Cyber-bullying, Public Spaces, IT/Telecom Companies: A Review of Issues & Solutions for Librarians

France Bouthillier
School of Information Studies
McGill University
February 29, 2012
Charles Sturt University, Research Seminar Series
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Developing an Interactive Virtual Forum to Study Children’s Online Interactions and Stakeholder Responsibilities to Promote Cyber-Safety for Canada’s Youngest Technology Users

Pi: Shaheen Shariff, Faculty of Education, McGill University
Co-Applicants: F. Bouthillier, T. Beran, V. Talwar, D. Zinga
Definitions, Roles & Perspectives

- Bullying
- Cyber-bullying
- Bullies
- Assistants
- Bullied
- Bystanders

- Psychological
- Biological
- Cultural
- Criminal
- Educational
- Social
- Environmental
- Legal
- Commercial
- Technological
- Informational
Some Data & Consequences

- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Dropout
- Permanent trace
- Suicide…. and
- Bullying

Canada: 95% of 11-15 yr-olds have Internet & 37% cell phones
- 50% know someone cyber-bullied

USA: 70% of 4-6 yr-olds use Internet, 84% 10-14 yr-old have cell phones
- Australia: 46% of home have access to Internet
- 46%-73% of 14-16 yr-old have cell phones

(2008)
Canada: 46% of students don’t think it is school responsibility
USA: 69% of children do not like restrictions
58% of student grade 4-8 would not say anything if threatened

Pew Internet studies
- 2009 – 800 parents/child survey, 12-17 yr-olds
- 93% go online, 94% for school assignments
- 89% at home, 77% at school
- 75% have cell phones
- 73% use social media
- 32% experienced harassment
- 38% for girls

More Data
• Where we go to carry out functional and ritual activities that bind a community (Carr, 1992)
• Physical and virtual spaces
• Digital divide
• Digital disconnect

Private Matters & Public Spaces
The War & the Warriors

Analogy of a war: because real impact and real casualties

Phenomenon that is sustained by economic, commercial and political factors

Everyone does not have the same understanding

- Intentional, direct
- Non-intentional, indirect
- Some know the power of the weapons
- Some do not know
- Different levels of involvement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Weapons &amp; the Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Cell phones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chat rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social media /networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instant messaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Online gaming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| • Outing: private material |
| • Impersonation: someone else |
| • Happy slapping           |
| • Cyber-stalking: repeated threats |
| • Flaming: online argument |
| • Internet polling        |
The War Zones

- School yards
- Classrooms
- Washrooms
- Locker rooms
- Libraries
- Isolated areas

- My Space
- Yahoo, Amazon
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Websites
- Wikis
- Chat rooms
The Stakeholders

- Policy makers
- Information technology companies
- Software companies
- Telecommunication providers companies

- Children & teens
- Parents
- Teachers
- School administrators
- Librarians
IT companies revenues in billions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Revenue (in billions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>$78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>$54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>$38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oracle</td>
<td>$24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Telecom companies users

- China Mobile   522 m
- Vodafone Group 333 m
- Telefonica    202 m
- Deutsch Telecom 151 m
- AT&T          85 m
The Politics

- Freedom of expression
- Educational use of Internet
- Selection

- Privacy & safety
- Filtering for protecting
- Censorship
- Banning
- Information control
- Challenging professional autonomy of teachers/librarians
- Parent prerogatives
The Positions

Students:
• 40% disagree that it is school rep to stop it;
• 53% agree that school should know it if happens
• 49% think adults have to live with consequences
Adults:
100%: it is our rep

• Until recently: governments, policy makers, school administration, teachers - this is private matters; now growing legislation/awareness
• Librarians: freedom of expression
• It/telecom companies: we make the tools, can’t control their use
• Now: real anti-bullying movement but still uneven collaboration
Librarians’ positions

- Role of schools administrators and teachers to deal with it
- Librarians’ role: guiding to resources, providing links
- An issue for school libraries mostly

Intellectual freedom is overarching right
Online Education
or
Education on safe use of Internet

The Issues

- What if cyber-bullying takes place in public space?
- What if public resources are used for harassing?
- What if virtual spaces/services sustained by public authorities are used?
- Can we control kids? Online information? Online interactions?
The Solutions

- Technological
  e.g.: filtering, blocking
- Disciplinary
- Individual
- Legal
  E.g.: Deleting Online Predators Act in USA
  Children’s Internet Protection Act
- Community-based
- Social responsibility
- Educational
- Sound & clear policies, rules, procedures
More on solutions

- Prevention
- Raising awareness
- Clear roles of teachers, librarians and others: e.g. counselors, administrators, parents
- Policies on use of cell phones, laptops, staff agreements, blocking technology

- Improving teachers/librarians education
- Learning how to deal with delicate situations
- Introducing codes of conduct
- Being pro-active and collaborative
A Research Agenda: Some Questions

- Why kids/teens engage in cyber-bullying?
- What types of literacies are needed and how they should be integrated?
- Who should be the leaders for building awareness?

- Basic literacy
- Digital literacy
- Information literacy
- Legal literacy
Conclusions

- Although no consensus, worldwide concerns
- Need not to forget that offline harassment is more frequent
- Everyone is affected and involved

- Call for socially responsible citizenship
- Opportunity for librarians to pursue civic roles
Thank you for the invitation and attention!