EDITORIAL

Cyber Hate: Antisocial networking in the Internet

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The multi cultural aspect of the human beings provides diversity and uniqueness. However, the same issue which provides color for the human lives is scorned off as many find it offensive if they find people who are not similar to them. History, Geography, culture and society makes us non-identical human beings and it provides us a unique identity. The unique identity makes people to like those who look like themselves and makes them to hate others who do not look like or identify with their values and norms. If hating others stop with just a feeling, it would have been fine; however, killing people in the name of hate cannot be acceptable by any civilized society. Hate crimes was there since time immemorial, for which examples can be cited from Bible or Quran or Hindu Texts. "From the Romans' persecution of Christians and the Nazis' "final solution" for the Jews to the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and genocide in Rwanda, hate crimes have shaped and sometimes defined world history. " (Hamm, 1996, p. 1-2, cited in BJA, 1997, p. ix)

Earlier, the proliferation of hate crimes was tied to geography of the place, but now due to the advent of modern technologies such as internet, their proliferation has defied boundaries. Cyber hate or hate in the cyberspace dates back to a decade. Initially hate was spread in emails and chat rooms. But now social networking websites is being used as the medium to spread hate. Social networking websites like *Orkut, Facebook* and *Myspace* was originally intended to allow people to "socialize with known or unknown individuals for the purpose of research, entertainment, establishment of friendships or relationships due to feelings of loneliness, and sexual gratification" (Fraim, 2006, para 1). But these sites are now misused to the greatest possible extent.

The use of these sites has surged in the recent past. Sinrod (2009) cites a research of Nielsen Online:

> The time that Americans spend on social networking sites is up a staggering 83% from just one year ago. Facebook has become the dominant social networking site, with total user minutes on the site at 13,872,640 for April 2009, up 699% from 1,735,698 comparable minutes in April 2008. Twitter is coming on like gangbusters, with total user minutes increasing a phenomenal 3,712% from 7,865 in April 2008 to 299,836 in April 2009. Meanwhile, while total user minutes for Myspace comes in at a hefty 4,973,919 for April 2009, this is down 31% from 7,254,645 in April 2008, perhaps because of the surge in use of sites like Facebook and Twitter (Para 2, 3, and 4).

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The research by Neilson online is only the tip of the iceberg as it has unearthed only the usage of these sites by Americans. World over the usage of social networking sites have increased in the recent past and so the case of hate in these sites. Apart from being used as a medium to spread hate, these social networking websites have gone to the next level. They are now used recruit members for hate groups and militants (Reuters, 2009). According to Websense, a vendor, "Racism, hate, and militancy sites have tripled in number over the past year on the Web and within corners of social-networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, Google and Yahoo" (Messmer, 2009, para 1).

According to a recent (June 19, 2009) report of Simon Wiesenthal Center titled "*Facebook, YouTube +: How Social Media Outlets Impact Digital Terrorism and Hate*," there is a surge of 25 per cent compared to the past year on the growth of "problematic" social networking groups on the Internet. "The report was based on "over 10,000 problematic web sites, social networking groups, portals, blogs, chat rooms, videos and hate games on the Internet which promote racial violence, anti-semitism, homophobia, hate music and terrorism." (Reuters, para 3). According to the report "Sites such as Facebook and YouTube have both seen a huge proliferation of extremist use with the greatest increase coming from overseas, particularly Europe and the Middle East" (Simon Wiesenthal Center, 2009, para 5). The most often targeted groups in these social networking websites are Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, gays, women and immigrants (Reuters, 2009). Websense which also did similar research like the Simon Wiesenthal Center "is now tracking about 15,000 of these hate and militancy sites, with 1,000 added in just the first five months of this year" (Messmer, para 2). Simon Wiesenthal Center's study has showed that "there was only one hate Web site in 1995, but more than 10,000 exist today" (Solomon, 2009).

As there as is a greater surge of the sites on using it for hate purposes there will also be a rise in the lawsuits against these sites (Sinrod, 2009). Sinrod (2009) warns in this context:

> Inevitably, we will see lawsuits where people allege that they have been defamed by false information about them posted on social networking pages. There also are bound to be lawsuits concerning alleged invasion of privacy having to do with the posting of revealing photos and videos without consent. In addition, lawsuits alleging the improper revelation of trade secrets and intellectual property on social networking pages could come out of the woodwork. And, we very well may see cases in which there are allegations of harassment, intimidation and hate speech on social networking pages. Indeed, practically the full gamut of allegations that can be made in the real world might find their way into the social networking world of Cyberspace (Para9, 10, and 11).

