

# CYBERBULLYING

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## **'I h 8 u': findings from a five-year study of text and email bullying**

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Briefing Note 3

A new form of bullying?

*THE BEST CYBERBULLYING RESEARCH I KNOW OF IS BY NATHALIE NORET AND IAN RIVERS...*

**DR MIKE ESLEA  
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE (2007)**

# Cyberbullying

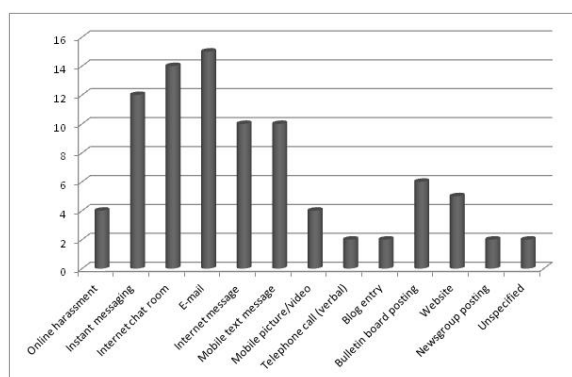
## A NEW FORM OF BULLYING?

### Cyberbullying: What is it?

**CYBERBULLYING** is the name given to any form of aggression perpetrated through electronic media. Unlike other forms of bullying, rarely do we understand the relationship between the bully and the victim, or indeed the identity of the bully.

In a five year study of text and e-mail bullying conducted by Ian Rivers and Nathalie Noret, working with over 15,000 pupils in 13 secondary schools in the North of England (Years 7 & 8)<sup>1</sup>, the researchers found that the frequency with which pupils reported being bullied was directly related to the market up-take in mobile technology and internet connectivity. Persistent text and e-mail bullying was reported by very few pupils (0.7%-1.8%) across the five years.

FIGURE 1: WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING? TECHNOLOGIES STUDIED



Rivers and Noret have also shown that studies of cyberbullying vary greatly in their estimates of prevalence - ranging anywhere from **4% TO 36%** of the school population. This is primarily a result of the different definitions used by researchers and the technologies they include/exclude (see *Figure 1*).

Among boys, text and e-mail bullying was found to be linked with experiences of **PHYSICAL BULLYING**. Among girls, it was linked **UNPOPULARITY AMONG PEERS** rather than other forms of bullying.

### Why do children cyberbully?

**CYBERBULLYING** occurs because bullies often believe they cannot be caught. Cyberbullying also occurs in a context where there are few cues or signals from others to inhibit bullies. Sending a hurtful text, uploading an embarrassing image, or talking about another person on a blog or social network does not have immediate repercussions for the bully. Often cyberbullying is no more than a medium through which name-calling, rumour spreading, and ostracism are perpetrated. What goes on in the classroom, schoolyard, or to and from home also occurs in cyberspace.

#### REFERENCES

1. Rivers, I. & Noret, N. (2010). 'I h 8 u': Findings from a five-year study of text and e-mail bullying. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(4), 643-671.