Forum:	Youth Assembly (YA)
Issue:	Measures to address cyberbullying
Student Officer:	Georgia Papaioannou
Position:	Co-Head

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates of the Youth Assembly,

My name is Georgia Papaioannou, I am 15 years old, and I attend the 10th grade at Athens College. I feel very honored to be serving Co-Head in the Youth Assembly Committee of this year's Platon School MUN. To me, Model United Nations or MUN is an extracurricular activity that benefits everyone. Not only is it a great way to acquire new experiences and meet new people, but it is also a means for young people to gain new perspectives and get in touch with the planet they are living on. I hope that this study guide will give you a fundamental idea of what the issue of "Measures to prevent cyberbullying" is about, assist you in producing apt policy statements and resolutions before the conference and help our committee have a fruitful and productive debate. While this study guide will help you gain a basic understanding of the issue at hand, you will also have to do your own research and develop your stance on the issue. I can't wait to meet everyone at the conference and do not hesitate to contact me through the attached email if you run into any issues while researching this topic, or if you have any questions about this study guide.

Yours truly,

Georgia Papaioannou

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TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Bullying has long been an issue countless young people have to face every day. Unfortunately, with flourishing technological developments, a new threat to young people has been introduced in the face of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying, much like regular bullying, is a form of harassment and peer violence, often happening between two or more individuals of the same age group. The principal difference is that cyberbullying occurs in an online space. When someone is being cyberbullied, they are often sent hurtful, embarrassing, or threatening texts, pictures, and videos. They may be ridiculed publicly on a social media platform or group chat, or they may be intimidated privately in messages or chat rooms. Nevertheless, it is considered a criminal offense in multiple countries and there needs to be a solemn attempt made by nations to combat the issue of cyberbullying.

This form of bullying impacts adolescents the same way physical bullying would affect them. A person being cyberbullied is more likely to be reluctant to socialize with people their age, may lose or gain weight quite suddenly, may have higher rates of anxiety and depression, suffer from intrusive thoughts, and most often have a lack of confidence and self-esteem that will prevent them from achieving their fullest potential. That is why it is crucial that we, not only as global citizens but also as teenagers, need to learn how to stand in solidarity with victims of cyberbullying and provide urgent solutions to this problem.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Bullying [1]
"Intentional and aggressive behavior occurring repeatedly against a victim where there is a real or perceived power imbalance, and where the victim feels vulnerable and powerless to defend himself or herself."

Cyberbullying [2]
The use of electronic and technological means to harass and/or bully someone.

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[1] "Bullying and Cyberbullying | UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children." *United Nations*, United Nations, https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/bullying-and-cyberbullying-0.

[2] "Cyberbullying Definition & Meaning." *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cyberbullying.

Harassment [3]

"Illegal behavior towards a person that causes mental or emotional suffering, which includes repeated unwanted contacts without a reasonable purpose, insults, threats or offensive language"

Bullying is considered harassment since it is an undesirable act that occurs repeatedly. This characteristic also makes it a criminal offense and grounds for prosecution on the basis of defamation and libel, if it is happening publicly, and for harassment and discrimination, in both cases.

Trolling [4]

Deliberately trying to upset someone or start an argument with them, especially by posting something offensive or unkind on the internet. The word "trolling" is a fairly new expression, mainly used as slang on the internet. Seeing as it is used almost exclusively in the context of cyberbullying, it is an important phrase to keep in mind when evaluating the vast influence cyberbullying has on internet culture.

Human Rights [5]

Certain rights are inherent to being a human being. Everyone is entitled to these rights, which are not defined by race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other status a person can have, as established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Main Types of Cyberbullying

Almost every incident of cyberbullying can be divided into these main categories: Impersonation, otherwise known as "catfishing", where an individual creates a fake profile of a real person and pretends to be them, often done in order to create commotion and embarrass the victim. Harassment, where the perpetrator sends distressing messages to the victim, frequently promises violence, exclusion, and hate. Posting or sharing embarrassing or inappropriate photos publicly or within group chats. The exclusion of one or more individuals from group chats.

