



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
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CYBER   
VIOLENCE

## HANDBOOK

FOR YOUTH WORKERS, TRAINERS AND TEACHERS

WORKING WITH YOUTH

ON THE SUBJECT OF CYBER VIOLENCE



Instytut  
Nowych Technologii



CCS  
Digital Education



CSP  
innovazione nelle ICT



DIRECT  
Association



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## Introduction

### About the project

CyberViolence it is a project aimed against violence in the network. The Institute of New Technologies Association together with three foreign partners implements the international CyberViolence project as part of the Erasmus + program. The main problem about cyber violence is lack of knowledge and awareness about the problem of cyberbullying among young people, youth workers, teachers and parents. Among the youth, the problem is the lack of awareness of online threats, the lack of opportunities and the ability to respond to cyberbullying. Among the youth workers and teachers the problem is the lack of tools and methodologies for working with this topic, education and prevention. Among parents, there is no awareness of the problem and the ability to recognize the first signs of being a victim of cyberbullying.

Among the target groups there are:

- youth – the main group of our activities. Young people are the most vulnerable to be a victim of cyberbullying due to they are vulnerable and inexperienced in social life,
- teachers, youth workers – their role is to educate and prevent this negative phenomenon. They need new tools to know how to combat cyber violence among the students,
- parents – when their child is a victim of cyberbullying they should be the first ones who are able to recognize the symptoms, unfortunately they often lack the basic knowledge in this topic.

The project has a few main objectives, among which there are:

1. Improving the quality and relevance of education, through the development of new and innovative approaches (new scenarios for youth workshops, thematic comics, competitions, testing of these products, implementation and promotion of dissemination of results),
2. Developing a program to prevent cyberbullying, developing and providing a handbook and other resources for teachers,
3. Increasing knowledge about online threats, the consequences of online activities and the mental



and emotional aspects of cyberbullying,  
4. Introduction, development and promotion of innovative methods and tools in education by supporting schools and teachers interested in joining the program,  
5. Promoting cross-border cooperation in education and prevention, as all project participants can learn from each other.

The project is implemented by 4 organizations from 4 countries and has a transnational character, due to the Internet has no borders, cyberviolence is an international problem and has to be solved at the international level.

- Institute of New Technologies Association (Poland) – leader of the project
- Crystal Clear Soft (Greece) – partner,
- DIRECT Association (Romania) – partner,
- CSP – INNOVAZIONE NELLE ICT S.C.A.R.L. (Italy) – partner

The CyberViolence project 2016-03-PL01-KA205-035361 is implemented as part of the Erasmus + program of the European Union (Action 2. Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices, Strategic Partnerships). The project implementation period is 24 months in April 2017 – March 2019.

## About the handbook

This handbook is written to support the Erasmus+ Project, aiming to help youth trainers to implement consistent policies of awareness-raising, prevention and law enforcement to combat cyber violence. This handbook is aimed to be used by youth trainers in order to carry on the trainings and workshops for combating cyberbullying. Partners from Poland, Romania, Italy and Greece have been cooperating on creating the content of this handbook according to their specializations and experience involving experts from the field of cyber violence. All partners have been working on promoting active methods and techniques in order to stop cyber violence and raise the awareness of the problem among people.



The handbook covers the significant topics on cyber violence, its range, forms, and ways of prevention. Including the information about the phenomenon of cyber violence in countries: Poland, Romania, Greece and Italy.

## MODULE 1: Cyber Violence in Poland, Greece, Romania, Italy

### Italy

This brief analysis aims to give an overview of the Italian situation regarding CyberBullying, in order to inform the training contents and other products produced by the partners in the Cyberviolence project.

In this document are presented data coming about most recent and relevant survey in Italy in which emerged the intensive use of social media made by young people and a general lack of awareness of the consequences of their actions in the digital world, along with an increasing of episodes of bad uses of the digital channels.

After the suicide of Carolina Picchio, official identified as the first suicide caused by cyberbullying in Italy, an opinion movement started that lead to the approval of a national law.

Furthermore some best cases and initiatives, promoted by national and local government, along with some grassroots initiatives were described.

Bullying activities may fall under the category of **indirect bullying**, which entails spreading rumors, stories or gossip about others; **verbal bullying** which could include insults, teasing and threats; and **physical bullying** consisting of violent acts such as pushing, kicking, biting, punching or assaults with a weapon. The intent of bullies is to cause mental or physical harm to their victims. Their abusive behavior could result in short term or long term effects that endanger a person's health and well-being both in the present and future.



The Italian Constitution, Rights and Duties of Citizens, Civil Code and Penal code can be used to some extent to help prevent bullying and provide a means of punishing criminal bullying behavior. Anyway, after reviewing statistics about bullying in Italy, it seems that these laws aren't sufficient to get the job done. Although schools and local police are making an effort to increase bullying awareness via anti-bullying programs and campaigns, studies reveal that school bullying in Italy is on the rise. The country is also seeing an increase in bully related depression and suicide attempts due to this abusive behavior.

A 2014 report by Istat showed that over half of the teen population in the country has been bullied at one time or another; 20% of these victims have suffered monthly attacks. Approximately 63% of kids and teens have witnessed bullying acts. Moreover, teens aged 11-13 have suffered more disrespectful or violent bullying acts than teens aged 14-17. Females have been bullied more frequently than males.

### “Gen Z” and cyberbullying

Today's generation of young people, aka “Gen Z” has the reputation of being “always on” when it comes to using the Net and social sites. Members of Gen Z pass most of their time with smartphones in hand, sending and receiving texts, snapshots and emails. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram are some of their favored sites.

According to bullying information gathered by the **IX Italian Monitoring of ONU Convention**, which deals with the rights of Italian youth, one out of every two Gen Z members has been victimized by bullying at some time.

Italy is home to over **2 million tech savvy teens** between the ages of 14 and 17, most of which have a passion for Internet and social media usage. Most of these young people own personal laptops, TVs and smartphones, making it easy for them to stay connected at all times. With this 24/7 connection, teens are at greater risk of being targeted by cyberbullies. Today's youth use online connections for personal, social, academic and professional reasons, placing them at the



forefront of potential bullying activities. Gen Z's passion with the Internet and their smart devices could very well be the reason for the dramatic increase in cyberbullying.

Studies show that Gen Z members use their phones up to 15.4 hours weekly – that's slightly **over 2 hours daily**. Smartphones are convenient devices for bullies to send malicious phone calls and/or texts. The anonymity of Internet bullying is a great motivator for people to commit cyberattacks as they are convinced not to be discovered or they are not aware of the relevance - sometimes even criminal - of their actions. In the case of high school students, many times the perpetrator is someone a victim knows from school or social event. It's not unusual for students to target an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend, for example, simply out of spite.

### Bullying and cyberbullying in school

In the era of digital communication, where 91% of young people between 14 and 18 years old are enrolled at least one social network and 87% use a smartphone connected to the Internet, **CENSIS** and the Post and Communications Police have launched a common research path to better understand the implications of the use of new technologies by teenagers.

Schools are becoming d more digital. Almost all schools have a website, which in 65% of cases is run by teachers, 16% by non-teaching staff and 12% by external consultants. In 86% of schools there is a Wi-Fi network, which only in 5% of the institutions is freely accessible to students. 93% of schools have a multimedia lab, but only in 17% of cases it is open beyond school hours. 46% of the principals are aware of the existence of a Facebook page that concerns the school, although in 55% of cases it is managed by students. In 47% of the schools, the IT security officer is a teacher, 34% an external consultant and 19% an administrative operator.

According to 77% of middle and high school principals, the web is the environment where bullying occurs more frequently than in the places of aggregation of young people (47%), on the journey between home and school (35%) or within the school itself (24%). These data are based on responses provided by 1,727 school leaders across Italy.



52% of school principals had to personally handle cyberbullying episodes, 10% sexting cases (sending sexually explicit photos or videos) and 3% online casualty cases. For 45% of principals, cyberbullying has involved no more than 5% of their students, but for 18% of school executives sexting involves between 5% and 30% of boys.

Cyberbullying is a difficult phenomenon to focus on, given the wide variety of behaviors that can be qualified as digital bullying, but 77% of principals believe cyberbullying is a real offense and in 51% of cases, the headmaster had to turn to law enforcement.

### **The cyberbullying identikit.**

According to 70% of school executives, cyberbullies are both male and female, while 19% of them think that cyberbullies are mostly girls and 11% mostly boys; 90% of school headmasters think that the phenomenon of cyberbullying is more serious than bullying, because it is more painful for those who suffer its consequences and is quicker and more lasting in adverse effects on personal reputation. According to 78% of the school principals, the cyberbullies tend to hit the psychologically weaker guys.

### **Unaware parents.**

For 81% of school leaders, parents tend to minimize the problem, considering digital bullying as a little more than a joke among kids. For 49% of principals the biggest difficulty is to make the parents aware of the severity of the incidents, for 20% to figure out exactly what happened. According to 89% of the gathered opinions, cyberbullying is more difficult to detect than traditional bullying, because adults are excluded from online teen life. 93% of principals believe that parents' example influences much or fairly the behavior of cyberbullies.

### **The initiatives of schools.**

39% of Italian schools have already implemented some specific actions against cyberbullying, following the orientation guidelines provided by the national Ministry of Education and 63% intend to do so during the next school year. In 36% of the institutions, the participation does not go beyond about half of the parents and in 59% of cases it only stops at a few parents. Only 48%



of the schools have a real monitoring programs through questionnaires addressed to students and parents.

### The latest research: How much do you share?

The research carried out under the project “Quanto Condividi” (“How much do you share”), presented in Rome on June 2017, was created by the synergy between the Computer Crime Analysis Unit of the National Contracts on Online Pedopornography (CNCPO) Post and Communications Police Department, Department of Psychology, Wisdom University of Rome and the Department of Minority and Community Justice.

The research was designed specifically by using short stories, representing real cases that have come to the attention of the Post Police and dealt with by the Department For Minority Justice and Community, as offenses committed via Internet. The aim was to subject secondary school students to behaviors, which constitute different crime cases, implemented by their peers, so that they can explore their reactions and beliefs.

The students participating in the survey were asked what their relationship with social networks was, then they were invited to read the scenarios and to answer some questions about the truthfulness of history, the degree of severity, if it had been violated by laws. Five cases of online offenses committed by minors have been selected.

Every story has been presented with fictitious names and without any reference to its criminal proceedings. The questionnaire was aimed at investigating two different aspects: both the "habits" of using and sharing the various materials (messages, photos, videos, news) on different social (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others) and to analyze and understand how the teens are aware of the cybercrimes that they themselves can do or can undergo and the possible implications of their behaviors.

The results of the investigation shows the relevance of **revenge behaviors**, and there is clearly a **distinction between cognitive aspects, whereby students recognize certain underlying mechanisms and emotions that create an illusion that things always happen to others and that**



**will have little consequences**, which do not cause suffering and that in the end appear almost like a game with totally reversible effects.

The survey involved 1,874 teens between the ages of 11 and 19: most of them use social networks for several hours from the phone. On the top there is Whatsapp, with 9 out of 10 people claiming to use it, 5 out of 10 prefer Instagram, while only 1 in 10 uses Twitter.

As for the reasons, most of them (6 out of 10) claim to use them to socialize or simply curiosity, sharing mostly messages and photos (6 out of 10), and videos and news (2 out of ten), but few are wondering about where the material ends (only 35% of high school students responded with the option "all" to the question "Who can access the material that you share?", while 37% of middle school respondents answered "only recipient").

### The new Italian law on Cyberbullying

In the past few years, Italy has experienced an upswing in young people's suicide attempts due to cyberbullying attacks. These tragedies have been a wakeup call to parents, teens and society at large concerning just how dangerous cyberbullying had become.

In January of 2016, a young 12-year-old girl attempted suicide after being consistently abused by fellow classmates online. Before leaping out of a window in her home, the tween left a note indicating that bullying was the reason for her taking such drastic action. According to news stories from across the country, such incidents are not isolated. Italy apparently has a history of Internet bullying wherein young people seem to be the main perpetrators and targets.

Bullying – to include Internet bullying – hasn't been considered a criminal offense in Italy unless such activity takes on the nature of what's considered a crime such as physical assault or stalking, before the new law has been approved unanimously by the Parliament in May 2017.

In January of 2013, Carolina Picchio, a bright and attractive 14-year-old student from the City of Novara, near Turin, committed suicide due to excessive cyber harassment from an ex-boyfriend and his friends. The case was referred by national and international news because of the tragic



circumstances of her demise. Her last Facebook post related her feelings of despair: “Forgive me if I’m not strong. I cannot stand it any longer.”

When investigating the incident, Police discovered her former boyfriend and a group of his friends were circulating a video of the girl in a drunken state during a party. In addition, the boy had targeted Carolina with verbal abuse and threats on Facebook. At the time of her suicide, Police discovered that Carolina had received over 2,000 malicious text messages only on Whatsapp.

This incident clearly reflects the need for change in the stance schools and government agencies take against bullying offenses. The eight boys who perpetrated the cyberattacks against Carolina, aged 15-17, have been later investigated for their role in instigating a suicide and placing pedo-pornographic material on the Net. One of the investigating prosecutors, Francesco Saluzzo, also considered citing Facebook for not taking action in removing the offensive posts, even after requests made by relatives and friends.

Starting in May 2015, Italy’s Senate initiated action to institute cyberbullying legislation in an effort to stop bullying in Italian schools. Donatella Ferranti, Chairperson of Italy’s House Judiciary Committee, corroborated the need for legislation, after taking note of the rampant increase of online threats, texts and offensive social media posts against Italy’s youth.

Two years after, in May 17th the Italian Parliament has approved a long-awaited legislation to address cyberbullying, in a move to prevent users of the Internet and social platforms from abusing a minor. The piece of legislation, **which broadly defines cyberbullying as “any use of the Internet to offend, threaten, abuse, blackmail, denigrate, and steal the identity of minors”**, was welcomed by the families of victims as the first step in a long battle.

The Italian law follows similar legislative initiatives in other countries. In the United States, only 23 states have included cyber abuse in their bullying laws and 18 states punish it with criminal sanctions, according to cyberbullying.org.



The new law in Italy includes two important new aspect:

- **schools will have to appoint a teacher to lead initiatives against cyberbullying**
- **minors above 14 years of age who have been victims of online abuse, as well as their parents, can ask website hosts and social platforms to remove and block abusive content within 48 hours.** Access providers and search engines however are excluded.

The law encountered some criticism due to the real application of removing content in short time and also related to the training and responsibility of the school teacher. Moreover at this stage there are little investments providedd to support the law: besides some money for the Post and Communication Police , the schools will have only 47 euros each to manage the training and the management for this new role.

## Conclusions

There are many researches and data around the bullying and cyberbullying topics at local, national, international level analyzing these issues from different perspectives.

In order to prevent and manage these situations, it is important to invest a lot in education at different level: children, teens, parents, educators, teachers, while involving different agencies from the formal, non-formal and informal education system.

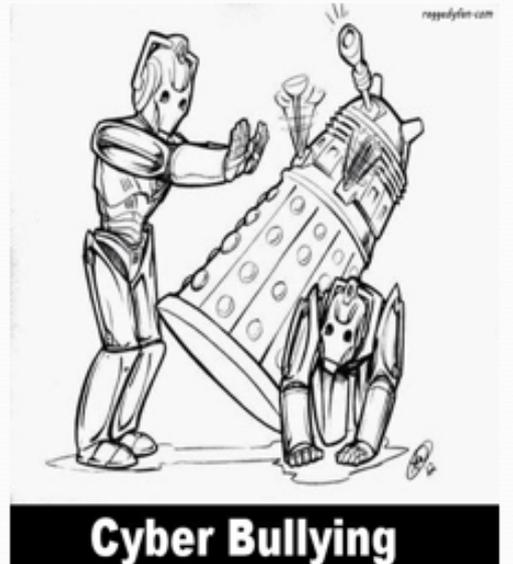
Key factors are education and dialogue and especially education to resilience in order to equip people in not feeling overwhelmed by bullying situations and feelings.



## Greece

### Cyberbullying

- **Action of harming or harassing via ICT in a repeated and deliberate manner [Wikipedia].**
- **When Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send/post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person [Wikipedia].**



The Internet has become all pervasive in the lives of young people in Greece and in this document we attempt a small scale review of studies that examine the risks and opportunities that it affords. We examined research that investigates the more negative aspects of youth online behavior such as addiction as well as online risks such as harassment/cyber bullying and sexual solicitation. In addition, positive aspects of Internet use such as its potential for learning and enhancing social relations as well as delivering health interventions was examined.

The results show that online risks such as addiction, cyber bullying, and sexual solicitation are associated with negative consequences for Greek youth. It is important to note that not all children & youth are equally susceptible and more research is necessary to identify the youth most at risk as well as to develop effective interventions. The Internet can also provide benefits in the areas of cognitive, social, and physical development, and can also be used to deliver treatment interventions.



In summary, the Internet represents both risks and opportunities for young people in Greece. To protect youth who are at risk for online addiction, bullying, and solicitation, we need more research to understand which youth may be most susceptible and to develop targeted interventions to protect them. The Internet also has many positive aspects and can be used to enhance youth learning and empowerment; although it is a tremendous health resource and can be used to cheaply deliver interventions, we need to understand how to better implement them to enhance their effectiveness.

### Cyberbullying in Greece by numbers (secondary schools and university students)

Cyberbullying is on the rise in Greek schools. Relevant research has shown that **1 in 20 high school students** experienced a form of **cyber bullying** while 1 in 20 students has been a perpetrator in 2015 and this number is **doubled in Lyceum**. This is according to research from 13 health centres which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.

The same research revealed that **someone who has been a victim has 5,5 times more chances of acting as a perpetrator** also.

The percentages of Internet use which were identified by the research raise several issues along with recommendations which were provided to the ministries of health and education in order to be taken into account for the drafting of relevant public policies.

The sample of students for the research included 5.590 students which answered a questionnaire.

From those, 3.143 were primary high school students and 2.447 were secondary high schools students (response percentages 69,6% and 66,1%).

The purpose of the research was to record for the first time in Central and Western Macedonia the increase of pathological uses of Internet in students of secondary education in order to surface the related problems.



In the context of the research a **large database was developed** which will be very useful for future studies in Internet uses therefore our project can also benefit from this database.

Additional research conducted by the Foundation Themistoklis & Dimitris Tsatsos, titled “**Investigation of modern types of school violence and bullying in Greek schools**” and assigned by the Ministry of Education, has revealed that educators play a key role in the identification of related problems and their handling.

Based on the outcomes of the research, it is identified as a fact that the family environment and the school environment play a leading role in the formation and expression of attitudes of students of all grades. A school environment which inspires trust and a sense of security in children and constitutes a space of creative expression can function as a barrier to the occurrence of bullying phenomena and preserve a balance in the classroom and eliminate sentiment of fear among students.

The role of the educators has been identified as key in issues concerning the identification and management of problems related to cyber bullying, while the lack of specialized tools and common guidelines or rules in formal level, including the non-systematic education in dealing with issues of violence and bullying, constitute a barrier for the effective and pro-active/preventive handling of such issues in Greece.

Then, there are no recording mechanisms for disseminating good practices among schools and educators, including youth workers in Greece. Nevertheless, the research recorded a series of initiatives and good practices for dealing with cyber violence and bullying in school and new proposals for eradicating the phenomena. The good practices have an experiential form and concern the briefing of all parties involved, their education on the subject and the active participation of school children and youth in the understanding, tracing and handling of bullying incidents.

In a recent **survey for Internet usage by teenagers** for a research programme of the University of Athens, 897 teenagers were surveyed with average age 14.85 years (430 boys and 467 girls).



The main conclusions are:

- 53.4% used the Internet for a consecutive period spanning more than 1 year
- 26% reported a daily use
- 8% reported a use of > 20 hours per week.
- Boys used the Internet significantly more than girls
- 1% demonstrated Internet addiction behaviour
- 12,8% demonstrated periodical or regular problems concerning Internet over-use (situation just before addiction)
- The most frequent reason for using the Internet was games
- 4.2% had received threats through the Internet (cyber bullying victims).
- Internet usage related to school seems to be a protective factor against developing problematic usage behaviours.
- There was a positive association of Internet usage and ADHD according to SDQ classification.
- Positive associations were observed between Internet usage and unlawful behaviours as well as dysfunctional relations among same age group youngsters.

Detailed statistics by Eurostat can be queried here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Archive:Internet access and use statistics - households and individuals - 2016 edition#Further Eurostat information](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Archive:Internet_access_and_use_statistics_-_households_and_individuals_-_2016_edition#Further_Eurostat_information)

**Overall Conclusion:** Internet usage among Greek youth, especially teens, is extremely popular and it is easy to lead to sociological and psychological problems when excessive. Official Sources of Information:



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[www.saferinternet.gr](http://www.saferinternet.gr)

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According to Safer Internet Greece, Greece and Russia top the charts for **excessive Internet use** with 31% against 5% which is the European average. The data originates from the 31 help lines of the European Insafe network. The second most serious problem for Greece is **online privacy** with 16% (EU average 12%) while on the third place is **cyber bullying** with 19% (EU average 21%).

So, we see that cyber bullying is an important problem in Greece, very close to the EU average and partially powered by the excessive use of the Internet as more time spent online increases possibility of falling victim of cyber bullying.

The Stop Bullying Network of the Ministry of Education (Development and operation of a network for preventing and dealing with bullying incidents, <http://stop-bullying.sch.gr/>) provides content for parents, educators and students and good practices on the subject.



## Legislative Framework in Greece

The Protection over Internet navigation is a citizen's right in the **Greek Constitution**. More specifically, freedom of expression, information, communication and, more generally, the development of personality as well as the protection of privacy are among the most important rights of citizens and are directly enshrined in the Greek Constitution in Articles 5A and 9A, respectively, and restrictions may only be imposed on them for reasons of national security, the fight against crime or the protection of the rights and interests of the wider public.

However, these fundamental rights do not cease to apply when we navigate to cyberspace, which is nothing but a virtual world where all users would like to move safely. Since 2008, significant steps have been taken to modernize the Greek legislative framework with regard to the protection of young Internet users. Awareness and the need to defend the rights of young population was so urgent that it led to the conclusion of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse which was ratified and implemented by the Greek State under Law 3727 / 2008.

The authority responsible for protection of children's' and young individuals data privacy is the **Hellenic Data Protection Authority -DPA**.

The relevant legislation is going to be updated according to the new GDPR (the European Data Protection Regulation) applicable as of May 25th, 2018 in all member states to harmonize data privacy laws across Europe. One of main changes brought about by the new regulation is to strengthen the protection of young people classified as "vulnerable natural persons" with stricter rules and obligations for the controller and a stricter framework for the consent of the data offered by the children.



In relation to the offer of information society services directly to a child (Article 8, Chapter 2) the following are stated:

1. The processing of the personal data of a child shall be lawful where the child is at least 16 years old. Where the child is below the age of 16 years, such processing shall be lawful only if and to the extent that consent is given or authorized by the holder of parental responsibility over the child. Member States may provide by law for a lower age for those purposes provided that such lower age is not below 13 years.
2. The controller shall make reasonable efforts to verify in such cases that consent is given or authorised by the holder of parental responsibility over the child, taking into consideration available technology.
3. Paragraph 1 shall not affect the general contract law of Member States such as the rules on the validity, formation or effect of a contract in relation to a child.

More specifically in Greece, the public consultation on the adoption of legislative measures for the application of the GDPR was opened on 20 February 2018 and was successfully concluded on 5 March 2018. The Greek Ministry of Justice has subsequently published the Draft Law on the Protection of Personal Data (Νόμος για την Προστασία Δεδομένων Προσωπικού Χαρακτήρα). Article 6 of the Draft Law sets the age of consent for children at **15 years**. According to the article, in relation to information society services being directly offered to a child, the processing of personal data of a child, when based on consent, shall be lawful where the child who provides consent has reached the age of 15 years. Where the child is below the age of 15 years, such processing shall be lawful only if and to the extent that consent is given or authorised by the holder of parental responsibility over the child.

## Conclusions

Youngsters spend many hours online:

- In some countries youngsters spend as much as 27 hours per week online;
- More ways of accessing online content are becoming available;



- Increased Internet use comes with risks, cyber bullying being one of them;
- Not all youngsters are affected equally;
- Limiting, monitoring and controlling access not a solution.

For Greek youth, the Internet presents a number of risks along with a multitude of opportunities. The research reviewed suggests that some of the online risks facing youth are addiction, exposure to inappropriate material, cyber bullying and sexual solicitation.

Research is only now beginning to determine which youth may be at most risk for cyber bullying. With regard to combating addiction, cognitively based treatment approaches have shown some success, but more research is needed. Research also suggests that some youth may be more likely to be victims of online harassment and sexual solicitation, suggesting that intervention efforts should target high-risk youth as well as risky online behaviors.

Despite these risks, the research also suggests that the Internet can be beneficial for youth. It provides a vehicle to promote cognitive, social, and physical development. Although there are limits to which the Internet can be used as a means of learning, health promotion, and intervention delivery, nonetheless the Internet can be used to complement more traditional methods of delivering treatment interventions. Overall, research suggests that specific and targeted efforts may be needed to counter online risks in order for youth to benefit from the many opportunities offered by the Internet.

#### Most Prominent Recommendations:

- Open communication channel with youngsters;
- Technology opens up;
- Organised use of technology at home;
- Structured use of technology in schools. Chapter 3 CV in Romania

Hundreds of millions of people currently use the Internet to enhance their lives and those of others. Yet a growing segment of the online population abuses the Internet for antisocial purposes, to



stalk, harass and prey on other users, often with distressing effects. Internet-mediated aggression is a global phenomenon.

Access to the internet is fast becoming a necessity for economic well-being, and is increasingly viewed as a fundamental human right; therefore it is crucial to ensure that this digital public space is a safe and empowering place for everyone. Online violence is rising at a time when the Internet has moved from being a luxury to a necessity of daily life for educated people throughout the industrialized world. 'Cyber violence' thus stands to have negative impacts on a very large scale.

Bullying and violence have always existed in one form or another, but (anonymous) violence online is becoming increasingly common. With the rise in the use of mobile technologies with permanent access to the internet, coupled with a sense of anonymity and lack of accountability, cyber violence has been affecting a growing number of people.

Cyber Violence is an issue that can have a damaging and disruptive effect on a youth community. For youth people it's important to learn the warning signs and how to be vigilant about cyberbullying. Although technology may have helped create this problem, more of it might actually be the solution.

Over 80% of children involved in cyberbullying agree that it is easier to get away with cyberbullying than typical bullying. The same percentage of children involved in cyber bullying think it is easier to hide cyber bullying from parents than typical bullying.

We know that bullying is easier when no adult supervision is in place. Cyber bullying can hide the identity of a child who bullies so they aren't held responsible, even when the cyber bullying is discovered or reported to an adult.

Due to the nature of electronic media, children can setup false accounts, or even make a parody account of the child that they are bullying. Anonymous cyber bullying is another one of the cyber bullying facts that results from the nature of electronic media, like the fact that cyber bullying can occur anywhere.



According to the **European Commission**, *cyberbullying is repeated verbal or psychological harassment carried out by an individual or group against others*. It can take many forms: mockery, insults, threats, rumors, gossip, “happy slapping”, disagreeable comments or slander. Interactive online services (e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging) and mobile phones have given bullies new opportunities and ways in which they can abuse their victims.

What distinguishes **cyber violence** from traditional off-line forms of violence is that in the former case, some significant portion of the behavior takes place online, although it might then carry over into offline contexts. Cyber violence thus may, but need not, have a physical component, and much of the harm caused by cyber violence— as indeed by offline violence—is psychological and/or emotional (which is not to say less real or destructive). Finally, cyber violence may be targeted at individuals or groups, the latter being more characteristic targets of cyber violence than of offline, physical violence, due to the ease with which a single perpetrator can gather information about and make contact with large numbers of people on the Internet. This is another aspect of online violence that can cause it to have widespread effects. (European Network Addressing Cyber violence)

**“Cyberbullying” is defined as a young person tormenting, threatening, harassing, or embarrassing another young person using the Internet or other technologies, like cell phones.** The psychological and emotional outcomes of cyberbullying are similar to those of real-life bullying. The difference is, real-life bullying often ends when school ends. For cyberbullying, there is no escape.

Cyberbullying is using the Internet, cell phones, video game systems, or other technology to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. Cyberbullies victimize teens in a variety of ways:

- Nearly 20 percent of teens had a cyberbully pretend to be someone else in order to trick them online, getting them to reveal personal information.
- Seventeen percent of teens were victimized by someone lying about them online
- Thirteen percent of teens learned that a cyberbully was pretending to be them while communicating with someone else



- Ten percent of teens were victimized because someone posted unflattering pictures of them online, without permission

## Romania

There is a general preoccupation in Romania for preventing violence and a special one for preventing violence against child. Romania is the 13-th of the countries that forbid violence against child.

Violence has the various complex causes, preventing and limiting its consequences may be achieved only by resorting to measures as complex as the actual situation, which should cover all its aspects, by undertaking coordinating actions and by creating a large national, local and international partnership.

In Romania, the prevention and fight against different types of violence against children coincides with the national steps for the creation of legal and institutional means for granting children's rights, in accordance with UN Convention and other related international and European documents signed by the Romania.

There is a general preoccupation in Romania for preventing violence and a special one for preventing violence against child. In September 1990, Romania was one of the first countries to have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, voted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November 20, 1989. The ulterior immediate ratification of the document (Law No 18/1990) was followed by the continuous concern for the protection and promotion of Children Rights, within its national policies.

In Romanian, the word „violenta” (violence) means „behavior or attitude that consists of physical or mental pressure exercised by certain persons on others, in order to impose their will on them, by hurting them.” The term „violence” is related to aggressiveness. Aggressiveness may be defined as „any action intended to inflict an injury to a third person”.

Violence against children continues to be a nearly invisible but widespread phenomenon in Romania. According to the latest statistics, there are more than 15,000 reported cases of child abuse, neglect and exploitation. While extreme violence against children is unacceptable (e.g. beatings, sexual abuse, rape), there is a high tolerance of several forms of “mild” violence, such as



slapping, yelling, humiliation etc. The number of registered cases increased by 14 percent over the last two years, likely due to increased awareness among the general public. ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org))

The field of **cyberbullying** is relatively new in Romania. Cyberbullying is an extension of bullying that teens are experiencing in school, and it may be more emotionally destructive. Threats and taunts posted on websites are visible throughout the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Cyberbullying is not defined in Romania by law. A definition of bullying is provided by the Government Decision 49/2011 according to which bullying is: 'the intimidation that takes place in school by another child'.

**Cyberbullying has reached worrying levels in Romania**, where online harassment of minors has increased by as much as 13% in just two years. According to a recent study conducted by the organization 'Salvați Copiii', in 2014 - about 45% of Romanian children were emotionally affected or hurt while surfing the Internet. More than 20% of them reported having seen or received messages with sexual content. Of these, about 42% personally received an explicit photo or message related to sex, 8% were invited to talk about sexual acts, while 5% were asked to send a picture or video of their private parts. These figures are of great concern to the organization, which is highlighting the importance of warning children about the dangers that lurk behind the screen.

Same study shows that people spend more time on the Internet than watching television, which looked on average 202 minutes per day. According to results presented at Research Day Media, 45% of Internet users aged between 25 and 44 years and 19% were between 14 and 24 years.

Romania: the largest Internet fans:

- 19% of Romanians use the internet have between 45 and 54 years, while the remaining 17 percent were between 55 and 64 years.
- Around 5.7 million Romanians were using the Internet in 2016 in urban areas, while in 2002, only half a million city residents using Internet.
- The survey also reveals that 49% of Internet users in Romania are men, while the remaining 51% are women.
- Regarding the level of education who access online, 25% did not receive even high school, 44% have completed secondary education, while the rest of 32% and higher education.  
(HotNews.ro)

Internet is very agreeable young. About 83% of people aged 15-24 use it, 71% of those between 25 and 34 years and 62% of those between 35 and 44 years, reads the Gfk.



Children's involvement is a process that is developing in Romania. We need more projects to involve children and to give them a good feeling about participation. Peer education is in the beginning but is giving good results.

Data obtained through the **Sigur.Info** counselling line reveal that the most frequent victims calling the helpline are girls aged between 13-15 years. Data from the 2015 **EU Kids II** study are consistent with these findings showing that girls were at a higher risk than boys to become victims of cyberbullying. Moreover, children aged 15-16 years old and those with medium socioeconomic status were more likely to experience cyberbullying. In the **EU Kids Online** project, Romanian children reported one of the highest percentages in Europe for being bullied both on the internet and offline (41% say they have been upset by someone online or offline in the past 12 months and, 13% say this happened online).

According to the data collected by EU Kids Online II (2016), Romanian children had a great tendency to seek social support when facing cyberbullying (73% of victims told someone about what happened). Most of them spoke to their friends (63.4%), while others spoke to their parents (49.2%). Also, many of them, 42.6%, chose to use problem solving in order to deal with cyberbullying. Only 3 out of 10 children preferred passive coping.

Concerning the age of the victims, the same study showed that there is a tendency of online and/or offline bullying cases to increase with age: 36% of preadolescents (aged 9-12) reported being bullied online and/or offline, while 45% of adolescents (aged 13-16) said they were online or offline victims in 2015. Data on cyberbullying is not systematically collected by public authorities and is not disaggregated by age and gender. (Study, 2016 – Cyberbullying among young people) Public authorities (e.g. School Inspectorates, Ministry of Education and Scientific Research) collect data on school violence.

Almost half of the children in Romania have been victims of bullying, while over 51% of the surveyed children say the school doesn't take this phenomenon seriously, according to a study published in 2017 by Telefonul Copilului Association, cited by local Mediafax. Some 72% of the respondents that have been victims of this phenomenon say that they've faced an indirect type of bullying, characterized by nasty words and untrue comments about them, their families, social status or ethnicity, 59.4% received nicknames, 47.3% were ignored or left out of the group, 43.3% received kicks or slaps and 32.2% were threatened. The study also revealed that 76.4% of the children experienced negative states while they were bullied, such as anger, sadness, loneliness and shame, while 22% were indifferent. Half of bullying victims were aggressed by "one other children", while 47.2% were aggressed by "a group of children". Half of the interviewed children said they have been bullied several times a year, 17.2% – each week, 13.2% – every day and 11.9% – every month.



The latest study by the Romanian IT company Bitdefender shows that in 2017, four out of five Romanian teenagers aged under 18 said they were being harassed online. The most common (67%), discursive aggressions were centered on the way in which the targets show or dress, the second being leisure passions (30%), followed by the financial level of the family of origin (13%), school results (12%) and sexual preferences (8%).

In the summer of 2018, Romania participated in the second stage of the EU Kids Online data collection. Given the context described above, a special focus was on cyberbullying, not only with respect to victims and aggressors, but also in order to see positions held by cyber-bystanders. Studies have shown that a useful strategy to address the phenomenon is not only to empower the victims and to discourage the aggressors, but to also raise awareness about the culture of permissiveness in which bystanders are involved.

Romania has seen a sharp increase in Internet and SNS use in recent years; underestimation of risks by parents, and absence of parental digital skills may have contributed to the emergence of high rates of cyberbullying victimization: it leaves a large technological gap between parents and the younger generation. Moreover, the absence of a legislative framework for the protection of Romanian children online, as well as the current lack of integration of ICT components into education, limits the promotion of online safety and awareness of online risks.

