2012 Cyber Bullying Tactics

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"Technological advancements have changed the way humanity interacts, exchanges and accesses information. Smartphones, mobile devices and social media are the latest in a succession of advancements growing at a feverish pace. It's often difficult to imagine that the Internet, used by two billion people globally, celebrated its 20th birthday in 2011." ***iPredator-A Global Internet Predator Theory. Michael Nuccitelli Psy.D., (2012)***

2012 Cyber Bullying Tactics

Like classic bullying, cyber bullying is harmful, repeated and hostile behavior intended to deprecate & defame a targeted child. Cyber bullying describes threatening or disparaging information against a target child delivered through Information and Communications Technology (ICT.) Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is an umbrella term used to define any electronic or digital communication device or application used to obtain, exchange or disseminate information. ICT stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications, which enable users to create, access, store, transmit, and manipulate information. ICT consists of all forms of telecommunication, information technology, broadcast media, audio and video processing, transmission and network based control and monitoring functions.

ICT today usually means computer-based management of data or ideas, but will continue to grow with technological advancements. ICT has rapidly become one of the basic building blocks of modern society and will become increasingly important as the information age matures. Whereas classic bullying typically involves face-to-face interactions and non-digital forms of communication, cyber bullying consists of information exchanged via ICT and may never involve face to-face encounters.

In the article that follows, this writer briefly introduces his global theoretical paradigm definition, iPredator, who he believes to be the modern-day criminal and psychological reprobate. Compiled for the reader are the most commonly used cyber bullying tactics practiced by child and adolescent ICT users in 2012. As ICT advances and expands, cyber bullying tactics will also continue to adapt to the ever-changing world of Information and Communications Technology (ICT.) Within this writer's paradigm of iPredator, a significant percentage of those cyber bullies who are conscious of the harm they cause a target child are included. The definition of iPredator is as follows:

iPredator: A child, adult or group who, directly or indirectly, engages in the exploitation, victimization, stalking, theft or disparagement of others using Information and Communications Technology (ICT.) iPredators are driven by deviant fantasies, desires for power and control, retribution, religious fanaticism, political reprisal, psychiatric illness, perceptual distortions, peer acceptance or personal and financial gain. iPredators can be any age, either gender and not bound by socioeconomic status, race or national heritage.

An important distinction made in this theory states iPredators can be any age and need not to be an adult. Unfortunately, cyber bullies are a large contingent of iPredators and growing as ICT advances and expands. In a child's life, most often the iPredator is a cyber bully. Cyber bullying has reached epidemic proportions with no known end in sight.

Although bullying has been part of the human experience since the inception of civilization, cyber bullying has introduced to humanity a form of bullying never seen before. Bullying used to be confined to schools, neighborhoods or some small geographic location that the bullied child could leave and seek respite. With cyber bullying, the target child has no escape from the taunting and harassment afforded by ICT. Cyber bullies easily target children when they are vulnerable, unaware, unsuspecting or different from the peer group in power or peer majority based on their age, race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation and physical attributions.

It has been speculated that children view the real world and the online or virtual world as part of a seamless continuum. Conversations with friends may begin at school and pick up again, on a child's computer or mobile device. Given the child has 24-hour contact with peers; they are susceptible to perceiving cyberspace and the virtual world as directly connected to reality. Because of this perceptual distortion, posited to be age and maturational related, children are far more negatively impacted by disparaging, abusive and false information posted about them online.

Regarding cyber bullying, children are somehow interpreting this online deprecation and taunting by cyber bullies more intensely, in a more meaningful way and far more impacted as opposed to adult online users. For these reasons, targets of cyber bullying are more apt to personalize the victimization and can lead to a multitude self-destructive and destructive behaviors including: depression, alcohol/substance abuse, high-risk taking and aggression.

