

English Language and Composition
Reading Time: 15 minutes
Suggested writing time: 40 minutes
Assignment devised by Eileen Bach 12-09
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Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying eight sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. *Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrasing or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.

Introduction

Cyber bullying has become a major concern for parents and educators, who recognize the damage done to teens that are bullied on the Internet by those who feel safe in their relative anonymity. How should cyber bullying be addressed? Is this a free speech issue, as some claim, or should bullies be penalized using school and/or legal channels? Defend, challenge or qualify the claim that cyberbullies must not be punished for exercising their First Amendment right to free speech.

Assignment

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. Then in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the source for support, take a position that defends, challenges or qualifies the claim that the First Amendment right to free speech protects cyberbullies.

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.; titles are included for your convenience.

SOURCE A (Crime Prevention Council)

SOURCE B (Student Suspension)

SOURCE C (Perfect Sting)

SOURCE D (Cartoon)

SOURCE E (Statistics)

SOURCE F (The Observer)

SOURCE G (Bill of Rights)

SOURCE H (Password Safety)

SOURCE A (Crime Prevention Council)

How Are Teens Cyberbullied? From the National Crime Prevention Council

Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience. Some youth who cyberbully:

- Pretend they are other people online to trick others
- Spread lies and rumors about victims
- Trick people into revealing personal information
- Send or forward mean text messages
- Post pictures of victims without their consent

When teens were asked why they think others cyberbully, 81 percent said that cyberbullies think it's funny. Other teens believe that youth who cyberbully

- Don't think it's a big deal
- Don't think about the consequences
- Are encouraged by friends
- Think everybody cyberbullies
- Think they won't get caught

How Do Victims React?

Contrary to what cyberbullies may believe, cyberbullying is a big deal, and can cause a variety of reactions in teens. Some teens have reacted in positive ways to try to prevent cyberbullying by

- Blocking communication with the cyberbully
- Deleting messages without reading them
- Talking to a friend about the bullying
- Reporting the problem to an Internet service provider or website moderator

Many youth experience a variety of emotions when they are cyberbullied. Youth who are cyberbullied report feeling angry, hurt, embarrassed, or scared. These emotions can cause victims to react in ways such as

- Seeking revenge on the bully
- Avoiding friends and activities
- Cyberbullying back

Some teens feel threatened because they may not know who is cyberbullying them. Although cyberbullies may think they are anonymous, they can be found. If you are cyberbullied or harassed and need help, save all communication with the cyberbully and talk to a parent, teacher, law enforcement officer, or other adult you trust.

SOURCE B (Student Suspension)

"Students hot over senior's suspension for posting girls on Web site"
Great Falls Tribune 28 February 2002

By PETER JOHNSON
Tribune Staff Writer

More than 50 students staged a 1960s-style sit-in at Great Falls High Monday morning, to support a student they say was exerting his rights to post what he pleases on a private computer Web site.

The student, senior Kenny Volk, 18, says Principal Gary Davis suspended him last week for "insubordination" after Volk posted head shots and brief bios of the school's "hottest 10 freshman girls."

Volk is appealing his suspension and the transfer to C.M. Russell High that Davis reportedly imposed. Superintendent Bryan Dunn is expected to rule on his appeal today, Volk said.

Davis and Dunn would not confirm whether Volk is being disciplined or suspended, insisting that federal law prevents them from discussing any disciplinary action taken against a student.

SOURCE C (Perfect Sting)

“Stung by the Perfect Sting” By MAUREEN DOWD
Published: August 25, 2009 *The New York Times*

It began eight months ago when Liskula Cohen, a 37-year-old model and Australian Vogue cover girl, was surprised to find herself winning a “Skankiest in NYC” award from an anonymous blogger. The online tormentor put up noxious commentary on Google’s blogger.com, calling Cohen a “skank,” a “ho” and an “old hag” who “may have been hot 10 years ago.”

This time, she punched the virtual bully in the face, filing a defamation suit to force Google to give up the blogger’s e-mail. And she won.

“The words ‘skank,’ ‘skanky’ and ‘ho’ carry a negative implication of sexual promiscuity,” wrote Justice Joan Madden of State Supreme Court in Manhattan, rejecting the Anonymous Blogger’s assertion that blogs are a modern soapbox designed for opinions, rants and invective.

The judge cited a Virginia court decision that the Internet’s “virtually unlimited, inexpensive and almost immediate means of communication” with the masses means “the dangers of its misuse cannot be ignored. The protection of the right to communicate anonymously must be balanced against the need to assure that those persons who choose to abuse the opportunities presented by this medium can be made to answer for such transgressions.”

Source D

By banning YouTube in schools,
we hope to stop bullying in
cyberspace...

...And get it back
into the playground,
where it belongs.



Wilcox

SOURCE E (Statistics)

Cyber Bullying: Statistics and Tips from <http://www.isafe.org/>

In the 2003-04 school year, i-SAFE America surveyed students from across the country on a new topic: Cyber Bullying. It is a topic that not many adults were talking about. It turns out to be a topic all too familiar with students.