The increasing use of the Internet and social network sites (SNS) has created a new domain of socio-emotional development for adolescents. The aim of this cross-sectional study was to explore cybervictimization across seven European countries, in relation to socio-demographic, Internet use and psychosocial variables. Methods: a cross-sectional school-based study was conducted in the participating countries: Germany, Greece, Iceland the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Spain. Results, 2017: the highest rate of cyber victimization was found in Romania (37.3%) and the lowest in Spain (13.3%). Multiple logistic regression analyses gave differing results between countries. In Romania, Poland and Germany cyberbullying victimization was associated with SNS use, whereas Internet use was associated with increased odds of cybervictimization only in Romania. Cybervictimization was associated with greater internalizing behavior problems in all



countries analysed, and with externalizing problems in all except Romania.  
(<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com>)

### Psycho pedagogical Impact

One of greatest and fastest growing threats to our youth today is cyberbullying. With the explosion of technology and social networking sites on the Internet, bullying has moved from physical confrontation in the schoolyard to a more psychologically damaging experience. Cyberbullying is having a profound impact on students across the globe and educators are scrambling on know how to deal with it. Threatening text messages, unauthorized dissemination of private videos, Facebook on social networking sites are just a few of the many ways students are using cell phones and computers to ridicule, humiliate, harass and intimidate one another.

Although it takes place online, cyberbullying has very real life consequence. This issue has been tied to suicidal actions, antisocial behavior, low self-esteem, anger, substance abuse, school delinquency, and emotional issues, among others. The risk for cyberbullying can increase significantly with the increased use of web-enabled devices, such as tablets and laptops, or online learning, which requires digital student interaction.

#### The Effects of Cyberbullying:

More than 7 out of ten children felt that bullying negatively impacted their social lives (<https://nobullying.com/>):

- 83 percent of victims felt that the bullying hurt their self-esteem
- 30 percent of victims have turned to self-harming behaviors, which has increased by 6 percent from 2013
- 30 percent of children who have been bullied have suicidal thoughts, a 5 percent rise from 2013 statistics
- 10 percent of children have attempted to take their own lives due to bullying
- 7 percent of victims have bullied others as a result of their torment

#### How cyberbullying impact students

- Those who are cyberbullied are also likely to be bullied offline (Hamm, Newton, & Chisholm, 2015).
- Cyberbullying can result in serious emotional problems for targets, including anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, stress, and suicide ideation, (Hinduja & Patchin, 2015)



- Motivations behind cyberbullying include a lack of confidence or desire to feel better about themselves, a desire for control, finding it entertaining, and retaliation (Hamm, Newton, & Chisholm, 2015).

Research in the area of cyberbullying has practical relevance in order to create prevention strategies, as well as recognition of cyberbullying and the timely legal and professional attempts.

The issue of violence proved highly complex and with numerous causative factors. In this situation the entire community is challenged, especially the school, teachers, school managers and parents. Even if the solution is not unique, school has an important role in implementing preventive measures.

## Conclusions

Bullying has become a constant reality for our children in this age of the Internet. We must do all we can to work together as parents, school officials, school staff, community leaders, nonprofit and private groups, and especially other students, to make it clear that we will not tolerate bullying and will do everything we can to prevent it.

Cyberbullying policies have proven to be very important elements in tackling the phenomenon. Policies, action plans and strategies provide a framework that supports, protects and empowers youth communities' actors in responding to violent and anti-social behavior. Through antibullying campaigns, several good elements and approaches will be identified that may shape a well-organized, concrete and coherent policy outline that could be used in developing a common EU anti-bullying policy or in developing each country's national anti-bullying policy.

Dealing with cyberbullying can be difficult, but there are steps parents, educators, and other caregivers can take to prevent it. Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to help keep youth **safe online**. In order to do this, parents have to be aware of the types of activities youth are engaged in online and teach teens about cyber-ethics, responsibility, and Internet safety.

Adults can:

- Talk with teens about some of the risks and benefits posed by the Internet
- Share examples of inappropriate incidents that can happen online, which teens may view as harmless or normal (e.g., a stranger initiating a conversation with a teen regarding pictures the teen has posted of him- or herself online)



- Learn what their teens are doing online and keep track of their online behavior
- Visit websites that teens frequent (such as social networking sites) to see what teens encounter online
- Tell teens never to give out personal information online (including their names, addresses, phone numbers, school names, or credit card numbers)
- Let teens know that they should never arrange a face to-face meeting with someone they meet online
- Communicate online rules and responsibilities to teens and enforce rules with tangible consequences
- Keep computers in a highly trafficked room in the house where online activities are hard for teens to hide
- Teach youth about cyberbullying and let them know that engaging in cyberbullying is unacceptable
- Explain that youth who cyberbully sometimes bully because they have a feeling of anonymity and a lack of accountability; however, cyberbullying is harmful and can have negative consequences
- Explain that youth who cyberbully aren't always anonymous; they can be traced, located, and punished if the bullying becomes harassment
- Speak to teens about how to react if they are cyberbullied.

Schools can be very effective brokers in working with the parents to stop and remedy cyberbullying situations. They can also educate the students on cyber ethics and the law. If schools are creative, they can sometimes avoid the claim that their actions exceeded their legal authority for off-campus cyberbullying actions. We recommend that a provision is added to the school's acceptable use policy reserving the right to discipline the student for actions taken off-campus if they are intended to have an effect on a student or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of student while in school. This makes it a contractual, not a constitutional, issue.

As more attention is given to the importance of cultivating socio-emotional learning skills among students, it seems vital to increasingly consider one often-neglected component: resilience. Students can contribute their views and experiences with bullying. They can take leadership roles in



school to promote respect and inclusion, communicate about bullying prevention with their peers, and help develop rules and policies.

Schools can set the stage for meaningful parent and youth involvement, but it doesn't happen overnight. School staff can keep parents informed, make them feel welcome, and treat them as partners. Schools can consider identifying a school coordinator to support parent and youth engagement strategies. Parents and youth need to feel valued and be given opportunities to prevent cyber violence. Parents can contribute to a positive school climate through the parent teacher association, volunteering, and school improvement events.

Online safety seems like a difficult topic to understand, especially for busy parents and caregivers who fail to understand almost all the terminology involved in the cyber world. Children can be sexually abused online by being asked by the groomer to send out sexually explicit images of themselves or take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone. Afterwards, the abuser may threaten to send images, video or copies of conversations to the young person's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity or to meet them in person.

Parents need to be more aware of the aspects of the cyber world and how to steer clear from potential dangers to their children's online safety.

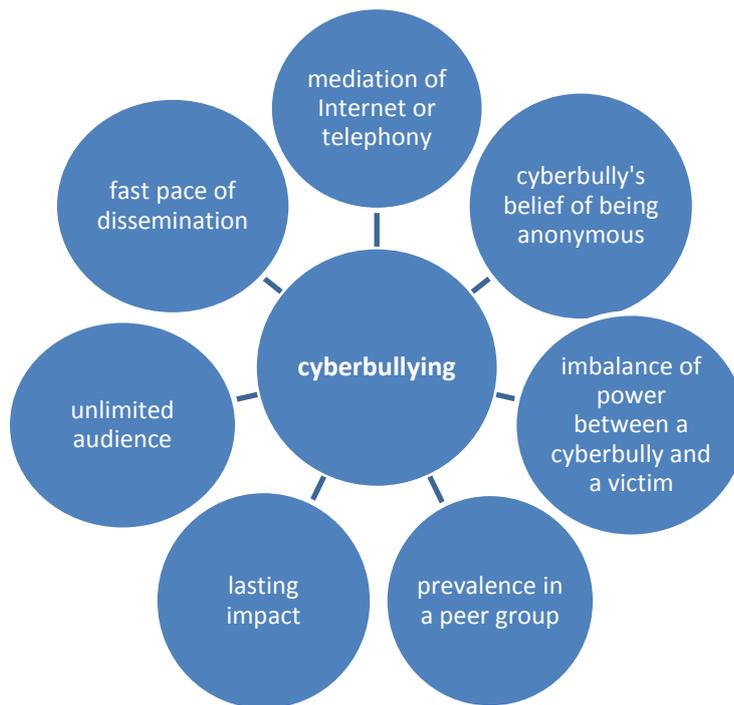
## Poland

The problem of cyberbullying was noticed in Poland only a dozen or so years ago. It can be described as a deliberate form of violence directed towards other people with the use of information and communication technologies, especially a mobile phone or the Internet. Everyone can become a victim of cyberbullying; however, the problem is the most visible among children and teenagers. The Internet is the most important medium of communication for teenagers in the 15-19 age group. 93,4 % of the Polish teenagers use the Internet at home many times a day. It allows them to watch video clips and films, but also to enjoy the privileges of using instant messengers and social networking sites. Young people use the Internet for educational purposes as well.



As technology develops, we may encounter new forms of cyberbullying. These are, among other things, browbeating, harassing, blackmailing with the use of mobile phones or the Internet, disseminating embarrassing, defamatory or compromising information, photographs, films by means of information and communication technologies, identity fraud. Cyberbullies usually use e-mails, instant messengers, chats, websites, blogs, social networking sites, Internet forums, SMS and MMS services. Cyberbullying is characterized by the imbalance of power between a perpetrator of the crime and his/her victim, but also by its prevalence in a peer group.

Due to the use of the Internet and a mobile phone, the cyberbully can remain his/her anonymity or, at least, the belief of being unrecognizable. Nevertheless, studies show that most victims of cyberbullying know their oppressors. Simultaneously, the Internet is a powerful tool, by means of which compromising information or photographs can be quickly spread, as a result it is almost impossible to remove them from the Internet indelibly. Other common features of cyberbullying are: its lasting effect and an unlimited audience. Given the fact that the pictures and films published on the Internet are so quickly spread on different forums or by means of instant messengers, it is almost infeasible to remove them from the Internet for good.



### 1. Characteristic features of cyberbullying. Own elaboration.

Children at an increasingly young age can become subject to cyberbullying as they have easy access to the Internet and possess all the necessary skills to use it at a very early stage of their development. Even in primary schools, the possession of mobile phones by students has become extremely popular. Contemporarily, almost 100% of the Polish youth use the Internet on an everyday basis.

### Types of cyberbullying and statistics in Poland

One of the first studies on cyberbullying was conducted in 2007 by the Nobody's Children Foundation and a research company Gemius S.A. The results revealed that more than half of the children aged 12-17 years fell victim to verbal violence (insulting, blackmailing, humiliating, ridiculing, browbeating) via a mobile phone or the Internet. This type of violence made the injured nervous, ashamed and scared. One out of three respondents stated that such attacks on the part of other people did not affect them. Rarely do the victims of online verbal violence share their



experiences with adults. Only 10% of the victims sought help and support from their parents, caretakers or teachers.

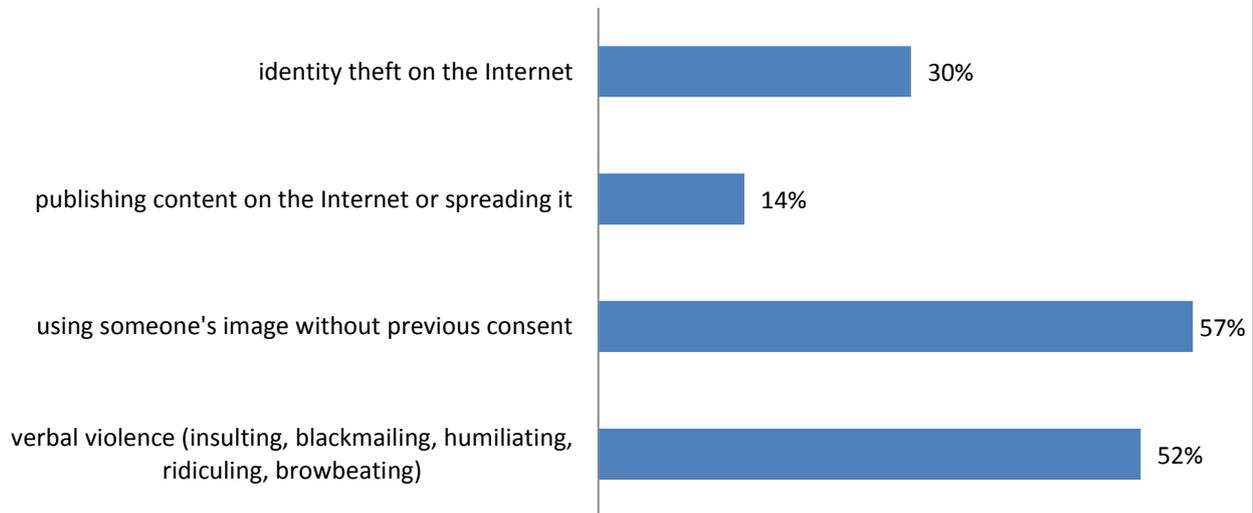
57% of the young respondents declared that their image had been used without their previous consent. In those cases, the cyberbullies turned out to be their peers, colleagues with whom they attended school classes. Most often than not, the incidents did not pose a huge danger; in fact, they imparted an element of humour. Nonetheless, they frequently evoked negative feelings. 5% of the respondents believed that the pictures and films featuring them, which had been published on the Internet, were compromising. The acts of cyberbullying are frequently aimed at the same people over and over again. Only 18% of the wrongful uses of someone's image turned out to be a one-off event. The victims of the abovementioned form of violence sought support from adults only occasionally. The majority did not share their experiences with cyberbullying with anyone, 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the respondents confided in their peers and 6% confided in their parents.

Publishing compromising content on the Internet or sharing it via a mobile phone is an act of violence. This type of cyberbullying produces extremely negative feelings among the victims, such as nervousness, fear, shame. In such cases, the injured seek help from adults more frequently. 13% of the respondents reported it to their parents, and 12% to their teachers.

30% of the respondents fell victim to identity theft on the Internet. In most cases, the perpetrators were the victim's acquaintances (78%), but the crime was also committed by complete strangers (20%).



### Percentage of youth at the age of 12-17 experiencing particular forms of cyberbullying

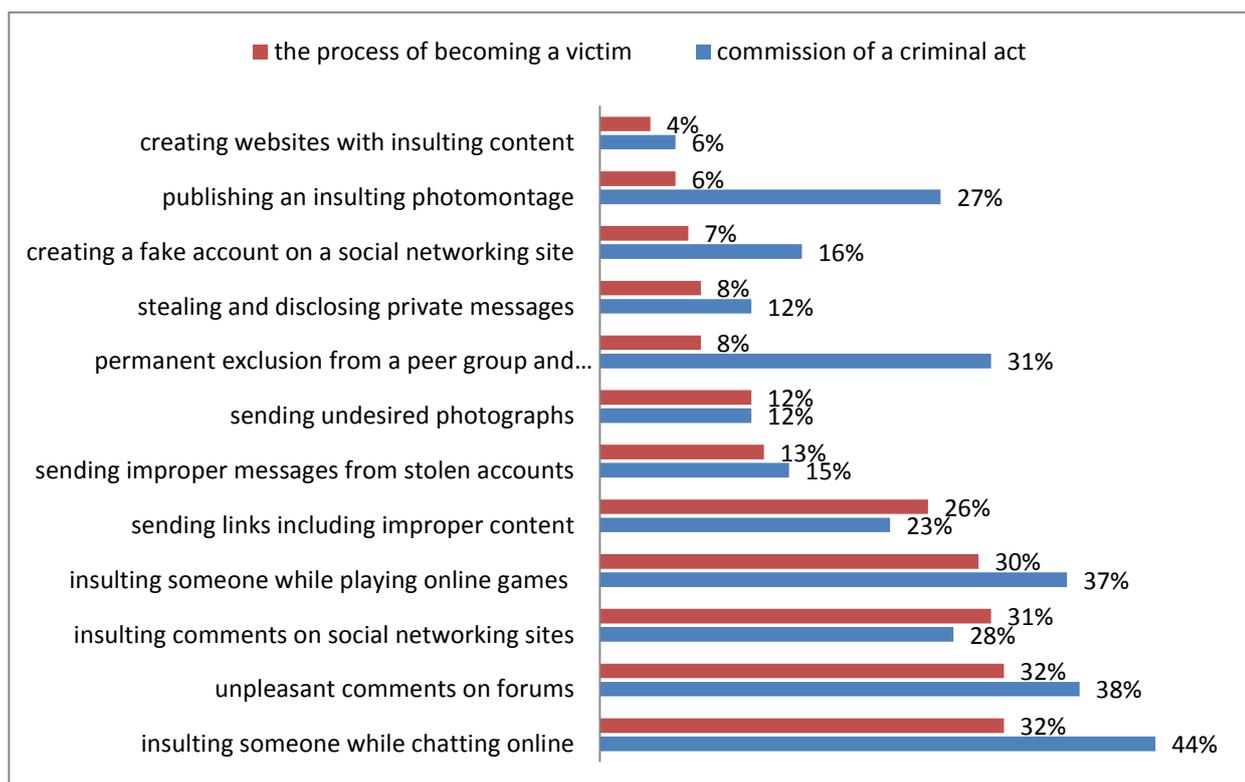


Percentage of youth at the age 12-17 experiencing particular forms of cyberbullying. Source: Ł. Wojtasik, „Cyberbullying - characteristics, scale of the problem, prevention.” Nobody’s Children Foundation, 2008.

The Nobody’s Children Foundation conducted another research on cyberbullying in 2010, this time among the students of junior high schools. The research revealed that the most common type of cyberbullying was insulting each other while chatting online. 44% of the respondents admitted to having called other people names, and 32% reported to have been the victims of such behaviour. Another common form of aggression is writing unpleasant comments on forums and social networking sites, or insulting each other while playing online games. Nearly 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the junior high school students admitted to having sent their friends links, the content of which was unpleasant. Almost the same number of students declare that they were sent similar links as well. 13% of the youth experienced the cyberbullying on the part of a person who had stolen their account and sent material with improper content. A similar percentage of the respondents suffered detriment because of the spreading of undesired photographs. It is also worth bearing in mind that in some types of cyberbullying, for example permanent exclusion from a peer group or preventing someone from joining it, there are more perpetrators than victims. 31% of the respondents claimed to have done that, and 8% experienced it themselves. Stealing and disclosing private messages and creating fake profiles on social media are other types of cyberbullying, in which there are more perpetrators



than victims. As much as 27% of the youth participating in the research admitted to having published an insulting photomontage, and 6% fell victim to it. Such significant differences between the percentage of cyberbullies and their victims point to the fact that only few people are the victims of a wide group of oppressors.



Types of cyberbullying. Source: Wójcik Szymon; „Korzystanie z Internetu i zagrożenia online wśród młodzieży gimnazjalnej. Przegląd badań”; („The use of Internet and online dangers among the junior high school’s youth. Research overview.” – translation mine) The Nobody’s Children Foundation, Warsaw, 2013.

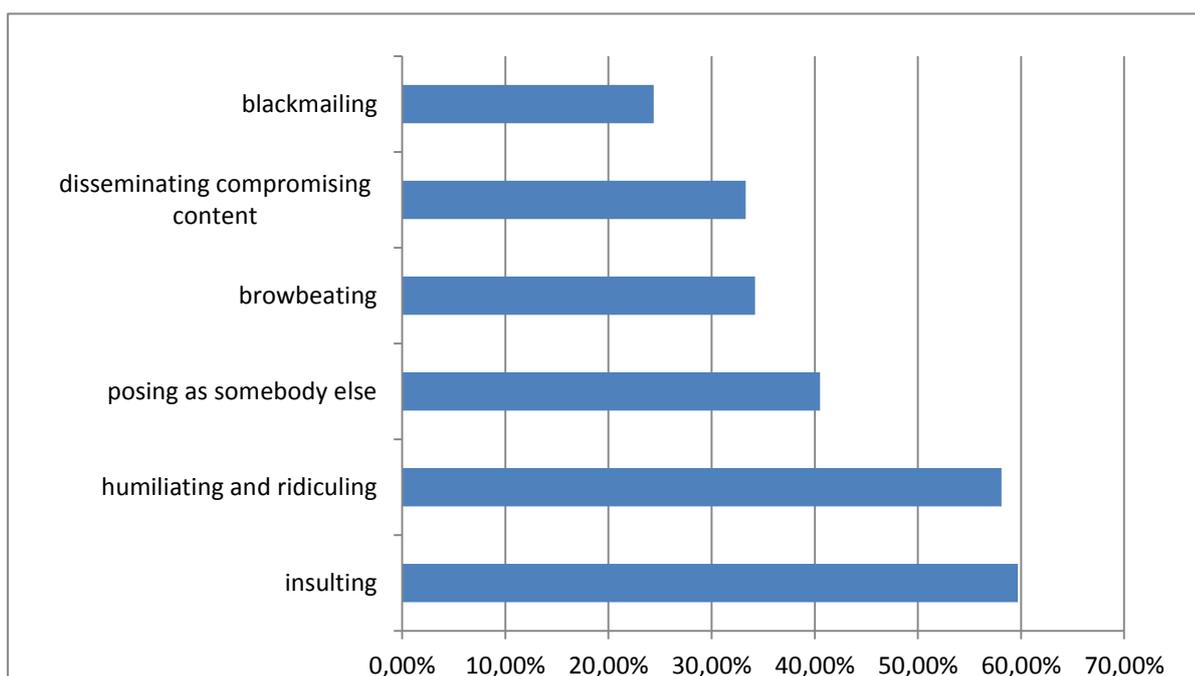
If a victim is subject to cyberbullying on a continuing basis, it poses a real danger to him/her. Cyberbullying differs from other types of online aggression with respect to its repetitiveness, imbalance of power between aggressors and victims, and its prevalence among peers.

In the research conducted in 2016 by the Research and Academic Computer Network, the phenomenon of using the Internet by young people and their experiences with cyberbullying were carefully analyzed. Teenagers attending junior high schools and high schools admitted they had had contact with cyberbullying. 59,7% of the respondents witnessed a situation in which someone used the Internet to insult his/her acquaintance, a similar percentage of people also witnessed



humiliating or ridiculing a friend. 40,5% observed that somebody posed as somebody else. Other phenomena that young people encountered were:

- browbeating – 34,2%
- disseminating compromising content – 33,3%
- blackmailing – 24,4%



Types of cyberbullying which young people experience the most. Source: "Teenagers 3.0. Selected results of the Polish Nationwide research on schoolchildren." Research and Academic Computer Network.

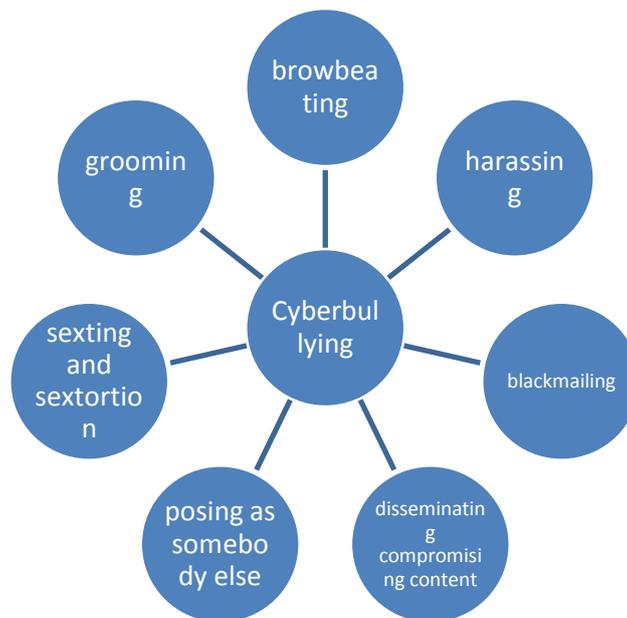
Every third respondent fell victim to cyberbullying. 39,9% of them did not tell anyone about the ensuing situation, every fifth person reported the incident to a network administrator, a little less percentage of people informed their parents.

One of the most serious incidents of cyberbullying is the dissemination of the material displaying sexual abuse of minors and child pornography. The research conducted by Dyzurnet.pl reveals that from the year 2014 child sexual abuse material has been increasingly reported. In 2016, 3216 cases were reported. The number is still growing, and the sites displaying pornographic content, especially the ones which pertain to minors or children in erotic contexts. It is caused by the fact



that the phenomenon of cyberbullying has become much more prevalent, the Internet users' sensitivity and awareness have also increased.

While surfing the Internet, minors are also under threat of grooming, which consists in seducing them. This procedure can usually be observed on forums, groups or social networking sites, it is also practiced via instant messengers. Sexting and sextortion are also closely linked to grooming. Sexting is about sending messages with erotic content via the Internet. People who are in possession of erotic photographs frequently use them in order to seek financial gain by blackmailing a person who is presented in the pictures. The perpetrators threaten to publish the photographs and demand huge amounts of money in exchange for giving up the intention to publish the compromising content (sextortion).



Types of cyberbullying. Own elaboration.



## Hate speech

The refugee crisis has been a subject of heated debates in recent years. The influx of refugees and immigrants from Africa and the Middle East stirs a lot of emotions, which frequently turn into hate speech that is widely spread all over the Internet. "Hate speech is a form of expression which calls for animosity and hostile attitudes towards minority groups, disseminates and justifies it." The research conducted in 2014 by the University of Warsaw Center for Research on Prejudice proved that mostly non-heteronormative people who belong to national minorities, such as Romani, Ukrainian, Jewish and Muslim, are exposed to hate speech. The Dyzurnet.pl's crew reports that the content promoting hatred towards refugees is constantly rising.

The word "hate" has become a very popular term among the youth. This notion is much broader than hate speech, though, for it is a form of verbal violence, which is usually illegitimate. "Hate" is not always linked to the negative stereotypes concerning the minority. However, the research conducted by the Nobody's Children Foundation in 2014 revealed that the phenomenon of "hate" was commonplace. Young people claim that Jews, homosexuals and black people are most exposed to "hate." Another phenomenon which is closely connected with "hate" is the so-called "trolling," which consists in publishing aggressive or controversial comments in order to make other people indignant and nervous. There is easy access to many studies on hate speech, which is so quickly spread on the Internet. In 2011, the Local Knowledge Foundation, in collaboration with the Collegium Civitas Center for New Media, conducted a similar study. They analyzed 10 mln comments coming from the Internet forums, eighty-five thousand of the comments were said to be insulting. In a report "The Internet culture of insulting?" published in 2012, the researchers presented the study's results. 2,5% of the analyzed comments were qualified as insulting. The study's results, presented in "Hate speech. Report on the conducted surveys," imply that the Internet is a space where the respondents usually fall victim to "hate speech."



### Promoting autodestructive behaviours on the Internet.

Thanks to a game called “A blue whale,” the websites promoting antisocial and autodestructive behaviors in children and youth have become more visible. These websites promote antisocial behaviors and even encourage people to engage in them. You can easily find information on the Internet on how to break into a house or a car, how to get in possession of drugs and how to abuse the vulnerable. There are also sites which promote self-harm, starvation or even suicide. They affect particularly children and young people who have low self-esteem, who are lonely or their need for love, respect and belongingness is not satisfied.

### Effects of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may have a negative effect on its victim’s well-being as well as mental health. People who are subject to online aggression frequently report a feeling of nervousness, fear and embarrassment. Most often than not, those feelings are so strong or last for so long that they lead to very serious social and health issues, including the mental ones. Over the course of the next few years, the victim may struggle with the side effects of their peers’ “jokes.” The victims of cyberbullying can even suffer from mental disorders, such as depression or anxiety, which can ultimately lead to suicidal attempts or even suicides. They may also develop some psychosomatic symptoms, i.e. physical discomfort, the underlying cause of which may be linked to their mental state. Cyberbullying may also cause autodestructive behaviours, for example self-harm. Some victims of such online attacks develop anorexia nervosa or bulimia.

The phenomenon of cyberbullying was not thoroughly discussed in Poland until the media started to broadcast the situation of a female teenager from Gdańsk who was bullied by her peers. They threatened to publish a very compromising video featuring the girl, as a result of which she committed suicide. It was the year 2006.



Another teenager fell victim of self-harm as a result of cyberbullying. She was not able to cope with the negative comments she had received on social networking sites.

Suicide or a suicidal attempt committed as a result of cyberbullying is rather extreme. Usually, cyberbullying is not the only cause that triggers suicide.

The consequences of cyberbullying may also be of social nature. Frequently, one negative comment results in subsequent ones. Particular Internet users encourage each other to criticize, insult and call other people names. The victims of cyberbullying are under threat of being excluded from the society. A feeling of shame and a lack of confidence in others prevent them from social interaction, they don't want to go to school or attend any extracurricular activities. They limit their contact with friends to an absolute minimum. However, it is also a peer group that does not want to interact with a person who has been ridiculed on the Internet.

It results in another set of consequences, such as their absence at school, bad mood or depression triggered by their worse academic performance. The victims of cyberbullying are not able to deal with the humiliation they experienced. Being exposed to insulting comments, they frequently change schools or even their places of residence. They try to move away from their previous life and start living in a new place. The lack of self-confidence caused by the exclusion from a peer group may hinder their functioning in their future private and working life. The stigma attached to cyberbullying is usually lifelong. Studies show that up to 60% of the cyberbullying's victims have problems with adaptation, such as emotional dysregulation, distrust and aggressiveness.

In 2017, a junior high school student was brutally beaten. As it turned out, the girl had been bullied on the Internet before, and when she decided to take revenge and do the same to her oppressors, they attacked and badly beat her. This example proves a strong connection between the online reality and the real world.

The victims of online aggression may display the symptoms of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), such as:

- increased vigilance, looking out for danger, nightmares, psychosomatic symptoms
- flashbacks and intrusive recollections of the event



- apathy, numbness and avoidance

Studies show that the victims of cyberbullying rarely inform adults about what happened. Unlike physical violence, cyberbullying does not leave any marks on your body. Therefore, a caretaker needs to observe a child in order to notice even the smallest changes in his/her behavior. If a child used to use the Internet or a mobile phone on a daily basis and suddenly stopped doing it, it may indicate that the online reality has become a source of danger for the child. Another symptom of a child being cyberbullied is his/her withdrawal from social life, apathy and depressive moods.

The most frequent symptoms of cyberbullying are:

- enduring emotional stress (“frozen fear”)
- low self-esteem, querulousness, withdrawal, proclivity to isolation
- constant sadness, depression, compulsiveness, obsessions
- impulsiveness, mood changes, inability to control emotions

## Cyberbullying prevention

Online aggression is, without a doubt, a serious problem of today’s world. The number of victims of cyberbullying in Poland is much higher than the average number in 251 other countries which were subjected to analysis by the Microsoft company. The consequences of cyberbullying have been much more visible in recent years thanks to the media which draw people’s attention to the situations in which young people were bullied by their peers by means of the Internet or a mobile phone. Unfortunately, those situations did not have a happy ending.

72% of the Polish youth are bothered by the scale of the issue. Parents also show interest and try to prevent their children from being bullied. 55% of the parents talk to their children and warn them against potential dangers on the Internet, 45% of the parents monitor the websites their children frequently visit, and 49% of them teach the children proper behavior in the online reality. Even so, studies show that parents usually do not know that their children fell victim to cyberbullying. The



studies also show that there is a discrepancy between parents' and children's opinions on the caretakers' control of children's and young people's activity on the Internet.

Schools also try to reduce the danger, although on a smaller scale. 17% of the schools devised a formal policy on how to prevent aggression on the Internet; whereas, almost 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the schools make teachers tackle the problem of online dangers during their classes.

The most important role in preventing cyberbullying play people who belong to the children's closest circle. Parents and teachers should raise children's and teenagers' awareness of how harmful the consequences of online activities might be. Parents also have to build a relationship with their child, based on mutual trust and safety, due to which the chances of a child telling about his/her problems grow significantly. It is also the parents' role to shape their children attitudes of respect and empathy towards others.

Parents who introduce their children into the online reality should control their activity and pay attention to the content they are exposed to and apps they use. Some of them require the children to give their personal details, which allows to locate their geographical position. The apps also display the advertisements of dating sites and articles aimed at adults. While giving children access to a computer or a mobile phone, it is worth considering the installation of the apps that enhance parental controls. Nevertheless, at the very beginning of the child's journey with a computer, the parent should also participate in it and point out potential dangers, teach the child proper behavior on the Internet and show the websites which would be of interest to the child and suitable for his/her age.

However, it is not uncommon that parents themselves recklessly expose their children to cyberbullying by publishing photographs and films of their children on social media, repositories (flickr, picasa) and on blogs recklessly. Parents also disclose personal information on their child's development, illnesses, difficulties and behavior issues. Publishing the pictures of naked children (e.g. while taking a bath) or children dressed only in underwear is the most dangerous. Such photographs can become a subject of interest for paedophiles or make the child an object of his/her peers' jokes in the future.



The rules concerning the use of Internet should be established and adhered to both at home and at school. When it comes to the schools, the rules should be put in the statute of an IT classroom. The procedures concerning the use of school computers and a Wi-Fi network should be made it impossible for the user to become anonymous. The problem of cyberbullying should be addressed by all schools by devising and popularizing the rules condemning the procedure and showing how to react to it. Young people should also be made aware of where to seek help in case of falling victim to this phenomenon. The school system should be divided into 3 areas when it comes to the prevention of cyberbullying:

- Technicality – guaranteeing safe access to the Internet, proper software, censorwares, preventing the use of the Internet by anonymous people.
- Competences – factual knowledge of teachers necessary to conduct preventive classes and react properly to cyberbullying. Working with parents and making them sensitive to the problem.
- Regulations and procedures – devising and following statutes and procedures connected with different online dangers by the school, but also reacting to them. The procedure should aim at detecting the phenomenon, determining the facts of the case, detecting the perpetrator, taking disciplinary action against him/her, helping the victims and supporting the witnesses.

Preventive programs and information campaigns result in the increase of awareness of the problem of cyberbullying and its consequences. Some of the information campaigns are:

- “Have fun on the Internet – safely,” the Nobody’s Children Foundation
- “Let’s stop cyberbullying,” the Nobody’s Children Foundation
- “Add your friend,” the Nobody’s Children Foundation
- “Cyberbullying – do not do, like or share it,” the Feminoteka Foundation

Friends of the victims and their oppressors play an important role in fighting against cyberbullying. Young people should be made more sensitive so that when they witness an act of cyberbullying they know how to behave. Young people may be passive or start attacking the victim themselves by



sharing or liking the compromising content for fear of being rejected by their peer group. Preventive actions focus on the witness' role, they encourage him/her to be active and object to attacking and hurting other people and to notify adults about the incident.

Educational and preventive programs should be aimed at different age groups – children whose journey with the Internet has just begun, teenagers who are most sensitive to their peers' influence, and adults who have insufficient knowledge, thus subjecting themselves and their families to the acts of aggression on the Internet. These programs should convey the message of how to be safe on the Internet and how to build attitudes of respect, empathy and solidarity.

### Law vs. cyberbullying

The Polish law lacks any regulations concerning the punishment of the perpetrators committing cyberbullying. However, persistent harassment, preserving the image of a naked person, showing pornographic content, forced prostitution, insults or defamation are punishable, according to the Civil Code, and it does not matter whether the acts were committed on the Internet, via telephony or in any other way. The problem of cyberbullying is very seriously treated by the police, in some cities there are special units dealing with this phenomenon.

