Combatting Cyberbullying:
Government, NGO and the Private Sector

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The Information and Knowledge Services Unit specializes in collecting data from a variety of sources in Israel and abroad, and managing them for the purpose of creating the groundwork for policy and strategic planning.

This paper is the result of research regarding methods used to combat cyberbullying. There may be additional information not included in this paper. Furthermore, the views expressed in this paper are those of the author, and do not represent the opinions of the Ministry of Public Security of Israel.
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Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of the internet and related technologies to harm other people in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner. This threat has worsened as internet related technologies and devices have become omnipresent in society, and specifically available to children. In many cases, cyberbullying has become an extension of school bullying that can reach victims in the "safety" of their homes. In the last decade, there has been an increased effort on the part of governments and NGO's around the world to combat the threat of cyberbullying. Law enforcement, parents, and non-profit educational organizations have been working together to raise awareness, education, and assistance to victims of cyberbullying. Below is an outline of different governments and NGO's and their efforts to combat cyberbullying through legislation, law enforcement and educational/supportive means.

UNITED STATES

Legislation

The primary federal law regarding internet safety is the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA). Schools and libraries subject to the CIPA must have an internet safety policy for their computers that filters and blocks obscene content, in order to receive discounts for internet through the E-rate program- a program that makes communication services more affordable for certain schools and libraries. They must also have a policy that addresses minors' access to harmful material on the internet. Schools must also hold a public hearing addressing their proposed internet safety policy before it is put into place (1).
Governmental Programs

Many departments within the federal government have programs that aim to increase cyberbullying awareness and offer resources to children, parents and educators. One of these programs is the Department of Defense Education Activity's Bullying Awareness and Prevention Program. The program offers information and resources, and works to raise awareness about the National Bully Prevention Month (October) every year (7).

The Department of Health and Human Services has a website: Stopbullying.gov, which offers information and advice regarding bullying and cyberbullying. The website also offers outside links to programs within the Department of Justice and Department of Education (8).

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) within the Department of Education enforces certain statutes including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The Educational Amendments of 1972 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 also have anti-discrimination measures that are enforced by the OCR. When bullying or cyberbullying involves discrimination covered in these statutes, the OCR may get involved and school personnel are held responsible for putting an end to this type of discrimination (9). In addition to the OCR within the Department of Education, the Civil Rights Division within the Department of Justice contributes to the enforcement of civil rights laws in addition to holding schools and their personnel responsible for addressing harassment and bullying (12).

The White House held the first ever "White House Bullying Prevention Conference" in March of 2011. The conference was put on in coordination with the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. Its aim
was to bring more attention to the issue of bullying and cyberbullying. President Obama met with students and parents involved in the conference and a Facebook video chat was held with the Facebook Chief Security Officer, the MTV Vice President of Public Affairs and author Rosalind Wiseman, with a member of the White House staff moderating. The administration appropriated $132 million in 2012 to combat violence and the bullying of children (3).

The FBI field offices deal with internet safety issues through various programs throughout the United States. One of these programs is the Safe Online Surfing (SOS) program that began in the Miami office. The program involves children in schools learning about various internet safety tactics and gaining knowledge in different areas depending on their age. They take quizzes to test their retention of this knowledge. These issues include virus protection, password security, chat rooms, social networking sites, and cyberbullying. The SOS program is now a national one headed by the FBI's Cyber Division (39).

The Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) works to improve the United States' cyber security posture. As a part of their cyber security focus, the CERT provides information and tips regarding cyberbullying. In addition to providing information and tips, their website refers readers to the stopbullying.gov website of the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Crime Prevention Council (23). The DHS created a campaign in 2010 in conjunction with National Cyber Security Awareness Month called "Stop.Think.Connect", which is a public awareness campaign aimed at increasing the understanding of internet use and safety (40).
State Legislation and Programs

Many state laws exist in the United States that address the issue of bullying, however most of these laws do not cover cyberbullying and states often do not have separate laws covering the issue of cyberbullying. Forty nine states have laws addressing bullying while only sixteen states have laws that cover cyberbullying crimes. In addition, forty seven states have laws concerning electric harassment but only twelve have criminal sanctions for these crimes. Regarding schools, forty nine states require a school policy addressing cyberbullying, but only ten states mention off campus behavior (5).