Bullying is no longer about the strong picking on the weak in the schoolyard. The physical assault has been replaced by a 24 hour per day, seven days a week online bashing. Savvy students are using Instant Messaging, e-mails, chat rooms and websites they create to humiliate a peer. No longer can parents count on seeing the tell-tale physical signs of bullying—a black eye, bloody lip, torn clothes. But the damage done by cyber bullies is no less real, and can be infinitely more painful.

Cyber Bullying Statistics

42% of kids have been bullied while online. 1 in 4 have had it happen more than once. 35% of kids have been threatened online. Nearly 1 in 5 have had it happen more than once.

21% of kids have received mean or threatening e-mail or other messages.

58% of kids admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online. More than 4 out of 10 say it has happened more than once.

53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online.

More than 1 in 3 have done it more than once.

58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online.

SOURCE F (The Observer)

From "Why is cyber-bullying taking Britain by storm?"

By Miranda Sawyer, *The Observer* 27 December 2009

Bullying once removed has been everywhere this year. It's when viewers vote to have Katie Price perform every available task in *I'm A Celebrity...* It's when grown men and women boo two 17-year-old twins for having the gall to sing a song and do a dance in front of them. Or send emails in their thousands about a 50-something superstar's really disgusting wrinkly-backed hands. Or call into a national radio show to say whether or not a young woman with drug problems should get back with her ex-husband, who also struggles with addiction.

New communication methods – texting, email – mean that as soon as any of us thinks anything, even something as thunderingly crucial as "I think Dannii Minogue's hairdo looks like a little pile of cat poo" – we can send that thought out into the world. Just a few seconds of tapping and ping! There it goes. And because establishment institutions – the BBC, newspapers, all of the public sector – are so obsessed with reaching out to their consumers, so worried about being in touch, our random idiotic spleen is taken seriously. It's put up on the online comments board. It's used in yearly assessments. It becomes an essential part of the news.

But all it is, really, is the critical equivalent of shouting at the telly. Or swearing at another driver. Or leaving nasty comments on someone's Facebook page. You're only doing it because you can; because the person who's getting on your nerves can't get at you. If you were to meet them, you wouldn't say anything horrible at all. Because real social interaction involves an appreciation of someone else's feelings. And because you'd be scared.

Source G: Preamble and Amendments I and IX to the Bill of Rights

Preamble

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Password Safety

Top Ten Tips for Teens



Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.
Cyberbullying Research Center

1. Never, ever give your password (on Facebook, MySpace, World of Warcraft, the Playstation Network, email, or any similar service) or cell phone unlock code to a friend. Friendships sometimes don't last, and that password or PIN can be used against you.

2. Remember your secret answer. When you create an online account, and it asks you to provide an accurate answer to a question you should know - don't treat it lightly or as a joke. Make sure it's something you will remember months and years from now in case you have a problem at that time.

3. Do not use passwords based on personal information (your login name, birthdate, address, phone number, middle name, pet's name, etc.).

Voices of Victims

Someone has hacked my email address and has changed my password, my personal information and my secret question. I can't log into my own email account! Please help me recover my password. Please rescue me.

4. Use a mixture of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers, and nonalphabetic characters (symbols) if possible.

5. Change your password often. It takes time and is a bit of a chore, but do it anyway. It takes more time and is more of a chore to try to recover from a hacked account or from identity theft.

6. Never provide your password over email or in response to an email request.

7. Make your own acronym by creating a phrase that means something to you, and group together the first letter of each word. Use numbers and symbols when you can. Make sure the acronym you create has at least seven characters. For example:

- "Last week I fell down thirty stairs" (Lw1fd30\$)
- "It's 3am, I must be lonely" (I3amimbl)
- "My boyfriend got me a dog for Christmas" (mBFgm@d4C)
- Use short words separated by characters (d0g%d00r,c@ndystr1p).

8. Do not place a written copy of your password on the side of your monitor, under your keyboard, under your mousepad, etc. Figure out a secure place where you can store the passwords you write down - or, if possible - never write down any passwords; it is best to commit them to memory.

9. Do not type passwords on computers that you do not own, control, or fully trust. Computers in Internet cafés, computer labs, airports, libraries, or similar public places should only be used for anonymous Web browsing, and not for logging into your online accounts.

10. Don't use the same password across all of the online accounts you have. Try to use different passwords at different sites, so that one hacked account doesn't lead to other accounts being hacked.

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at Florida Atlantic University and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Together, they lecture across the United States on the causes and consequences of cyberbullying and offer comprehensive workshops for parents, teachers, counselors, mental health professionals, law enforcement, youth and others concerned with addressing and preventing online aggression.

The Cyberbullying Research Center is dedicated to providing up-to-date information about the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents. For more information, visit <http://www.cyberbullying.us>. © 2009 Cyberbullying Research Center - Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin