

# 1.6 Types of bullying and cyberbullying

## Bullying

There are different ways of bullying.

It may be **physical**, when it is carried out through physical aggression and abuse (hitting, kicking, shoving, hitting, pinching or assaulting with objects). But it may also refer to violence against things or property, through, for instance, taking objects, damaging them, or extorting money from the target. This is generally the easiest form to detect.

However, it can also manifest itself in a **verbal form**, through insults, teasing, verbal aggression. It means mocking, repeatedly taunting the target, apostrophising them with humiliating nicknames, making comments about the way they dress or speak, making racial or sexist remarks. This form of violence repeated over time leads to a progressive and deleterious inner attrition in the target. But there is also indirect or psychological violence, which is mainly carried out through the spreading of slander, intentional exclusion, the spreading of annoying gossip or through threats, humiliation and mockery. Conversely, it is defined as relational when it involves isolating the target. Ignoring someone also falls under this form of bullying. This one in particular refers to a form of 'aggression' that manifests itself mainly in the form of 'sneaky gossip' and affects the female sex more than the male.

## Cyberbullying

The cyberbully can inflict immediate and long-term violence or psychological harm on his target in various ways:

- Cyberbashing
- Harassment or Put Down
- Denigration
- Cyberstalking
- Flaming
- Impersonation
- Exclusion
- Outing or Trickery
- Exposure
- Sexting
- Sextortion

## **CYBERBASHING**

CYBERBASHING is the most frequent form of cyberbullying and is evidenced when a target is assaulted, hit or harassed while a group of bystanders film the scene with a phone camera and then disseminate the images and footage on the web.

Digital prevarications are the order of the day and are used by CYP in order to humiliate, attack and denigrate others, many of which are unknown to most adults.

These are forms of violence, often acted out in group, in which physical force is used with the intent to hurt: children punching and kicking each other, girls beating each other and pulling each other's hair while others stand by and watch what happens, without intervening, except to comment and to incite them to continue, while they record it all behind a smartphone screen. The videos are then posted on groups and pages with the hashtag WorldStar, spread all over the world in order to be visible and popular, to receive likes, comments and shares on an attention-grabbing video.

We are talking about 4 out of 100 teenagers filming their peers while they are being beaten and suffering physical violence, without intervening at all, leaving them at the mercy of this type of violence (Italian National Observatory on Adolescence data).

The most alarming aspect is the sharing, appreciation and incitement to hatred on the net: in no time, in fact, the videos reach thousands of views and likes. No one intervenes; on the contrary, most of those who view these videos are as if they were watching a film, laughing, enjoying themselves, commenting with insults and sharing, fuelling the phenomenon.

The pages where these videos are collected have been flagged and closed several times but then reopened under other names, so that most of the videos can still be found on the web, triggering a very powerful contagion effect.

There is a risk of encouraging a normalisation, a greater acceptance of such behaviors by those who are already prone to this type of violence. There is also a deep irresponsibility in those who watch and do nothing because they do not feel personally involved, because they cover themselves behind the fact that 'it is not them who are fighting'. The screen also dehumanises, strips away feelings and emotions in those who do not put themselves in the victim's shoes and show no solidarity with them.

In these CYP, there is a total lack of awareness of what they are doing both to themselves and to others, failing to understand the limit between play, fun, prevarication and violence. There is a lack of education on all fronts, which must also involve all those spectators who, if they intervened immediately and if they did not share, could at least stem this type of violent phenomenon.

## **HARASSMENT and PUT DOWN**

HARASSMENT consists of the repeated sending of offensive, unpleasant, defamatory and insulting messages, which are sent, repeatedly over time, through technological means (chat, email, text messages, blogs, anonymous phone calls).

PUT DOWN (denigrate): i.e. denigrate someone through e-mails, text messages, posts sent to a blog, i.e. a group of people. This tool aims at affecting not the person as he/she really is, but his/her reputation in the eyes of others, which is compromised not only on the web but also by all those who are informed by the cyberbully.

This is therefore an unbalanced relationship in which, as in traditional bullying, the target is always in a one-down position (Watzlawick, Beavin, Jackson, 1971), i.e. passively suffers the harassment or, at best, tries, usually unsuccessfully, to convince the persecutor to stop the aggression. In some cases, the cyberbully, in order to reinforce his offensive activity, may also involve his online contacts (mailing lists), who, perhaps even though they do not directly know the target student, lend themselves to participating in the online aggression (one could define this phenomenon as 'harassment with voluntary recruitment', Pisano, 2008).