Finally, doxing or outing, which is the sharing of personal and sensitive information on the internet without consent. Doxing has a range of motivations, according to

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[3] "Harassment." *Cambridge Dictionary*,
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/harassment.

[4] "Troll Definition & Meaning." *Merriam-Webster*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/troll.

[5] "Human Rights." *United Nations*, United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights.

research. Doxing is sometimes motivated by a desire to expose misconduct and bring the culprit accountable. It can also be used to assert influence over someone after a breakup of a relationship. The danger of doxing can also be used to threaten or intimidate someone. It is sometimes used to collect payments, although most of the time no demands are made to prevent the information from being disclosed, and the victim is unaware they are about to be doxed.
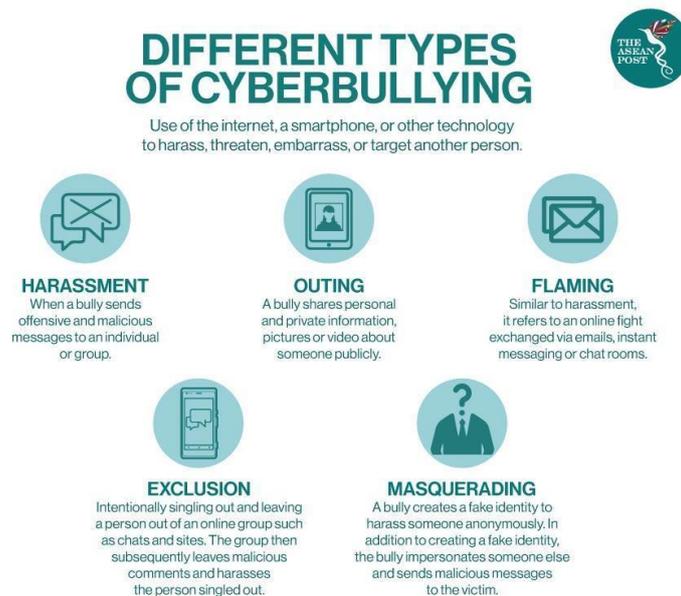

Figure 1: The different types of Cyberbullying

Nortajuddin, Athira. "Cyberbullying on the Rise." *The ASEAN Post*, 2 Dec. 2020, https://theaseanpost.com/article/cyberbullying-rise.

Internet Addiction

Addiction is the uncontrolled use of certain substances and behaviors. Internet addiction, however, is different from most regular addictions, as it is a relatively new issue, only pertaining to the last two decades, since the beginning of the digital age and the rise of the at-home computer. An individual can be addicted to the internet in a multitude of different ways. Initially, one can be addicted to surfing or video games, being unable to stop using the platform and misusing their access to the internet to an extreme extent. In the case of the victims, internet addiction can drive them to not report their bullies in fear of parents or guardians taking away their access. On the other hand, perpetrators are often a direct result of internet addiction. Unfortunately, internet addiction is not yet recognized as an actual means of addictive behavior.

Effects of Cyberbullying on the Victim

Cyberbullying has both psychological and physical effects on victims. The psychological effects include depression and social anxiety, the hesitancy to go in public places, followed by embarrassment and shame that may lead to a multitude of

other mental health issues such as eating disorders and anger issues. In extreme cases, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may be observed. As for the physical effects, victims may experience sleep disturbances due to PTSD, or gastrointestinal problems like abdomen and stomach pain, or stomach ulcers due to extreme social anxiety.

Human Rights Lens

When a child is being cyberbullied, he or she is deprived of their basic human rights. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children have the right to protection from violence and abuse. Additionally, the UN Declaration of Human Rights supports that all humans are free to achieve the highest attainable standard of mental health and be free from emotional and physical violence. Cyberbullying often violates and disregards all of these aforementioned rights all humans are entitled to.

