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**Are Social Networking Sites a Source of Online Harassment  
for Teens? Evidence from Survey Data**

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# **Are Social Networking Sites a Source of Online Harassment for Teens? Evidence from Survey Data**

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## **Abstract**

Media reports on incidences of abuse on the internet, particularly amongst teenagers, are growing at an alarming rate causing much concern among parents of teenagers and legislations aimed at regulating internet use among teenagers. Past studies have found that one in five youth were exposed to sexual solicitation, one in seventeen were harassed or threatened and only a fraction reported these cases while more than 63% reported being upset, embarrassed or stressed as a result of these unwanted contacts. Social networking sites (SNS) have been blamed to be a major source of harassment for teen users. Despite several media reports, there is a serious paucity of research in this area that explicitly identifies risk factors that make teens prone to internet abuse, and strategies for prevention and intervention. This study examines the extent to which internet use and having SNS site memberships result in incidences of stranger contact and online harassment for teens in the United States. We also determine the characteristics of teens that make them more likely to be victims of online harassment. Using parental background information, we also seek to shed light on the relationship between parental awareness and teen abuse on the internet. We use 2006 round of Pew Internet™ American Life Survey for this study. Since data on social networking has been collected fairly recently and we do not have any past information, the limitation of this study is that we cannot draw causal links between internet use and online harassment.

## **I. Introduction**

Media reports on incidences of abuse on the internet, particularly amongst teenagers, are growing at an alarming rate (Goodstein, 2008). A recent video of a Florida teen being beaten, posted on YouTube, created uproar and a renewed call for assessment of unmonitored use of the internet by teenagers. A Pew Internet survey reported that one in three teens experience some form of cyber-bullying and the more frequent victims are girls. Cyber-bullying or internet abuse takes the form of unwarranted contact by unknown strangers, distortion of photographs, posting distorted information, and even coercive actions like sending threatening or aggressive messages online. These unfortunate incidents have been on an upward swing causing much concern among parents of teenagers and state-level legislations aimed at regulating internet use among teenagers (Thierer, 2007).

The internet has provided social networking sites (SNS) like MySpace, Facebook and others in addition to instant messaging, online chat rooms, etc as a means to contact friends and socialize over the internet. Finkelhors et al (2000) conducted an internet survey of representative youth aged 10 to 17 years in the United States and found that one in five youth were exposed to sexual solicitation, one in seventeen were harassed or threatened and only a fraction reported these cases while more than 63% reported being upset, embarrassed or stressed as a result of these unwanted contacts. At the same time that SNS have been blamed to be a source of harassment for teen users (McCullagh, 2006), researchers have not found much evidence to support this fact (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008) and critics have blamed the media for alarmist coverage (Goodstein 2007). Some researchers have suggested the need for investing in virtual outreach to help

teens that are more prone to internet abuse (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008). There is a paucity of serious research studies in this area that explicitly identify various risk factors that make teens prone to internet abuse, the effects on them and strategies for prevention and intervention. We attempt to address some of these questions in this study.

In this study, we examine whether the nature of internet use and having SNS site memberships result in incidences of cyber-bullying and online harassment for teens in the United States. We also determine the characteristics of teens that make them more likely to be victims of online abuse. Using parental background information, we seek to shed light on the relationship between parental characteristics and teen abuse on the internet. We use a unique data collected by Pew Internet™ American Life Survey that tracks internet usage of individual households. A component of this survey is the Teen Online Survey that was most recently conducted between October-November 2006. It tracks activities of teens on the internet and asks participants questions that help us to identify whether a teen was abused, bullied or approached by complete strangers through the virtual medium. The survey also collects household demographic information that allows us to track education levels and internet use amongst parents of teen respondents.

Economics literature has been studying adult risky behaviors and policy interventions to deter behaviors around smoking, drinking and drunken driving. Economists have only recently started paying attention to youth risky behaviors which has important ramifications for adult wellbeing (Gruber 2001). Internet use, particularly the use of chat rooms and instant messaging can be deemed addictive (Becker and Murphy 1988) and risky if teenagers indiscreetly divulge private information, indulge in inappropriate behaviors, and encourage contact with strangers. Abuse on the internet has

serious mental health consequences for teenagers (Ybarra et al, 2006; Wolak et al, 2006), hence is critical for policymakers to address. There are no simple models to describe how teens make decisions on the internet. To protect teens from being bullied and abused in cyberspace, public policy can call for restrictions on youth access of the internet. As researchers have found for goods such as smoking (Gruber and Zinman 2000), restrictions will not reduce participation but may reduce the intensity of risky behaviors. Harsher consequences may reduce the incentive for bullies and strangers to harass teenagers on the internet. For example, state of California is considering a bill (AB 86) which if enacted would make cyber-bullying illegal and give school officials the authority to suspend offenders, fine them or even send them to jail.

Social networking sites have been blamed for an increase in the incidences of cyber-bullying and therefore there are calls for restricting teen access to social networking sites. However, there is no consensus that SNS leads to greater harassment or abuse of teenagers and in fact existing sources has shown poor evidence to support this notion (NSBA 2007). Although the cost of networking on SNS may be incidences of harassment, there are also tangible benefits of online social interactions. It is difficult to establish causal effects of social networking on incidences of online harassment because there may be unobservable characteristics that may predispose certain teenagers to specific types of harassment online. Instead of restricting access to SNS, teen abuse on the internet can be prevented through creating greater awareness and targeting the root of the problem. Economic environment and parental characteristics play a major role in teen behaviors and outcomes. Moreover, awareness of parental guidance and parental controls can help parents guide their teenage children better on the appropriate use of the internet

and protect them from unwarranted and unpalatable contact from strangers. Our study aims to determine the characteristics of teens, their environmental and parental characteristics that are correlated with their likelihood of becoming victims of abuse even though we do not try to establish causal links.

This study has important policy implications. It provides a systematic study to identify predictors of risky online behaviors of teens which can help policymakers and health professionals identify the most vulnerable teens and target interventions to prevent the potential harassment likely to be faced by them.