## Best practices: Initiatives to stop Cyber Violence

### Romania

There are quite extensive thematic national programmes on the prevention and combatting of school violence. Several of these projects are EU funded in Romania. Thematic projects mainly focus on prevention of peer violence and cyberbullying. Health education programmes also address violence in various ways by promoting mental and emotional health and producing supportive material for teachers.

Violence is mainly understood as a phenomenon emerging among peers. No specific policies on cyberbullying have been identified through desk research. Nevertheless, there are initiatives especially from the non-governmental sector that are focused primarily on cyberbullying prevention. The non-governmental sector also provides hotlines where both children and adults can report illegal content in the online environment.

In Romania there are some educational projects to prevent violence/ cyberviolence:



- **Youth against violence:** the project is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports in collaboration with The Institute of Education Sciences and the organization "Save the children", 2017
- **Violence in school:** a study conducted by The Institute of Educational Sciences and UNICEF Romania, 2016
- **The reduction of violence in schools** – A guide to change: an initiative coordinated by The Council of Europe, 2016
- The campaign - **Safer Internet** - across Europe built awareness in 2017, targeting different stakeholders to prevent cyberbullying.
- “Anti-Bullying Campaign: **No violence in schools, stop bullying**” is the good anti-bullying practice which was collected regarding Romania, 2017, Save the children.
- Romania was also partner country in the good anti-bullying practice “**ProSAVE**”, and “Toolkit. Digital & Media Literacy Education”.
- Romania participated in one more transnational practice “Toolkit. Digital & Media Literacy Education”.
- **ComBus** Project - 2015 - “Combat Bullying: A Whole School Program” developed and implemented activities and a comprehensive anti-bullying policy in seven organizations from Spain, Romania, Greece, Italy and Ireland
- **Sigur.info** project, 2017 - comprises several initiatives that could be considered ‘good practices’ on how to prevent cyberbullying which shows that Romania is among the top three European countries in the incidence of cyberbullying, especially when it comes to one of its subcategories, namely sexting messages.
- **Net Class:** online platform launched in April 2016 by Save the Children Romania with the purpose of increasing online safety. Cyberbullying is one of the problems addressed.
- **eSafety Label**, 2017: is an online platform to ensure a safe online environment in schools, providing teachers with an active online community where to share information, experiences, and concerns. eSafety experts are available to answer teachers’ questions
- **Eyes on Cyber Bullying**, Erasmus Project to combat violence online in Romanian schools, 2017-2019, <https://www.facebook.com/Eyes-on-Cyber-Bullying-1557059357666767/>



- **PREPEI Erasmus Project** - Protect Enhancing Participating Educating Informing, a strategic partnership involving 5 European countries to consolidate effort to tackle bullying and set up stronger antibullying activities, <http://www.prepei.eu>.

Moreover, the absence of a legislative framework for the protection of Romanian children online, as well as the current lack of integration of ICT components into education, limits the promotion of online safety and awareness of online risks.

## Greece

- [Cyberkid.gov.gr](http://Cyberkid.gov.gr)

Wealth of resources for kids of various ages and parents, applications and games. Developed by the Cyber Crime Division of the Greek Police it is very popular in the country.

Cyber Bullying e-Learning course from the University of Athens

[http://elearn.elke.uoa.gr/show\\_programs.php?catID=all&prID=421](http://elearn.elke.uoa.gr/show_programs.php?catID=all&prID=421)

- From Peer to Peer – Combating discrimination, segregation and bullying

<http://frompeertopeer.eu/>

From Peer to Peer is a European Erasmus + project that aims to contribute to a better education from the point of view of social inclusion, combating discrimination, segregation and bullying. In this sense, it aims to provide support and tools to schools that address situations of bullying and discrimination, affecting the proper growth and development of students, with the aim of achieving more inclusive educational processes, generated from the base and the people involved in phenomena as the main protagonists.

- “European Awareness Raising Campaign on Cyberbullying” #DeleteCyberbullying

<https://deletecyberbullying.wordpress.com/about/>

Children, young people and adults spend more and more time online. The continuously growing number of social media platforms, online opportunities also increase the risks of running into



inappropriate websites, images, and in the case of cyber-bullying, it also increases the risk of anonymous threats, abuse and bullying.

The project through the cooperation of the international partners contributes to developing a common approach to risk-prevention, information and guidelines to families, parents, children and other relevant stakeholders.

- EUBULLY – Changing Cyberbullying and bullying behaviour

<http://eubully.eu/>

The EU BULLY project, funded by DG JUSTICE, has been developed to support teachers to address bullying with young people in schools, youth groups etc.

UBULLY offers a blended approach – creating innovation in the virtual world alongside transfer and roll out of best practice in the use of drama in the physical world, both providing safe and secure environments for bullying to be addressed openly. Many anti-bullying initiatives are built upon the core philosophy of the Whole School Approach: on the assumption that bullying is a systemic problem, and, by implication, an intervention must be directed at the entire school not just at individual bullies and victims. EUBULLY reflects this, but wider by working with young people who are most vulnerable (Roma, travellers, ethnic /faith minorities, young people in care, disabled, risk of offending, those living in poverty) and recognising their lives include additional support staff (in residential homes, associations supporting these groups in schools and community, health care staff, etc.).

- BeatBullying

<https://kmop.gr/index.php/completed/30-beatbullying-project>

Its objective is to tackle and address the long term negative impact that peer violence, victimisation, bullying and cyber bullying can have on children and young people, by supporting those who are being bullied and/or cyber bullied, helping educate young people about safe and responsible use of new technology, and building the capacity of schools and communities to effectively manage and reduce incidences of bullying.



This project already being implemented in the UK, under the name 'Cyber Mentors', by the NGO BeatBullying, has supported millions of children; is proven to reduce violence in schools by up to 80% and has been independently evaluated by EU funded partners to protect children from harm both on and offline.

- Live Without Bullying

<https://livewithoutbullying.com/>

An initiative against bullying. It offers material, information, training (<https://elearning.coeus.online/>), consulting, etc. It also carries out events for knowledge dissemination about the subject. There is also an online helpline and a volunteering network.

- EUGANGS

New skills and competences to address skills gaps and mismatch within the sectors working with Gang and Youth Crime across Europe

<http://eugangs.eu/>

Although gangs are prevalent in most large cities across the EU, there is no systematic, well supported and cohesive vocational training programme that addresses the structural, social, cultural psychological and public policy context in which gang activism emerges and operates.

EUGANGS developed a new training trainers programme, supported with a trainer's guide and resources to enable those with experience of working in this field to be formally accredited and become trainers either in formal, non-formal or informal VET (Vocational education and training) provision. A modular approach is delivered and supported by an e-learning platform.

EUGANGS anchors the knowledge, skills and competences of those touched by gang culture enabling a sustainable learning process evolve to create a qualification which is not only theoretically sound but is credible, based on real life experiences. This is achieved through careful and effective consultation with all stakeholders from public / private services, community activists



and gang members themselves within NGOs, employees in local businesses located in gang afflicted communities.

- kids.kaspersky.com

Very good source of information about cyber threats relevant to children.

## Italy

Things are rapidly changing in Italy: from 2014 the number of episodes seems to be rising and they have had a considerable media coverage.

The shift from using Internet from a smart phone rather than a PC has completely changed the landscape; moreover as described in EU Kids Online research, “Children in Italy are using the internet mainly at home, while Internet access at school is among the lowest in Europe” they the initiative for a “digital awareness” at schools are still very little due to a lack of infrastructures and teacher preparation at school.

The **Guarantor Authority for Childhood and Adolescence** the national authority to guarantee the youngsters’ rights plays an important role in coping with these episodes. The most important initiative in Italy is “**Generazioni Connesse**”, the Italian Safer Internet Centre. Then there are some regional and local initiatives, such as

- MOVE UP in Piemonte
- KIVA in Tuscany (testing the Finnish KIVA methodology in Tuscany)
- Bullying and Cyber in Emilia Romagna



In the following, some of these initiatives are presented more in details.

- GENERAZIONI CONNESSE: Safer Internet Centre

The “Generazioni Connesse” project is the Italian Safer Internet Centre co-funded by the European Commission. It aims at continuing the experience underway since 2013 and, at the same time, improving, strengthening and broadening the role it has undertaken at a national level by the Safer Internet Centre. The aim is to become an ever-greater national reference point on topics related to a safer and better Internet for young people.

The Safer Internet Centre is made up of an Awareness Centre, two Hotlines, and a Helpline.

The Consortium that operates in the Safer Internet Centre is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs – Postal and Communication Police, National Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, University of Florence, University La Sapienza – Inter University Centre, Save the Children Italia Onlus, SOS Telefono Azzurro Onlus, Social Cooperative E.D.I., Movimento Difesa del Cittadino, Skuola.net.

The project general objective is encouraging the better conditions for initiatives that help make the Internet a better and more trusted place for children and young people. While the project is addressed primarily to children and teenagers, aged 6 – 18 years, also parents, educators, teachers and youth professionals are involved.

The Safer Internet Centre implements a number of actions:

**Awareness and information actions** aimed mainly at schools, including a combination of management staff, families, teachers and students, throughout the country.

The planned interventions foresee the participation of the above-mentioned groups both online, through the use of an ad-hoc digital platform, as well as through face-to-face workshops in the field. The workshops make use of innovative practices like peer-education. These activities will be bolstered by the creation of educational and informative materials addressed to children,



adolescents and educators (both teachers and parents) and by the promotion of existing online quality resources available at a national and European levels.

**Dissemination and visibility actions:** developing a communication campaign that is capable of being reproduced with continuity for the entire duration of the project.

The campaign is driven by traditional Media - TV, radio and printed material –, online channels, in particular social networks, and the channels placed at our disposal by third parties who have chosen to support the project.

**Actions to combat the spread of illegal material online:** with support of two Hotline services for the reporting of online child sexual abuse, racist or xenophobic material.

For some time now the two Hotlines have collaborated with the Postal and Communication Police (a project partner) through the drawing up of specific agreement protocols and the application of shared operational procedures. The two Hotlines contribute – in accordance to what is allowed by national legislation – to the core European platform database.

Furthermore, the Hotline services collaborate with Postal and Communication Police to develop possible actions that will permit to analyse reported contents, identify and remove faster illegal or damaging online material.

**Support and guidance assistance,** thanks the availability of an innovative Helpline – the first in Europe so far - that using an integrative platform can be accessed via telephone, chat, Skype, SMS or WhatsApp. This comprehensive system can respond to any request for advice or help coming from children, adolescents, and adults who are seeking information on how to deal with uncomfortable or dangerous situations affecting minors. The Helpline service collaborates with the most relevant social networks in order to identify new trends concerning online risks (e.g. those related to the use of social networks by under 13) and find solutions and policies that will contribute to ensure a more child friendly and safety environment.

Una vita da social

“Una Vita da Social” (a life as social) is an important and impressive impressive educational itinerant campaign to raise awareness and prevent the risks and dangers of the web for minors



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

CYBER **STOP**  
VIOLENCE

lead by the Post and Communications Police, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, University and Research and with the Patronage of the Guarantor Authority for Childhood and Adolescence.



The project met more than 1 million students in both squares and schools, 106,125 parents, 59,451 teachers for a total of 8,548 School Institutions, 30,000 km of routes and 150 cities reached on the territory and a Facebook page with 108,000 likes and 12 million monthly users on online security issues.

In December 2016, "A Social Life", was selected by European Commission among the best practices at European level. The fourth's edition on the campaign started in February 2017. During the launch of the campaign they presented some data about cyberbullying in 2016 (see table).



2016	Stalking	Online Diffamation	Injuries Threats Harassment	Identity theft on sociamedia	Diffusion of child pornography material	Total
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The number of 8 42 88 70 27 235  
complaints where  
minors are victims  
of crime.

Minors denounced 1 11 6 3 10 31  
to the judicial  
authority -who  
has become  
responsible for the  
offenses

- MOVE UP

The Regional Government of Piemonte (where CSP is based and has most of its activities) is sensitive to the issue and has a pilot program called MOVEUP - Alternative destinations.



It is focused on three themes: respect for diversity, violence prevention and responsible use of new technologies in an integrated manner. The goal is to provide information on these issues to students, teachers and parents to make them more aware, encourage them to share experiences



and enhance local initiatives. The project also aims to provide information about criminal aspects and methods of defence.

The program is at the moment in “stand by” as confirmed by a meeting with the Regional Managers on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Torino: they told us that there are a lack of coordination at regional level and a risk of not using in a right way the few resources they have.

### **Grassroot Initiatives**

In an effort to raise awareness of the dangers of bullying and put an end to its effects, Italian students and adults have introduced new initiatives to support schools in their anti-bullying stance. Some initiatives were launched and executed by teens on their own. Others combined the efforts of students and adults to get their anti-bully message across. In introducing these initiatives, Italian students and adults hope to prompt changes in their schools and towns, making them a more positive environment in which to study and live.

- Reality TV: Bully Project

The Bully Project puts bullying behavior up front and center on Italian TV. This reality TV show aired on Rai 2 captures bullying activities in progress as filmed through on site hidden cameras. Cameramen recorded the abuse received by a young victim during the course of 15 days to give viewers a graphic picture of bullying in action. The program was divided into four episodes and aired with the intent of raising public awareness of bullying in schools and denouncing discrimination that occurs daily in many teens’ lives. Transmission of the Bully Project in other countries such as Spain met with some controversy due to disturbing images and material.

- ‘One Kiss’ Film

The anti-bullying Italian film “One Kiss” (Un Bacio) directed by Ivan Cotroneo made its debut in Italian cinemas in March of 2016 with mixed reviews by the public. The film depicts the lives of three Italian teen friends – two boys and a girl – who are discriminated against by their peers due to being different. One of the boys has a speech impediment that causes others to ridicule and reject him. The girl has a reputation for being “loose” sexually due to a past relationship and the other boy is gay.



Through this film, Cotroneo exposes the pain and suffering that discrimination and homophobia can cause. Cotroneo feels “it’s the responsibility of adults to make children understand that all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, social class or people’s lifestyle choices are all stupid and very dangerous.” By helping to expose wrong mindsets and viewpoints, One Kiss could be a force for good in countering bullying behavior.

- ‘MaBasta! (That’s enough!)

MaBasta! is an Italian anti-bullying campaign created, organized and managed entirely by teenage students. The movement was initially formed by Class 1a 14-15 year old students at Galilei-Costa Institute in the city of Lecce with the purpose of uniting young people in their school against bullying. As so much bullying is done via social media, MaBasta! students developed a plan to use Facebook and other Internet means to attack bullying behavior in all its forms. The students opened their own Facebook account, created an original logo for their campaign and are working on developing a MaBasta! website to achieve their aims. The movement has already started posting anti-bully videos and personal selfies saying “it’s enough!” on Facebook to promote their cause.



Since its inception, the MaBasta! movement has captured the attention of national media with over 17,000 “likes” on social sites. The campaign has also gained the backing of four national online sites that support education, including Your Edu Action, MasterProf and Aetnanet.

- Bulliziotti and Bulliziotte

The *bulliziotti and bulliziotte* (is a joke with the word “poliziotto” – police man and bully) characters and bullibox follow in the footsteps of the MaBasta project, to continue the fight against bullying in Italian schools. The figures of bulliziotti and bulliziotte represent student monitors selected by their local schools to observe, identify and report bullying activity committed by fellow students to teachers, administrators and police. Students who are



victimized by bullying can seek the help of school bullizioti for the protection and support they need. Having support from their peers will help victims step forward in reporting bullying incidences as well as encourage do-nothing bystanders to take a stance against bullying acts.

At the start of every school year, schools participating in the program select a bullizioti from the student body to represent individual classes and/or school in their anti-bullying campaign. Those chosen should be individuals known for their anti-bullying stance. The bullizioti will act as an intermediary between bullying victims and school officials. In addition to reporting bullying behavior, the bullizioti may be called upon to counsel victims or stop harassment in progress, depending on the need. By providing training by professional psychologists and/or police in how to handle bullying matters, schools can help bullizioti carry out their responsibilities with greater success. Candidates for bulliziotte are to be selected from older students in the school who have earned their peers' respect.

The “bullibox” is a closed container placed in a strategic location on school premises where students can place anonymous reports of bullying or cyberbullying against their peers. These reports will be read and acted upon by a bullizioti committee formed by the school. The bullibox provides yet another means for victims and spectators to take action against abusive behavior in their schools.

- SBAM! (Stop Bullying Adopt Music)

Organized by young 3<sup>rd</sup> year students at the Galilei-Costa School from Lecce, the SBAM program involves the use of music to combat bullying in Italian schools. As music plays such an important role in teens' lives, SBAM creators felt it was the perfect medium to unify their generation against bullying. The initiative involves using music in a positive way to counter the negative effects of songs that promote violence and abusive behavior. The program's two-fold purpose includes:

- Identifying songs that promote bullying attitudes and exposing these attitudes to Italian youth: As many of the songs were written in English, they would need to be translated into Italian first before students can expound on their negative impact.



- Encouraging Italian musicians to compose songs with an anti-bullying message, i.e. songs that have a positive message about how to stop bullying, songs that encourage young people to stand up against bullying, songs that promote acceptance and understanding, etc.

By speaking out against bullying through their music, Italian musicians have an opportunity to make a positive impact on Italian youth who need direction in their lives. Music is a popular medium by which artists can reach and influence the lives of youth in the country. Through music, Italian artists can provide students and their families with positive role models to emulate, bridging the gap of prejudice and discrimination that's so rampant in society today.

#### **CSP initiatives:**

- Safety4kids@school

The SafetyKids @school project was an initiative to foster greater awareness of the use of social media for students, teachers and families. Assosecurity has commissioned CSP and CNR-IIT for the implementation. The project run in the 2013-2014 scholastic year.



The project, in line with the European recommendations, aims to raise the awareness of the school world to "digital civic education" so that network security is part of structural and cross-sectional education in all levels of education. The purpose of the project is to contribute to a greater awareness and awareness of young people in the use of digital technologies and in particular social media, to promote full digital citizenship, but above all to give teachers a strong leadership and reference role for students. The proposed activity envisions training and



awareness-raising initiatives for teachers through meetings in the presence and the establishment of a community. The aim of the project is to define a curriculum for teaching security at school, aimed at:

- Providing teachers with tools and skills that will enable them to deal with these issues with their students, retrieving the role of guidance and support that rhetorically rejects the alleged innate skills of young people questioning
- Providing students with elements of digital citizenship by sensitizing them to some of the risks of network surfing

The training was offered for free to all the teachers of the Piedmont and Tuscany regions: Piedmont focused on secondary schools and Tuscany on primary schools. It was designed with the support of the Ministry of Education and the Polytechnic of Torino that also provided the trainers, with a special focus on pedagogy and law. The training was provided in three provinces in Piedmont (North, South and Center) and in two provinces in Tuscany. About one hundred of teachers were involved and a collaboration platform was also available in order to create a community.

- BYOD Project

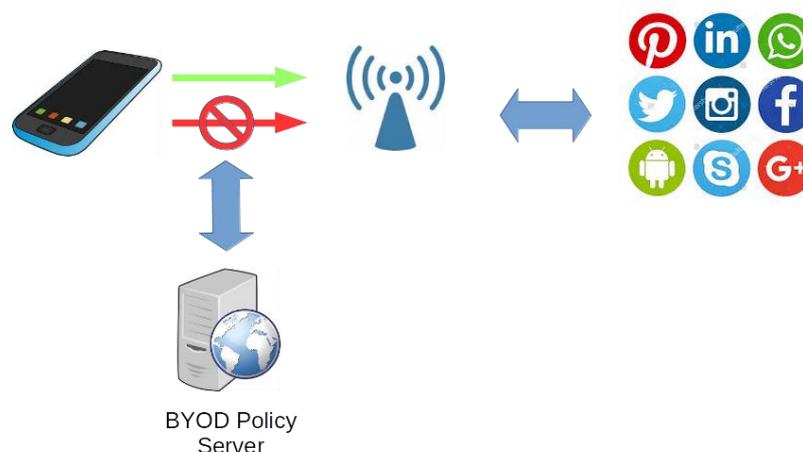
The online activities could become a trap for children. But nobody knows that also filters activated on home computers can't prevent them from getting into troubles. Despite Pcs are provided with filters that restrict access to some web contents, 25% of children, indeed, visit dangerous websites that put them in contact with pedophiles or pornography. As a consequence, 14% chat with strangers they have bumped into hazardously in the Internet. A truth highlighted by a research<sup>1</sup> carried out by the University of Oxford on a big sample of teenagers under 15, a third of whom had restriction software set up on their computer. The main reason why they escape such restrictions – say experts – lies in the fact that they use more frequently their smartphone rather than the computer to surf the internet. And mobile phones are much more difficult to monitor. “A filter is not a person and so cannot know if the user who’s



chatting on Whatsapp with a children is someone he/she knows or a potential abuser” – said Andrew Przybylski, the main study’s author.

As it can be easily imagined, the use of Internet at school using the Wi-Fi access provided for free to the students to allow them to access online resources is creating new challenges for teachers and school principals who have the responsibility to provide a safe environment offline and online. Moreover there is also a problem of distraction and exploitation of the connection provided for educational goals, and instead used in a not appropriate way.

CSP supported by Assosecurity, set up a trial in a secondary school in Torino, call “BYOD – Bring your own device - at school” in order to better manage the use of the school Wi-Fi connection. The trial was about developing an app that allow students to use the Wi-Fi provided by the school but with some limitations during the lesson hours.



In order to design the proof-of-concept CSP, choose a secondary school who agreed to be participate, as they already had some severe cyberbullying episodes.

The school was a big secondary school state vocational school specializing in Commercial, Tourist and Social Services located in Torino, CSP carried out interviews with the teaching staff where the following context emerged:



- The school has a WiFi network that is available to both teachers and students. It is currently protected by a single WPA password. A multi-SID subdivision is planned during the development of the project: a network will be used by teachers the other by students, with different passwords.
- Several teachers use the WIFI for educational purposes: sometimes it's only the teacher who uses their device and projects content on the network in other cases also the students need to use the web for didactical purposes.
- The school uses Google for Education services: each student then has a google user of the school to access the services.
- Students use the school's WiFi network during attendance at the institute
- Students during class hours do not usually use their smartphones (if not required) but they happen to be called for improper use.
- The type of devices is roughly 50% Android and 50% Apple.
- Currently, the school does not have proxy and firewall services

Teachers have found it useful to develop an application that can:

- Allow access to the WiFi network of the school only through a dedicated application (students should not have credentials to access the network directly)
- The application running once is able to apply filters statically defined by the teacher
- Filters must have a temporal validity (eg lesson hours, breaks, afternoon hours)
- Filters must be able to block either applications or related internet traffic
- The application must be multi platform.
- Teacher should have the possibility to decide whether filters should be applied, both when they are connected to the WiFi network of the school or even in 3G mode



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Teachers for instance could decide to allow access to Facebook or other online services only during the breaks.

The trial was very appreciated by the technical staff of the school, but it also needs some improvement following the suggestions of teachers and students. Unfortunately, no more resources were available to continue the trial.







## Module 2: CyberViolence concept

### Introduction

This booklet is an important document for all dedicated youth workers and leaders, as well as interested NGOs, decision makers and citizens, who are familiar with the ways and goals of using pedagogical tools to stop cyber violence, promoting non-formal education and competences and skills which are in this case managing planning life goals and inclusion, empathy, the need to cooperate, acknowledging human rights, promoting differences and universal values of tolerance as-well as solving conflicts via communication and controlling conflicts. During the project, the participants will adopt new skills related to social dialogue and cooperation.

The number of training handbooks on non-formal learning focused on stop cyber violence is limited and insufficient. The lack of an adequate training framework (in formal education) for youth workers leads to inefficient use of the capacity of professionals working in the field. This handbook fills one of the gaps in the youth sector, namely the need for methodologies for the training of trainers capable of training youth workers.

The handbook modules that relate to the primary goal of the project are elaborated in a way that youth workers, trainers and teachers working with youth will acquire all the necessary knowledge and skills to prevent and stop cyber violence so the workshops can be utilized in further work for the wellbeing of their organizations, the local community and beyond.

We hope that this handbook will be used by youth workers and youth leaders to multiply the project

message by using the methods and content of the Handbook. Following the priorities and aims of the Erasmus+ programme as well as their support project partners hope this handbook will serve as a useful tool on cyber violence prevention for active youth participation to find practical and sustainable solutions to stop the phenomenon of violence.



## Context

This module gives an overview of the CyberViolence concept, types of bullying related to age, methods, channels of reaching, reactions, theoretical examples of cyberbullying situations that may affect young people with the described appropriate method of response.

There will be a schema of operation, to deal with difficult situations, solutions/remedies/responses, how to prevent, how to react, how to defend ourselves and others, support from the closest ones (family and friends) and the environment, social approach, media and public opinion and specific cases.

The project contributes to the raising the awareness of youth learning as an important tool for social inclusion. There needs to be more frequent and age-appropriate information for young people regarding their rights online and their responsibilities when using internet. We also recommend project toolkit of responses for trainers and educators and an educational approach to building empathy and responsibility online.

Learning by sharing experiences and work together to develop common quality criteria serve to all participating organizations to support the relevant procedures in their national systems.

Cyberbullying is on the rise in Greek schools. Relevant research has shown that 1 in 20 high school students experienced a form of cyberbullying while 1 in 20 students has been a perpetrator in 2015 and this number is doubled in Lyceum. This is according to research from 13 health centres which are under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. Stop Bullying Network of the Ministry of Education (Development and operation of a network for preventing and dealing with bullying incidents: <http://stop-bullying.sch.gr/>)

For Greek youth, the Internet presents a number of risks along with a multitude of opportunities. The research reviewed suggests that some of the online risks facing youth are addiction, exposure to inappropriate material, cyber bullying and sexual solicitation.



In Greece 55% of students are claiming that they are suffering from depression because of bullying. As many as one in three children have self harmed or had suicidal thoughts. The research conducted by the University Research Institute of Mental Health (EPIPSI) concludes that bullying is spreading like an epidemic, 8.5% of teenagers are being bullied at least 2-3 times a month, while 1 in 6 (15.8 %) teens mention that they intimidate others frequently.

Students who bully others are mostly boys, while those who are intimidated are both boys and girls. In the United Kingdom, 50% of young people have bullied another person, 30% of which do it at least once a week, 74% of those who have been bullied, have, at some point been physically attacked, 17% have been sexually assaulted whereas 62% have been cyber bullied.

The Italian Constitution, Rights and Duties of Citizens, Civil Code and Penal code can be used to some extent to help prevent bullying and provide a means of punishing Italy is home to over 2 million tech savvy teens between the ages of 14 and 17, most of which have a passion for Internet and social media usage. Most of these young people own personal laptops, TVs and smartphones, making it easy for them to stay connected at all times. With this 24/7 connection, teens are at greater risk of being targeted by cyberbullies. Today's youth use online connections for personal, social, academic and professional reasons, placing them at the forefront of potential bullying activities. Gen Z's passion with the Internet and their smart devices could very well be the reason for the dramatic increase in cyberbullying.

Today's youth use online connections for personal, social, academic and professional reasons, placing them at the forefront of potential bullying activities. Gen Z's passion with the Internet and their smart devices could very well be the reason for the dramatic increase in cyberbullying.

39% of Italian schools have already implemented some specific actions against cyberbullying, following the orientation guidelines provided by the national Ministry of Education and 63% intend to do so during the next school year. In 36% of the institutions, the participation does not go beyond about half of the parents and in 59% of cases it only stops at a few parents. Only 48% of the schools have a real monitoring programs through questionnaires addressed to students and parents.



Romania is among the top three European countries in the incidence of cyber bullying, between October 2011- October 2013, there have been registered over 2907 cases of bullying. 45,72 % regarding physical violence, 22,86% verbal abuse, whereas 15,24 and 14,28% regarding emotional abuse.

In Romania, the prevention and fight against different types of violence against children coincides with the national steps for the creation of legal and institutional means for granting children's rights, in accordance with UN Convention and other related international and European documents signed by the Romania. This matter tends to circumscribe within a specific domain regarding mainly child protection against any types of neglect, physical, sexual or psychological abuse, exploitation, or traffic of human beings for any purpose, including all the important environments where children spend their time: family, school, health system, protection or detention centres, work places, as well as the whole community. (*REPORT on national policies for the prevention of violence against children, ROMANIA, 2000*)

As in many developed nations, cyberbullying is becoming a much larger issue in Poland. The Cyberbullying Research Center estimates 24 percent of students are victims of cyberbullying. As the world turns high-tech, all kinds of social media have increased the bullying in Poland. This particular study also said 52 percent of Polish internet users had been bullied via their mobile phone.

Polish governmental authorities have created cyberbullying laws, as well as cyber stalking laws as facts about cyberbullying emerge. It creates the idea that stalking is stalking, whether done physically or electronically. The Polish law makes it illegal to bully someone even one time, even though the legal definition is repeated behavior. It makes it illegal to make a threat, or make a person feel threatened by use of any electronic device.



## Cyberbullying – a new form of bullying

Bullying is an international problem (see Smith et al., 1999). It is also a local problem, in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (Mc Guckin, 2013; Mc Guckin & Corcoran, 2013; Mc Guckin, Cummins, & Lewis, 2013).

Bullying ruins lives. It damages self-esteem, disempowers people and sews the seeds of prejudice. Last researches revealed that 1 in 2 people have experienced bullying in some form during their lives. This shocking statistic shows just how much more needs to be done.

In an academic context, there is a strong consensus in the research community that bullying is a form of social aggression (Björkqvist, Ekman, & Lagerspetz, 1982), which is characterised by three major criteria: intent to cause harm; repetition of the behaviour over a period of time, and; an imbalance of power between the victims and the bullies (e.g., Olweus, 1993; O'Moore & Minton, 2004; Rigby, 2002). O'Moore and Minton (2004) extend this by arguing that just one particularly severe incident which contributes to an on-going sense of intimidation can constitute bullying.

In an European context bullying occurs in increasingly atrocious ways, such as: street fights, bombings, insults, harassment, cyberbullying. Dangerous, pathological behaviour like aggression and violence has gained new tools and, hence, adopted new forms. The phenomenon was diagnosed only several years ago and is nowadays referred to as "cyber-violence".

Cyberviolence is any online behavior that constitutes or leads to harm against the psychological, emotional, financial, and/or physical state of an individual or group.

**Cyber-violence** may be targeted at individuals or groups, the latter being more characteristic targets of cyber violence than of offline, physical violence, due to the ease with which a single perpetrator can gather information about and make contact with large numbers of people on the Internet. This is another aspect of online violence that can cause it to have widespread effects. *(European Network Addressing Cyber violence)*



Over the past 40 years, researchers have studied the phenomenon, which in 1970 was described as "**bullying**". Dan Olweus was one of the first researchers who made scientific studies of bullying. He defines bullying as follows:

We say that a student is being bullied when another student or a group of students;

- *say unkind or unpleasant things or make fun of someone or give any bad or hurtful nickname*
- *is ignoring or excluding someone from friends or deliberately fail to include some in various activities intentionally*
- *beating, kicking, shoving and bullies or threatens someone*
- *spread lies or false rumors about someone, sending nasty notes or trying to get other students to dislike someone*

The researchers Olweus, Smith, Ortega and Merchan agree on that in order to define a particular behavior as bullying, there must be at least three conditions applied: (i) an intent to harm the victim (ii) a repetition of the abusive behavior over a certain period (iii) an imbalance of power between the victim and the bully/bullies.

In the past, bullying may have been confined to school grounds; but with most young people now having access to smartphones, laptops and tablets, bullying and abuse can enter young people's homes and happen at any time, day or night. We heard harrowing accounts from children and young people who described cyberbullying as feeling 'inescapable', and in the most extreme of cases it has pushed young people to the verge of suicide.

Cyberbullying differs from traditional forms of bullying in a number of ways. For example Vande Bosch and Van Cleemput (2009) highlights that the power balance in cyber bullying is not dependent on the physical size, and may be based on higher technological skills or the ability to hide their identity

Bullying, once restricted to the school or neighbourhood, has now moved into the online world. Bullying through electronic means is referred to as "**cyberbullying**." The psychological and emotional outcomes of cyberbullying are similar to those of real-life bullying. The difference is, real-life bullying often ends when school ends. For cyberbullying, there is no escape.



In recent years the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICT) have had an increasingly important impact on our everyday lives (Cross et al., 2009). Use is now thoroughly embedded in children's daily lives (Livingstone et al., 2011) and electronic communication is viewed by many children and adolescents as essential for their social interaction (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008).

The connection between bullying and digital and social media created the phenomenon of cyberbullying, with new and unexpected effects of people. **Cyberbullying** is a form of repeated violence by one or more people towards other people defined victim through the use of the web, using computers or mobile devices.

Cyberbullying can hide the identity of a child who bullies so they aren't held responsible, even when the cyber bullying is discovered or reported to an adult. Due to the nature of electronic media, children can setup false accounts, or even make a parody account of the child that they are bullying. Anonymous cyber bullying is another one of the cyber bullying facts that results from the nature of electronic media, like the fact that cyber bullying can occur anywhere.

Technology also provides bullies the opportunity to harass the victim regardless of time and place. Therefore cyber bullying occurs outside of the physical limitations in the school environment or other places where traditional bullying takes place. The bully or bullies no longer need to be located in the same place as the person or people they want to bother.

Cyberbullying has grown exponentially as a threat to online security over the last decade alone. To quote a few popular statistics, the 2017 Pew Research Center study on online harassment noted that around 40% of Americans have experienced online harassment personally, while around 62% of Americans already consider cyberbullying to be a major problem in our society. The study also stated that nearly one in five (18%) of individuals will experience more 'extreme' harassment such as physical threats, stalking, and online sexual harassment. Statistically, the harassment will target users over their political views, their physical appearance, race, gender, and sexual orientation respectively.



While the definitions of **cyberbullying** (Hutson, 2016), sometimes called **online bullying**, vary from source to source, most definitions consist of:

- *electronic forms of contact*
- *an aggressive act*
- *intent*
- *repetition*
- *harm to the target*

The technology, accessed through computers or cell phones, used to cyberbully includes:

- *personal websites*
- *blogs*
- *e-mail*
- *texting*
- *social networking sites*
- *chat rooms*
- *message boards*
- *instant messaging*
- *photographs*
- *video games*

By definition, it occurs among young people. When an adult is involved, it may meet the definition of cyber-harassment or cyber-stalking, a crime that can have legal consequences and involve jail time.

Cyberbullying occurs “*when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through e-mail or text message or when someone posts something online about another person that they don’t like*” (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2016).



**Cyberbullying** is as an aggressive, intentional act distributed by an individual or group, using contact in an electronic medium, continuously and relentlessly against someone who cannot stand up for himself or herself easily (Smith et al., 2008).

We developed this definition because it is simple, concise, and reasonably comprehensive and it captures the most important elements. These elements include the following:

- **Willful:** The behavior has to be deliberate, not accidental.
- **Repeated:** Bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not just one isolated incident.
- **Harm:** The target must perceive that harm was inflicted.
- **Computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices:** This, of course, is what differentiates cyberbullying from traditional bullying

According to the European Commission, cyberbullying is repeated verbal or psychological harassment carried out by an individual or group against others. It can take many forms: mockery, insults, threats, rumours, gossip, “happy slapping”, disagreeable comments or slander. Interactive online services (e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging) and mobile phones have given bullies new opportunities and ways in which they can abuse their victims.

