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## MANAGING CYBER BULLYING IN VIRTUAL WORLDS FOR EDUCATION ONLINE

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### ABSTRACT

*Because of possible risks to a child's safety and well-being, online educational virtual worlds have promise that is presently not being realized. This article aims to better understand the behavioural and psychological problems that school students experience while they are online, especially in relation to cyber-bullying, and what remedies are presently available. We offer suggestions based on our knowledge of how cyber bullying should be handled in educational virtual environments, using a hybrid approach that includes policy, technology, and non-technology based remedies. Educational Virtual Worlds (VWs) on the internet have potential that is presently unrealized in our classrooms. Concerns about student safety and welfare have been cited by Education Departments and schools with whom we have talked. Surprisingly, virtual worlds are regarded as a means to establish secure and low-risk settings in other application areas.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Cyber-Bullying, Cyber-Victim, Educational Virtual Worlds, E Safety, Online Education.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

This is especially true in the adult world, where virtual worlds are used in serious games and training simulations such as train and airplane simulators, as well as military and first responder scenario-based training settings. Schools have highlighted a wide range of safety concerns, including access to improper content, student privacy, and acceptable behavior [1]. In this article, we will concentrate on online behaviors in educational virtual environments and the wider context of the Internet, especially cyberbullying. Users may utilize the Internet to study, have fun, investigate, meet new people, establish friendships, and seek for information. Virtual worlds exist on the Internet, where virtual settings with various situations and avatars interact to accomplish shared or individual objectives. Avatars may represent and be controlled by users. Virtual worlds, according to Crystal are "imaginary worlds into which individuals may enter to participate in text-based fantasy social interaction"[2]. The continuous exchange of contact between two or more individuals may become problematic in these virtual environments if the existence of improper online behavior causes damage to at least one of the participants[3]. Potential cyber-victims may experience anxiety and humiliation as a result of such circumstances. Nonetheless, moral panic in response to a situation (that is, teens being online and almost constantly digitally connected) that has arisen in part because "parental fears, over-scheduling, and a lack of viable transportation often make offline socialization difficult, if not impossible[4].

It's important to remember that technology isn't the issue; the issue is the abuse of technology as a tool for engaging in harmful online behavior. As a result, in this paper, we (1) describe some problems related to the misuse of educational and non-educational virtual worlds; (2) explain the consequences of these problems on children and teenagers among others; (3) identify a range of

current solutions; and finally, (4) recommend a hybrid approach combining policy, technology, and non-technology based solutions and a set of features that shroud the misuse of educational and non-educational virtual worlds[5]. We will compare conventional bullying with cyberbullying in this part, followed by definitions of the latter. Then we go through several kinds of cyber-bullying and other forms of cyber-bullying including cyber-stalking and cyber-threats. Before we get into detail about what "cyber-bullying" is, let's first define "bullying" so we can grasp the distinctions. Bullying is a kind of behavior that occurs between two individuals. The bully (or perpetrator) is the one who tries to physically or verbally harm another person, whereas the victim is the one who is harmed. Bullying is a power or strength imbalance. Traditional bullying occurs when a stronger male student in elementary school challenges another male student (who is younger or weaker) to participate in a physical activity that the former is capable of but the latter may not be. When bullies learn of other people's flaws, they quickly begin to attack them. The goal is to show that they are better in some way, or just to make fun of their victims in order to create humiliation. Aside from humiliation, which is terrible enough, when bullies experiment with aggressive behavior (such as punching, kicking, and shoving), violence is also involved, particularly when bigger boys or girls attempt to frighten their victims[6]. Through rumor-spreading or gossiping, the bully may cause further damage, which can be compounded by others. More mocking, social isolation, and friendship manipulation or shunning follow these rumors, which are often an assault on the victim's speech and looks. A virtual environment, one would think, would offer protection from physical damage.

Furthermore, being able to change one's look and demeanor may help a person avoid becoming a target. Online virtual worlds, on the other hand, pose additional dangers. Cyber-bullying includes bullying via the use of technology such as the Internet and cellular phones," according to a basic definition. Bullying has evolved into cyber-bullying in an age of instantaneous and continuous contact[7]. "Sending or publishing damaging information or participating in other kinds of social violence via the Internet or other digital technologies" is another description of cyber-bullying. The Internet, for example, never goes offline. As a result, we may infer that cyber bullying can take place at any time and on any day. Digital bullying is spreading more quickly, due to the accessibility of technology and the Internet. Many gadgets have characteristics that let cyber bullying spread like wildfire[8]. Mobile network providers, for example, allow their customers to send an instant message (IM), short message service (SMS), or images to one or more individuals, and users can connect to social networks such as Twitter and Facebook and send content with offensive or inflammatory comments and graphics to be displayed to all of a person's contacts or followers by accessing Wi-Fi hot spots[9]. Even if the material is subsequently removed from the website or forum, it may have already been sent to thousands of people and saved on other machines. In a study of students with special needs a link between the amount of time spent on a computer and the likelihood of being a victim of online bullying or becoming a perpetrator[10].

