

What Is Cyber Bullying and What Can We Do About It?

Cyberbullying is a form of harassment that makes use of the latest technology. Primarily the harassment occurs on the web, but today's smart phones are being used to harass people, too.

The term cyberbullying is a new one that has been defined in different ways by different organizations. According to the US National Crime Prevention Council, it is when the internet, cell phones or other devices are used in cruelty to others by sending or posting text or images intended solely to hurt or embarrass another person.

Unlike bullying in the school yard, a cyberbully might steal a classmate's online name and spread lies or write hateful comments about them. Cyberbullies often post damaging information on blogs or websites and even secretly record conversations (via cell phone) and then playing back the recording to the person being talked about. There are bullying stories all over the internet even one where stalking-type emails were sent to a 16-year old who ended up committing suicide.

Cyberbullying differs from the more traditional forms of bullying in that it can occur at any time - literally 24-hours a day. Email messages, videos and images can be distributed instantaneously to a world-wide audience with the perpetrator remaining anonymous, often making them difficult to trace. Although research is scarce, studies have found that approximately 30 percent of students in grades six through eight reported they recently had been cyberbullied or had cyberbullied another person at least once. Research shows that girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims *and* perpetrators of cyberbullying and that the most common method of cyberbullying is through instant messaging, followed by chat rooms, e-mails and messages posted on websites.

The practice of cyberbullying is not limited to children and, while the behavior is identified by the same definition in adults, the distinction in age groups is sometimes referred to as cyberharassment when perpetrated by adults toward adults, sometimes directed on the basis of sex. Common tactics used by cyberstalkers are to vandalize a search engine or encyclopedia, to threaten a victim's earnings, employment, reputation, or safety. A repeated pattern of such actions against a target by an adult constitutes cyberstalking. *Source: Wikipedia 2010*

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Children and teens are rarely concerned about internet safety. Yet, cyberbullying can have a devastating effect on them. At least a dozen suicides have been linked to internet harassment in just the last few years. Published information from the National Crime Prevention Council

indicates that half of all American teens are bullied online. Because the disturbing trend seems to be on the rise, celebrities, businesses, parents, teachers and kids have joined together to help teach everyone about internet safety practices. Some new programs help parents stop cyberbullying without forcing their kids to stay off of their computers.

What Can You Do?

If you are an adult and you have been a victim, do not hesitate to contact the police. Adults internet safety concerns should also include identity theft and the damage that can be done to their computers by viruses. To protect against online identity theft, you should never reveal personal information to anyone.

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If we all work together, perhaps (maybe? hopefully?) we can manage this problem.

(ORIGINAL INTERNET SOURCE: http://www.whatissocialnetworking.com/Cyber-Bullying.html)