

Online harassment and cyber-bullying within the school context

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Growing Up
With Media

* 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., Diener-West, M., & Leaf, P. Examining the overlap in Internet harassment and school bullying: Implications for school intervention. *J Adolesc Health*, 2007;41:S42-S52, or by contacting CiPHR for further information.



Background

- An estimated 97% of youth use the Internet in USA (Lenhart, Madden & Hitlin, 2005; USC Annenberg School Center for the Digital Future, 2005).
- Internet harassment measured by the Youth Internet Safety Surveys (YISS) has increased from 6% in 1999 to 9% in 2005 (Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006).
- 39% of YISS-2 youth who are harassed report feeling very/extremely upset or afraid because of the incident (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006)

Background

Behavior and psychosocial problems have been noted for youth involved in Internet harassment.

- **Targets of Internet harassment:**
 - Social problems (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006)
 - Interpersonal victimization (Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, Finkelhor, 2006)
 - Depressive symptomatology among boys (Ybarra, 2004)
- **Instigators of Internet harassment:**
 - Rule breaking problems (Ybarra & Mitchell, under review)
 - Physical / sexual abuse for girls (Ybarra & Mitchell, under review)
 - Poor emotional bond with caregiver (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)
 - Alcohol and cigarette use (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)
 - Low school commitment (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)

Background

- As with bully/victims (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Haynie et al., 2001; Forero et al., 1999), Internet harassment aggressor/targets:
 - Share more characteristics with aggressor-only than victim-only youth (Ybarra & Mitchell, under review; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)
 - Commonly have the strongest association with psychosocial challenges as compared to victim-only and aggressor-only youth (Ybarra & Mitchell, under review; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)

Problem Statement

School professionals are wrestling with how to support youth who are being targeted by Internet harassment, because it's occurring off school grounds but can affect school functioning.

While logical to assume an overlap in bullying behavior at school and online, the extent to which this is the case is yet unreported. Furthermore, beyond anecdotal reports, little is known about the influence that Internet harassment may have on school functioning.

To address these issues, we will examine:

- The possible overlap between online and school harassment; and
- The association between Internet harassment and school functioning

We will also examine more general associations between Internet harassment and caregiver-child relationships to inform future intervention targeting

Growing up with Media Methodology

- 1,608 households (one caregiver, one child) were surveyed online
- 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
 - Adult
 - Be a member of the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel
 - Be a resident in the USA (HPOL has members internationally)
 - Be the most (or equally) knowledgeable of the youth's media use in the home
 - English speaking

Harris Poll On Line

- HPOL data is consistently comparable to data that has been obtained from random telephone samples of general populations when sampling and weighting is applied.
- In general, panelists are invited to participate in surveys no more frequently than once every three weeks.

Growing up with Media Data Methods

- Sample selection was stratified based on youth age and sex.
- A balance between "novice" and "experienced" survey participants was forced through additional stratification.
- On average, the adult survey took 5 minutes and the youth survey took 20 minutes
- Study was conducted between August and September, 2006
- Analyses
 - Stata 9 software used, with weighting and stratification variables specified
 - Don't know answers were coded as 'symptom absent'

Youth characteristics

Demographic characteristics:

- 48% Female
- 71% White, 13% Black, 9% Mixed, 7% Other
- 19% Hispanic
- Mean age: 12.6 years (SE: 0.5)
- Median time spent online / day for activities other than email: 31 minutes – 1 hour

Youth characteristics

School characteristics:

- Median grade in school: 8th grade
- 90% attend public school, 7% private school, 3% home-schooled
- School functioning:
 - 22% have had detention or been suspended in the past year (3% 8 or more times)
 - Median grades: Mostly A's and B's (9% report mostly C's and D's or poorer)
 - 3% have carried a weapon to school in the last 30 days

Youth characteristics

Parent child relationships:

- General monitoring: 3.0 (0.5)
 - Know where child is when not at home
 - Know who child is with when not at home
- Emotional bond: 4.2 (0.6)
 - Tell caregiver when sad
 - Frequency of having fun together
- Coercive discipline: 5.4 (0.5)
 - Take away privileges
 - Yell at child