## **2. DISCUSSION**

Students who used computers with Internet access for less than one hour per day were less likely to be victims of cyber-bullying, while students who used computers with Internet access for more than one hour per day were more likely to be victims of cyber-bullying and/or cyber-bullies. Bullies have developed new methods to toss the rock and conceal the hand in this development of bullying. Cyber bullies take advantage of the fact that they do not have to disclose their true name in social networks, chat rooms, or forums. They may target individuals while without immediately revealing themselves while cyber bullying. This makes a cyber bully believe that they will not be detected and that they may continue as long as they want. Because of the capacity to conceal and role-play in the virtual world, several fascinating phenomena have emerged. In the actual world, the consequences of one's actions may not be as obvious. As a consequence, some people may unintentionally inflict or condone damage to others, or they may not realize how much hurt they

have caused. Anybody with basic computer skills and Internet access may readily spread rumors or abusive emails, and cyber-victims can do the same.

This tendency exacerbates the issue by turning hostile online behavior into a never-ending cycle. When young individuals target elderly people. Cyber bullying is quite different from bullying. Adults who may become targets of cyber bullying by children range from teachers mostly to parents or other community members. Finally some of the important indicators to look for when a kid is being cyber bullied. Awareness of these indicators may aid in the detection and treatment of cyber bullying. In a nutshell, the symptoms are when a kid or teenager: seems concerned during and after being linked to the Internet; and appears bothered during and after being connected to the Internet. Expresses dissatisfaction after getting an SMS or email. Abruptly ceases social contact with classmates or parents, or experiences a decrease in academic achievement. We see that these symptoms primarily manifest in the actual world as a consequence of behavior in the virtual world, necessitating cyber-bullying remedies in both realms. This is a debate that usually occurs in chat rooms, or via posting or comments on a forum, social network, blog, or even in games.

This kind of cyber-bullying typically includes harsh and filthy language, insults that come and go, and in some instances threats between the players. While threats may appear in games such as Halo or Gears of War, these threats do not reflect real-life intentions. Flaming may happen in front of other users of the IM service, known as bystanders, who will ultimately engage in an argument to either heat up the conversation or put out the flames. Despite the fact that flame is most often associated with public places, it may also occur in private locations such as private chat rooms. Other kinds of non-public flaming may take place through email or instant messaging sent to a single individual or group with no more than the intended receivers. In a nutshell, flaming is defined as a series of short-term/long-term disputes with no recurrence and an exchange of aggressions between the parties. "Words, behavior, or action typically repeated or persistent aimed at a particular individual that irritates, alarms, or causes significant emotional distress in that person," according to Black's Law Dictionary.

Harassment is the sending of hostile communications to a person or group on a regular basis. When virtual methods are employed for this aim, such as a cyber-bully delivering damaging remarks to a target through SMS or email, it is referred to as cyber harassment. It's possible that the channels utilized for cyber-harassment are the same as those used for flame. The most popular means for this behavior are email, instant messaging, and text messages. Griefers, as defined are people who want to torment other players in multiplayer online games. Rather than pursuing victory, they aim to disrupt other players' gaming experiences, such as continually murdering or teleporting the other's avatar. Cyber-harassment, in contrast to flame, is characterized by long-term and repetitive aggression, in which one party initiates the hostility and the other attempts to remove the aggression or react to halt the cyber-harassment. This kind of online behavior involves picking a person and making him or her the subject of many articles that smear their reputation and public image in the eyes of others. The case of a song that was changed by some students soon after it was posted to a website for other peers to listen to. The teenagers altered the words to make a song about one of their classmates that was nasty.

Cyber-bullies who attempt to mock an adult, such as a teacher, or propagate false rumors are also prone to denigration. This is when a cyber-bully obtains personal information from someone else (the cyber-bullied) and then uses it to get access to their email accounts, social media accounts, forums, games, and virtual worlds. The goal is to get access to the cyber victim's accounts or devices and try to damage them by posting or uploading remarks and pictures that the victim would never post or upload themselves. These derogatory remarks may be directed towards the online victim's pals, for example. The texts are meant to irritate friends, who may subsequently respond angrily towards the victim, ending the relationship or becoming foes. This type of cyber bullying disguises the cyber bully's identity with that of someone else in order to avoid being

caught with their own identity in order to avoid trouble; that is, the cyber bully pretends to be someone else in order to cause distress to classmates or even closer friends. When a kid or adolescent provides their password to their friends as a show of friendship, then their pals use the account for cyber-bullying, this is an example of this problem. Another example is when a kid visits a friend and departs before signing off from their email account. While hiding behind their friend's identity, the other individual may read and send emails to others. Outing as the act of transmitting, uploading, or forwarding in a public manner any exchange of words or pictures meant just for one recipient, and then the later publishing the material, creating humiliation. According to the author, this aggressive online behavior includes the cyber victim sending sexually provocative or graphic photos. This violent behavior enables the offender to threaten others in the real world while hiding behind the seeming safety of the online or virtual realm.