Here is an explanatory story of this phenomenon:

*"Valeria is happy. Finally, after months, she was able to get together with Manuel, the boy she liked from the beginning of school. She overcame her shyness and on Saturday, at Luca's party, she asked Manuel if he wanted to be with her. He, after a very long moment of silence, said yes. Valeria is in seventh heaven and jokes with her friends via chat. Some joke that she is lucky to have such a handsome guy and others congratulate her on her conquest. Valeria laughs, embarrassed and happy at the same time.*

*Then the smartphone rings again: it is a text message from an unknown number. The message is brutal: 'I'll make you pay'. Valeria is astonished, she thinks it is a mistake, a message intended for someone else. Shortly after, the smartphone rings again: it is the same number, and the message is even more threatening. Valeria whitens, swallows slowly. Then she takes courage and writes: "Who are you?". No reply.*

*For the rest of the day, the mystery user does not answer or search for her. The same happens the next day, so Valeria is quiet again. Finally, she can only think of Manuel, with whom she exchanges an endless series of sweet messages.*

*But after three days, the unknown number returns, and this time it leaves no room for doubt: 'You stole Manuel from me'. Valeria is overcome with rage: she has not stolen anyone's boyfriend, it is Manuel who has chosen her. She tries to find out who the sender is, but cannot get any definite information.*

*And meanwhile the messages increase, become a constant in her days, like the fear that grips her stomach every time the phone rings. Valeria also begins to dread the journey from home to school: she is afraid that someone will suddenly come and hurt her. And in the end she decides to break it off with Manuel. She no longer wants to see him, because discomfort accompanies every moment spent with him."*

## **DENIGRATION**

DENIGRATION consists of the online dissemination of slander, lies or rumors, gossip, often of an offensive and cruel nature, for the purpose of defaming or insulting someone or damaging their

reputation and personal relationships.

Cyberbullies may, in fact, send or publish on the Internet altered images (photographs or video clips) of the target, for instance, by modifying the face or body of the target student in order to ridicule him or her, or by making him or her the protagonist of sexually explicit scenes, through the use of photomontages.

In these cases, the peers who receive the messages or view the photographs or video clips on the Internet are not necessarily the targets (as is predominantly the case with harassment and cyberstalking), but sometimes passive spectators of cyberbullying (when they just watch), more likely active ones (if they download the material, report it to other friends, comment on it and vote on it).

Therefore, unlike in cyberstalking, the cyberbully's offensive and intentional activity can take the form of a single action (e.g. publishing a retouched photo of a classmate), capable of generating, with the active, but not necessarily required, contribution of other Internet users ("involuntary recruitment", Pisano, 2008), unpredictable cascading effects.

Finally, denigration is the form of cyberbullying most commonly used by students against teachers: there are, in fact, numerous seriously offensive video clips on the Internet depicting episodes from classroom life. In some cases, the scenes depicted are obviously fake and, therefore, re-created ad hoc by the student, sometimes they are, unfortunately, true.

Here is a concrete example:

*"Marco is in his first year of middle school and has landed in a class where he knows no one: making new friends is difficult. To break the ice, Annalisa takes care of it: after asking everyone for their mobile phone number, her classmate creates a class group on WhatsApp. The kids start interacting. There are those who write jokes, like Giacomo, those who send curious photos, like Sara, and those, like Gloria, who only reply with smiling emoticons and simple 'ahahs'. Others, however, view the conversations but do not participate. Annalisa does not worry: sooner or later it will be their turn. The group on WhatsApp also seems to help in real life, because the children now find themselves talking about that shared photo or that song Sara linked.*

*All is well, in short. Until the maths test arrives. The day before, everyone talks about it, and promises to 'help each other' and 'suggest'. The debate, in the group, continues even after the test is over. And for the first time, Dario intervenes. Dario sits two seats away from Marco: he always keeps to himself and speaks little. His best friends are in other classes and he spends playtime with them. During the test, Dario ended up next to Marco and, throughout the test time, asked him for his results. But Marco was unable to help him because the teacher was keeping an eye on him.*

*Dario then debuts in the group with a very specific accusation: Marco refused to hand over the task to him. It is a false accusation and full of insults. Marco tries to justify himself, but Dario continues to insult him. Someone tries to stop the comrade, but he gets fed up almost immediately: after all, his attack is only on Marco and everyone prefers to talk about something else.*

*Only Annalisa writes a private message to her unjustly attacked friend: she tells him to let it go, that Dario is only telling lies and that no one believes him. To Marco, however, those harsh words hurt. He cannot help but give them weight. And so, what used to be a space to have fun, now becomes a battleground, and Marco loses the will to interact with his peers...'*

## **CYBERSTALKING**

CYBERSTALKING consists of repeatedly sending intimidating messages containing threats and insults. It can be considered a real telematic persecution after which the target begins to fear for his or her physical safety.