The New York State Educational Department (NYSED) recognizes the growing prevalence of bullying and specifically cyberbullying in the school system, and provides guidance to educators in New York State. This guidance includes policy, internet safety programs, and legal considerations regarding cyberbullying. The NYSED also assists the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and County Vocational Education and Extension Boards (CVEEB) in creating a comprehensive approach for dealing with cyberbullying. The Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act of 2000 (SAVE) focuses on acts of violence, including but not limited to physical acts of bullying and harassment. The NYSED encourages educators to consult with the attorney in their school district, BOCES, or CVEEB when bullying or cyberbullying takes place (1).

One of the resources offered by the NYSED is a document developed with the New York State Office of Mental Health called, Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning (SEDL) in New York State. This document and ones similar to it assist schools in creating positive school environments that limit bullying and cyberbullying. The SEDL encourages
community and family outreach programs to help the educational system work with parents to help the development of their children. The SEDL is associated with different programs like America's Promise Alliance, which awards grants to states to hold summits to develop plans to reduce dropout rates. (1).

Another resource is the Code of Conduct that all school districts, BOCES, and CVEEB's must adopt and enforce. The COC is updated every year so that it can address the most current issues like cyberbullying. The COC is reviewed by students, parents, and other members of the community in addition to school personnel (1).

Each school district must also submit Violent and Disruptive Incident Reports (VADIR) annually. This report notes incidents including cyberbullying, and helps the NYSED stay current and address new issues arising in schools (1).

**NGOs/Partnerships**

Different non-profit, non-government affiliated organizations exist that deal with cyberbullying. One of the most recognized and prominent organizations are the Cyberangels. Launched by the Guardian Angels (a non-profit community patrol org in NY) in 1979, the cyberangels began as an online safety education program. Led by Anthony de Araujo and Katya Gifford, the cyberangels have won both national and municipal awards from Bill Clinton and Rudy Giuliani respectively. The Cyberangels' goals are prevention through education and providing assistance to victims by helping to trace and identify cyber criminals, and monitoring internet legal issues that affect the public. They often work with the FBI and organizations abroad like Interpol and Scotland Yard in order to trace perpetrators of online crimes (12).

Wiredsafety is a similar online safety program. It was started by volunteers in 1995 and has grown over the years to stay current in the evolving cyber world.
Wiredsafety now provides one-to-one help and education and resources for internet users of all ages on privacy and security issues. It's a worldwide organization comprised of unpaid volunteers of ages 7 to 96. Wiredsafety's work falls into the categories of: help and support for cybercrime victims, advice and training for law enforcement, education for children, parents, communities, and educators, information and awareness on all aspects of online safety, and free downloadable online resources (13).

Another non-profit organization is The End to Cyberbullying Organization (ETCB). The ETCB was established in 2011 and attempts to raise awareness and provide information and approachable services while mobilizing students, educators, and parents to take measures to end cyberbullying. The ETCB has over two hundred volunteers around the globe and works hard to inspire others to take a stand against cyber bullying (6).

The Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI) is an international, non-profit organization that works to improve internet safety for families and children. FOSI convenes leaders in industry, government, and other non-profit organizations to collaborate and improve internet safety. FOSI uses research, resources, and programs to provide information and tools for internet users. FOSI also uses forums and conferences worldwide in addition to its special events and YouTube channel to lead the debate on internet safety (14).

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) was created in 1982 and has worked since that time to spread knowledge and help individuals, families, and communities stay safe and free of crime. The NCPA has an advertising campaign aimed at preventing cyberbullying. Their website provides information and educational resources to raise awareness and knowledge regarding cyber bullying.
(24). The NCPC has recently partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI in which they will emphasize the importance of cybersafety. The NCPC will also join the Department of Homeland Security's Stop. Think. Connect Campaign's National Network where they will promote cyber security awareness (26).

Common Sense Media is a non-profit organization committed to providing tools and information including media reviews so that parents can make educated choices about the media in their children's lives. Common Sense Media also has information on cyberbullying and provides information through articles on harmful texting, bullying, body image tips, and how to combat digital harassment (32).

