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Understanding and Predicting Cyberstalking in Social Media: Integrating Theoretical Perspectives on Shame, Neutralization, Self-Control, Rational Choice, and Social Learning

ABSTRACT

Cyberstalking has received increasing attention in academia and the public for its pervasive effect on society. However, there has been little comprehensive research concerning the mechanisms of cyberstalking behavior, particularly in social media. In this article, we define cyberstalking and explain how it is dramatically different from real-world stalking, and thus calls for additional taxonomic and theoretical development. Based on an extensive review of the literature and case studies of cyberstalking, we then propose a comprehensive taxonomy of cyberstalking. On this basis, we develop a theoretical model to explain and predict cyberstalking behavior. To better understand cyberstalking, we propose a model that integrates five theories within three levels of prediction: the intrapersonal level (emotional theory, neutralization theory, and self-control theory), the situational level (rational choice theory), and the interpersonal level (social learning theory). On this taxonomic and theoretical foundation, future empirical research should be able to further explain, predict, and test cyberstalking behavior online.

KEYWORDS

Stalking, Cyberstalking, Shame, Neutralization, Self-control, Rational choice theory, Social learning theory of crime, Emotional theory of stalking, Self-control theory, Social media, Deviance

INTRODUCTION

With the development of online communication information technology (IT), it is increasingly difficult to protect users from online stalking (D'Ovidio & Doyle, 2003). In the age of social media, cyberstalking behavior is increasingly ubiquitous and serious. The media has widely reported cyberstalking instances of identity theft, online impersonation, identity deception, threats, and hostile posting, that is, posting false information intended to cause harm (Maple et al., 2011), as well as the newer, insidious twists of the posting of "revenge porn" by jilted lovers (Melnicoe, 2013; Miller, 2013) and ill-intentioned groups of online teens bullying victims into suicide (Liston, 2013). Furthermore, cyberstalking is becoming increasingly more common than offline stalking (McVeigh, 2011). Maple et al. (2011) showed that cyberstalking is becoming progressively more prevalent in social media. Because of its widespread effect on the psychology, finances, and social interactions of individuals, cyberstalking not only hurts victims psychologically, but also influences their work and even their relationships with friends and family.

The prevalence, nature, and negative social consequences of cyberstalking have led to growing public concern regarding its presence in the online environment (as shown in Appendix A). Because social media encourages users to exchange information within the community, as well as to use new features and applications that expose additional personal information (Ellison, 2007), it provides a new, effective, and efficient means to perform stalking behavior at the expense of a relatively large number of potential victims. First, the large network size, combined with the numerous privacy leaks in public networks, make it extremely convenient for individuals to unethically, unlawfully, or immorally stalk others using social media tools. Therefore, even people with very little IT competence have the potential to become cyberstalkers (Costa, 2012). Furthermore, because social media features a wide range of relationships, stalkers from the cyberworld vary from intimate friends to strangers (Gutierrez, 2013; Lyndon et al., 2011). With a strong need to use social media and self-disclose online, typical users often lack the ability or sufficient concern to manage and protect their privacy online, thus leading to a clash between the risks and benefits of online activities (Gross & Acquisti, 2005).

Given the huge, increasing negative impact cyberstalking and cyberbullying has on society, it has drawn highly interdisciplinary research interest. Information systems (IS) literature on cyberstalking has focused primarily on analyzing its ethical and moral aspects and the legal responsibility of the different participants (Tavani & Grodzinsky, 2002). Adam (2002) highlighted the role of gender in analyzing cyberethics problems and maintained that third-party cyberstalking should receive more attention. Grodzinsky and Tavani (2002) argued that both Internet service providers and individual online users should assume moral responsibility, although in different

ways. IS research on cyberbullying has emphasized the demographic antecedents that potentially predict cyberbullying. Scholars have explored the role of gender difference and the use of IT in cyberbullying (Erdur-Baker, 2010; Huang & Chou, 2010). Similarly, Tokunaga (2010) discussed how age and gender influence cyberbullying behavior and its possible psychosocial, affective, and academic consequences. Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009) investigated the influence of sociodemographics, psychosocial factors, and the usage of information communication technology on different roles (victims, bystanders, and bullies) in cyberbullying.

In media and communication research, scholars have attempted to measure cyberstalking to develop effective strategies to blunt it. For instance, Spitzberg and Rhea (1999) developed the scale of cyber-obsessional pursuit, which included four components (hyperintimacy, sabotage, invasion, and threat) that can be used to measure cyberstalking behavior. Spitzberg and Cupach (2001) further refined the measure of cyberstalking victimization and explored the incidence of such victimization. Spitzberg and Hoobler (2002) indicated that cyberstalking is experienced by a nontrivial proportion of undergraduate communication students and that there are weak but generally consistent relationships between facets of cyberstalking and real-world stalking.

Cyberstalking is also addressed in the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry. Boon and Sheridan (2002), for example, found that cyberstalking problems influenced mainly children and young people and that stalking behaviors are less likely to be performed by people with psychotic illnesses than by those with nonpsychotic illnesses. Zur et al. (2009) provided advice regarding the self-disclosure of psychotherapists in response to clients' online behaviors, including cyberstalking. Finally, Ybarra (2004) found that students who reported depressive symptomatology were more likely to be victims of cyberbullying, and the findings of Patchin and Hinduja (2010) indicated that cyberbullying leads to low self-esteem for both victims and offenders.

In general, cyberstalking is of great interest in interdisciplinary research and has been studied from many perspectives. However, most of the extant research has limited its focus to specific categories of cyberstalking behaviors, general measurement, descriptive studies, and exploratory studies. A large portion of the literature has focused, for example, on exploring cyberbullying behaviors of juveniles, or on children as the victims of Internet predators, while ignoring the richer, broader range of cyberstalking behaviors and the reality that adults actively engage in both cyberbullying and cyberstalking behaviors. Little research has thus considered the underlying causal mechanisms and technologies that promote or blunt cyberstalking, especially among adult social media users. Given the currently scattered approaches to taxonomy and nomenclature in cyberstalking, it is not surprising that theoretical development in this area is immature.

We aim to help improve theorizing in this area, which must depart from theorizing in real-world stalking. In contrast with traditional stalking behavior, not every aspect of cyberstalking is purely negative and most cyberstalking cases do not actually constitute crimes (Campbell, 2012; Langer, 2013; Main, 2010). Indeed, many cyberstalking behaviors are performed without an immediate intention to harm the victim. The cyberstalker may just want to know more about or build a relationship with the victim, at least in the beginning. Thus, criminological theories, such as general deterrence theory (D'Arcy & Herath, 2011; Nagin & Pogarsky, 2001), probably cannot fully explain the widespread phenomenon of cyberstalking.

Furthermore, because cyberstalking is performed in a relatively low-risk context (i.e., often anonymously and at great physical distance), the technological attributes of the crime make it difficult for stalkers to be punished (Bocij & McFarlane, 2003). As a result, morality and ethics might be more important factors in explaining cyberstalking because it operates with few social and legal constraints. In the few studies that have addressed cyberstalking, it has been explained primarily from the perspective of personality or reasoned action. None of the various facets of this issue has been investigated with coherent intrapersonal, interpersonal, or situational models, or with a strong focus on ethics. Hence, it is imperative to investigate systematically the process and possible antecedents of cyberstalking occurring in social media, thereby providing insights to support the more effective prevention, on the part of both operators and users, of cyberstalking in social media.

To fill this research gap, this study develops an integrative contextual theory to explain cyberstalking. We first define cyberstalking in general and develop a taxonomy of cyberstalking. With this taxonomy as a foundation, we then propose a theoretical model to explain and predict cyberstalking behavior. This model integrates five theories within three levels: the intrapersonal level (emotional theory, neutralization theory, and self-control theory), the situational level (rational choice theory), and the interpersonal level (social learning theory). Specifically, we integrate the most relevant explanatory variables from the five theories into a coherent model with specific propositions that can be operationalized into hypotheses through empirical work.

BACKGROUND ON AND TAXONOMY OF CYBERSTALKING

A common nomenclature and taxonomy is crucial to the development of a useful theory because they provide a proper conceptual foundation (Lowry et al., 2004; Posey et al., 2013). Consequently, in this section, we develop the foundation for the term *cyberstalking* and discuss the term in the context of social media. Because cyberstalking is a relatively recent phenomenon, we initiate our discussion of cyberstalking by situating it in relation to key features of traditional stalking. On this basis, we propose the taxonomy of cyberstalking that will be used to develop our theoretical model.

CYBERSTALKING AND TRADITIONAL STALKING

The term *cyberstalking* derives from stalking literature and generally refers to stalking that occurs in a cyberworld context. To understand the nature of cyberstalking behavior, we thus provide a clear definition of traditional stalking. Scholars have attempted to define stalking behavior from different perspectives, such as psychology, psychiatry, law, and criminology (Fisher et al., 2002; Kamphuis & Emmelkamp, 2000; Meloy, 2001; Palarea et al., 1999). However, there is no consensus on the exact definition of cyberstalking (Fukuchi, 2011; Sheridan & Davies, 2001; Stocker & Nielssen, 2000). Because this study primarily addresses the underlying mechanism of cyberstalking behaviors, we exclude the legal perspective and focus on stalking research from psychology and criminology.

We offer a few major definitions of stalking from the literature. From a psychological perspective, Meloy and Gothard (1995, p. 258) defined *stalking* as "the willful, malicious and repeated following and harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety." Westrup and Fremouw (1998, p. 258) suggested a behavioral-oriented definition: "one or more of a constellation of behaviors that (a) are repeatedly directed toward a specific individual, (b) are unwelcome and intrusive, and (c) induce fear or concern in the target." In criminology, Fisher et al. (2002, p. 255) defined it as "the same person exhibiting repeated pursuit behavior that seemed obsessive and made the respondent afraid or concerned for her safety." In a survey supported by the American National Institute of Justice et al. (1998, p. 240), stalking was defined as "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written or implied threats, or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person fear."

Most of these definitions contain three elements, as noted by Meloy (2001): (1) a behavioral intrusion on another person; (2) implicit or explicit threats arising from the behavioral intrusion; (3) fear arising as a result of the threats. However, what we believe is missing in this synopsis is the foundational element of stalking: "stalkers are motivated by an obsession with having power, control, and influence over their victim" (Pittaro, 2007, p. 180). In line with these points, we define *stalking* as a series of repeated socially intrusive behaviors—motivated by an obsession with having power, control, and influence over a victim—that facilitate implicit and explicit threats, and thus induce fear in a victim.

Because the concept of cyberstalking is relatively new in the literature, no consensus definition of it exists. We now explain cyberstalking with the aim of proposing an improved definition at the end of this section. We summarize the definitions from the extant literature in Appendix B.

Following the definitions listed in Appendix B, we outline two conflicting views of cyberstalking. *Traditionalists* such as Adam (2002) have argued that there is no substantive distinction between cyberstalking and stalking. In contrast, *uniqueness advocates* such as Tavani (2002) have claimed that because the scale and scope of cyberstalking are larger than those of traditional stalking, cyberstalking can result in special problems that have not appeared in traditional stalking. Although simplistic definitions of cyberstalking characterize it as traditional stalking performed via online media, our careful review of the literature and case studies of cyberstalking leads us to agree strongly with the uniqueness advocates for several important reasons.