There is a need to prevent such hate sites and usage of social networking sites for hate purposes. A spokeswoman for Facebook said that users are told they cannot post content that "makes threats of any kind or that intimidates, harasses, or bullies anyone, is derogatory, demeaning, malicious, defamatory, abusive, offensive or hateful" (Coyle, 2008). Still many do not find it threatening and are insensitive to others feelings. However, many such offensive contents are removed from facebook and the responsible accounts are disabled (Solomon, 2009). The International Network against Cyber Hate (INACH), which was started in 2002 significantly works against cyber hate. Organizations such as INACH and governments should unite to work against cyber hate. The private public partnership will help in the prevention of cyber hate. Though this task will take a longer time, it is possible and the need of the hour.

About this issue:

This issue has five articles and one book review. *Higgins, Wolfe* and *Marcum* analyses the issue of Digital piracy in the first article of this issue. Digital piracy has two sides. One, it is governed by laws of developed nations to prevent and two, less developed nations do not see this as a big issue and laws to prevent this do not exist in an ideal manner. There are reasons for this. Less developed nations cannot afford to buy softwares or music which are very costly and they feel that capitalistic nations alone should not own these softwares. Many crack sites in the internet are found and they give free access (hacked!!) to copyrighted version of softwares or music. There are no laws to govern this. Higgins et al study is done in a developed nation such as US. However, there is a need to analyze this issue in least developed nations and probably the results will be diametrically opposite to their study.

Alaeldin Maghaireh's paper explores the Islamic world in cyberspace and how propagation of Islamic ideology via the net has become a popular medium. In the Islamic world, the issue of hacktivism has hardly ever bothered the religious consciences. Indeed, religious leaders refrained from condemning hacktivism and even made it appear as if it were perpetrated to defend Islam. Therefore, extremism, fanaticism, and violence of the Islamists have sprung up on the web. To tackle this problem the author takes a look at the Shariah law system, which is the ultimate criminal justice system in the Muslim world. Contemporary Muslim thoughts, both traditionalists and reformists, and their role in shaping a modern criminal law are studied in depth in the paper to understand the law system. The constructs of the Shariah law system are studied in the paper in reference to the above views to understand the inflexibility of the law and its inability to respond to the problem of cyber crime. The paper urges the Muslim scholars to bring about amendments in the traditional law system so as to accommodate the seriousness of cyber crime and make it punishable by law. Considering cyber crime is a growing menace, it is only wise to nip the problem in the bud, by improvising the law system.

Today, the benefits of the Internet are being reaped in both a positive as well as a negative manner. The global community has become a tight knit space for communications through the Internet. However, the Internet has also provided an easy platform for online victimization. In this paper, *Catherine Marcum* aims to create awareness on adolescent victimization online by conducting a full fledged study on college freshmen and their experiences with online victimization. The three constructs of the Routine Activities Theory have been utilised to create the methodology and study the data. The population for the research included all freshmen enrolled in 100-level course at a mid-sized university in the northeast during the spring 2008 academic term. Surveys were administered to enrolled freshmen in the spring of 2008, with a focus on their frequency and types of Internet use, and experiences with different types of Internet victimization. The findings of this study indicated that respondents who spent an increased amount of time using the Internet were more likely to be victimized. The purpose of this study is to bring about awareness on the dangers present online. Adolescents need to be educated about these dangers, rather than preventing them from using it. The knowledge gained from this study should be utilized to create effective policies and programs that educate youth and families about protecting themselves while online.

Adebusuyi I. Adeniran's study concentrates on the growing menace of cyber crime in Nigeria. The author aims to understand the emergence of the infamous 'yahooboys' (cybercrime) sub-culture among the youths. In this study, both the multi-linear

evolutionary theory and Robert Merton's view is utilized to help analyze the 'yahooboys' sub-culture. The study was conducted in Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria and the research method used was both, survey research and participant observation. The findings confirmed the author's hypothesis. According to the author, inactivity on the part of the political leadership, which has failed in giving needed direction and opportunities to the youths in Nigeria, has been the major factor facilitating the unwholesome utilization of the Internet platform in defrauding unsuspecting individuals across the globe. Moreover, poverty, unemployment and deteriorating social standards of life have also resulted in the enhancement of the 'yahooboys' sub-culture.

Hacking has been an old problem, but has not been studied in depth. It is a global problem and is growing at a fast pace. Hacking has been difficult to interpret due to lack of a solid definition and vague boundaries between computer experts and hackers, as well as those characteristics that differentiate between various types of hackers. In this study, *Orly Turgeman-Goldschmidt* has interviewed 54 hackers based on the narrative interview technique to understand their lives, behavior, and beliefs, as well as their perceptions of how society treats them. The study is based on the 'grounded theory', a data-driven method that produces theoretical propositions and concepts, and systematically processes them. The paper attempts to explain the different types of offenses that a hacker can commit. These are software piracy, phreaking and hacking/cracking. The author has categorized the hackers as good or bad hackers based on the basis of the hacker's perceptions of themselves.

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