

Cyber bullying

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Introduction

It is very common for bullies or bullying to use new Internet information technologies to perpetrate assaults, which is called cyberbullying. Harassment through the Cyber includes both taunts and threats against the victim, so anyone who wants to intervene in bullying situations should know this fact and know that we understand when we talk about cyberbullying. Cyberbullying includes both cyber-bullying and virtual harassment and this classification is based on the type of virtual tools used by stalkers. There is no doubt that harassment through ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) is not exclusive to children and that they are also used by adults, therefore cyberbullying is not only in bullying although the mastery of these techniques is widely used in bullying.

Justification

Within the web of internet networks there have been different cases of harassment, both in adults and among minors, which require reflection. The National Association of Primary School Principals NAESP provides an information to highlight, "according to studies one in four children has been victims of intimidation over the Internet" (1). We are faced with a new phenomenon, where the concepts managed by the few authors who have focused on this problem, are not always coincident. We need a conceptual analysis that clarifies that we understand cyberbullying, virtual harassment, network mobbing, or cyber-intimidation; and this job has that pretence.

In addition to providing clear conceptual definitions, we will delve into the phenomenon of online harassment with the desire that will serve as the basis for a deeper reflection and perhaps, as a result of this reflection, we can end the impunity of those who operate in this way. This is the spirit that animates us.

Concepts

We have already mentioned in the past the disparity of meanings used by the various authors on the concepts related to the exercise of psychological violence in cyberspace and the peremptory need to clarify those concepts. We believe that we must be able to reach an agreement, among which we handle these terms, in such a way that we must ensure that what we mean when we use a concept is understood by the recipient with the same meaning. For this purpose, we will start the following conceptual analysis of the terms: cyberbullying, virtual harassment, network mobbing, media harassment and cyber-intimidation.

Cyberbullying.

For some authors, such as Bill Belsey (2) the term refers to the use of any of the means of new technologies to transmit defamatory information and hostile communication by one individual or group, in order to harm another either through e-mail, mobile phone, personal website, forums and immediate text message (msm). In contrast, for other authors, such as Ina Klein (3) the term is limited to the population of minors and the use of more personal technological

means, such as anonymous email, instant messaging (Messenger) or text messages through mobile, leaving out of concept the use of websites or forums to defame.

Specifically, Bill Belsey's definition (2) finds that "cyberbullying involves using information and technological communication such as e-mail, mobile phone, personal website, forums and immediate text message(msm),defamatory, as well as deliberately, and repetitively supporting, and repetitively, hostile behaviour on the part of one individual or group, in order to harm another."

In the definition of Inda Klein (3) states that "cyber-bullying: it comes from the school or social environment of the child by peers who through anonymous emails, instant messenger (Messenger) or text messages by cell phones, assault or threaten their victims". In extreme cases, they take pictures of children and adolescents in embarrassing situations or modify them with specific programmes to ridicule and/or humiliate them (3). We particularly like the definition of the association "Safe2Tell": "Internet bullying, known in English as "Cyber bullying", is defined as follows: "the promotion of the hostile behaviour of an individual who intends to harm other individuals, through the use of computer technology and communications; for example, email, cell phones, text messaging, instant messaging, and personal Web sites (4)

Once we have collected the different definitions of the concept and already to conclude on these concepts, we can say that the most appropriate translation into Spanish of the term "cyberbullying" is cyber-intimidation. At the end of the concept section we propose a definition of the term to be discussed.

Network Mobbing

The concept refers to the use of cyberspace to realize a strategy of moral harassment and the term can be translated into Spanish as virtual harassment, either this directed towards a person or an organization. We quote To Self-Reliance Press as one of the portals that has analysed the phenomenon (5):

"the particularity of network mobbing is that harassment is done through the person's social network - or organization - who is slandered and disqualified. This is not a mere gossip or occasional criticism, but a real campaign organized to destroy the social or professional credibility of a third party. A lot of times the victim doesn't even find out he's being attacked. It senses its consequences: doors that close, look wary and cold on the part of interlocutors that are previously friendly and elusive from one moment to the next."

For Alejandro Castro (6): "The main difference between cyberbullying and face-to-face is that minors transfer to the Internet their insults and threats by making public the identity of the victim in a particular forum (blogs, websites),even facilitating in some cases their phones, so that strange people can adhere to the aggression. This bullying situation in some cases can occur against teachers and school managers. Another characteristic feature is that as long as the forum where you are staying is not removed, it can perpetuate harassment for months or years."

Conceptual proposal

For Parés (2008) author of this scientific work, it is necessary to be able to distinguish between cyberbullying and network mobbing. We propose to use the term cyber-intimidation when we

want to describe hostile and humiliating behaviours through cyberspace by using personal ICTs (email, msm, chats and mobile phones) and reserve the term of virtual harassment to the same behaviours when they are transmitted through the most collective ICTs (websites, blogs, forums, and mailing lists). We believe that the impact on the victim is extremely serious in both cases and that both terms should describe these situations of hostile and vexatious behaviour, regardless of the age of the issuer or receiver.