## **II. Literature review**

A recent surge of literature has provided descriptions of internet use amongst teenagers including use of SNS and other internet technology (Finkelhor et al 2000, Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008). Finkelhor et al (2000) conducted an internet survey of representative youth aged 10 to 17 years in the United States and found that one in five youth were exposed to sexual solicitation, one in seventeen were harassed or threatened and only a fraction reported these cases while more than 63% reported being upset, embarrassed or stressed as a result of these unwanted contacts. Some researchers have suggested the need for investing in virtual outreach targeting teens that are more prone to internet abuse (Ybarra and Mitchell, 2008).

Studies have also correlated the use of internet and harassment and sexual abuse of youth and teenagers online (Goodstein 2007; Finkelhor et al 2000; Ybarra and Mitchell 2008). SNS sites have been particularly blamed for an increase in teen abuse (Thierer, 2007). However, some studies that have explicitly measured the correlation

have not been able to determine whether SNS sites are to be blamed solely or that it is a result of use of different types of online technology as well as teen attitudes and behaviors (Ybarra and Mitchell 2008). Further, the emotional distress and psychosocial trauma caused by online abuse has been well documented (Ybarra, 2006; Wolak et al, 2006) creating a need to prevent teen abuse of this nature. What the literature completely lacks are studies that examine the demographic and behavioral characteristics of teenage victims, and the extent and nature of internet use that increase their likelihood of being victims of online abuse.

Although research has established that parental characteristics are highly correlated to youth outcomes (Painter and Levine 2000), there is a clear paucity of studies aimed at explaining the relationship between parental characteristics and controls and teen abuse on the internet. Further, few studies have used multivariate methods to examine the differences in online harassment between male and female internet users, controlling for other characteristics. This study therefore fills important gaps in the existing literature by examining the following four issues: First, the teen characteristics that make them more likely to have SNS memberships are determined. Second, the relationship between having SNS memberships and online bullying or harassment is separately examined. Third, the correlation between teen characteristics including their online behaviors and online abuse is estimated. Fourth, the impact of parental characteristics and parental controls on teen online abuse is examined.

### **III. Data and Variables**

We use data from Pew Internet™ American Life Survey's Online Teen Survey, conducted between October – November 2007. The survey asked a variety of questions to both



parents and their teenage children on their online awareness and activities. This nationally representative survey collected data from 935 teens in the age bracket of 12 to 17 belonging to the census regions of Northeast, Mid-west, South and West. In particular, the survey focused primarily on the social networking activities of the teens on the internet and their parent's awareness of their children's online activity. It also tracked parent's monitoring of their teenage children's internet activities. Most importantly, the survey collected information on whether the teens have been contacted by strangers online or have been bullied in any form, such as, rumors spread about them, embarrassing pictures posted online or receipt of threat messages.

For the purposes of this study, teen internet abuse can be of two types: cyber-bullying and online harassment. Cyber-bullying is a categorical variable that is 1 (0 otherwise) if the teenager has experienced bullying in the form of rumor spreading, receiving threats, embarrassing information posted about them, and forwarding private messages. Online harassment is defined as a categorical variable with value 1 (0 otherwise) if a teenager has been either bullied or contacted by a total stranger (not known to the teen or friends) online.

Incidences of online abuse may depend on a variety of factors. We control for the fact if the teen has an online profile (like MySpace, Facebook) and if such a profile is protected (only visible to friends). Teens who visit SNS more frequently are more likely to be more aggressive in making friends or networking, hence we control for the frequency of such, very high to extremely low frequency, visits to these SNS. One important factor is the ease of access the teen has to such social networking sites on the internet and the frequency with which they access the internet. The teenager can access

the internet from home, school, work-place, libraries, friend's house and others. The teenager, however, is likely to spend more time at home surfing the internet hence whether the teen has access to the internet at home is considered an additional control.

One of the key determinants that may result in internet abuse is the online behavior of teen users and the information they disclose in their online profile. This primarily (but not limited to) consists of their personal information (name, address, school name, city and state, cell or home phone number, instant messenger id) and pictures of themselves or their friends. We use these online behaviors to determine the relative importance of these behavioral characteristics on the incidences of teen abuse. Some teens also often display fake information of themselves, so we control for the fact if the information revealed by them in their profiles are true or not. We control for the fact if teens use online chat rooms and if they occasionally use these SNS or chat rooms to 'flirt'. Flirtatious activities may encourage stranger contacts or other forms of harassment.

As discussed earlier, it is more likely that a typical teen (12-17 years old) spends more time surfing the internet at home. There has been much discussion of late, that parents should keep computers in a more public place, such as living rooms and also install monitoring systems to prevent their kids from visiting certain sites or to track their child's online behavior. To test if monitoring teen behavior makes a difference, we control for whether the teen uses internet privately (example, in bedroom) and whether parents monitor their children's internet use (using monitoring or filtering software or by checking the history of sites visited).

Besides these key variables we also control for other demographic characteristics such as age, race, gender and household income. Family environment, such as parents' marital status (married or otherwise) can influence teen behavior in the household hence we use it as a control. We also add categorical variables indicating broad geographical regions such as east, west, mid-west and south to control for geographical differences in the use of the internet.

#### **IV. Estimation Methodology**

We estimate three different models using logistic regression analysis. All estimations use sampling weights to generate nationally representative estimates. To examine the association between teen's SNS memberships and incidence of online harassment, we employ a two-stage estimation process. Not all teens have a SNS site membership (only 53% of teens report having a SNS membership). Further, we are interested in understanding the determinants of who are likely to have SNS site access. Hence, in the first stage (*Model 1*), we examine the determinants of having access to SNS sites. We are also interested in determining who will experience abuse conditional on having SNS site access. Hence, in the second stage (*Model 2*), using a truncated logit analysis, we examine the factors that increase the likelihood of being abused conditional on having SNS access. We examine two kinds of online abuse: cyber-bullying as well as online harassment.

***Model 1*** (pooled):

*Likelihood (SNS membership) = f(teen characteristics, frequency of teen internet use, teen online behavior, parent characteristics, race, income, geographic region)*

***Model 2a*** (truncated model conditional on having SNS membership):

*Likelihood (online harass) = f(teen characteristics, frequency of teen internet use, teen online behavior, parent characteristics, race, income, geographic region)*

**Model 2b** (truncated model conditional on having SNS membership):

*Likelihood (cyber-bullied) = f(teen characteristics, frequency of teen internet use, teen online behavior, parent characteristics, race, income, geographic region)*

In addition, we also do a pooled analysis (*Model 3*) to determine if having a SNS website is correlated with an increase in the likelihood of online harassment or cyber-bullying for all teens, controlling for all other characteristics. In *Model 3*, the covariate of interest is SNS membership and the related online behaviors of teens.

