An Introduction to Cyberbullying

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University of Macerata
Outline of Introduction to Cyberbullying

• Part 1: Introductions:
  • Who am I? Where do I come from?
  • Who are you?

• Part 2: What is Cyberbullying?
  • Impact of technology
  • Definition of cyberbullying
  • Types of cyberbullying
  • Prevalence of cyberbullying

• Part 3: Understanding why cyberbullying happens.
  • Impact of cyberbullying on Youth
  • The importance of theory
  • Possible theories
Types of Technology Used for Cyberbullying

• Computer/laptop
• Tablets and IPads
• Cell/Mobile Phone
• Ipods
• Online Gaming Systems/Gaming Devices
• Webcams
• Cameras
• Land line Phone
• Personal digital assistant (PDA’s)
Types of Technology Used for Cyberbullying

- Text
- Instant Message
- Blogs
- Chatrooms
- Message Boards
- iPhotos
- Profile sites
- Photoshopping
- Wiki

- Burnbooks
- Email
- Video Hosting Sites
- Virtual Learning Environments
- Skype
- Video conferencing
- Social media
- Virtual worlds
- Weblogs
## Types of Technology Used for Cyberbullying

### Social Media Platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ask.fm</th>
<th>LinkedIn</th>
<th>Reddit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burn Note</td>
<td>MeetMe</td>
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<td>Blender</td>
<td>MyLOL</td>
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<td>Chatroulette</td>
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<td>Facebook</td>
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<td>Hot or Not</td>
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<td>9Gag</td>
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What is Bullying?

• BULLYING – a form of peer aggression that is differentiated from other forms of peer harassment by three criteria:
  • repetition,
  • intent to harm, and
  • the presence of a power imbalance between victim and perpetrator (Olweus, 1994, 2010).

• Bullying can be expressed through physical, verbal, social, or relational means (Card & Hodges, 2008; Finger et al., 2008; Swearer et al., 2010)
The Problem: Defining Cyberbullying

• Cyberbullying research first emerged in the early 2000s (cf. Smith, 2010).
• There is no single definition of cyberbullying agreed upon internationally or at the European level.
• Attempts to define this phenomenon are underway by international organizations, EU institutions and academia.

Italy: ‘Cyberbullying is the online manifestation of bullying, using ICTs’

Italian Ministry of Education and Research (MIUR), Guidelines for the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying at schools’ level (Linee di orientamento per azioni di prevenzione e di contrasto al bullismo e al cyberbullismo), 2015, MIUR-Prot. no. AOODGSIP 2519.
Cyberbullying Definition by Tokunaga (2010)

• Cyberbullying is any behaviour “performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others” (p. 278).

## How Does Cyberbullying Differ From Bullying?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Traditional Bullying</th>
<th>Cyberbullying</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentional harm</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imbalance of power</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of electronic or digital means</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymity/Accountability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓ ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>✓ (limited)</td>
<td>✓ (extensive audience)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of supervision</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to the target</td>
<td>✓ (limited in time/space)</td>
<td>✓ (unlimited in time/space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>real world</td>
<td>digital world</td>
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Cyber-Aggression vs Cyberbullying

- **Cyber-aggression** represents an umbrella notion of electronic bullying without requiring the elements of imbalance of power or repetitive acts.
- Cyberbullying is limited to bullying through information communication technologies (ICT’s).
- Cyberbullying does not always include other aggressive behaviours (e.g. hacking someone’s social media profile).
- Cyberbullying refers to a form of social aggression between two people that usually know each other, it doesn’t always refer to situations where strangers perform cyberbullying acts.

Cyberbullying Forms

1. Exclusion
2. Harassment
   a. Online gaming
   b. Griefing
   c. Flaming
3. Outing/Exposure
4. Dissing/Denigration
5. Trolling
6. Trickery
7. Fraping
8. Masquerading
9. Catfishing
10. Cyberstalking
11. Bashboards
12. Blogobullying
13. Cyberbullying by Proxy
14. Multimedia Bullying
15. Happy Slapping
16. Sexting
17. Voting and Polling
18. Cyberdrama

Exclusion

• The rejection of a person from an online group provoking his/her social marginalization and exclusion
• Exclusion is:
  • the deliberate act of leaving you out.