If Harassment involves targeting someone every now and then, Cyberstalking (online persecution) is a relentless barrage, aiming to frighten the target with threats, even of physical violence.

*"It is Saturday afternoon and Mattia has gone to the park with his mates to play a football match against the older children in the neighbourhood. Just before the last goal, the one that will decide the challenge, Mattia sees the attacker of the opposing team advancing. He decides to counter him with a rather impetuous foul, and lands him. His teammates recover the ball and score on the counter-attack. Among his teammates, Mattia becomes the hero, the one who saved the game. But the attacker of the opposing team doesn't think so: at one point, he approaches him and whispers something incomprehensible in his ear, then walks away.*

*The next day, Mattia finds a message in the Facebook chat. The sender is the older boy, and the text is a threat with a clear reference to Saturday's game. Twenty minutes pass, and an e-mail arrives at Mattia's e-mail address: the subject is a provocation. An hour later, four more emails arrive containing violent photos. The subject line is a chilling: 'Do you want to end up like that?'*

*Mattia does not lose his cool and decides to let it go. He hopes that the older boy will tire of it sooner or later. But he does not. After a week, Mattia starts receiving at least ten threatening messages on Facebook and three different emails every day, full of details about what might happen to him if he is found wandering around alone.*

*Mattia starts to get scared and begins to no longer want to leave the house alone. He even gives up his usual bicycle ride around the neighbourhood, something he had always loved to do right after lunch.*

*After a month, the messages increase further, but Mattia prefers not to talk about it with anyone so as not to look like a coward. But now he hardly goes out anymore: even when he is in company he does not feel safe and the rare times he is with friends he spends the whole time looking around, worried.*

*"What is it? Everything OK?" his best friend Francesco asks him.*

*Mattia plays it down: sooner or later that boy will stop threatening him. Maybe."*

## **FLAMING**

FLAMING consists of violent and vulgar messages that aim to provoke confrontations and verbal battles in web spaces between two people using the same modality.

Flaming is the offence, pure and simple, made on public social networks and often vulgar, perhaps written between social media comments or in a forum, an online discussion group.

*"Paul is very sensitive to environmental protection issues. For some time, he has been sharing articles, photos and videos on his Facebook page that, in his opinion, should 'shake everyone's conscience'. And, in his own way, he achieves some effect. His schoolmates occasionally make fun of him, but most of the time they just comment with a 'Way to go! Way to go!'. The same goes for family friends, who appreciate his commitment.*

*Paul also chooses to share all posts publicly to attract more people, but no unknown contact ever commented. One evening, however, under a new anti-pollution article, a user called Max Turbo surprisingly shows up. The first comment is a long sequence of insults that have nothing to do with the article.*

*Paul decides not to reply: some of his contacts will do it for him. No one intervenes instead, and Max Turbo continues to comment, increasing the creativity of his offences. To make matters worse, a couple of his classmates comment with amusement on the 'style' of the unknown brawler.*

*At that point, Paul decides to reply and does so at first calmly and diplomatically, urging the user not to swear. And he gets the opposite effect: Max Turbo now takes it out on Paul directly. And the boy loses his patience and starts to hit him back.*

*The comments become dozens and dozens. Occasionally someone tries to intervene to restore calm, but to no avail, and meanwhile the supporters of both contenders increase. There are those who urge them to dare more and those who take sides. The next day, the post contained over seven hundred comments. Paul rereads them all with a hint of anger and solemnly promises himself that from now on he will never post anything on social networks again, not even those beautiful posts for the protection of the Earth for which he had spent so much energy.*

## **MASQUERADE or IMPERSONATION**

In the case of IMPERSONATION, the attacker carries out a real identity theft, obtaining private information (passwords, nicknames) that allows him to access someone else's account with the aim of damaging his reputation or taking possession of it.