Violence in cyberbullying occurs through messages, films, and photographs, intimidating writings through social media or published on websites. Examples of cyberviolence include (but are not limited to) malicious text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, sharing of another’s intimate pictures/ videos/texts without consent, online bullying, harassment, cyberstalking, blackmail, expressions of racism, homophobia and misogyny.

Vandebosch, Van Cleemput, Mortelmans, and Walrave (2006) argue that it is not essential that aggression be repeated on the part of the bully in order for it to constitute cyberbullying. For instance, content created or shared just once by the cyberbully can remain online over time, and therefore can be viewed or shared by those who witness the content. In such an instance, the repetition is characterised by the number of witnesses as opposed to the number of actions on the part of the cyberbully. Additionally, the power imbalance in cyberspace is somewhat less clear than in the real world. Although in cases of traditional bullying, power can take the form of physical size,



in the cyber world power may be constituted by the capacity to hide one's identity (Vandebosch et al., 2006). It is somewhat more difficult to remain anonymous in instances of traditional bullying.

There are several actors involved in cyberbullying:

- Bully/bullies
- Victim
- Observers

It's important to understand that the role of the bully and the victim are interrelated and sometime the role can be change, if we change the point of view: sometime the victim can become a bully or a persecutor.

Rey and Ortega (2007) divide traditional bullying into five main forms:

1. *physical*
2. *verbal*
3. *gestures*
4. *exclusion*
5. *blackmailing*

All types of bullying are linked to a real risk of causing psychological harm, impaired performance in education and lack of social achievements.

## Possible reasons for bullying

Why are some children selected as victims?

Many factors may contribute to the development of aggressive behaviour, including individual, family and school factors, such as the lack of love and care, exposition to models of aggressive



behaviour or the lack of consistent rules. O'Moore (2010) describes how bullies select victims on the grounds of several possible reasons:

- Language. For example, speak with an accent or different dialect.
- Appearance. For example, use of glasses or clothes that are a little different.
- Faith, have a different religion
- Ethnicity. Come from another country or culture.
- Social background. Have different social and economic backgrounds.
- Learning abilities. Have learning difficulties or be especially gifted.

O'Moore (2010) describes the characteristics a child who is susceptible to bullying can possess. These young people may have one or more of the following characteristics:

- are anxious, sensitive, shy, insecure and / or have a gentle disposition/mood
- have few good friends
- have low self-esteem
- have a passive, little aggressive, or low selfconfident personality
- react emotionally
- insecure or "clumsy" behavior when attempting to join or participate in a group of peers

The typical bully is described as having one or more of the following characteristics:

- tendency to dominate others
- low self-control
- impulsive personality
- not afraid of confrontations towards other
- tendency to blame the victim for their own bad behavior
- tough posture or appearance
- positive view of aggression
- lack of sensitivity and empathy
- tend to have an antisocial behavior
- loudly demeanor



- sometimes also been victims of bullying themselves

O'Moore (2010) argues that bullying is "*An attempt to manipulate a relationship with an objective to satisfy his/her own psychological needs, for example have a desire to maintain control, ensure their dominance, seek attention, 'rough it', or to improve their social status.*"

In cases of face-to-face bullying, the bully can usually see the victim's reaction. This is rarely the case in the digital world where the bully can be separated from the victim and thus not see or hear the victim's reactions. This can lead the bully to feel less empathy or guilt. It also may lead the bully to continue or reinforce his/her negative behavior.

### Forms of cyberbullying

One way to understand cyberbullying is to classify it according to media or form:

- By the media where the assault is going on, such as text messages, picture messages, phone calls, e-mail, instant messaging or web pages.
- In line with the assault's character, such as flaming arguments, harassment, slander, pretending to be others, disclosure of private information, exclusion, persecution and defamation.

These classifications will change as the technological development changes. The following overview gives a closer insight in different types of cyber bullying:

### By type of media

- SMS: Sending or receiving abusive text messages via mobile phone.
- MMS, Snapchat etc: Take, send or receive unpleasant pictures and / or video clips using mobile phones.
- Phone calls: Make or receive disturbing phone calls, such as evil nonsense phone calls, or anonymous calls.
- Malicious or threatening e-mails sent E-mail: directly to a victim or emails with malicious content about a victim sent to others.



- Threats or abuse when participating in Chat: chat rooms, for example during online gaming.
- Harassing instant Messages Messaging: (IM), for example on Facebook, Skype

### By the type of behavior

- **Flaming:** an intense, brief discussion which often includes harassing, rude and vulgar language, insults and sometimes threats. "Flaming" can occur via text messages or instant messengers, in blogs, on social networking sites, in chat rooms, on message boards or via online computer games
- **Harassment:** repeated distribution of nasty, mean and insulting messages.
- **Slander:** send or publish gossip and rumors about a victim in order to damage his or her reputation or friendships.
- **False identity:** pretend to be someone else and sending or publishing materials to create problems for the person who owns the profile. Aiming to damage his or her reputation or friendships.
- **Outing:** disclosure of secrets or personal and private information in order to humiliate. A common method is to forward a message from the victim containing intimate or personal information.
- **Rip:** persuade someone to reveal secrets or humiliating information, then share this online
- **Exclusion:** deliberately and viciously exclusion of someone from a group or online forums. For the victim, exclusion from participating in online activities with peers can cause a feeling of rejection.
- **Cyber stalking:** persecution, repeated intense harassment and slander, which include threats and creates significant fear.
- **Harassment:** use of Internet or mobile phone for verbal or visual attacks. Predators can post comments in blogs or sending text messages from a mobile. They can also take pictures of the victim or steal a picture from a source on the Internet and then change the image in a humiliating



way or add harassing comments and publish them online so others can see. A special trend ("happy slapping") involves filming of people being beaten up, and then upload the video online.

- **Posing:** a form of indirect attack where a bully publishes content on the Internet in the name of the victim. This may take place if a bully knows the victim's username and password, and can log on and access the victim's online accounts. When the bully pretends to be the victim, he or she may say bad things to or about the victim's friends. This can get the friends or peers to reject the victim, as they think it was the victim who said it.

### Cyberbullying Facts and Statistics

Cyberbullying is not the most common problem that youth face while using information technologies, but it is one of the most serious ones as it leads to long term negative effects like psychological problems, violence, absenteeism and early school leaving, poor marks, and poor social skills on children.

Research suggests that cyberbullying, although occurs most outside school hours, is usually related to incidents that originate in school setting (Cassidy et al., 2009; Olweus, 2012). This form of aggression may have a devastating effect on victims' well-being and health, and thus can impact students' school-related well-being, as well as academic performance (Cassidy et al., 2013; Smith, 2014, 2015). The development of a concerted approach to this problem, involving teachers, students, parents, as well as school community as a whole become, therefore, of great importance (Jäger, 2010; Jäger, Stelter, O'Moore, Corcoran, & Crowley, 2012).

In Europe, where over 80% of those aged 5-14 years use mobile telephones, it is reported that, between 2010 and 2014, the proportion of children and adolescents aged 9-16 years who had been exposed to cyberbullying increased from 8% to 12%, especially among girls and children at younger ages, and this age group is increasingly likely to be exposed to hate messages, pro-anorexia sites, self-harm sites and cyberbullying. (*UNESCO Report, School Violence and Bullying, Global Status, 2017*)



CyberViolence is an issue that can have a damaging and disruptive effect on a youth community. Research in Europe identifies a growing number of national and local initiatives to tackle the problems of violence. Over 80% of children involved in cyber bullying agree that it is easier to get away with cyber bullying than typical bullying. The same percentage of children involved in cyber bullying think it is easier to hide cyber bullying from parents than typical bullying.

Children and teenagers are growing up with technology, media and social conventions that are very different from their parents' generation. Children and teenagers are growing up in an era where digital media are a natural and integral part of everyday life and relate to this in a natural way. The Internet is increasingly accessible for children and teenagers through wireless networks and mobile devices.

A crucial factor in the increase in cyberbullying is the rapid growth in children's access to the internet and other ICTs.

1-in-5 of all young people have witnessed bullying within the past 12-months, with 50% of them witnessing it at least once a month. The experience proves to have serious impacts upon their own mental health, with 59% saying they felt bad and 39% reporting that it made them feel upset. Only 17% told us that they always intervene when they witness bullying. Most commonly young people were scared of being victimised or felt like they didn't have the right skills to interject. From those who did intervene, the response is largely positive and a statistic that I particularly found reassuring was 1-in-4 interventions resulted in them gaining a new friend. (*Hackett, The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2018*)

Cyberbullying is using the Internet, cell phones, video game systems, or other technology to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person. Cyberbullies victimize teens in a variety of ways:

- Nearly 20 percent of teens had a cyberbully pretend to be someone else in order to trick them online, getting them to reveal personal information.
- Seventeen percent of teens were victimized by someone lying about them online



- Thirteen percent of teens learned that a cyberbully was pretending to be them while communicating with someone else
- Ten percent of teens were victimized because someone posted unflattering pictures of them online, without permission (<https://nobullying.com/what-is-cyberbullying/>)

Despite our collective efforts to teach teens about cyber safety, they can still be victimized by youth who cyberbully. Moreover, cyberbullying can be an extension of bullying that teens are experiencing in school, and it may be more emotionally destructive. Threats and taunts posted on websites are visible throughout the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Youth who cyberbully often create websites that encourage friends and classmates to make disparaging comments about another youth. Thus, teens who are cyberbullied can face constant victimization and do not have a safe retreat. Because of this, cyberbullying can elicit a strong emotional response from teens. Some teens change their daily online and offline behaviours.

Although students are known as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), their technical skills do not guarantee their knowledge and effectiveness to use ICT in a way that assures their safety and of those with whom they interact. Digital skills involved in reporting cyber bullying incidents, blocking the bully or saving evidence.

### Cyberbullying by the numbers

According to a Debating Europe survey, more than 1 in 10, 11-16 year-olds in the EU say they have been bullied online. A majority of those affected by bullying (55%) said that it caused them to become depressed, and more than one in three said they self-harmed – and even considered suicide – as a result.

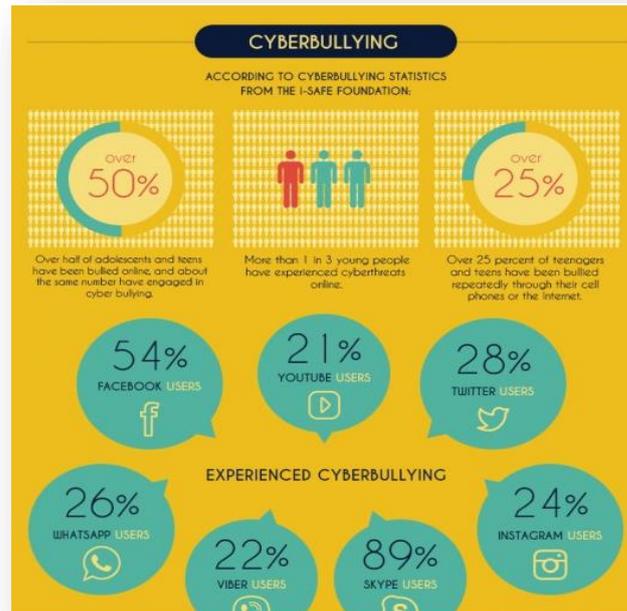
Another survey shows that over the past few years, the percentage of children who encountered risk online increased from 48% to 52%. This increase occurs mainly among girls, children and teenagers. In this case the role of parents is important and a 2008 Eurobarometer survey shows that as many as 54% of European parents are worried that their child could be bullied online. (<https://deletecyberviolence.wordpress.com/about-cyberviolence/>)



- 87 percent of today's youth have witnessed cyberbullying
- Close to 34 percent of students acknowledge that they have experienced cyberbullying
- 15 percent of surveyed students admit to cyberbullying others
- 24 percent of our sons and daughters report that they do not know what to do if they would be harassed online
- 39 percent of our children do not enable their privacy settings on social media
- One out of three kids feel they are more accepted on social media networks than in real life
- Girls (41 percent) are more likely to experience cyberbullying at some point in their life compared to boys (28 percent)
- Girls who cyberbully tend to post mean online comments
- Girls tend to favor social media outlets like Instagram while boys often interact over gaming consoles
- Male cyberbullies often post hurtful photos or videos (Source: [www.teensafe.com](http://www.teensafe.com))

Girls are about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyber bullying.  
(<http://www.ncpc.org/resources>)

Children and young people are using social media for longer periods, and using multiple profiles:



Cyberbullying statistics refer to Internet bullying. Cyberbullying is a type of teen violence which can cause lasting damage to young people. Cyberbullying statistics prove that cyberbullying is a serious issue among teens. By getting more awareness about cyber bullying, teens and their parents/guardians can help to fight this problem.

### Cyberbullying

- 43% of teens reported that they have experienced cyberbullying (NCPC, 2007)
- 20% of students admitted to cyberbullying others (CRC, 2010)
- Only 23% of teens reported being cyberbullied by someone they did not know (NCPC, 2007)

### Parent Perspective

- 45% of teens say that parents should tell their kids that cyberbullying is wrong
- 27% of teens report that their parents have no idea what they are doing online (NCPC, 2007)

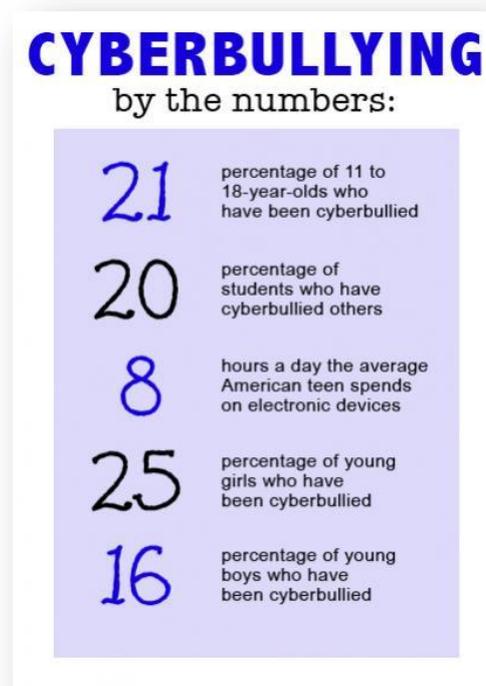
### Students Online

- 75% of teens (ages 12-17) have a cell phone (including 58% of 12-year olds) (Lenhart et al., 2010)
- 27% of teens with cell phones use them to go online (Lenhart et al., 2010)
- 95% of teens go online (Lenhart et al., 2011)



- 80% of teens who go online use social networking websites (Lenhart et al., 2011)

**Cyberbullying** has the capacity to reach a much wider audience, continue around the clock, affect children in both public and private spaces – from schools to their bedrooms – and escalate quickly if people share or comment on bullying content.



Anyone can experience cyberviolence; however there are some populations that experience higher rates of cyberviolence due to intersecting power imbalances that make certain groups more vulnerable. Cyberviolence is largely gender-based as it is disproportionately experienced by self-identifying females. Gender-based cyberviolence refers to misogynistic behavior that can flow on and off line. In addition, individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, queer and/or questioning, and two-spirit (LGBTTIQGS), are also more vulnerable to being targeted by an online perpetrator.

### Violence and Gender



Violence is related to gender. Research has shown that men are disproportionately the perpetrators, and women disproportionately the victims, of violence in the physical world (Cyberstalking.net, 2002). Cyber violence shows a similar pattern. Women were the victims in 84% of online harassment cases, and men the perpetrators in 64% of cases reported to the organization Working to Halt Online Abuse in 2000-2001 (WHO@, 2002). For many female Internet users, online harassment is a fact of life. One out of five adult female Internet users reported having been harassed online as of 1994 (Brail, 1994), and as many as one out of three female children reported having been harassed online in 2001 alone (Thomas, 2002). Among children, girls are targeted at almost twice the rate of boys (Finkelhor et al., 2000).

Males are also victims of violence (particularly of violence perpetrated by other males), and females also commit acts of violence, both online and offline. However, to ignore the larger gender pattern associated with violence is to miss a basic insight into the social reality of violence as a means of control and intimidation. That is, it tends to be perpetrated downward along a power hierarchy, thereby reinforcing societal gender asymmetries. (<http://info.ils.indiana.edu/~herring/violence.html>)

### **Who Gets Bullied the Most?**

While bullying has no one particular group of targets, statistics and research highlight certain groups that are more prone to being bullied than others. Those are:

- People with weight problems
- People with Disabilities
- People who belong to racial or religious minorities
- People who are LGBTQ or perceived as LGBTQ

One third of girls and one fourth of boys report weight-based teasing from peers, but prevalence rates increase to approximately 60% among the heaviest students (Puhl, Luedicke, and Heuer, 2011). 84% of students observed students perceived as overweight being called names or getting teased during physical activities (Puhl, Luedicke, and Heuer, 2011)



Researchers discovered that students with disabilities were more worried about school safety and being injured or harassed by other peers compared to students without a disability. The National Autistic Society reports that 40 percent of children with autism and 60 percent of children with Asperger's syndrome have experienced bullying.

### The Effects of Cyberbullying

Research on children's and youngsters media habits like the *EU Kids Online* shows that new media can be said to have many positive aspects, but they also bring challenges and potential risks. It emphasizes that young people need to develop competencies needed to deal with problematic material in a good way, as well as make safe and responsible choices related to their encounter with others online. Key risk areas in this respect are associated with content, commerce, contact and behaviour.

The phenomenon of is one of cyberbullying the troubling aspects of the new media. Social media is a huge part of everyday life for most young people, offering them 24/7 connectivity, creativity and access to endless information. There are many positives to social media, but it also presents new and unique pressures and risks.



The connection between bullying and digital and social media created the phenomenon of cyberbullying, with new and unexpected effects of people.

61% of young people had a first account at age 12 or under. Digital inclusion brings together high-speed internet access, information technologies, and digital literacy in ways that promote success



for communities and individuals trying to navigate and participate in the digital realm. There is a lot of great work going on across the public, private and voluntary sectors to help people and organisations go online, but digital exclusion remains a big issue.

Cyberviolence is a significant online problem that results in offline consequences. It is important to remember that behind the screen there are real people with real lives, and the harm caused by cyberviolence is often predominantly psychological and emotional.

Cyberviolence can lead to offline consequences such as:

- Depression, social anxiety, loneliness, isolation, stress related health problems (e.g., headaches, stomach aches) and low self-esteem
- School and work absenteeism
- Aggressive behaviours

Contemplating, attempting, or committing suicide Cyberbullying is a social problem, not a technological one. Although it takes place online, cyberbullying has very real life consequence. This issue has been tied to suicidal actions, antisocial behavior, low self-esteem, anger, substance abuse, school delinquency, and emotional issues, among others. The risk for cyberbullying can increase significantly with the increased use of web-enabled devices, such as tablets and laptops, or online learning, which requires digital student interaction.



- More than 7 out of ten children felt that bullying negatively impacted their social lives
- 83 percent of victims felt that the bullying hurt their self esteem
- 30 percent of victims have turned to self harming behaviors, which has increased by 6 percent from 2013
- 30 percent of children who have been bullied have suicidal thoughts, a 5 percent rise from 2013 statistics
- 10 percent of children have attempted to take their own lives due to bullying
- 7 percent of victims have bullied others as a result of their torment (Source: [www.teensafe.com](http://www.teensafe.com))

Children and young people reported feeling more disinhibited on social media. Many children reported having numerous profiles online, including multiple on the same social media platforms, to preserve their anonymity or to follow their separate interests.

- 44% of children and young people spend more than three hours per day on social media
- 1 in 10 (9%) reported always using social media overnight between midnight and 6am
- 38% of young people reported that social media has a negative impact on how they feel about themselves, compared to 23% who reported that it has a positive impact
- 46% of girls stating that social media had a negative impact on their self-esteem.



They have moved from using their family computer to more personalised devices such as smartphones. This affords greater privacy, but potentially greater risk. What young people see on social media often doesn't reflect real life.

Children and young people who are currently experiencing a mental health problem are more than three times more likely to have been bullied online in the last year. The inquiry heard about the impact that cyberbullying can have on children and young people's mental health. We heard how being bullied online, and the psychological trauma that can come with it, increases the chances that a child will go on to have poor social and health outcomes throughout their life. ([www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk))

Bullying has been linked to a number of negative effects, both short and long term. An Irish research by O'Moore and Kirkham (2001) shows that children in primary and secondary schools, who have been involved in bullying, either as perpetrator, victim or both - had lower self-esteem compared to children who were not involved in bullying. Children who were both perpetrators and victims, proved to have the lowest self-esteem of all groups. Research from Finland performed by Kaltiala-Heino (1999) suggests that depression and suicidal ideation is more common among both perpetrators and victims.

In the book "Dealing with bullying in schools" (1999), the authors Rigby and Lee presents a list of signs and symptoms in children and adolescents who are bullied. In abbreviated form, the following symptoms may indicate that the child is a victim of bullying:

- Seem stressed or anxious, but refuses to say what is wrong
- Have unexplained cuts and bruises on his/her arms or elsewhere on the body
- Reluctance to go to school
- Sudden changes in mood and behaviour
- Poorer self-esteem and self-image
- Complain about headaches and stomach aches
- Sleep problems
- Have very few friends and is apparently socially isolated from their peers



A study of Fekkes (2006) indicated that children and young people who were bullied at the start of the school year, had a greater chance of developing new health-related symptoms during the school year, including depression, anxiety, bedwetting, abdominal pain and tension.

Other researchers have also identified various maladaptive outcomes for cyber victims, such as:

- Problems in school (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008) and with peers (Sourander et al., 2010)
- Anxiety or stress (Ortega et al., 2009)
- Loneliness and depression (Erdur-Baker, 2010, Olenik-Shemesh et al., 2012, Ortega et al., 2009, Perren et al., 2010, Raskauskas and Stoltz, 2007 and Wachs, 2012)
- Suicidal (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

Youth are particularly vulnerable to the impact of cyberbullying, given the rapid neurological development taking place in the teenage brain. This means that the negative consequences of cyberbullying can have a lasting impact through to adulthood.

- Students who experience bullying are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, and poor school adjustment (Center for Disease Control, 2012).
- Students who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and violence later in adolescence and adulthood (Center for Disease Control, 2012).
- Students who experience bullying report that allying and supportive actions from their peers (such as spending time with the student, talking to him/her, helping him/her get away, or giving advice) were the most helpful actions from bystanders (Davis and Nixon, 2010).
- Students who experience bullying are more likely to find peer actions helpful than educator or self-actions (Davis and Nixon, 2010).
- Students reported that the most helpful things teachers can do are: listen to the student, check in with them afterwards to see if the bullying stopped, and give the student advice (Davis and Nixon, 2010).
- Students reported that the most harmful things teachers can do are: tell the student to solve the problem themselves, tell the student that the bullying wouldn't happen if they acted differently, ignored what was going on, or tell the student to stop tattling (Davis and Nixon, 2010).



There is clear evidence that excessive use of social media is associated with low well-being and depression. However there needs to be further research to explore whether this relationship is causal or not. The corollary is that young people report that social media (particularly when consumed in moderation) can also offer a number of social and emotional benefits. These range from connecting with friends, aiding creativity and improving self-expression, to providing a resource for advice and a sense of belonging.

Social media can also be valued by those experiencing emotional distress, allowing them to gain support, information and advice from others in a similar position.

There have also been reports of teen suicide as a result of being bullied. The Polish law gives authorities the ability to charge a person who bullied someone who committed suicide and they could be sent to jail for 10 years.

Despite these risks, the research also suggests that the Internet can be beneficial for youth. It provides a vehicle to promote cognitive, social, and physical development.

Although there are limits to which the Internet can be used as a means of learning, health promotion, and intervention delivery, nonetheless the Internet can be used to complement more traditional methods of delivering treatment interventions.

The good practices have an experiential form and concern the briefing of all parties involved, their education on the subject and the active participation of school children and youth in the understanding, tracing and handling of bullying incidents.





## Types of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, because of its reach into the personal lives of victims, can impact every aspect of life, and affect everything from school performance to relationships with peers and family members.

That's why it's so important to look at examples of cyberbullying and remember that these victims (many of whom have committed suicide) had their whole lives ahead of them—lives that were destroyed by cyberbullying.

Because there are so many mobile devices, digital platforms and mediums that can be used for bullying, several different types of cyberbullying have emerged. It's important to differentiate and understand them, although any type of cyberbullying can cause the victim to become depressed, anxious, or self-harm.

### *1. Social Media Bullying*

Cyberbullies thrive on social media because the entire social network is interconnected, and there are opportunities to shame their victims in front of their social circles.

Mean comments, making fun of the victim publicly on social media, gossiping, and even threatening through private messages are all ways social bullying occurs.

While some of these platforms allow users to block specific people from communicating with them, cyberbullying can still continue even if the bully has been blocked by the victim. They can still spread malicious rumors, share humiliating pictures, and make fun of the victim to their other connections, continuing their patterns of social media bullying without the victim even being directly accessible.

### *2. Harassment*

Harassment is an extremely common component of most types of cyberbullying. This is because harassment is the repeated and unrelenting negative threats, mean comments, and other hurtful activity, which is a defining characteristic of cyberbullying: repetition.



Harassment can occur over all different channels, including text messaging, instant messaging, as part of social media bullying, or on gaming platforms.

Specifically, harassment can mean sharing private communications online with others, targeting the victim relentlessly in group communications, or simply sending hurtful private messages.

An extreme but common form of harassment is posing or impersonating. The bully creates a fake profile of the victim and poses as them (often on dating sites), posting their name, phone number, and other personal details, putting the victim at risk for further harassment and danger.

### *3. Flaming*

Instead of taking place over private messaging or texts, flaming usually occurs in a more public setting online, such as a chat group, gaming chat, or forum. The cyberbully (or bullies) send hurtful, angry, or shaming messages to the victim directly, but within the group so others can see.

In addition to the effect of the hurtful message itself, the victim has also lost some of their credibility and reputation within the group, and may feel like they cannot be part of the community anymore.

### *4. Exclusion*

Social bullying doesn't even have to include talking to the victim—sometimes, cyberbullies torment their victims by doing the opposite.

Instead of directing harassment at the victim directly, cyberbullies sometimes use exclusion, deliberately cutting their victim out of an online group. It's common for the group to then make fun of the victim and harass them with malicious comments and discuss the victim among themselves.

Those who cyberbully are more likely to have anxiety, depression, less life satisfaction, less self-esteem, and face drug and alcohol abuse (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014).

Both cyberbullies and targets of cyberbullying report less school satisfaction and achievement (Bernan & Li, 2007).



Because cyberbullying can occur anonymously, cyberbullies can act more aggressively as they feel there will be no consequences. In face-to-face bullying, the bully can view the impact as the attack happens, whereas cyberbullies cannot see any of the immediate outcomes, often resulting in further aggression (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014).

Extensive research demonstrates that well designed bullying prevention programmes can reduce bullying behaviours. There is also evidence that prevention can significantly contribute to developing positive changes in the culture of a school. Youth exhibit more positive social relationships, and have more positive attitudes toward both their schoolwork and their school. Fighting, vandalism, theft and truancy can also decrease while general pupil satisfaction with school increases (Olweus, 1991, 2005; Fleming et al, 2005).

Europe's most comprehensive media study among children and young people between 9 and 16 years, "EU Kids Online", examined the relationship between Internet use among parents and children. It was clear that in most of the 25 participating countries, especially in the Eastern European countries as Romania, Poland, Lithuania and Turkey, children use the Internet more frequently than parents. Some of these children have much more knowledge advantage than their parents when it comes to using the Internet. Although parents and professionals do not need to be media experts, it is still required a certain level of knowledge to be able to talk to children about these topics.

## Recommendations

Understanding the motives and psychological profiles of young people who perpetrate bullying behaviour is essential if we are to proactively reduce the prominence of bullying both online and offline. Children and young people need both to train good ICT skills as well as develop conscious and healthy ICT attitudes. The combination of knowledge and awareness creates a good foundation for digital literacy, good judgment and safer Internet use.

Social media companies cannot continue to ignore the reality that children under the age of 13 are using their sites. Therefore, we recommend that social media companies make greater efforts to



identify under-13s and gain the appropriate consent, as well as providing age-appropriate settings for children using these platforms.

There is a particular concern about lack of transparency around the nature and number of cyberbullying reports, the resources allocated to tackling it, and the efficacy of the response. There is an appetite among young people for greater intervention, with 83% of young people saying that social media companies should do more to tackle cyberbullying on their platforms. The key issues that young people raised were:

- Unclear reporting processes and delayed responses.
- Unclear communication about rights and responsibilities – including community guidelines, and safety features within platform.
- Lack of support when people report online bullying. ([www.childrengsociety.org.uk/](http://www.childrengsociety.org.uk/))

Dealing with cyberbullying can be difficult, but there are steps parents, educators, and other caregivers can take to prevent it. Developing good, solid attitudes through dialogue and being present in the children's childhood and adolescent life promotes safe and sensible use.

Cyberbullying creates new challenges for schools and teachers, as it brings new features to bullying, a phenomenon with which they are still learning to cope with. Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to help keep youth safe online. In order to do this, parents have to be aware of the types of activities youth are engaged in online and teach teens about cyber-ethics, responsibility, and Internet safety.

There are several challenges for addressing cyberbullying. Parents suggest they lack the technical skills to keep up with their children's' online behaviors. Schools are educating about cyberbullying with policies, training, and assemblies, yet don't always know when and how to intervene in cyberbullying when it happens off campus. Law enforcement often can't get involved unless there is clear evidence of a crime or threat to someone's safety (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

Effective approaches to address cyberbullying requires effort from children, parents, schools, law enforcement, social media companies, and the community (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).



A multilayered approach can best combat cyberbullying, including educational media campaigns, school-based programs, parental oversight and involvement, legislative action, and screening and evidence-based interventions by health care providers, especially pediatricians and mental health professionals (Aboujaoude, Savage, Starcevic, & Salame, 2015).

Parental involvement can significantly reduce cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Parents can be taught how to openly discuss cyberbullying with their children, when to meet with school administrators, and when and how to work with a bully's parents, request that a Web site or service provider remove offending material or contact the police (Aboujaoude, Savage, Starcevic, & Salame, 2015).

Parents can also create an age-appropriate “technology use contract” that identifies behaviors that are and are not appropriate on the Internet, as well as consequences for inappropriate behaviors (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

The most common strategies reported by youth to cope with cyberbullying were passive, such as blocking the sender, ignoring or avoiding messages, and protecting personal information. Those who are cyberbullied are most likely to tell a friend about the incident. When asked what coping strategies those who were previously cyberbullied would encourage to someone being cyberbullied include blocking the sender, ignoring the messages, and telling someone, such as a friend. Getting retaliation was the least recommended strategy (Hamm, Newton, & Chisholm, 2015).

Only 33% of teens that were targets of cyberbullying told their parents or guardians about it, because children are worried they will face reduced Internet and cellphone privileges or other punishments (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

Improving social networking safety skills can help prevent cyberbullying, such as understanding how cyberbullying can cause harm, making sure personal information is not available on social media, keeping social media accounts private, not “friending” people they do not know, and general efficacy (Wölfer, Schultze-Krumbholz, Zagorscak, Jäkel, Göbel, & Scheithauer, 2013).

If someone is being cyberbullied, he/she should keep all evidence of cyberbullying, keep a log with the dates and times of the instances, and report the instances (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).



Bystanders to cyberbullying might not want to get involved because of the fear that the bullying will come onto them. However, by not doing anything, bystanders are passively encouraging the behavior. Bystanders can make a big difference by actively standing up against cyberbullies. Bystanders should intervene if they feel comfortable, tell a trusted adult after, and never encourage or contribute to the cyberbullying, such as laughing at comments, forwarding hurtful comments, or silently allowing it to continue (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

Through antibullying campaigns, several good elements and approaches will be identified that may shape a well-organized, concrete and coherent policy outline that could be used in developing a common EU anti-bullying policy or in developing each country's national anti-bullying policy.

In terms of developing a school anti-bullying policy, it is recommended that the following elements are included:

- A positive school ethos with a focus on respecting the individual;
- Awareness raising that bullying is considered to be an unacceptable behaviour among school management, teachers, pupils, and parents / guardians; implementation of supervision and monitoring to counter bullying across all areas of school activity with assistance from students;
- Design of procedures for noting and reporting bully/victim problems as an integral part of the school Code of Behaviour and Discipline;
- Provision of support for victims, bullies, and peers, including counselling;
- Inclusion of local agencies in combating bullying as a form of anti-social behaviour as it is desirable to involve the extended school community beyond the school grounds;
- Ongoing review and evaluation of the effectiveness of school anti-bullying policy to assess the prevalence and types of bullying within the school.

One of the important measures to limit risky behaviour is to enable children and young people to develop digital skills. In order to be able to guide young users; parents and professionals need to develop their own level of competence.



## Recommendations:

- Social media platforms must be age-appropriate, and companies should pilot approaches to identify under-13s and gain explicit parental consent.
- Social media companies should enable children and young people to understand their rights and responsibilities, including their behaviour towards others.
- Social media companies should provide timely, effective and consistent responses to online bullying.
- The Government should put children's experiences at the heart of internet safety policy development.
- Educators and parents should teach children and young people how to be safe and responsible online, and ensure they know how to respond positively to online harms such as cyberbullying.

## How to prevent cyber bullying?

### GENERAL ONLINE SECURITY TIPS:

Here are a few general online security tips that can help in facilitating a safer online space:

- Log out of accounts when no longer in use.
- Do not share your passwords, and make sure to change them regularly.
- Use your privacy settings on social media accounts to adjust what you would like to share and with who (e.g., only friends)

Research by O'Moore, Kirkham and Smith (1997) indicates that young people who are exposed to bullying, prefer to talk about the bullying to parents rather than teachers at school. By creating a home culture where parents and children are accustomed to talk about personal matters, parents will increase the chance that the child will address and speak about problems at an early stage.

There is a vital need for a collaborative effort from society, schools, teachers, parents, and young people to determine policy and practice, and it is of particular importance that young people feel that their voices are heard in these matters which affect them:



- Cyberbullying must be included in a whole school community approach to bullying, which empowers students to report victimization to seek help either for themselves or their peers;
- Education regarding staying safe in cyberspace, responding effectively when faced with aggression, and improving online social skills are necessary for young people;
- Both parents and teachers must take responsibility in dealing with abusive behaviour in cyberspace and must offer support for those victimized;
- It is important that teachers receive training both in pre-service and professional development training with regard to group dynamics and conflict management;

The important role of parents is recognised with the suggestion that parents familiarise themselves with the Internet and associated risks, and that they encourage regular communication with their children in relation to cyber activities.

The online world is an arena where the parents often have limited insight in the social life of their child. As a result of that it may be difficult to detect whether one's own child is being bullied – or takes part in bullying.

A similar trend has been found by O'Moore and Minton (2009) when it comes to cyberbullying. In other words, parents have a unique opportunity to help the child to process emotions and counteract adverse effects associated with digital bullying.

Fear of punishment, and fear of restrictions related to use of media, are main barriers that can stop children from talking about what worries them to their parents.