Looks Like:

✔ You may be excluded from friends’ parties or activities.
✔ Your friends may have online conversations and tag other friends but not you.
✔ You do not use social networking sites or don’t have a smartphone and are deliberately excluded from conversations by others because of this.

Harassment

• Harassment is a sustained, constant and intentional form of bullying comprising abusive or threatening messages sent to you or a group
• This is a very dangerous form of cyberbullying.
• The messages are generally unkind or malicious, can impact your self-esteem and confidence, and can make you fearful. The constant messaging means that there is no respite from the cyberbully. The cyberbully makes extreme effort to cause fear and pain.
• **Looks Like:**
  - insults, mocking, slander, menacing chain messages, denigrations, namecalling, gossiping, abusive or hate-related behaviours.
  - It can also be *sexual harassment* if it includes the spreading of sexual rumours, or comments about your body, appearance, sex, or gender.

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Interactive/Online Gaming Harassment

- Interactive games on online gaming devices allow youth to communicate by chat and live Internet phone with others they are matched with online.
- **Looks Like:**
  - Cyberbullies verbally abuse others, use threatening and profane language, lock others out of games, pass false information about others.
- Depending on their computer shrewdness, cyberbullies can also hack into the target child’s accounts.

Griefing

• Is the act of harassment and irritating and angering people in video games through the use of destruction, construction, or social engineering (e.g. ChatRoulette, Formspring, Minecraft, etc)

• A griefer is a player in a multiplayer video game who deliberately irritates and angers other players within the game, often using aspects of the game in unintended ways. A griefer derives pleasure from the act of annoying other users, and often cannot be deterred by penalties related to in-game goals.

Looks Like: Intentional friendly-fire, kill stealing, impersonating the server administrator, smurfing – playing much lower skill ranks, etc.

Flaming

• The online sending of violent or vulgar messages often using profanity. It differentiates from harassment on the basis that flaming is an online fight featured by anger and violence (e.g. use of capital letter or images to make their point).

🔍 Looks Like

• Joe and Alec’s online exchange got angrier and angrier. Insults were flying. Joe warned Alec to watch his back in school the next day.

Outing/Exposure/Revealing Secrets

• Outing is a deliberate act to embarrass or publicly humiliate you or a group through the online posting of sensitive, private or embarrassing information without your consent.

• Outing can happen in a variety of ways and the information revealed can be serious or trivial.

• Even reading out your saved messages on your mobile phone can be considered a form of outing.

• Personal information should not be shared and if someone reveals private information deliberately be sure you know to report it as cyberbullying.

Dissing/Denigration/Spreading Rumours

• Dissing is the act of sending or posting cruel information about you online, to damage your reputation or friendships with others.

• It can also include posting material online such as photos, screenshots or videos.

• The cyberbully wants to put you down, so draws attention to what you are saying about them to make other people think you’re not cool.

• The cyberbully is usually someone you know. This can make it really upsetting.

Trolling

- Trolling is the deliberate act of provoking a response through the use of insults or bad language on online forums and social networking sites.
- The troll will personally attack you and put you down.
- Their main aim is to make you angry enough to act in the same way.
- Trolls spend their time looking for vulnerable people to put down.
- Usually they are looking to make themselves feel good by making others feel bad.

Trickery or “Phishing”

• Trickery is the act of gaining your trust so that you reveal secrets or embarrassing information that the cyberbully then shares publicly online.

• The cyberbully will ‘befriend’ you and lead you into a false sense of security before breaking your trust and sending your private information to a third party.

Fraping/Impersonating YOU/“Imping”

• Fraping is when somebody logs into your social networking account and impersonates you by posting inappropriate content in your name.
• Fraping is a very serious offence, which many people believe to be funny and entertaining, but it’s not.
• Impersonating somebody online and ruining their reputation can have serious consequences.

