**Main Features of Cyber Harassment**

Traditional bullying transformed into cyber harassment in the 1990s after personal computers became popular. People with personal computers use the web to hide their identities and engage in online harassment. Cyber harassment worsened in the 21st century after the invention of social media platforms and the popularization of smartphones. It gained mainstream attention in 2007 when a teenager committed suicide after experiencing online harassment. Although cyber harassment constitutes felonies or misdemeanors in some states, it is difficult to arrest anonymous offenders. Today, people use instant messages, derogatory websites, and email to conduct cyber harassment. The main features of cyber harassment include defamatory content, persistent threats, teasing, information gathering, online sexual harassment, and harassing by hacking.

**Defamatory Content**

Cyber harassment involves hurting another individual's reputation through the internet and electronic devices. This content mainly involves sharing degrading comments about an individual (Stevens et al., 2021). The perpetrator usually shares the content on social media platforms such as Reddit, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and NextDoor. These comments aim to show a lack of respect for someone and make internet users perceive the victim as worthless. The statements are mainly based on misleading information and are classified as harassment because they result in humiliation and a negative perception of an individual. In addition, the perpetrator uses defamatory content to destroy the victim's friendships and economic opportunities by making them appear untrustworthy.

**Persistent Threats**

Persistent threatening is also a common part of cyber harassment. It occurs when individuals send messages to the victim implying bodily harm. These messages can involve death threats and aim to put the victim in a constant state of fear. Additionally, they include the bully threatening to post an embarrassing image of the victim on social media platforms. The bully sends threatening messages consistently and ensures the victim believes they will execute the threats. The messages sometimes involve showing awareness regarding the victim's residence and whereabouts to make the victim realize that the bully knows them.

**Teasing**

Teasing is another central element of cyberbullying. Bullies tease victims by posting edited, funny images and provoking, irritating comments that aim to annoy, embarrass, and humiliate the victim. Teasing involves making jokes about personal issues regarding the victim, such as their socioeconomic status, residence, religion, racial background, and sexual orientation. Primarily, it focuses on the victim's poor body shape or competence, showing that they are at a social disadvantage (Wang et al., 2022). Teasing aims to hurt the victim's self-esteem and encourage internet users to mock the victim. The perpetrator identifies the victim's weaknesses and designs content that will make them feel humiliated.

**Information Gathering**

Information gathering is a primary element of cyber harassment as perpetrators must collect information regarding victims for the bullying to be effective. It involves obtaining and evaluating data about the target to know when and how to attack. The bully must know the information that evokes an adverse emotional reaction among victims. Perpetrators gather information through social engineering, search engines, and social networks. The victim's friends, schoolmates, and workmates might help the perpetrators to collect their data. Perpetrators mostly rely on internet servers to acquire the maximum data about the victim. The perpetrator aims at gathering large quantities of information: more information guarantees relevant results.

**Online Sexual Harassment**

Online sexual harassment is another element of cyber harassment. It usually involves asking individuals to perform sexual acts or sending sexual images or videos to the target (Copp et al., 2021). Besides, it includes using a target's gender to harass them. For instance, a bully can tease a girl online because she plays a sport predominantly played by men. Online sexual harassment also occurs when a perpetrator uses sexual epithets such as 'bitch’ or 'whore’ when addressing a target. Some perpetrators perform online sexual harassment by spreading false or factual information about an individual's sexual activity. Additionally, some perpetrators take sexual images without consent and share them online, while others solicit sex. Online sexual harassment aims at making victims feel discriminated against: it eventually attains sexualization, coercion, and humiliation.

**Harassing by Hacking**

Harassers exploit digital devices' weaknesses and obtain sensitive information to harass their targets. This information includes banking websites, health records, school records, and passwords to social media accounts (Mikoley, 2021). The harassers will threaten to expose this information to the public. Some will use it to make purchases in the victim's name and ruin their finances. Besides, they can change the passwords of the victim's social media accounts to annoy them. After changing passwords, most hackers will pretend to be the victim and post embarrassing content on their social media accounts or send hurtful messages to the target's social media friends. The victim will experience difficulty convincing people that they are not responsible for their social media accounts' irritating posts and messages. The hacker usually aims to create hatred towards the victim and make them seem disrespectful.

**Conclusion**

Cyber harassment is an unethical practice with features that annoy, upset, humiliate a victim, and make them appear disrespectful. Its primary features involve hurting other people's reputations to make them seem untrustworthy, sending threats to people to put them in a constant state of fear, teasing, online sexual harassment, and harassing by hacking. Harassing by hacking is a crucial element of cyber harassment because it allows perpetrators to acquire sensitive information. Lastly, information gathering is the foundation of cyber harassment as it allows the bully to acquire data that enables them to know when and how to attack.

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