First, Internet technologies and social media currently enable cyberstalkers to gain access to vast quantities of personal information (Basu & Jones, 2007), which makes stalking harder to prevent and the consequences for victims more serious than before (Fisher et al., 2002). Although cyberstalking was previously possible with email, chat rooms, and short message service (SMS), social media has further facilitated cyberstalking because of its richness and high volume of personal content. Social media encourages its users to exchange socially rich information with high levels of interactivity; the easy access to private information may thus expose users to data leaks (Ellison, 2007). The social connectedness enabled by such media, combined with the leaks of private data, makes it more difficult for users to protect their privacy, and they may suffer more cybercrimes as a result (Gross & Acquisti, 2005). Another risk is that people tend to subscribe to multiple social media accounts, which may further increase privacy risks (de Paula, 2009).

Second, the pervasive personal privacy leakage of social media is exacerbated by exploding mobile computing usage because most of its users continually leak their locations in real-time to online social media—often without knowledge or consent (Keith et al., 2013). This newer phenomenon makes cyberstalking increasingly sophisticated and allows it to target victims in ways not possible in traditional stalking. New and “creepy” applications are being devised to exploit victims’ privacy because of this new intersection of real-time location data and social media. To wit, Keith et al. (2013) recently illustrated an example involving i-Free’s *Girls around Me* app (Mikhaylova, 2012), which led to its removal from the Apple App Store™, as they explain: “The app generated a map displaying the locations of single females in close proximity to the user. The availability of publicly shared personal and location data through the application programming interfaces (API) of Foursquare and Facebook allowed *Girls Around Me* to collect and display the names, personal photos, and most recent location(s) of single females. The fine line between “social networking app” and “creepy stalker app” was crossed by its “Make contact!” button, which facilitated the user’s personal introduction to the female through the push notification feature of the female’s Foursquare app.” Similarly invasive apps are being continually envisioned and released,

creating new rounds of unsuspecting victims, especially with a new series of apps that are explicitly designed for spying on boyfriends/girlfriends (Wealth Creation, 2013).

Third, the ubiquity and anonymity afforded by social media enable kinds of interpersonal relationships not seen in the real world. For example, research on relational behavior on Facebook has indicated that social media *facilitates* obsessive relational intrusion behavior (Chaulk & Jones, 2011), such as obsession over ex-partners and harassment by ex-partners (Lyndon et al., 2011). Likewise, anonymity and distance allow people who would not engage in real-world stalking to engage in cyberstalking behaviors (Pittaro, 2007). Anonymous or fake identities make it much more difficult for law-enforcement agents to track down stalkers (Tavani, 2000) Likewise, true anonymity online allows for stalking opportunities that do not present themselves in the real world (Pittaro, 2007): anonymity allows people to seek revenge, make rude comments, post embarrassing pictures, and hurt people in ways not possible in the real world.

Fourth, cyberstalking departs from traditional stalking because it does not have to involve a series of repeated behaviors. Because information presented via social media “lives forever,” one negative post or video can “live on” to create emotional trauma in a person, as if purposefully repeated acts by the initial offender were involved. A startling example is a recent case of “revenge porn” in which initial postings of nude photos from a jilted lover were almost immediately removed after the initial posting, but were reposted by others and spread to many servers over the years, and are still being reposted, thus causing so much trauma that the victim has felt “cyber raped,” year after year (Miller, 2013). Notably, the postings of the photos by the jilted lover were not considered illegal, because they were initially taken under her consent and are considered his electronic property, which he is free to circulate under US guarantees of freedom of expression (or more precisely, under the lack of current laws dealing with the emergent phenomenon of “revenge porn”). Hence, such “cyber rape” is a legally protected behavior in many countries and jurisdictions because of the real-world legal vacuum surrounding the phenomenon. Stalking laws simply do not apply.

Fifth, online media allows for novel, pernicious cyberstalking behaviors that are not seen in the real world or come in unexpected forms, such as anonymous herds of bullies focusing on one victim, “revenge porn,” virtual fake relationships, sending computer viruses as an act of revenge, modifying a photo of someone and reposting it to embarrasses him/her, and solicitation of minors for sexual purposes. Other examples of cyberstalking behaviors greatly modified from similar behaviors in the real world include online false accusations and threats, information theft, identity theft, electronic monitoring, and data damage for deviant social reasons (Bocij & McFarlane, 2002). Consequently, cyberstalking subsumes a rather wide variety of behaviors not normally associated

with traditional stalking.

For example, although sexual solicitation of minors has long occurred, anonymity and identity cloaking have made social media the tool of choice for pedophiles, because they can more easily groom and ensnare countless victims who would not be susceptible in the real world (Dombrowski et al., 2004; Mitchell et al., 2007). In fact, youth Internet users are at most risk for the most serious forms of sexual solicitations (Mitchell et al., 2007).

Moreover, real-world stalking (e.g., Fox et al., 2009; Fox et al., 2011; McFarlane et al., 1999) and bullying (e.g., Nansel et al., 2001; Salmivalli et al., 1996) are traditionally studied separately as different behaviors by sociologists and psychologists. Traditionally, bullying was almost exclusively studied in terms of juvenile behavior and typically in the context of school (Nansel et al., 2001; Salmivalli et al., 1996). Meanwhile, such behaviors are so conflated online, and go well beyond juvenile behaviors, that cyberbullying is generally subsumed under cyberstalking or the terms are treated as interchangeable (Fukuchi, 2011), and cyberbullying/cyberstalking are now often studied together. Cyberbullying is an extension of real-world *bullying*, which can be defined as a repeated aggressive behavior to harm or disturb victims in the context of an imbalance of power (Nansel et al., 2001). *Cyberbullying* can be defined as a deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior to harm people anonymously through the Internet by leveraging the imbalance of power between bullies and victims (Kowalski et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2008).

Although the news media tends to focus on extreme cases of cyberbullying—such as those leading to suicide (Dahl, 2013; Huffingtonpost & Salazar, 2011; Neil Katz, 2010; Telegraph Reporters, 2013), rape (Neil Katz, 2010), sexual assault (Dahl, 2013), and abuse (Coyne, 2013)—cyberbullying can also involve less pernicious behaviors such as taunts and intimidation (Neil Katz, 2010), unwanted teasing, and implied threats. The most common forms of cyberbullying include forwarding private messages and spreading rumors (Claburn, 2007). Similarly, the US National Crime Prevention Council (National Crime Prevention Council, 2013) summarized common cyberbullying as online behaviors in which people “pretend they are other people to trick others, spread lies and rumors about victims, trick people into revealing personal information, send or forward mean text messages, and post pictures of victims without their consent.”

According to Menesini et al. (2012), imbalance of power, intentionality (of hostile behavior), and anonymity have been highlighted as three distinguishing criteria of cyberbullying. Thus, we agree with the literature that cyberbullying is a subtype of cyberstalking, as the motivations are virtually the same, although the delivery mechanisms and targets of cyberbullying are usually more narrowly focused. For theoretical concision, we do not attempt to further distinguish these concepts, and assume the same basic predictors for their shared motivators. Appendix C lists the

definitions of cyberbullying in the extant literature.

Summarizing this section, Table 1 highlights some of the differences between traditional stalking and cyberstalking, which lead us to the strong conclusion that cyberstalking is *not* merely an extension of real-world stalking to the online environment. These crucial differences, coupled with the scarcity of theoretical literature on cyberstalking, indicate the need for further taxonomic and theoretical development to understand what explains and predicts cyberstalking.

Table 1. Characteristics of Traditional Stalking and Cyberstalking Behaviors

Characteristics	**Stalking**	**Cyberstalking in social media**
Access to private personal information (Basu & Jones, 2007)	Little available information offline	Access to vast amounts of personal information
Interactivity and variety of mediums for stalking (Ellison, 2007)	Low variety (e.g., physical presence, written letters)	High variety (e.g., email, chat, social media, multiple media accounts, multiple identities, video, photos, viruses)
Difficulty of tracking and sensing stalking (Gross & Acquisti, 2005)	Less difficult (tends to be purposeful intrusion)	More difficult (can be intrusive or hidden)
Ability to track physical location of victims (Keith et al., 2013)	Difficult (must physically follow)	Easy, especially through mobile device use
Ease of stalking and ability to be anonymous (Tavani, 2000; Weir et al., 2011)	More difficult	Less difficult (more anonymity, more distance, multiple identities)
Ability to have multiple victims (Tavani, 2002)	More difficult	Less difficult
Ability to repeat frequently (Lyndon et al., 2011)	Less able	More able
Requirement of repeated stalking behaviors to inflict long-term damage and emotional toll on victim (Miller, 2013).	Required	Not required (one post can cause years of havoc)
Variety and predictability of stalking behaviors (Bocij & McFarlane, 2002)	Focused, predictable, and well-known; more limited range of perpetrators	Unfocused, unpredictable, and new varieties continually emerging; greater range of perpetrators
Likely relationship between stalkers and victims (Alexy et al., 2005)	More likely weak	More likely strong, but allows for a greater range of relationships

Because of the many variations of cyberstalking, only a broad definition is possible at this point in the paper. Hence, we propose a general definition of *cyberstalking*, which builds on our definition of stalking, as one or more online postings or behaviors—motivated by an obsession with having power, control, and influence over a victim or multiple victims—that facilitate implicit and explicit threats, and thus induce fear in a victim. Our taxonomic work, presented in the next section, will further challenge and expand on this definition.

PROPOSING A TAXNOMY AND EXPANDED DEFINITION OF CYBERSTALKING

Again, new areas of theoretical development can progress adequately only with proper nomenclature for and taxonomies of the phenomenon involved (Lowry et al., 2004; Posey et al., 2013). Thus, a taxonomy of the facets of cyberstalking is required in order to explain and predict the phenomenon more effectively. In this section, we first review existing classifications of cyberstalking/cyberstalkers, and then propose a two-dimension taxonomy of cyberstalking

behaviors. We then refine our proposed definition of cyberstalking.

Several attempts at taxonomies or more elaborate definitions of cyberstalking have been made in the literature. Although the motivations of stalkers as well as the relationship between stalkers and victims are widely discussed in cyberstalking research, no common nomenclature or taxonomy has been produced. Several criteria for distinguishing types of cyberstalking have been proposed, including the behavioral patterns of stalkers, the motivations of the stalkers, and the relationships between stalkers and victims, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Existing Classifications and Taxonomy of Cyberstalking

Source	Criteria	Key classifications used
(McFarlane & Bocij, 2003)	Motivation and relationship	Vindictive cyberstalker, composed cyberstalker, intimate cyberstalker, collective cyberstalkers
(Bocij, 2002)	Individual/organization and motivation	Dimension 1: Individual/organization: individual stalks organization, organization stalks individual Dimension 2: Motivation: vengeful, individual gain, ideological, unwitting, for profit, competitive
(Wikipedia, 2013a)	Behavioral patterns	False accusations, attempts to gather information about the victim, monitoring the target's online activities, encouraging others to harass the victim, false victimization, attacks on data and equipment, ordering goods and services, arranging to meet
(SAPAC, 2013)	Motivation, relationship, personality, duration, and criminality	Rejected stalker, resentful stalker, predatory stalker, intimacy seeker, incompetent suitor, erotomania, and morbidly infatuated
(QuitStalking Me, 2011)	Motivation	Envy, fulfill wishes or cravings, feel invincible, not happy with current career, make others feel inferior, delusional, instill fear in others to justify status, embarrass others, cannot deal with some problems, curious
(Network for Surviving Stalking)	Motivation and relationship	Ex-partner harassment, infatuation harassment, delusional fixation stalking, sadistic stalking

A significant limitation of most of these studies is that they fail to base their classifications on meaningful behavioral examples. We attempt to fill this taxonomic gap by reviewing both (1) the literature and (2) media reports of actual cases of cyberstalking behaviors and motivations. This allows us to deduce a taxonomy of 35 specifically identified (and validated in real life) cyberstalking behaviors (see Appendix D). In view of these behaviors and the various proposed criteria in the literature, we organize the behaviors in a manner that clearly exposes their core differences, which provides a more useful taxonomy upon which theory can be built. For concision, we thus focus on two major dimensions: (1) the behavioral patterns of the cyberstalkers and (2) their motivations.