Causes of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is different from regular bullying in the way that it can be conducted completely anonymously and without leaving any digital trace since the bullying takes place via the internet. A lot of bullies find comfort in knowing that there is little to no means for them to be discovered unless authorities get actively involved and their IP address is discovered, which is very unlikely since perpetrators often manipulate their victims into silence. Furthermore, it is very likely that the bullies are experiencing stressful situations in their personal life. They may be victims of bullying themselves, or they may be experiencing an abusive situation at home. Whatever the case may be, they almost always feel like bullying their peers is a way for them to gain power, since they themselves may feel like their life is somehow out of control and deem it essential to find a way to gain domination.
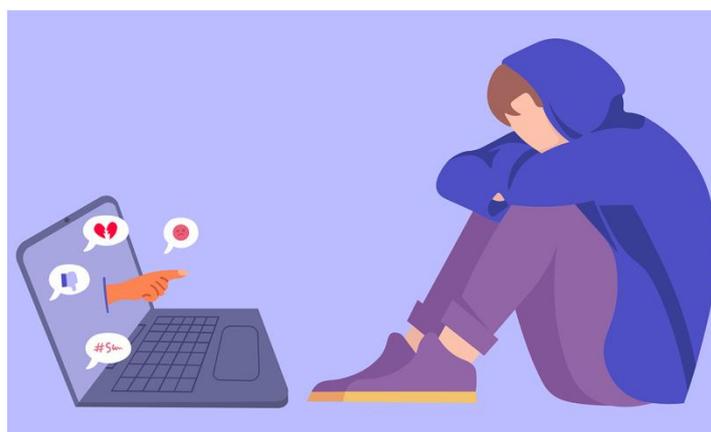

Figure 2: Isolation due to Cyberbullying

"Make the Internet a Better, Safer Place on Stop Cyberbullying Day." *Security*, https://www.bitdefender.com/blog/hotforsecurity/make-the-internet-a-better-safer-place-on-stop-cyberbullying-day.

Sociological Lens

Cyberbullying, as do many things in life, often correlates with the victim's social class or social standing, essentially how "popular" or "likable" one is. Relational aggression, "behavior that manipulates or damages relationships between individuals or groups, such as bullying, gossiping, and humiliation."[6] otherwise known as the "Mean Girl" phenomenon, is very often witnessed in cases regarding cyberbullying, especially when they involve preteens and teenagers. Adolescents engage in relational aggression simply to establish social status, the victims are selected on the basis of economical class, social skills, suspected or recognized incapacity, and physical appearance. The anomalous characteristic relational aggression possesses is that the cyberbullying may be happening between supposed friends and maybe projected as anecdotes when that is simply not the case.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Brazil

While Brazil has enacted a national policy, Law No. 13,185, when it comes to cases of bullying, that criminalized the act, there has yet to be a policy that covers cyberbullying. However, ever since 2012 a study has been conducted in the country, called the Brazilian Kids Online survey, whose main objective is to produce statistics and examine the online behavior of adolescents in Brazil. Over the years the survey has revealed that four out of ten Brazilian adolescents have witnessed discriminatory behavior while on the internet, at least once, 12 months prior to taking the survey. Out of the individuals who took the survey 20% stated that they had been subject to cyberbullying, even though other studies support that the number is close to 30% of adolescent internet users.[7]

Philippines

The Philippines has enacted The Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (RA 10627) that touches upon the topic of cyberbullying, "this law finds applicability in school-related bullying, student-student bullying in particular, which covers those uttered in social media"[8]. Nevertheless, cyberbullying remains a fairly common occurrence in the Philippines. In

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[6] "Apa Dictionary of Psychology." *American Psychological Association*, American Psychological Association, https://dictionary.apa.org/relational-aggression.

[7] "Cyberbullying in Brazil: Findings from the Brazilian Kids Online Survey." *UNESCO*, 27 Oct. 2017, https://en.unesco.org/news/cyberbullying-brazil-findings-brazilian-kids-online-survey.

