


Scholarly vs. popular sources

COMMON FEATURES OF A SCHOLARLY SOURCE

- 1 Formal presentation includes abstract and research methods.
- 2 Includes review of previous research studies.
- 3 Reports original research.
- 4 Includes references.
- 5 Often has multiple authors who are academics.



Cyberbullying: Using Virtual Scenarios to Educate and Raise Awareness

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Abstract

This study examined cyberbullying in three distinct phases to facilitate a multifaceted understanding of cyberbullying. The phases included (a) a quantitative survey, (b) a qualitative focus group, and (c) development of educational scenarios/simulations (within the Second Life virtual environment). Phase III was based on adolescent feedback about cyberbullying from Phases I and II of this study. In all three phases, adolescent reactions to cyberbullying were examined and reported to raise awareness and to educate others about cyberbullying. Results from scenario development indicate that simulations created in a virtual environment are engaging and have the potential to be powerful tools in helping schools address problems such as cyberbullying education and prevention. (Keywords: cyberbullying, virtual worlds, Second Life, teacher education, counselor education)

Introduction

Cyberbullying has gained attention and recognition in recent years (Beale & Hall, 2007; Carney, 2008; Casey-Canon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2007; Shariff, 2005). The increased interest and awareness of cyberbullying relates to such factors as the national media attention after several publicized cyberbullying tragedies (Maag, 2007; Stelzer, 2008; Zifcak, 2006), the attenuation of communication boundaries (i.e., cell phones, the Internet, and computer network connections), and the exponential increases in technology use among youth. Nonetheless, with the escalation of technology and the easy access and popularity of technological devices among youth, presently there remains a critical gap in the literature related to cyberbullying and its possible effects on school-aged children and adolescents. Because cyberbullying has the potential to impact youth across systems (i.e., home, school, and the community), we believe that parents, "school professionals" (Li, 2007, p. 1778), and mental health providers must not only be made aware of cyberbullying and its consequences, but must also have access to ways to deal with this growing concern.

Two years ago, cyberbullying was considered to be a "new territory" for exploration (Li, 2007, p. 1778) because there was limited information about bullying through "electronic means" (Li, p. 1780). In contrast, today studies on cyberbullying, including some descriptions of the worst cyberbullying incidences (Maag, 2007; Stelzer, 2008; Zifcak, 2006), are becoming more prevalent (Beale & Hall, 2007; Carney, 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2007). At this time, there is a need to raise awareness about the effects of cyberbullying and to create educational opportunities to serve multiple audiences (i.e., teachers, teacher educators, school administrators, school counselors, mental health professionals, students, parents) in the quest to identify and hopefully prevent cyberbullying in the future. Consequently, to facilitate a multifaceted understanding of

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2 Research suggests that cyberbullying has distinct gender and age differences. According to the literature, girls are more likely to be online and to cyberbully (Beale & Hall, 2007; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2006, 2007). This finding is "opposite of what happens off-line," where boys are more likely to bully than girls (Beale & Hall, p. 8). Age also appears to be a factor in cyberbullying. Cyberbullying increases in the elementary years, peaks during the middle school years, and declines in the high school years (Beale & Hall). Based on the literature, cyberbullying is a growing concern among middle school-aged children (Beale & Hall; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2007; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, & Tippett, 2006; Williams & Guerra, 2007). Of the middle school grades, 6th grade students are usually the

3 **Table 2: Percentage of Students Who Experienced Cyberbullying through Various Methods**

| | E-mail | Facebook | MySpace | Cell Phone | Online Video | Chat Rooms |
|--------|--------|----------|---------|------------|--------------|------------|
| Victim | 35.3% | 11.8% | 52.9% | 50% | 14.7% | 11.8% |
| Bully | 17.6% | 0% | | | | |

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5 Vivian H. Wright is an associate professor of instructional technology at the University of Alabama. In addition to teaching in the graduate program, Dr. Wright works with teacher educators on innovative ways to infuse technology in the curriculum to enhance teaching and learning. She has helped initiate and develop projects such as the Master Technology Teacher and Technology on Wheels. Dr. Wright's scholarship includes publications and presentations in the research areas of K-12 technology integration, emerging technologies, and asynchronous education.

