# Lecture: Cyberbullying

A Recent case…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=za9XTbRZD10

# Introduction

- Bullying is a serious problem because it causes mental distress and psychological/physical harm to the victim.
- However, unlike traditional bullying, the internet and social media have provided new venues for people to hurt their peers.

Smith et al. (2008) defines cyberbullying as

*" an aggressive or intentional act carried out by a group or an individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" p 376.*

- Electronic forms provide endless sources of contact through facebook, twitter, text messaging, online gaming, chat rooms, forums, instant messaging, video messaging and picture messaging.

- Most people conceptualize bullying as a particular entity or behaviour, but Willard (2006) cites many more examples; aggressive behaviour, harassment, insults, denigration, impersonation, exclusion, outing others` sexual preferences, hacking, stealing information, breaking into accounts and creating damaging websites or profiles to defame another.

- Cyberbullying can be just as harmful if not more so than traditional bullying.

- Traditional bullying is face to face, which has a physical component, whereas cyberbullying does not. The perpetrator can act without regard for the victim, the consequences or the accountability.
- For the victim, not knowing their perpetrator can heighten anxiety.
- In addition, cyberbullying can occur anywhere and at anytime. Even if the victim remains off line, they can be constantly faced with worry.
- The internet also makes it very easy for information to spread rapidly and reach large audiences.

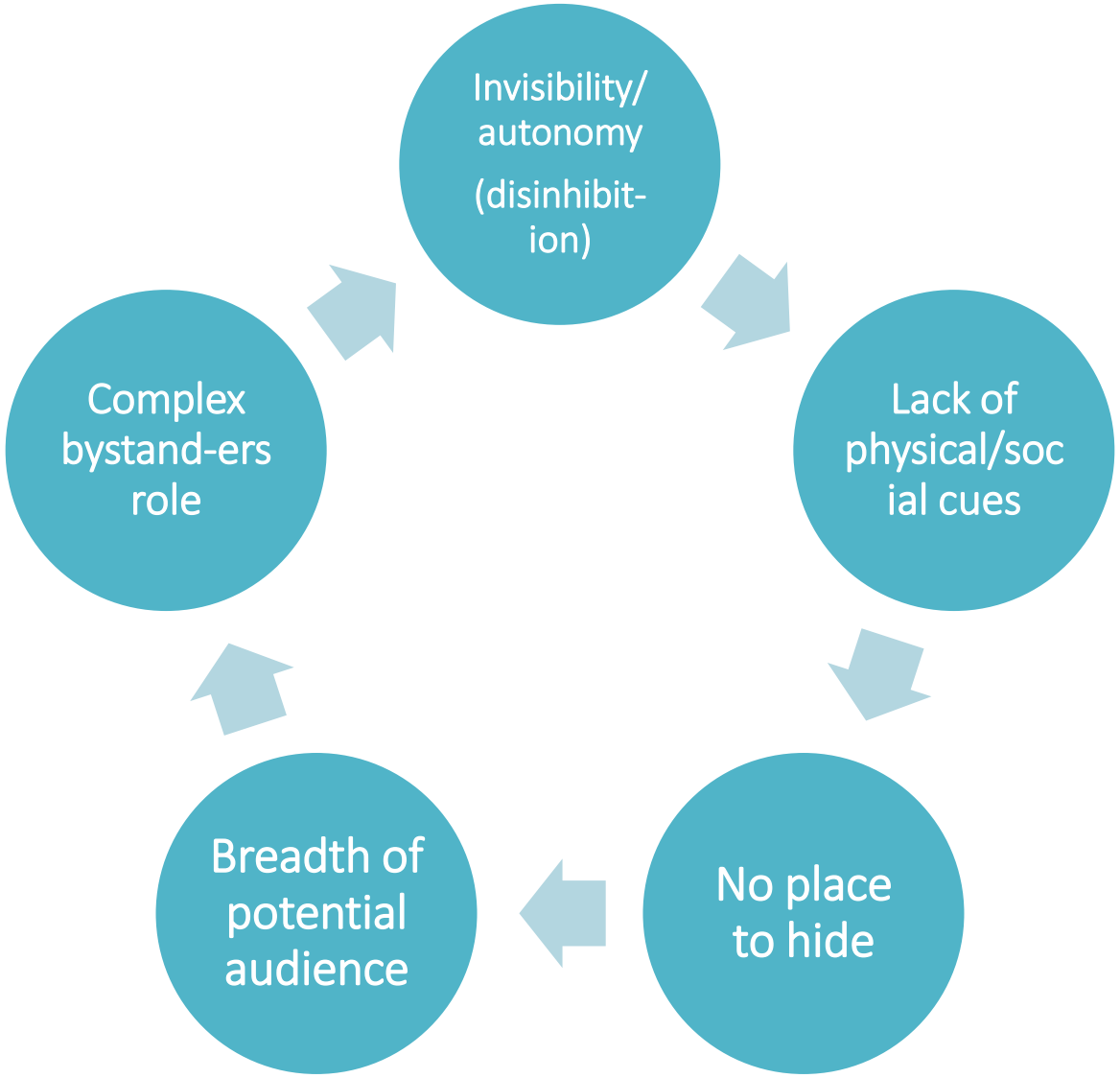
- Children and adolescents who are victims have high levels of depression and low self esteem. They report academic problems, anger, sadness, hostility and delinquency (Beran & Li, 2007).
- 32% of adolescents have experienced online harassment, of these, girls 15-17 as most likely to be victims and boys 12-14 are least likely to be victims.
- Since it occurs online, it is difficult to control, monitor and almost impossible to detect if anonymous.
- However, for our young people, SNS play an important role in their social world and despite the potential for harm, they continue to use it.

- Some individuals are in favour of online communication, as it can have a positive effect by providing a forum for developing and expressing one`s identity (Livingstone, 2008).
- One study reported that 68% of 2,500 respondents said that online sharing sites helped them get a better understanding of themselves and the things most important to them.
- Opposing groups view SNS with negativity, emphasising that they promote self obsession and narcissism (Rosen, 2007).
- They focus on the fraudulent way in which people present themselves. This could be because of anonymity and the removal of social inhibition and norms.
- Cassidy et al. (2009) found pretence online was carried out in 52% of adolescents pretending to be older, 23% another gender, 19% adopting another physical appearance and 15% acting contrary to how they would in life.

# Cyberbullying versus traditional bullying

| Description | Cyber B | Bullying |
|---|---|---|
| Face to face with physical context | | x |
| Can happen 24/7 anywhere | x | |
| Can rapidly, widely and easily spread | x | |
| Repetitive acts or behaviours | x | x |
| Bully acts without regard for consequences | x | x |
| Bully feels less guilty because he/she does not have to face victim | x | |
| Bully can be anonymous | x | |
| Bully does not fear punishment | x | |
| Harmful psychological effects | x | x |
| Anxiety and fear of encountering bully in real life | x | |
| Higher levels of depression and low self esteem | x | x |
| Fewer friends and trouble adjusting socially | x | |
| Hard to track down perpetrator | x | |
| Enforcement is difficult due to free speech rights | x | |

# Cyberbullying versus traditional bullying



# And another video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjG95wOgkk4&t=1s

Whilst cyberbullying is a relatively new term, aggressive online actions have been investigated for some time (Rivers et al., 2011).
Flaming, flooding and spamming.

Willard (2006) identified many forms of bullying and Huang & Chou (2010) investigated the role of three groups in bullying; victims, aggressors and bystanders.
Victims reported threats and harassment as most common, followed by making fun and the least common being spreading rumours.
New behaviours of sexting, trolling and griefing were identified.

Langos (2012) identified two groups; direct and indirect cyberbullies. Direct is in the private domain and aimed at one person, whereas indirect is in public cyberspace and is out there for all to see. E.g. public forum or blog.

Flaming:
Offensive insults on social media
Griefing: harassing/upsetting other gamers
Flooding: A denial of service (DoS) to bring a network down
Sexting:
Sending and receiving sexual messages
Trolling: provokes arguments via inflammatory comments
Identity theft:
Manipulation of human element
Spamming: bulk electronic messages

Advances in technology have opened up the arena for a variety of types of aggressive acts, all with the core aspects of intention to harm, repetition and power imbalance (Nocentini et al., 2010)

Intention-
Very difficult to establish this, because even jokes can have the same effect as intentional comments. Should it then be more appropriate to consider the victims perceptions?

Repetition-
Usually you would expect to see repeated attempts at bullying, however with cyberbullying one single episode can be repeated over and over by others.

Power imbalance-
The technologically savvy individuals hold the power (Law et al. 2012). Cyberbullies rate themselves as better experts than those who do not bully. Dooley et al. (2009) argue that it is not the level or power of the perpetrator, but the lack of power in the victim.

# Workplace bullying

- As yet, the research in this area is relatively sparse. Wetherbee & Kelloway (2006) define it as `aggression expressed in a communication between two or more people using ICT`s wherein at least one person in the communication aggresses against another in order to effect harm`.
- Coyne et al. (in review) argue that workplace bullying differs from usual cyberbullying as it does not involve outsiders and is generally focused on higher intensity behaviours.

# Prevalence rates and methodological issues

Rates from a number of countries vary between 10-72% (Smith et al., 2005)

However, there are problems with the way in which the usage was measured-
In a specific time frame… or not…
The type of media and how many categories…
Cultural differences…

UK- Rivers & Noret (2010) in a 4 year study 15% of children received a nasty email or text.
In the workplace, 14-21% (Coyne et al., under review)

There are 3 main attempts to make comparisons across countries:
Euro Daphne programme (Italy, Spain & England)
EU Kids Online (33 countries)
COST Action ISO801 (30 countries)

# Further limitations

Global vs specific item assessment:
Depending on which type of assessment is used, different results are reported. Global asks about direct involvement with any media, whilst specific inquired regarding a specific form of media use.
Another problem is that the person has to be fully aware of the concept of cyberbullying and also, that specific behaviours are not the only behaviours that allow for cyberbullying.

# Outcomes of cyberbullying

Serious physical, social, psychological problems arise, from social anxiety, low self esteem, depression, sadness, despair, anger, frustration, vulnerability, fear to substance abuse, eating disorders and even suicide (Hinduja & Patchin 2010).

In children, decline in academic performance, the inability to concentrate, reduced attention, commitment to school and a negative school climate (Williams & Guerra, 2007).

Likewise in the workplace, anxiety, low job satisfaction, an intention to leave, decline in general well being, a loss of confidence, increased stress and sick leave, all can occur (ATL, 2009).

# Risk factors

Most of the research has looked at risk factors, and not at predictors:

1) Intensive internet use allows for pressure from others in chat rooms etc. (Wolak et al., 2007)
2) Location of computer is important risk factor; if in bedroom then more likely to be at risk of violation. Also if the children are not aware of the risks they are easy targets, for example sharing of passwords and talking to `unknowns` (Hunduja & Patchin)
3) Victims of physical bullying are often the perpetrators online, but… there are also complex and conflicting findings…

# Age and gender differences

- Traditional bullying peaks in adolescence with boys having more physical bullying than girls. Whilst we know less regarding cyberbullying, we know that all ages do it, but most of the research is centred around children.
- Furthermore, the findings are completely contradictory, with some reporting differences and others not!

Moreover, some findings state that girls are more likely to use relational bullying (Keith & Martin, 2005) but some studies report no difference.
Some studies report that girls bully boys more because they use texts and emails more often.
The content is different too- boys are homophobic whilst girls spread rumours (Bond et al., 2011)

# Theoretical explanations

General strain theory (Agnew, 1992) proposed that experiencing strain will lead to negative emotions such as anger, frustration and resentment which will result in criminal acts or deviant behaviours such as bullying. It is also associated with vandalism, shoplifting, fighting and substance abuse (Patchin & Hinduja, 2011)

The Social Identity model of De-individuation (SIDE) is developed from Zimbardo`s (1969) idea of de-individuation. Anonymity can lead to de-individuation, loss of individual responsibility, arousal and sensory overload. Recent research shows that CMC does have de-individuation effects (Joinson 2001), we become less concerned with what others think, we react suddenly and develop a lack of awareness. In addition, we can have increased social conformity as a result of group norms and depersonalisation (Lea & Spears, 1991).

A further idea is the `cues filtered out` theory (Kim 2000).
CMC lacks the physical and social cues of everyday interaction and fosters anti-normative, uninhibited, aggressive and impulsive behaviour, because direct feedback from the victim is missing.
Therefore the perpetrator does not have the opportunity for remorse.

The upside is that for certain situations where a social hierarchy would usually restrict individuals from speaking, the use of online forums offers the opportunity for these people to voice their opinion.

# Controlling cyberbullying

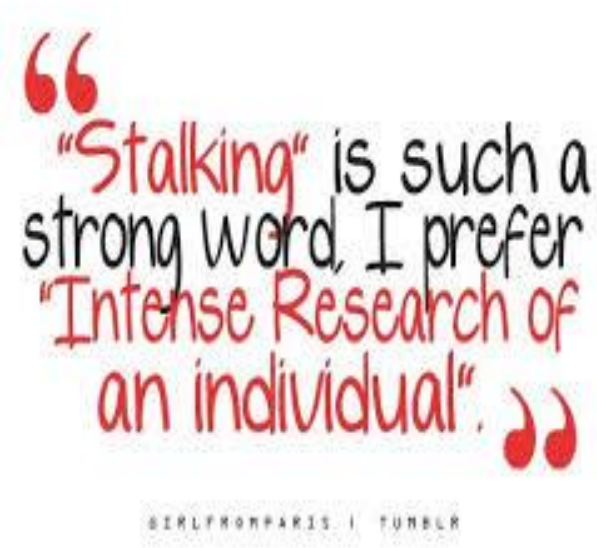
Legislation falls into three categories:

1) Laws regulating schools to create or update policies to include CMC behaviour
2) Update existing criminal law to include online communication
3) Create new laws specific to cyberbullying

The problem with this is that:
Difficulty controlling behaviour  that is not in school time, not on property etc.
However, the DfE in England and Wales has extended their policy to cover confiscation of phones etc. and to manage conduct of pupils when not on school grounds `to a reasonable extent`.
Likewise in Canada, Austria and Korea/China similar laws have been introduced.

# Other types of cyberbullying

What other types of cyberbullying are there?



# Sexting and online solicitation

Sending, receiving or forwarding explicit messages, pictures or videos.
20% of teens had sent nude pictures or videos (2011), usually in the context of existing offline relationships with the intention of private viewing.

It is more prevalent than we think!
17% of females and 18% of males had sent pictures or videos whilst 31% of females and 50% of males reported receiving one or more! (Strassberg et al., 2012)

Temple et al. (2012) 28% of teens have sent one, whereas 31% had asked for one. This study also found a link between sexting and increased sexual activity. Reasons offered for this surrounded the ability to experience sexual identities and sexual boundaries.

# Online solicitation

- We know that children use SNS, so what are the patterns of sexual offenders?
- Three quarters of past offenders would not answer questions about their use of SNS (Dowdell et al., 2011)
- Those who did named MySpace as the site they accessed the most.
- Over half admitted to disguising their identity and 63% reported that they initiated conversations about sexual activity during the first online contact.

- A national survey of 10-15yr olds using the internet over the last six months found 15% had received unwanted sexual solicitation (Ybarra et al., 2007)
- BUT the most often behaviour online occurs between two teenagers (contrary to belief), with the intention to experiment.

# Cyber-porn and obscenities

This is an unique category as it can be both legal and illegal.
As it is relatively inexpensive it is a very lucrative business (Edelman, 2009).
Also, even amateurs can do it in their own home!

