

Internet Safety Technical Taskforce 1st Meeting, 2008, Washington, DC

Social networking sites, Unwanted sexual solicitation, Internet harassment, and cyberbullying,

Michele L. Ybarra MPH PhD
Internet Solutions for Kids, Inc.



* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses can be found in: Ybarra, M., & Mitchell, K. (2008). How risky are social networking sites? A comparison of places online where youth sexual solicitation and harassment occurs. *Pediatrics*, 121(2), e350-e357, or by contacting ISK for further information.



Background

One in three teens 12-17 engage in some form of content creation in 2006 (Lenhart, Madden, Magill et al., 2007)

- Girls are more likely to post photos (54% v 40%)
- Boys are more likely to post video (19% v 10%)

Roadmap for today's discussion

Unwanted sexual solicitation and harassment

- Definitions
- What are the prevalence rates over time?
- What is the influence SNS have?
- How do the rates online compare to those offline?
- Are there other factors that we need to be aware of?

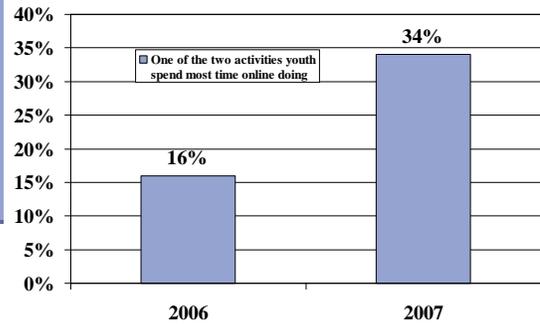
Growing up with Media Survey

- 1,588 households
- Online Survey
 - Baseline data: August and September, 2006
 - Follow-up: October – December, 2007 (76% rr)
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Youth:
 - Between the ages of 10-15 years
 - Use the Internet at least once a month for the last 6 months
 - English speaking
 - Adults
 - Member of the Harris Poll OnLine
 - Equally or most knowledgeable about youth's media use
- Funded by the CDC (U49/CE000206)

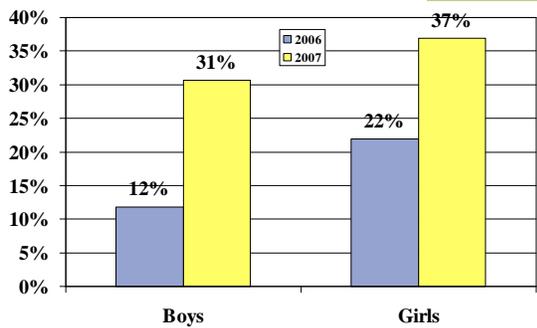
Youth Internet Safety Surveys

- 1,500 households were surveyed
- Random digit dial telephone survey
- Eligibility criteria:
 - Youth:
 - Between the ages of 10-17 years
 - Use the Internet at least once a month for the last 6 months
 - English speaking
 - Adults
 - Equally or most knowledgeable about youth's Internet use
- YISS-1 conducted 1999-2000; YISS-2 conducted in 2005 by Dr. David Finkelhor and colleagues at UNH

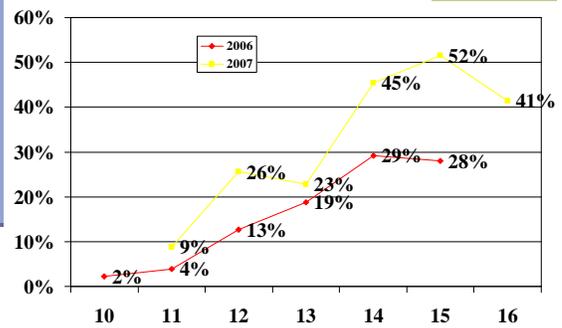
Frequent SNS use is growing



...for boys and girls



...and across all ages



Internet harassment & CyberBullying

Internet harassment *What Youth Said...*

- **Boy, 14:** "I have my own ... website and I have my own page on it and someone posted something bad about me on it."
- **Boy, 15:** "I was playing a first person shooter game and unintentionally offended this person who became very serious and began to threaten me by saying if this was real life he would physically harm me. [It happened because he] was unable to accept this was just a game."

Quotes taken from the Youth Internet Safety Survey – 2 report (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, 2006)

Internet harassment: Definitions

Depends on the survey..