- ✓ Listen carefully and act in a conscious way if your child shares personal matters with you as a parent. The sooner in a child's life the parents take initiatives to promote conversation, the easier it is to succeed in building a home where the child choose to talk with its parents when he or she is facing something embarrassing or difficult.
- ✓ Be confident in your child's use of technology in the classroom and at home by taking the time to understand the services they are using and how their personal data is being handled.
- ✓ Talk to Child's School to Find Out What Apps or Services They are Using



- ✓ Learn About the Safety, Privacy and Security of Apps or Services and How They Handle Your Child's Personal Information

Parents can promote awareness of the child when it comes to online activities, use of language, sharing of photos, rumors and so on. It is important to ensure children and young people feel comfortable about telling their parents things that have happened online.

Talking to their children will help parents to understand the ways in which they are using the Internet, social media and their mobile phone. Talking to children about responsible behavior is important as sometimes children who are victims of cyberbullying may also be involved in cyberbullying others.

Increased awareness on use of Internet and digital social networks can reduce the risk that children will bully others. It may also increase the chance that the child engages rather than being a spectator if it becomes a witness to someone bullying others.

By discussing potential problems related to social life online and cyberbullying with child, he or she will be better equipped to meet various challenges in reality. This can also increase the child's resistance or "emotional immunity," a skill that prevents the child being hurt by others' violations.

Parents and educators have to talk with your youth about what national law say about online behaviour, knowledge of legal limits and possible consequences can prevent children and young people from breaking rules and harassing others.

### **Developing a healthy self image**

Professor Mc Guckin et al. (2012) believe that children and young people with a positive self-image, and who learns to act with assertiveness, often have a better understanding of how they should behave in difficult situations.



Specialist within psychology Solfrid Raknes (Norway, 2013) developed some tips for how parents can make the child more robust and enhance their selfimage:

- Help your child to identify his / her own feelings
- Teach your child to talk positively, encouraging and supportive for themselves in difficult situations.
- Talk about nice things that happened during the day.
- Facilitate good relationships and positive experiences with adult caregivers. This makes it easier for children to go to adults for help when they need it.
- Facilitate for your child to develop friendships, and let them bring their friends home. Friendships make your child better equipped to cope with adversity.
- Encourage independence and give the child tasks it can handle.
- Teach your child that adversity is something we can use to become stronger. Life is not just easy, and you do not always get what you deserve.
- You can not prevent your child from facing tough experiences, but you can influence how your child can handle them.

Children do not always tell their parents about cyberbullying that takes place among friends and peers. Parents should listen attentively when their children talk about their online experiences, and acquaint themselves with the various arenas of digital communication that young people are using (such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *snapchat* etc.). If the child has told about a bullying episode, a parent's first response may be to confirm that the child made a good choice: - *Thank you for telling me this..*

If online content is upsetting and inappropriate, and the person or people responsible are known, parents need to ensure they understand why the material is unacceptable or offensive and request they remove it.

If the person responsible has not been identified, or refuses to take down the material parents should contact the social networking site directly to make a report and request the content is taken down. The material posted may be in breach of the service provider's terms and conditions of use



and can therefore be removed. Some service providers will not accept complaints lodged by a third party.

In cases of mobile phone abuse, where the person being bullied is receiving malicious calls and messages, the account holder will need to contact the provider directly. Before parents contact a web service provider, it is important to be clear about where the content is, for example by taking a screen shot of the material that includes the web address.

Parents should stay calm when a child tells them about an incident where they were bullied online. A calm and balanced response helps to keep the lines of communication open with your child.

Kowalski (2008) also suggests that the parents and their child should agree on which cases where the child's parents inform the parents of the counterparty about negative content and / or contact online. By providing children positive feedback, parents can influence behavior without discouraging the child. Well-intentioned, but negatively charged words from adults can be perceived in ways that were not intended.

Self-esteem comes from feeling loved, secure (Taylor, 2011). Parents can increase their child's resilience against negative consequences of bullying by building up a positive self-esteem. They can promote their child's confidence by developing, emphasizing and acknowledge the child's strengths.

The following are some things that parents may wish to consider teaching their children about using the Internet safely, source - [gov.uk/government/uploads](http://gov.uk/government/uploads):

- Make sure you use the privacy settings.
- Always respect others – be careful what you say online.
- Be careful what pictures or videos you upload. Once a picture is shared online it cannot be taken back.
- Only add people you know and trust to friends/followers lists online. When talking to strangers, keep your personal information safe and location hidden.
- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly.



- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly. • Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations.
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher.
- Make sure you tell an adult you trust, for example, a parent, a carer, a teacher, or the anti-bullying coordinator or call a helpline.
- Most social media services and other sites have a button you can click on to report bullying. Doing this can prevent a bully from targeting you and others in the future. Many services take bullying seriously and will either warn the individual or eliminate his or her account.
- While you are on your mobile phone make, sure you also pay attention to your surroundings.

Parents can contact the school, leaders in the youth environment if bullying occurs within an organized activity, police or other agencies if they are considering this as relevant according to the seriousness of what has taken place.



**What parents can do if their child has been cyber bullied:**

- Listen attentively to your child
- Remain calm
- Block the cyber bully
- Do not reply
- Secure evidence
- Find out what is wrong
- Make it clear that it is the bully who has a problem, not the victim
- Create an atmosphere of security
- Strengthen your child's self-esteem
- Report the problem

**What parents can do if their child is involved in bullying others:**

- Develop an accurate and objective overview of what the ongoing cyberbullying involves.
- Find out underlying reasons for this behavior.
- Consider outlining rules for the child in order to promote responsible use of Internet and mobile in general.
- Consider measures to follow up on your child's use of Internet and mobile phone in an appropriate manner.
- Promote and develop the child's capacity for empathy and respect for others.
- Build your child's confidence and self-esteem.
- Facilitate energetic children "catharsis", let them unleash energy and frustration in a constructive way.

Although cyber bullying usually starts at school, and very often involves peers, cyberbullying incidents may occur outside school boundaries. It is very important that schools invest in raising students' knowledge and awareness about the characteristics of new media, about features such as their digital footprint (Chadwick, 2014).

Building a supportive school environment, raising awareness of the problem, providing training for teachers, students, parents, and other school staff, incorporating cyber bullying into the curriculum, publicize antibullying measures, and assuring the indispensable monitoring and evaluation are



among the several practices that shape a wholeschool approach, and thus contribute to the prevention of bullying behaviours.

The communication between teachers and parents may be a crucial element for the early detection of cyberbullying incidents, for its resolution, for offering victims a coordinated quality support, as well as for developing a concerted work with the bullies.

Raising awareness among students, school staff and parents about cyber bullying is a key prevention strategy. By being familiar with cyber bullying signs and symptoms school members will be able to identify cyber bullying situations early and to react accordingly.

A clear and consistent school policy to deal with cyber bullying is extremely important, since it makes school members aware of the school commitment in offering a safe and supportive environment, while at the same time it offers a framework that guides school members' behaviours and practices (Cross et al., 2012).

A school policy which includes cyber bullying should inform about:

- the appropriate behaviours regarding the use of ICT;
- what are the unacceptable behaviours, and the consequences of those behaviours;
- what are the procedures for responding to cyberbullying incidents;
- what are the responsibilities of all the school community regarding prevention and intervention

According to Olweus (2012), a measure that is potentially very effective in reducing the cases of cyber bullying is the school investment in disclosing some identified cases of cyber bullying and communicate the results (maintaining anonymity) to the students.

As part of a whole-school approach, providing training to school staff, students and parents emerged in research as an essential component of every prevention and intervention program (Cross et al., 2012). Given that and are less teachers parents familiar with the new media, training on ICT and cyber bullying is considered an essential method to tackle this problem (Jäger, Amado, Matos, & Pessoa, 2010).



Students may also need advice about what to do to stop the aggression using the electronic media and adopting technological strategies. Beyond empowering students in terms of social skills and digital citizenship, curriculum should also teach about bullying and cyberbullying. Understanding cyber bullying as a community-problem instead of a child-problem or school problem, and to make cyber bullying a more shared responsibility thus constitute essential steps towards more effective prevention and intervention strategies (Cassidy et al., 2013; Välimäki et al., 2012).

When cyber bullying occurs, school's action should focus, in a first moment, in supporting the victims, giving them a feeling of security, and assuring that measures will be implemented to stop the bullying. Examples of activities that may be implemented during classroom or extracurricular activities, with the aim of fostering students' empathy and contribute to positive social relationships:

- Ask students to search for cases of cyber bullying covered by media.
- Watch a film that presents a case of cyber bullying.
- Drama / Role-play, explore with students their feelings and perceptions.

An important part of school's preventive action targeting students should be the conversion of neutral or positive attitudes towards cyber bullying into negative attitudes. Victims of cyber bullying may need advice about the immediate actions they should take to stop the bullying and save evidence.

The Schools Anti-Bullying Programme contain four main components:

1. A network of professionals who are trained to implement the anti-bullying programme in participating schools;
2. Resources for teachers and in-service training provided by the trainers;
3. Resources and information for parents and other members of the community provided by trainers;
4. Trainers taking a consultancy role for the duration of the programme in the participating schools.



Besides parents, school should inform all relevant actors that can contribute to solve the situation, such as psychological counsellors and electronic service providers.

### Case studies – cybersafety

**Online harassment** is computer-mediated words, gestures, and/or actions that tend to annoy, alarm and abuse another person (cf. Black's Law Dictionary, 1990). A crucial component of harassment is that the behavior is repeated—a single instance of abuse, such as an insulting email message, does not generally constitute harassment—and persistent, even after the harasser has been told to desist. The nature of the harm caused by online harassment is diverse, and can include disruption, insult/offense, and defamation of character.

#### Example 1:

Author Jayne Hitchcock exposed an Internet scam by a group of people calling themselves the Woodside Literary Agency. In retaliation, the agency launched a series of email bombs to her, her husband, and her lawyer. Then, the harassers forged posts in her name to hundreds of newsgroups. The posts indicated that Jayne was interested in having people call or stop by her house to share their sexual fantasies with her. Her home address and phone number were included. (WHO@, 2002)

Jayne Hitchcock's case involves elements of stalking (the perpetrators knew where she lived, and she changed residences to escape them) in addition to harassing behaviors (email bombing her email account [disruption] and sending forged posts that defamed her character). This is an example of retaliatory harassment—she was harassed because she did something online (in this case, exposed a scam) that angered someone else.



Example 2:

Two female friends chatting together on IRC were repeatedly sexually propositioned and verbally abused by two male chat channel administrators. When the women protested, the administrators kicked them off the channel. (Herring, 1999)

The case is a clear example of cyberviolence (in that they involve non-physical (verbal) abuse that takes place entirely online.

Online anti-abuse organizations such as WHO@ recommend responding once to the harasser with a polite request that the contact be discontinued, and ignoring him or her thereafter. Such organizations will sometimes intervene to stop harassment, including referring cases to law enforcement authorities. Anti-defamation cases have been brought to trial and judgments obtained against the perpetrators. However, with the exception of "defamation lawsuits against message board posters by companies wanting to silence their online critics" (Benner, 2002), legal action has thus far rarely (if at all) been taken against harassers who operate entirely within online chat rooms and discussion forums.

Lack of familiarity with cyber violence is not the only obstacle to recognizing and resisting it. The Internet itself fosters and abets abusive behavior by rendering perpetrators more anonymous and less fearful of retribution than they would be in physical space. At the same time, computer-mediated abuse typically leaves a trace (an email message, a routing path pointing back to an IP number, etc.), such that most perpetrators who are reported are eventually identified (WHO@, 2002). Nonetheless, the perception of anonymity appears to be a disinhibiting factor that leads otherwise normal individuals to give expression to their aggressive impulses in situations where they might not otherwise do so.

Ideologies of Internet communication play a role as well, notably in defining what counts as socially (un)acceptable behavior online. Libertarian views promoting individual freedom of expression can be used to justify harassment (Herring, 1999), and probably contribute to people's willingness to put up with pervasive behaviors such as flaming, spamming, hate speech, and sexual come-ons (to say nothing of Web pornography, which is actively defended by free speech advocates<sup>13</sup>). In contrast, discourses that construct cyber violence as a problem often invoke ideologies of personal



safety (in the case of stalking and harassment; e.g., Magid, 2000) and community standards of decency (in the case of degrading representations; e.g., Biegel, 1996). In an important sense, cyber violence must be legitimized discursively and ideologically before it can effectively be fought.

Last, as the incidence of cyber violence increases, online organizations such as WHO@, SafetyEd International, WiredPatrol (formerly CyberAngels) and CyberTipline are stepping up their efforts to assist targets of online abuse. Working together with search engines such as Yahoo! and Internet Service Providers such as AmericaOnline, these organizations provide in situ intervention to stop abuse, referrals to legal counsel and law enforcement agencies, information and advice, and statistics about online abuse. They, too, must make judgment calls about what is and is not abuse, in order to allocate their resources effectively.

Example 3:

“And I spoke to a wee boy last week, just because I heard this second-hand, and he was playing a game online with another wee boy in P7, and he had used some inappropriate language. But it was only when I spoke to that wee boy that he sat back and actually thought that “Well, actually, I’m not sure who’s at the other end when I’m speaking out loud and my voice can be heard. I actually don’t know if it’s just my mate or my mate and his parents, or is it somebody else?”

*(Primary Principal)*

Whilst the issue of bully/ victim problems is not directly addressed by legislation, in so far as the key words do not appear, schools are entrusted to provide proper care for students in terms of their general welfare and not just their academic achievement. When dealing with bully/victim problems, schools should have adequate policies and procedures in place to deter such behaviour, and should act properly and promptly in addressing incidents when it does happen (Mc Guckin & Lewis, 2008). Furthermore, in addressing such issues, schools should act according to fair procedures.



Example 4:

“Certainly the tablet technology – which is rapidly and exponentially accelerated – has created a broadening problem of cyberbullying. There’s no doubt about that. It was rare for children to have a mobile phone coming into school, but that increased quite quickly – see, every time you had a birthday or Christmas, another swathe of children have a tablet . . . Smartphones, iPads, iPad Minis, Samsung tablets as well... That’s the stuff children are getting for presents....I was talking to a P1 last Wednesday and she got an iPad Mini for her birthday, at 4 and a half, 5 years of age...it’s beyond belief, and therefore social networking stuff, the text and instant messaging, is rapidly increasing as a problem.” (NI – primary principal)

Many school leaders express confusion regarding the legal parameters of their responsibility in relation to cyberbullying incidents involving their pupils which take place outside school hours. For many, the nature of such cyberbullying incidents “blurs the line” between home and school. There appeared to be variations between schools, some of which were firmly refusing to deal with cases which began out of school, and others which felt a moral duty to respond to all reported cases, even though at times a very direct response was required with parents.

Many parents and teachers struggle to keep up-to-date with the fast changing cyber world. While training is recommended for pupils, parents and teachers (Kowalski et al., 2008). They need more practical guidance and more resources to help schools respond to cyberbullying.

While parental involvement is widely recommended (e.g., Hinduja & Patchin, 2012; Kowalski et al., 2008) in helping prevent and address incidents, it is apparent that less than half of schools had offered any training to parents. (*CyberTraining - A Research-based Training Manual On Cyberbullying*)

When cyberbullying incidents then arose out of school hours, some teachers felt that parents were too quick to ask the school to deal with these complex problems, and at times actually made the situation worse by their own interventions on social media (“throwing in their tuppence worth”), while at the same time not taking advantage of specially organized training/awareness-raising sessions when offered. Clearly there is a need for a joined-up approach to preventing and dealing



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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with incidents of cyberbullying, involving the school and home community, but this study highlights that the current situation falls far short of that shared understanding and mutually supportive approach.







## Module 3: Cyberbullying and Social Media

### Introduction:

This document aims to provide a guidance on the phenomenon of cyberbullying in social media.

This document is addressed to youth operators, teachers, trainers and educators that work with students and adults.

The document follows the process shown in the following figure.

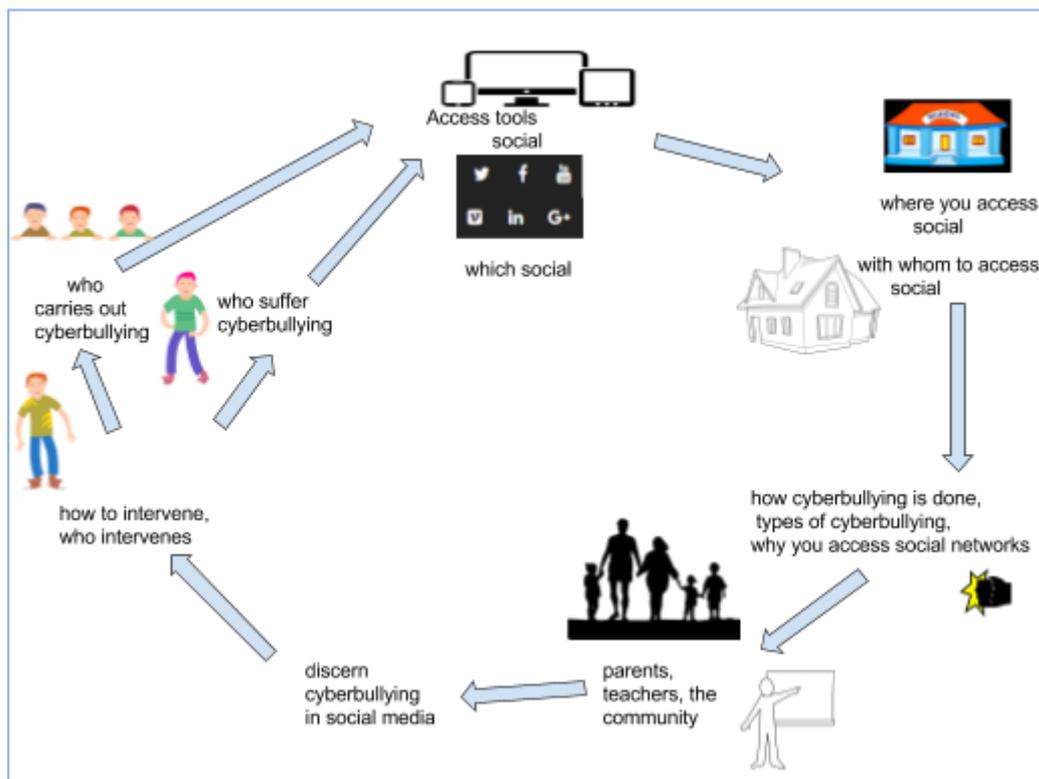


Figure 1 Cyberbullying in the social media process

The phenomena cyberbullying on social media is described and analyzed in the following, considering:

- definition of social media and cyberbullying vs bullying
- actors involved in cyberbullying in social media (the bully, the victim, the observers/spectators)



- identification of the context in which cyberbullying phenomena occur (at school, at home, in groups, with friends)
- analysis of how cyberbullying and types of cyberbullying are done
- analysis to recognize cyberbullying: parents and teachers
- analysis to counteract the phenomenon and understand how to intervene on the bully, on the victim and on those who witness the phenomena of cyberbullying, laws, regulation of social media (Twitter, Facebook,...) at international level.

### The Social Media Landscape

Social media is a generic term that refers to technologies and practices on the web allowing people to interact, share text, photos, images, video and audio content.

Professor Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein defined social media as a group of web applications based on the ideological and technological assumptions of Web 2.0, which allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.

Social media brought a dramatic change in the way people learn, read and share information and contents. Using sociology and technology Social Media transformed the monologue (from one to many) in dialogue (from many to many) and the users/consumers in producers, we talk about “prosumers”.

They become very popular because they allow people to use the web to establish personal or business relationships. Social media are also referred to as user-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media (CGM).

The use of Social Media is very popular and the numbers of people using these channels are really impressive but there are some differences in terms of age and gender.



## Some Facts about Social Media<sup>2</sup>

<p>Facebook is the largest social media network in the world and has members from almost every generation, but some demographics are more attracted to it than others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook has 2.01 billion unique monthly visitors</li> <li>• Facebook users are 53% female and 47% male</li> <li>• 75% of Facebook users spend 20+ minutes on Facebook every day</li> <li>• 83% of women who use social media use Facebook, versus 75% of men who use social media</li> <li>• 63% of seniors aged 50-64 who use the internet are on Facebook, as well as 56% of online seniors over 65</li> </ul>
<p>YouTube is the second largest social media network in the world, and it also has the power of Google behind it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YouTube has 1.3 billion unique visitors per month</li> <li>• YouTube users are 38% female and 62% male</li> <li>• YouTube reaches more 18-34 and 35-49-year-olds than any cable network in the US</li> <li>• 80% of YouTube users are outside the US</li> </ul>
<p>Instagram isn't nearly as big as YouTube, but it is the fastest growing social media network, and that growth shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instagram has 700 million unique visitors per month</li> <li>• 80% of Instagram users come from outside the US</li> <li>• 59% of internet users between 18 and 29 are on Instagram, along with 33% of Internet users between 30 and 49</li> <li>• 17% of teens say Instagram is the most important social media site (up from 12% in 2012)</li> </ul>
<p>Twitter has 328 million unique visitors per month. It's a channel that can't be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 37% of Twitter users are 18-29; 25% are 30-49</li> <li>• 69 million Twitter users are based in the United States</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The data are from: How to Find Social Media Audience for Your Business: From Demographics, All the Way to Which Platforms to Use and What to Post <https://revive.social/find-social-media-audience/>



<p>ignored for business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 79% of Twitter users are based outside the United States</li> </ul>
<p>Snapchat is currently the second fastest growing social network. It's the most suitable channels for teenagers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• over 300 million active users on Snapchat every month</li> <li>• 173 million people use Snapchat every day</li> <li>• 71% of Snapchat users are under 31 years old</li> <li>• 45% of Snapchat users are 18-24 years old</li> </ul>
<p>Pinterest it's a fast-growing social with around 150 millions of users, it's the best choice for visual communications, great for business connected with a photo.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 81% of Pinterest users are women</li> <li>• 40% of new signups are men; 69% are women</li> <li>• The median age of a Pinterest user is 40, but most active users are under 40</li> <li>• 60% of Pinterest users are from the US</li> </ul>
<p>LinkedIn it's the social for professional connections rather than for social activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 million college students and recent graduates are on LinkedIn</li> <li>• 70% of LinkedIn users are from outside the US</li> <li>• 44% of LinkedIn users make more than \$75,000 per year</li> <li>• An average user spends 17 minutes monthly on LinkedIn</li> </ul>



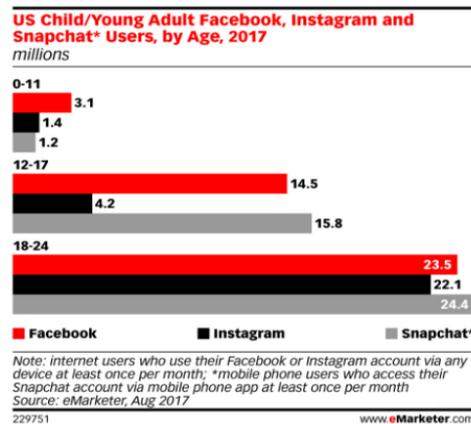
In the following pictures, you can see some trends in the use of social media.

**US Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat\* Users, 2016-2021**  
millions, % change and % of social network users

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Facebook</b>	<b>168.8</b>	<b>172.9</b>	<b>176.6</b>	<b>180.0</b>	<b>183.3</b>	<b>186.7</b>
—% change		3.4%	2.4%	2.1%	1.9%	1.8%
—% of social network users	89.7%	89.1%	88.6%	88.2%	87.9%	87.6%
<b>Instagram</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>96.3</b>	<b>104.5</b>	<b>111.9</b>	<b>118.1</b>
—% change		17.2%	23.8%	12.6%	8.4%	7.1%
—% of social network users	36.7%	44.1%	48.4%	51.2%	53.6%	55.4%
<b>Snapchat*</b>	<b>62.9</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>92.7</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>100.2</b>
—% change		36.3%	25.8%	9.3%	7.1%	4.6%
—% of social network users	33.4%	40.8%	43.4%	45.4%	46.5%	47.0%

*Note: internet users of any age who use their Facebook or Instagram account via any device at least once per month; \*mobile phone users of any age who access their Snapchat account via mobile phone app at least once per month*  
Source: eMarketer, Aug 2017

229752 www.eMarketer.com



Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat users – source: TechCrunch

## Bullying vs Cyberbullying: a definition

Cyberbullying is a form of violence by one or more people towards other people defined the **victim** through the use of the web, using computers or mobile devices.

This violence occurs through messages, films, photographs, intimidating writings through social media or published on websites.

Bullying and cyberbullying mainly involve young people, but adults are also involved in this form of violence.



The table below shows the comparison between cyberbullying and bullying in a document of the Ministry of Education of the Italian University of Research.

### Differences between bullying and cyberbullying

<b>Bullying</b>	<b>Cyberbullying</b>
Only students in the class and/or the school are involved;	Children and adults from all over the world can be involved;
Usually, only those who have a strong character, capable of imposing their own power, can become a bully;	Anyone, even those who are victims in real life, can become cyberbullying;
Bullies are students, classmates or Institute companions, known to the victim;	Cyberbullies can be anonymous and solicit the participation of other anonymous so-called "friends" so that the person does not really know who they are interacting;
Bullying actions are told to other students in the school where they took place, are limited to a specific environment;	The material used for cyberbullying actions can be spread worldwide;
Bullying takes place during school hours or on the journey from school to school, school to home;	Aggressive communications can take place 24 hours a day;
School or class group dynamics limit aggressive actions;	Cyberbullies have ample freedom to do online what they couldn't do in real life;



Need for the bully to dominate in interpersonal relationships through direct contact with the victim;	Perception of invisibility on the part of cyberbullies through actions hidden behind technology;
Visible reactions from the victim and visible in the act of bullying;	The absence of visible reactions from the victim which do not allow cyberbullies to see the effects of his actions;
The tendency to evade responsibility by taking violence on a playful level.	Personality splitting: the consequences of your actions are attributed to the created "user profile".

## Actors involved in cyberbullying

To understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying in the social media, it is necessary to identify first of all who participates in cyberbullying acts:

- The **bully/bullies**: the person or the group, who perpetrates violence, is a youngster, an adult or a boy who seeks popularity, who has a strong aggressiveness, needs affirmation, often does not realize the consequences of his actions. The bully often finds in his actions affirmation in the group.
- The **victim**: the person who suffers the violence. Violence is linked to the characteristics of the victim: religion, physical appearance, etc. The victim is generally a shy, insecure person who does not participate in the group's activities. Sometimes the victim is an isolated person, who has few or no friends. One can speak of a provocative victim if it is the behavior's victim that provokes cyberbullying.



- The cyberbullying can also affect adults, because insults, derision, sarcasm involve all those who are on the Internet, all who use social media: Tiziana Cantone was an Italian woman who committed suicide after private videos of her having sex that she sent to a former boyfriend and other acquaintances via WhatsApp were extensively shared through websites.
- The **Observers**: cyberbullying phenomena in social media are characterized by the presence of groups of people who assist without participation. The listening group is necessary for the bully to have greater recognition of his actions.

## The forms of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is various forms, for example in gaming cyberbullying is often called "griefing", in the following you can read about various forms.

### Different types of cyberbullying

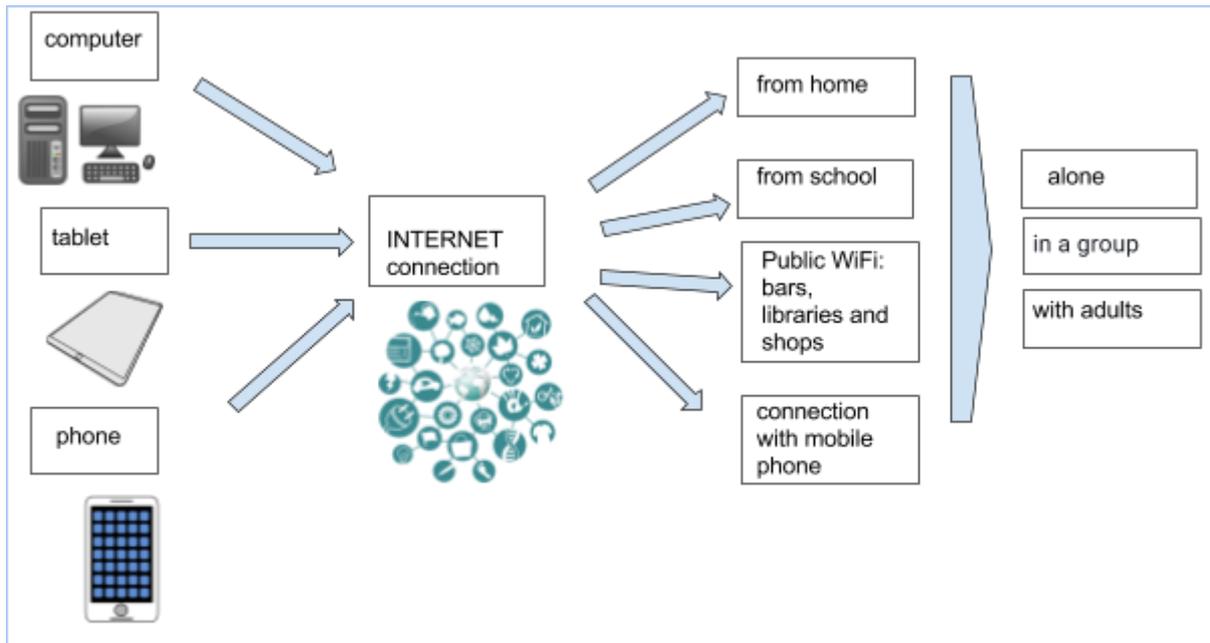
<b>Flaming</b>	Sending violent and vulgar messages.
<b>Harassment or Stalking</b>	Sending repeated messages to an individual.
<b>Denigration</b>	Dissemination of false news.
<b>Identity theft / unauthorized access and Impersonation</b> <b>Masquerading</b>	Identity theft. Masquerading is a situation where a bully creates a fake identity to harass someone anonymously. In addition to creating a fake identity, the bully can impersonate someone else to send malicious messages to the victim
<b>Tricky Outing</b>	It consists of having the trust of the victim and then



	spreading his or her confidence.
<b>Ostracising/Exclusion</b>	Intentional exclusion of a person from a group.
<b>Happy slapping</b>	Dissemination of online material in which the victim is resumed while suffering violence.
<b>Trolling</b>	Attacking a person on important personal or family matters.
<b>Roasting</b>	Attacking a person until he or she bends, no longer resists attacks.
<b>Creating Websites, Blogs, Polls and More</b>	Development of vilification websites, vilification blogs, vilification surveys.
<b>Self-cyberbullying or digital self-harm</b>	As the case of Hannah Smit sending messages denigrating on the web.

## Accessing the Social Media

In order to access a Social Media you need a device: it could be a desktop or a laptop computer and an Internet connection. The access to the Social Media can be done from home or schools, but accessing from mobiles or smartphone is possible everywhere. When they use Social Media they could be alone or with friends, in the case of children/minors they can be assisted by adults (teachers, parents, caregivers).



### How and Where Social Media are used

### Opportunities and Challenges in Social Media

According to studies and research carried out, social media offer teenagers opportunities and, the ones who are timid and anxious have the possibility to hide their names and identities so that they can express their ideas and deal with other people.

The web can avoid direct confrontation and could generate security or start to grow conviction even in fearful people.

The great speed of social media communication and the ability to communicate everywhere and throughout the world can allow teenagers to have new friendships, to share many events of their lives with their friends, consolidate friendships.

Sexuality and identity are two other important aspects of adolescence that can benefit social media.



The opportunity to compare with other friends and then be able to correct themselves by changing their ideas, their own appearance and knowing themselves are important in the development of children.

In a survey involving about 600 children and teenagers of 9-18 years who visited online chat rooms and used instant messaging, it emerged that they can overcome shyness or create new relationships.

The discovery of one's own sexuality and personality can lead to risky behaviors: some teenagers can publish photographs, videos, comments that refer to sex, substance use, and violence and can see youngsters themselves involved in these acts.

Youngsters may not understand that this information can become public and affect themselves and others involved. The same information can be accessed by potential employers, teachers and could be influenced by it.

In a study by Moreno, Parks, and colleagues (2009), a 500-page analysis of MySpace profiles of 18-year-old university students showed that 54% reported risky behaviors; gender 24%, substance abuse 41% and violence 14%.

In a study group conducted by Moreno, Briner, and colleagues (2009), teenagers aged between 11 and 18 years observed alcohol references on social networking sites as representative of actual use and realistic behaviors.

In another study group from Moreno and colleagues (2011), male university students reported that sexual references on youngsters' social networking sites increase sexual expectations among males.

Representation of risky behaviors may encourage behavior in other people, such as violence or alcohol use.

Young people who believe themselves to be strengthened in the world of the Internet, however, can suffer consequences within relationships in their own lives, at school, at work and in the workplace, which could also be denounced or dismissed.



## Using Social Media at school - The Italian case

In the era of digital communication, where 91% of young people between 14 and 18 years old are enrolled at least one social network and 87% use a smartphone connected to the Internet, CENSIS and the Post and Communications Police have launched a common research path to better understand the implications of the use of new technologies by teenagers. Schools are becoming more and more digital. Almost all schools have a website, which is 65% of cases run by teachers, 16% by non-teaching staff and 12% by external consultants.

In 86% of schools, there is a Wi-Fi network, which only in 5% of the institutions is freely accessible to students. 93% of schools have a multimedia lab, but only in 17% of cases, it is open beyond school hours. 46% of the principals are aware of the existence of a Facebook page that concerns the school, although in 55% of cases it is managed by students. In 47% of the schools, the IT security officer is a teacher, 34% an external consultant and 19% an administrative operator.

### The Italian Research: “How much do you share”

The research carried out under the project “Quanto Condividi” (“How much do you share”), presented in Rome on June 2017, was created by the synergy between the Computer Crime Analysis Unit of the National Contracts on Online Pedopornography (CNCPO) Post and Communications Police Department, Department of Psychology of La Sapienza University of Rome and the Department of Minority and Community Justice.

The research was designed specifically by using short stories, representing real cases that were known by the Post Police and dealt with by the Department For Minority Justice and Community, as offenses committed via the Internet.

The aim was to subject secondary school students to behaviors, which constitute different crime cases, implemented by peers so that they can explore their reactions and beliefs. The students participating in the survey were asked what their relationship with social networks was, then they



were invited to read the scenarios and to answer some questions about the truthfulness of history, the degree of severity if it had been violated by laws. Five cases of online offenses committed by minors have been selected.

Every story has been presented with fictitious names and without any reference to its criminal proceedings. The questionnaire was aimed at investigating two different aspects: both the "habits" of using and sharing the various materials (messages, photos, videos, news) on different social (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others) and to analyze and understand how the teens are aware of the cybercrimes that they themselves can do or can undergo and the possible implications of their behaviors.

The results of the investigation shows the relevance of **revenge behaviors**, and there is clearly a **distinction between cognitive aspects, whereby students recognize certain underlying mechanisms and emotions that create an illusion that things always happen to others and that will have little consequences**, which do not cause suffering and that in the end appear almost like a game with totally reversible effects.



The survey involved 1,874 teens between the ages of 11 and 19: most of them use social networks for several hours from the phone. On the top there is Whatsapp, with 9 out of 10 people claiming to use it, 5 out of 10 prefer Instagram, while only 1 in 10 uses Twitter. As for the reasons, most of them (6 out of 10) claim to use them to socialize or simply curiosity, sharing mostly messages and photos (6 out of 10), and videos and news (2 out of ten), but few are wondering about where the



material ends (only 35% of high school students responded with the option "all" to the question "Who can access the material that you share?", while 37% of middle school respondents answered "only recipient"

## Identify the signs of cyberbullying

Kids and teens who suffer from cyberbullying sometimes don't even talk about it with their friends: it's not a surprise that parents or teachers can be unaware of the problem or underestimate it.