Behavioral Patterns of Cyberstalkers

The first criterion of our taxonomy, the behavioral patterns of cyberstalkers, focuses on illustrating how and to what extent a cyberstalker gains access to and interacts with the victim. Again, due to the enormous overlap between cyberstalking and cyberbullying, some of these categories are more commonly recognized as cyberbullying; again, however, we do not further distinguish these, as the motivations are largely the same. Based on our comprehensive review of the literature and real-world cyberstalking cases, we propose three major types of behavioral patterns adopted by cyberstalkers: (1) cyberstalking in secret, (2) indirect cyberstalking, and (3)

direct cyberstalking. Table 3 expands these into nine variations or subtypes.

Table 3. Three Types and Nine Subtypes of Cyberstalking Behavioral Patterns

Behavioral patterns	Subtypes	Description
Cyberstalking in secret	1. Monitoring / tracing / tracking others without consent	There is no direct communication (e.g., instant messages, emails, online comments, feedback) between the cyberstalker and the victim. The cyberstalker tracks the information of the victim in secret without the awareness of the victim (victim often is not aware he/she is a victim). The cyberstalker processes the information privately and usually does not inflict any indirect or direct damage on the victim.
Indirect cyberstalking	2. Purposeful damage to data or equipment / hack into victim's system 3. Identity theft / fake profiles under victim / fake identities 4. False accusations / fake photos / passing on rumors 5. Indirect cyberbullying: posting true information or valid photos (meant to harm / embarrass)	There is no direct communication (e.g., instant messages, emails, online comments, feedback) between the cyberstalker and the victim. The cyberstalker processes or publishes the personal data of the victim so that it is possible (but not certain) that the victim will be aware of the incident. The behaviors usually do not inflict immediate harm, but long-term harm and awareness of victimization is highly likely.
Direct cyberstalking	6. Fake relationship to exploit person / exploiting minors 7. Unwanted obscene messages / pornography / sexual harassment 8. Making threats / intimidating people 9. Direct cyberbullying: insults / flaming / rude behavior	There is direct communication (e.g., instant messages, emails, online comments, feedback) between the cyberstalker and the victim. The victim is aware of the interaction with the cyberstalker. The cyberstalker's behaviors inflict tangible financial, career, physical, psychological, or emotional harm on the victim.

Motivations of Cyberstalkers

The second criterion of our taxonomy, the motivations of cyberstalkers, focuses on illustrating why the stalking behavior is performed. Based on the various stalking motivations listed in the relevant studies (Bocij, 2004; Bocij et al., 2002; Bocij & McFarlane, 2002; Bocij & McFarlane, 2003; QuitStalkingMe, 2011; SAPAC, 2013) and the many behaviors we observed in the literature, we further summarize and reclassify the stalking motivations into four groups:

(1) To fulfill cyberstalkers' psychological needs, wishes, or cravings regarding another person (e.g., obsessive curiosity about someone, wanting to make fun of someone, venting a bad mood gratuitously)

(2) To instill fear in or gain control over a victim

(3) To seek revenge or punish the victim (usually resulting from negative emotions toward the victim, such as anger and jealousy)

(4) To build a relationship with the victim (including sexual relationships or those acting out a fantasy)

Although we categorize each of our example behaviors according to a single motivation, we recognize that a cyberstalker can have more than one motivation. However, for simplicity, we categorize each behavior in view of its most probable primary motivation.

Toward an Expanded Definition of Cyberstalking

Given the real-world and research examples of actual behaviors and motivations of cyberstalking, we believe our improved taxonomy improves the understanding of cyberstalking itself and indicates why it is not a merely a form of traditional stalking. In particular, our two added dimensions, to the extent that they hold for all cyberstalking cases, lead us to refine our definition of cyberstalking as follows: *cyberstalking* involves one online behavior or a series of online behaviors that is/are (1) secret, (2) indirect, or (3) direct, targeted toward another person, group, or organization, and motivated by a stalker's desire to (1) fulfill psychological needs, wishes, or cravings regarding another person; (2) to instill fear in a victim or to gain control over a victim; (3) to seek revenge or punish the victim; or (4) to build a relationship with a victim.

PROPOSING A THEORETICAL MODEL OF CYBERSTALKING

This section begins with a review of theories that can be used to explain cyberstalking. Our taxonomy highlights that cyberstalkers can have a number of motivations, which motivations greatly outnumber the more limited set found in traditional stalking. Thus, a useful theoretical model of cyberstalking needs to account reasonably for these possible motivations. To do so systematically, we reviewed a wide number of theories of the *intrapersonal*, *situational*, and *interpersonal* levels that most likely encompass these motivations. Based on this critical review, we propose a theoretical model of cyberstalking based on the five theories from this review that we identify as the most efficacious in explaining cyberstalking. First, three theories are selected for the intrapersonal level: the emotional theory of stalking (Spitzberg, 2000), neutralization theory (Sykes & Matza, 1957), and the self-control theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Second, we use rational choice theory (Becker, 1968) as a broad theory for situational-based decision making. Third, for our interpersonal theory, we leverage the social learning theory of crime (Akers, 1973).

INTRAPERSONAL-LEVEL THEORIES EXPLAINING CYBERSTALKING

Theories at this level typically emphasize the cognitive and emotional factors that affect outcomes within a person or occurring within one's mind. The theories, on this level, that we believe are relevant to cyberstalking include the emotional theory of stalking, the neutralization theory, and the self-control theory of crime.

Emotional Theory of Stalking and Cyberstalking

In developing the emotional theory of stalking, Spitzberg (2000) pointed out two negative emotions that deserve attention: shame and anger. These emotions can contribute to explaining the emotional mechanism of cyberstalking. Anger can be the catalyst that encourages a person to cyberstalk (e.g., for revenge). Because most cyberstalking behaviors violate social norms, a cyberstalker is likely to experience shame both before and after the cyberstalking behavior, and

possibly because of high levels of anger itself. Following this line of reasoning, because we are focused on the predictors as opposed to the results of cyberstalking, shame is particularly useful in our theoretical model.

Shame can be invoked in two major ways: by breaking a moral code or by being put in a negative social light. Either form of shame should decrease cyberstalking. To experience guilt-induced shame, one must have an underlying moral or ethical code that they transgress, and this transgression facilitates the guilt needed for this form of shame to occur (Spitzberg, 2000; Tangney et al., 1996). Morality and shame and thus intertwined (Lamb, 1983), though shame is a broader concept than moral guilt. It is possible to experience shame for factors outside of from transgressing a moral code, such as something in general reflecting negatively about one's identity (e.g., unflattering photo) (Olthof et al., 2004).

If potential cyberstalkers believe that cyberstalking actions will violate moral codes, they are likely to feel guilt and subsequent shame; such uncomfortable feelings will make them less likely to cyberstalk others. Likewise, if potential cyberstalkers feel cyberstalking could put themselves in a negative light in which they would experience shame, they are less likely to cyberstalk. For example, IT literature shows that people with strong moral or ethical dispositions are less likely to commit purposeful security violations (Myyry et al., 2009) or are more likely to adopt anti-plagiarism software (Lee, 2011). More recently, Siponen et al. (2012) explain moral beliefs, with its associated guilt and shame production, as a key catalyst in preventing software piracy. As an important limitation to the scope of this theory is that it does not apply well to sociopaths. Sociopaths are people who suffers from psychopathy, in which they are abnormally immune to the influence of morality and ethics in their behaviors, among other personality disorders (Koenigs et al., 2011; Young et al., 2012). Summarizing this section, we propose the following in our cyberstalking context:

P1a. Shame toward cyberstalking decreases cyberstalking.

P1b. Morality increases shame toward cyberstalking.

P1c. Morality decreases cyberstalking.

Neutralization Theory and Cyberstalking

Originating in criminological research, neutralization theory has been widely used in explaining delinquent behavior. One of the basic assumptions of neutralization theory is that people who engage in delinquent behavior also "believe in the norms and values of the community in general" (Siponen & Vance, 2010, p. 489). Earlier studies had proposed that there is a distinction between "acts that are wrong in themselves" and "acts that are illegal but not immoral" (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 667): the former will cause significantly more guilt in the delinquents than the latter.

Therefore, non-sociopathic people feel guilty and ashamed when they realize that their own behaviors do not comply with established moral standards, which in turn prevents them from performing illegal and improper behaviors. However, before engaging in delinquent behavior, delinquents tend to justify such behavior subjectively, and certain neutralization techniques help them to justify their delinquent behaviors as moral and proper.

Siponen and Vance (2010) further adopted neutralization theory to explain law-abiding and rule-breaking actions using IT in organizations. Their empirical study additionally supported the argument that a set of neutralization techniques outlined in the criminology literature helps employees to rationalize their rule-breaking behaviors in the IS context. Although neutralization theory is not yet widely used in the IS field, similar perspectives have been used to explain the problematic use of information systems. For instance, Harrington (1996) argued that by denying responsibility for the potential consequences, employees are more likely to perform computer abuse behavior. In addition, Puhakainen (2006) found that employees sometimes failed to comply with rules requiring the encryption of confidential emails because they thought the company was at fault for failing to make the rules clear. From the standpoint of these studies, people use certain techniques to persuade themselves that some of the deviant behaviors they want to perform are actually reasonable, and this process contributes significantly to their eventual actions. Following the research of Siponen and Vance (2010), Gregory and Brekashvili (2012) adopted neutralization theory to understand employees' whistleblowing intentions, while Li and Cheng (2013) combined neutralization theory with rational choice theory to propose that neutralization techniques contribute significantly to Internet abuse in the workplace. To summarize, these studies have indicated that neutralization theory can be applied to explain problematic and delinquent behavior in the cyberworld context, especially when the risk to the offender is relatively low (Li & Cheng, 2013).

Examples of neutralization techniques used by delinquents to justify their behaviors include denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes & Matza, 1957), the metaphor of the ledger (Klockars, 1974), and the defense of necessity (Minor, 1981). Table 4 summarizes the relevant neutralization techniques examined in previous studies and offers corresponding examples of neutralization techniques that could be used to justify cyberstalking.

