# Anonymity and Abuse on the Internet

Internet has been the fastest growing medium, as more and more people are becoming a part of the internet fraternity; it becomes more difficult to keep track of who is doing what. One of the biggest issues that have come to surface recently is the one of anonymity; people can become anonymous and do just about anything in the cyber space. Anonymity is just not all about the negative things that evolve from it, rather there are positives out of it too.

The internet allows everyone to have online discussions with people from all over the world, hailing from diverse backgrounds. There can be extremely conservative people found out there and they will not like to talk openly about issues such as sexual abuse, harassment, minority issues, racism and many other things (Motwani 2003). Therefore it becomes very uncomfortable to share opinions & views, anonymity facilitates people to have such discussions and protect their identity at the same time. Because without anonymity, these discussions can result in public abuse or ridicule, physical injury or even legal action. Anonymity lets people practice freedom of expression; it gives them an outlet for their opinions, even the controversial ones that cannot be talked about openly.

Having said that anonymity has proved to be quite a harmful issue over the years. A lot of illegal activities are being practiced due to anonymity; extreme level of abuse is one of the major drawbacks. In many a cases people have been found involved in harassment, threatening, kidnapping and even terrorist activities by being anonymous (Quayle 2003).

There have been instances when anonymous users over the internet have breached privacy specially exposing females and their personal information; at times posting personal pictures with anonymous names. Financial scams have been uncovered where people from within the organizations have leaked the secrets of trade and entail themselves in money rigging activities.

Best way to curb anonymity abuse is to react to the anonymous information unemotionally. And notify operators if very severe abuses or criminal activity occur, such as piracy, harassment & extortion.

## Virtual Crime and/or Regulating Virtual Communities

The virtual world is full of communities and interactive gaming applications with millions of players and participants from all over the world; everyone is bound to find a community which will suit their interests (Donovan 2004). Number of virtual games and communities with multiplayer interface are increasing everyday. Most of these games are based on aggression, crime and illegitimate activities.

Virtual games contain in-game crimes that allow players to accumulate points or cash and progress further ahead in the game. The crimes in the games, virtual criminal act that takes place in a massively multiplayer online game (MMOG), usually in an MMORPG – Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game.

South Korea is the hub for virtual gaming; there are massive numbers of players participating from that region of the world (Brown 2005). Players there have taken the gaming to a whole new level where actual gangs and mafia like mobs have emerged out of the streets, where they demand newbie’s for virtual money to protect them.

In a similar instance, special police investigation units were introduced in South Korea to cover such virtual crimes. In spite of the fact that South Korea is suffering from the highest number of virtual crimes, they have uncovered about 22,000 cases (Wall 2001).

As far as regulation within the cyber space is concerned, many communities do not allow illegal items and activities to be carried out on their forum, but still people get involved in unlawful acts. One way to stop these activities is by including a clause of self-regulation in the policies of the community. By giving a limited amount of control to the users, the community can be moderated more efficiently.

On the bigger scale the state can derive a charter for communities and expect them to abide by it. Through this way communities will be required to follow some standards, yet not the basic purpose of the community (Shelley 1998). State can only make the rules and then it is up to the communities to follow them, a set pattern of guidelines met by the communities and inculcated in their policies.

## Corporate Blogging

Blogs have become the source of communication and expression for many firms lately. It’s a very versatile outlet that gives a corporation to connect with its stakeholder and build long lasting relationships. A corporate blog basically plays a support function for the main website or portal of the corporation (Storey 2004). The diverse options that a blog provides, enables firms to showcase information through the help of different media options that can be accessed on a blog.

Every firm has their own reasons for blogging, and blogs also deliver diverse results. However, if used smartly, a blog can prove to be an excellent salesperson that can deliver effective presentations to prospects and can help built good relationship with target markets. As from a business perspective there are diverse reasons for a firm to blog. It is not like an outlet where the main objective is to sell, rather more like a forum (Flynn 2006). This forum is a way to communicate on a more personal level with the customers; this in turns allows the customers to send in their feedback about the latest offerings from the firm. On the other hand the blogs a re a good way to participate in customer’s discussions, get to know their behaviours and gain valuable insights (Allan 2004).

Good Public Relations with the media channels is another requirement that the blog can fulfil easily without much hassle. Media outlets are looking for updates from corporations all the time, by providing sneak peak and updates on the blog instead of Press Releases, media gets actively involved into PR for the corporation.

The best way to be found on the internet is by putting relevant content on the blog and updating it regularly. Implementing the SEO strategy in the right manner will enable the search engines to find the relevant content of the corporation from these blogs. Google and other search engines give higher rank to the blogs that are updated regularly and eventually a higher position when relevant content in being searched for (Smudde 2005).

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