[8] "Cyber Bullying in the Philippines - in-House Community." *In*, https://www.inhousecommunity.com/article/cyber-bullying-philippines/.

fact, almost half of all adolescents aged 13 to 17 claimed that they have experienced some form of bullying on the internet. Figures show that 44% of males and 43% of females living in the Philippines have experienced cyberbullying, with the most common form being verbal abuse through means such as text messages. [9]

South Africa

South Africa has recently changed their legal framework regarding cybercrime and specifically cyberbullying. As of the 26th of May 2019, when the Cybercrimes Act 19 was finalized, South African law that pertains to the issue of cyberbullying is corresponding to international standards. The Act criminalized messages or posts that incite or threaten the individual receiving them and outlawed the sharing of personal photos via text messages if the person in the photos did not consent to them being shared.

Sweden

Sweden is the single most knowledgeable country on the issue of cyberbullying, with over 90% of the population being aware that it exists as a problem plaguing youth. While the factor of education is supported heavily, there is not any substantial legislation on the subject at hand, there is a need for more legislation to be passed and effective action to be taken in order for this topic to be enclosed in Sweden.

Figure 3: Anti-Cyberbullying Campaign

"Anti-Cyberbullying Tips." *Betterinternet Singapore*, www.betterinternet.sg/SID-Campaign-2018/Tipsheets/Cyberbullying.

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[9] "Online Bullying Remains Prevalent in the Philippines, Other Countries." *UNICEF*, 28 Sept. 2021, https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/online-bullying-remains-prevalent-philippines-other-countries.

United States of America

The House of Representatives passed anti-cyberbullying law, the Anti-Cyberbullying Act of 2015. The act recognized cyberbullying as a criminal. Additionally, it provided an outline for the financial penalty the perpetrator must pay or risk incarceration since the final decision is left to the discretion of the court. The United States has put regulations on schools so that cyberbullying is condemned by school policy and binds them to take action when dealing with such incidents. However, it has also taken a more educational approach when it comes to dealing with cyberbullying. The government has launched national campaigns that conduct research and use it as statistics to inform children and teenagers in schools about online violence and the topic of cyberbullying and cyber security.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund or UNICEF is an organization that was founded in 1945, and its core mission is to protect children from any and all harm. UNICEF has published statistics and other forms of information such as studies and handbooks, pertaining to the issue of cyberbullying. The organization has taken great steps towards raising awareness on the issue and due to its significance as an institution, it can assist in educating youth to be more mindful when it comes to this topic.
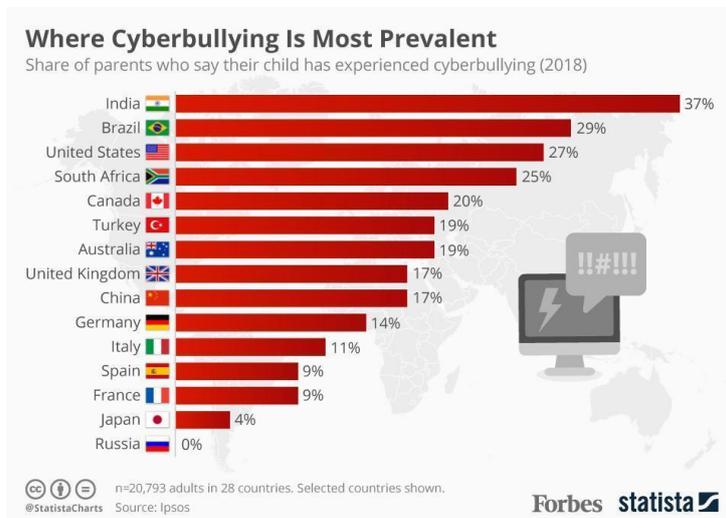
Where Cyberbullying Is Most Prevalent
Share of parents who say their child has experienced cyberbullying (2018)

Country	Percentage
India	37%
Brazil	29%
United States	27%
South Africa	25%
Canada	20%
Turkey	19%
Australia	19%
United Kingdom	17%
China	17%
Germany	14%
Italy	11%
Spain	9%
France	9%
Japan	4%
Russia	0%

@StatistaCharts n=20,793 adults in 28 countries. Selected countries shown. Source: Ipsos   Forbes statista