Data from the National Adolescence Observatory are alarming: 74% of the victims of bullying and cyberbullying from 14 to 19 years of age, have never talked about what they suffer at school and digitally with their parents and even 87% of the children targeted at school, about 9 victims out of 10, did not tell teachers, expressing an important distrust of the school as an effective tool for protection and intervention.

Distrust of parents and teachers increases as the age of children increases.

Bullying and cyberbullying are behaviors that can affect the emotional part of young people and we must consider some signs like these:

- a child seems more shy, quieter, a little less smiling and enthusiastic to go to school. A child shows emotional responses (laughs, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device



- considerable, rapid increases or decreases in device usage, including text messages



- ask to stay at home more often, they are more frequently ill with headaches, belly pain or anyway fever and psychosomatic states because suffering bullying can affect the immune system
- are more isolated, closed, almost thoughtful. They make up less with friends, socialize little with the class group, which does not involve them in group activities and generally can have friendships with a single boy or girl
- they change their attitude to technology, they are less attached, almost as if they were afraid of finding unpleasant surprises or reading negative things about them
- a child hides his or her screen or device when others are close together and avoids discussing what they are doing on their device
- change mood when receiving notifications on your phone
- bullying and cyberbullying also hurt personal safety, the child doesn't feel stronger, safer, lose self-confidence, reduce self-esteem and avoid confrontation with others





- sleep is often also a very important indicator because it is affected and children sleep poorly and badly in terms of quality and quantity. This is a burden on the attentive level and ability to concentrate and often also on the educational performance that can drop
- a child begins to avoid social situations, even those that have been appreciated in the past
- social media accounts are closed or new ones are displayed
- avoid direct contact with their executioners, try to do other activities, to go outside, to avoid those guys and groups that feed the prevarication, even if sometimes they arrive in chat rooms or social networks equally insulting and insulting through cyberbullying. A child withdraws or depresses or loses interest in people and activities

### Slang useful to know

The use of slang and jargon is very common among teens and it helps in creating a sense of community. It could be useful to know the language used by teens and especially some acronyms that can be monitored. In the following table, you can find some examples, but of course, these things are different in any community and can change very rapidly.

#### PHRASES TO BE AWARE OF

GNOG: Get naked on camera

FBOI: A guy who's just looking for sex

WTTP: Want to trade pictures

FINSTA: Fake Instagram account

PAL: Parents are listening

1174: Meet at a party



FAM	Refers to someone who is a close friend
LIT/TURNT/TURNT UP	Something that's active or popular, can also refer to being stoned or drunk
SMH	"Shaking my head", meaning "I don't believe it" or "that's so dumb"
KMS/KYS	"kill myself", "kill yourself"
DABBING	Reference to concentrated doses of cannabis; also a dance craze
SNATCHED	On point, very good, or well styled
NETFLIX AND CHILL	Getting together and hooking up
AF	Short for "as f**k", used to mean "extremely"
BASIC	Used to refer to someone viewed as a boring or conforming person
	Emoji used to mean pride or general acceptance of an idea
	Emoji used to refer to the penis
	Emoji used to refer to the butt
	Emoji used to mean "ejaculate", often used in conjunction with the tongue emoji
MOS	Mom over shoulder
9 AND CD9	Parents are nearby
99	Parents are gone
WTPP	"Want to trade pictures?"

A child can be involved in cyberbullying in different ways. A child may be bullied or present in a situation of bullying. Parents, teachers and other adults may not be aware of all social media platforms and apps used by a child. More digital platforms a child uses, more opportunities there are to be exposed to potential cyberbullying.

Many of the warning signs that cyberbullying is happening around a child's use of the device. Because children spend a lot of time on their devices: computers, tablets and especially mobile phones, increases or decreases in use may be less noticeable. It is important to pay attention when a child shows sudden changes in digital and social behavior.

Teachers, school administrators, parents, and trainers are in unique positions to use their skills and roles to create safe environments with positive social norms. They are also in positions where they may notice changes in youngsters' behavior in group settings, such as when a group of children focuses attention on a child. There are things you can do in class or other group settings to deal with or prevent cyberbullying.



## The importance of reporting cyberbullying

According to a survey by Ditch the Label of the year 2014, 47% of young people who participated in the survey received unpleasant comments on the profile and 62% sent out unspeakable private messages via smartphone apps.

Most apps and social networking sites are aimed at people aged 13 or over. They also state that bullying, offensive behavior that includes harassment, identity theft, and identity theft are prohibited and not permitted. However, a UK bullying survey shows that 91% of those who reported cyberbullying said no action was taken. This can leave non-believing, vulnerable users and lose their self-esteem.

One of most hateful aspects of cyberbullying is the silence of students/people that don't speak when they are aware that something wrong is going on: for this reason, it's important to emphasize the importance of reporting.

Two successful examples of reporting are from the US: the Safe2Tell Colorado' launched after the Columbine massacre, offers the possibility to teens and adults to report bullying situations either at school or in the community; another is Childnet International that underlines the importance of capturing evidence of cruel online behavior for use in reporting.

A good exercise to do in the classroom is teaching how to take screenshots and save message threads: learning how to capture these evidence and bring bullies to light it's a powerful way to dissuade abusive behavior.

Most Social media channels offer built-in tools for reporting and it's important to make youngsters and student's awareness of these features; on Connectsafely.org you can find some good suggestions.

If you are a teacher or a youth operator you can find some useful hints on what to do and not do with youngsters on social media, in order to balance personal e professional presence. In order to have a safe presence, here some suggestions but of course, you can adapt to your teaching style:



- 1- **Setting expectations for parents and family** in order to prevent awkward interactions on social media; define a social media policy approved by the school principal and share as a classroom policy can help outline virtual boundaries and ensure that everyone knows how to behave.
- 2- **Create a safe area for students on group/classroom** page for allowing responsible interactions and teachers can use social media to enhance interpersonal relationships between students

A general rule when you make a complaint to be a victim of online bullying is to copy the terms and conditions that have been violated and make a screenshot of the comment or photo as evidence. This could cause any of these sites and apps to take action, as you have shown them an obligation to investigate and take appropriate action.

You can find a useful suggestion for reporting cyberbullying on Social Media from the Bullying UK website, and also in the next session of this document: in general remember that: you **can block of unfollowing contacts that send you unpleasant messages** on Facebook, Twitter and that every social media has features for reporting bullying or abuse on messaging.

In short, if you become aware of a cyberbullying phenomenon or if you want to prevent cyberbullying, you can:

- Contact the police or agencies (in Italy "Telefono Azzurro") for advice
- Report to social media and ask for content blocking
- Install software on your mobile phone or computer that filters content and restricts the use
- Talk about this with adults, parents, school Staff



## Software helping in counteracting cyberbullying at the school level

There is software for mobile phones and PCs that allow filtering websites and can be used at school or at home to block access to some website. We can cite here NetGuard and OpenDNS.



**NetGuard** is open-source software and has been used by the CSP to set up a trial in Torino, in a secondary school. This trial called "BYOD - Bringing your device - to school" is used to allow a better management of the use of the school wifi connection. The test concerned the development of an application that would allow students to use the wi-fi connection provided by the school, but with some limitations during class hours: the idea is the school should provide the connection only for education purpose.



**OpenDNS** in the free version allows filtering and site control.

## Legal aspects

### Privacy and personal data

The protection of personal data and privacy has become even more important with the advent of social media. And even more important for access to platforms, it has become even more important for young people under 13 years of age.

The main social networks have a minimum age for subscribers of 13 years old because is used the US regulations. In Europe there is no precise indication, each country applies its laws, in Italy under 18 years the boy has a reduced legal capacity, the child under 14 years of age is not attributable and has no legal capacity. The new European Regulation (GDPR) does not allow access to social



media and messaging services to teen under the age of 16 unless parents' consent is given. However, the rule provides that individual countries may change this rule.

	<p>On the Facebook website, there is a section on cyberbullying where is possible to get directions on how to behave if you encounter incorrect content for yourself or other people. It is specified that Facebook will only intervene if the content is not in line with the terms of Facebook's contract.</p> <p>Of course, it's a problem not having an URL easier to reach and things change rapidly, so you could have a problem in find with this address and also contents may change.</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/help/420576171311103">https://www.facebook.com/help/420576171311103</a></p>
   <i>Instagram</i>	<p>Instagram provides a section about Privacy and Setting where you can find information on how to restrict access to your photos and how to manage followers. In the Safety Center, you can find Instagram's indications on the policies used by social media for the processing of personal data and on the reporting of possible abuses.</p> <p><a href="https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501">https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501</a></p> <p><a href="https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501/?helpref=hc_fnav&amp;bc[0]=368390626577968&amp;bc[1]=1757120787856285">https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501/?helpref=hc_fnav&amp;bc[0]=368390626577968&amp;bc[1]=1757120787856285</a></p>
	<p><a href="https://www.snap.com/en-US/privacy/privacy-center/">https://www.snap.com/en-US/privacy/privacy-center/</a></p> <p>Snapchat has a section for privacy management.</p>
	<p>Twitter has a section for for privacy</p> <p><a href="https://about.twitter.com/en_us/safety.html">https://about.twitter.com/en_us/safety.html</a></p>



### Reporting to Social Media Provider

You can find some good indications on how to report cyberbullying or sexting on social media searching online: for example, you can try Childline .

Every Social Media provides guidelines on how to use the platform in a correct way and what to do in case you suffer cyberbullying. It's important to remark that sharing images of people under 18 is illegal and usually every social media provides tools to report it in order to get this images taken down. In the following, you can see some examples.

	<p><b>Take threats seriously</b></p> <p>If you believe you are in physical danger, contact the local law enforcement authorities who have the tools to address the issue.</p> <p>If you decide to work with law enforcement, make sure to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document the violent or abusive messages with print-outs or screenshots</li> <li>• Be as specific as possible about why you are concerned</li> <li>• Provide any context you have around who you believe might be involved, such as evidence of abusive behavior found on other websites</li> <li>• Provide any information regarding previous threats you may have received</li> </ul>
	<p>If you ever experience any harassment, bullying, or any other safety concern, you can always report it right to us! Every report we receive is reviewed by someone at Snapchat, usually within 24 hours. <i>Together we can make Snapchat a safer place and a stronger community.</i></p>



**To report a Story on Snapchat,** just press and hold on the offending Snap until a  button appears in the bottom-left corner. Tap it to report the Story and let us know what's going on.

**To report a Snap someone sent you,** just press and hold on the Snap until a  button appears in the bottom-left corner. Tap it to report the Snap and let us know what's going on.

**To report a Snapchat account,** press and hold on that Snapchatter's name and tap the  button. Tap 'Report' to report the account and let us know what's going on.

**To report a Story on the web** from your computer, click the button on the video, then click 'Report'. To report a Story on the web from your phone or tablet, tap the button on the video to report it and let us know what's going on.

**To hide something in Discover,** just press and hold a tile on the Discover screen, then tap 'See less like this' or 'Unsubscribe'. You should start to see fewer Snaps like that on your Discover screen!

**Please Note:** If you're unable to report a safety concern in-app, you can still report any issue you run into right on the [Snapchat Support](#) site!

## The Italian Law on Cyberbullying

In the past few years, Italy has experienced an upswing in young people's suicide attempts due to cyberbullying attacks. These tragedies have been a wakeup call for parents, teens, and society at large concerning just how dangerous cyberbullying had become.



In January of 2016, a young 12-year-old girl attempted suicide after being consistently abused by fellow classmates online. Before leaping out of a window in her home, the teen left a note indicating that bullying was the reason for her taking such drastic action. According to news stories from across the country, such incidents are not isolated. Italy apparently has a history of Internet bullying wherein young people seem to be the main perpetrators and targets.

Bullying – to include Internet bullying – hasn't been considered a criminal offense in Italy unless such activity takes on the nature of what's considered a crime such as physical assault or stalking, before the new law has been approved unanimously by the Parliament in May 2017.

In January of 2013, Carolina Picchio, a bright and attractive 14-year-old student from the City of Novara, near Turin, committed suicide due to excessive cyber harassment from an ex-boyfriend and his friends. The case was referred by the national and international news because of the tragic circumstances of her demise. Her last Facebook post related her feelings of despair: "Forgive me if I'm not strong. I cannot stand it any longer."

When investigating the incident, Police discovered her former boyfriend and a group of his friends were circulating a video of the girl in a drunken state during a party. In addition, the boy had targeted Carolina with verbal abuse and threats on Facebook. At the time of her suicide, Police discovered that Carolina had received over 2,000 malicious text messages only on Whatsapp.

This incident clearly reflects the need for change in the stance schools and government agencies take against bullying offenses. The eight boys who perpetrated the cyber attacks against Carolina, aged 15-17, have been later investigated for their role in instigating a suicide and placing pedo-pornographic material on the Net. One of the investigating prosecutors, Francesco Saluzzo, also considered citing Facebook for not taking action in removing the offensive posts, even after requests made by relatives and friends.

Starting in May 2015, Italy's Senate initiated action to institute cyberbullying legislation in an effort to stop bullying in Italian schools. Donatella Ferranti, Chairperson of Italy's House Judiciary



Committee, corroborated the need for legislation, after taking note of the rampant increase of online threats, texts and offensive social media posts against Italy's youth.

Two years after, on May 17th the Italian Parliament has approved a long-awaited legislation to address cyberbullying, in a move to prevent users of the Internet and social platforms from abusing a minor. The piece of legislation, which broadly defines cyberbullying as "any use of the Internet to offend, threaten, abuse, blackmail, denigrate, and steal the identity of minors", was welcomed by the families of victims as the first step in a long battle.

The Italian law follows similar legislative initiatives in other countries. In the United States, only 23 states have included cyber abuse in their bullying laws and 18 states punish it with criminal sanctions, according to cyberbullying.org.

The new law in Italy includes two important new aspects:

- Schools have to appoint a teacher to lead initiatives against cyberbullying
- minors above 14 years of age who have been victims of online abuse, as well as their parents, can ask website hosts and social platforms to remove and block abusive content within 48 hours. Access providers and research engines, however, are excluded.

The law encountered some criticism due to the real application of removing content in short time and also related to the training and responsibility of the school teacher. Moreover, at this stage there are little investments provided to support the law: besides some money for the Post and Communication Police, the schools will have only 47 euros each to manage the training and the management for this new role.

#### **In a short the main point of cyberbullying Italian laws:**

DISCLOSURE FOR FAMILIES: unless the fact constitutes a crime, the head teacher who becomes aware of acts of cyberbullying will promptly inform the subjects exercising parental responsibility or the guardians of the children involved and activate appropriate educational actions.



AMMUNITION: until a lawsuit is filed for some of the crimes referred to in Articles 594 (Ingiuria), 595 (Defamation) and 612 (Threat) of the Criminal Code and art. 167 of the Code for the protection of personal data, as per Legislative Decree 30 June 2003, n. 196, committed through the Internet, by minors above the age of fourteen against another minor, and 'applicable the admonition procedure referred to in Article 8, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Decree-Law 23 February 2009, n. 11, converted, with amendments, by law April 23, 2009, n. 38. To this end, the Quaestor shall convene the minor, together with at least one parent or another person exercising parental responsibility; the effects of the warning cease at the age of majority.

OBSCURING: the child who has at least 14 years of age and the parents or the responsibility of the child, can forward to the data controller or the manager of the website or social media an application for the obscuration, removal or blocking of any other personal data of the minor, disseminated on the Internet. If it is not provided within 48 hours, the interested party can contact the Privacy Guarantor that intervenes directly within the following 48 hours.



## Case studies

### Matthew: the newly arrived in the school

**Situation:** Matthew comes from another country and recently joined the school, he's a bit shy and it's not easy for him to make a new acquaintance. One day while browsing on a social media website, he found a classroom page and discovered a photo of him, with the label "The extra – fat – nerd".

He was upset and posted nasty comments. This creates an escalation of bad comments on the social and also strange behaviors in the lunchroom and on the playground. A teacher noticed the situations and asked Matthew what was going on: so he described the social media and the cyberbullying.

In the school, there is a great sensitivity to cyberbullying and there is a zero-tolerance policy on bullying. The creators of the unauthorized page were identified and a discussion with students and parents helped in to remove it from the social.

Matthew had a very bad time, in which he felt alone and unaccepted by his comrades. No one was able to understand what's going on, neither their parents and it was not easy for Matthew to be accepted in the group.

### Lessons

- Try to have a daily conversation with your children about what happened in their digital life, as it's an important part of their identity
- Discuss with them about inappropriate message or pictures they could see online and about the ethical and legal aspects connected.



### Gloria and Hateful Texting

**Situation:** Gloria is a nice and clever girl. She and her best friends liked both the same boy and have many discussions about this, but none of the two has a relationship with him. Suddenly one day, without any special reason, Gloria started in receiving rude text messages at all hours on her smartphone, calling her in very bad names and inappropriate messages like “Why don’t you kill yourself?” And these messages were shared with others friends.

Gloria was not understanding why everyone treats her in this way and started to retire herself from the social and in general from life, spending more and more time alone in her room. Her mom was really worried about this Gloria retirement and investigated with some of Gloria’s friends and discovered what happened and learned about the hateful messages.

The reaction of Gloria’s mom was to discuss with her daughter that she was aware of the hateful messages and decided to talk with teachers and principals: with this help, Gloria was put in a situation that allowed herself to clarify the situation with her friends.

In Gloria’s family, they never discussed cyberbullying or how to behave in a case like this one. She was unprepared to face such a major assault on her self-esteem.

### Lessons

- Give your children the information and the support to understand that bullying behaviors exist and encourage them by telling you if they feel bullied or if they know that someone else is bullied.
- Teach your children how to behave online and that anonymity online is an illusion.

### Lucie: be careful with your post

**Situation:** Lucie wrote an Instagram post to a small group of friends, writing stupid things about people who were going to a party and then this post was sent to other youngsters at her school a month later.



People started saying terrible things at school, she tried to apologize to them for the stupid things she had written.

After 6 months Lucie sent a photo of Instagram with the inscription "Life is good" and on that post, there were many ugly and repeated comments. She also started to have bad comments from people she did not know, many friends defended her but nobody had the courage to defend Lucie online.

After repeated attacks, she decided to talk to her mother and her family.

Her mother reached out to the school advisor who reminded that the school has a code of conduct policy that includes a cyberbullying section that all student sign.

Now after this incident there were no more problems.

Lucie understood that we must be careful about what we write on the Internet because while people can forget what is written on social media is not deleted and can spread very quickly and can come back even after a long time.

#### **Lessons:**

- understood that anything written in a limited group can be divulged to very large people on the Internet
- **report cyberbullying**
- Don't stay alone

#### **Mallory Grossman: negligence of the school!**

Mallory Grossman committed suicide at the age of 12. For about 2 years she was persecuted on social media and at school. Her classmates and peers started to humiliate her and write cruel messages mainly on Snapchat.

They wrote to her "when do you die?", "Why do not you commit suicide?"



The mother tried to talk to the families of the bullies who denied everything, she tried talking to the school principal who did not intervene.

#### Lessons:

- **log off and block harassers**
- **to changes in the mood and physical of children, of people because they can mean unexpressed discomfort**
- If someone you know is being bullied, take action

#### Ryans Story: bullied because of disability

Ryan suffered years of bullying at his school because of his learning disorder and other problems connected to language, and motor skills development, some boys mistreated him at school. One of them pretended to be his friend, so he had some personal information told to everyone.

They said he was gay. And to prove that it was not true, he tried to create a friendship with a friend



on social media, leaving a lot of messages. This girl, however, has disclosed to all the conversations they had had and in front of other kids told him that he was just a loser.

Being bullied for years and losing people's trust has been decisive for Ryan's decision to quit. Parents only blame themselves for not being able to understand and intervene adequately to help their child.

#### Lessons:

- **the victims of bullying are the weakest people**
- **it is important to have real friends to address the problem**
- Save the evidence



### Flavia Rizza: a truly happy ending story

Flavia is a girl who first suffered from bullying and then cyberbullying. She is the girl who suffered, who cried, who was afraid of not being fit, but also a girl who has good grades in school. A girl overweight and for that, she was the victim of her companions.

Bullying and cyberbullying in Flavia's story is the result of the same cause of ignorance and wickedness of the teens who commit the facts, of their families and of those who pretend not to see.



Flavia, because of her overweight, suffers attacks first in primary school and then in the secondary classes: these attacks were carried out school also through social media by both his schoolmates and his companions.

After years of abuse, he had the courage to talk about it and teachers and parents helped her by intervening with teens, families and blocking social content.

Flavia now is spreading her story and she repeats in interviews that the important thing is to talk about the problem, both those who suffer from it and those who witness bullying. But it is also important to create situations where people can be happy, have friends and feel good. Two important lessons come from the history of Flavia:

- Talk about bullying
- Don't stay alone

### Best practices

- Generazioni connesse

The "Generazioni Connesse" project is the Italian Safer Internet Centre co-funded by the European Commission. It aims at continuing the experience underway since 2013 and, at the same time, improving, strengthening and broadening the role it has undertaken at a national



level by the Safer Internet Centre. The aim is to become an ever-greater national reference point on topics related to a safer and better Internet for young people.

The Safer Internet Centre is made up of an Awareness Centre, two Hotlines, and a Helpline.

The Consortium that operates in the Safer Internet Centre is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Universities, and Research (MIUR) in partnership with the Ministry of Internal Affairs – Postal and Communication Police, National Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence, University of Florence, University La Sapienza – Inter-University Centre, Save the Children Italia Onlus, SOS Telefono Azzurro Onlus, Social Cooperative E.D.I., Movimento Difesa del Cittadino, Skuola.net.

The project general objective is encouraging the better conditions for initiatives that help make the Internet a better and more trusted place for children and young people. While the project is addressed primarily to children and teenagers, aged 6 – 18 years, also parents, educators, teachers and youth professionals are involved.

The Safer Internet Centre implements a number of actions:

- **Awareness and information actions**
  - **Dissemination and visibility actions**
  - **Actions to combat the spread of illegal material online**
  - **Support and guidance assistance**
- The National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (ABC)

The National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (ABC) is a university designated research center located in DCU Institute of Education. The work of the Centre builds on over 22 years of research started in 1996.

Researchers at ABC were the first in Ireland to undertake research on school bullying, workplace bullying, homophobic bullying and cyberbullying. ABC leads the field of research, resource



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

CYBER   
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development and training in bullying in Ireland and is an internationally recognized center of excellence in bullying research.

### The Blurred Lives Project

The “Blurred Lives Project – a cross-national, co-participatory exploration of cyberbullying, young people and socio-economic disadvantage” – brings five European partners with specific expertise and experience in tackling cyberbullying. The central aim of the project is to empower young people aged 14-16 to better understand, prevent and combat cyberbullying.

The project is innovative in its focus on cyberbullying among young people in five different regions of the European Union, but also in its aim to be participatory, involving, training and empowering young people as co-researchers. In seeking to work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the study also uniquely aims to explore how these young people are affected by cyberbullying, but also to provide them with accessible, up-to-date resources to help them.

The project will involve young people in each partner region (aged 14-16) in responding to a survey of their experiences of cyberbullying, co-leading quality circle sessions and sequential focus group interviews, and helping create a comic book resource which is highly visual and engaging, as well as feeding into the Guide for Parents/Carers.



## Recommendation and practical advice

A recent research from Mehari and all was aimed to investigate which norms can be helpful in cyberbullying prevention and also which are the barriers. They made an interview with adolescent, pediatricians and parents: they reported perceptions that youths should *intervene at the moment and get outside help for others*. **Fear of repercussions** emerged as a significant barrier to these behaviors. Participants believed that **parents should communicate with their children and monitor and supervise youths' online activities**. Barriers included the perception of priority and low parental efficacy or naiveté. Participants believed that providers should provide education and resources and ask screening questions; the most frequently identified barrier to those behaviors was the perception of providers' role.

On the Web, you can find a lot of resources supporting you in dealing with cyberbullying as a teen or an adult as if you are a bully or a bullied person. We collected here some few examples.

## Practical advice

From case studies we can summarize some important indications to tackle cyberbullying in social media:

- understood that anything written in a limited group can be divulged to very large people on the Internet
- **report cyberbullying**
- don't stay alone
- **log off and block harassers**
- **to changes in the mood and physical of children, of people they can mean unexpressed discomfort**
- if someone you know is being bullied, take action
- **the victims of bullying are the weakest people**
- **it is important to have real friends to address the problem**
- save the evidence



Following to the police from **Cheshire Constabulary**, cyberbullying isn't restricted to the Internet. If a bully has access to your private phone number, they can leave abusive text messages, photos, calls or voicemails. Even though it is a lot of hassle, the best way to stop this type of bullying is to change your phone number. Making offensive calls is a criminal offense. Anyone who is found guilty could have to pay a large fine and they may also be given a six-month prison sentence (following UK laws).

Removing a bully from your 'friends' or creating a new email address can be solutions to cyberbullying. However, it is **important to look at the bigger picture** as this type of behavior is usually only one part of the issue. **Bullying is usually carried out by people you know** and could start off in places such as school, work or clubs.

If you are a victim of bullying, **never respond or get into an argument** with the person or group. **Save any messages, texts or pictures** as they can be used to help the police investigate further if the need arises. Any threats of violence should be **reported to the police**.

### Facebook Bullying Prevention Hub

**Facebook** has just created a service for preventing cyberbullying in collaboration with the Yale Center For Emotional Intelligence:

*Developed in partnership with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, the **Bullying Prevention Hub** is a resource for teens, parents, and educators seeking support and help for issues related to bullying and other conflicts. It offers step-by-step plans, including guidance on how to start some important conversations for people being bullied, parents who have had a child being bullied or accused of bullying, and educators who have had students involved with bullying.*



Remember that bullying is  
never your fault, and it can  
happen to anyone.

Bullying might make you feel  
embarrassed and like you're all  
alone, but you're not alone. Reach  
out to someone you trust to help you  
through the situation. No one should  
ever have to tolerate being bullied.



### Stay calm

- Take a few deep breaths. Clear your mind so you can make the best possible decision about whom to contact and what you want to say them.
- Do not approach the person who bullied you when you're upset.



### Tell someone you trust

- If you've been threatened or you're worried about your safety, talk to someone you trust immediately.
- Reach out to a close friend, a family member, a teacher or even the authorities.



### Be safe

- Never risk being alone with anyone who makes you feel unsafe.
- If you talk to the person, use simple and direct language, remain calm.



### Don't retaliate

- Don't try to get even or put the person who bullied you down.
- Don't do or say something you might regret later.

## General recommendations

In **order to prevent**, you need to get the knowledge of the phenomenon, and it should include two fundamental aspects:

- educating to emotions, to the recognition of our emotions, to those of others and to empathy, to respect for diversities
- informing all children of children and adults of the effect of an act of bullying or cyberbullying, stressing that the bully adopts certain behaviors because in reality hides weakness or social difficulty. Anonymity on the net does not exist: victim and perpetrator can be easily identified.

If, unfortunately, you have to intervene after a cyberbullying

- avoid exposing victims and perpetrators further, not republish or share videos or photos
- immediately report videos or photos to web manager or social media providers
- stay close to the victim, not to make her feel alone and make her understand that she can react
- request the school, even if the episode did not happen at school



- ask for advice from a psychologist for serious cases
- talk to the cyberbully and his family, listen to his reasons, make him understand the consequences of his, share with him a decisive action as removing published content and encourage an educational "penalty" to allow the bully to help disadvantaged people. Punitive actions must be agreed with the bully
- if the bully does not cooperate or the episodes are repeated and appropriate to proceed to formal denial to protect the victims



## Exercises, self-reflection, and quizzes

In this section we'd give you some suggestions for activities to increase awareness, the same questions to start some common reflections in your organization.

### Exercise 1 – Theater

The technique of neutralization is very effective for creating empathy and involvement. It is important to involve the students in inventing and writing a scene script. Usually, we recreate the history of bullying inside the class, in which one of the comrades teases the victim in front of his companions who remain indifferent. The victim returns home alone, sad and hurt. At home, he does not tell his parents or other adults what happened to him. The story will be repeated in the following days and with different plots but it is important that in the end there is the intervention of an adult who restores things to their best.

Put yourself in the role of the bully or the victim, allows you to explore the emotional sphere of the various characters. Secondly, it can have a cathartic function, helping those who have undergone such acts to understand the importance of reacting and not feeling lonely.

### Exercise 2- The news

Co building a television program with young people, such as a newscast. This technique creates a sense of responsibility, as it moves everything in the adult world, where there are rules and rules to be respected. There will be a conductor, reporters who will go around doing interviews and will involve adults as experts. The video can then be shared on social media and becomes an opportunity to learn other aspects related to media education.



### Think about - Reflection

Take some time to reflect and discuss these items with your colleagues. Then write down your reflection here.

Are you aware of bullying in your school?

---

How can you intervene in bullying in your school?

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How can bullying be prevented?

---



How can parents help bullied children?

---

How can the school help bullying victims?

---

Has bullying changed with the use of social media?

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## Self Assessment

Is there any difference between bullying and cyberbullying?

- No, there is no difference, because they are a phenomenon that has the same characteristics.
- There is a difference, both phenomena occur with the use of the Internet but have different characteristics.
- **No, there is no difference bullying and cyberbullying mainly involve young people, but adults are also involved in this form of violence.**

What is important to combat cyberbullying in social media?

- **Talk about the problem, both those who suffer it and those who witness bullying**
- **Create situations where people can be happy, have friends and feel good.**
- **Educate kids at school**

## Quizzes

1. Match the phrases with the area it covers

Bully		who observes those who bully
Observers		who receives bullying
Victim		who bullies



2. Match the phrases with the area it covers

Ostracising/Exclusion		Sending violent and vulgar messages
Flaming		Attacking a person until he or she bends, no longer resists attacks
Roasting		Intentional exclusion of a person from a group.



## Glossary

- **Gamification:** is the use of elements borrowed from games and game design techniques in contexts outside the games
- **Social TV:** is the convergence of Social Media and Television. More precisely, Social TV means the activity of interacting through social networks - for example by publishing comments, opinions or votes - with products that can be accessed through Television such as entertainment broadcasts, talk shows, films or television films. Millions of spectators currently share their experiences with other social media viewers such as Twitter and Facebook, thanks mainly to the help of smartphones and tablets.
- **"Mobile Internet" and "Mobile Web ":** refers to the use of the web through mobile devices such as tablet computers, mobile phones or smartphones. Mobile Internet is the access to the Internet via mobile devices, in mobile conditions, through the mobile telecommunications network... etc.. The mobile Internet has become the Internet within a few years and, as a result, the definition of the Internet will suffice.
- **Netnography:** Netnography is an online research method originated from ethnography applied to the understanding of social interaction in contemporary digital communication contexts. The information obtained from an ethnographic study is more precise because it emerges from the processes of social interpretation that require living in the context of the conversations themselves.



## Video

- Cyberbullying: The Dark Side of Social Media

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSxHkLZw8\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSxHkLZw8_U)

- Child victim of bullying

<https://video.repubblica.it/mondo/usa-perche-lo-fanno-lo-sfogo-del-bimbo-bullizzato-fa-il-giro-del-mondo/291935/292544?ref=RHPPBT-BH-I0-C4-P4-S1.4-T1>









## Module 4: Offline and online Identities, profiling and web tracking: Keeping ourselves safe on the web Introduction

### Introduction

In the early 1990s, Internet users used to feel shielded behind an electronic veil of anonymity, able to take on any persona they pleased. The internet has changed hugely in the last 20 years, in ways that directly affect our online identity and privacy. Online services of all kinds today have adopted technologies that build profiles of customers, offer product recommendations, and keep personal histories that can be long-lived and extremely detailed. Data sharing between these web-based businesses also affects our online identity and privacy. Through data sharing, a service provider can link subsets of personal data to a mass of data we may have thought was confined to another persona or context.

While some Internet users appreciate the convenience those digital identities afford, others worry about how much of their personal information is being stored and how this information is being shared.

#### **This module will help:**

- a) explain the different identities and profiles that represent people online and offline both from a social science and a technical or practical perspective;
- b) understand some of the key differences between online and 'real life' identity;
- c) understand the relationship between online identity and personal privacy;
- d) better manage online identity and safe internet, taking certain steps;
- e) recognize the ways and purpose of profiling,



- f) get better insight on the web tracking and its types; and
- g) control web tracking using technology tools and apps.

## Identity

This section will help explain the various different identities and profiles that represent people online and offline both from a social science and a technical perspective. Children and young people may use the internet for a host of different reasons. One of them is to express, and potentially experiment with their identity (Turkle, 1995, 1996, 2011). Using social network sites such as Facebook, online role playing games such as World of Warcraft, and social media such as Twitter, they can connect with others, interact with them, share ideas, images and movie clips, and engage in a variety of versions of 'digital flea picking'. Developing, expressing and experimenting with identities is a central element of growing from childhood into maturity, and therefore it is worthwhile to investigate how the internet affords and inhibits young people's abilities to engage in online self-exploration.

The data presented here is based on the work presented in the Primelife EU project book, Roger Clarke's publications and Goffman's perspective on identity (Goffman, 1959), which remains very influential to this day.

### General aspects about off line Identity

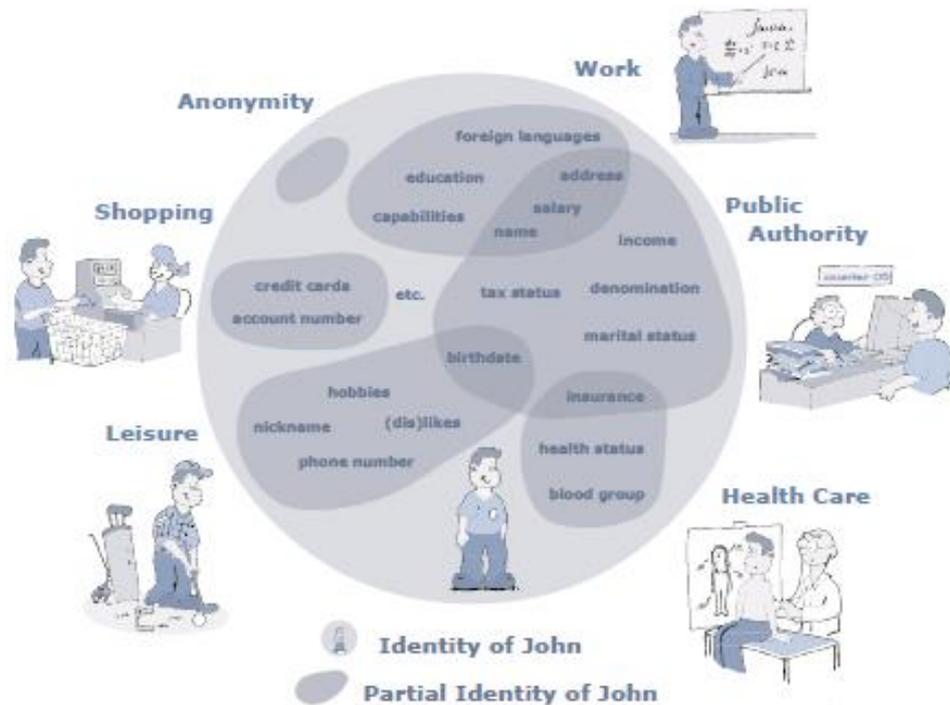
As individuals interact with other individuals and organisations in many different relations, all of which are connected to different roles of the individual, Goffman (1959) defines identity as **“the result of publicly validated performances, the sum of all roles played by the individual, rather than some innate quality”**. In this respect, all different roles or characteristics can be seen as **partial identities**.