For our model, we adopt six techniques to understand neutralization in cyberstalking (per Table 4). First, the five techniques of neutralization proposed by Sykes and Matza (1957)—denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalty—are used because they are widely recognized and used in criminological studies to explain delinquent behaviors in various contexts. Another technique, metaphor of the ledger,

Table 4. Techniques of Neutralization Applied to Cyberstalking		
Techniques	**Definition**	**Statement in cyberstalking context**
Denial of responsibility (Sykes & Matza, 1957)	Delinquents absolve themselves of responsibility for their deviant actions—thinking that they are not to blame.	I should not be held responsible for my cyberstalking behavior.
Denial of injury (Sykes & Matza, 1957)	Delinquents justify their behavior by minimizing the harm and injury that they cause, with the underlying logic that their deviant behavior can be excused when there is little harm.	I did not really hurt anybody with my cyberstalking behavior.
Denial of the victim (Sykes & Matza, 1957)	Delinquents claim that the injury is not wrong in light of the circumstances, altering the roles of perpetrators and victims.	It is the victims' fault. I am the real victim, and they deserve cyberstalking.
Condemnation of the condemners (Sykes & Matza, 1957)	Delinquents maintain that the condemners are deviants in disguise, transferring the focus of attention from their deviance to the ethical righteousness of the condemners.	Virtually everyone online is cyberstalking and does a lot worse stuff than I do. Thus, why only pick on me?
Appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes & Matza, 1957)	Delinquents violate social norms for the benefit of other social members, and although their behavior is regarded as deviant by the wider society, it remains loyal to the norms of a subgroup.	I did not cyberstalk for my own benefit, but to help others.
Defense of necessity (Minor, 1981)	Delinquents believe they are constrained by the current situation to perform certain deviant behaviors.	Others are violating my rights, and I just cyberstalk them to protect myself.
Claims of normality (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003)	Delinquents claim that the deviant behavior is common based on the widespread similar acts of others.	Almost everyone searches for information about others online every day. I am doing something quite common, which is not cyberstalking.
Metaphor of the ledger (Klockars, 1974)	Delinquents believe they are mostly honest and should be allowed a few deviant behaviors.	I am generally a good person and well behaved online, so a little cyberstalking here and there is not a big deal.
Claims of entitlement (Gauthier, 2001)	Delinquents believe they have the right to engage in deviant behavior.	I know cyberstalking is not acceptable to many people, but it is my right to cyberstalk in this particular situation.
Postponement (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003)	Delinquents ignore current thoughts about the deviant behavior.	I am going cyberstalk the victim and deal with the potential consequences later.
Claims of individuality (Henry, 1990)	Delinquents refuse to consider others' judgment and act only according to their own thinking.	I do not care what other people think about cyberstalking. I think it is fine, and everyone can do what her or she wants.
Claims of relative acceptability (Henry, 1990)	Delinquents compare themselves with worse people, especially those who have not been blamed or punished.	There are far worse people than me online, and because they have avoided being blamed or punished, my cyberstalking is fine.

proposed by Klockars (1974), is adopted to better fit our context of cyberstalking in social media: the large amount of self-disclosed information in social media, as well as the blurred boundaries between normal browsing actions and cyberstalking behaviors, will almost certainly lead cyberstalkers to think that their delinquent behaviors should be allowed to some extent. To make the model concise and clear, other techniques are excluded because they either exhibit significant overlap with the first five techniques of neutralization (Sykes & Matza, 1957) or are applicable only to certain situations with a low degree of generalizability to cyberstalking cases. Table 5 summarizes how the six techniques facilitate cyberstalking in a social media context.

For purposes of simplicity, we combine these six techniques to depict neutralization as a multidimensional second-order construct constituted by various neutralization techniques, which is

Table 5. Neutralization Techniques Used in Cyberstalking	
Techniques	**How characteristics of cyberspace and social media facilitate the adoption of neutralization techniques**
Denial of responsibility	• The large number of social media members and "the diffusion of responsibility effect" (Chao, 2011, p. 653) contribute to the cyberstalker's lack of a sense of responsibility. • The anonymous environment and virtual identity contribute to the cyberstalkers' lack of a sense of responsibility. • Public information and the support of social members and social norms contribute to the cyberstalkers' lack of a sense of responsibility.
Denial of injury	• The lack of face-to-face contact helps cyberstalkers to ignore the injury to the victim (Bocij & McFarlane, 2003). • No physical damage is caused by social cyberstalking (Bandura, 1999; Parker, 1983). • The victims will not be hurt unless they become aware of the violation. • The psychological distance created by cyberspace facilitates the denial of injury.
Denial of the victim	• The support from community members of social media helps cyberstalkers maintain that the victim is at fault and that cyberstalking represents a punishment to them. • In social cyberstalking events, victims have often previously wronged the cyberstalkers (Alexy et al., 2005; Lyndon et al., 2011).
Condemnation of the condemners	• The general impression is that almost everyone searches for others' information through social media, because there is a great deal of public information that can be exploited. • It is a common phenomenon that people search for others' information using social media.
Appeal to higher loyalties	• Some cyberstalking behaviors are performed with a motivation to benefit others; this will be used by cyberstalkers to rationalize their behaviors. • Perceived support from social media helps cyberstalkers to become convinced that their behaviors benefit others.
Metaphor of the ledger	• There is no clear boundary between cyberstalking and normal Internet browsing actions. • Most information on social media is self-disclosed and available to the public.

consistent with the theoretical model of Jarvis et al. (2003) and Siponen et al. (2010). Although individual techniques of neutralization are conceptually quite distinct, and we expect to test them separately, they can be regarded as different facets of the overall construct of neutralization.

Before performing a cyberstalking behavior, it is likely that cyberstalkers will engage in multiple neutralization techniques to justify their behavior. Which ones they choose is not as theoretically important for our model as the key proposition is that they will engage in neutralization as a key facilitator of cyberstalking. Under this assumption, when cyberstalkers attempt to justify their delinquent behavior, they will adopt a certain combination of these techniques to realize the overall neutralizing effect at which they aim. Figure 1 depicts neutralization.

One of the basic assumptions of neutralization theory is that moral beliefs serve as obstacles to performing delinquent behavior (Siponen et al., 2012). Similarly, several security-related studies in IS outside of neutralization identify morality as an information sanction or impediment against inappropriate online security-related and piracy behaviors. (Lee, 2011; Myyry et al., 2009; Vance & Siponen, 2012). Neutralization then serves as a psychosocial method to overcome such psychological obstacles: using multiple techniques of neutralization, cyberstalkers will diminish their sense of guilt and shame and ultimately facilitate their cyberstalking. In addition to this indirect relationship, neutralization directly influences cyberstalking: techniques such as

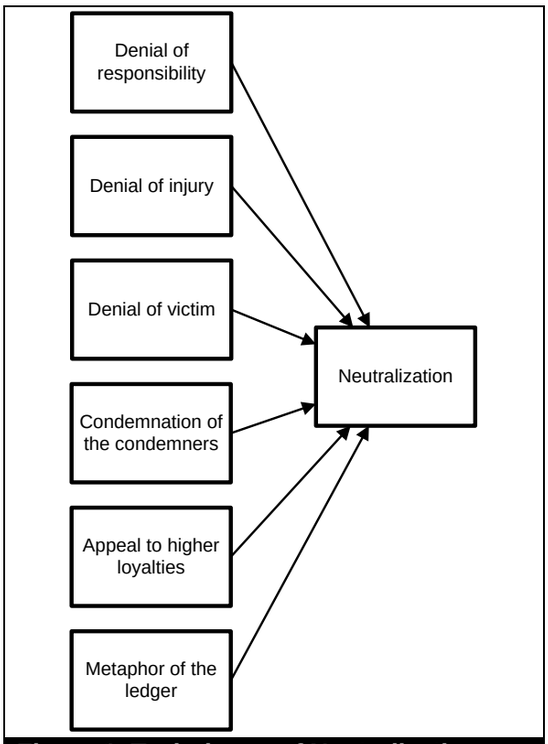

Figure 1. Techniques of Neutralization

metaphor of the ledger help cyberstalkers claim that it is "just" and their "proper right" to cyberstalk others, which directly increases the cyberstalking. If this is the case, then a more moral person is less likely to succumb to neutralization. Therefore, we propose the following:

> *P2. Neutralization of cyberstalking (via [a] denial of responsibility, [b] denial of injury, [c] denial of victim, [d] condemnation of the condemner, [e] appeal to higher authority, and [f] metaphor of the ledger) decreases shame toward cyberstalking.*
>
> *P3. Morality decreases neutralization of cyberstalking (via [a] denial of responsibility, [b] denial of injury, [c] denial of victim, [d] condemnation of the condemner, [e] appeal to higher authority, and [f] metaphor of the ledger).*
>
> *P4. Neutralization of cyberstalking (via [a] denial of responsibility, [b] denial of injury, [c] denial of victim, [d] condemnation of the condemner, [e] appeal to higher authority, and [f] metaphor of the ledger) increases cyberstalking.*

Figure 2 shows the interrelationships among neutralization, shame, morality, and cyberstalking.

Self-Control Theory of Crime and Cyberstalking

The final intrapersonal theory we leverage is the general theory of crime, also called the self-control theory of crime, which argues that individuals with low self-control are more likely to commit crime when presented with the opportunity (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) did not provide a clear operational definition of self-control, they simply used *low self-control* and *high self-control* "as labels for this differential propensity to commit crime" (Akers, 1991, p. 204). Specifically, risk seeking, impulsivity, a temperamental personality, shortsightedness, self-centeredness, and a preference for physical activities are regarded as six traits representing

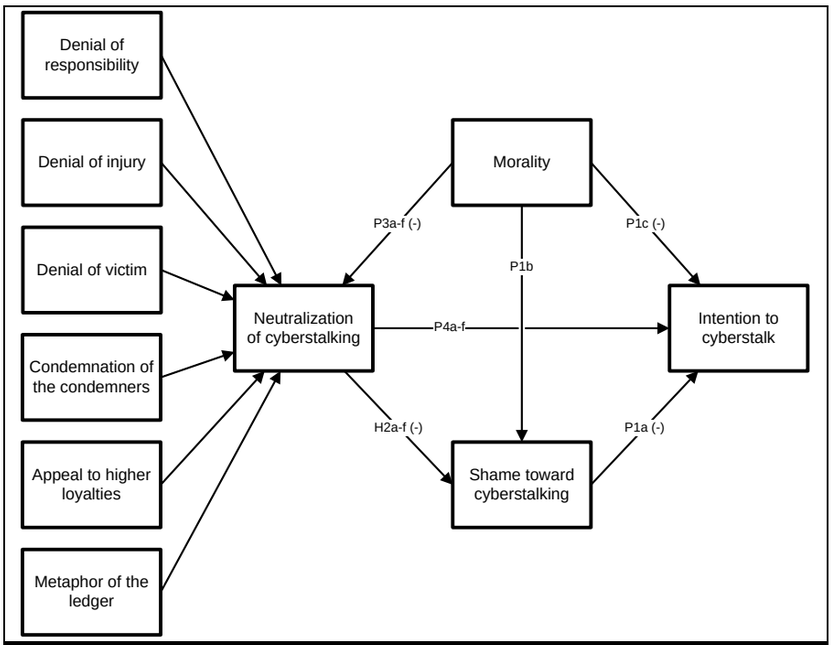

Figure 2. Neutralization, Shame, Morality, and Cyberstalking

low self-control. People with these traits will have a lower degree of self-control and therefore a stronger inclination to engage in criminal actions.

Self-control theory is widely used to understand various criminal behaviors, including academic cheating (Bolin, 2004), fraud (Holtfreter et al., 2008), date violence (Schreck et al., 2008), theft (Schreck, 1999), and the like. Tibbetts and Gibson (2002) suggested that low self-control is one of the most important factors influencing criminal decision making. Fox et al. (2009) first applied self-control theory in the context of stalking and suggested that low self-control is related to both stalking behaviors and stalking victimization; its relationship to stalking victimization was significant only among women. Bossler and Holt (2010) further proposed that self-control theory can be expanded to explain cyberworld victimization and that low self-control contributes significantly to cyberworld victimization under low-risk situations. Similarly, to understand information security policy violation, Hu et al. (2011) integrated self-control with other rational choice factors in their research. In view of these studies, it is useful to adopt self-control theory in the context of cyberstalking.

