MIKEY D'S STORYTELLIN' BLOG

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Bullying in Cyberspace

Cyberbullying is an all too real reality for many people online. In his Medium.com article "The Four Kinds of Privacy," Christopher Allen considers online harassment to fall under his second kind of privacy: human rights privacy.

https://medium.com/@christophera/the-four-kinds-of-privacy-bf4b0bf222ac

Before discussing cyberbullying, it is vital to define what it is legally. USLegal.com defines cyberbullying as "any harassment that occurs via the internet, cell phones, or other devices. Communication technology is used to intentionally harm others through hostile behavior such as sending text messages and posting ugly comments on the internet."

https://definitions.uslegal.com/c/cyber-bullying/

Some people argue that regulating cyberbullying goes against the first amendment. While they recognize online harassment is a problem, many believe people write cyberbullying

laws too vaguely.

https://www.mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1581/cyberbullying

https://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/is_cyberbullying_free_speech

The Fairfield School Board in Connecticut uses the fourth amendment laws that allow schools to enforce bans on pornography or illegal content to combat Cyberbullying. The ACLU takes issue with this because the school can search through students' "personal computers and devices."

Cyber Bullying Law

New York Cyberbullying law

New law makes cyber-bullying a crime

Michigan Cyberbullying law

Cyberbullying consists of many kinds of online victimization. They include harassment, flaming, exclusion, outing, masquerading, frapping, and trolling.

https://www.federalcharges.com/cyberbullying-laws-charges/

The type of online bullying that most people are familiar with is harassment. According to Federalcharges.com, harassment is when "the bully sends malicious and offensive messages to a person and does so many times. This is a form of cyberstalking in the worst

cases and involves constant threatening and rude messages. It can eventually lead to physical harassment."

Cyber-bullying Facts – Top 10 Forms of Cyber Bul...

Some cases of cyber-harassment became big news stories. In 2018, a 12-year old Panama City, Florida girl named Gabriella Green, hanged herself with a dog leash. Police arrested her bullies, a 12 boy and girl, and charged them with cyberbullying.

Before their arrest, the girl who tormented her spread rumors that Gabriella contracted STD's and made threats that she would expose "personal and sensitive details" about her life.

Gabriella Green and her mother

The 12-year boy who was arrested video-chatted Gabriella Green. After learning of Green's previous suicide attempt, he told her, "If you're going to do it, just do it."

Gabriella's mother hopes that her death will shine a light on cyberbullying cases so that others take it seriously.