**Remember:** Google never forgets so everything rude or otherwise posted online will never be fully gone, even if deleted.
Masquerading/Impersonating Others/Creating Fake Profiles

• Fake profiles are created in order for a person to hide their real identity with the intention of cyberbullying you.
• May use someone else’s email or mobile phone to cyberbully making it appear as if someone else has sent the threats.
• Involves the impersonation of someone else to send malicious messages, as well as breaking into someone’s account to send messages, or ‘like’ posts that will cause embarrassment or damage to the person’s reputation and affect his/her social life.

Catfishing

• Catfishing is when another person steals your online identity, usually photos, and re-creates social networking profiles for deceptive purposes.

• A catfish is someone who wants to hide who they are.

• They will look at your social networking profile and take any information they want to create a fake persona.

• Sometimes they will only take your photos and use fake names and information; other times they could take your name and personal information.

Cyberbstalking

• Involves continual threatening and sending of rude messages
• This form of cyberbullying can extend to the cyberbully making real threats to your physical wellbeing and/or safety.
• Cyberstalking can also refer to the practice of adults using the Internet to contact and attempt to meet with young people for sexual purposes.
• It is a very dangerous form of cyberbullying and can have serious consequences if something isn’t done immediately to stop it.

Bash Boards

• Bash Boards are a cyberbullying tactic describing a case of cyber attacks a cyberbully initiates in chat rooms, “virtual” rooms, online forums and message boards.

• Within these social exchange sites, youth disseminate and exchange information they deem important, socially relevant or noteworthy for their peers to view, comment on and share with other peers.

• The reason they give the slang term of Bash Boards is because cyberbullies can post negative and defamatory information about another child that is public for all to read and shared among forum participants.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Blogobullying

- When a cyberbully creates a blog with the you being the central subject and topic of blog posts.
- Although BlogoBullying is the least frequently used tactic, it is by far the most content rich method and can cause long-term injury to the target when applying for employment and college admissions.
- Not only does BlogoBullying include defamatory, felonious and humiliating information about the target, but with a universal understanding of search engine optimization by the cyberbully, their derogatory laden posts can page rank on the first page of Google.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Cyberbullying by Proxy

• A cyberbully who encourages, deceives or persuades other online users to harass you.

• Cyberbullying by proxy is a dangerous kind of cyberbullying in that adults may become accomplices to the cyberbully.

• For many adult accomplices who are rigged by the primary cyberbully, they do not recognize they are abusing a minor or possibly a child of someone they know.

• With cyberbullying by proxy, the primary cyberbully will go to any lengths to incite counter attacks and retaliation against the target child.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Non-consensual Multimedia Bullying

• The usage of images and video as a cyberbullying tactic has become a rising fear.
• Images and videos of the target are emailed to peers, while others are published on video sites such as YouTube.
• The main aim of this maneuver is to humiliate and disparage the target.
• As the term denotes, this cyberbullying tactic is non-consensual and the target either has not given consent or does not know the images or videos are being disseminated. (i.e. KiK, Snapchat, Instagram, Ask.fm)

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Happy Slapping

• A new type of cyberbullying that integrates the rapid increase of online videos with classic bullying.
• This occurs when an unsuspecting victim is physically attacked or embarrassed in person and then an accomplice video records or takes pictures of the incident.
• The image or video is then posted online at video and social networking sites for public use.
• With the widespread growth of mobile device technology, Happy Slapping is a cyberbullying tactic likely to grow.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Sexting

- The slang term for the use of a cell phone or other Information and Communications Technologies to distribute images or videos of a sexually explicit nature without your consent.
- It can also refer to text messages of a sexually charged theme.
- Sexting is both a sexually oriented form of communication and a cyberbullying tactic.
- As a cyberbullying tactic, the cyberbully creates and/or disseminates sexually themed information about the target that is both highly embarrassing and humiliating.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Voting and Polling Booth Bullying

• Some websites offer online users the opportunity to create online polling/voting booths that are free of charge and easy to post.
• Cyberbullies use these websites to create web pages that allow others to vote online for categories that are deemed highly embarrassing by the target.

