



‘Digital Rape’ and Online Mysogyny Scandal at Harvard Goes Back to Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook's Founding

- The social network started as a site to rate sexual facial images of Harvard students as "hot" or "not."
- Zuckerberg now sued by Germany as a hate speech promoter. Isn't objectifying women also hate speech?
- Zuckerberg famously called users of his networks "dumb F*ucks!" for being stupid enough to put anything on social networks



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Harvard [canceled the men's soccer team's season](#) Thursday, after an Office of General Counsel review found that team members had continued to produce vulgar "scouting report[s]" in which they rated women based on their sex appeal and physical appearance.

That practice first emerged in a "scouting report," compiled by a member of the men's team in 2012, rating members of the women's team on sex appeal. That document reportedly lived in a Google file that was publicly accessible for years.

The school's athletics director, Robert Scalise, wrote in an email that the "practice appears to be more widespread across the team and has continued beyond 2012, including in 2016." He added that, as a result, the team will forfeit the rest of this season's games and will not participate in any post-season tournaments.

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This time around, Harvard may be taking a bold stance against misogynistic behavior among the men's soccer team. But this situation echoes the past. We've seen the practice of publicly rating fellow students on sex appeal at Harvard before.

Have you ever heard of this thing called Facebook?

For those of you who haven't seen *The Social Network*, here's how the site originated. In 2003, Mark Zuckerberg, then a student at Harvard, developed the precursor to Facebook, called Facemash. The site let people compare pictures of Harvard students side-by-side, asking them to choose who was "hot" and who was "not." Zuckerberg had hacked into the school's database to obtain the pictures of his classmates he needed for Facemash.

No athletic season was canceled with the start of Facemash. And [Harvard didn't expel or suspend Zuckerberg](#). He dropped out on his own.

Instead, Facemash was allowed to operate out a Harvard dorm, eventually evolving into a social network with [1.79 billion monthly active users](#). Mark Zuckerberg, the man behind the original scouting report at Harvard, has a [reported net worth of \\$51.5 billion](#).

Harvard did not immediately respond for comment.

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