

Federal Trade Commission  
Washington DC  
Noon, May 18, 2010

## A Look at Youth Internet Victimization: What's Really Going On?

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\* Thank you for your interest in this presentation. Please note that analyses included herein are preliminary. More recent, finalized analyses can be found in: Ybarra, M. L., Mitchell, K. J., & Korchmaros, J. D. (2011). National trends in exposure to and experiences of violence on the Internet among children. *Pediatrics*, 128(6), e1376-e1386.



## Acknowledgements

This survey was supported by Cooperative Agreement number U49/CE000206 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The contents of this presentation are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

I would like to thank the entire Growing up with Media Study team from Internet Solutions for Kids, Harris Interactive, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the CDC, who contributed to the planning and implementation of the study. Finally, we thank the families for their time and willingness to participate in this study.

## Technology use in the US: Benefits of technology

### Access to health information:

- 55% of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders have **ever** looked  
(Generation M2)
- 17% of 12-17 year olds go online for  
'sensitive' health topics (Purcell, 2010)
- 41% of adolescents indicate having  
changed their behavior because of  
information they found online (Kaiser Family  
Foundation, 2002)

## Technology use in the US: Benefits of technology

- Teaching healthy behaviors (as described by My  
Thai, Lownestein, Ching, Rejeski, 2009)
  - Physical health: Dance Dance Revolution
  - Healthy behaviors: Sesame Street's Color me Hungry (encourages eating vegetables)
  - Disease Management: Re-Mission (teaches children with cancer about the disease)

## Growing up with Media survey

- Longitudinal design: Fielded 2006, 2007, 2008
- Data collected online
- National sample (United States)
- Households randomly identified from the 4 million-member Harris Poll OnLine (HPOL)
- Sample selection was stratified based on youth age and sex.
- Data were weighted to match the US population of adults with children between the ages of 10 and 15 years and adjust for the propensity of adult to be online and in the HPOL.

## Eligibility criteria

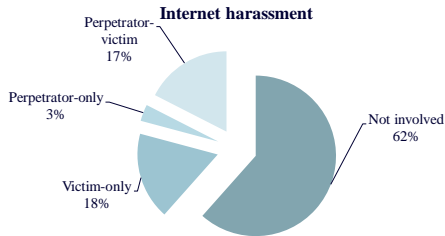
- Youth:
  - Between the ages of 10-15 years
  - Use the Internet at least once in the last 6 months
  - Live in the household at least 50% of the time
  - English speaking
- Adult:
  - Be a member of the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel
  - Be a resident in the USA (HPOL has members internationally)
  - Be the most (or equally) knowledgeable of the youth's media use in the home
  - English speaking

## Youth Demographic Characteristics

	2006 (n=1,577)	2007 (n=1189)	2008 (n=1149)
Female	50%	50%	51%
Age (SE)	12.6 (0.05)	13.7 (0.05)	14.5 (0.05)
Hispanic ethnicity	18%	17%	17%
Race: White	70%	72%	72%
Race: Black / African American	15%	13%	14%
Race: Mixed race	7%	9%	9%
Race: Other	8%	6%	6%
Household less than \$35,000	25%	24%	25%
Internet use 1 hour+ per day	47%	49%	52%

## Internet harassment

## Involvement in Internet harassment

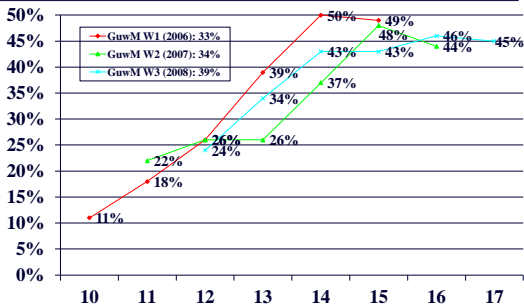


## Annual prevalence rates of youth victims of Internet harassment

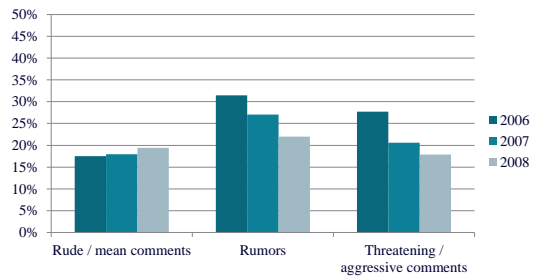
Type (Monthly or more often)	2006	2007	2008
<b>ANY</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Someone made a rude or mean comment to me online.	29%	31%	35%
Someone spread rumors about me online, whether they were true or not.	12%	17%	19%
Someone made a threatening or aggressive comment to me online.	14%	14%	15%

Someone my age took me off their buddy list because they were mad at me	26%	3%	30%	4%
Someone posted a picture or video of me in an embarrassing situation	1.5%	0.7%	3%	0.6%
"Revised" total	41%	10%	45%	10%

## Internet harassment victimization by age across time



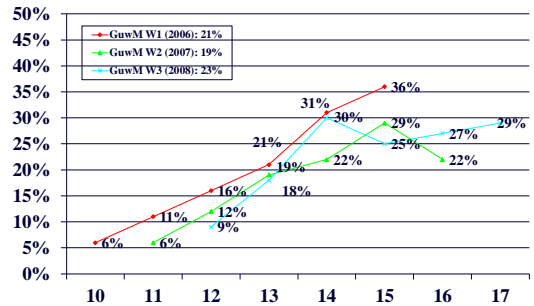
## Very / extremely upset by the harassment – age constant (12-15 y.o.)