Looks Like:

the ugliest, fattest, dumbest, more sexually promiscuous....

• The primary purpose of this cyberbullying tactic is to encourage group consensus by encouraging peers to engage in disparaging the target child.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Cyber Drama

• A common cyberbullying tactic
• Mild cyberbullying or gossip that was not thought to be shared on a social or a “flame war” that terminates after a few messages.
• Most adolescent online users are perceptive about telling each other to refrain and will block a user or open a new account when necessary.
• Some children engaged in Cyber Drama can be psychologically affected due to their negative perception of the data being passed around.
• Cyber Drama is best identified as a passive aggressive kind of cyberbullying.

c.f. https://www.ipredator.co/cyberbullying-examples/
Prevalence of Cyberbullying

% CB Victim

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

% CB

Italy  Canada  Belgium  China  Columbia  Greece  Israel  Spain  Sweden  Switzerland  UK  USA

35  30  25  20  15  10  5  0

Prevalence of Electronic Bullying in Canada reported by Victimized Youth

Craig & McCuaig Edge, 2011

Boys 2005
Girls 2005
Boys 2010
Girls 2010

Grade 6
Grade 7
Grade 8
Grade 9
Grade 10
Most Recent Italian Study (2016)

RESULTS

• Boys were more involved than girls in overall cyberbullying: sending mean, cruel, or threatening messages online to someone they know.

• No significant gender differences were found with regard to being a victim of cyberbullying.

• High prevalence rates and a significant overlap between students admitting bullying at school as well as bullying online and between being a cyberbully and a cybervictim.

• Boys and girls were equally likely to be involved as a victim but boys were up to 3 times more likely than girls to be a cyberbully or both a cyberbully/cybervictim.

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

• Self-report surveys – social desirability
• Depends on cyberbullying definition
• Depends on how the question is asked – ever vs past year vs past month...
• Depends on the population asked – ages of students
• Depends on gender
• Depends on date of study – 2000 to now
• MORE on this in the next two Cyberbullying lectures...

Bottom Line: Cyberbullying is a problem for youth and the problem appears to be increasing around the world...
Perceived Harmfulness of Electronic Bullying

![Bar chart showing perceived harmfulness of different types of bullying for boys and girls.]

- Physical
- Verbal
- Social
- Electronic

Mean Perception of Harm

Bullying Scenario

- Boys
- Girls

* Denotes significant difference.
The impact or consequences of cyberbullying on its victims are similar to those of traditional bullying (Li, Smith, & Cross, 2012; Tokunaga, 2010).

Emotional consequences of cyberbullying include anger, frustration, sadness, depression, embarrassment, and being scared (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Behavioural consequences of cyberbullying include: reduced family relationship quality, school difficulties, absenteeism, lower academic performance, psychosocial difficulties, assaultive conduct, substance use, traditional bullying, and the potential for victims to bring weapons to school for protection (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Tokunaga, 2010; Ybarra, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2007).
Cyberbullying has the potential to be more harmful than traditional bullying (Campbell, 2005; Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009; Tokunaga, 2010)

- because it can be conducted quicker than traditional bullying due to the speed with which technology functions (Slonje & Smith, 2008);
- communication technologies increase a bully’s accessibility to victims and the ability to reach individuals outside of the traditional schoolyard (Lines, 2007);
- potentially harmful communications can easily be distributed to a large audience (Sticca & Perren, 2013) extending the victimization (more public);
- cyberbullies perceive their actions to be anonymous in nature (Tokunaga, 2010) and cyberbullying actions frequently lack the social cues or disinhibition that commonly occurs from the reactions of witnesses to traditional bullying (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012); and
- cyberbullying is more difficult for teachers and parents to control for, and supervise, than more traditional forms of bullying (Li, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).
Reasons for Cyberbullying

