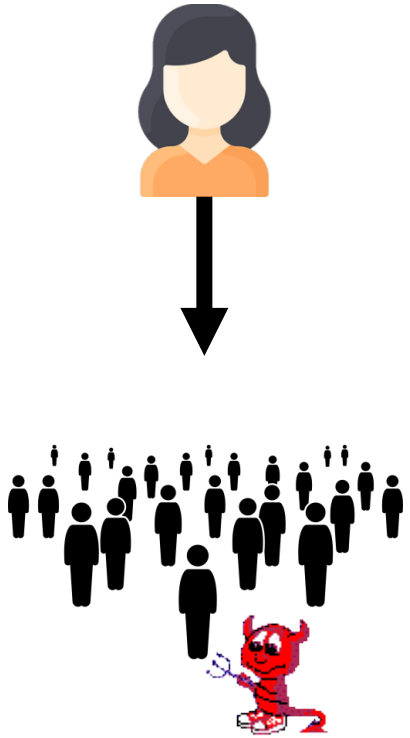
Threshold cryptography?

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Key challenges:

- Disclosure tradeoffs
- Audience management
- Uncontrolled resharing