**Model 3a (Pooled)**

*Likelihood (online harass) = f(teen characteristics, frequency of teen internet use, teen online behavior, parent characteristics, race, income, geographic region, SNS membership)*

**Model 3b (Pooled)**

*Likelihood (cyber-bullying) = f(teen characteristics, frequency of teen internet use, teen online behavior, parent characteristics, race, income, geographic region, SNS membership)*

## **V. Results**

### **V.I. Data Summary**

Table 1 summarizes the data used for this analysis. The data is well represented nationally in terms of census regions, teen age and teen gender. There is a slight over-representation of whites in the survey. Teens in the different age brackets, 12 to 17 are adequately represented. More than half the teens have a SNS profile and almost a third of all surveyed are frequent internet users, accessing internet several times a day. Almost 80 percent of the teens interviewed have married parents while 56 percent used computers which had a monitoring device installed.

## *V.II. Determinants of SNS profile*

Results presented in Table 2 suggest that female teens are 63 percent more likely than male teens to set up a profile on one of the many available social networking sites. Also, teens in the age group of 14 to 17 have a much higher likelihood to have a SNS profile as compared to teens below 13 years. The results also suggest that the likelihood of teens having a SNS profile is strongly associated with the frequency of internet usage. Higher frequency of internet usage, either from home, school, work place or libraries is associated with a higher likelihood of SNS profiles of the teens. Results suggest that teens who access the internet as frequently as once a day is 51 percent less likely to have a SNS profile than teens that access the internet several times a day. Contrary to anecdotal evidence, teenagers who use the internet privately at home do not significantly have a higher likelihood to have a SNS profile. Having part-time jobs or having extra-curricular activities is not associated with having SNS profiles. Estimated results suggest that teens living in western and southern United States are more likely to have SNS compared to those living in the east or the mid-west.

Interestingly, results suggest that teens with married parents are 37 percent less likely to have a SNS membership than teenagers of divorced or single parents. This suggests (and corroborates with other findings) that teens of divorced or single parents may face a domestic environment that induces riskier behaviors such as seeking a social circle on the internet, and contact with strangers. Results indicate that other parental characteristics such as income and education are not significant determinants of teenager's likelihood of having SNS.

### *V.III. Determinants of Online Harrassment*

One of the key issues that we address in this paper is to determine the potential determinants that lead to online abuse (both bullying and harassment) of teenagers. Social networking sites have often been criticized for serving as a breeding ground for cyber-bullies and abuse by strangers. Our results fail to corroborate the claim that having social networking site memberships is a strong predictor of online abuse of teens. Instead demographic and behavioral characteristics of teenagers are stronger predictors of online abuse.

Table 3 contains results for models 2a and 3a with estimates of correlates of online harassment. Column 1 in Table 3 presents pooled estimation results. Female teens are more than 250 percent more likely to be harassed online than male teens. This is consistent with media reports that suggest that female teenagers are more prone to online bullying and unwanted stranger contact. Lower frequency of use reduces the likelihood of being harassed. Disclosure of private information, primarily disclosing instant messenger id, disclosing school information and uploading picture of oneself on SNS attracts unsolicited contacts or other forms of aggressive behavior from strangers and others. Teenagers who use SNS as a platform to flirt are 300 percent more likely of being harassed online compared to those who do not use SNS for flirtatious activities.

Teens who have part-time jobs are more likely to be harassed online. This may mean that teens who have part-time jobs may have less of a social life and may be resorting to the internet for their social networking needs and may be more prone to facing online harassment. It may also mean that there may be unobservables that make

teens work part-time as well as make them prone to online harassment. Hence, parttime work may be a potentially endogenous variable that needs to be corrected using instrumental variables estimation. Since this is not the main focus of the paper, we plan to address this interesting finding in our future work.

Column 2 in Table 3 contains truncated logit results of determinants of online harassment conditional on teen's having a SNS membership. Results are similar to the pooled case. Interesting observations include those who have extracurricular activities and have SNS memberships are less likely to be harassed online. This may suggest that these teens may use SNS to do their extra-curricular activities thus using the internet in a way that helps them reap positive benefits from it.

#### ***V.IV. Determinants of Cyber-bullying***

Table 3 reports estimation results of models 2b and 3b. Column 1 in Table 3 presents odd ratios of covariates that determine cyber-bullying for the pooled sample. Column 2 contains results for the truncated sample conditional on having a SNS membership. Results indicate that having a SNS membership is not a predictor of cyber-bullying. Instead, being female, posting pictures online, chatting online, disclosing school information and instant messaging ID, having part-time work, using internet privately and flirting online are strongly associated with likelihood of being bullied. Conditional on having SNS, teenagers who are busy with extra-curricular activities and older teens are less likely to be bullied online.

## **VI. Discussion and Policy Implications**

It is commonly believed that social networking sites like [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com) and similar others serve as a hub for sex offenders and their likes. This study, based on survey of teens in the age bracket of 12 to 17 years fails to establish a strong empirical support to this widely held belief. This study rather finds support to the fact that the online attitudes of teens, including the amount of information they disclose on the public domain, the manner in which they use the internet (privately or publicly) and the manner in which they interact with people online plays a key role in determining whether they eventually become victims to online harassment and cyber-bullying. Uploading pictures of themselves which everyone can see, disclosing information like school they attend or home phone number and instant messenger id, flirting with unknown people, visiting online chat rooms and having private access to internet are all key to soliciting unwanted stranger contacts or being bullied online. Having a profile on SNS does not imply a higher likelihood of facing online harassment, unlike what has been repeatedly reported in the media.

The results suggest that teens who access SNS and use their computers privately and away from their parent's watchful eyes, are 60 percent more likely to be bullied. Unfortunately, installing monitoring system in the computers does not seem to have any significant effect. These results emphasize the importance of parents' interaction with their teenage children. Installing monitoring software's or devices may not be as crucial as would be to discuss the negative sides of internet with their children.