From a practical perspective, **our identity is the sum of our characteristics**, including our birthplace and birthday, the schools we attended, our shoe size, our language, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, sex, generation and so on. Some of those characteristics never change, such as our birthday, and some change over time, such as our age or hair colour. In simple words our identity is that we are who we are and what we do.

Different (kinds of) relationships involve different kinds of information constituting the **individual's identity**. A single individual therefore consists of different characterizations linked to the different contexts in which he/she operates. For example, the co-workers in a work-related context will characterise an individual differently than the friends that interact with the same individual in the context of friendship. The relevant attributes associated to an individual are different in a working environment than in a social environment and individuals may also represent themselves differently throughout such contexts." Some attributes may thus take different values in different context. For instance, James' nickname may be 'Jim' among his friends, whereas his colleagues might call him 'Captain Slow' (behind his back).

According to Goffman (1959) different contexts impose different rules on behaviour and people play different roles (as in a theatre play) in different contexts. Also they present different faces of themselves. Thus, we may say that individuals give different performances in everyday life.



An identity comprised of multiple different identities [source: [Primelife project D1.3.1](#)].

However, roles can also be disgraced or undermined by information that emerges within the same situation and role. To explain how this works, Goffman uses a distinction between **'giving'** and **'giving off'** information:

**'Giving'** information refers to all information an individual actively and intentionally shares to bring across a certain image of himself before his audience, including verbal cues, intentionally used gestures and deliberate facial expressions. Goffman describes this as *'communication in the traditional and narrow sense'* (Goffman, 1959: 2). In contrast, **'giving off'** information refers to all the cues that an individual shares unintentionally, accidentally or inadvertently at the same time.



## Online identity is valued

Our identity has value, as does each of our online partial identities. Our identity is valuable not only to us but to others as well:

1. It is of value to the individual, because his identity reflects him and gives him access to the resources they desire.
2. Second, it is of value to the service provider who relies on our assertion of identity, for example the bank or a social networking site, such as Facebook. They are the holders of the resources we want. Our identity is a business asset to those entities. When our partial identity is with our bank or a brokerage house, it may have direct monetary value. When it is with a social networking site, the value may be less tangible but equally important to us.
3. Lastly, our identity is of value to the thieves and other illegitimate users of our identity who want it to access resources they are not entitled to. As the value of our partial identities grows, the information becomes more attractive to thieves.

Identity theft, broadly, is the loss of control over one or more of our partial identities.

As any online partial identities may contain private data, it is important to manage and protect them appropriately.

## When does identity theft happen?

**Identity theft** can happen in one of the following ways:

1. **Disclosing important personal information to the wrong person:** This form of theft is also called a “social engineering” attack. If a malicious website can persuade us that it is our bank or a trusted online merchant, we may be tricked into revealing sensitive data we would not otherwise have disclosed. Social engineering attacks play on the user’s trust to trick them into inappropriate actions. A significant portion of the unsolicited email or “spam” sent to Internet users is designed to steal personal information. These “phishing” messages try to convince us to connect to a malicious



website designed to steal our identity, or disclose other data such as payment details, in the mistaken belief that we are dealing with a trustworthy site

**2. Unlocking of our online identity** because someone (or some entity) is able to guess one or more of our passwords, or reset a password by exploiting password-recovery procedures. This is a more sophisticated form of theft. It usually requires the ability to combine social engineering with weaknesses in online systems. Unfortunately, most people choose passwords that, with a little thought and some patience, can too easily be guessed. Sometimes, guessing at a password isn't even necessary if the system has an automated password-reset feature. In fact, many online systems allow anyone to reset a password as long as a few facts about the account holder are known. If our password can easily be guessed, or it can easily be reset, we are at risk of identity theft. We should also insist on secure browser sessions by default, so that our password is protected in transit.

**4. Mass data compromise:** usually the hacking or purchase of a whole file of user details from a poorly-secured third party, such as a service-provider's website, and/or retrieve other data such as payment details, shipping address etc. Mass data compromise occurs when hackers are able to get hold of the password database, especially credit card details, and often re-sold online through an organized, international black market.

**5. Parallel lives:** when an attacker gathers enough personal data to set up a new partial identity in our name, usually so as to get credit and then default on the loan: This form of identity theft happens when an attacker gathers enough data about us to set up a bogus partial identity in our name.

In case 5, identity theft is sometimes made possible by inadequate security on the part of the service provider. When passwords are stored at service-provider websites, we have to rely on the security measures of the service provider, and the level of responsibility they are prepared to take in case of a security breach.



## Profiling

### What is it?

One of the internet ‘harms’ that has recently been discussed quite regularly in the media is that of *profiling*.

**Profiling** refers to the use of “sophisticated pattern recognition”, the above mentioned identifiers, by governments and businesses, which employ this technique to distil meaningful information from massive amounts of data about individuals or groups of people, for example for the purpose of targeted advertising and personalised services in the case of businesses, or policing, crime prevention and detection, combating terrorism and surveillance in the case of governments. Profiling revolves around the idea that large sets of randomly collected data about individuals and groups of people can generate interesting, surprising and meaningful correlations that machines, with their vast powers of calculation can detect, while we as humans cannot.

Businesses can use such correlations to improve their services to customers, or provide better product suggestions and hence increase sales and customer satisfaction levels. Governments can use such correlations to detect undesired behaviours, and criminal or terrorist acts, even as they are in the making.

As the name suggests, profiling may lead to the creation of extensive *profiles*, in which information about individuals or groups of individuals are accumulated, stored, and used for the purposes cited above. Such profiles may build on the *projected persona* of users on the internet, and, as **we will discuss more extensively below**, on the *implicit, or unintentional* digital footprints they leave behind as they surf the web, for instance by monitoring their behaviour observed via their clickstream (i.e. when they click on links to navigate the web).



The high potential of profiling based on usage data, more technically referred to as 'web usage mining' (Mobasher et al., 2000), has been well studied for over 15 years. Generally, these data are collected with the best intentions, such as observed user behaviour is known to be crucial to optimize website design (for example, link and menu structure) and a key ingredient to realize high quality search engine results. However, it's quite common that profiling can be really problematic for both individuals or group of individuals and societies.

### Types of profiling

**Individual profiling** can raise various types of concerns. Imagine not being able to get a bank loan because our bank has bought data about us which shows that we are an "unreliable customer". Or imagine our insurance company classifying us as someone with "risky behaviour" due to the fact that our browsing activities show that we have an interest in extreme sports. Or even worse, imagine law enforcement agencies knocking on our door because we "read too much" anarchist material online.

**Group profiling** can be equally problematic and can raise concerns for societies at large. Sociologist David Lyon argues that profiling is a powerful means of creating and reinforcing long-term social differences. Research has shown that clustering data about groups can lead to social stratification and discrimination, which is reinforced by an entire data brokerage industry that operates behind the scenes. Data brokers - companies that collect, analyse and sell consumer information - enable discriminatory targeting of groups based on sensitive information like financial situation or health indicators. By selling marketing lists data brokers are putting people into categories ("data segments") which can lead to discriminatory behaviour towards them by those who acquire such lists.



## The risks of profiling

Many of the risks the Internet poses can be mitigated if, especially, youth more proactively preserve their privacy online. Doing so requires them to be more aware of the consequences of disclosing identifying information, and of guidelines for determining when it is appropriate to do so. Unfortunately, many young people do not easily recognize situations in which disclosing information might put them at risk.

Given the complexity of the data itself, combined with the complexity of human behaviour patterns, one of the concerns relating to profiling is the occurrence of ‘false positives’ (Rubinstein *et al.*, 2008): the software finds correlations in the data that are deemed meaningful, when in fact the correlation is accidental and random. When false positives form the basis of decisions in the real world, this is a worrying phenomenon indeed. The occurrence of false positives may lead to relatively harmless mistakes, for instance to product recommendations that do not meet the users’ wishes and desires, but also to very serious ones, for example to false and unwarranted accusations of terrorist acts or other criminal conduct.

Moreover, one of the most serious concerns surrounding profiling is the *opaqueness* that surrounds it. It is often unclear to internet users when, where and for which purposes they are profiled. It is also unclear to users in which cases they are presented with decisions that build on profiling processes, or even *that* this may be the case. As said above, businesses and governments may use profiling techniques to create profiles of consumers or citizens, respectively, which may help them predict preferences, choices, desires and potential future behaviours of their respective target groups. These profiles may thus be used to target individuals – read: both grown-ups and children! – with commercial offers, without these individuals knowing that this is the case, or which profiles or digital traces these recommendations are based on. Especially in relation to children, this is a serious issue. Many online games for children, for example, abound with subtle (or not so subtle) product



recommendations made on the basis of children's actions within the game or even outside, for instance when they've linked their profile in the game to their profile on social media platforms such as Facebook. Since such recommendations may be personalised, based on profiling, the seduction to buy the products offered may be much greater for these children. This may draw children, sometimes from very early ages onwards, into commercialised worlds in which the goal is to sell as many products as possible, while the children themselves are oblivious to this fact.

Profiling may also provide a basis to make decisions that have a negative effect upon individuals' real world, for example by limiting their freedom to travel by airplane, or to acquire certain products or services. For example, profiles may be used to exclude 'high risk' individuals from health insurance packages or mortgages – read: individuals who have been profiled as more likely than average to run the risk of getting a life threatening disease. Note that, while the decision to turn down high risk individuals may be made by humans (most likely on the basis of evidence collected and/or analysed using computer support), in some cases the decision may even be left completely to the machine, building on the outcomes of profiling. What's more, the individuals who suffer the consequences of such a decision may never know that the decision was based on profiling, nor which of his/her behaviours formed the basis for the profile to emerge, nor whether or not human beings were involved in making the decision.

Clearly, these issues are equally relevant to children as they are to adults. They, too, may suffer potentially negative consequences from actions conducted online, either intentionally or accidentally/outside their awareness. Think for instance of attracting surveillance by police officers after using certain keywords that 'raised red flags' in a conversation that the youngster him/herself considered entirely innocent on a social network site, or even being denied further access to such a site as a result of profiling practices. And, since the internet 'never forgets', think of the potential consequences, years down the line, of accidental goofs or intentional foolishness by children and young people, for



example resulting in lesser/different job opportunities or other life choices being barred or altered.

One could claim that by using ever more subtle and sophisticated profiling and marketing practices, businesses aim at exploiting children's naivety or their incapacity to see through marketing messages when playing in digital playgrounds or socializing on social network sites. This applies not only to younger children, but also to teenagers, when the boundaries between marketing and entertainment blur and behaviour is influenced on more subconscious levels. Perhaps, therefore, it is fundamentally unfair to use profiling techniques for these target groups.

Targeted advertising and personalised services are becoming more and more common in commercial environments on the internet. And with the threat of terrorism and the pressures on many Western governments to combat crime effectively there is a presumed significant increase in government profiling as well, although numbers are hard to come by, since much of the government's profiling practices fall under the umbrella of the various national intelligence agencies, and hence it is hard to know the extent to which government profiling actually takes place (Brown and Korff, 2009).

Here we will focus on ***profiling by commercial parties*** because children and youth are much more likely to encounter profiling by commercial parties in their online activities – ranging from in-app product recommendations to targeted advertisements based on their web surfing behaviours and to subtle ways of evoking materialistic or other commercially attractive desires. It is important that children learn to recognise the targeted messages they encounter online, or, the ways in which businesses attempt to inconspicuously prompt needs and desires in children and teenagers to maximise their profits, all of which may be part of profiling practices. They should learn to consider strategies to avoid or reduce profiling (and thereby reduce the risks discussed above), if they so desire.



Before we turn to a more in-depth discussion of how profiling and identity are related, we will first shed some more light on the current reality of commercial profiling practices in relation to children and young people as these exist on the internet today, and present some facts and figures regarding the extent of this phenomenon.

### Profiling young people in practice: Depicting the current reality

Of course, many uses of profiling technologies are perfectly valid, desirable even: serving to enhance online experiences of adults and children alike. The EU funded PuppyIR project, for instance, has demonstrated how simple techniques can be used to identify the web pages most suited for young internet users, and, using this information, also select a search engine's queries that are most likely issued by these children and adolescents. Consider for example the ODP, a large scale web taxonomy, where the Kids & Teens category annotates that part of the web that is most suitable for the two age groups. Propagating that age information along the links that connect these pages together (using a variant of Google's pagerank algorithm that has been aptly named 'agerank'), captures a significant large part of the web that is most useful for children and teenagers (Gyllstrom and Moens, 2010).

Another study demonstrates how the level of school children's capability to search the web effectively (their 'search literacy') can be inferred from monitoring their actual search engine use during class-wide assignments, which could in turn be deployed to direct the teachers' attention to those who needing help the most (Eickhoff et al., 2012). PuppyIR results include a wide variety of demonstrators that show positive applications of such technologies developed, including tools to adapt search engines or blog readers to consider child-suitability, to improve query assistance, to ease access to medical information, and even to mitigate bias in results when children search for contentious topics.

Applying these profiling techniques requires access to the users' online behaviour, which is in principle limited to the entity that controls the (web) server accessed. Thus, the opportunities to use (and misuse) web and search engine usage data (legally) may seem



limited to the largest online players; and they have a strong brand reputation to maintain, so on the basis of these facts one could claim that the actual risks of profiling could be considered rather limited.

In practice however, websites may attempt to track users also after they have left their servers, across their own various services, and, by sharing this information across different entities. A well-known example is the wide-spread use of so-called *third party cookies*, a phenomenon that led to a rather constraining law in The Netherlands – a law that may have as a negative side-effect that online services may not always achieve the best possible online experience for their users. Unfortunately, we could not find scientific literature that details to what extent commercial parties have targeted children to build profile information. In the next section, we will however discuss findings from the Wall Street Journal.

Alternatively, profile information may also be collected by crawling social media sites. A recent study by the Polytechnic Institute of New York University demonstrates how easy it is to build up detailed knowledge about minors by analysing their social media usage – despite the fact that they are supposed to be legally protected by laws such as the US Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA); a law specifically designed to protect the privacy of children. In their technical report (Dey et al., 2012), the researchers describe how they collected (a large proportion of) the Facebook profiles of pupils from three different high schools in New York. They discovered the current high school, graduation year, inferred birth year and a list of school friends of most of the students. All of this information, not usually accessible on the profiles of minors, was collected without the need to establish any friend links with students.

Ironically, the COPPA law indirectly facilitated this ‘attack’. In order to bypass restrictions put in place due to the COPPA law, some children will lie about their ages when registering, and as a result their profile information is protected much less than it would be should they



give their true age as a minor. This unfortunately not only increases the exposure for themselves, but also for their non-lying friends.

## Web tracking

In this section we will explain what web tracking is and get better insight on its types. **Web tracking** is the activity (and ability) of a website (using special software tools) to keep tabs on website visitors. According to the guardian article "Tracking the trackers: What are cookies? An introduction to web tracking" there are different forms of web tracking that are explained and described below.

### What are cookies?

Cookies are small bits of text that are downloaded to our browser as we surf the web. Their purpose is to carry bits of useful information about our interaction with the website that sets them. Contrary to a common belief, cookies do not contain software programs, so cannot install anything on a computer.

Cookies generally do not contain any information that would identify a person. Usually they contain a string of text or "unique identifier". This acts like a label. When a website sees the string of text it set in a cookie, it knows the browser is one it has seen before.

The cookies that appear to cause the most controversy are for managing the advertising we see on a website. This is particularly the case when websites set a cookie from a separate advertising delivery company. This cookie can record when and where we saw an advert, where in the world we might have been when it happened and whether we clicked on it. The cookie will send this information to the cookie owner, who records this data and uses it to make sure we don't see the same advert too many times.

If websites choose to pool some of the information this type of cookie collects as part of an ad network, the systems used by advertising delivery companies can create "segments" of browsers that display similar behaviours.



They will use this to try to draw conclusions about what the people behind the browsers might be interested in: "basketball lovers" or "hair product enthusiasts" or "adventure holiday takers", for example. Cookies that do this are known as third-party advertising cookies.

Over time they learn which types of adverts are most effective to these groups and can sell this service to advertisers.

### How do I control cookies?

Although much of the public concern around cookies would suggest otherwise, they can be controlled if we know how:

We can set our browser to delete cookies every time we finish browsing (Find out more for [Firefox](#), [Internet Explorer](#), [Chrome](#), [Safari](#)).

### Other forms of web tracking

Apart from cookies there are many other ways that companies may use to track browsing behaviour on websites. These include:

**Flash cookies:** also known as "locally shared objects". These are pieces of information that Adobe Flash might store on our computer. This is designed to save data such as video volume preferences or, perhaps, our scores in an online game.

Flash cookies have caused controversy because they can not be deleted in the same way as other cookies. This has meant that some less scrupulous companies have used them as "cookie backups", loading a traditional cookie back into our computer if we delete it. We can control what sites store information on [Adobe's website](#).

**Server logs:** when we load a page on a website, we are making a request to that website's server. This server will log the type of request that was made and will store information such as: IP address (which will allow website owners to infer location), the date and time the browser loaded the page,



what page was loaded, and what site or page the browser was on before it came to that page (referrer).

Server logs form the basis for web analytics and can only be seen by the owners of the website.

**Web beacons:** these are small objects embedded into a web page, but are not visible. They can also be known as "tags", "tracking bugs", "pixel trackers" or "pixel gifs".

A simple version of this is a tiny clear image that is the size of a pixel. When a web page with this image loads, it will make a call to a server for the image. This "server call" allows companies to know that someone has loaded the page.

This is very useful to companies that want to learn if readers are opening their the emails they send. When the web beacon loads, companies can tell who opened the email and when.

This system has been abused by spammers who will identify active email accounts by sending emails that include pixel trackers. This is why many email systems will ask if we trust the sender before it displays images.

Web beacons are not as useful to website owners who already have access to their server logs. However, they are useful to advertisers displaying their ads on someone else's website or services that don't have server log access. Often advertisers will embed web beacons in their adverts to get an idea of how often an advert is appearing.

### How does browser tracking work?

When we visit a website, third-party trackers (cookies, web beacons, flash cookies, pixel tags, etc.) get stored on our computer.

How many trackers exist in any given website depends on how many the website owner has decided to include. Some websites will have over 60 trackers, belonging to a multitude of companies, while others might have only one - perhaps to track visitor numbers, or see where these visitors are coming from, or to enable a certain functionality. Some might have none at all.



Not all trackers are necessarily tied to companies tracking our browsing habits - but when we 'accept cookies', we're saying ok to all the trackers that are there - including those feeding information back to companies.

### What is being collected, and why?

Trackers collect information about which websites we're visiting, as well as information about our devices.

One tracker might be there to give the website owner insight into her website traffic, but the rest belong to companies whose primary goal is to build up a profile of who we are: how old we are, where we live, what we read, and what we're interested in. This information can then be packaged and sold to others: advertisers, other companies, or governments.

The companies tracking we are unrelated to the website we're visiting. Called "data brokers", they tend to have stock-market sounding names like DoubleClick, ComScore, and cXense (though DoubleClick is actually owned by Google). Their entire business is built on the selling of "customer data".

They are also joined by more well-known companies. Some of these are even visible: Google's red G+ button, for example, is a tracker; Facebook's "like" thumb is a tracker; and Twitter's little blue bird is also a tracker.

### How can a company track my devices across the web?

#### Browser Fingerprinting

Most companies will probably fingerprint our browser, which will then enable them to identify us across the internet.

Trackers are able to collect a lot of information about our device, including our IP address, browser history, screen size, time-zone, plug-ins, and operating system. The special constellation of all these elements is our 'browser fingerprint'.



We might be surprised to see how unique our browser is. To test our browser fingerprint, go to [EFF's Panopticklick tool](#) and click "**Test Me**". When the browser of a random mobile phone tested, only one in almost 3 million other browsers had the same fingerprint, from the vast Panopticklick database of tested browsers.

If a company has trackers in lots of different websites across the internet, they can recognise us by this fingerprint.

### Sticky trackers

We can also be tracked across the internet over time by way of special trackers that "stick" in our browser - instead of disappearing when we leave a website.

Most companies claim that they don't identify us by name when they hand over a profile of us- but what does that really mean, when we can be identified easily through all the other information included?

All of this might look harmless if we're just browsing the internet for, say, a new jacket - but what if we went to a health website for advice on living with HIV or depression, or a forum on dealing with chronic debt? Where is this information going to end up?

### Location tracking

Location tracking gives a very detailed picture of who we are, where we go and who we spend time with. See how our location is tracked through our phone, our wifi connections, the websites we visit, and the social media platforms and email providers we use.

Our devices - computers, mobile phones, and tablets - are constantly telling others where we are. **Our mobile phone** in particular is a very effective tracking device: Where we go and it records our location all the time - even when we're not connected to the internet.

Location information collected over time can tell a surprisingly **full story** about who we are and what our life looks like. Add publicly-available addresses, tweets, photos, and/or our phone records, and the story gets really detailed.



Location information can **reveal** not just where we live and work, but also our visits to churches, clinics, bars, friends and lovers; it can show which protests we've participated in, or which political organisations or support groups we're part of.

### Mapping of our social relations

Location data can also be used to map out our relationships with others. If we and another person, or other people, are in the same place at specific times of the day, it's possible to infer what relationships we have with these people - if, for example, they are co-workers, lovers, roommates, or family members. Or, to take another example, if we are a government employee and are in the same cafe as a specific journalist, we could be flagged as a leaker.

This kind of detailed picture can be valuable to all kinds of people and organisations. For one, it can be sold by companies to make money; it can also be used to predict where we'll be at a given point in the future.

### *Websites, social media platforms and email providers*

#### **IP addresses**

When one of our devices connects to the internet, that device is assigned an IP address by the internet service provider of the network we're on (ours, for example, or our work's).

This IP address is a set of numbers that identifies who the internet service provider is, as well as where we are connecting from. The accuracy of this location depends on how that particular provider assigns IP addresses, but it's likely to be somewhere between the street we're in, and the city.

We can check our IP address [here](#).

#### **Who has access?**

Unless we're using software that hides our IP, (e.g. Tor browser or a VPN), our computer shares our IP with every website and social media platform we visit.



Those who have access to our location information therefore include whoever owns the website we're visiting, or who has access to the website's analytics; any company running third party tracking technologies included in the website; or who is able to intercept our internet traffic.

#### *Photos, Google Maps and other sources of location data*

If we have location information on our phone turned on for pictures, this information will get embedded in the picture (i.e. the picture's metadata will include where we took the picture). When we send or upload these pictures we can share our location data without thinking about it. Most social media providers extract location data when we upload the picture, but there are still many ways in which location data can be aggregated from the pictures we share.

[Aljazeera's Ask the Decoder column](#) has a story that illustrates this quite well: (Oct 8 2014):

In the summer of 2014, Android user Jean Yang returned from a trip through Europe to find a surprise package in her Google+ notifications: an organised photo scrapbook titled "Trip". She hadn't requested this, and hadn't notified Google that she was going on holiday.

But she didn't need to. Google's algorithms could pick up the break in routine, and take an obvious guess that she was on holiday.

Google+ was able to organise her photos using a combination of information sources: **geotags on photos**(information embedded in the photos, providing the longitude and latitude of where the photo was taken), **location information from Google Now or Maps**, and **GPS data**. Google's algorithms could have also identified locations using **machine vision to match key landmarks**. By the end of the trip - despite the fact that Jean's phone was actually off most of the time - Google was able to pull together enough information to organize her photos in a location timeline.







## Module 5: Working with youth

### Introduction

“Be yourself – find your own way. Get to know yourself before you want to get to know children. Realize what you are capable of (...). You are the only child you have to meet, educate and educate first of all” – such an advice was given to the educators by the outstanding Polish teacher Janusz Korczak. It applies to children's educators, but you can also refer it to educators, educators, and youth teachers. Knowing yourself, working on your own weaknesses and developing your strengths, and above all, authenticity in contact with the mentees will allow for effective work with young people.

Youth work differs from working with children or with adults. It is connected with constant confrontation with teenage rebellion, with strong emotions, but also with the great absorption of young minds. If a youth worker manages to gain the trust of young people and encourage them to work together, he can do a lot for himself, for his pupils and entire communities.

### Brief description of youth as a social group.

To talk about teaching young people, we need to think about who we mean when we say young people. Researchers do not agree on the definition of youth and youth, or even an age that could be a determinant to qualify a given person in the category of youth. As a rule, the category of adolescents includes persons aged 11 and 21, although the upper limit is often moved even to 30 years of age. However, the biological criterion of age is not enough to define young people.

Researchers dealing with youth issues emphasize the transient nature of this period of life. It serves the adoption of certain life roles and the acquisition of skills to implement them. At the same time, it is a very turbulent time when an individual is struggling with biological maturation and the search for identity. This is associated with confusion and anxiety. Young people eagerly focus on groups



around the idea or doctrine, are prone to indoctrination and testing of different ideologies. Among adults, they also look for guides and reject the authorities. The period of youth is the time of internal and external conflicts. Attempts to define yourself and the world around you. Young people build their worldview, determine what standards and values they want to be guided in their lives. They become independent from the family and acquire social skills. Despite many common features, young people are a heterogeneous category. Differences arise from the social and cultural context in which young people are embedded and from individual characteristics.

### Who is a youth worker?

A youth worker is a person who works with youth in non-formal education, that is outside institutions such as schools or formalized out-of-school education institutions. In contrast to working with young people in schools, in this case we assume full voluntary participation in classes. The relationship between the participant and the youth carrier is also different - we are talking about partnership here, not about the relation of dependence. Responsibility for the educational process rests on both sides. A youth worker indicates solutions, animates actions, awakens potential, but young people decide on their own activities.

Youth work requires the use of methods tailored to the needs and abilities of young people. The youth worker itself should be distinguished by features such as communicativeness, charisma, empathy, as well as assertiveness and the ability to resolve conflicts and deal with stressful situations.

### Rules for working with young people.

A number of difficulties can be encountered in working with youth, including resistance to involvement, lack of trust. These difficulties can be countered by applying several principles:

- Listen to the voice of young people, treat them as equal partners.



- Include young people in all stages of joint work - from planning, through implementation, to evaluation.
- Use a language that everyone can understand.
- Organize meetings in places of friendly and well-known young people, eg in cultural centers.
- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship, and above all, make sure that everyone feels safe.

Young people are much more willing to engage in activities that arouse their curiosity, relate to their interests, encourage physical activity, are rich in various external stimuli such as colorful presentations, illustrations, paintings, scents, sounds / music. It is also important to clearly define the purpose for which young people would be involved. This goal must be consistent with the needs and values of the participants, otherwise the group will not want to take action.

### **Internal motivation**

Work with young people should be based on arousing internal motivation, which is a force that drives people to take action despite the lack of external rewards. We talk about internal motivation when we do something, because it makes us happy, gives us a sense of satisfaction and allows us to develop in an area that is important to us. The activity undertaken is a reward in itself. This type of motivation favors engagement and creativity, which is why it is worth developing in young people.

Factors that increase internal motivation:

- **Curiosity** - young people are more eager to learn what is interesting for them.
- **Sense of influence** - young people are more willing to get involved if they have the opportunity to choose and have a real influence on what is happening to them.
- **Recognition** - wisely used praise has the effect of strengthening internal motivation, but it too often has the opposite effect.
- **Cooperation** - young people willingly cooperate with each other, inspire each other and encourage them to act.



- **Competition** - the desire to compare your results with the results of others may be a source of internal motivation. However, if the discrepancies between the results are very large, the motivation drops.
- **Challenges** - clearly defining the goal and the ability to track the level of its implementation favors the development of internal motivation. The goal should be achievable, but requiring effort, and above all should be consistent with the values and aspirations of a given person.
- **Pleasure** - if any activity gives us pleasure, we not only take it more willingly, but also remember more about it.

The most important element of learning young people is experiencing. Young people should, if possible, use their own: knowledge and skills to learn about the unknown and gain new habits. However, if the existing knowledge and skills are insufficient, the teacher or trainer acts as an expert and gives the knowledge already tested. Students, however, should have the opportunity to test it in a practical task.

### Cooperative learning

Learning based on group cooperation supports learning in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship, thanks to which it is an effective method. Nevertheless, it is worth combining workshop participants into groups in a thoughtful way. It should be remembered that better results, both in the development of individual members and for the whole group, bring work in a more diverse group. Optimally, groups should consist of four people, so that during a given task can go to work in pairs, after a while, return to the discussion with the whole group. If the specificity of the task allows it, it is worth asking the participants to assign roles (eg a person making notes, a person responsible for materials, a watchman, etc.) so that no one remains passive. Exercises can also be divided into phases and asking individual students to guide their implementation (eg stage and - discussion and brainstorming, stage II - translation of the discussed issues into objectives and activities, stage III - presentation of results).



## Methods of giving and activating in work with young people

"I hear and forget.  
I see and remember.  
I do and understand. "

Confucius

In youth work, one can use methods of giving, such as conventional lecture, problem lecture, conversational lecture, storytelling. However, they have a number of disadvantages, including they involve the participants to a small extent, they are tedious. Nevertheless, the lecture can be an introduction to the exercises, and the story can be an interlude or closing some stage of the training. The delivery methods should be accompanied by a picture, e.g. a multimedia presentation or drawings on a flipchart. The lecture addressed to the youth should be short or divided into several parts, colored with anecdotes, videos, photos, etc. Activating methods, that is, those that allow the participants' activity to be greater than the activity of the teacher are more effective. Young people in the proposed activities engage intellectually, emotionally and physically. This allows for more effective acquisition of new knowledge and deepening of already possessed.

Activation methods include:

- a) problem-based methods - they involve presenting problem situations to participants by using various sources of information, eg films, the Internet, drawings and photographs. The commitment of young people does not end at acquiring information. Participants include analysing the information provided, explaining, assessing, comparing and inferring. The methods in this group include, among others: brainstorming, case study, observation, discussion.



- b) methods of expression and impression - activities focused on emotions and experiences.  
Exemplary techniques: drama, brain map, simulation method.
- c) graphic recording methods - techniques in which a drawing is used, e.g. mind map, poster, fish skeleton.

The above methods can be divided in more detail:

**Integration methods** - their goal is to introduce a good and friendly atmosphere in the group, allow you to relax and unwind. They strengthen communication skills.

Example:

Fun "spider" - participants stand in a circle next to each other. They close their eyes, stretch out their hands and grab the hand of another participant. In this way, a spider web is created from the hands, and the task of the participants is to unravel the web without tearing the web and to re-enter the circle. It may be that there will be two or three vertebrae or that some people will be standing in front of you and others will be backwards inside the circle.

**Methods of defining the terms** - exercises carried out with this method teach analyzing and defining concepts, as well as negotiating and accepting different positions. They are: brainstorming, snowball, conceptual maps.

Example:

Participants are working on the definition of a concept, for example: cyberbullying.

Stage 1 - each participant receives a card and writes his own definition of the concept in question.

Stage 2 - participants merge in pairs. In pairs, they present each other their definitions, and then create and write one common on a piece of paper

Stage 3 - pairs of participants merge into larger groups (4-6 people). Each pair in their group has a definition of the concept that they have created, and together they create and record one definition.



Stage 4 - each group reads its definition, and then all participants create one common definition, and the teacher writes it on the board or flipchart.

Methods of hierarchization - strengthen the ability to classify and organize messages, for example: "pyramid of priorities", "diamond ranking".

Example:

Diamond ranking – participants work in groups. Each group receives 9 sheets. The task of each group is to enter to each the features / principles / statements, eg 9 principles of communication in cyberspace, and then the participants rank the rules from the most important, to the least important and present the results of work to all principles.

**Methods of creative problem solving** – teach finding solutions through the use of creativity, for example: “colourful hats”, “fish skeleton”, “rug for ideas”, “6, 3, 5”, brainstorming. The methods can be used as both loosening and in substantive exercises.

Example:

Brainstorming - the trainer asks the participants a question, for example: how can we minimize SPAM arriving in our mailboxes. Then the participants freely give their suggestions for answers, the coach saves all. The key principle in this method is the appreciation and non-evaluation of ideas in this phase. Participants should not stop at the most obvious answers, but look for new ideas. The coach can encourage this. Only after the stage of generating ideas is the stage of their verification. The participants jointly delineate unrealistic solutions to be implemented, unprofitable, ineffective, leaving the best few.

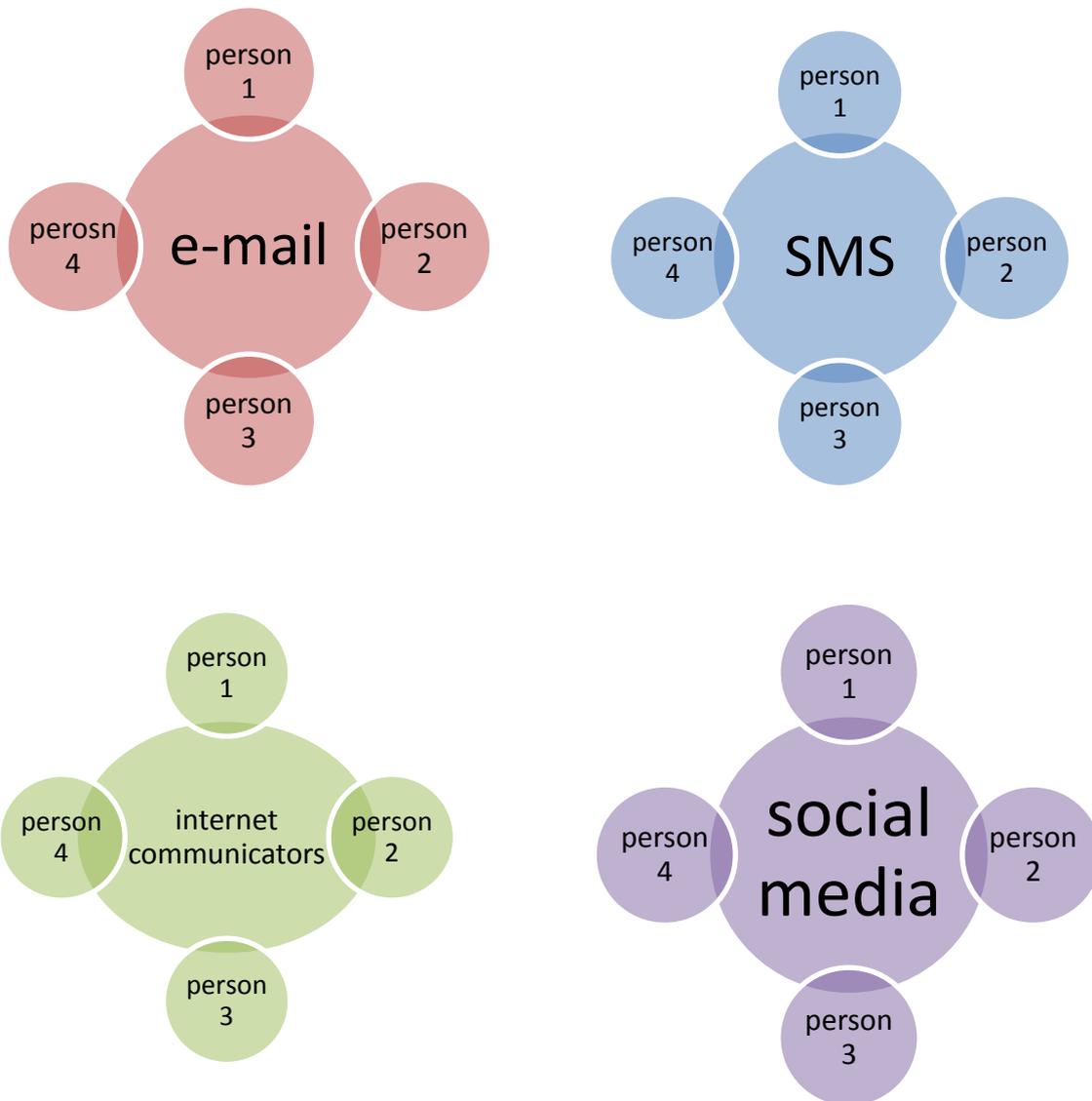
**Work methods in cooperation** - teach cooperation and work in a group and with a group, for example: fun for the slogan, puzzle, building believes from paper.