According to self-control theory, people with a low degree of self-control are less able to control their emotions and behaviors and thus are more inclined to seek immediate gratification. The personal trait of low self-control makes them more emotion-driven and directly forms the intention to perform delinquent behavior regardless of other rational considerations. Thus, they are more likely to have a higher degree of cyberstalking as “an efficient and effective means to satisfy immediate gratification” (Bossler & Holt, 2010, p. 228). Thus, we hypothesize:

P5. Low self-control increases cyberstalking.

SITUATIONAL-LEVEL THEORIES EXPLAINING CYBERSTALKING

Theories on the situational level are designed to account for the situational factors of the

external environment, such as economic, social, or IT factors. Different theories provide different explanations for how these factors facilitate negative behaviors such as stalking. For example, *routine activities theory* concentrates on the circumstances in which criminals carry out predatory criminal acts. This theory emphasizes that most criminal acts require the convergence in space and time of likely offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardians against crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Holt and Bossler (2008) applied routine activities theory to the empirical study of cyberstalking; they found that individual and peer involvement also significantly increased the risk of victimization in computer crime and deviance. Reyns et al. (2011) developed an adapted lifestyle–routine activities theory specifically for the cyberstalking context; they distinguished many significant predictors, including exposure to risk, online proximity, online guardianship, and online deviance. However, as these studies have illustrated, the use of routine activities theory in cyberstalking best focuses on the perspective of the victim rather than that of the stalker; therefore, it is not appropriate for explaining the internal mechanisms of cyberstalking behavior under investigation here.

As a more promising theory, Becker (1968) initially introduced *rational choice theory* (RCT) into the literature as an extended economic approach to crime. Drawing upon economic, political, and sociological research, the rational choice approach assumes that individuals, on the microeconomic level, analyze and plan to make reasoned decisions for a given situation or context (McCarthy, 2002). RCT argues that, in the process of rational decision making, people primarily identify alternative actions and the likely outcomes of each (Bulgurcu et al., 2010). The rationality is determined by balancing the costs against the benefits of one's actions to maximize personal advantage. The calculus of perceived expectations not only refers to material goods, but also includes a vast array of outcomes (McCarthy, 2002). Hence, the decision to perform a criminal behavior represents an overall assessment of costs and benefits shaped by an individual's perception of the criminal action (Bulgurcu et al., 2010). Because of its economic contributions and the empirical reality of crime, the RCT approach has been widely used in criminology research in conjunction with other theoretical frameworks, such as those emphasizing moral beliefs, deterrence, and self-control (Hu et al., 2011).

General deterrence theory (GDT) is also a well-established theory in criminology; it posits that deviant behaviors could be deterred by the administration of disincentives and sanctions relevant to the deviance (Ehrlich, 1973). The key assumption of GDT is that specific punishments will prevent offenders from committing the crimes and that the response to punishment (e.g., fear) will prevent others from committing similar crimes (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). This assumption is the basis for the two central tenets of GDT: *certainty of sanctioning* and *severity of sanctioning*

(Blumstein et al., 1978). According to GDT, organizations can predict the offender's behavior by assessing the two dimensions of sanctions and inhibiting the deviant behavior by administrative disincentives.

Like RCT, GDT takes into account some of the costs of deviant behavior. However, GDT focuses exclusively on the sanctions of deviant behavior, which focus is too narrow to explain a lot of cyberstalking phenomenon. Although the punishments or disincentives can be viewed as the cost of deviant behavior, some cyberstalking that is harmful to the victims (e.g., searching private information without permission) may not be sensed, especially because anonymity is a major facilitating factor; therefore, it is not easily prevented by traditional sanctions. Furthermore, because anonymity can cloak cyberstalkers' identities, the risk of sanctions is much lower in cyberstalking than real-world stalking. Because RCT considers both the benefits and costs of deviant behavior, we believe it is more appropriate than GDT for explaining cyberstalking behavior.

Another advantage of adopting RCT is that it can be used to complement neutralization theory. Neutralization theory explains the rationalizations used by cyberstalkers, but RCT can better explain the motivations of cyberstalking. If this is true, the intention that accrues to the individual from cyberstalking is partially or largely influenced by the individual's perception of the costs and benefits of potential outcomes. Thus, we use RCT to identify those cyberstalking-related consequences—the rational calculus of the costs and the benefits. In our context, the outcomes of an individual's stalking behavior are the contemplation of costs (e.g., risks and punishment) and benefits (e.g., accomplishment and materials) of the associated action. We define the *perceived benefit* of cyberstalking as the overall expected favorable consequences for an individual engaging in cyberstalking, whereas the *perceived cost* of cyberstalking is defined as the overall expected unfavorable consequences (Bulgurcu et al., 2010).

Following Bulgurcu et al. (2010) and Hu et al. (2011), we include perceived extrinsic and intrinsic benefits as the favored consequences of cyberstalking. *Perceived extrinsic benefits* refer to the material benefits (e.g., rewards) as external motivations for cyberstalking. Conversely, *perceived intrinsic benefits* are an individual's intrinsic motivations—such as the contentment, satisfaction, accomplishment, and fulfillment derived from cyberstalking itself—to cyberstalk someone in social media (Bulgurcu et al., 2010). Accordingly, we propose:

P6. An individual's perceived (a) extrinsic benefits and (b) intrinsic benefits of cyberstalking increase cyberstalking.

Previous studies have also recognized that the risk of getting caught will deter individuals from committing crimes (Siponen & Vance, 2010). This cognitive characteristic of individuals will affect how the costs of desired actions are perceived (Hu et al., 2011). Obviously, "opportunities

linked to a low risk of being caught" are less costly and more favorable than the "opportunities linked to a high risk" (Seipel & Eifler, 2010, p.173). Importantly, although perceived risk will decrease cyberstalking, because of greater anonymity, social distance, and fewer legal controls, the risks of cyberstalking will frequently be seen as lower than those of traditional stalking. Nonetheless, from an RCT perspective these potential risks and costs can be represented in terms of intrinsic costs (Bulgurcu et al., 2010), formal sanctions (severity and certainty) (Bulgurcu et al., 2010), and informal sanctions (Vance & Siponen, 2012). We omit intrinsic costs, because these include guilt, embarrassment, and shame (Bulgurcu et al., 2010), which are already sufficiently represented in our model. However, we include informal sanctions, which include the idea of guilt but adds the important elements of social disapproval from friends and peers. Summarizing this section, we propose:

P7. An individual's perceived risks and costs of cyberstalking, calculated through (a) formal sanctions and (b) informal sanctions, decrease cyberstalking.

Moderation Effects of Self-Control on Cyberstalking

Finally, in our model, we discuss the possible moderating effects of low self-control. We add this possibility because a significant amount of the literature has discussed the relationship between self-control and rational thinking (Baron et al., 2007; Bossler & Holt, 2010; Fox et al., 2009; Hu et al., 2011; Piquero & Tibbetts, 1996; Seipel & Eifler, 2010). According to these studies, self-control not only serves as an alternative factor of rational choice measures that have a direct influence on the intention to perform delinquent behavior, but it also moderates the relationship between rational choice factors and the behavioral intention. Individuals with low self-control are less likely to calculate the risk and benefit involved in their real-world stalking behavior (Fox et al., 2009), and this is likely in cyberstalking, as well. That is, those with low self-control are simply less, rational in general. They do things more out of impulse then out of cost-benefit considerations. Hence, low self-control acts as a negative moderator of all RCT-related cost-benefit variables:

P8. Low self-control negatively moderates the relationships between cyberstalking and (a) extrinsic benefits, (b) intrinsic benefits, (c) formal sanctions, and (d) informal sanctions.

Figure 3 summarizes our theoretical propositions thus far.

INTERPERSONAL-LEVEL THEORIES EXPLAINING CYBERSTALKING

Theories on the interpersonal level usually consider the influence of social relations. The social experience of stalkers as well as their interaction within their social network would certainly be useful in understanding cyberstalking. In particular, *social learning theory* posits that crime is a social behavior learned largely by interacting within intimate groups (e.g., peers); that is, a criminal or delinquent actor models and imitates the deviant behavior of fellow group members

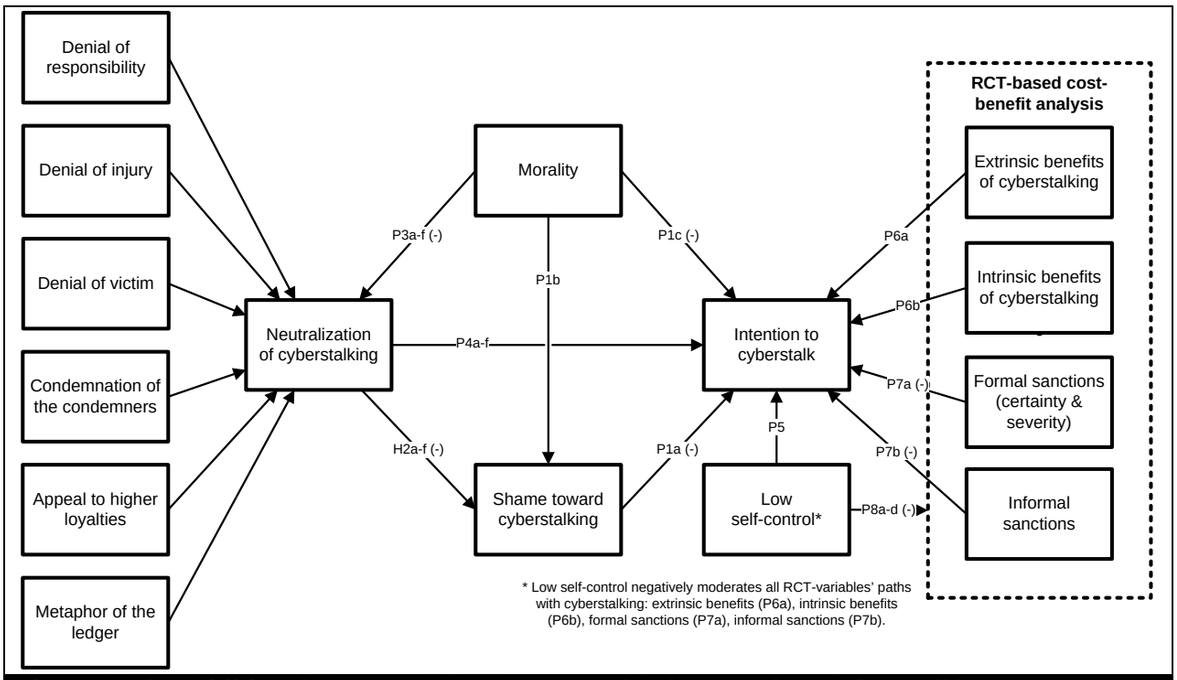

Figure 3. The Additional Effect of RCT Factors and Self-control on Cyberstalking

Table 6. Explanatory Variables of Social Learning Theory

Variables	Descriptions
Differential association	The process by which individuals directly and indirectly interact and identify with others
Differential reinforcement	The combination of different frequency, amount, and probability rewards and punishments regarding certain behavior
Definitions	Whether an action is good or bad: the attitudes, beliefs, justifications, and orientations regarding certain behaviors
Imitation	The process in which people observe and model the behavior of and consequences accruing to others

(Akers et al., 1979). *Differential association*, *differential reinforcement*, *definitions*, and *imitation,* as summarized in Table 6, are regarded as the four major explanatory variables of social learning theory.