## Annual prevalence rates of youth perpetrators Internet harassment

Type (Monthly or more often)	2006		2007		2008	
<b>ANY</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Made a rude or mean comment to someone online.	18%	3%	17%	3%	21%	4%
Spread rumors about someone online, whether they were true or not.	11%	2%	10%	0.7%	11%	0.7%
Made a threatening or aggressive comment to someone online.	5%	1.5%	5%	0.4%	8%	1%
<i>Took someone your age off their buddy list because I was mad at them</i>			25%	3%	26%	2.3%
<i>Posted a picture or video of someone in an embarrassing situation</i>			1%	0.6%	2%	0.3%
<i>"Revised" total</i>			31%	4%	35%	5%

## Internet harassment perpetration by age across time



## Assumptions about Internet harassment

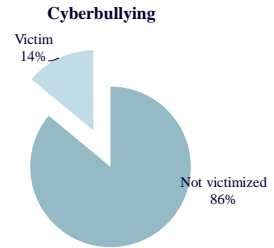
- Everyone's doing it
- It's increasing over time
- It's getting nastier / kids are more affected
- Everyone's a hapless victim

## None of these assumptions are supported by the data

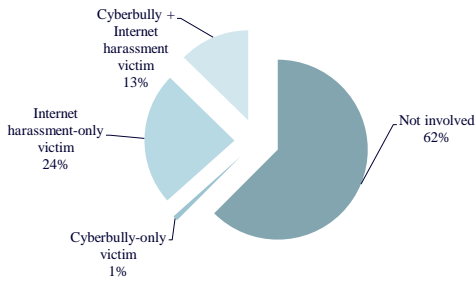
- "Everyone's doing it":
  - 38% (about 2 in 5) are involved in harassment
  - That means that 62% (3 in 5) are NOT involved in any way
- It's increasing over time
  - Neither perpetration nor victimization rates appear to be increasing from 2006-2008
- It's getting nastier / kids are more affected
  - There is no indication that young people are more likely to be upset by harassment now (in 2008) than they were 2 years ago (2006). If anything, there's some indication that youth are \*less\* likely to be upset now.
- Everyone's a hapless victim
  - 17% of all youth are BOTH victims and perpetrators of harassment
  - The odds of victimization increase about 8 fold if you are a perpetrator and vice versa

# “Cyberbullying”

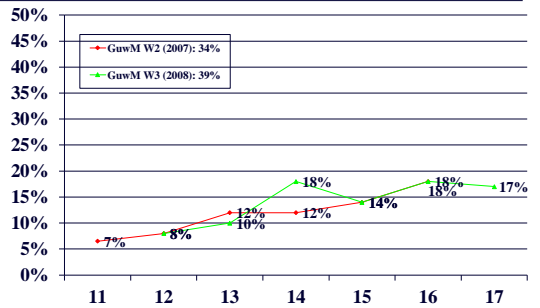
## Cyberbullying victimization



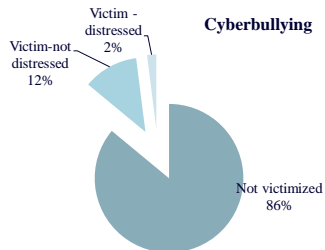
## Overlap of cyberbullying and Internet harassment victimization



## Cyberbully victimization by age across time



## Distressing cyberbullying victimization\*



Data available for Wave 3 only

## Assumptions about cyberbullying

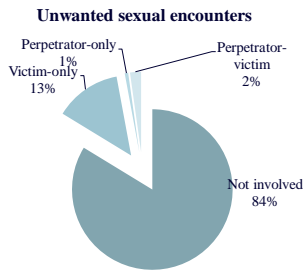
- Cyberbullying is the same as Internet harassment
- Cyberbullying is more common as Internet harassment
- Cyberbullying is more damaging than Internet harassment

## None of these assumptions are supported by the data

- Cyberbullying is the same as Internet harassment
  - If you accept that bullying must be: repetitive, over time, and between two people with differential power; THEN any measure that does not delineate this is not measuring cyberbullying
  - Due to a lack of consensus in measurement, this is not necessarily an agreed-upon assertion however
- Cyberbullying is more common than Internet harassment
  - On average (between 2007-2008): 37% were harassed, 14% were bullied online in the past year
- Cyberbullying is more damaging than Internet harassment
  - Among those cyberbullied, 15% report being very / extremely upset
  - Among those harassed, between 17-34% report being very / extremely upset

