Online Abuse and Crime By Youth:
Results from the RIT
Survey of Internet and At-risk Behaviors

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Monroe-Orleans BOCES 2 and other New York School Districts for their involvement and support!
Today’s Presentation

- Overview of RIT - CSEI research
  - Major points
  - Limitations of research
- RIT Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors
  - Cyber bullying
  - Lying and deceitful behaviors
  - Sexual “offending”
- Observations of contemporary digital youth culture
- Your questions and comments
Major Point 1: Students Experience Many Forms of Cyber Abuse . . .

- Academic dishonesty
- Plagiarism
- Piracy of music, movies and software
- Online threats and harassment (cyber bullying)
- Credit card fraud and identity theft
- Creating and posting child pornography
- Sending unwanted solicitations for sex
- Illicit purchasing of prescription and illegal drugs
- Writing and distributing malicious computer code
- Password cracking and computer hacking

. . . As Victims and Offenders!
Major Point 2: Cyber Abuse, Crime and Victimization . . .

- Appears to be a function of:
  - Number and type of devices used to access the Net
  - Amount of time spent online
  - Types of online activities and levels of social computing engaged in
  - Prior successful offending
  - Previous victimization
  - Declining age of onset of engaging online
Major Point 3: Contemporary Digital Youth Culture is . . .

- Alarming
- Tolerant if not perpetuating cyber abuse, crime and victimization
- Not being adequately checked via:
  - Education
  - Supervision and role modeling
  - Enforcement
  - Technology
Survey Methodology

- Largest, most comprehensive “cybercrime” study
  - Involved 14 Rochester, NY area school districts
  - Convenience sample = 40,079 K-12 students
  - Hundreds of parents and teacher respondents
- Survey (May-June 2007 + Sept – Feb, 2008)
  - Developmentally appropriate questions vetted by 50 experts
  - Seven instruments (5 student levels, parents, teachers)
  - Student content: online technology use, victimization, offending, social interactions, perceptions of supervision, etc.
  - Passive (Opt-out) parental consent via U.S. mail notices plus advance Website, community and media announcements
- Online survey using WebSurveyor
  - K-3rd grade instruments: audio (“talking computer”)
  - 4-12th grade instruments: text-based
RIT Survey of Internet and At-Risk Behaviors (May 2007- January 2008)

- **Surveyed Districts**
  - **Brighton**: pop 3,548; n=2,684 (76%)
  - **Canandaigua**: pop 3,988; n=3,314 (83%)
  - **Diocese of Rochester**: pop 10,204; n=4,010 (39%)
  - **East Irondequoit**: pop 4,026; n=2,212 (55%)
  - **Fairport**: pop 6,998; n=4,583 (65%)
  - **Greece**: pop 12,702; n=9,882 (78%)
  - **Hilton**: pop 4,510; n=3,659 (81%)
  - **Monroe BOCES #1**: pop 2,035; n=452 (21%)
  - **Newark**: pop 2,335; n=1,460 (62%)
  - **Penfield**: pop 4,670; n=817 (17.5%)
  - **Pittsford**: pop 2,264; n=1,797 (79%)
  - **Rush-Henrietta**: pop 5,682; n=467 (8.2%)
  - **Webster**: pop 8,886; n=2,945 (33%)
  - **Wheatland-Chili**: pop 769; n= 641 (83%)

- Generally representative of youth in U.S. population

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Survey Results: K-1st Grade
(n = 4,743)

- Demographics
  - 51% boys and 49% girls
  - Ages 4 = 2.6%, 5 = 32%, 6 = 47.4%, 7 = 18%
- 63% (n=4459) use home computer to access Net
  - 92% play games
  - 66% watch videos or listen to music
  - 48% read or write email
  - 41% talk with people on website
  - 49% look at websites for school work
- 50% report parents do NOT watch their use of computer
- 39% report parents do NOT limit use of computer
- 70% report they use computers “for a long time”
- 56% have clicked on website not knowing what would happen
- 48% saw something that made them feel uncomfortable
- 28% did not tell a grownup after experiencing uncomfortable content
Results: 2nd-3rd Grade (n = 5,549)

- Demographics
  - 50% boys and girls
  - Ages 6 = 2%, 7 = 34%, 8 = 47%, 9 = 16%, 10=1%

- Means of accessing Internet during 2006-2007 school year?
  - 14% use cell phone
  - 21% use video game console
  - 23% use portable video game console
  - 96% use a computer

- Location of home computer from which Internet was accessed?
  - 20% kitchen
  - 36% living room
  - 22% bedroom
  - 66% different room

