

INTRODUCTION

The Internet is without a doubt one of the best resources available to us. Unfortunately it's also extremely dangerous if you aren't aware of who and what lurks behind the scenes. Everyone should know how to be safe when surfing the web, but internet safety tips and tricks are spread out all over the web without a go-to resource. Since the majority of internet scam and virus victims are students and young people, Open Colleges is a perfect place to post the very first full guide to being safe on the internet.



CYBER BULLYING

"Cyber Bullying is the use of the Internet and related technologies to harm other people in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner." - Wikipedia

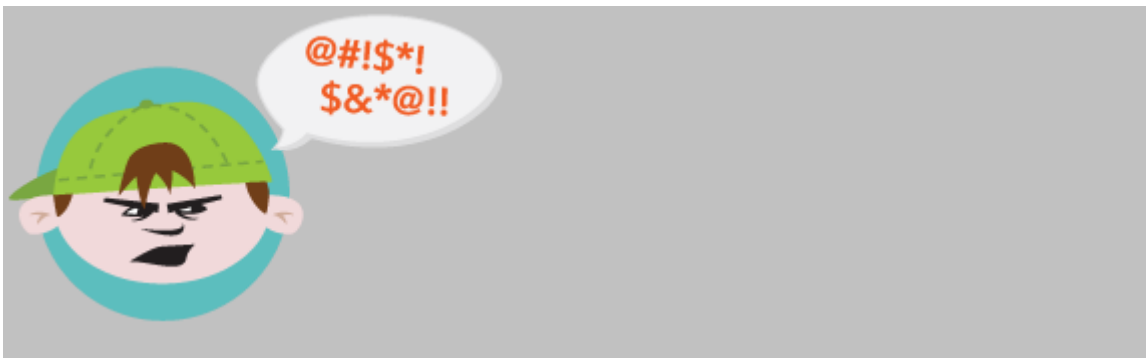
FORMS

Whether it's posting public pictures, social statuses, or personal messages, cyber bullying takes many forms. The most popular cyber bullying tactics are:

1

FLAMING

Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.

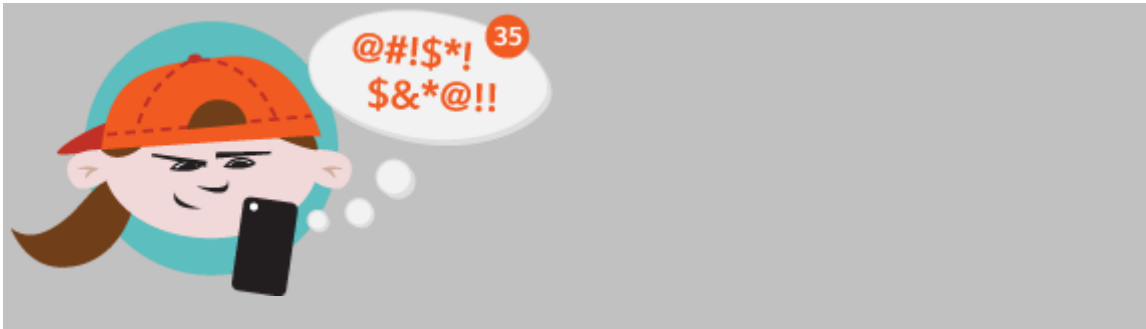


Joe and Alec's online exchange got angrier and angrier. Insults were flying. Joe warned Alec to watch his back in school the next day.

2

HARASSMENT

Repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages.



Sara reported to the principal that Kayla was bullying another student. When Sara got home, she had 35 angry messages in her e-mail box. The anonymous cruel messages kept coming - some from complete strangers.

3

DENIGRATION

"Dissing" someone online. Sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.



Some boys created a "We Hate Joe" Web site where they posted jokes, cartoons, gossip, and rumors, all dissing Joe.

4

IMPERSONATION

Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble or danger or to damage that person's reputation or friendships.



Laura watched closely as Emma logged on to her account and discovered her password. Later, Laura logged on to Emma's account and sent a hurtful message to Emma's boyfriend, Adam.

5

OUTING

Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online.



Greg, an obese high school student, was changing in the locker room after gym class. Matt took a picture of him with his cell phone camera. Within seconds, the picture was flying around the phones at school.

6

TRICKERY

Talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, then sharing it online.



Katie sent a message to Jessica pretending to be her friend and asking lots of questions. Jessica responded, sharing really personal information. Katie forwarded the message to lots of other people with her own comment, "Jessica is a loser."