This terminology proposal aims to distinguish between intimidation and harassment; understanding that in the first, hostile behaviour has a beginning and an end. It starts when the victim is threatened and vetoed and ends when the victim receives the message, either through the computer or mobile. On the other hand, when we use the term harassment, we have to refer to situations that still have an initial situation where hostile treatment towards the victim is manifested, it remains over time. These are situations where hostile and degrading communication has no way of ending and this taking into account the means used. We all know that the vexations posted on websites, forums and mailing lists are permanently public, since new users can access hostile information many years after the publication of the first message, thus discrediting the humiliated person is permanent and without an expiration date. It is precisely this constancy in time that allows it to be regarded as a situation of harassment. We cannot leave this section without mentioning two other related concepts, which have already been defined above, such as the terms of "media harassment" and "cyberspace".

The concept of media harassment was defined by the author of this communication in 2005 (Parés 2005) (7) as:

"This term is used to identify situations in which a person or group of people engage in a set of behaviours characterized by psychological violence, systematically applied for a time on another person aimed at causing the smear of it, using any means of mass communication."

Being, therefore, strategies used to discredit a person through curse and rumour. Media harassment is a concept that is identified with moral harassment since the effects are the same, discredit, through insult and slander and this concept encompasses both virtual harassment, cyber-intimidation and journalistic harassment in its two versions: strategic or economic, very interesting aspects but that exceed the pretensions of this communication.

Another concept to note is the term Cyberspace, which is defined as an abstract concept that serves to represent computer facts produced through interconnected public networks commonly known as the Internet (8). To conclude this section, we will propose the reflection and possible acceptance of the following definitions on cyberintimidation and virtual harassment.

We propose to define cyber-bullying as:

"The promotion of the hostile behaviour of an individual who intends to harm other individuals, through the use of computer technology and individual reception communications" (Parés 2006). For example, email, cell phones, text messaging, and instant messaging "being translated into English as cyberbullying. In this definition, they are responsible for the hostile behaviour not only to the one who initiates it but to anyone who promotes and disseminates it.

We propose to define virtual harassment, as follows as:

"The harassment that is carried out through the social network of the person - or the organization - who is slandered and disqualified. Using public spaces on the Internet" (Parés 2006). Such as websites, blogs, forums and mailing lists to create a true organized campaign to destroy the social or professional credibility of a third party. His translation into English as network mobbing.

APPROACHING THE PHENOMENON

Once the meaning of the terms has been clarified, it is necessary to make a brief approach to the phenomenon of the exercise of psychological violence through new information technologies. The exercise of violence perverts the use of new advances, because instead of transmitting information they transmit de-information as they become propagators of hoaxes and discredits, which harm other human beings with impunity. In short, the victims are helpless. We have no doubt that these actions are promoted by unscrupulous people who take advantage of the lack of legislation in this regard, which gives them total impunity.

We agree with The Press Self-Reliance when he states that "the informality of networks allows hostile, resentful people, with a desire for dominance or lack of scruples, to harass with impunity. Running a rumour or slander, for a personal reason or for ideological differences, anonymously or unstoppable, by word of mouth or by mail, is not a mischief without consequences."

Harassment can cause stress, somatization, depression, or lead to suicide" (5). We quote Ina Klein as alert: "Children who are bullied experience real suffering that can interfere with their social and emotional development, as well as their school performance. Some victims of bullying have reached suicide" (3). NAESP states "There is a new form of humiliation in schools today—intimidation over the Internet. Through the Internet, children can remain anonymous to intimidate other children, spread cruel rumours, and sometimes even to threaten physical harm. And the worst part is that this can happen anywhere, anytime. The same technology that has given us so many benefits also means pain for too many children, while allowing others to intimidate their peers without being discovered" (1).

Other authors have also approached the phenomenon, so Claudia Altamirano in her work entitled "Virtual Harassment" tells us that "scorned lovers and resentful people now enjoy the ideal means of revenge symbolically: The Internet network, which provides them with the ease and freedom from anonymity. The law does not provide for any punishment, but not everything is lost", adding that "the uses that this generation gives to technology; where the Internet network and cellular telephony, with all its resources, offer scorned lovers, abandoned ex-partners and resentful people, a symbolic revenge, to be able to slander the object of their grudges in a public environment" (9). We consider it important to highlight this aspect of spite and vengeance, described by Altamirano, by the person who instigates and promotes these situations. As Alejandro Castro reports the serious repercussions on the child victims of this type of psychological violence, he informs us in his work that "through a press release originating in Bangkok in November 2005, the study "Violence against children in cyberspace" was reported. Weak laws and fragmented action by industry exposes children around the world to violence over the Internet and other cyber-technologies in an increasingly worrying way, the report revealed. He says that violence against children through new technologies is ubiquitous. This

violence causes depression and prolonged physical and psychological harm to victims and is exceeding the capacity of law enforcement agencies" (6). For her part Natalie Noret laments that "the emergence of new technologies has also generated new methods to turn a child's life into a real hell" (10).