## Unwanted sexual solicitation (unwanted sexual encounters)

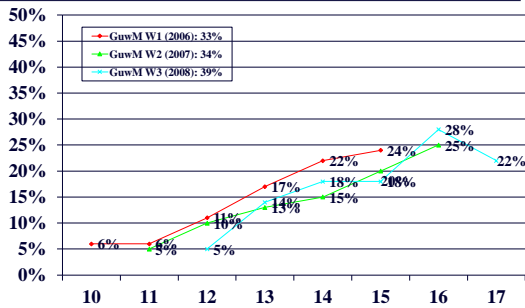
### Involvement in unwanted sexual encounters



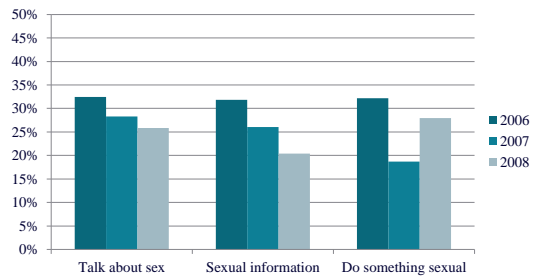
### Annual prevalence rates of youth victims of unwanted sexual encounters

Type	2006		2007		2008	
<b>ANY</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Someone asked me to talk about sex when I did not want to	11%	2%	13%	3%	14%	3%
Someone asked me to provide really personal sexual questions about myself when I did not want to tell them	11%	2%	12%	3%	13%	3%
Someone asked me to do something sexual when I did not want to	7%	2%	8%	2%	9%	3%

### Unwanted sexual encounters victimization by age across time



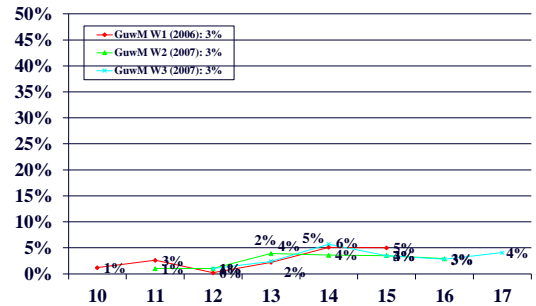
### Very / extremely upset by the encounter – age constant (12-15 y.o.)



### Annual prevalence rates of youth **perpetrators** of unwanted sexual encounters

Type	2006		2007		2008	
<b>ANY</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Asked someone to talk about sex when they did not want to	2%	1%	2%	0.6%	2%	0.3%
Asked someone to provide really personal sexual questions about themselves when they did not want to tell them	3%	1%	2%	0.5%	2%	0.4%
Asked someone to do something sexual when they did not want to	1%	0.5%	2%	0.4%	2%	0.3%

### Unwanted sexual encounter **perpetration** by age across time



### Assumptions about unwanted sexual encounters

- It means being solicited for sex
- It's increasing over time
- It's getting scarier / kids are more affected
- Everyone's a hapless victim

### None of these assumptions are supported by the data

- It means being solicited for sex
  - The definition is very broad; while it includes solicitations for sex, it also includes solicitations for other things
- It's increasing over time
  - Neither perpetration nor victimization rates appear to be increasing from 2006-2008
- It's getting nastier / kids are more affected
  - There is no indication that young people are more likely to be upset by the encounter now (in 2008) than they were 2 years ago (2006). If anything, there's some indication that youth are \*less\* likely to be upset now.
- Everyone's a hapless victim
  - Definitely, there are more victims (16%) than perpetrators (3%)
  - BUT the odds of victimization increase about 6.5 fold if you are a perpetrator and vice versa



## Limitations

- Findings need to be replicated – preferably in other national data sets
- Data are based upon the US. It's possible that different countries would yield different rates
- Non-observed data collection
- Although our response rates are strong (above 70% at each wave), this still means that we're missing data from 30% of participants...but we are statistically adjusting for non-response

## Recap: Research supporting and refuting assumptions about Internet victimization

- Assumption: Victimization is increasing
  - Rates of victimization appear to be holding steady (and maybe in some cases decreasing) from 2006-2008
- Assumption: Victimization is getting nastier
  - At least as measured by rates of distress – victimization distress rates appear to be holding steady (and maybe in some cases decreasing) from 2006-2008

## Recap: Research supporting and refuting assumptions about Internet victimization

- Assumption: Victims are always innocent
 

The interplay between victimization and perpetration can sometimes be complex. These data suggest that victims are significantly more likely to also be perpetrators. It can be a two-way street.
- Assumption: the Internet is doing it
 

The strong overlap between online and offline behaviors ...and the fact that these kids are significantly more likely to have additional psychosocial problems

→ Suggests that this is form of 'old' behavior in a 'new environment'

## Takeaways

As professionals we need to be able to sit with these two "competing" realities:

- Like other forms of victimization, bullying and unwanted sexual encounters online can be distressing for youth who experience them.
  - We need to do a better job of identifying these youth and getting them into services (e.g., therapy).
- We need to recognize also that:
  - The majority of youth are not being victimized online,
  - The majority who are, are not seriously upset by it..