NEW ZEALAND

Legislation

New Zealand recently established a law commission on cyber bullying to make recommendations to the government on how to combat the growing threat that cyberbullying poses. The report defines harmful digital communication as threats, harassment, dissemination of intimate personal visually recordings and incitement to suicide. The commission calls for the creation of a new criminal offense for cyber bullying, amendments to existing statutes, an authority to enable internet takedown and cease-and-desist orders, and legal reforms in schools regarding bullying and cyberbullying (11). Specifically, the commission recommends that a Communications Tribunal be established and have the power to "name-and-shame" offenders online and force ISP's or websites to take down content. Amendments to existing laws would make it illegal to cause serious distress or mental harm, rather than just threats related to physical harm, which the current laws cover. As of now, it is a criminal offense to
incite someone to suicide if they ultimately take their own life. However, the commission recommends that the act of incitement be outlawed regardless of its outcome (10).

**Partnerships**

NetSafe is a non-profit partnership founded in 1998 that is focused on promoting cybersafety by educating and supporting individuals, organization, and industry on a range of cyber issues. Partners involved in NetSafe come from different sectors and groups including the fields of Government, Education, Law, and the community. NetSafe also receives funding from the New Zealand Ministry of Education. NetSafe is involved in the government's new Cyber Security Strategy and has recently created a National Cyberbullying Taskforce. The taskforce is made up of more than a dozen different organizations with the aim of developing an approach, response, and solution to cyberbullying that will benefit young people, parents, teachers, and the community. The government partnered with NetSafe to increase cyber awareness and help keep Government and business infrastructure safe (18).

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**Legislation**

Four statutes exist in the United Kingdom that deals with cyber bullying. The Protection from Harassment Act of 1997 was proposed to combat stalking; however it covers harassment in a wider sense. The act prohibits someone pursuing a course of conduct, where harassment of another occurs, or where he/she knows or should know
that harassment of another occurs. Police have used this act to deal with cyberbullying by prosecuting individuals for sending offensive messages through the internet.

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 also deals with harassment. It defines an act of intentional harassment as a person having intent to cause another person harassment, alarm, or distress by using threatening or abusive words or behavior or disorderly behavior, or displaying writing, sign, or other visible representation, which is abusive, or insulting as to cause a person harassment, alarm, or distress. This act has also been used when dealing with online messages relating to cyberbullying.

The Malicious Communications Act of 1998 and the Telecommunications Act of 1984 deal with electronic communication. This includes telephone calls under the latter and any indecent, offensive, or threatening communication in the former.

The Communications Act of 2003 is a recently passed Act that also deals with communication. It states that a person is illegal of an offence if he/she sends a message or other matter that is grossly offensive, or of an indecent or obscene or menacing character. It is also illegal to send a false message with the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or anxiety. The act also makes it illegal to cause such a message to be sent.

**Government Programs**

The Office of Cyber Security within the Cabinet Office provides coordination of the governmental response to online threats. This office works closely with the Home Office to reduce risks to the UK's secure use of the internet (45).

The Home Office, along with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, leader the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) (45). The
program brings over 180 NGO's and individuals from government agencies, law enforcement, industries, academia and charities together to help keep children safe on the web. The UKCCIS takes part in extensive research on internet safety including the functionality of parental controls on PC's. They are also involved in the UK's Anti-Bullying week and help raise awareness about internet safety through their website along with helpful links to outside materials (47).

The Home Office is in charge of providing law enforcement in response to cyber crime (45). The increased focus on investigations and use of existing legislation in the field of cyber crime will cover cyberbullies and the Home Office, as part of a new strategy, will use "cyber sanctions" to keep cyberbullies off of social networking and instant messaging services (46).

**Partnerships**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) is a coalition of organizations and individuals who work together to create safe environments free from bullying. Like other non-profit organizations, the ABA provides information through research and services to the public. These services include training workshops that are open to different people depending on the specific session. ABA members get discounts for the workshops. The ABA also sends speakers to events and specialized members are available through appointments. In addition, the ABA established an Anti-Bullying Week in 2006 to help raise awareness and education regarding bullying (16).

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Center is a governmental organization affiliated with the Serious Organized Crime Agency in the UK with the goal of eradicating sexual abuse of children. The CEOP works with police, different government agencies, professional experts from the community and
various corporations. Within CEOP is a child trafficking unit, behavioral analysis unit and an interactive Most Wanted initiative. One program involved in internet safety is the Thinkuknow program (34). Thinkuknow is a program centered around providing information to viewers through a variety of specific websites for children of different ages, educators, and parents. The websites offer advice and knowledge on a variety of internet related issues including sexual abuse, general internet safety, and cyberbullying (35).