We adopt the social learning theory in the context of cyberstalking for several reasons. First, although social learning theory is widely used as a general theory to explain most deviant behaviors, it was originally designed by Akers (1973) and Bandura (1977) to explain offending and related behavior, which is indeed consistent with our context.

Second, previous studies have already adopted social learning theory to explain general stalking behaviors. Fox et al. (2011), for instance, applied it to examine the social factors related to stalking and concluded that the four explanatory variables of social learning theory are important predictors of both stalking perpetration and victimization.

Third, social learning theory has been shown to be effective not only in understanding traditional deviant and criminal behavior, but also in understanding deviant and criminal behavior occurring in the cyberworld context—for instance, in general criminal computer behavior (Rogers, 2001; Skinner & Fream, 1997), software piracy (Higgins, 2006; Higgins & Makin, 2004), and computer abuse within organizations (Lee & Lee, 2002). All these studies have provided theoretical and empirical evidence that various deviant and criminal actions in the cyberworld are, like their

real-world counterparts, partially learned from social interactions.

Finally, the social media context of this study is highly social and interactive by its very nature; social media fuels such social interactions and mimicking behaviors. Given the importance of social influence and interaction in social media, it is natural to expect that a social learning process can have an important influence on individual cyberstalking behavior. This is particularly true in mimetic behavior, such as group bullying and insulting posts. In fact, we may be witnessing a social shift in which much traditional socialization is now learned by children and adolescents online (O'Keeffe et al., 2011).

As a general theory explaining criminal behaviors, social learning theory was built on the differential association-reinforcement theory (Burgess & Akers, 1966) and later further developed by Akers (1973), who introduced alternative variables such as definitions and imitation. Therefore, it maintains a comprehensive perspective (Rogers, 2001). There is a significant amount of discussion in the literature where its overlaps with RCT (Akers, 1990) and interacts with self-control theory (Higgins, 2006; Higgins & Makin, 2004). Because we focus specifically on how the social interaction process within intimate groups influences the behavioral patterns of cyberstalkers, in this section we adopt differential association as the most relevant variable from the interpersonal level and omit the overlapping elements in order to reflect the influence of social interaction with peers.

The other three variables from the social learning theory—differential reinforcement, definitions, and imitation—are excluded for the following reasons. First, although they all reflect the key idea of social learning theory that deviant behaviors are learned within the social interaction process, they overlap significantly with theories from the intrapersonal level (i.e., neutralization theory and self-control theory) and situational level (i.e., rational choice theory), and do not belong exclusively to the interpersonal level. For instance, differential reinforcement is highly similar to RCT variables (i.e., benefits and punishments), which construe deviant behaviors from an economic perspective, whereas definitions, which reflect the inner attitudes and beliefs of stalkers, will further influence the neutralization process.

Second, while discussing the interrelationships among the four social learning variables, Akers et al. (1979) claimed that differential association occurs first in the social learning process and that the other three variables largely depend on it. Consequently, differential association is pivotal and foundational. Without it, it is meaningless to discuss the reinforcement and imitation process or how definitions are formed in the minds of individuals.

Third, with respect to the social learning theory, the variable of definitions emphasizes the inner moral value formed from past experiences that may further influence the use of neutralization

techniques, whereas differential reinforcement and imitation describe how past experience will influence the perceived benefits and risks. Thus, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation have a less direct influence on determining a deviant behavior in a specific situation. As a result, their influence has been frequently insignificant in empirical studies (Skinner & Fream, 1997). Thus, for theoretical parsimony, we adopt differential association as the most relevant variable from social learning theory and exclude the other three.

Differential association attempts to capture the extent to which individuals are exposed to deviant behavior through their association with others. According to social learning theory, deviant behaviors are learned from models that emerge in social interactions. Thus, individuals who are more frequently exposed to cyberstalking behaviors are more likely to learn to cyberstalk others. In contrast, individuals who are less frequently exposed to cyberstalking behaviors are less likely to form the motives and habits to cyberstalk others or to gain the skills necessary to do so. Thus, we hypothesize:

P9. Differential association with cyberstalking increases cyberstalking.

Finalizing this section, Figure 4 summarizes all the propositions of our proposed model.

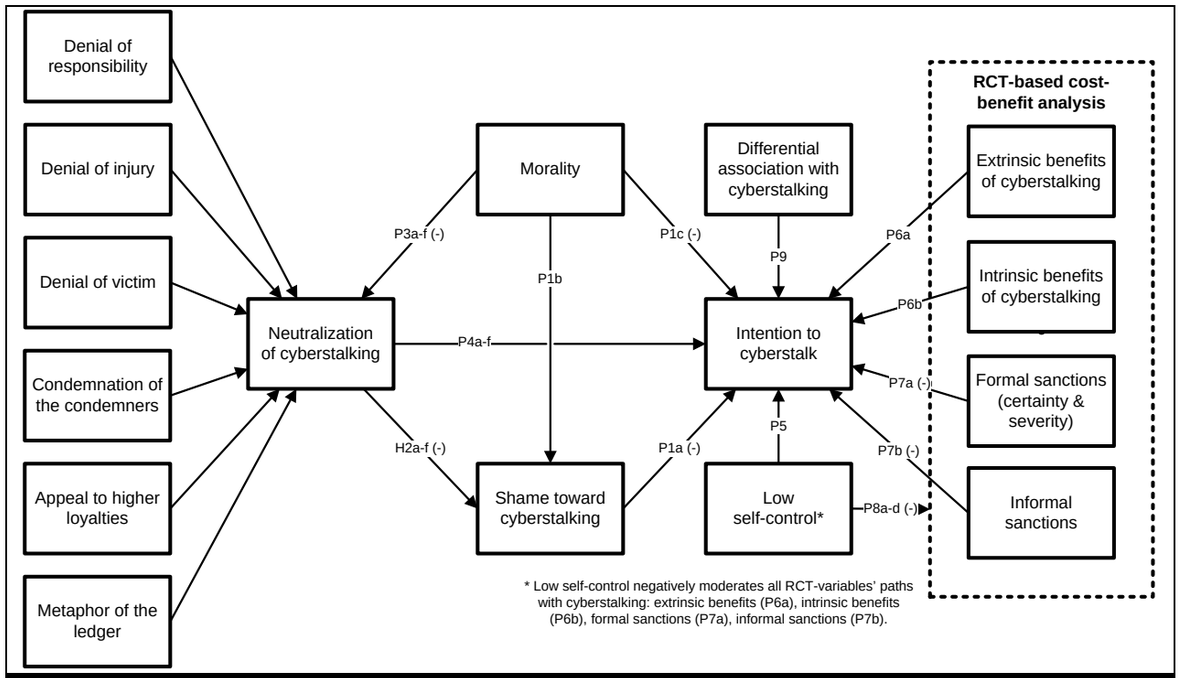

Figure 4. Proposed Theoretical Model Explaining and Predicting Cyberstalking

DISCUSSION

Although stalking is widely studied in the traditional offline context, few comprehensive studies and theories explain and predict stalking behavior in the cyberworld context. The problem is due partly to the divergent conceptualizations and taxonomies of cyberstalking. Our study thus starts by proposing a common nomenclature for and taxonomy of cyberstalking, which can be used by researchers and practitioners to better understand its differences from traditional stalking. We then propose a meaningful theoretical model that captures, and can explain and predict, the most

likely motivations and behaviors involved in cyberstalking. Our model integrates five theories within three levels: the intrapersonal level (emotional theory, neutralization theory, and self-control theory), the situational level (rational choice theory), and the interpersonal level (social learning theory).

Although our model integrates five theories, we believe that neutralization theory forms the foundation of our model, and that the other theories provide additional explanation. We suggest that neutralization theory can be used to explore cyberstalking and that it is appropriate for our context of social media for several reasons. First, neutralization theory fits the context of cyberstalking well. Although cyberstalking is generally regarded as deviant behavior and usually inflicts harm on the victim, the motivation of cyberstalkers is not always purely negative. For instance, sometimes they cyberstalk others out of curiosity and admiration, and even because they want to build a relationship with the victim (albeit often in a misguided approach). Moreover, with the development of Internet tools and social media, cyberstalking has become widespread. Consequently, to the extent cyberstalkers feel any degree remorse, shame, or moral reservations in their behavior, neutralization techniques help them overcome their reservations against cyberstalking.

Second, compared with other theories, neutralization theory can be generalized effectively to cyberstalking behavior and is particularly illuminating in the low-risk contexts of social media. According to Seipel and Eifler (2010), when rational choice theory is used to explain individual behavior, it has strong explanatory power for high-cost situations. Only when the cost is sufficiently high will the delinquent seriously calculate the costs and benefits to decide whether to perform delinquent behaviors. In contrast, neutralization theory describes techniques used to overcome moral constraints rather than to lower the risks of being punished. In terms of the context of this study, most cyberstalking cases do not constitute crimes, and certain technological affordances of the Internet, such as the high degree of anonymity and virtual identities, make it difficult for cyberstalkers to be punished or socially censured. Hence, cyberstalking is generally much less risky to the perpetrator than real-world stalking. Because neutralization theory focuses on moral constraints instead of personal risk, it thus represents an effective tool for explaining deviant behaviors in the relatively low-risk context of cyberstalking.

Third, although neutralization theory has been applied primarily in organizational contexts in previous IS literature (Gregory & Brekashvili, 2012; Harrington, 1996; Li & Cheng, 2013; Puhakainen & Ahonen, 2006; Siponen & Vance, 2010), we believe it can be used more convincingly to explain individual behaviors in the general social environment. Derived from criminology to explain individual deviant behavior, neutralization theory helps to clarify how

deviants view their illegal behaviors as morally correct by using their delinquent subculture to distort the generally accepted culture (Sykes & Matza, 1957). In organizational studies, if the mainstream organizational culture's policies and rules are not widely known and not accepted by employees, they do not need the neutralization process to break them. However, in the cyberworld and social media context, the general cultures' real-world moral rules are widely known and, to some degree, still effective in regulating netizens' behavior. We also argue that deviant behavior at work is far more risky that deviant (often anonymous) behavior online. Hence, we believe that neutralization applies even more strongly to cyberstalking than in organizational settings.

Nonetheless, the other theories we isolated—the emotional theory of stalking, self-control theory, rational choice theory, and social learning theory—provide important additional explanations of cyberstalking. The theories from the intrapersonal level (the emotional theory of stalking and self-control theory) provide explanatory variables such as neutralization, shame, and self-control to reflect the impact of mental activities, inner perceptions, and personality traits on cyberstalking. Using explanatory variables such as perceived benefits and risks, rational choice theory, as a situational-level theory, helps to predict the cyberstalking based on specific situations. Finally, as an interpersonal-level theory, social learning theory emphasizes how interactions with the social environment influence individual cyberstalking behavior. By integrating all these explanatory variables into a coherent model, we can now better understand how to explain and predict cyberstalking behaviors.