Direct threats and upsetting content are two kinds of cyber-threats. A direct threat, according to her, is one that demonstrates a clear and explicit desire to harm someone else or oneself, as well as a present plan to carry it out. The plan may include details on where and when the event will take place, such as a date, a particular location, or a certain time. Distressing material resembles a direct danger, but there is no clear strategy in place to indicate when or where this possible catastrophe could occur. This kind of threat, on the other hand, refers to the intention to harm, murder, or blow up a person or a group of people for reasons such as religion or nationality. Both kinds of cyber-threats are usually found in the prospective offenders' chat rooms, forums, blogs, and web pages, or in their public profile status updates. However, it is essential to note that these threats do not always come true, thankfully. The offenders may have responded in a fury as a result of a strong hatred or dispute.

Even if the threats aren't intended to be carried out, they should be reported to parents, teachers, relatives, competent authorities, or a responsible adult. When a perpetrator pursues their cyber victim with repeated harassing and threatening messages through electronic communications such as IM, SMS, posting on social networks, and others, this is known as online behavior. These messages may include pictures, videos, and/or text, and may be regarded as a kind of cyber harassment. Cyber-stalking as the transmission of repeated threats that are highly frightening to the victim and include a high degree of offensiveness in the messages. The author also said that this problem may sometimes include extortion and is typically associated with interpersonal issues using photographic material. The author gives an example of this where there was a photo exchange in which one participant submitted nudity photos. After a disagreement or a breakup, the person in possession of the material may begin to threaten the exboyfriend/girlfriend with putting the photos out. Alternatively, they may distribute the pictures to disparage their ex and falsely publicize their victim's desire to meet other individuals interested in having sexual experiences. Cyber-stalking is a kind of cyber-harassment that falls halfway between cyber-harassment and cyber-threats. The repercussions of the above-mentioned behaviors are mostly linked to the failure to disclose these occurrences.

This isn't always the case, however. In many cases, the harm or effect on a kid or adolescent has already occurred after the first assault. This may be the consequence of an improper picture being shared on social media or transmitted through MMS to mobile phones. The primary reasons for not reporting these issues to a parent or other adult were fear of having their internet access revoked, as well as the assumption that the adults would be unable to locate proof of the cyber bullying or identify the aggressor. There are four types of consequences: life-threatening, legal, psychological, and other. Cyber bullying and other kinds of online problems in educational and none educational virtual worlds are mostly unknown to teachers and parents. Teachers and parents, should be made aware of cyber bullying and its repercussions since it may be recurrent and serious. Teachers, on the other hand, need appropriate training in order to recognize and respond to problems in order to avoid and address them. Parents must address these concerns since



their children may have been sending distress messages from their cell phones or laptops. Students in elementary, secondary, and high schools must be aware of cyber bullying, cyber-stalking, harassment, and any other kind of online virtual world problem.

The importance of discussing cyber-bullying in schools, clarifying how it differs from traditional bullying, explaining its consequences, describing methods, strategies, and controls to primarily but not exclusively prevent it from occurring, and finally identifying the sanctions that a cyber-bully may face within school rules and before civil authorities. Parental strategies such as the bullied child's parents contacting the cyber-parent's bully's may aid in taking remedial action. When the issue is more serious, such as when there have been numerous cyber-bullying assaults or when many individuals are involved in the attacks, a formal appeal to the school for assistance and a solution is required. Finally, if the cyber-bullying continues, the cyber-bully is recognized, and sufficient proof exists, the cyber-victim and their parents may consider taking the matter to court. A comprehensive collection of activities for teaching kids, teachers, parents, and the general public about improper online behavior, associated concerns, and how to avoid and respond to these issues when they occur. The exercises are designed to illustrate situations and encourage participants to consider the issue and potential actions. Quizzes are also included, which allow instructors to assess how much their pupils have learnt.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

People may have fun, establish connections with their peers, and meet new people while learning new information and improving their ICT skills in online virtual worlds. Virtual worlds present a tremendous educational potential because they provide numerous benefits, such as the ability to reach virtually any location on Earth through the Internet, which overcomes the constraints of time and place that conventional education imposes. An online educational virtual environment may not only be accessible at many times and places, but it can also construct or recreate different time periods and transfer the student to any point in the universe, even within the plant or animal they are studying. While both educational and non-educational virtual worlds have their benefits, they also offer a number of e-security threats to users. We looked at the hazards associated with other users' behavior in this study, with a special emphasis on cyber-bullying.

There are a variety of divergent and incomplete solutions available, none of which are unique to virtual environments. As a result, a major suggestion is that raising awareness and interest in kid safety should be high on the agenda of researchers and producers of these instructional worlds and gaming engine firms. In general, we recommend a more integrated strategy that incorporates policy, non-technology, and technology-based solutions that are suitable for assisting the cyber victim and discouraging the cyberbully. This comprehensive strategy should involve educating all participants about the rules, problems, and repercussions of their actions while engaging in an online educational virtual environment; measures to identify and prevent cyberbullying; and assistance for victims. All of information must be presented in a way that is natural, thorough, and welcoming. It must interest students so that they will pass on the advice to others in order to alter the culture. Educational Virtual Worlds should be seen as a component of the solution rather than a contributor to the issue.

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