- Online activities during 2006-2007 school year?
  - 94% play games
  - 60% watch videos or listen to music
  - 36% look at websites for school work
  - 37% read or write email
  - 13% email or talk with people you do not know
Survey Results: 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd} Grade
(n = 5,549)

- Victimization and offending during school year
  - 48\% have clicked on website not knowing what would happen
  - 38\% saw something that made them feel uncomfortable
  - 18\% report someone was mean to them online
  - 9\% admit they have been mean to someone online
  - 11\% were asked private things about their body
  - 10\% Have been told or shown private things about someone else’s body

- 68\% report parents do NOT watch them using computer
- 50\% report parents do NOT limit their use of computer
- 63\% report they use computer “for a long time”
- 30\% report they did not tell a grownup after experiencing uncomfortable content online
Survey Results: 4th-6th Grade
(n = 9,350)

During the past school year . . .

- 1 in 5 students have been victimized online
- About 14% of students have experienced
  - Someone using their password without permission
  - Pretending to be them online; or
  - Embarrassment online
- 1 in 4 students have committed some type of online deception, abuse or crime and posted personal information about themselves online
- Illegal downloading of music and movies begins at this age/grade level.
Survey Results: 4th-6th Grade
(n = 9,350)

- Demographics
  - 50% boys and girls
  - Ages 9 = 21%, 10 = 31%, 11 = 34%, 12 = 12%

- Means of accessing Internet during 2006-2007 school year?
  - 91% Desktop computer
  - 49% Laptop
  - 12% Cell phone
  - 43% Video game console
  - 48% Portable video game console
  - 27% Other device

- Location from which Internet was accessed?
  - 44% Home in a shared space
  - 34% Home in a private space
  - 50% School lab, classroom or library
  - 25% Friend’s house in a share space
  - 20% Friend’s house in a private space
  - 28% Other location
Survey Results: 4\textsuperscript{th}-6\textsuperscript{th} Grade
(n = 9,350)

- Online activities during 2006-2007 school year?
  - 38% Instant messaging
  - 54% read or write email
  - 26% Chat rooms
  - 24% Text message
  - 87% Websites for kids
  - 72% School work
  - 92% Play games
  - 72% Watch videos
  - 80% Listen to music

- Victimization during the past school year
  - About 20% have been victimized by one or more forms of online abuse/crime within the past school year
[4th-6th] Q14: During this past school year, has someone...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used your password without your knowledge</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>1142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen your computer, cell phone, or gaming console</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretended to be you online</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed you online</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullied or threatened you online</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requested pictures of you without clothes</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shown you pictures of yourself without clothes</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked private things about your body</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Told you private things about their body</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
[4th-6th] Q17: During this past school year, have you...

- Used Another's Password: 5.2%
- Pretended to be someone else: 7.1%
- Embarrassed others: 3.7%
- Bullied/Threatened online: 6.9%
- Lied - Age: 22.8%
- Lied - Gender/Appearance: 6.9%
- Request Nude Picture: 0.6%
- Asked private things about another's family: 0.8%
- Pirated Music: 7.8%
- Pirate Movies: 33%
- Obtained information online and presented it as your own: 4.4%
- Cheated - School Work: 3.4%
- Cheated - Tests: 1.2%
- Bullied/Threatened someone in person: 5.9%
- Falsified Security Software: 10.8%
Survey Results: 7\textsuperscript{th}-9\textsuperscript{th} Grade  
\((n = 10,204)\)

- By this age/grade level kids are using . . .
  - every type of IT device to access the Net;
  - the Internet to communicate in myriad ways
  - 45% have a social network (i.e., profile) website

- During the past school year about 1 in 4 kids:
  - Experienced some form of online victimization
  - Engaged in some form of online offending (i.e., deception, abuse or crime)

- Internet access by kids from schools is least likely to occur from within a private space

- Students have experienced the full range of computer crime and abuse, ranging from 15% having been embarrassed online to 7% having received requests for nude pictures
Survey Results: 7\textsuperscript{th}-9\textsuperscript{th} Grade  
(n = 10,204)

- Within the past school year students have engaged in every form of IT-enabled crime or abuse.  
  E.g.:
  - 24% Lied about their age online
  - 11% Pretended to be someone else online
  - 7% Circumvented security measures
  - 5% Cheated on school work
[7th-9th] Q16: During this past school year, has someone...