https://abc13.com/cyber-bullying-florida-girl/2983420/

Sameer Hinduja, a criminology professor at Florida Atlantic University and co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center, conducted a cyberbullying study. According to his findings, one in three kids say that cyberbullies victimized them. The study also mentions that twelve percent of children bullied others online.
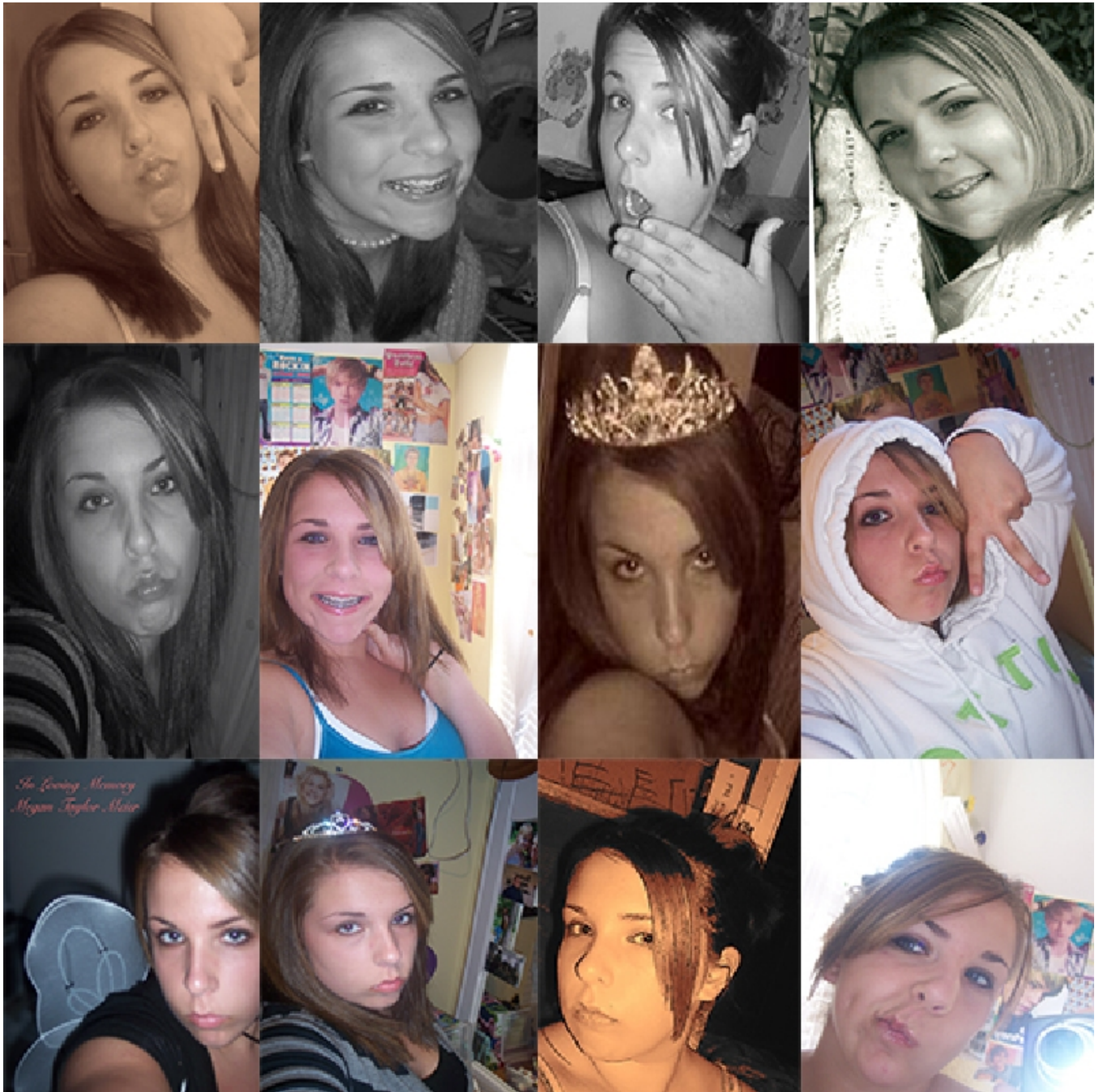
Sameer Hinduja

https://hinduja.org/

The case that brought Masquerading to national prominence is that of Megan Meier. Meier, a 13-year-old girl, who committed suicide after being bullied by fifty-nine-year-old Lori Drew. Drew developed an online relationship with Megan Meier by claiming to be a teenage boy. Police charged Drew, but a jury acquitted her.

https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/4144102/162/united-states-v-drew/

Megan Meier

Lori Drew

Catfishing is a similar concept to that of Masquerading. Catfishing "refers to a person who creates a fake online profile in order to fraudulently seduce someone. It has also become a verb to refer to the act of doing so."

A famous case of Catfishing is that of Nev Schulman. In his 2010 documentary Catfish, Schulman tracks the girl with whom he is in an online relationship. At the end of the documentary, he discovers his girlfriend is forty and married.

https://slate.com/culture/2013/01/catfish-meaning-and-definition-term-for-online-hoaxes-has-a-surprisingly-long-history.html

Schulman and MTV later created a reality TV show that helps people find their catfishers.

https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2013/aug/30/catfish-tv-show

Social Media platforms have begun to place importance on tackling Cyberbullying. Instagram has a long established issue with users harassing others on their platform. Instagram uses machine learning to detect bullying in both photos and comments.

https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/10/teens-face-relentless-bullying-instagram/572164/

https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/anti-bullying-tools-on-instagram

Cyberbullying affects many people. The Seeker (formerly D- News) video below discusses the long term effects of online bullying. According to the video, cyberbullies tormented one in four teens. Bullied teens experienced higher instances of anxiety and panic-related disorders and the bullies themselves are at greater risk for future cardiovascular disease.

These two segments from John Oliver's Last Week Tonight provide an in-depth look into the seriousness of online bullying. In one of them, he interviews Monica Lewinsky about the Bill Clinton scandal. In her interview, Lewinsky explains how the internet amplified her scandal and led to one of the first cyberbullying instances.

John Oliver's Last Week Tonight: Online Harassment

John Oliver's Last Week Tonight: Public Shaming

All in all, Cyberbullying is a critical issue to tackle. Both teens and adults can benefit from laws meant to combat online bullying because harassment instances have real-life consequences.

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