



Coalition Against Stalkerware Named J.D. Falk Award Winner for Raising Awareness About and Helping Victims of Malicious Spying Apps

Award Honors Falk, Antispam Pioneer and a M³AAWG Founding Member

San Francisco—The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is thrilled to announce that the Coalition Against Stalkerware, co-founded by Cybersecurity Director Eva Galperin and leading antivirus companies and victim support groups, has received the J.D. Falk Award for its work raising awareness, increasing detection, and combatting the spread of malware used for stalking and intimate partner abuse.

The award is being presented today by the Messaging, Malware and Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group (M³AAWG), a global industry organization working against internet abuses including botnets, malware, spam, viruses, DDoS attacks and other online exploitation. The award honors the work of one of M³AAWG's founding members [J.D. Falk](#), an antispam and email security pioneer. It recognizes individuals and organizations improving the internet experience and protecting end users.

The Coalition Against Stalkerware was created in 2019 by ten founding partners in response to the growing threat of commercially available apps and devices that enable someone to covertly spy on another person's electronic devices. Stalkerware enables abusers to [remotely monitor victims'](#) web searches, text messages, geolocation, photos, voice calls, and more. It affects hundreds of thousands of victims around the world and is often used [to facilitate partner surveillance](#), gender-based and domestic violence, harassment, and sexual abuse.

The Coalition helps those targeted by stalkerware and works with antivirus makers to improve the detection of stalkerware on mobile phones, laptops, and other devices. The [Stopstalkerware](#) website, offered in seven different languages, has resources for victims to learn how to protect their devices, as well as find and remove stalkerware once it has been installed. It also offers a [global directory](#) of organizations for victims of stalking, domestic violence, online abuse, and more.

Galperin and the Coalition were the driving forces building awareness about the apps among antivirus software makers, whose products often failed to detect them as malicious and warn users. As a result of the Coalition's work with the anti-virus industry, detection rates have grown rapidly, with many of the top antivirus programs catching between 80 percent and 100 percent of the most prevalent stalkerware strains for Android.

The Coalition also works to expose and hold accountable the companies and individuals behind stalkerware apps. The coalition this year launched basic [technical training](#) on stalkerware for support organizations and other stakeholder groups to provide

knowledge- and skills-building to address this form of tech abuse. Further, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) [announced in April its support](#) for the coalition and is promoting training sessions developed by the Coalition to its 194 member countries to enhance the ability to investigate the use of stalkerware, support victims requesting assistance, and hold perpetrators accountable.

Founded by EFF and Kaspersky, Avira, the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence, G Data Cyber Defense, Malwarebytes, NNEDV, Norton Lifelock, Operation Safe Escape, and Weisser Ring, the Coalition has grown into a large international working group with more than 40 partner organizations working in domestic violence survivor support and perpetrator intervention, digital rights advocacy, IT security, and academic research.

The award is being accepted by Galperin and Tara Hairston, executive director, on behalf of the Coalition at a recorded presentation at M³AAWG's 53rd general meeting today. The presentation and Q&A session can be viewed [here](#).

“We are grateful to M³AAWG for this prestigious award and for shining a light on the Coalition and its work to put an end to the stalkerware industry,” said Galperin. “We’re proud of the work we’ve done so far, but [it’s not over](#)—stalkerware makers [are continually finding ways](#) to evade detection by antivirus software, which is why continued cooperation with the security community is so important.”

“Thank you again to M³AAWG for the 2021 J.D. Falk Award,” said Hairston. “Stalkerware and other forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence remain pervasive in society, and therefore, it is imperative that the anti-abuse and anti-malware communities address interpersonal threats and abusive personas with the same commitment as third-party adversaries. Protecting those most vulnerable among us protects us all.”

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