7

EXCLUSION

Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.



Millie tries hard to fit in with a group of girls at school. She recently got on the "outs" with a leader in this group. Now Millie has been blocked from the friendship links of all of the girls.

8

CYBERSTALKING

Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.



When Annie broke up with Sam, he sent her many angry, threatening, pleading messages. He spread nasty rumors about her to her friends and posted a sexually suggestive picture she had given him in a sex-oriented discussion group, along with her e-mail address and cell phone number.

EFFECTS

Just a handful of the effects of Cyber Bullying include:



Undermining confidence

Causing stress and hurtful health effects

Affecting performance and attendance in school

Depression and a sense of loneliness

Suicidal thoughts

But why are the effects so
devastating?



For one, cyber bullying material can be worldwide and is often irretrievable. Bullies can be anonymous, giving the victim a sense of helplessness.

MISCONCEPTIONS



Contrary to popular belief, cyberbullying doesn't just happen to kids. Bullies on the web will look for almost anyone to harass, as long as the bully has someone to pick on and an audience.



While most cyberbullying takes place on instant messaging nowadays, kids are bullied almost anywhere in the virtual world.

This includes: Chat rooms, video games, e-mail, blogs, and even over cell phones.

Cyberbullying isn't just kids picking on other kids. If handled incorrectly, it can escalate from rude jokes and gossip to cyberthreats.

LOL > FYI > YOU'RE DEAD

Examples of these threats can include physical threats to others or be self-inflicted.

A group of girls at his school had been taunting Alan through IM, teasing him about his small size, daring him to do things he couldn't do. They dared him to commit suicide. He discussed this with them. The girls thought it was a big joke.

It's best to catch and prevent online bullying in its early stages, what may seem harmless at first can turn out to be much more.

FACTS



Common Cyberbully targets are kids in their pre-teen years.

Online conflicts will sometimes start in the real world, a.k.a. schools, and then transfer into the virtual world. Bullying is pushed to the virtual world because cyberbullies are mostly, if not completely, anonymous.



This gives the cyberbully the false idea that their actions have no repercussions. Now that more and more kids have cell phones, cyberbullying often takes place through texting and picture messaging as well.

LEGAL ISSUES



Cyberbullying is not to be handled lightly and can quickly become a serious problem. There have been many cases where cyberbullying has resulted in victims fearing for their lives and even committing suicide. There are specific actions that can actually cause a bully to break civil or criminal laws.

CIVIL LAWS



In this case, a victim should try to

resolve this problem by seeing a bully's parents or asking an attorney for advice on how to handle the situation.

Defamation

Someone publishes a false statement about a person that damages his or her reputation

Invasion of privacy/public disclosure of a private fact.

Someone publicly discloses a private fact about a person under conditions that would be highly offensive to a reasonable person.

Invasion of personal privacy/false light.

Publicly disclosing information that places an individual in a false light.

Intentional infliction of emotional distress.

Someone's intentional actions are outrageous and intolerable and have caused extreme distress.

CRIMINAL LAWS

When a bully is accused of breaking criminal laws, they can be subject to prosecution and even arrest.





Hate or bias crimes

Making violent threats to people or their property.

Engaging in coercion. Trying to force someone to do something they don't want to do.

Making harassing telephone calls, sending obscene text messages, and stalking.

Sexual exploitation and sending sexual images of children under 18.

Taking a photo of someone in a place where privacy is expected (locker room, bathroom, etc.) and exploiting it on the internet.

PREVENTION

Luckily, there are practices you can put in place today to prevent cyber bullying from happening. Even though there's no "one size fits all" solution, here are some of the steps you can take:



Tell someone.

Just let a trusted adult know what's going on. The worst thing you can do is to keep it to yourself. Remember, it's not your fault!



Don't instigate.

If someone is sending you hurtful messages or posting mean pictures, they're doing it to get an emotional response from you. Don't give them one! Don't respond OR retaliate. This will only encourage them to take it further.



Block them.

If it's on Facebook or another website that allows you to block the person or leave the chat room, then do it!



Be aware.

If you're a parent, encourage your kid(s) to talk about what they're doing online and whom they're doing it with.



Block them.

The majority of cyber bullying occurs by someone you already know. These are also the people that are closest to you and your passwords, so keep them safe.



Always log out.

Especially on public computers.



Don't be a cyber bully yourself.

It's easy to be hurtful, so remember what it's like for the person on the other side.