The way to operate to intimidate and harass is the spread of rumour. Let's see how Santiago Camacho analyses it in his book slander that something remains, in him tells us that "slander spreads through the internet like lightning. Email in email, word of mouth. It is possible that before he dies, the fake or "bulo" mutes, changing the name of its protagonist depending on the current or the fillies or phobias of one of the emitters, and metamorphoses into a new bule" (11). He also explains that "a simple rumour can crush an enemy more strongly than a cannon," and concludes that "the rumour is used, in most cases, to destabilize or discredit a person or organization, and attacking it is almost impossible." The eminent author also states that "the rumour requires the mediation of a number of actors who in complicity decide to put pressure on a group or a person". He concludes by noting that "slander and rumours damage the image of the person being assaulted, affect their feelings and cause unnecessary harm because they are absolute falsehoods" (11).

I don't want to fail to point out two examples found on the network, both of virtual harassment. In the first it is a constant harassment by an individual towards the webmaster of a forum that ended with the disappearance of the forum.

EXAMPLE No 1: Since I opened Gatopardo has been on my cover links

Tau's window. (...) After enduring the constant harassment of a psychopath who left him with insulting comments in his blog, Tautina has deregistered his page. Whoever harassed, insulted and insulted her has the IP: XXXXXXXXXX. (12)

In the second example we are faced with a single act of intimidation that, as it is still published on the network, becomes harassment. Despite the years since the publication of this single message, it remains available to new readers, and the victim's good name continues to be damaged in a perpetual way. We transcribed the opinion that appeared in the blog "Punto de Vista".

EXAMPLE No 2: My friend (...) wrote an article titled Mobbing Real Estate, which was published in Mobbing Review. He starts by talking about moral harassment of homeowners and then explains that this practice is spreading to all sectors of Spanish life. The article was answered in the same place. The answer was a furious personal attack. Personal attacks are excluded in civilized places. (...) If personal attacks are reprehensible anywhere, much more should be avoided in specific places to combat moral harassment. (13).

Conclusions

According to most authors, bullying and harassment through cyberspace has serious consequences on the health and good name and credibility of the victim; and yet, everyone agrees on the impunity of those who operate in this way. The helplessness of the victim of cyber-bullying and virtual harassment is staggering in a rule of law. In short, we can say that the victim, whether person or organization, adult or minor, is the main target of malice that is noticed in

the envious entanglement through the hoax, in the most modern form of the Internet, and that the promoters of the hoax are those subjects who move within the web of Internet networks, where they know that credibility is essential to belong to it. NAESP states. "there's nothing new about bullying, the only new thing is that it's now easier over the Internet. Simply by creating a screen name or identity for instant messages (IM), children can use the Internet to send hateful messages that in most cases do not allow their origin to be known." (1)

The helplessness of the victim of media harassment is described in an article of Self-Reliance Press, when he states that "network mobbing, is a new form of moral harassment that operates with total impunity within the networks" and adds "network mobbing occurs in this broad and undefined space where victims have little chance of defending themselves" (5). We conclude that defamation on the internet has no criminal repercussions, and only in some cases are there civil repercussions. If you have been the victim of harassment by someone seeking virtual revenge, the chances are limited to a civil lawsuit that most of the time does not succeed and all imply that the attacker's impunity is assured. We have to ask ourselves, does the network have resources, which allow us to find who is hiding behind their computer?

In part, to defend against cyberbullying you can restrict access to personal pages or cancel them permanently, just like with email accounts; or search for the IP address of the machine from which the messages were issued. We have to consider whether this is enough. As Claudia Altamirano states: "If the victim of defamation wants to take legal action to stop these attacks, he must have patience and low expectations, for the process is long and might not bear fruit" (9) We citizens know that sexual or moral harassers enjoyed impunity for a while, until the figure of crime was specified. Something similar will have to happen with this new scourge called cyberbullying. We hope that this communication will contribute to the awareness of the helplessness of victims of virtual harassment and intimidation and the impunity of the violent who operate on the internet networks, and if it contributes to alleviate that injustice we will be satisfied.

Notes.

(*) Based on the article "Cyberbullying. A theme of reflection" by Marina Parés Soliva. Diploma in Social Work. Legal Social Expert. President of the European Mobbing Information Service (SEDISEM). www.acosomoral.org Webmaster

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Placing the "bomb-bomb" logo on an internet page is a way of making potential stalkers know that we're not going to share their destructive confidences. © Self-Reliance Press