*"Francesco has never joined any social networks. He is in eighth grade and almost all his peers are on one or more platforms. For this reason, he sometimes feels excluded from certain discussions, but he doesn't give it much weight. In fact, in some respects, he is famous precisely because he refuses to stay connected and this makes his friends smile, who see him as the 'alternative' kid.*

*One day Stefano, a classmate, walks up to him smiling and pats him on the back: 'You gave in too, huh? You finally joined Facebook'. Francesco stares at him dumbfounded: he hasn't done anything at all! He tries to deny it, to say he is mistaken, but Stefano insists: he has been registered on Facebook since the night before and has already asked all his classmates to friend him.*

*Francesco pales: he has to check what is going on. So, he borrows his smartphone from Stefano and looks at what should be his profile. In the avatar photo is his favourite footballer, the date of birth is correct. There is only one post in the profile: 'I'm here at last! Hello everyone!', followed by a list of welcome comments.*

*Francesco has no idea how to deal with it, except by declaring that it is a fake profile. But the statement is met with global laughter: everyone knows he is the only one missing on social media, and sure enough, Francesco is lying to get attention!*

*The next day, the situation worsens: in the space of twenty-four hours, the fake Facebook profile has sent offensive messages to all his classmates, threatened a couple of students from first grade and shared 'embarrassing' links. When Francesco entered the classroom he was greeted by grim looks and a few classmates picked him up saying he should be ashamed of what he had written. "It wasn't me," Francesco repeats, but no one believes him.*

*And while Francesco futilely continues to defend himself, in a corner of the classroom Stefano updates his brand new and totally fake profile."*

## **EXCLUSION**

Exclusion consists of voluntarily excluding and ousting someone from an online group, chat, forum, or other activity, just for the purpose of hurting them.

Not inviting a classmate to your class group on WhatsApp, or making sure that on Facebook no one accepts the friendship of that girl from the gym, simply because you have decided she is obnoxious, are examples of Exclusion.

*"Luisa changed volleyball teams this year. She joined a team of girls who have been playing together for seven years, and she still does not know anyone. The group is very close-knit and does not seem to accept the newcomer willingly.*

*Luisa is a sunny and cheerful girl, and she is not used to this kind of reception. Therefore, from the very first day of training, she tries to establish a good relationship with her teammates, listening, intervening in conversations and being helpful. But every effort falls on deaf ears.*

*One day, the setter, Betta, confides in her that this attitude stems from the fact that she is not part of the team's online group, and is therefore an outcast. And she tells her that to be part of the group she will first have to 'deserve' it.*

*Luisa does not quite understand how to acquire this merit, but she decides to put in as much effort as possible: she starts to satisfy every need of her companions, who ask her to bring them a drink, to lend them a towel or comb, to shower last, when the water is cold, and so on.*

*Luisa takes it ironically, as a kind of 'challenge' to win their trust and tries not to take it personally. But time passes and, after two months, she has still not received an invitation to the online group. On the other hand, at every training session she listens to the amused conversations of her companions who talk about things they have 'put into the group'.*

*Luisa begins to despair: although she has behaved well and always made herself available to the others, she does not feel accepted. She begins to dislike training, starts not showing up for matches, and her parents cannot understand why her great passion for volleyball has died out.*

*Luisa would like to talk to them, to explain that joining that group would be an important step for her. But every time she tries, a knot clutches her stomach and the words seem to die in her throat..."*

## **OUTING, TRICKERY and EXPOSURE**

It refers to the sharing of personal information, secrets or images on the Internet; usually the person is persuaded by deception, to reveal this information in order to then make it public on the Internet. It is experienced as a real emotional betrayal.

Trickery means deception, and it is one of the most devious attacks: alone or with an accomplice, the cyberbully gains the target's trust (perhaps by offering to help him/her not to be bullied any more!), and then publishes online everything they said to each other, laughing about it.