Volume 26/ Number 1 Fall 2009 Journal of Computing in Teacher Education 35
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COMMON FEATURES OF A POPULAR SOURCE

- 1 Often has a provocative title.
- 2 Author is typically a staff reporter, not an expert.
- 3 The bulk of the article presents anecdotes about the topic.
- 4 Presents a summary of research but no original research.
- 5 No consistent citation of sources.

Technology

The cyber-bullies are always with you...

1 The anonymity of the internet makes it easy for bullies to ruin the lives of their teenage victims

PHIL MCKENNA These are extreme but far from unique examples of the devastation wrought by cyber-bullying. Since RYAN HALLIGAN died in 2003 and JONES in 2000, more and more children are logging onto the internet, so it's likely that online bullying, including sending threatening messages, displaying private messages and posting embarrassing video and photos online, is also increasing. A study last month by the Pew Internet & American Life Project based in Washington DC found that one-third of US teenage internet users have been targets of cyber-bullying (*New Scientist*, 7 July, p 23). Meanwhile, as online communication evolves from instant messaging and chatrooms to social networking sites and YouTube, the venues where bullying occurs are becoming both more central to young people's lives, and more public.

2 PHIL MCKENNA These are extreme unique examples of devastation wrought by bullying. Since Halligan in 2003 and Jones in 2000 more children are logging onto the internet, so it's likely that online bullying, including sending threatening messages, displaying private messages and posting embarrassing video and photos online, is also increasing. A study last month by the Pew Internet & American Life Project based in Washington DC found that one-third of US teenage internet users have been targets of cyber-bullying (*New Scientist*, 7 July, p 23). Meanwhile, as online communication evolves from instant messaging and chatrooms to social networking sites and YouTube, the venues where bullying occurs are becoming both more central to young people's lives, and more public.

3 RYAN HALLIGAN was taunted for months. Classmates spread rumours via instant messaging that the 13-year-old boy was gay. A popular female classmate pretended to like him and chatted with him online only to copy their personal exchanges and share them with her friends. Unable to cope, Halligan, of Essex Junction, Vermont, killed himself.

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5 "The lack of face-to-face contact might tempt bullies to new levels of cruelty"

communication. "There is a distancing of the self and immediacy in response that we don't have in any other form of communication," she says. "On the computer, it's like it's not really you."

So what can be done? Led by Ruth Aylett of Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, UK, Meanwhile, some governments have taken legislative action. In January 2006, the US Congress passed a law making it a federal crime to "annoy, abuse, threaten or harass" another person over the internet. Approximately 36 states have enacted similar legislation. And in South Korea, the "internet real-

Known best as a problem facing teens, cyber-bullying affects adults too. Inhabitants of virtual worlds, from film stars to teachers have all been victims. Second Life is designed for adults and to access most locations you are supposed to be at least 18 years old. Yet nearly 2000 abuse reports are filed each day, says Linden Labs of San Francisco, who created Second Life. "It's adults hassling other adults," says Thomas Chesney of the University of Nottingham, UK, who has encountered pushing, swearing and shooting there. Chesney and colleagues recently set up an office in Second Life where they interviewed more than 100 inhabitants about bullying. Chesney says that because many people come to Second Life with a background in gaming, they bring preconceived notions of violence and aggression with them. "They're playing games like World of Warcraft - where the aim is to kill everybody - and they take that attitude into Second Life," he says. "It's a bit depressing that we haven't progressed beyond hassling one other, but not surprising given all we know about workplace bullying." Teachers have also been victims. Tired of insults from students on websites such as RateMyTeachers.com, the UK Association of Teachers and Lecturers said earlier this year that it is ready to go to court in support of teachers who have been libelled online. The union would target publishers of websites directly, not the children who post disparaging comments. Meanwhile in South Korea, celebrities have been the high-profile victims of anonymous cyber-bullying attacks, reportedly including TV star Jeong Da-bin and pop singer Yuni, who both later committed suicide.

could simply turn off the computer, that's not really an option for today's teens, who are dependent on the internet for communicating with their peers. "This is the always-on generation," says Kowalski. "This is how they communicate." A 2007 Pew study found that 93 per cent of US teens use the internet.

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McKenna, Phil. "The Cyber-Bullies Are Always with You. . . ." *New Scientist* July 2007: 26-27.