Example:

The teacher prepares several pieces of material regarding the discussed issue. It divides participants into as many groups as there are fragments of material prepared, for example: the teacher has



prepared material on various electronic communication channels - email, SMS, instant messengers, social media. There are four pieces of material, so the participants form four groups.



In each group participants get acquainted with the material and discuss it. In this way they become "experts" from a given area. Next, the participants form expert groups, so that each group consists of experts from each area. In this case, there will be 4 expert tables, with each of them will be 4 experts, each from a different area.



At the expert table, each expert presents the previously acquired knowledge to other participants. At expert tables, participants can also do some task requiring knowledge from each area, eg: complete the comparative table with individual electronic communication channels.

**Diagnostic methods** - they teach the skills necessary to collect information about the course and results of a given state of affairs. Examples of exercises in this method are: metaplan, foreigner, procedure U.

Example:

"A visitor from the past" - The trainer introduces the participants to the role. They are to imagine that in the training room a visitor from the past appears, for whom the existence of computers is unreliable. He has absolutely no idea what the internet is, what it can be used for or how to use it.

The trainer distributes the self-adhesive sticky notes in two colors to the participants. On sticky notes in one color, participants enter the answer to the question:

"What Internet benefits you come from the past should learn first."

On the cards in a different color, participants enter the answer to the question:

"About what online threats you should come from the past should find out first."



Participants stick the answers to the questions in the schema prepared by the trainer:

the benefits of the Internet	visitor from the past	online	threats

**Discussion methods** - they use and develop the skills of discussing, presenting and defending their own positions, and listening to others, for example: debate for and against, panel discussion, point discussion, aquarium.

Example:

Panel discussion - experts, the audience and the moderator (usually the trainer) are in this type of discussion. The role of experts can be played by the participants of the classes who will prepare themselves for this role.

In the first phase of the panel discussion, the participants "experts" exchange their views on a given topic. Well, if the views differ from each other. For the purposes of the course, "experts" can play their roles and present pre-established views, while looking for arguments to support them. In the second phase, the auditorium asks questions and refers to the views of "experts". During the discussion, the moderator watches over her course, gives voice, watches over time, paraphrases, summarizes and constructs conclusions.

**Methods developing creative thinking** - their goals are to develop creativity among the participants, training the mind, discovering their predispositions and abilities, eg: accidental word, plot from the cup.

Example:



Random word - participants receive one A4 sheet. Each of them writes down their name at the bottom of the page, and writes one word at the top, then bends, so that the next person will not see the word and give the card to a friend, a colleague on the right. Another person adds any word and also bends the card and passes it on. When all participants have entered their words and the card returns to the person signed at the bottom of the page, the participants create a story / poem using the words on the page.

The exercise can be used during workshops that develop creative thinking, but also as a warm-up or cut-scene during any classes.

**Group decision-making methods** - develop discussion and decision-making skills based on the analysis of facts, eg: decision tree, desert, 6 pairs of shoes.

Example:

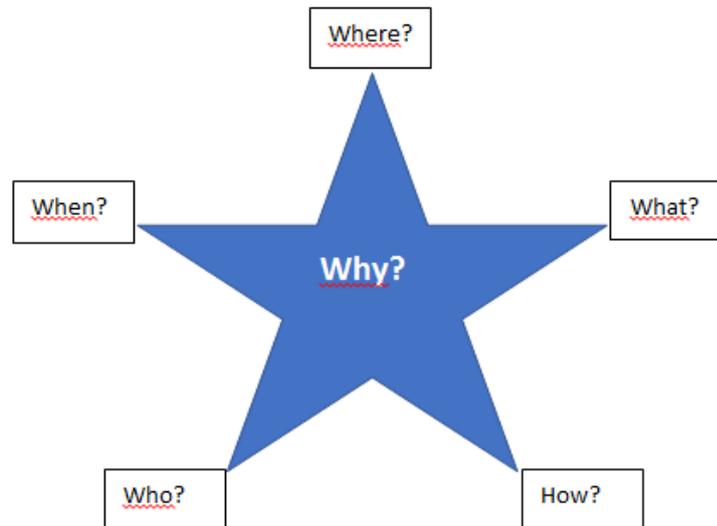
Decision tree - participants individually, in small groups or all together graphically record the decision making process. The "tree" illustrates possible solutions or information obtained and the consequences of the action.

**Planning methods** - this is another group referring to creative thinking. The purpose of its application is to strengthen the skills associated with planning the reality. The exercises to be used in this method are: question stars, future planning.



### Example:

Question star - participants working individually or in small groups plan an action by answering questions written in the star diagram.

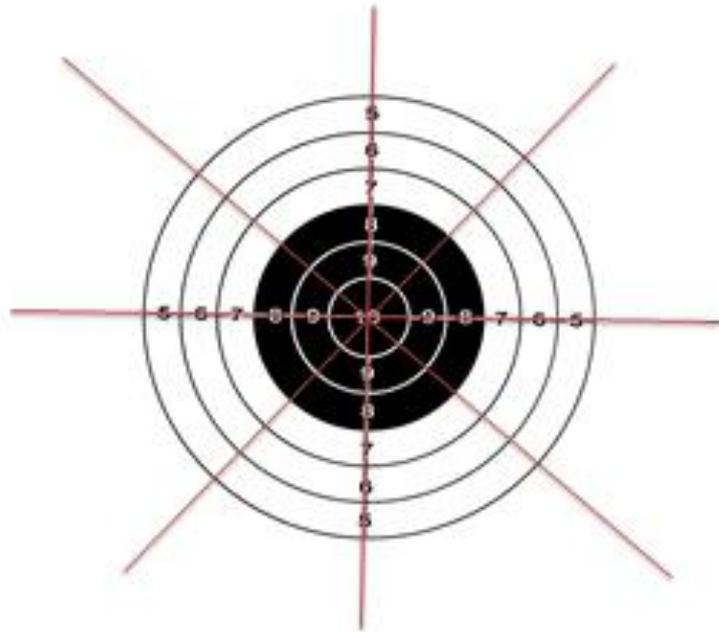


The basic question is "why?" And you should not look for the answer first.

**Didactic games** - based on fun. They can be used to learn any skills and develop knowledge in various fields. Leaders can customize games and games known from childhood to the needs of youth activities or to invent their own scenarios. It is important that the participants are involved in fun on a physical, emotional and volitional level. Didactic games should be used to improve the participants' concentration, at times of fatigue.

**Methods of accelerated learning** - they teach quick acquisition of knowledge, eg: fast reading techniques, memory hooks, chain association method. These are methods for individual use, based on associations.

**Evaluation methods** - methods useful in working with young people, used to evaluate the activities and self-evaluation of participants, for example: a thermometer of feelings, a smile, a basket and a suitcase, a shooting shield.



Participants evaluate each aspect marked on the target by placing a dot in the appropriate box. The closer to the center, the better the rating. Before conducting the evaluation, the operator should determine what assessment means next fields on the target.

## Learning styles

When working with young people, it is necessary to influence different senses, because the group will probably include people representing different learning styles. Learning styles are actions and thought processes that determine good learning outcomes. They depend on the sense that is most used in the acquisition of knowledge. People usually represent a combination of different learning styles, but one of them is dominant.

**Visual learner** - a person who uses the sense of sight in the process of learning the most.

Visual learner features:

- learning to make notes in graphic form;
- remember by reading or analysing the illustrations;



- has a good sense of direction, balance and space;
- he remembers names better than faces;
- quickly remembers visual details.

Formulations, educated users use visuals:

“Let's look”, “see”, “look”, “watch”, eg: “let's look how it sounds”.

In order to practice learning, photos, maps, charts, diagrams, presentations. Training materials are rich in graphic forms. The trainer can use a flipchart and crafting. For fitness visions, finishing content exercises and animations.

The basic style with the verifier is very popular.

Auditory learner - people who are learning about the world and have science in them. They are often to people with musical talent.

Characteristics for the auditory learner:

- he likes to read aloud;
- willingly takes the voice in a group;
- can clearly and precisely explain their point of view;
- remembers names and faces;
- has memory for nursery rhymes, poems and song lyrics;
- thinks aloud, hummers, sings;
- taps the rhythm with your fingers or feet.

The formulations that audiences often use:: "It sounds good", "let's hear", "hear"

To encourage the student to learn, it is worth using exercises that require speaking out loud and using sound and rhythm. Classrooms should use films and recordings. Use the oral and written instructions together. Lead discussions, lectures and stories. Pay attention to the modulation of the voice.



**Kinesthetic** - people who learn by movement, action, examination. It is the third group of visual and auditory students who uses their dominant sense to acquire knowledge.

Features characteristic for kinaesthetics:

- he remembers what he does first
- uses the sense of touch to explore the world
- uses body language and skilfully reads it to others
- he likes emotions and movement
- willingly devotes time to physical activity
- it's hard to sit in one place
- if he has to give a talk he is happy about it or is playing with something in his hands
- when he learns, he makes a move
- notes the differences between things
- can focus in disorder

The formulations often used by kinesthetics:

"I feel that ...", "I have a feeling", "how is it going?", "I have tied hands", "I have no way out".

Among the kinesthetics, we distinguish people with kinesthetic-motor domination (tactile) and kinesthetic-sensory (sensory) domination. The Cretans learn and express themselves to a greater extent through emotions, whereas tactics through movement.

The best way to support kinesthetics in the learning process is to involve it in specific activities. He prefers tasks requiring movement. If he has to read some text, it should be short. While listening to the lecture, the kinesthetic should be able to move. In class scenarios, it is worth taking into account tasks using materials such as plasticine, maps, shapes, puzzles, large sheets of paper, etc., wherever possible, change the location of classes. Field science and experiments would be the best solution for kinaesthetics. It should also be remembered that he needs frequent breaks, especially if the classes are carried out in a static way.



"When the angler goes fishing,  
it takes the bait that tastes fish,  
and not him "

Aleksander Kaminski

When conducting classes with young people, the trainer has to deal with a diverse group. There will be people who are dominated by the style of visual learning, but also audiences and kinestheticians. It is worth observing the group and if we can see that the participant clearly outweighs one style of learning, you can help him with the appropriate tasks, for example: if the group has to work out a poster together, the visual can take the idea of transferring ideas to paper, auditor some information, and the kinesthetic should be allowed to move as much as possible

### Youth Worker's skills

Substantive knowledge, knowledge of the methods of working with young people and adapting them to learning styles are important assets of Youth Worker, but for effective work are also necessary developed social skills such as: communication, assertiveness, problem-solving skills, coping with stress. These are not innate traits, but skills that you can work on and develop.

### Communication skills

One of the most important principles of effective communication during classes with young people is to speak in a clear language. The coach may have enormous knowledge, but it will not translate into youth development if it is not properly communicated. If we introduce a new concept, it is necessary to clarify it. It is worth making sure that the youth understands the content transmitted. In the same way, young participants of training can use a speech that is incomprehensible to the trainer, their own slang, whose meaning we may be guessed by, but we are not sure. It is worth to paraphrase in such situations to avoid misunderstandings.



**Paraphrase** - repeating the interlocutor's statements in his own words. However, one should be careful that the interlocutor, in this case the participant of the workshop did not take away our paraphrasing as a mockery. To this end, we should signal that we want to make sure that we have understood it well:

"Do I understand correctly that ..."

"You mean that ...."

"If I understood you correctly ...."

To paraphrase, we do not add our own opinions or interpretations, we do not repeat the word-for-word of what we have heard, nor should we paraphrase every heard statement, because it would be funny or annoying.

Paraphrase not only makes it possible to ascertain whether the message has been well understood and prevents conflicts, but also helps to focus on the topic, gives time to reflect on the further answer. Paraphrasing you also give a signal that you are listening and trying to understand, because it is important to you.

Another way to avoid misunderstandings is to ask, or clarify. If we think that we do not understand what our interlocutor wants to convey to us, it is better to ask than to guess. Let's also encourage young participants of the classes. Let's create an atmosphere in which no one will be afraid to say that he does not understand something.

"I do not understand, could you explain it again?"

"What do you mean by that?"

Clarification also serves to refine thoughts and name problems. Questions should encourage deep reflection. They should not suggest answers, e.g.

"Which of these elements is the most important for you?"

"What else could be done in this situation?"



Another important element of active listening is reflection, or checking whether we understand the emotions of the interlocutor well. This is a paraphrase-like mechanism, but we do not repeat his own words in his own words, but we call his emotions, eg:

"I see that it bothers you very much"

"You are proud of yourself"

"You feel anxiety about it"

### **Barriers in communication.**

Active listening can hinder communication barriers, or habits that cause our interlocutor to withdraw from the relationship. The main barriers to interpersonal communication include:

Judging -

"If you were not so lazy, you would definitely have better grades"

"You have done quite well, but next time try harder"

"I see that this topic does not interest you at all."

Deciding for others and advising -

"Do it differently in this way"

"If you do not do it, then ..."

"When I was your age, then ... you should do that too"

Escaping from other people's problems and changing the topic –

"I would tell him ... in your place."

"Do not worry, it will be good"

"Others have worse"



Another barrier to communication is inattentive listening caused, for example, by putting in your head your own speech or catching only information that is valuable to us. The interlocutor will soon realize that he is not listened to, even if we nod to him, we will adopt the attitude of an active listener - slightly bent towards him. In communication, the authenticity and coherence of verbal communication with body language is of great importance. To overcome barriers to communication:

- adapt the language to the interlocutor;
- paraphrase;
- listen actively and empathically, that is, attentively and with the desire to understand the other person's point of view and emotions;
- avoid strong emotions;
- pay attention to body language, both your and your interlocutors.

### **Empathy**

Empathy, mindfulness and sensitivity play a very important role in working with young people. These features allow us to perceive emotional states, understand its dilemmas and behaviours being a manifestation of seeking our own identity. An empathic approach will not only help you look at the behaviour of a young person from a different perspective, but also let you reject the thought "he does it especially to upset me". A sincere conversation based on empathy gives a sense of security, allows insight into oneself. Teenagers are often torn by strong emotions that they cannot name themselves and cannot determine their source. The experience of a youth worker and his empathic approach can help a young person understand himself.

### **Assertiveness**

As mentioned earlier, the youth worker relationship - the class participant is equal, that is nobody imposes anything on anyone. Each party has the right to refuse and defend its borders. The tool that can help in maintaining this equality is assertiveness.



It happens that a youth worker, wanting to gain the sympathy of young people, allows him to cross his borders, agrees to situations that conflict with his principles and values, then he feels anger at himself that he could not resist. In such situations, you need assertiveness

Assertiveness is the ability to express your needs and feelings without violating other people's borders. Assertive person is not afraid to express their opinions, wishes, talk about their emotions, but at the same time does it in a way that does not hurt others. There are also no problems with taking criticism and praise from others.

The opposite of assertive attitude is the passive attitude. It is expressed in agreement that others will cross our borders. A passive person making decisions thinks first of all about whether other people will be happy with it, cannot admit to the error, or ask others for help.

Assertive attitude cannot be confused with an aggressive attitude, which is characterized by the motto "either my way or not at all". Aggressive people do not have problems with denying others or expressing their needs, but at the same time they cannot cope with emotions when someone else refuses them.

A youth worker should work on an assertive attitude. The desire to be liked cannot be stronger than self-respect. On the other hand, hard but not aggressive setting of borders will allow for building truly partner relationships with young people

The skill of resolving conflicts

A youth worker will often deal with conflict in his work. It will be a conflict between himself and the participant or a conflict between participants. In both cases, skills to deal with such a situation will be very important. Conflict is natural and inevitable where people cooperate or co-operate. It is the result of conflicting interests, but often what seems to be a conflict is just a misunderstanding. Such situations occur when the parties do not express clearly what they need. The first step in resolving conflicts should therefore be to hear both sides. If you are a party to the conflict, remember that you first try to understand yourself, and only then argue your point of view and your needs.



When starting conflict resolution, make sure you have a friendly atmosphere. It is not worth seeking an agreement in a state of agitation and mutual hostility. It is necessary to separate people from the problem, to realize that we are working together to find a solution and not against each other.

Focus on the benefits that you can offer to the other side, not what you can achieve. Together with the other party, create as many conflict resolution options as possible. You do not have to reach an agreement at the first confrontation. Sometimes it is worth to sleep with the problem to find the best solution.

In a conflict situation, the parties usually choose one of the following strategies:

**Avoidance** - pretending that there is no conflict at all. Nobody talks about their needs and nobody wants to satisfy them. The result is frustration, dissatisfaction and building superficial relationships.

**Adaptation** - resignation from your expectations, for example, for fear of losing sympathy or the impression that I have to submit. In this strategy, one side wins - it achieves all its goals, the other loses - it does not achieve anything.

**Confrontation** - this is a strategy characterized by an aggressive attitude. We are not interested in the needs of the other side, we strive to achieve our goals, regardless of others.

**Compromise** - everyone gives up some part of their needs. None of the parties fully realizes their goals, which results in a lack of satisfaction.

**Cooperation** - a strategy in which both sides win. A solution that satisfies all interested parties is possible only if the parties cooperate with each other and look for opportunities to achieve all the goals. This is the only strategy on which you can build further good relationships.

The skills of effective communication, empathy and assertiveness are helpful in resolving the conflict. It is therefore worth developing these skills and showing them to young people under their care.



## Skills of a youth worker in the era of digital technologies

In the last decade, the challenge for youth workers is the development of new technologies. Almost all participants of classes run by youth workers use the Internet both on computers and in portable devices. The Internet is used to search for information, entertainment, and maintain contact with others.

The development of the Internet has changed the perception of teachers and educators. The knowledge they provide is available in the virtual world, so education in the real world must be more attractive to be competitive. Today's teenagers were born in the age of the Internet, computer or smartphone is as basic to them as writing or reading. Their digital competences often outweigh the skills of their teachers. It is necessary to incorporate new technologies and digital media for youth work.

One of the elements of the use of new technologies in youth work is the ability to communicate with it through social media both at the stage of promoting activities addressed to young people and later during the implementation of joint projects. Digital youth work involves both the use of digital devices during classes on various topics, as well as focusing on the development of digital skills, the use of devices and programs, and maintaining security on the web.

A youth worker must be aware of the weaknesses and threats resulting from the rapid development of digital technologies. At the same time, he must try to be "on time" with technological novelties and not be afraid to use them in his work.

The competences of a youth worker in the context of the use of digital technologies can be divided into three areas:

- 1) Skills of establishing and maintaining online relationships - the ability to use the opportunities offered by social media, the use of applications and mobile devices directly in the work with young people.



2) Ability to use new technologies in the work of the organization - building the image of the organization / institution in social media, promotion via the Internet, using programs and applications that are helpful in everyday work.

3) Knowledge of the principles of safe and legal use of the Internet and ethical principles.

## Planning training for young people

### Diagnosis

A very important element of planning work with young people is recognizing her training needs. If we do not get to know them, we will not know if the program, tools and techniques that we plan will be appropriate and effective. In order to create a good diagnosis of the needs of the young people's environment, partners should be involved, for example: schools, local institutions, local governments, as well as the young people themselves. By looking at the needs of young people from different perspectives, we will have a better chance of accurately recognizing the real problems.

It is not enough to ask what training and wants young people want. You have to be inquisitive, do not stop at one question, but explore the topic and look for the hidden causes of the existing state. The "5 Why" method can be used for this purpose. The first element of this method is to gather as much information about a given problem as possible. Examples of questions we can look for answers:

- What is the situation? What's happening?
- Since when does it look like this? Has something changed? Has it ever been different?
- What is the scale of the problem? How many people are he concerned?
- What will be the consequences if nothing changes?

Then determine who can help us look for the cause of the problem. You can use the brainstorming method for this purpose. Once you know what the problem looks like and who to ask about its



causes, you can proceed to the appropriate stage of the "5 Why" method, that is, to ask "why?". To know the real cause of the problem, the "why" question should be asked on average 5 times, e.g.

Problem: Youth do not participate in activities of local cultural institutions.

1. Why do young people not participate in activities of local cultural institutions?

Because they do not want to.

2. Why are young people not willing to participate in activities of local cultural institutions?

Because they prefer to spend time at home in front of a computer.

3. Why do teenagers prefer to spend time in front of the computer?

Because he is afraid of building relationships in the real world.

4. Why are teenagers afraid of building relationships in the real world?

Because he evaluates his social skills low.

5. Why do young people assess their social skills low?

Because he rarely has the opportunity to train these skills.

In the above case, the solution may be to involve the youth in activities that will allow the development of interpersonal skills, initially in small groups.

An important principle in diagnosing needs is to avoid simple categorization. In the above case, the division between active and inactive youth comes first, but maybe inactive youths in some areas are willing to take the initiative and guilty. After asking more questions, such a division can be misleading.

When diagnosing the needs of young people, it is worth using attractive and interesting diagnostic methods that will require the participation of the subjects, not just their answers to the questions. Such methods can be walking, mapping, field game, workshops. Attractively diagnosed may be an incentive for young people to participate in classes later.



The diagnosis should be completed with a report that should be brief, comprehensible to everyone, attractive and available to those interested.

### The initial part of the training

Once I was diagnosed and needed to carry out the same needs and thoroughly update them. It is necessary to formulate the goals of these activities. Young people are more willing to get involved, get to know each other. When planning an action, one should approach the diagnosed needs as well as the possibilities and barriers of implementation from the age, place of residence, and interest saved. On this basis, determine their classes, their time and place, and then plan the class collection.

Classes or classes should begin with getting to know each other and building an atmosphere of trust and kindness. This can be served by integration games and so-called icebreakers. These are games that allow participants and youth worker to learn something about themselves, overcome shyness and encourage cooperation. In the initial part of the training, it is also worth determining the purpose of the classes and their structure.

An important element of the course is to define the rules that all participants and leaders will follow. It can be served by a contract agreed and signed by everyone. It helps to avoid various embarrassing situations in the training room. Because young people like to decide for themselves and influence what is happening around them, it is better to abandon the authoritarian imposition of principles that will be respected and set them together. The teacher can encourage participants to submit policy proposals, ask orientation questions, or organize discussions. The rules set out in the contract, all participants should agree, and in order to prove it, it is worth signing. Written contract should be hung in a visible place and it should remain until the end of training or a training cycle. In problem situations, the trainer can refer to established rules. If during the training it turns out that the contract ran out of some rule, with the consent of the whole group, you can add it. Also, if any of the saved rules prove to be difficult to comply with and all participants will want to plot it - it is possible. The contract can be updated at every stage of the training - provided that all these changes are accepted.

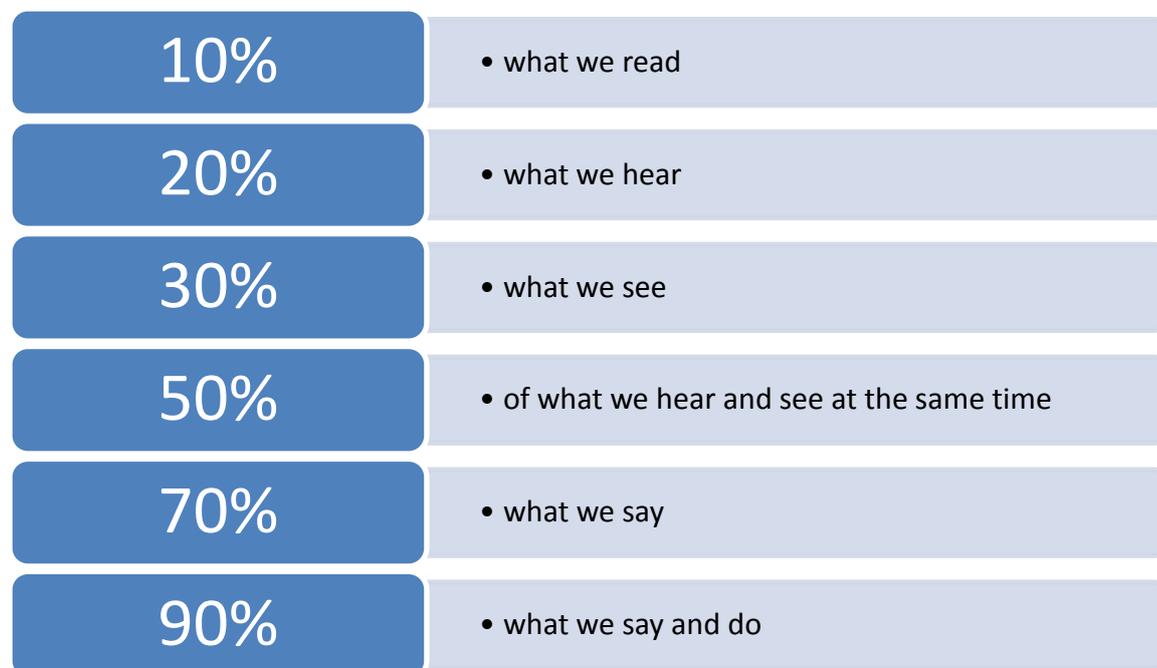


## The right part of the training

Once the participants and the trainer are familiar with each other, the aim of the course is clear to everyone, what topics will be discussed and when there are breaks and everyone accepts the training contract, you can proceed to the right part of the course.

When arranging a class schedule, one should bear in mind how young people learn and provide them with a variety of stimuli and activities.

### WE REMEMBER:



The individual modules of the classes are clearly separated from each other. People remember better what is at the beginning and the end - the most important issues should be found in these places. The lecturers should, therefore, do many "beginnings" and "ends" through appropriately planned breaks and summaries of individual batches of materials.

It's a good idea to introduce traffic to the right part of the training, because the activity improves the brain's functioning. If you use the lecture method, it is worth making small spacers every 8-10 minutes. It can be a question for participants, a joke or a short exercise.



## End of training and evaluation

Each training or other form of classes should have its ending and summary. It serves to organize the transmitted knowledge. At the end of each class it is worth gathering the participants' opinions on their satisfaction with the completed training. However, do not stop at subjective assessments, because they say nothing about whether the goals of the training have been achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to consider other forms of evaluation. The easiest way is to test the knowledge, but probably no teenager likes tests. A better solution is to check whether participants are able to use the acquired knowledge in a practical task. You can also conduct individual and group interviews or invite participants of the educational process to participate in the summing-up workshops. Applications from the evaluation should be presented in the form of a written report.

## Good practice

### Youth with impetus

The Momentum Educational and Cultural Association gathers community members who want to act mainly for children and youth.

Each project carried out by the Association is preceded by a thorough diagnosis of needs in which both young people and teachers, employees of community centres and libraries are involved. No action is planned outside the group you want to deal with. It is the youth who determines what and how they want to do, and the adults support them.

Examples of projects:

**Generation cocktail** - as part of the project, young inhabitants of the Co. Łęczyca conducted interviews with older residents of their towns to learn about the history of their "small homelands". As a result, they gained knowledge about important events and people associated with the county. Photographic and journalistic workshops were organized for the participants of the project, during which the theory was reduced to a minimum, and the young ones simply took photos and performed journalistic tasks and discussed them with an expert. Young people, while designing and



implementing activities, improved the skills of planning, making decisions and taking responsibility for them. No one spoke with the participants of the project, who to talk to or what questions to ask. They planned their own work, set goals and implemented them. Thanks to group work and the need to win over interlocutors, young people trained social skills and overcome shyness.

**Tuwim - lessons with Julian Tuwim** - is another project of the momentum association. Here, too, the main role was played by young people who were given the necessary tools and provided support for adults. The first element of the project was its planning, starting from promotional activities, through organizational issues, to the final concert itself. This planning took place during workshop meetings, where the methods of activating and encouraging creative solutions were used. These included brainstorming and "six-think hats". Young people were also encouraged to use visualizations as a tool to overcome stage fright. Along with the next meetings, young participants were more and more willingly and boldly presenting their ideas, including for the promotion of the final concert. They did not have any fears to present their own interpretations of works by Julian Tuwim. The young, encouraged and supported by adults, were the organizers, directors and performers of the final concert. It allowed them to develop organizational skills, strengthened their self-esteem and confidence in their own strength.

Education and Cultural Association IMPET also implements other projects, including those related to digital education. The organization runs a computer lab where workshops are held, including concerning the principles of safe browsing the Internet, or modelling and 3D printing. The most important in the Association's activity is the involvement of young people at every stage of work. According to the slogan "nothing about us, without us", every action is consulted with people who are to be direct recipients. Often, it is young people who take the project initiative and lead it from the beginning to the end on their own, and adult caregivers offer advice and support.



## Case study

Courtyard house of culture - non-formal education of young people

Śródmieście is a district of Łódź belonging to the degraded area, i.e. "in a crisis state due to concentration of negative social phenomena, in particular unemployment, poverty, crime, low education or social capital, as well as insufficient participation in public and cultural life".

Among the residents of Śródmieście, a large proportion are young people. Unfortunately, a huge percentage of teenagers are at risk of social exclusion. This threat is caused by poverty, pathologies in the immediate family, and inherent helplessness. Adolescents brought up in professionally passive families who do not change their life situation and have a claiming attitude towards aid institutions do not take up any activity either. Lack of patterns in the immediate surroundings collects the harvest in the youth's attitudes. The problem of a large part of the youth from Lodz downtown are problems in the school expressed by poor grades and a large absenteeism during classes. The discussed group of young people is characterized by a lack of interest in the cultural and educational offer of local institutions. He spends his free time in gates, parks and on the fields. He does not participate in formal groups.

Karolina came to such an environment - an anthropologist and educator by education, a local animator and artist by passion. She started work in Łódź and rented a flat in one of the townhouses in the city centre. For 3 years, she watched the youth in her new neighbourhood, got to know her in their natural environment, got information about local institutions and their offers, and for some time she handed these institutions to children, youth and their parents with commitment. She noticed, however, that her efforts are not effective. The lack of participation of young residents of Śródmieście in the activities offered by the institutions did not result from the lack of information. Karolina knew that the problem is not lack of time, because the youth from the early afternoon to late evening sat in the backyards and in the nearby park, whose aesthetics left much to be desired. Our heroine had the gift of deep conversation. She learned from her young neighbours that they do not trust adults, that they do not want someone to tell them what to do and how to do it, that they feel best with themselves. And yet, when Karolina went out into the yard with paints, brushes and a



large canvas, a group of people willing to paint gathered in a short time. Another time she asked a friend who was a Breakdance instructor to just start dancing in front of her tenement house. In this case, several teenagers also appeared, initially they only observed, and later they practiced together. Karolina believed that in these young people, crossed out by teachers and instructors, there is potential. She wrote a request to the City Hall for a social initiative, i.e. a project co-financed from the city's money, which also implies social involvement of the residents. Together with her friends, she created a backyard cultural centre. The community centre had a class schedule - different activities every day, but no one had to sign up. It was enough to come at a certain time to the right backyard to learn circus art, make music on everything, paint or learn the basics of karate. These classes were only a pretext for getting to know young people better, their needs and building relationships based on trust. After a few weeks of classes in the courtyards and at the gates, the proposition was made to create a place for the shape of a day-care centre, but this expression never fell out of the mouth of the youth. They were talking about a meeting place, an alternative to the yard. Karolina and people cooperating with her - already as an association, applied to the city for lending them a flat. The city agreed and a group of street workers received a place for their activities. He was in poor condition. Young people were involved in the renovation. She also decided about the colour of the walls or space management. This place was supposed to be from the beginning to the end. The trust that this youth endowed has resulted in their enormous commitment. In the renovated meeting place, classes were also organized that were slightly more formalized but always taking into account the needs of young people - above all the need to decide about themselves. Volunteers involved in activities in this place helped with their homework at school and in catching up. Young people took responsibility for their surroundings. Sam came with the initiative to take care of the yard, create gardens and make nice murals on the site of unsightly painted walls. The whole process took about 3 years. There were moments of doubt, like this when someone destroyed benches made by young people from pallets received from a local entrepreneur, or when one of the volunteers was stolen from a room in a common room. There were projects that ended in failure because the youth had other ideas for spending time. Fortunately, there were more moments when the initiators of the creation of a backyard house of culture, and later a day-care centre.



The above story is based on facts, but it is not an accurate description of the actual story. This is an example of how you can work with young people, especially the "difficult" one.

## Self-evaluation questions

1. How do you assess the level of social participation of young people in your area? Think about what encourages them to participate in various forms of activities and what constitutes a barrier.
2. What is the best way to start working with young people? What tools can you use?
3. How to encourage youth to long-term activity and development in non-formal education?

## Examples of exercises

### At the beginning of the workshop

**"Hot chairs"** - it is a game that serves to get to know each other and shyness.

Participants sit on chairs arranged in a circle. One of the participants does not have a chair and he starts to play (it can be a youth worker).

He turns to seated participants with the question: "who like me ... ..?". The questions are complemented by their features, properties, and something that describes them, eg "who likes riding a bike like me?" Or "who is wearing green socks like me today".

People who share the above feature get up and change places. The person who asked the question also tries to take the place, so that someone else will be left without the chair. A person who will remain without a chair asks another question.

Before you start playing, you can determine what your questions will be about, for example: character traits, appearance, hobbies, etc.



## The division of participants into groups

### "Seasons"

You ask the participants to place themselves in order of the month of birth, but when performing this task they cannot communicate verbally with one another, nor can they write on pages. Once the task is completed, you divide participants into 4 groups, according to the season in which they were born (or according to quarters).

## Raising energy

### "Cat and mouse"

A large space is needed for this fun.

Participants stand in twos holding hands, scattered throughout the room, and between them runs two participants selected as a cat and mouse. The mouse can run away, but it can also join one of the two, grabbing one of the people by the hand. In this situation, the person on the other two becomes a mouse and escapes until he is not caught by a cat or turns into someone else.

## To stimulate creativity

### "Non-standard applications"

The lecturer presents participants with a subject of everyday use and asks them to come up with as many different uses as possible. All the answers are recorded.

In this game, we avoid judging and commenting on ideas.



## Affirmations

### "A table of good words"

Each participant has a piece of paper glued to his back. Participants walk between each other around the room. In any order they approach each other and on the sheets stuck on the back of the other person they write for which they would like to thank her or for what they value her.

Participants keep the cards as a souvenir.

This exercise should be carried out at the end of the workshop cycle, when the participants have learned a little and live together.







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