\In closing, aside from empirically testing our model, several more theoretical possibilities remain. For one, the model could be expanded to consider cyberstalking continuance. Like other continuance models, the roles of habit or even addiction can come into play. Habit formation derives from positive feedback loops of positive emotional arousal from a specific behavior, and in systems use has been shown to link to continuance in (Khalifa & Liu, 2007). (Limayem et al., 2007; Polites & Karahanna, 2013). Positive feedback experiences in cyberstalking could thus lead to habit in cyberstalking, or to cyberstalking continuance. Such phenomenon would thus help explain people who keep cyberstalking even when they get caught, such as the famous case of Anthony Weiner's multiple sexting scandals (Anonymous, 2013a).

The role of sociopathy in cyberstalking also introduces intriguing possibilities: To include sociopaths, the model would need to contextually drop morality, shame, and guilt when a sociopath is involved because they are generally immune to these emotions when making behavioral decisions (Koenigs et al., 2011; Young et al., 2012). Neutralization and RCT would likely play a stronger role for sociopaths than people with a degree of moral conscience. Certainly, theoretical development and empirical research on cyberstalking has many exciting and intriguing possibilities.

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Appendix A. Descriptive Statistics on Cyberstalking and Cyberbullying

Description statistics of cyberstalking and cyberbullying				
Behavior	**Prevalence**	**Forms**	**Negative social consequences**	**Dispositions of stalkers**
Cyberstalking	• 3.4 million people over 18 years old are stalked each year in the United States; 26% of stalking victims are stalked online, via tools such as email or instant messaging (Baum et al., 2009). • 18% of teenagers reported that their partners posted negative information about them on a social networking site; 17% were impersonated on email, text messages, chat rooms, and social networking sites; 11% documented that their partners had shared private pictures of them against their will; 10% were physically threatened by their partners via email, instant messaging, text, chat, or cell phone; and 5% reported that their partners had used spyware to track their Internet activity (Picard, 2007). • 40.8% of undergraduates have experienced cyberstalking (Reyns et al., 2012). • 5–30% of people have been cyberstalked, in the varied sample and methodology (Cupach & Spitzberg, 2004). • Cyberstalking has created increasingly subtle ways of continuously terrorizing victims of all ages, races, genders, faiths, and sexualities (Alexy et al., 2005). • The prevalence of cyberstalking in the Web-based social network was 6.3% (Dressing et al., 2011).	• The most common form is e-mail, followed by network access at work and Web discussion groups, electronic dating sites, and chat rooms (McFarlane & Bocij, 2003). • Cyberstalking, particularly in social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), provides a method not only to harm a single victim rapidly and intimately, but also to disseminate information that is detrimental to multiple victims (Goodno, 2007).	• 80% of stalking of intimate partners occurs with physical violence, and 31% of stalking victims were also sexually assaulted (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). • 76% of women killed by intimate partners are primarily stalked (McFarlane et al., 1999).	• Over 41 years old, white, male, single, with average computer literacy, in professional post (McFarlane & Bocij, 2003). • High levels of narcissism and jealousy, poor self-esteem, shy and isolated (SAPAC, 2013). • 60% of online harassment cases involve male attackers and female targets (http://www.victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/stalking-resource-center).
Cyberbullying	• 16% of males said someone had sent them a threatening message online, compared with 7% of females. 11% of males said they had sent threatening messages online (2011). • About 7.4% of adolescents bullied others but have not been targets of cyberaggression, while 4.8% have been targets only and another 5.4% have been both cyberbullies and cybervictims (Sourander et al., 2010). • 9% of youth were targets of online harassment at least once in the previous year and 50% were harassed more than once; among the targets, 32% reported chronic harassment (Ybarra et al., 2006). • Over 32% of boys and 36% of girls under the age of 18 have been victims of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008).	• Sexual cyberbullying (Dahl, 2013; Prismacat, 2010) • Discussion group, instant messaging service, text message, and virtual chat room (Sourander et al., 2010)	• Of those who had been victimized, one in four reported that the event resulted in fear for their safety and most do not know how to stop the cybervictimization (Sourander et al., 2010) • One-third of the youth victims reported feeling emotionally distressed (Ybarra et al., 2006) • Vicious message postings online led to a raped girl's suicide (Dahl, 2013; Prismacat, 2010), and cyber bullies have continued to harass victims on Facebook after their suicides (Salazar, 2010)	• The majority of offenders in youth bullying are adolescent (13–17 years old) males (Ybarra et al., 2006).

Appendix B. Definitions of Cyberstalking from the Literature

Definitions of Cyberstalking	
Source	**Definitions of Cyberstalking**
(Hancock, 2000, p. 307)	“Repeated threats or harassing behavior over E-mail, the Internet, or other electronic communications.”
(Meloy, 2001, p. 10)	“The Internet as a means of stalking can be used for two criminal functions: (1) to gather private information on the target to further a pursuit; and (2) to communicate (in real time or not) with the target to implicitly or explicitly threaten or induce fear.”
(Tavani & Grodzinsky, 2002, p. 123)	“A form of behavior in which certain types of stalking-related activities, which in the past have occurred in physical space, are extended to the on-line world.”
(Adam, 2002, p. 135)	“The online variant of the much older crime of stalking.”
(D’Ovidio & Doyle, 2003, p. 10)	“The repeated use of the Internet, e-mail, or related digital electronic communication devices to annoy, alarm, or threaten a specific individual or group of individuals.”
(Philips & Morrissey, 2004, p. 67)	“Known by other names such as online harassment, online abuse or cyber-harassment.”
(Bocij, 2004, p. 12)	“A group of behaviors in which an individual, group of individuals, or organization uses information and communication technology to harass another individual, group of individuals, or organization.”
(Petherick, 2001)	Cyberstalking “is simply an extension of the physical form of stalking…where the electronic mediums such as the Internet are used to pursue, harass or contact another in an unsolicited fashion."
(Deirmenjian, 1999)	Cyberstalking is "harassment on the Internet using various modes of transmission such as electronic mail (e-mail), chat rooms, newsgroups, mail exploders, and the World Wide Web."
Bocij & McFarlane (2002)	"A group of behaviors in which an individual, group of individuals or organization uses information technology to harass one or more individuals. Such behavior may include, but are not limited to, the transmission of threats and false accusations, identity theft, data theft, damage to data or equipment, computer monitoring and the solicitation of minors for sexual purposes. Harassment is defined as a course of action that a reasonable person, in possession of the same information, would think causes another reasonable person to suffer emotional distress."
Federal Internet Law & Policy (2012)	“Cyberstalking generally refers to the use of the Internet, e-mail, or electronic communications devices to ‘stalk’ another person - where 'stalking' in the traditional sense means to engage in repeated harassing or threatening behavior (such as following a person, appearing at a person's home or workplace, making harassing telephone calls, or leaving written messages or objects) that places the victim in reasonable fear of death or bodily injury.”
Shouse Law Group (2013)	“When those threats or harassment are communicated via the Internet, e-mail, text messages, the phone (either cellular or a landline), a fax machine, a video message, or any other electronic device the crime is commonly referred to as cyberstalking.”
Citron (2009)	“Cyber stalking crime is the intent to engage in conduct that causes the targeted individual to fear for her safety or suffer severe emotional distress.”
Howes (2006)	“Stalking—a pattern of repeated, intrusive, distressing behavior focused on one individual that persists despite clear indications that it is unwanted.”
US Attorney General (1999)	Cyberstalking is ”the use of the internet, email, or other electronic communications devices to stalk another person.”

Appendix C. Definitions of Cyberbullying from the Literature

Definitions of Cyberbullying	
Source	**Definitions of Cyberbullying**
Cross (2009)	“Cyber bullying was defined by young people as cruel covert bullying used primarily by young people to harm others using technology such as: social networking sites, other chat-rooms, mobile phones, websites and web-cameras.”
National Crime Prevention Council (2013)	“The process of using the Internet, cell phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.”
US Legal (2013)	“Cyber-bullying could be limited to posting rumors or gossips about a person in the internet bringing about hatred in others’ minds; or it may go to the extent of personally identifying victims and publishing materials severely defaming and humiliating them”
MacDonald (2010)	“Cyber-bullying is using information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging and websites to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to harm others.”
Sleglova & Cerna (2011)	“Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act or behavior that is carried out by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.”
Hinduja & Patchin (2008)	“Cyber bullying was defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text.”
Sourander et al. (2010)	“The term cyberbullying can be defined as an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.”
WiredSafety (2013)	“Cyberbullying is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.”
von Marées & Petermann (2012)	“Cyberbullying is an intentional, repeated, and aggressive act or behavior carried out by a group or individual employing information and communication technology (ICT) as an instrument.”

Appendix D. Our Newly Proposed Taxonomy of Cyberstalking Based on Behavioral Patterns and Motivations of Cyberstalkers

Nine Major Behavioral Patterns	Four Major Behavioral Motivations of Cyberstalkers			
	1. To fulfill cyberstalkers' psychological needs, wishes, or cravings regarding another person	**2. To instill fear in or gain control over the victim**	**3. To seek revenge against or punish the victim**	**4. To build a relationship with the victim**
1. Cyberstalking in secret: monitoring / tracing / tracking others without consent	B01. Use positioning software/mobile apps to obtain someone's location information without their knowledge or permission B02. Keep up to date on a former lover without their knowing		B03. Secretly gather information about someone that could be used to harass them later	B04. Learn more about a person the cyberstalker is interested in having a relationship with but who is not interested in the cyberstalker
2. Indirect cyberstalking: purposeful damage to data or equipment / hack into victim's system	B05. Send another person spyware to gather their personal data	B06. Purposely send another person a computer virus to cause damage to their data or system	B07. Alter information in a computer system to negatively affect another person B08. Deface/alter someone's online profile to create inaccurate or embarrassing information about the victim	
3. Indirect cyberstalking: identity theft / fake profiles under victim / fake identities		B09. Steal other's account login information to chat with their friends and defraud/borrow money	B10. Order goods or services under a victim's identity to cause them trouble B11. Create a fake online social media profile under another person's name to embarrass them B12. Tweet or send controversial information/unethical content using a different or fake identity as an act of revenge	
4. Indirect cyberstalking: false accusations / fake photos / passing on rumors		B13. Purposefully lie about someone or fail to tell them the full truth in order to hurt or embarrass them B14. Modify a picture of someone to make them look worse	B15. Repost inflammatory information or known rumors to embarrass someone B16. Post authentic materials but remark on/interpret them with false information to embarrass someone	
5. Indirect cyberbullying: posting true information or valid photos (meant to harm / embarrass)	B17. Intentionally make someone look unintelligent by publically correcting them	B18. Post explicit photos of a person online without his/her consent.	B19. Post an unflattering picture of someone online that the person does not want published B20. Post truthful but negative or highly personal information about someone that he/she wants kept private	