(M: SE) [Range:2-10], Higher score reflects worse relationship

Defining Internet harassment

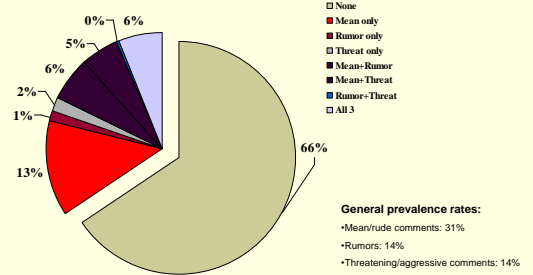
- Someone made a rude or mean comment to me online.
- Someone spread rumours about me online, whether they were true or not.
- Someone made a threatening or aggressive comment to me online.

Frequency of Internet harassment Targeting in the previous year (n=1,608)

Frequency	Type of harassment			
	Made rude or mean comments	Spread rumors about me	Threatening / aggressive comment	Rude / mean TXT
Daily	0.6% (13)	0.4% (7)	0.4% (7)	2.3% (7)
Weekly	2.4% (30)	1.1% (12)	1.0% (14)	2.8% (12)
Monthly	4.9% (68)	1.2% (19)	2.3% (30)	2.3% (8)
Less Frequently	23.2% (349)	11.1% (167)	9.9% (143)	19.4% (71)
Never	68.2% (1136)	85.5% (1389)	85.7% (1401)	72.1% (289)
Decline to answer	0.7% (12)	0.7% (14)	0.8% (13)	1.1% (1)

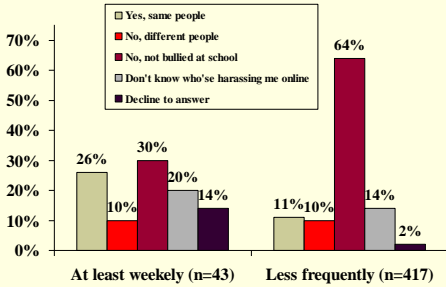
Data are weighted for demographic characteristics and attitudinal variables

Overlap of targeting by rumors and threatening / aggressive comments



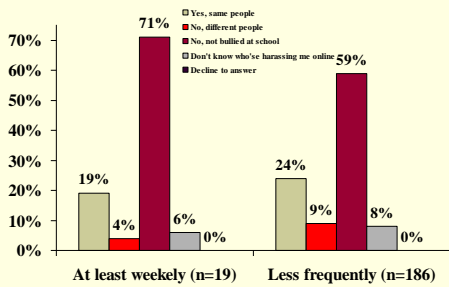
Data are weighted for demographic characteristics and attitudinal variables

Overlap of online and school bullying: Mean / rude comments



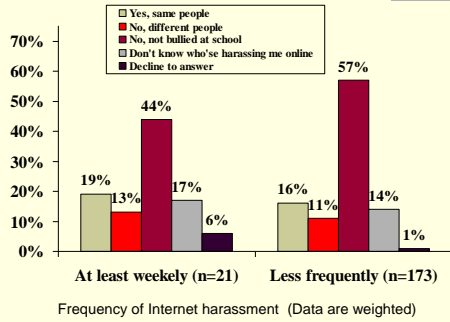
Frequency of Internet harassment (Data are weighted)

Overlap of online and school bullying: Rumors

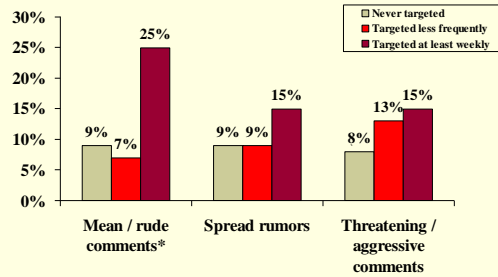


Frequency of Internet harassment (Data are weighted)