Beatbullying is the leading bullying prevention charity in the U.K. They provide information and tools for families, schools, and children to help communities and individuals better understand the problem of bullying. Beatbullying empowers victims of bullying through programs like CyberMentors and MiniMentors. CyberMentors is a program where young people, ages 11-17, are trained by Beatbullying staff to become mentors of other students around the U.K. both offline (at school) and online (on the CyberMentors website). The mentoring is monitored by Beatbullying staff and qualified counselors. This peer to peer supports is designed to empower victims and fight feelings of helplessness and aloneness. MiniMentors is a similar program for children ages 5-11. This program is more about friendship and wellbeing and works closely with parents and professionals. Only children attending schools with the MiniMentoring program can access the chat features on the website, but anyone can visit and view the website (33).
CANADA

Legislation

Legislation in Canada with criminal harassment provisions are used to combat cyberbullying. These provisions make it an offense to repeatedly follow, watch the dwelling of, engage in threatening conduct, or repeatedly communicate with, either directly or indirectly, the other person or their family, or anyone known to them. The harassment legislation also contains provisions regarding sexual offenses, making it illegal to conduct behavior causing the fear of a sexual offense occurring (48).

Quebec recently passed the Act to Prevent and Stop Bullying at School, dealing with bullying in schools. The act requires every public and private school in Quebec to implement an anti-bullying and anti-violence act. This act is to be coupled with an advertising campaign to raise awareness about bullying (27).

Partnerships

The Nova Scotia Cyberbullying Task Force works directly with the community to assess cyberbullying and provide recommendations for intervention, education, and policy. The task force has raised awareness and public interest in the field of cyberbullying and prevention by conducting surveys; receiving more than 5,000 responses and creating 35 focus groups with 1,000 students from across the province. The task force chair also meets with the public and speaks at events and schools about cyberbullying and ways to combat it (21).

PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network) is Canada's authority on research and resources devoted to bullying prevention. It is made up of 65 Canadian research scientists and almost 100 graduate students and 52
youth-serving organizations. PREVENet began in 2006 and has turned into the national network for Canadian anti-bullying information. Four main aims of the organization is to educate and raise awareness among individuals, students, families, schools, and organizations, assess bullying and victimization issues, provide guidelines and empirically-based programs and tools to reduce bullying, and shape policy within the government and schools to insure the safety of children and others victimized by bullying (22).

The British Columbia Ministry of Education's ERASE (Expect Respect And a Safe Education) Bullying is a province-wide strategy to combat bullying. The plan includes training programs for educators and community partners, online resources and tools including a smartphone app for kids to anonymously report bullying, the establishment of safe school coordinators in schools, and guidelines and protocols regarding bullying to coordinate the work of educators and community leaders (20).

NGOs

Stop a Bully is a national non-profit Canadian organization developed in 2009 by a teacher in British Columbia who wanted victims of bullying and witnesses to bullying to be able to come forward without fear of retribution from their peers. Stop a Bully provides information to schools to help them further assist victims and witnesses of bullying and improve accountability for perpetrators. They also provide assistance to any student in Canada who requests it.
LEGISLATION

In Germany, the German Criminal Code Strafgesetzbuch and the Interstate Treaty for the Protection of Minors from Unsuitable Media Content, which are closely interlocked, are examples of legislation covering violent content in the media and acts of cyberbullying (37).

PARTNERSHIPS

Initiatives and policy geared towards cyberbullying are developed at a local level in the Germany Landers (provinces). An example of one of these policies is the Rhineland's 10 Point Program, aimed at raising awareness and knowledge of internet use and literacy in all media related activity. The program was launched in 2007 and uses facilitators to protect minors from dangerous internet content in cooperation with EU-funded programs like Kicksafe (37).

Klicksafe's aim is to raise awareness and knowledge about the internet and the threat of cyberbullying. Created in 2009, Klicksafe integrates children into its program through its Youth Panels in order to bring up new issues that should be addressed. The program promotes Europe's "Safer Internet Day" (February 5th) and provides various information regarding internet safety and cyberbullying while working together with the government and private partners. Klicksafe also provides specific networks within Europe in order to address problems that differ from country to country (38).

Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle Multimedia-Diensteanbieter, or FSM is a registered association created in 1997 by companies and e-commerce alliances with the goal of
protecting youth from harmful web content. The FSM operates a hotline that deals with reports of illegal or harmful web content. In 1999, the FSM co-founded the International Association of Internet Hotline Providers called INHOPE. More than 20 internet hotlines have joined INHOPE, most of them are in Europe. INHOPE coordinates and facilitates the work of hotlines relating to internet safety (30).

INTERNATIONAL

The Cyber Training project was launched in Europe in 2008 with the support of the European Commission with the objective of helping countries in Europe research and assess web trainers' needs in terms of cyberbullying with the goal of creating a training manual by 2011. The manual is practice-oriented and will address trainers working with schools, parents and children (28).

The European Commission has also sponsored Safer Internet Centers in 30 European countries, made up of awareness centers, hotlines, and in some countries, helplines. The centers and helplines are organized in a pan-European network called INSafe. The centers help raise awareness about threats posed to children online. They have also developed events such as the Safer Internet Day in Europe. In addition, they set up youth panels and other activities in various European countries. The hotlines are organized in a pan-European network called INHOPE. These helplines receive reports from members of the community who come across illegal content online. INHOPE also works with the US, Canada, Australia, Taiwan, Japan, South Africa, Russia, and South Korea (29).
COMPANIES

Google has invested in and bought many cyber security startups and does several things to ensure the safety of people using its search engine. To help prevent instances of children inadvertently finding inappropriate web content, Google has created family safety technology and tools such as SafeSearch, a filter that uses advanced technology to block explicit content from Google searches. Google has also partnered with child safety and internet safety organizations to educate families about ways to keep their children's web experiences safe. This effort includes work with groups like Common Sense Media and I-Safe and IKeepSafe, who raise awareness on safe and unsafe content on the web and promote access to resources on internet safety (31).

Google also has safety tools in place to keep users safe. Google SafeSearch is a tool designed to remove sexually explicit content from search results. Settings can be adjusted in SafeSearch to moderately or strictly filter results and SafeSearch can also be locked in place. Google also has a Safety Mode available that filters out mature or age-restricted videos on YouTube, as well as other tools to allow users to report content or profiles that are inappropriate. In addition, Google offers tips to families and parents and provides resources on internet safety (44).

Facebook has teamed up with the White House for events like the White House Bullying Prevention Conference and has also began the, "The Stop Bullying: Speak Up" campaign. It aims to raise awareness of bullying and actions that kids, parents, and educators can take to prevent bullying. The Facebook page was created in August of 2011 and now has 1.1 million likes (41).
Facebook also has tools available to report abuse and harassment. A user can unfriend or block another user. Abusive content, pages, groups, events, or users can also be reported to Facebook. Privacy settings also allow users to customize who sees their information and what goes on their personal wall (43).

MTV's A Thin Line campaign is aimed at educating and empowering individuals to fight and end cyberbullying and other forms of digital hate and disrespect. Their website provides information, tips, and has areas where individuals share their stories and positive responses to bullying and other issues (42).

Below is a chart outlining the different countries discussed with their respective laws, government programs, agencies, and NGO's regarding cyberbullying.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Government Programs</th>
<th>Law Enforcement</th>
<th>NGOs/Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Quebec: Act to prevent and stop bullying and violence in schools</td>
<td>The British Columbia Ministry of Education's ERASE</td>
<td>The Nova Scotia Cyber Bullying Task Force</td>
<td>PREVNet/Stop a Bully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Law Commission (Currently debating new legislation)</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>NONE</td>
<td>NetSafe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>German Criminal Code Strafgesetzbuch/The Interstate Treaty for the Protection of Minors from Unsuitable Media Content</td>
<td>Rhineland's 10 Point Program/ Klicksafe</td>
<td>Ministry of Family Affairs (Landers) /Police/Min. Edu</td>
<td>FSM/INHOPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) has made recommendations for EU regarding cyberbullying</td>
<td>The Cyber Training project/ Safer Internet Centers</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>INHOPE/INSAFE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


(15) "An End to Bullying & Equal Opportunities for All Students." Civil Rights Division United States Department of Justice. 31 October, 2012. Web. 3 December, 2012.