- **YISS1 & YISS2**
 - Rude or mean comments (YISS1 only)
 - Felt worried or threatened because someone was bothering or harassing them online
 - Someone has used the internet to threaten or embarrass them by posting or sending information for others to see
- **Growing up with Media**
 - Rude or mean comments
 - Threatening or aggressive comments
 - Spread rumors about youth, whether they were true or not

Internet harassment: Prevalence rates over time

- From YISS1 to YISS2, the prevalence rate of Internet harassment increased from 6% to 9% (Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006).
- In the Growing up with Media Survey, **34%** reported harassment at baseline, **34%** at follow-up
 - Frequent harassment: **8%** reported being harassed monthly at baseline, **8%** at follow-up
 - Continuity of harassed youth over time
 - **20% reported harassment at baseline and follow-up**
 - 13% reported harassment at baseline only
 - 14% reported harassment at follow-up only

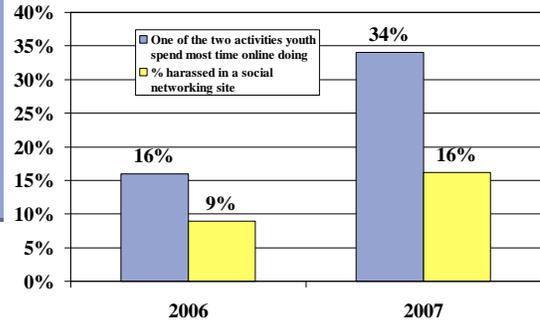
Internet harassment: Who is the harasser?

Based upon data from the YISS2 (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006).

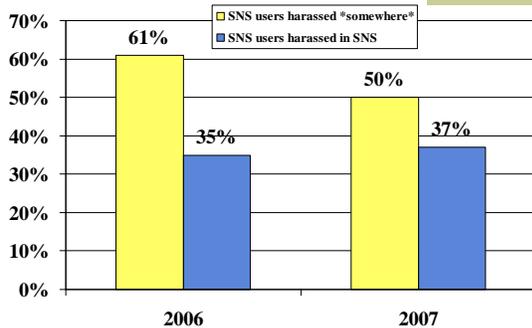
- 8%: Preadolescent (10-12 years old)
- 51%: Adolescent (13-17 years old)
- 21%: Young adult (18-25 years old)
- 2% Adult (26-40 years): 2%
- 18% Don't know: 18%

The majority (59%) of harassment comes from other minors

Social networking sites and harassment



What is the likelihood SNS users will be harassed?



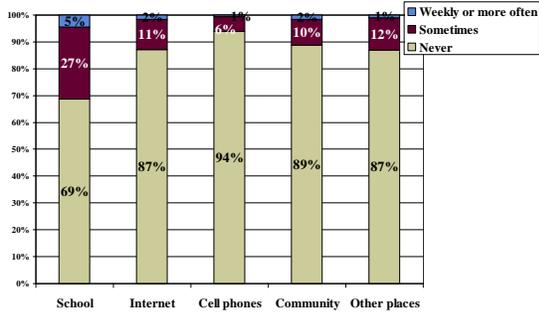
How do rates compare online and offline?

From GuWM

Defining Bullying

We say a young person is being bullied or harassed when someone else or a group of people **repeatedly** hits, kicks, threatens, or says nasty or unpleasant things to them. Another example is when no one ever talks to them. These things can happen at school, online, or other places young people hang out. It is **not** bullying when two young people of about the **same strength** fight or tease each other.

How do rates compare online and offline?



Impact of Internet harassment

About one in three youth targeted by Internet harassment report feeling very/extremely upset (or afraid) because of the incident:

- 30% in YISS-1
- 38% in YISS-2
- 25% in GuWM (wave 2)

Are there other factors?

Odds of psychosocial problems given report of Internet harassment

Type of psychosocial problem	YISS1	YISS2	GuWM W2
Peer problems			
Interpersonal victimization / offline bullying	3.1 *** +	1.5 *	1.8 **
Social problems		2.4 **	
Behavior problems			
Depression	3.6 * +		
Substance use			
Alcohol use			2.3 **
Inhalant and other 'hard' drug use			4.7 **
Respond to stimuli with anger			1.07 **

Ybarra M, Mitchell KJ, Wojak J, Finkelhor D. Examining characteristics and associated distress related to Internet harassment: Findings from the Second Youth Internet Safety Survey. Pediatrics. 2006; 118(4):e1169-1177.
 Ybarra ML, Coiro-Walt M, Leaf PJ. Examining the overlap in Internet harassment and school bullying: Implications for school intervention. J Adolescent Health. 2007 Dec;41(8 Suppl 1):S42-50.
 Ybarra ML. Linkages between depressive symptomatology and Internet harassment among young regular Internet users. Cyberpsychol Behav. 2004 Apr;7(2):247-57.

Synopsis

- The prevalence rate of Internet harassment appears to be stable.
- SNS users are not significantly more likely to be harassed now in SNS than they were in 2006.
- **School is by far the most common place** youth report being bullied (31%) versus elsewhere (e.g., 13% online)
- The majority (59%) of Internet harassment comes from other minors
- Youth who report being harassed online are significantly more likely to also report a myriad of concurrent psychosocial problems offline too.

Unwanted sexual solicitation

What Youth Said...

- **Girl, 14:** "I was chatting on the Internet and this guy just popped up in an Instant Message and started talking really dirty to me and saying things that I had never heard of before. He told me he was 30 years old and then he said, 'LOL' (laugh out loud)."
- **Girl, 12:** "I went into the chatroom and they asked me if I wanted to have cybersex. I was asking them what kind of music they liked and stuff."
- **Boy, 11,** who was playing an online game with a man, 20: "He asked me something personal, something about a man's privates."

Quotes taken from the Youth Internet Safety Survey – 2 report (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, 2006)

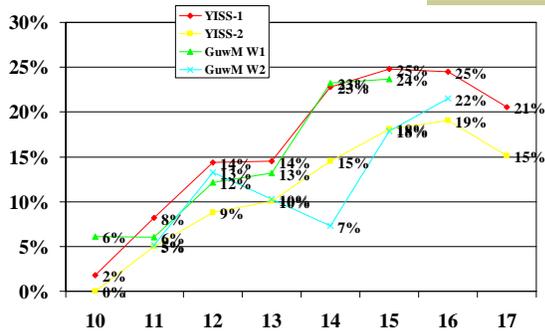
Defining unwanted sexual solicitation on the Internet

- Someone tried to get me to talk about sex online when I did not want to.
- Someone online asked me for sexual information about myself when I did not want to tell the person, e.g., really personal questions, like what my body looks like or sexual things I have done.
- Someone asked me to do something sexual when I was online that I did not want to do.

Unwanted sexual solicitation: Prevalence rates over time

- From YISS1 to YISS2, the prevalence rate of unwanted sexual solicitation decreased from 19% to 13% (Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006).
- In GuwM, **15%** reported solicitation at baseline, **13%** at follow-up
 - Frequent solicitation: **3.4%** reported being harassed monthly at baseline, **3.4%** at follow-up
 - Continuity of solicited youth over time
 - **6% reported solicitation at baseline and follow-up**
 - 8% reported solicitation at baseline only
 - 7% reported solicitation at follow-up only

...and across all ages



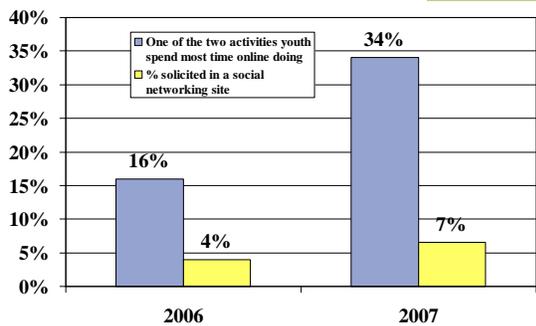
Unwanted sexual solicitation: Who is the solicitor?

Based upon data from the YISS2 (Wolak, Mitchell, Finkelhor, 2006).

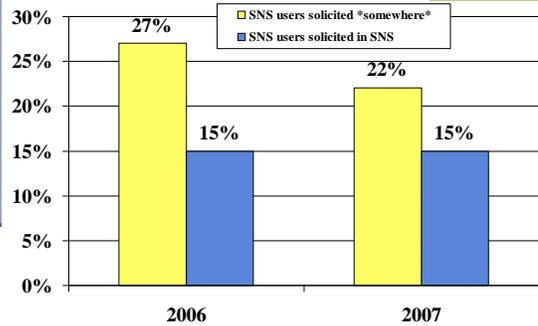
- 43%: 17 years of age and younger
- 30%: 18-25 years of age
- 9%: 26+ years of age
- 18%: don't know

Roughly half (43%) of sexual solicitations come from other minors

Social networking sites and unwanted sexual solicitation



What is the likelihood that SNS users will be solicited?



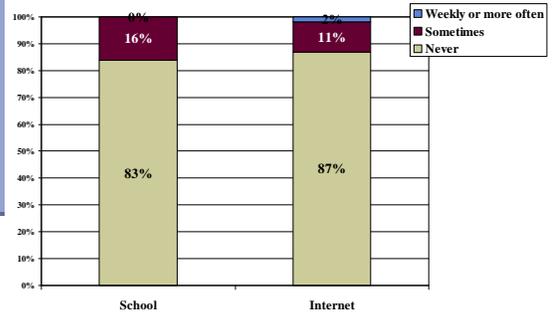
How do rates compare online and offline?

(From GuwM) School-based sexual solicitation / sexual harassment

The following question is about your experiences at school. In the past 12 months, did the following happen to you while you were at school?

- Someone tried to get me to talk about sex when I did not want to.
- Someone asked me for sexual information about myself when I did not want to tell the person, e.g., really personal questions, like what my body looks like or sexual things I have done.
- Someone asked me to do something sexual that I did not want to do.

How do rates compare online and offline?



Impact of unwanted sexual solicitation

Across studies, about one in three solicited youth report feeling very/extremely upset (or afraid) because of the incident:

- YISS1: 26%
- YISS2: 31%
- GuwM: 39% (at Wave 2)

Youth solicited in social networking sites (42%) are **no more likely** than youth solicited elsewhere (35%) to be distressed by the incident ($p=0.50$).

Concurrent psychosocial problems

Type of psychosocial problem	Odds of psychosocial problems given report of unwanted sexual solicitation	
	YISS1	GuwM W2
Caregiver child relationships		
Poor emotional bond		1.1 *
Coercive discipline		1.2 *
Peer problems		
Interpersonal victimization / offline bullying	1.8 * - 1.9 *	2.0 **
Behavior problems		
Symptoms of depression	3.0 ***	
Troubled (e.g., negative life event, depression, child abuse)	1.7 **	
Substance / alcohol use	2.6 ***	3.4 ***
Delinquent behavior	1.8 **	
Weapon carrying at school		10.0 **
Life challenge	2.9 * +	

Mitchell KJ, Finkelhor D, Wolak J. Risk factors for and impact of online sexual solicitation of youth. JAMA. 2001;285(23):3011-4.
 Ybarra ML, Leaf PJ, Diener-West M. Sex differences in youth-reported depressive symptomatology and unwanted internet sexual solicitation. J Med Internet Res. 2004 Feb 6;6(1):e5.
 Mitchell K, Ybarra M, Finkelhor D. The relative importance of online victimization in understanding depression, delinquency, and substance use. Child Maltreatment. 2007; 12(4): 314-324.

Synopsis : The picture is very similar

- The rate of unwanted sexual solicitation overall is stable.
- SNS users are no more likely to be solicited in an SNS now than they were in 2006.
- **Similar** percentages of youth report being targeted by solicitation/harassment at **school** (13%) and **online** (10%)
- Almost half (43%) of sexual solicitations come from other minors. The overwhelming majority of targeted youth are 14 years of age and older.
- Youth reporting being targeted by unwanted sexual solicitation are significantly more likely to also report a myriad of concurrent psychosocial problems offline.

Implications for professionals working with youth

- The data do **not** support the assertion that youth are more likely to be sexually solicited or harassed online than offline.
- We need to do more to provide support and intervention for youth who are targeted by peer aggression, both online **and offline**.
- Most youth do not operate in a 'vacuum'. What are we doing to treat children more globally and provide services that address all of their needs?

Final thoughts

- The **majority** of youth who use the Internet have **positive** experiences and report that none of these types of exposures occur.
- Youth having problems online are more likely to have problems offline. We need to be concerned about those reporting problems over time.
- We need to **focus on the child**, not the online application.

Thanks for your time

Michele@ISolutions4Kids.org