*"Giada is very shy and has made few connections in her class. Maria, on the other hand, is an outgoing, funny girl who always has a joke ready. The boys court her shamelessly and the girls look at her with a mixture of envy and admiration.*

*One afternoon, Giada receives an unexpected notification: Maria has written her a message on Facebook! Her heart flutters as she scrolls down the lines: the girl has composed a real declaration. She says that she is sorry to see her always on the sidelines and that if she needs to confide, she is ready to listen. Giada rejoices and cannot believe her eyes: Maria wants to be her friend!*

*Strangely enough, however, the next day, Maria greets her in passing, dedicating the same amount of time to her as she had so far. But after a moment Giada receives another message in which Maria apologises for not stopping to chat. At school, she says, there are too many impediments and distractions, and she would rather devote as much time to them. 'Better to talk here, where we have all the time in the world'.*

*And so a beautiful relationship begins and Giada finally begins to open up. Maria, for her part, listens to her and gives her advice, especially about her secret crush on the third-year blond boy who, fortunately, knows nothing.*

*All goes well until the day Giada receives a strange message via Facebook: it is Luigi, another of her classmates, who points her to a public group with a sinister name on the same social networking site. It is called: 'Poor Giada distressed by fate'. Inside the group there are some classmates, but also many strangers, and the thing that unites them is laughing out loud under the posts that are published.*

*These are screenshots of the conversations Giada had with Maria, each accompanied by a cruel comment. The moment when she confessed her love for the blondie is called 'eternal and impossible', while the conversation about her being shy is called 'boredom in person'.*



*Giada feels tears streaming down her face. She would like to talk to Maria, to ask her why she did this... but those evil words echo in her head more than ever."*

**Outing** occurs when the cyberbully posts embarrassing information about the target online. It often occurs when the target leaves the computer or smartphone unattended and with social network logins open.

*"The class is back from its two-day trip. Students are still elated about the school holiday and are talking about it all the time. The class Whatsapp group is studded with photos: everyone has taken a myriad of them of their classmates and wants to share them to remember those fun and unmissable moments they just experienced.*

*Melania, for example, only sends group photos. On a field trip, she was the subject of constant snorting because she made her classmates stop every three steps to take a shot 'all together'. Alice, on the other hand, did a photo shoot of the football match on the first day and the classmates really liked her shots.*

*So, in the days following the return, Whatsapp is full of photos and amused comments.*

*Strangely, the males share a few snaps: it almost seems as if they did not take any photos. The silence is broken by Giacomo, one of the shyest in the class, who suddenly posts a selfie taken in what appears to be the room where he was staying with his classmates during the trip: the shot shows him just waking up, with his hair tousled and wearing red and white pyjamas. Along with the shot, Giacomo writes 'I'm handsome, aren't I?'. The response is not long in coming, and more or less everyone responds with laughter and smiling emoticons.*

*Nobody would have expected this sudden cheekiness from Giacomo: he, so shy and reserved, is suddenly filling the class chat with his selfies. And the shot of Giacomo posing in front of the mirror, hugging a dog or showing off his muscles in the garden is followed by a shot of him on a field trip. Each shot always has a proud comment and causes further laughter.*

*But it is not Giacomo who is sending the photos because he is playing a game of football and has left his smartphone in his rucksack. The gesture did not go unnoticed by Luca, who decided to have some fun as he did not feel like chasing the ball with the others. He therefore grabbed his companion's smartphone and glanced through the photos in the device's archive in search of the most embarrassing or funny ones. Once selected, he started sharing and every time he sent a new snapshot, Luca grinned amused, thinking it was a fabulous joke.*

*Giacomo meanwhile, oblivious to what is happening to his smartphone, has just scored a goal. It has been a long time since he has scored a goal and he rejoices happily, hugging his friend Marco.*

*Too bad he doesn't yet know that, the next day, he will be called 'Selfie Fixer' by the whole class and that that obnoxious nickname will not leave him for months to come."*

**EXPOSURE** means revealing information, truthful or extorted, or details concerning someone's private life without them having the opportunity to make amends. In this case, however, it is not a question of actual confidence made by the target.

## SEXTING

As early as 11 years of age, many young people are tempted by the idea of taking intimate, unclothed or sexually oriented selfies and sending the pictures or videos to their partners, friends, in group chats. It is called sexting and we are talking about a practice habitually carried out by 6% of preadolescents aged 11 to 13, 70% of whom are girls. The numbers rise as age increases: in fact, between 14 and 19, the proportion is about 1 in 10 teenagers.

The term derives from the combination of sex (sex) texting and indicates the exchange or sharing of sexually explicit texts, videos or images that often depict oneself. Adolescents often mistake this behaviour for a game, which can, however, have repercussions that significantly alter their lives and explode into dramatic situations. In sexting, it is the dimension of trust that is misunderstood and confused. Teenagers who spread their images think they can blindly trust their friends but are betrayed the moment the relationship breaks down due to arguments or other reasons and the images are spread. Teenagers who post provocative selfies do not decide for themselves the image they want to give of themselves but go along with what others want to see in them (winking, older-than-their-age figures). This phenomenon feeds the divide between the sexual dimension and that of feeling. It has more to do with the exhibition of oneself than with the expression of emotions since it encourages the public display of automated sexual behaviour in a sphere that has always been private.