Nine Major Behavioral Patterns	Four Major Behavioral Motivations of Cyberstalkers			
	1. To fulfill cyberstalkers' psychological needs, wishes, or cravings regarding another person	**2. To instill fear in or gain control over the victim**	**3. To seek revenge against or punish the victim**	**4. To build a relationship with the victim**
6. Direct cyberstalking: fake relationship to exploit person / exploiting minors	B28. Act as a fake friend as a way to learn about someone			B21. Pretend to be someone else to have a relationship online (e.g., different age, different gender, not single) B22. Become fake "friends" with someone the cyberstalker actually does not like
7. Direct cyberstalking: unwanted obscene messages / pornography / sexual harassment		B23. Send profane messages to someone B24. Send someone unsolicited pornography or obscene material	B27. Post "revenge porn" as an act of revenge against a former lover.	B25. Make unwanted sexual advances or repeated requests for dates online B26. Frequently request to add someone as a friend after being rejected or deleted from "friend list" several times
8. Direct cyberstalking: making threats / intimidating people	B29. Join an anonymous group of people or encourage others to harass an individual	B30. Write threatening or menacing messages to someone online B31. Blackmail someone online	B32. Send threating information to someone as an act of revenge	
9. Direct cyberbullying: insults / flaming / rude behavior		B35. Intentionally exclude someone from an online group to make them feel bad	B33. Make a snide or negative comment about someone on their social media account B34. Write highly negative responses to someone else's posts online	

Examples and Citations of 35 Cyberstalking Behaviors Found in the Literature and in Real-world Cases	
Example behaviors	**Related citations (including real-world cases, statistical data, theoretical arguments, etc.)**
B01. Use positioning software/mobile apps to obtain someone's location information without their knowledge or permission	• (ACLU): Warrantless cell phone location tracking is now widespread in the US. • (Keith et al., 2013): Women have had their geographic locations tracked and used in "stalker" applications without their consent. • (Brownlee, 2012): Girls Around Me mobile app allowed users to gather location information of women/girls without their awareness.
B02. Keep up to date on a former lover without their knowing	• (Lyndon et al., 2011): 54.3% of the college students in this study admitted that they use Facebook to cyberstalk their ex-friends or ex-lovers. • (Muise et al., 2009): Facebook use was linked to increased suspicions in romantic relationships and to cause jealous partners/ex-partners to conduct cyberstalking behavior using Facebook.
B03. Secretly gather information about someone that could be used to harass them later	• (Potter, 2012): The cyberstalker secretly gathered information about the author, whom he did not know in the real world, and the cyberstalker eventually used the information to harass the victim for no apparent reason.
B04. Learn more about a person the cyberstalker is interested in having a relationship with but who is not interested in the cyberstalker	• (Bocij et al., 2002): Many cyberstalking cases are motivated by unrequited love and involve obsession over the personal details of the victim. • (Hub Pages): Some Facebook users use the "Close Friends" feature to stalk the people they are interested in who are not necessarily close friends in reality.
B05. Send another person spyware to gather their personal data	• (Wealth Creation, 2013): Nowadays many of Internet tools and mobile apps facilitate mobile spying and cyberstalking. A cyberstalker can gather the entire victim's communication information by installing spyware on the victim's smartphone or computer.
B06. Purposely send another person a computer virus to cause damage to their data or system	• (Rouse): Sending viruses is a common way to harass people online. • (Pettinari, 2013): The author recognized sending a devastating virus to a victim as a complex form of cyberstalking behavior.
B07. Alter information in a computer system to negatively affect another person	• (Cluley, 2013): It often happens in online games and online communities that hackers gain access to the system data and alter the personal information of the users.
B08. Deface/alter someone's online profile to create inaccurate or embarrassing information about the victim	• (Ripabrelli, 2011): A 12-year-old Washington girl hacked another girl's Facebook homepage to embarrass the victim by publishing sexual photos of the victim.
B09. Steal other's account login information to chat with their friends and defraud/borrow money	• (Anonymous): The author introduces two fake identity accounts on Facebook: the "Bot" sends ads and spam, while the "Impostor" uses fake identities to build social networks and even commit fraud.
B10. Order goods or services under a victim's identity to cause them trouble	• (McFarland): As an act of revenge, some people order products, adult products, and porn, and send them to the victim using the "bill me later" feature.
B11. Create a fake online social media profile under another person's name to embarrass them	• (Wellbelove, 2008): Stalkers use victims' photograph, name, location, and age to persuade others that they are the victims. • (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 2012): A young woman discovered that someone created a fake Facebook page with her personal information and photographs, pretending to be her. The cyberstalker sent scandalous sexual messages using the woman's identity.
B12. Tweet or send controversial information/unethical content using a different or fake identity as an act of revenge	• (The Times of India, 2013): An M Tech student created a profile of a woman on Facebook and sent abusive messages to the woman's husband and friends. • (Solutions Blog): Some classmates had stolen a young boy's identity in Facebook by setting up a false Facebook account and acted as if they were him. They used the boy's identity to taunt other students, in order to damage the reputation of the boy. • (Huff Post Tech, 2011): Two young girls used the third girl's computer address as well as her identity to send out instant message solicitations for sex.
B13. Purposefully lie about someone or fail to tell them the full truth in order to hurt or embarrass them	• (Star-Telegram): Sheila Loven sent messages to another woman, saying that she had an affair with her husband.
B14. Modify a picture of someone to make them look worse	• (Bosker, 2010): A mobile app in the iOS platform caused widespread cyberbullying concerns, because it allows users to create ugly pictures and then publish them online to insult others.
B15. Repost inflammatory information or known rumors to embarrass someone	• (Read Daily News, 2013): Someone spread rumors about the famous Chinese singer Li Yuchun through Sina Microblog, and the news was reposted thousands of times, which caused great trouble to Li Yuchun.

B16. Post authentic materials but remark on/interpret them with false information to embarrass someone	• (Rivera, 2013): The rumor that the famous performer Daddy Yankee was a gay spread very quickly, with a photo in which a man who looks like him was kissing another man.
B17. Intentionally make someone look unintelligent by publically correcting them	• (Cavalier): There is a specific kind of cyberbully called a “grammar bully,” who corrects others’ grammar mistakes online to vent his/her anger and make others look unintelligent (often in response to a comment he/she does not agree with).
B18. Post explicit photos of a person online without his/her consent.	• (Lenhart, 2009): A great number of teens think that they have published or forwarded others’ photos without their permission. • (Wikipedia, 2013b): In 2008, a collection of sex-related photos of Edison Chen was published by someone else online, which brought the Chinese famous musician into a huge sex scandal.
B19. Post an unflattering picture of someone online that the person does not want published	• (Yourself Series): Without the consent of the 14-year-old girl, a photo in which the bulimic girl wore a bikini was posted.
B20. Post truthful but negative or highly personal information about someone that he/she wants kept private	• (Fowler, 2012) Bobbi Duncan’s most personal secret—that she was a lesbian—was revealed by others on Facebook, which caused her a great deal of trouble. • (Petherick, 2003): A fifty-year-old security guard retaliated against the rejection of a woman by posting her detailed personal information to the Internet.
B21. Pretend to be someone else to have a relationship online (e.g., different age, different gender, not single)	• (Wikipedia): Manti Te'o, a famous football linebacker, finally discovered that his online girlfriend who supposedly died actually never existed; instead, the girlfriend was played by a gay man who was obsessed with the football player. • (Mail Online, 2007): The 13-year-old girl, Megan Meier, was stalked by a neighbor on Myspace. The middle-aged neighbor pretend to be a young boy and tried to build relationship with Megan Meier.
B22. Become fake “friends” with someone the cyberstalker actually does not like	• (Beal, 2005): Dan Longino gathered contact information of people that he regarded as “fakes” through social media, because he was irritated by all the people posing as celebrities on social network sites who were actually non-celebrities.
B23. Send profane messages to someone	• (Huff Post Politics, 2011): In this case, Willow Palin, a 16-year-old girl, sent Facebook messages containing homophobic slurs such as "faggot" to her friends.
B24. Send someone unsolicited pornography or obscene material	• (DeMarco, 2004): Children between the ages of 10 and 17 are very likely to receive unsolicited pornographic images online from known and unknown senders. • (Day, 2010): Unwanted / unsolicited “sexting” is common between dating young adults. • (Anonymous, 2013a): In an internationally famous case, NY congressman, Anthony Weiner, repeatedly committed unsolicited “sexting” against several female victims. In one case, he assumed the fake identity of “Carlos Danger” in sexting committed against a 22-year-old victim.
B25. Make unwanted sexual advances or repeated requests for dates online	• (Health 24, 2010): About 20% of children who use the Internet claim that they often receive unwanted sexual advances, especially young girls between 14 and 17 years old. • (Grant, 2013): The famous writer, James Lasdun was stalked by a former student, who tried to get access to him online. The student kept sending sexual advances to James Lasdun through email after being refused several times.
B26. Frequently request to add someone as a friend after being rejected or deleted from “friend list” several times	• (Anonymous, 2013b): A 40-year-old chief clerk in Japan repeatedly sent unwanted friend requests to a contract worker.
B27. Post “revenge porn” as an act of revenge against a former lover.	• (Miller, 2013): In this case of “revenge porn,” initial postings of nude photos from a jilted lover were almost immediately removed after the initial posting, but were reposted by others and spread to many servers over the years, and are still being reposted, thus causing so much trauma that the victim has felt “cyber raped,” year after year.
B28. Act as a fake friend as a way to learn about someone	• (University, 2013): A large amount of fake and duplicate accounts exist in Facebook so that people can gather others’ personal information.
B29. Join an anonymous group of people or encourage others to harass an individual	• (Weaver): Gang cyberstalking refers to the phenomenon in which a group of netizens “decide to target an individual and attempt to control aspects of that individual’s life.” • (Cyber Law): It is a common strategy for the cyberstalkers to involve more people into online harassment: they publish the personal information of the victims in public online forums, and thus form an ad-hoc group to conduct cyberstalking behavior.

B30. Write threatening or menacing messages to someone online	• (Arnold, 2008): Someone threatened others by sending messages to the victim claiming that he/she would publish a doctored photograph of the victim in a sex-related site. • (Fairbanks, 2012): A stranger (James Allen) threatened to send nude pictures of a young woman to her friends and family but was caught by the FBI. • (Bocij & McFarlane, 2003): QuickSilver is an anonymous re-emailing tool that allows cyberstalkers to conceal their identity when sending threatening letters to others.
B31. Blackmail someone online	• (Press Association, 2013): Daniel Perry killed himself after receiving blackmail online saying that his potentially embarrassing online conversations had been recorded. • (QuitStalkingMe, 2013): A 22 year-old young man, Michael Martin, sent threatening online messages to a women who owned him money, claiming that he would rape her if she did not pay him the money.
B32. Send threating information to someone as an act of revenge	• (Anonymous, 1999): After being rejected by a women, Gary Dellapenta publicly claimed online he would place ads in her name, advertising that she had rape fantasies. • (Daily Mail Reporter, 2009): Jason Smith was regarded as “the most obsessive cyber stalkers” because he terrorized a girl for two years after being rejected by the girl. He even sent death threats to the girl.
B33. Make a snide or negative comment about someone on their social media account	• (Huffingtonpost & Salazar, 2011): A large number of malicious online comments were made to a 17-year-old girl, Alexis Pilkington, and finally led to her suicide. • (Lyndon et al., 2011): 10.9% of the college students in this study wrote inappropriate or mean messages about their ex-partners as an act of revenge.
B34. Write highly negative responses to someone else’s posts online	• (Oremus, 2013): Twitter has more and more “haters” who have a habit of responding to others’ tweets with highly negative responses. • (Lyndon et al., 2011): 7.5% of the college students in this study made nasty or spiteful comments toward the photos published by their ex-partners as an act of revenge.
B35. Intentionally exclude someone from an online group to make them feel bad	• (Bully Online): People who are bullied online often find that they are isolated and excluded, which makes them feel that they are controlled and subjugated by others.