This study this has important policy implications related to teen access to the internet and SNS in recent times. Results suggest that outreach programs, to make teens



aware of the harmful consequences of risky online behavior would be a better alternative to reduce online harassment than banning teen access to SNS and online chat rooms. The parents need to educate themselves regarding the negative externalities that the internet can generate through various features that may also have positive benefits. The growing incidences of crime being committed through the virtual medium and the growing concerns related to them will be better tackled if parents of teenage children make the effort to educate their children about the perils of information revolution. Educated guidance can minimize disclosure of critical information and ensure appropriate social interaction in the public domain and hence avoid any adverse consequences.

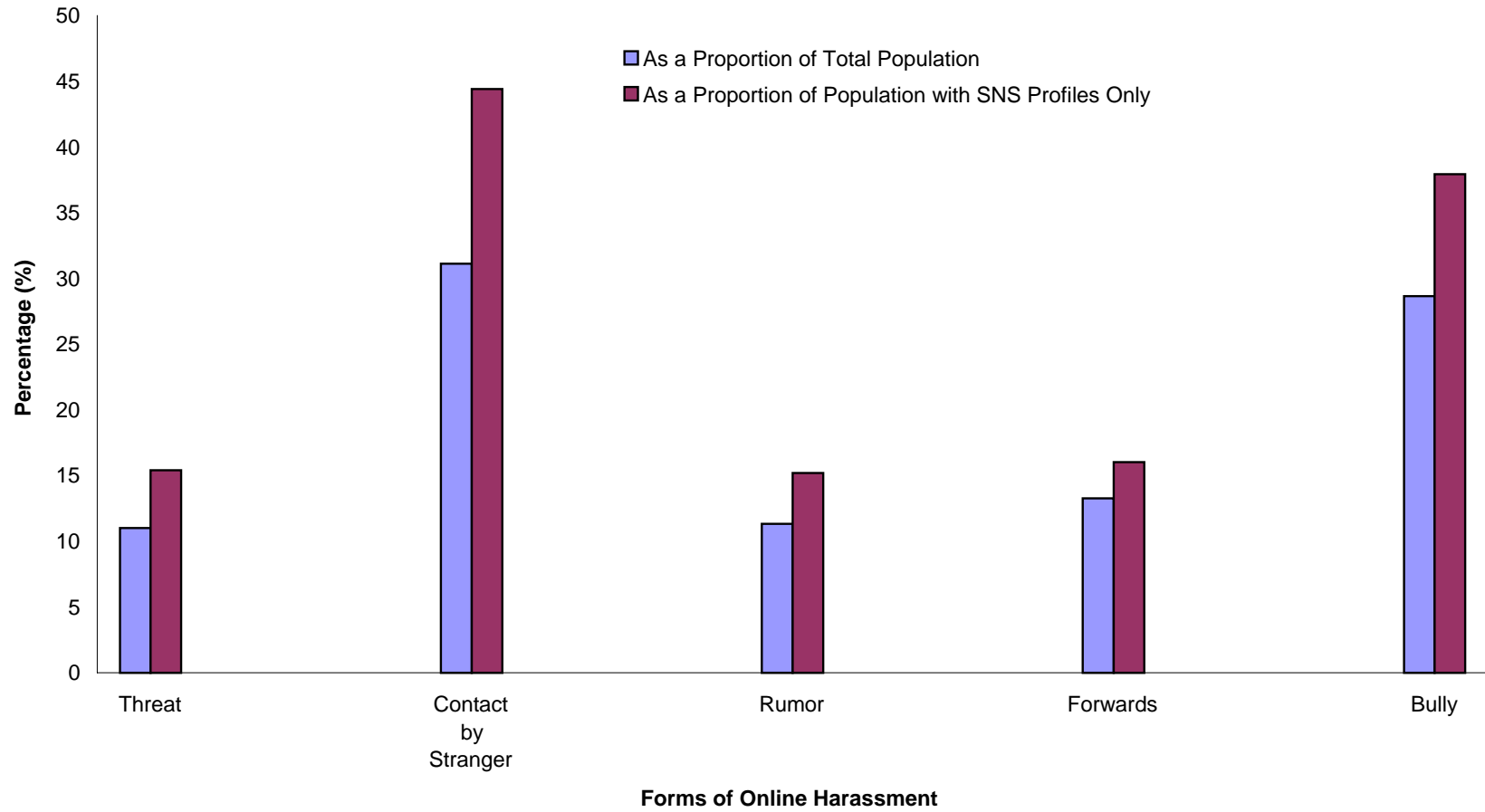
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**Figure 1**

**Different Types of Online Harassment Faced by Teens  
Proportion of Total Population and Proportion of Population with SNS Profiles**



**Table 1: Summary Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Female	935	0.50	0.50	0	1
Teen's age	935	14.66	1.70	12	17
<b><i>Teen's Age Group</i></b>					
Age 12	935	0.15	0.36	0	1
Age 13	935	0.14	0.35	0	1
Age 14	935	0.17	0.37	0	1
Age 15	935	0.16	0.37	0	1
Age 16	935	0.20	0.40	0	1
Age 17	935	0.18	0.39	0	1
<b><i>Race</i></b>					
White	935	0.88	0.32	0	1
Black	935	0.07	0.26	0	1
Asian	935	0.01	0.10	0	1
Others	935	0.04	0.19	0	1
<b><i>Frequency of Internet Usage</i></b>					
High	935	0.34	0.48	0	1
Moderate	935	0.26	0.44	0	1
Low	935	0.17	0.37	0	1
Very Low	935	0.09	0.29	0	1
Rare	935	0.14	0.35	0	1
SNS Profile	935	0.53	0.50	0	1
Chat Online	935	0.17	0.37	0	1
Involved in Extra-curricular Activities	935	0.87	0.34	0	1
Work Part-time	935	0.23	0.42	0	1
Use computer in a private area (bedroom)	935	0.23	0.42	0	1
<b><i>Information Disclosed</i></b>					
Disclose Name	935	0.48	0.50	0	1
Disclose School	935	0.71	0.45	0	1
Disclose Cell No.	935	0.29	0.46	0	1
Disclose Home Address	935	0.20	0.40	0	1
Disclose Instant Messaging ID	935	0.51	0.50	0	1
Disclose E-mail ID	935	0.44	0.50	0	1
Disclose other private information	935	0.86	0.35	0	1
Married Parents	935	0.79	0.41	0	1
Monitor devices installed on Computer	935	0.62	0.49	0	1
Cyber-bullying	935	0.29	0.45	0	1
Online Harassment	935	0.46	0.50	0	1
<b><i>Components of Harassment and/or Bullying</i></b>					
Spread Rumor	935	0.11	0.32	0	1
Posted Embarrassing Picture	935	0.06	0.23	0	1
Contacted by Stranger	935	0.31	0.46	0	1
Received Threatening or Aggressive E-mail	935	0.11	0.31	0	1
Took private e-mail/IM/text message from a forward	935	0.13	0.34	0	1