### Revenge porn: taking revenge even on friends

Girls, therefore, are the category most at risk from the point of view of the dissemination of intimate and private material and are often also targets of so-called revenge porn. This phenomenon occurs when an ex-partner takes revenge for having been left or betrayed by posting material of a sexual nature on social networking sites or chats, with the sole aim of causing harm to the other person and exposing them to public pillory. It can also happen in friendships, where one takes revenge for a wrong suffered by posting intimate content. The consequences, not only psychological but also social, are often devastating for the victims, even for those who do not go as far as suicide.

But what are the characteristic aspects of this type of behaviour?

- **Trust:** boys/girls often send their own nude or sexually explicit images or videos because they trust the person to whom they are sending the material. They show little awareness that that same material, if the relationship (friendship or couple) were to deteriorate or break down, could be disseminated as payback for what happened.
- **Pervasiveness:** the possibilities offered by the new generation of mobile phones allow to share one's own or others' photos with many people at the same time, through multiple sending, sharing on social networks, online dissemination.
- **Persistence of the phenomenon:** material posted on the Internet may remain available online for a long time. Children, who grow up immersed in new technologies, are not aware that a photo or video spread on the net may never be taken down again.
- **Non-awareness:** children are often not aware that they are exchanging child sexual abuse material.

The need to appear and 'be seen' helps to explain not only the surge in social network subscriptions, but also the incessant need to take selfies.

According to a recent survey of more than 15,000 Italian teenagers (2014), one in four takes at least one photo a day, 85% share at least a few of them on social networking sites, and 53% use photo-editing programmes before posting their pictures (53%, or 1 in 2 boys) (Doxa kids, 2014). The same research showed that 36% of teenagers know someone who has done sexting and 13% of teenagers have signed up or downloaded a dating app (among boys 17%).

Recent research (2013) by a European helpline (Kids Help Phone) with its users revealed that they used to sext for (in order from most to least common):

- for fun or for sexual pleasure: *"I do it for fun"*.
- as a result of pressure from others: *"I do it because I have been asked repeatedly"*.
- to give something of oneself to a person one likes: *"I do it for my boyfriend"*.
- to explore one's sexuality: *"I was curious"*.
- as a joke or to combat boredom: *"it's a game between friends"*.

It is also important to know that the phenomenon affects both boys and girls, although it is predominantly boys who both send and receive sexually-motivated messages. On the other hand, 9 out of 10 parents consider it impossible for their child to undress and put his or her pictures/videos online (source: Eurispes, 2012).

## **SEXTORTION**

Sextortion, or sexual blackmail, consists of threatening to make a target's private information public unless the target pays money to the extortionist. In the digital age, the information might include fragments of sexual text messages (sexts), private photos and even videos. Criminals generally ask for money even if they sometimes seek even more compromising material (send us more or make it all public). The majority of targets are not teenagers - according to the police, in 2017 out of more than a thousand victims of age only 25 were between 14 and 18, although the tendency of the very young not to ask the police for help may weigh on this statistic - because they are that part of the population that has no money to spend. Nevertheless, they remain the perfect target because in adolescence one finds oneself cultivating new types of relationships, usually without any guidance. The result can be a cybercriminal's dream: a lot of information that should be protected, but is not, and that belongs to people who are emotionally vulnerable and easily ashamed. Victims fear public condemnation; asking for help would mean revealing secrets they desperately try to hide. And teenagers are very vulnerable. Sextortion can cause serious psychological damage or even suicide attempts (at least four have been documented in Italy).

## **THE CYBERBULLY'S WEAPONS:**

**WARNING WARS:** wars of reports, often false, to get the target's account closed (mainly used in exclusion cases).

SCREEN NAME: denigrating the target by impersonating him/her, using a similar username

TEXT WAR: group ganging up against an individual and sending hundreds of text messages from the target's phone number

INTERNET ROLLING: Creation of online surveys aimed at offending someone. (e.g. 'who is the biggest loser in class').

E-MAIL E INSTANT MESSAGING: targets are placed among the users of advertising or porn sites.

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