The global reach has enabled the formation of online sub cultures based on various deviant behaviours, for discussion of their beliefs and attitudes, without them being stigmatised.

- In addition, sex cultures (e.g. prostitutes) can utilise the internet to advertise, keep in touch and to monitor and warn of police activity.
- The customers of sex workers also use the internet to share their experiences, not forgetting the sex offenders mentioned earlier.

# Cyber trespass and cyber violence

Offender identity:
Why is the internet such an attractive outlet for wrong doing?
The need for technical proficiency has decreased with most sources being user friendly and even more so because people use the same passwords, multiple emails and SNS.
The risks of being detected are much less compared to real world events.

Identity can be easily falsified, tools can be used to hide locations or devices e.g. TOR which uses an intermediary proxy server (Brenner, 2008).
Cyberspace makes targeting lots of people easy without their knowledge. E.g. spam.
There is also phishing… multiple messages that ask for verification in order to validate charges or issues with the recipients bank, accounts or similar.

# Harm to victim identities

Many individuals do not know that a crime has occurred. Who do you report to?
We are often aware of being harmed.
We may not report despite knowing, e.g. the 419 scam (Holt & Graves 2007)
Are we too embarrassed, or is it because we think that we cannot be helped?

Victims of cyberstalking often delete the messages, and corporate identities are least likely to report until long after the event. E.g. Target (2014) whose breach of security affected 70 million people!

# Cyber trespass

- The crossing or ownership boundaries e.g. hacking. However there are legal hackers…
- Not all want to cause harm, some are paid to look for harm.
- It is the malicious hackers who create Trojans, worms and viruses (Chu et al., 2010)
- The costs of cyber-hacking are huge and are considered a major problem.

- Types of cyber crime are:
- Cyber trespass
- Cyber deception and theft
- Cyber porn and obscenity
- Cyber violence

# Cyber deception and theft

Criminals send emails to get bank details via phishing (James 2005). If you click on a link your details will be stored in a server to be used later
Also digital piracy is a world wide problem with about 40-60% of illegal downloading occurring (Holt et al., 2010)

Torrent sharing software is one of the most popular mechanisms for downloading as it is rapid and can be accessed from computers worldwide.
One of the most popular resources is TPB operating out of Sweden despite being raided by police and three of its operators being heavily fined and jailed (Nhan 2013). The Pirate Bay…
Their principle is to stop the rich becoming richer and simply re-emerge following their shutdown.

# Cyber violence

The intention of emotional psychological or physical harm in any way. However, there are also political and social movements which utilise the internet to spread beliefs, causes and to co-ordinate violence against targets (Cere 2003).
E.g. the riots of recent years have been co-ordinated via the internet, facebook and Twitter (Stepanova 2011).

CMC`s are used to form `Flashmobs` which move quickly without alerting police or local people (Taylor et al., 2010). Think of a recent facebook example…

Lastly, political and terrorist groups radicalise individuals towards violence, demonstrations and hate speech events. E.g. Resistance Records, and Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) for attacks on the government and businesses

# Example of flash mobs…

https://econsultancy.com/12-great-examples-of-flash-mobs/

And… more recently,

Flash mob dance and the territorialisation of Urban movement.

https://www.delnext.com/blog/en/most-famous-flash-mobs/

Gore, G. (2010). Flash mob dance and the territorialisation of urban movement. *Anthropological Notebooks*, *16*(3), 125-131.

# Stepanova (2011);

http://www.ponarseurasia.com/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pepm_159.pdf

The role of information communications technology in the `Arab Spring`: Implications beyond the region. PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 159.

Your task:

Using the articles provided, work in groups to synthesise the content, compose a short synopsis and be prepared to present to the remainder of your fellow students.

In addition, consider the following points:

1. To what extent does Deindividuation Theory explain cyberbullying?
2. How may General Strain Theory explain cyberbullying?
3. How useful is `Cue-Filtering Out Theory for understanding cyberbullying?
4. How similar and different are direct and indirect cyberbullying?