***Census Regions***

North-east	935	0.20	0.40	0	1
Mid-west	935	0.28	0.45	0	1
South	935	0.31	0.46	0	1
West	935	0.20	0.40	0	1

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**Table 2: Likelihood (odds ratios) of having an SNS Profile by Teens**

	<b>Dependent Variable</b> <b>Whether a Teen has a SNS Profile</b>
Female	1.6314*** (0.2930)
Have computer at Home (teens)	1.0498 (0.2610)
<i>Teen's Age (Omitted Category: Age 12)</i>	
Age 13	1.5625 -0.5098
Age 14	2.2169*** (0.6851)
Age 15	2.3364*** (0.7676)
Age 16	2.2630*** (0.6964)
Age 17	2.4404*** (0.7779)
<i>Frequency of Internet Usage</i>	
Moderate	0.5135*** (0.1169)
Low	0.3002*** (0.0756)
Very Low	0.2220*** (0.0776)
Rare	0.0881*** (0.0303)
Use Internet Privately	0.9338 (0.1912)
Work Part-time	1.3589 (0.2980)
<i>Race (Omitted Category: White)</i>	
Black	0.6572 (0.2402)
Asian	1.517 (1.3242)
Other	1.1739 (0.4877)
Involved in Extra-curricular Activities	1.0554 (0.2604)
<i>Parent's Education (Omitted Category: College and Higher)</i>	
Some School	0.6907 (0.6435)
High School	0.9904 (0.2040)
Married Parents	0.3763***

	(0.0953)
<b><i>Household Income Groups (Omitted Category: Low Income (0-\$40,000))</i></b>	
\$40,001-\$99,999	1.3004 (0.3415)
\$100,000 and higher	1.1659 (0.3595)
Unknown Income Group	0.7413 (0.2593)
<b><i>Geographic Region (Omitted Category: Northeast)</i></b>	
Mid-west	1.3836 (0.3418)
South	1.9292*** (0.4524)
West	2.4620*** (0.6503)
Monitor devices installed on Computer	1.0786 (0.2038)
Chat Online	
Total Observations	935

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Robust standard errors in parentheses

\* significant at 10%; \*\* significant at 5%; \*\*\* significant at 1%



**Table 3: Likelihood (odd-ratios) of Teenagers being Harassed Online**

	<b>Dependent Variable Harassed Online [1]</b>	<b>Dependent Variable Harassed Online [2]</b>
Female	2.4769*** (0.5000)	2.7026*** (0.6702)
Have computer at Home (teens)	1.0383 (0.2722)	1.4011 (0.4915)
<i>Teen's Age (Omitted Category: Age 12)</i>		
Age 13	0.9625 -0.3386	0.4556 -0.2431
Age 14	0.8029 (0.2822)	0.3766* (0.1925)
Age 15	1.0613 (0.3538)	0.524 (0.2633)
Age 16	0.9914 (0.3141)	0.6558 (0.3419)
Age 17	1.1044 (0.3796)	0.3675** (0.1857)
<i>Frequency of Internet Usage</i>		
Moderate	0.8523 (0.1947)	1.0678 (0.3087)
Low	0.6068* (0.1743)	0.6857 (0.2634)
Very Low	0.3641*** (0.1290)	0.3509** (0.1831)
Rare	0.2822*** (0.1021)	1.3144 (0.8046)
Use Internet Privately	1.2926 (0.2875)	1.3181 (0.3704)
Work Part-time	2.0109*** (0.4260)	2.1815*** (0.6538)
<i>Race (Omitted Category: White)</i>		
Black	1.0212 (0.3342)	1.0103 (0.4519)
Asian	0.4422 (0.3939)	0.2533 (0.2591)
Other	3.2259*** (1.3370)	4.6521** (3.0014)
Involved in Extra-curricular Activities	0.9398 (0.2124)	0.5311* (0.1781)
<i>Parent's Education (Omitted Category: College and Higher)</i>		
Some School	0.5079 (0.3158)	1.8498 (1.6518)
High School	0.7902 (0.1592)	0.4165*** (0.1041)
Married Parents	1.023 (0.2639)	

<b>Income Groups (Omitted Category: Low Income (0-\$40,000))</b>		
\$40,001-\$99,999	0.9612 (0.2558)	
\$100,000 and higher	0.9852 (0.3168)	
Unknown Income Group	0.6988 (0.2445)	
<b>Geographic Region (Omitted Category: Northeast)</b>		
Mid-west	1.128 (0.2887)	
South	0.9574 (0.2388)	
West	1.4643 (0.4130)	
Monitor devices installed on Computer	1.5884** (0.3142)	1.3794 (0.3504)
Chat Online	2.4311*** (0.6135)	1.9284** (0.5849)
<b>Information Disclosed on SNS Profile</b>		
Disclose Name	0.958 (0.1850)	0.7105 (0.1829)
Disclose School	1.5775** (0.3494)	2.4886*** (0.6750)
Disclose Cell Phone Number	1.1784 (0.2741)	0.8807 (0.2430)
Disclose Home Address	1.3425 (0.3311)	1.337 (0.4692)
Disclose Instant Messaging ID	1.9044*** (0.3951)	1.7140* (0.5008)
Disclose E-mail ID	1.0364 (0.2104)	1.1055 (0.2981)
Disclose Other Private Information	1.1116 (0.3221)	1.65 (0.6380)
<b>Other Characteristics on SNS Profile</b>		
Post picture of Self	2.4637*** (0.6712)	3.3425*** (1.0242)
Profile is password protected	0.901 (0.2126)	0.9068 (0.2254)
Use a false ID	0.7977 (0.1783)	0.7982 (0.1988)
Use SNS to flirt with others	3.4156*** (1.2303)	3.9646*** (1.4731)
Frequent with Social Interactions	0.5812** (0.1524)	0.5821** (0.1588)
Have a SNS Profile	1.595 (0.4643)	
Observations	935	493