In the severe reactions, cyber bullying is driving a growing number of children to attempt and succeed at a new form of self-extinction called cyber bullicide. Cyber bullicide is when a child successfully commits suicide stemming directly or indirectly from cyber bullying victimization.

It is for these reasons that cyber bullies and their assaults, when conscious of their intent, may classify them in the genre of iPredator. Educators, parents and the community at large must treat cyber bullying as a socially toxic phenomenon. To thwart this growing epidemic, it is paramount the adult community becomes educated on the tactics cyber bullies use to taunt and victimize vulnerable children. Given the variety of methodologies cyber bullies use, which continues to expand, provided below are the most commonly used cyber bullying tactics used in 2012.

1. Exclusion: Exclusion is a cyber bullying tactic that is highly effective and indirectly sends a provocative message to the target child that they are not included in social activities without the need for verbal deprecation. As it is well-known children and teens are developmentally fixated on being recognized by their peers, the process of designating who is a member of the peer group and who is not included can be devastating to the target child.

2. Flaming: Flaming is a term describing an online passionate argument that frequently includes profane or vulgar language, that typically occurs in public communication environments for peer bystanders to witness including discussion boards and groups, chat rooms and newsgroups. Flaming may have features of a normal message, but its intent if designed differently and flamers endeavor to assert their power or establish a position of dominance.

3. Exposure: Exposure is a cyber bullying tactic that includes the public display, posting, or forwarding of personal communication or images by the cyber bully personal to the target child. Exposure becomes even more detrimental to the target child when the communications posted and displayed publicly contains sensitive personal information or images that are sexual in nature.

4. E-mail Threats and Dissemination: This is a cyber bully tactic used to inspire fear in the target child and then informing other members in the peer group of the alleged threat. The cyber bully sends a threatening e-mail to the target child and then forwards or copy & pastes the threatening message to others of the implied threat.

5. Harassment: Harassment is sending hurtful messages to the target child that is worded in a severe, persistent or pervasive manner causing the respondent undue concern. These threatening messages are hurtful, frequent and very serious.

6. Phishing: Phishing is a cyber bully tactic that requires tricking, persuading or manipulating the target child into revealing personal and/or financial information about themselves and/or their loved ones. Once the cyber bully acquires this information, they begin to use the information to access their profiles if it may be the target child's password, purchasing unauthorized items with the target child's or parents credit cards.

7. Impersonation: Impersonation or "imping" as a tactic in cyber bullying can only occur with the "veil of anonymity" offered by digital technology. Cyber bullies impersonate the target child and make unpopular online comments on social networking sites and in chat rooms. Using impersonation, cyber bullies set up websites that include vitriolic information leading to the target child being ostracized or victimized in more classic bullying ways.

8. Denigration: Used in both classic and cyber bullying, denigration is a term used to describe when cyber bullies send, post or publish cruel rumors, gossip and untrue statements about a target child to intentionally damage their reputation or friendships. Also known as "dissing," this cyber bullying method is a common element and layer involved in most all of the cyber bullying tactics listed.

9. E-mail and Cell Phone Image Dissemination: Not only a tactic used in cyber bullying, but a form of information exchange that can be a criminal act if the images are pornographic or graphic enough depicting under aged children. Children can receive images directly on their phones and then send them to everyone in their address books. Some children actually post these images on video sites, their social networking profiles and other programs for anyone to download or view.

10. Images and Videos: The usage of images and video as a cyber bullying tactic has become a growing concern that many communities, law enforcement agencies and schools are taking seriously. Images and videos of the target child are emailed to peers, while others are published on video sites such as YouTube. The usage of video and images are extremely dangerous and criminal in most states when the target child is a minor.

11. Interactive Gaming Harassment: Interactive games on online gaming devices allow children to communicate by chat and live Internet phone with others they are matched with online. Having the ability to exchange information with gaming opponents and fellow peers, children will verbally abuse others, use threatening and profane language, lock others out of games, pass false information about others and depending on their computer savvy, hack into other children's accounts.