Figure 3: Prevalence of Cyberbullying in Different Countries

McCarthy, Niall. "New Report: Cyberbullying Is Most Prevalent in India [Infographic]." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 29 Oct. 2018,

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
January 1, 1983	The internet is invented.
November 20, 1989	The Convention of the Rights of the Child is adopted by the General Assembly, the issue of cyberbullying is heavily based on this.
September 6, 2013	The Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 is enacted in the Philippines.
2015	The House of Representatives passes the Anti-Cyberbullying Act of 2015 in the United States.
July 26, 2016	A/71/213 is published, the report addressed the prevalence of bullying and highlighted international guidelines all nations should follow.
April 27, 2018	The regional consultation on the protection of children from bullying takes place in Mexico City, Mexico.
July 30, 2018	A/73/265 is published, which highlights past efforts made by member states.
November 5, 2020	First-ever International Day against Violence and Bullying at School including Cyberbullying.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

The Convention of the Rights of the Child

The 1989 Convention of the Rights of the Child, held in New York City, is an internationally recognized agreement outlining the human rights children are entitled to, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, abilities, and so on. The rights that are significant to the topic of cyberbullying are the right to protection from violence, the right to life survival and development, identity, and the right to protection of privacy. The reason why the aforementioned rights are critical to this issue is that cyberbullying often disregards them, and therefore they end up being violated without that violation being recognized. For instance, the right to identity is often violated with "catfishing" and the right to protection of privacy is violated when "doxing" or outing occurs. Either way, recognizing this convention is of utmost importance in convincing lawmakers that cyberbullying is an issue of genuine concern for this new generation.

The European Commission

The Joint Research Center (JRC), the European Commission's main science and research source, has conducted much of the research on cyberbullying in Europe.

More expressly, the Institute for the Protection and the Security of the Citizen (IPSC), a subsidiary unit of the JRC has organized a workshop on 'Social Networks and cyber-bullying in the teenager population. The workshops aimed to examine the different challenges that arise from teens using social media networks, specific adolescents with limited legal capacity, with the intent to support European Commission policies pertaining to the issue of cybersecurity. Experts in the field were requested to participate in this event, and several suggestions on how this issue should be allocated were proposed. The workshop revealed that there are still many pressing issues to address, in addition to the current focus on privacy when it comes to the internet.

European Child Helpline

The European Child Helpline is a telephone service that provides assistance and counseling to children free of charge. Children can call and talk to a licensed expert about any issue they may be facing, that includes issues like bullying and cyberbullying. Children can either call the helpline or find them on social media platforms such as Facebook.

European Crime Prevention Network

The European Crime Prevention Network is an organization that provides policies, funding, research, campaigns, and publications to European Union countries. In 2018 the network published a thematic paper on Youth Internet Safety. The thematic paper specifically covered cyberbullying risks and prevention, it provided research conducted in EU countries like Sweden, Cyprus, Austria, and Poland. The paper's main goal is to provide cautionary statistics in order for countries to adopt measures to address the issue of cyberbullying and other crimes happening to children on the internet.

Regional consultation on the protection of children from bullying

On April 27th of 2018, a consultation on the protection of children from bullying happened in Mexico City. The consultation was cooperation between multiple people and organizations whose clear goal was to protect children, like the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence against Children, the Mexican Government, UNICEF, and the Inter-American Commission on human rights to name a few. The consultation ended with multiple campaigns against bullying established and a national legal and policy framework put in place in several Latin and Central American countries.

UN Reports

Up to this point in time, there have been two attempts made by the UN Secretary-General to address the issue of cyberbullying. The first attempt was made back in 2016, in report A/71/213, which addressed the prevalence of bullying in young children and highlighted guidelines nations should follow when making legislation. The second attempt was made in 2018, again in the form of a report from the

Secretary-General, named A/73/265, which addressed children's rights and past efforts made by member states to combat the issue of bullying.

Figure 4: UN Campaign for the International Day Against Cyberbullying

"International Day against Violence and Bullying at School Including Cyberbullying." *UNESCO IITE*, 28 Jan. 2021, iite.unesco.org/announcements/international-day-against-bullying-at-school-including-cyberbullying/.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Raising awareness

In the topic of "Measures to prevent cyberbullying the most important aspect of solving this issue is raising awareness, especially in a school environment.

Raising awareness can be done in a number of different and unique ways. Firstly, it is of utmost importance to educate children and teens on the prominence of cyber security, which means teaching them the danger of social media in a way that does not scare them but provides an outline for more substantial information to be taught. Educate them on the impact cyberbullying has on their peers, the risks that come with such behavior, and the factors that contribute to adolescents conducting bullying on the internet. Afterward, they can be informed on the reasons why it is wrong to terrorize and taunt people, in general, but especially on the internet since that is the focus of this topic. Additionally, they can engage in discussions and conduct projects of their own.
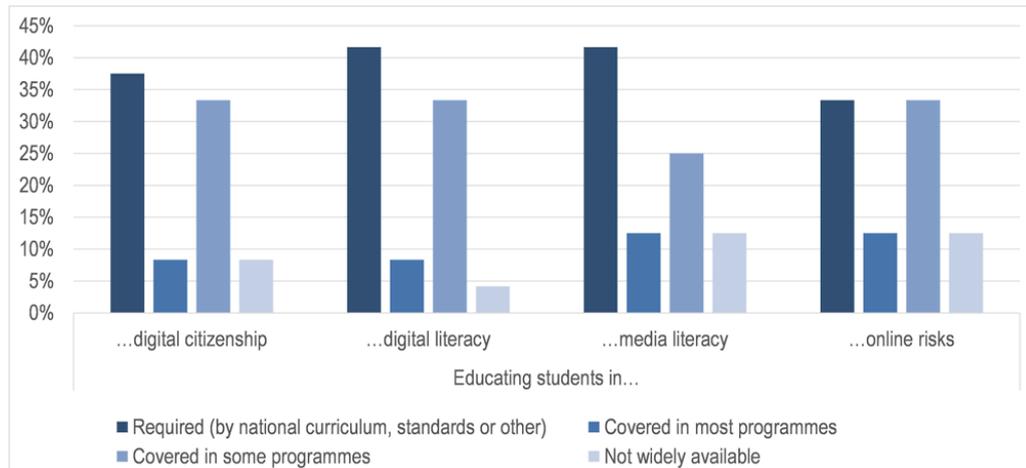
Figure 5: Percentages of Internet Education

"Home." *Empowering an Active and Ethical (Digital) Generation | Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-Being in the Digital Age | OECD ILibrary*, www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/75e2c8d8-en/index.html?itemId=%2Fcontent%2Fcomponent%2F75e2c8d8-en.

Creation of Helplines

A helpline is essentially a telephone service that supports and helps people in crisis situations. The creation of national helplines, specifically designed for individuals who have fallen victims to cyberbullying would assist in the resolution of this issue and provide the victims with a safe space to talk about what they might be facing. However, the creation of such helplines requires the active participation of the member states and considerable funding, since it is necessary for trained therapists and psychologists to be on site 24 hours a day. These helplines could be marketed to children and teens through the aforementioned educational campaigns as a means for seeking out assistance autonomously if they do not yet feel comfortable sharing their abuse with an adult in their life.

Creation of legislations

While material solutions, such as educational campaigns, are very important to this issue, there should also be a discussion pertaining to the adoption and ratification of anti-cyberbullying legislation, that will affect the decisions made by law officials on the resolution of cases that involve cyberbullying. While certain countries have already established such legislation for cybercrimes, such as cyberbullying, there should be an international framework put in place so that countries can systematically work towards eliminating cyberbullying for good. This framework could be set up by the United Nations or another organization that has global significance, like UNICEF.

Social Media Companies Cyberbullying Policies

Social Media companies should also have some burden of responsibility when discussing the issue of cyberbullying. Most importantly they should limit the means perpetrators have in their platforms, with prevention and intervention tools. Social media sites should work to promote anti-cyberbullying rhetoric and actively prevent perpetrators from being able to continue cyberbullying their victims through the feature of blocking and reporting certain accounts.

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