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\* 10% significance \*\* 5% significance; \*\*\* 1% significance

**Table 4: Likelihood (odds-ratio) of Teenagers being Cyber-Bullied**

	<b>Dependent Variable Bullied Online [1]</b>	<b>Dependent Variable Bullied Online [2]</b>
Female	1.9815*** (0.4078)	2.0110*** (0.4943)
Have computer at Home (teens)	0.8965 (0.2365)	1.2512 (0.4493)
<i>Parent's Education (Omitted Category: College and Higher)</i>		
Some School	1.3593 (1.0736)	3.5309 (4.0477)
High School	1.3348 (0.2723)	0.7475 (0.1793)
<i>Race (Omitted Category: White)</i>		
Black	1.2397 (0.4408)	1.8508 (0.8422)
Asian	0.2556 (0.2487)	
Other	2.7613** (1.1115)	2.5927* (1.2899)
<i>Frequency of Internet Usage</i>		
Moderate	0.5622** (0.1335)	0.5877* (0.1668)
Low	0.6391 (0.1931)	0.664 (0.2775)
Very Low	0.4666** (0.1675)	0.5554 (0.2991)
Rare	0.2369*** (0.0995)	1.0317 (0.6078)
Have a SNS Profile	1.1283 (0.3459)	
Chat Online	1.9236*** (0.4630)	1.7925** (0.5050)
Involved in Extra-curricular Activities	0.922 (0.2291)	0.4829** (0.1645)
Work Part-time	1.7750** (0.3957)	2.0394** (0.5813)
<i>Information Disclosed on SNS Profile</i>		
Disclose Name	1.0211 (0.2029)	1.0387 (0.2577)
Disclose School	1.6786** (0.3941)	2.2044*** (0.6133)
Disclose Cell Phone Number	1.3229 (0.3042)	1.0904 (0.2889)
Disclose Home Address	1.0791 (0.2833)	1.0204 (0.3508)
Disclose Instant Messaging ID	1.6771** (0.3667)	1.5561 (0.4337)

Disclose E-mail ID	0.9782 (0.2032)	0.7972 (0.2051)
Disclose Other Private Information	1.0684 (0.3403)	1.4559 (0.5604)
<b><i>Other Characteristics on SNS Profile</i></b>		
Post picture of Self	1.2281 (0.3408)	1.8558* (0.6213)
Profile is password protected	1.2941 (0.2927)	1.2739 (0.3082)
Use a false ID	1.1022 (0.2490)	1.2467 (0.3063)
Use SNS to flirt with others	2.2940** (0.7798)	2.3033** (0.7724)
Frequent with Social Interactions	0.7807 (0.2051)	0.7799 (0.2161)
Use computer at Home in Private	1.0975 (0.2381)	1.6052* (0.4178)
Monitor devices installed on Computer	1.2852 (0.2619)	1.1322 (0.2737)
<b><i>Teen's Age (Omitted Category: Age 12)</i></b>		
Age 13	1.2225 (0.4464)	0.5033 (0.2934)
Age 14	0.9768 (0.3434)	0.3797* (0.1948)
Age 15	1.239 (0.4336)	0.5066 (0.2598)
Age 16	0.6482 (0.2273)	0.2647** (0.1398)
Age 17	0.7266 (0.2680)	0.2209*** (0.1167)
Married Parents	1.043 (0.2912)	
<b><i>Income Groups (Omitted Category: Low Income (0-\$40,000))</i></b>		
\$40,001-\$99,999	1.0348 (0.2857)	
\$100,000 and higher	1.4007 (0.4536)	
Unknown Income Group	1.0074 (0.3575)	
<b><i>Geographic Region (Omitted Category: Northeast)</i></b>		
Mid-west	1.1032 (0.2894)	
South	1.1559 (0.2927)	
West	1.1511 (0.3343)	
Total Observations	935	487

Robust standard errors in parentheses

\* 10% significance \*\* 5% significance; \*\*\* 1% significance

Table 5: Correlation between Online Harassment and Demographic Characteristics

	harass	fem	age12	age13	age14	age15	age16	age17	white	black	Asian	other	Extra Curr	partime	married	Some school	High School	Medium Inc	High Inc	Unknown Inc	Midwest	South	West
harass	1.00																						
fem	0.16	1.00																					
age12	-0.16	0.00	1.00																				
age13	-0.10	0.02	-0.17	1.00																			
age14	-0.05	-0.05	-0.19	-0.18	1.00																		
age15	0.07	0.02	-0.18	-0.18	-0.20	1.00																	
age16	0.07	0.02	-0.21	-0.20	-0.22	-0.21	1.00																
age17	0.14	-0.01	-0.20	-0.19	-0.21	-0.21	-0.23	1.00															
white	0.00	-0.08	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	-0.01	1.00														
black	-0.03	0.04	0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.02	-0.75	1.00													
asian	-0.03	0.02	0.04	-0.01	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.02	-0.28	-0.03	1.00												
other_race	0.06	0.06	-0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.04	0.03	0.00	-0.53	-0.05	-0.02	1.00											
extracurr	0.01	0.03	-0.04	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01	-0.04	0.04	-0.03	0.04	-0.06	1.00										
partime	0.17	0.02	-0.16	-0.16	-0.11	-0.04	0.19	0.25	0.07	-0.07	-0.03	-0.01	0.00	1.00									
married	-0.04	-0.05	0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.04	0.03	0.01	0.12	-0.14	0.00	-0.03	0.07	0.03	1.00								
Some school	-0.05	0.03	-0.01	0.05	0.01	-0.04	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.06	-0.01	-0.02	-0.06	0.00	0.00	1.00							
High School	-0.02	0.07	0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	0.04	-0.09	0.04	-0.10	-0.06	1.00						
Medium Inc	0.02	-0.02	0.00	-0.05	0.00	0.03	-0.02	0.04	0.06	-0.08	-0.06	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.11	-0.03	-0.05	1.00					
High Inc	0.01	-0.05	-0.03	0.03	0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.08	0.11	-0.01	0.20	-0.05	-0.20	-0.50	1.00				
Unknown Inc	-0.02	0.06	-0.05	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.02	0.03	-0.01	0.04	-0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00	-0.31	-0.17	1.00			
Midwest	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.04	0.02	-0.04	0.04	0.08	-0.07	0.00	-0.03	0.07	0.06	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01	0.01	-0.05	0.03	1.00		
South	-0.04	-0.03	0.06	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.08	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05	-0.02	0.05	0.04	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.43	1.00	
West	0.05	0.00	-0.04	0.03	0.02	0.04	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	0.02	-0.03	0.07	-0.01	-0.06	0.04	0.03	-0.07	0.02	0.03	-0.05	-0.31	-0.34	1.00
Northeast	0.03	0.04	-0.03	-0.04	0.01	0.00	0.06	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	0.08	0.03	0.00	0.05	0.01	-0.05	0.03	-0.03	0.04	0.03	-0.32	-0.34	-0.25