12 Pornography and Marketing List Inclusion: A frustrating tactic committed by cyber bullies is signing up the target child to pornography and/or junk marketing e-mailing and instant messaging marketing lists. By doing this, the target child receives thousands of e-mails and instant messages from pornography sites and advertising companies.

13. Cyber Stalking: Cyber Stalking includes threats of harm, intimidation and/or offensive comments sent through personal communication channels. Frequently with cyber stalking, there is a threat or at least a belief of the target child that the cyber bully's threats of stalking are real or could become real offline stalking. Cyber Stalking takes harassment to the level of threatening the target child's safety to an offline environment.

14. Griefing: Griefing is a term to describe when a cyber bully habitually and chronically causes grief to the target child, their peers and other members of an online community. Griefing can also occur when a cyber bully intentionally disrupts the immersion of another player in their interactive online gaming game play causing the target child embarrassment and shame.

15. Password Theft & Lockout: A cyber bully steals the target child's password and begins to chat with other people, pretending to be the target child. Confident that others think he/she is the target child, they begin to communicate provocative and adversarial messages that are offensive and anger the target child's friends or even strangers.

16. Website Creation: This is a tactic whereby the cyber bully creates websites that insult or endangers the target child. The cyber bully creates, designs and posts web pages specifically designed to insult the target child, their peers or group of people who share similar characteristics as the target child such as race, religion or sexual orientation.

17. Voting/Polling Booths: Some websites offer online users the opportunity to create online polling/voting booths that are free of charge and easy to post. Cyber bullies use these websites to create web pages that allow others to vote online for categories that are deemed highly embarrassing by the target child. Examples of voting and polling include the ugliest, fattest, dumbest, more sexually promiscuous and a plethora of other deprecating attributes.

18. Bash Boards: Bash Boards are online bulletin boards where children post anything they choose and often frequented by the cyber bully and target child's peer groups and school acquaintances. At these online bulletin boards, negative and deprecating information is posted about the target child that is public for all to read and shared with others. Generally, bash boards encourage postings that are mean, hateful, malicious and embarrassing.

19. Chicanery: Chicanery is a tactic similar to Phishing in that a cyber bully purposely tricks a target child into divulging secrets, private information and/or embarrassing information about themselves and then publishing that information online. Like Phishing, chicanery requires the target child to have some element of trust or respect for the cyber bully by agreeing to post sensitive information about them thinking the cyber bullies rationale for doing so will be beneficial and/or positive.

20. Happy Slapping: Happy Slapping is a relatively new type of cyber bullying that integrates the rapid growth of video online and classic bullying. This occurs when a target child or unsuspecting victim is physically attacked or embarrassed in person and an accomplice video records or takes pictures of the incident. The image or video is then posted online at video and social networking sites for public consumption.

21. Text Wars and Text Attacks: Text Wars and Text Attacks are cyber bullying tactics when the cyber bully and a group of his/her accomplices' gang up on the target child by sending them hundreds of emails or text messages. Besides the emotional toll it can take on the target child, their cell phone charges may escalate.

22. Sending Malicious Code: Sending malicious code is a cyber bullying tactic whereby malicious information is sent intentionally to a target child to damage or harm their ICT. Many cyber bullies will send viruses, spyware and hacking programs to a target child that can be very costly to repair. The act of sending malicious code as a cyber bullying tactic is usually reserved for children and adolescents advanced in ICT.

23. Warning Wars: Internet Service Providers (ISP) offers a way for consumers to report an online user who is posting inappropriate or abusive information. As a tactic used in cyber bullying and harassment, children engage in "warning wars" by making false allegations to the ISP regarding the child posting inappropriate information. By doing this frequently enough, often times the target child has their profile and/or account suspended by the ISP.

24. Screen Name Mirroring: Screen Name Mirroring is a cyber bullying tactic used against a target child by constructing a screen name or user name that is very similar to the target child's name. This name may have additional or removed letters, numbers or combinations of the two to appear the same as the target child's screen name.