- Anonymity
- Approval
- Boredom
- Feel better
- Instigate jealousy
- Impulsivity
- Isolation
- Lack of education
- Lack of empathy
- Lack of information regarding web risks
- Lack of parental/teacher/adult supervision
- Moral disengagement
- No perceived consequences
- Protection
- Reinvention of self
- Reactive Behaviour
- Revenge
- Relationship problems (e.g., break-ups, envy, etc.)
- Co-occur with other externalizing behaviours (e.g., physical aggression, disobeying rules, cheating, stealing, etc.)
- Projection of feelings (e.g., envy, prejudice and intolerance for disability, religion, gender, shame, pride, guilt, and anger; Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Jones, Manstead & Livingstone, 2011)

Reasons WHY Cyberbullying Occurs?

• Most cyberbullying research is conducted without paying attention to theory!
• Theories enable us to see things from new angles and perspectives, understand more fully the relationship between constructs like cyberbullying, technology, and youth, and make informed decisions about how to prevent, intervene, and address cyberbullying.
• Need to examine CB using THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS to help us determine reasons and identify places and opportunities to intervene.

Possible Explanatory Theories

• Bullying Theories
  • Dual-Perspective Theory of Bullying
  • Peer Ecology Unifying Theory

• Criminology/Aggression Theories
  • General Strain Theory
  • Routine-Activities Victimization Theory

• Communication Theories
  • Uses and Gratifications Theory (51

• Choice Theory (Glasser, 1985)

• Socio-Ecological Theories
  • Ecological Systems Theory
Possible Explanatory Theories

• Social Psychological Theories
  • Social Development Model
  • Social Cognitive Theory/ies
    • Empathy
    • Moral Disengagement
  • Social Cognitions
    • Self-efficacy
    • Attitudes
    • Social Norms
    • Behavioural Intentions
      • E.g., Theory of Planned Behaviour (as alluded to by Li).
      • E.g., Buffering Hypothesis

• Unifying Theories
  • I<sup>3</sup> Theory/Model
I$^3$ Theory (pronounced as I-cubed theory)

• Meta-theory developed by Finkel and colleagues (Finkel 2014; Slotter & Finkel 2011) provides a comprehensive framework for categorizing risk factors promoting, aggravating, or mitigating aggressive behaviors.

• Three major forces associated with aggressive behavior:
  • Instigating Force: The situational events or circumstances that may normatively incite or arouse individuals toward aggression
  • Impelling Force: The dispositional or situational factors that increase individuals’ likelihood to act aggressively
  • Inhibiting Force: The dispositional or situational factors that increase individuals’ likelihood to override their urge to aggress, which in turn attenuates their aggressive acts
Wong et al. (2015) Test of I$^3$ Theory

- Wong et al. wanted to understand the factors instigating, impelling and inhibiting cyberbullying perpetration.
- Cyberbullying victimization (i.e., retaliation) as an instigating force of cyberbullying perpetration
- Perceived online disinhibition as an impelling force of cyberbullying perpetration
- Subjective norm as an inhibiting force that suppresses cyberbullying perpetration.
- Wanted to explore the moderating role of gender in the proposed research model.

Wong et al. (2015)

University students in Hong Kong

Diagram:
- **Gender**
  - **Cyberbullying Victimization**
  - **Perceived Online Disinhibition**
  - **Subjective Norm**

Paths:
- H1: Gender → Cyberbullying Victimization
- H2: Gender → Perceived Online Disinhibition
- H3: Gender → Subjective Norm
- H4a: Gender → H2
- H4b: Gender → H3
- H4c: Gender → Cyberbullying Perpetration
Wong et al. (2015): Results

• Both cyberbullying victimization and perceived online disinhibition can increase an individual’s tendency to perpetrate cyberbullying, whereas subjective norm as the inhibiting force represses the propensity to cyberbully others.

• The power of the factors influencing cyberbullying perpetration is different between male and female students. The effects of instigating and inhibiting forces are stronger for female students than for male students, while the effect of impelling force is stronger for male students than for female students.