Table 6: Online Harassment and Teen Behavior

	Harass	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Rare	Use Private	Disc_name	School	Cell	Home	IM	Email	Others	Self Pic	Protect	False ID	Flirt	Soc Feeq	Monitor
Harass	1																			
High	0.1954	1																		
Moderate	0.061	-0.4271	1																	
Low	-0.0321	-0.3243	-0.2637	1																
Very Low	-0.0925	-0.2307	-0.1876	-0.1424	1															
Rare	-0.2335	-0.2913	-0.2368	-0.1798	-0.1279	1														
Use Private	0.1471	0.1806	0.0683	-0.1043	-0.088	-0.1485	1													
Disc_name	-0.0196	-0.0644	0.0026	-0.0043	0.0281	0.0663	-0.0023	1												
School	0.0589	0.0181	0.018	-0.0261	-0.0512	0.0232	-0.0072	0.3163	1											
Cell	0.1475	0.1169	0.0235	-0.0738	-0.0342	-0.0822	0.0673	0.1257	0.1133	1										
Home	0.0118	-0.0698	-0.0318	0.0344	0.0629	0.0464	-0.0164	0.152	0.1288	0.3125	1									
IM	0.2996	0.2148	0.0747	-0.0808	-0.0752	-0.2396	0.1421	0.0429	0.095	0.279	0.0802	1								
Email	0.1722	0.1338	0.0436	-0.0467	-0.0412	-0.1541	0.0453	0.1058	0.0876	0.2721	0.1693	0.4727	1							
Others	0.0945	0.0876	0.0585	-0.1121	-0.0229	-0.0544	0.0592	0.2533	0.3075	0.1417	0.1225	0.2372	0.2019	1						
Self Pic	0.3662	0.2762	0.0392	-0.0643	-0.1155	-0.2631	0.1058	-0.0682	0.0092	0.1757	-0.1147	0.3452	0.2147	0.117	1					
Protect	0.177	0.1902	0.0214	-0.0516	-0.0846	-0.1619	0.0668	-0.0414	-0.0109	0.0591	-0.1199	0.1798	0.0775	0.0737	0.5272	1				
False ID	0.2184	0.1742	0.0077	-0.0207	-0.0603	-0.1763	0.0698	0.0127	0.0513	0.0931	-0.0457	0.2392	0.142	0.0795	0.4803	0.2299	1			
Flirt	0.2061	0.1186	-0.0141	-0.0503	0.0035	-0.0938	0.0567	-0.0093	0.0014	0.1839	0.0393	0.0889	0.0629	0.0715	0.253	0.0934	0.1295	1		
Soc Feeq	0.2435	0.3923	0.0249	-0.1959	-0.1528	-0.2315	0.1125	-0.1093	0.0057	0.1192	-0.0529	0.2482	0.1656	0.077	0.513	0.3067	0.3669	0.3042	1	
Monitor	0.1047	0.0353	0.1233	0.0584	0.0382	-0.2993	0.0401	-0.088	-0.0597	-0.028	-0.0341	0.0629	0.0251	-0.0098	0.0492	0.0708	-0.0003	-0.0134	0.0323	1

Table 7: Correlation between cyber-bullying and demographic characteristics

	Bully	fem	age12	age13	age14	age15	age16	age17	white	black	Asian	other	Extra Curricular	Part-time	married	Some school	High School	Med Inc	High Inc	Unknown Inc	MW	South	West	
Bully	1.00																							
fem	0.13	1.00																						
age12	-0.09	0.00	1.00																					
age13	-0.03	0.02	-0.17	1.00																				
age14	-0.03	-0.05	-0.19	-0.18	1.00																			
age15	0.09	0.02	-0.18	-0.18	-0.20	1.00																		
age16	0.01	0.02	-0.21	-0.20	-0.22	-0.21	1.00																	
age17	0.04	-0.01	-0.20	-0.19	-0.21	-0.21	-0.23	1.00																
white	0.00	-0.08	-0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	-0.01	1.00															
black	-0.01	0.04	0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.02	-0.75	1.00														
asian	-0.04	0.02	0.04	-0.01	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.02	-0.28	-0.03	1.00													
other_race	0.04	0.06	-0.02	0.00	0.02	-0.04	0.03	0.00	-0.53	-0.05	-0.02	1.00												
extracurr	0.00	0.03	-0.04	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01	-0.04	0.04	-0.03	0.04	-0.06	1.00											
parttime	0.12	0.02	-0.16	-0.16	-0.11	-0.04	0.19	0.25	0.07	-0.07	-0.03	-0.01	0.00	1.00										
married	-0.03	-0.05	0.02	-0.01	0.00	-0.04	0.03	0.01	0.12	-0.14	0.00	-0.03	0.07	0.03	1.00									
Some school	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	0.05	0.01	-0.04	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.06	-0.01	-0.02	-0.06	0.00	0.00	1.00								
High School	0.05	0.07	0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	0.04	-0.09	0.04	-0.10	-0.06	1.00							
Med Inc	-0.02	-0.02	0.00	-0.05	0.00	0.03	-0.02	0.04	0.06	-0.08	-0.06	0.03	0.02	0.00	0.11	-0.03	-0.05	1.00						
High Inc	0.01	-0.05	-0.03	0.03	0.01	-0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.06	-0.05	0.10	-0.08	0.11	-0.01	0.20	-0.05	-0.20	-0.50	1.00					
Unknown Inc	0.01	0.06	-0.05	0.07	-0.06	-0.01	0.02	0.03	-0.01	0.04	-0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.00	-0.31	-0.17	1.00				
MW	-0.03	-0.01	0.01	0.01	-0.04	0.02	-0.04	0.04	0.08	-0.07	0.00	-0.03	0.07	0.06	-0.02	-0.04	-0.01	0.01	-0.05	0.03	1.00			
South	0.00	-0.03	0.06	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.08	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05	-0.02	0.05	0.04	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02	-0.43	1.00		
West	0.00	0.00	-0.04	0.03	0.02	0.04	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	0.02	-0.03	0.07	-0.01	-0.06	0.04	0.03	-0.07	0.02	0.03	-0.05	-0.31	-0.34	1.00	
NE	0.03	0.04	-0.03	-0.04	0.01	0.00	0.06	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	0.08	0.03	0.00	0.05	0.01	-0.05	0.03	-0.03	0.04	0.03	-0.32	-0.34	-0.25	1.00