25. Cyber Drama: Cyber Drama is a cyber bullying tactic that is a lot more common than extreme cases of cyber bullying. Cyber Drama tends to be gossip that was not supposed to be shared on a blog or a flame war that ends after a few messages. Most child and adolescent online users are savvy about telling each other to refrain and will block a user or open a new account

when necessary. Needless to say, some children engaged in Cyber Drama can be psychologically affected.

26. Sexting: Sexting is the slang term for the use of a cell phone or other information and communications technologies to distribute pictures or video of sexually explicit images. It can also refer to text messages of a sexually charged nature. Sexting is both a sexually oriented form of communication and a cyber bullying tactic.

27. Pseudonyms: A pseudonym is a nickname cyber bullies call themselves when they are online as opposed to when offline. They do this to keep their real identity a secret from the target child. When using instant messaging services like MSN Messenger or Yahoo Messenger, an online user has a nickname they have chosen. Cyber bullies use this same feature to change their name to something that a target child would not expect.

28. Instant Messaging (IM): Instant Messaging is a type of communications service that enables online users to create a private chat room with another individual. Cyber bullies can and do use IM to send harassing and threatening messages to the targets of their hatred and loathing. IM has become a very large part of the social lives of child and adolescent online users. The conversations and conflicts that arise online often give rise to behaviors that are acted out in person during school or at the local shopping mall.

Children of the 21st century are targeted via classic bullying, cyber bullying or a combination of the two. Given the evolution of digital technology and the growth of the Internet, cyber bullying has reached epidemic proportions among the pediatric segments of society and has become a permanent weapon in the bully's toolbox. At the core of all bullying, cyber and classic, are victimization, disparagement and abuse of a targeted child. Child abuse, whether perpetrated by a child or adult, is detrimental to all aspects of their development following them into adulthood and throughout their lifespan.

iPredator was founded in September 2011 to provide educational and advisory products & services to consumers and organizations on Cyber Bullying, Cyber Harassment, Cyber Stalking, Cyber Crime, Internet Defamation, Cyber Terrorism, Online Sexual Predators and the new field they are developing termed, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Forensic Psychology. Created by a NYS licensed psychologist and certified forensic consultant, Dr. Michael Nuccitelli, their goal is to reduce victimization, theft and disparagement from online assailants.

In addition to assisting citizens, iPredator's mission is to initiate a national educational & awareness campaign with the help of private, state, and federal agencies. Dr. Nuccitelli can be reached at Dr@TechPredator.com. iPredator's criminal psychology & forensics blog can be viewed at www.DarkPsychology.co and their website, www.iPredator.co, offers site visitors an enormous database on Cyber Criminal Psychology, Internet Safety and iPredators. Although iPredator has joined a multitude of social networking sites, feel free to visit their social sites planned to be their major information and announcement vehicles.

- Facebook: The iPredator
- Linked In: iPredator
- Twitter: TheiPredator
- YouTube: iPredator Team

For online users seeking Internet and cyber attack protection, please read about iPredator's innovative advisory based membership service called, iPredator Protected. With the growth and expansion of social media, Dr. Nuccitelli and iPredator offers a unique assessment service called the iPredator Facebook Safety Analysis. In addition to offering advice, education and investigation, Dr. Nuccitelli has designed 13 checklists (IISC Collection) that can be taken online and 26 checklists and inventories (IISC & IPI Collection) that can be purchased. All of Dr. Nuccitelli's checklists and inventories were designed for assessment, education and prevention education (IISC & IPI Collection Overview.) To reach iPredator and Dr. Nuccitelli, please contact them by email at Dr@TechPredator.com or calling **(347) 871-2416.**

GOD BLESS AMANDA TODD, HER FAMILY AND ALL VICTIMS OF CYBERULLYING!