

Close up of young woman on mobile phone

# CIRCLE OF 6

2014 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2014

## JUST TWO TAPS TO SUMMON FRIENDS AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

*By Tech 4 Good, LLC*

Project URL: [circleof6app.com](http://circleof6app.com)

Project Twitter: [@circleof6app](https://twitter.com/circleof6app)

- Community Engagement
- Social Exclusion
- Geolocation
- Mobile
- Social Software

Circle of 6 is a free smartphone app to offer quick discreet support to those at risk of sexual assault, especially college students. The app was developed in the US, where one in four college students report sexual violence, and won the White House 'Apps against Abuse' Tech Challenge in 2011.

Circle of 6 gives everyone with a device the power to rapidly signal the sort of help that might avert an attack. Its preloaded shortcut buttons issues a precise request to six trusted friends, or official emergency services, each user has nominated to be within their 'circle of 6' network. The requests range from a phone call to cause a diversion to a physical pick-up from friend or the police – and are automatically flagged with coordinates on a GPS map if appropriate – who can be dispatched with just two taps on the app.

The app also comes loaded with advice, and information on healthy relationships, and a customisable version lets universities add a registry of local hotlines and contacts such as campus police or student health centres. 'This goes way beyond safety lights on a dark path,' says CEO and founder Nancy Schwartzman. The Circle of 6 college version is now in use at UCLA, Williams College and Hobart and William Smith colleges.

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US Vice President Joe Biden praised the app, saying it has transformed 'a personal electronic device [into] a powerful tool to help young women and men protect themselves and their friends,' calling it 'a new line of defense against violence.'

Take up of the app has not been limited to the US, and the app already has 200,000 users in 32 countries. Tech 4 Good, the human rights mobile start up behind the app, launched it in New Delhi in April 2013, less than four months after a brutal gang rape left a 23-year-old student, later nicknamed Nirbhaya ('fearless one'), dead. Protests about India's culture of violence against women swept across the subcontinent's cities as a result. The app featured anti-violence resources in English and Hindi, and as downloads rose sharply, the outfit quickly increased the resources that were local to the city, adding numbers for the city's 24/7 women's hotlines and Lawyer's Collective (since so many women mistrust the police).

*Image 'Texting' courtesy of Jhaymesisviphotography*

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