Table 8: Correlation between Cyber-Bullying and Teen Behavior

Cyber_Bully	Cyber_Bully	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Rare	Use Private	Disc_name	School	Cell	Home	IM	Email	Others	Self Pic	Protect	False ID	Flirt	Soc Feeq	Monitor
Cyber_Bully	1																			
High	0.1628	1																		
Moderate	-0.0221	-0.4271	1																	
Low	-0.0109	-0.3243	-0.2637	1																
Very Low	-0.0381	-0.2307	-0.1876	-0.1424	1															
Rare	-0.1522	-0.2913	-0.2368	-0.1798	-0.1279	1														
Use Private	0.0756	0.1806	0.0683	-0.1043	-0.088	-0.1485	1													
Disc_name	-0.0161	-0.0644	0.0026	-0.0043	0.0281	0.0663	-0.0023	1												
School	0.0841	0.0181	0.018	-0.0261	-0.0512	0.0232	-0.0072	0.3163	1											
Cell	0.1167	0.1169	0.0235	-0.0738	-0.0342	-0.0822	0.0673	0.1257	0.1133	1										
Home	0.0024	-0.0698	-0.0318	0.0344	0.0629	0.0464	-0.0164	0.152	0.1288	0.3125	1									
IM	0.196	0.2148	0.0747	-0.0808	-0.0752	-0.2396	0.1421	0.0429	0.095	0.279	0.0802	1								
Email	0.1004	0.1338	0.0436	-0.0467	-0.0412	-0.1541	0.0453	0.1058	0.0876	0.2721	0.1693	0.4727	1							
Others	0.0753	0.0876	0.0585	-0.1121	-0.0229	-0.0544	0.0592	0.2533	0.3075	0.1417	0.1225	0.2372	0.2019	1						
Self Pic	0.2082	0.2762	0.0392	-0.0643	-0.1155	-0.2631	0.1058	-0.0682	0.0092	0.1757	-0.1147	0.3452	0.2147	0.117	1					
Protect	0.1504	0.1902	0.0214	-0.0516	-0.0846	-0.1619	0.0668	-0.0414	-0.0109	0.0591	-0.1199	0.1798	0.0775	0.0737	0.5272	1				
False ID	0.1632	0.1742	0.0077	-0.0207	-0.0603	-0.1763	0.0698	0.0127	0.0513	0.0931	-0.0457	0.2392	0.142	0.0795	0.4803	0.2299	1			
Flirt	0.1731	0.1186	-0.0141	-0.0503	0.0035	-0.0938	0.0567	-0.0093	0.0014	0.1839	0.0393	0.0889	0.0629	0.0715	0.253	0.0934	0.1295	1		
Soc Feeq	0.1393	0.3923	0.0249	-0.1959	-0.1528	-0.2315	0.1125	-0.1093	0.0057	0.1192	-0.0529	0.2482	0.1656	0.077	0.513	0.3067	0.3669	0.3042	1	
Monitor	0.0627	0.0353	0.1233	0.0584	0.0382	-0.2993	0.0401	-0.088	-0.0597	-0.028	-0.0341	0.0629	0.0251	-0.0098	0.0492	0.0708	-0.0003	-0.0134	0.0323	1



## Appendix

**Table A1: Summary Statistics**

	N (=935)	[%]
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
Female	471	[50.37%]
<b><i>Teen's Age</i></b>		
12	140	[14.97%]
13	134	[14.33%]
14	157	[16.79%]
15	149	[15.94%]
16	183	[19.57%]
17	172	[18.40%]
<b><i>Teen's Race</i></b>		
White	825	[88.24%]
Black or Afro-American	66	[7.06%]
Asian or Pacific-Islander	10	[1.07%]
Others	34	[3.64%]
<b><i>Frequency of Internet Usage</i></b>		
Several times a day	322	[36.34%]
About once a day	241	[27.20%]
3-5 days a week	156	[17.61%]
1-2 days a week	86	[9.71%]
every few weeks or less	81	[9.14%]
<b><i>Other Teen Characteristics</i></b>		
Belonging to Married Parents	741	[79.25%]
Involved in Extra-curricular activities	123	[13.16%]
Internet User	790	[84.49%]
Have profile on a Social Networking Site (SNS) [Example: MySpace, Facebook]	493	[52.73%]
Use computer that has monitoring device installed	525	[56.15%]
Use computer with a monitoring device and has a SNS profile	281	[30.05%]
Have a SNS profile with their parents knowledge that they have one	383	[40.96%]
<b><i>Places where Teens Access their Computers at Home</i></b>		
Private Area (Own Bedroom)	209	[25.77%]
Open Family Area (Living Room)	592	[73.00%]
Laptop	9	[1.11%]
<b><i>Online Harassment of Some Form faced by the Teens</i></b>		
Spread rumor	106	[11.34%]
Posted Embarrassing Picture	54	[5.78%]
Contacted by Stranger	291	[31.12%]
Received Threatening or Aggressive E-mail	103	[11.02%]
Took private e-mail/IM/text messages from a forward	124	[13.26%]
<b><i>Census Region (National Representation of Survey)</i></b>		
Northeast	189	[20.21%]
Mid-west	266	[28.45%]
South	294	[31.44%]
West	186	[19.89%]