- Stolen Password: 15.2% (1520)
- Stolen Device: 7.7% (769)
- Pretended to Be: 15.0% (1504)
- Embarrassed: 15.4% (1538)
- Bullied/Threatened: 12.9% (1290)
- Nude Picture Requested: 6.5% (648)
- Shown Nude Picture: 8.2% (521)
- Requested Sexual Chat: 10.6% (1062)
- Sexual Chat: 13.8% (1378)

n = 10022  n = 10013  n = 10009  n = 9998  n = 10000  n = 9989  n = 9987  n = 9989  n = 9976

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[7th-9th] Q17: If you answered yes to one or more things in Question 16, was the person or people involved a:

- Man: 10.9%, 509
- Woman: 12.0%, 552
- Boy: 42.2%, 2099
- Girl: 45.6%, 2194
- Classmate: 21.0%, 976
- Friend: 59.4%, 2996
- Online Friend: 19.2%, 886
- Online Stranger: 15.6%, 712
- Parent/Guardian: 17.0%, 820
- Other Family: 30.5%, 1424
- Teacher: 6.2%, 280
- Other Known: 33.0%, 1643
- Unknown: 14.7%, 864
[7th-9th] Q22: Which of the following things have you used a computer to do within the last year:

- Lie - Age
- Lie - Gender/Appearances
- Request nude pictures
- Request sexual chat
- Share Music
- Share Movies
- Plagiarism
- Buy papers
- Sell papers
- Cheat on school work
- Cheat on exams
- Circumventing School Filtering

n = 10300
Factor Analysis of Offending (7-9th Grade)

- Generalists
- Pirates
- Academic Cheaters
- Deceiving Bullies

Principal components explain 55% of total variance
Survey Results: 10-12\textsuperscript{th} Grade
(n = 7,184)

- Students spend a total of approximately 15 hours per week on various online activities.
- Students have experienced multiple forms of victimization within the past school year, including:
  - Password cracking (24%)
  - Embarrassment online (16%)
  - Asked about sexual activities (23%)
- Students who were victimized were generally not upset by the abuse or crime, and 1 in 3 victims know the offender as a friend.
Survey Results: 10-12th Grade (n = 7,184)

- 15% of students have invited an online stranger to meet in person; 13% of students have accepted an invitation to meet an online stranger in person.
- Digital piracy is the most common form of offending behavior – within the past school year:
  - 59% illegally downloaded music
  - 27% illegally downloaded movies
  - 21% illegally downloaded software
[10th-12th] Q27: On how many separate occasions during this past school year have you used a computer or electronic device to...
Factor Analysis of Offending (10-12th Grade)

1. Hackers
2. Fraudsters
3. Pornographers
4. Deceiving Bullies
5. Data Snoops
6. Pirates
7. Academic Cheaters

Principal components explain 74% of variance
[10th-12th] Q15: Please indicated how many times during this past school year [someone]...

- Pretend to be you
  - Once: 833 (11.9%)
  - Twice: 279 (4.0%)
  - Three Times: 104 (1.5%)
  - Four or more: 134

- Stalked you
  - Once: 418 (6.0%)
  - Twice: 182 (2.3%)
  - Three Times: 56
  - Four or more: 160

- Embarrassed you
  - Once: 551 (7.9%)
  - Twice: 182 (2.6%)
  - Three Times: 55
  - Four or more: 121

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Online Experiences and Interactions of Youth

Victims

Abusers/Offenders

Internet Users

Youth

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General Observations: Digital Youth Culture

- Social computing via website forums, chat rooms, blogs, electronic gaming, “IM-ing” and “texting” are integral aspects of life.
- Social computing provides for creativity and stimulating online interactions.
- Social computing = mobile computing.
- Always being online, available to chat or help out, and rapid-fire messaging is highly valued.
Alarming Aspects of Contemporary Digital Youth Culture

- Online incivility, promiscuity, abuse and crime by and among youth is common.
- Sending mean messages and/or posting nasty content is done routinely by many though not all youth.
- This is learned, “normal”, expected and encouraged online by millions of youth.
Alarming Aspects (cont.)

- “Leetspeak” when used for deception
- Multiple personal profiles consisting of true-to-false information
- Lying and deceit is common
- Rampant naivety (or apathy) about trustworthy online friendships and the process of “friending” undermine civility
- Content and behaviors multiply “virally” as youth create, teach and promote their online culture
Choices and Parental Oversight

Perception of Supervision

- None
- Little
- Some
- A lot
- Constant

Percent

Parents
G4-6
G7-9
G10-12

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Limitations of Survey

- Retrospective questions – youth must remember prior year’s events
- Sensitive questions may illicit over or under-reporting of certain behaviors
- Sample does not include densely populated inner-urban school district
- Questions do not ask “why” students behave online as reported
The Cyber Safety and Ethics Initiative
(www.bcybersafe.org)

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