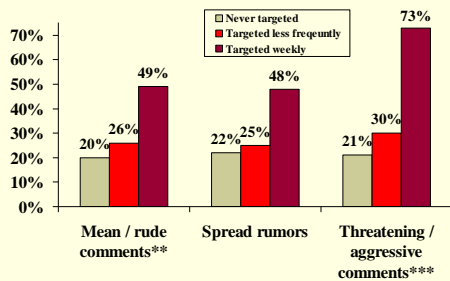
Overlap of online and school bullying: Threatening/aggressive comments



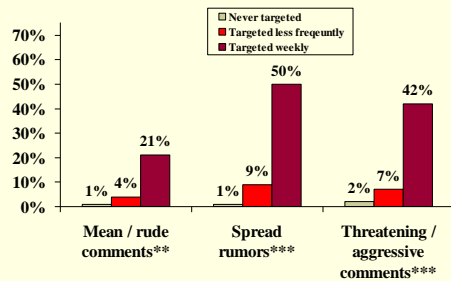
School functioning: Poor academic performance



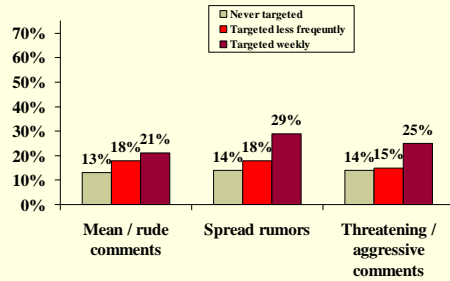
School functioning: Behavior problems



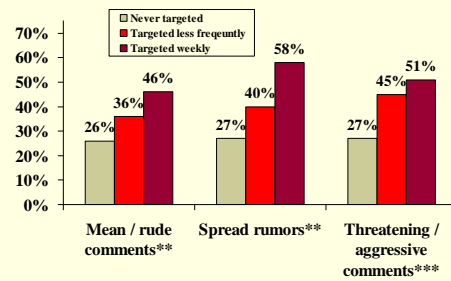
School functioning: Carried a weapon to school in the last 30 days



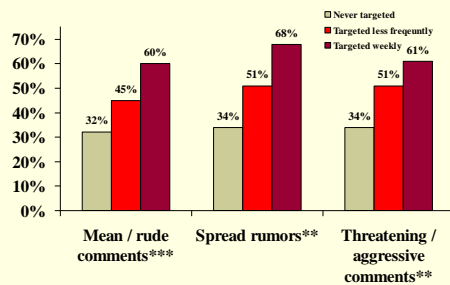
Parent-child relationships: Coercive discipline



Parent-child relationships: Poor monitoring



Parent-child relationships: Poor emotional bond



Summary

34% of youth report being the target of some type of Internet harassment at least once in the previous year:

- 31% report mean / rude comments
- 14% having rumors spread about them
- 14% report threatening / aggressive comments

Summary

Among all youth:

- 17% report 1 type, 18% report more than 1 type of Internet harassment queried
- Depending on harassment type, 1.4 – 3.0% of all youth report being targeted weekly or more frequently

Summary

While some overlap exists, it appears that the majority of youth harassed online are not bullied at school:

- 64% of youth reporting weekly mean / rude comments
- 77% of youth reporting weekly rumors spread about them
- 68% of youth reporting weekly threatening/aggressive comments

Do **not** report being bullied at school

Summary

Harassment on the Internet – especially weekly – appears to be related to school:

- Behavior problems
- Weapon carrying

Summary

Increasing frequency in Internet harassment is associated with increasing youth report of:

- Poor parental monitoring
- Poor emotional bond

Limitations

Respondents were not observed during the data collection process.

It is possible that:

- Children were monitored by their parents, or
 - Parents completed the youth survey.
- 22% of youth reported that someone was in the room close enough to see the screen when they completed the survey.

Limitations

- Findings are relevant to households where both the child and the adult use the Internet. General population findings may yield different frequencies.
- The definition of Internet harassment is still being determined. Findings should be compared to other studies within the context of possible differences in measures and time periods.

Implications

The concurrence of Internet harassment and school bullying appears relatively low

Being the target of Internet harassment may be associated with one's behavior in the school setting.

Youth harassed online may not have a positive relationship with their caregiver. Additional intervention/education targets should be included in intervention programs

Questions?

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