Implications of Youth (Digital) Media Use: Victimization and Bullying Prevention

Kaveri Subrahmanyan
Youth Media Use

- Youth are enmeshed in media and technology
  - Using them from very young ages
- Called digital natives
- Most youth are online and use smart devices
- Spend between 7 and 10 hours/day using entertainment media
- TV viewing on a TV set still makes up half of all screen time
- 17 hours online/week
  - “always connected, never alone”!
Digital Media Use

Digital divide has narrowed
- But access to a home computer and the Internet related to parental education, family income, & race/ethnicity

Compared to European American youth (Rideout et al., 2010), African-American and Latino youth consume
- 4 1/2 hours more media per day (especially TV)
- More likely to use cell phones to access media content

Boys spend more time gaming
Girls spend more time on social networking sites & texting and calling on cell phones
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Media Use</th>
<th>youth uses?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>Content creation</td>
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Communication uses dominate
- 100s of “friends” on social media
- keep in touch with peers, make plans, etc.
- helps parents keep tabs on teens, keep in touch with adult children

Interact online with offline peers
- online and offline networks are not identical
Means of interactions to create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks – (Wikipedia)
Digital media important for peer communication and interaction
> But also become a means of peer victimization

Rates of electronic victimization: 10 to 40%

Associated with negative outcomes
> Anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, suicidal behavior
Understanding the role of media in bullying

- Consider the role of media in development
- Digital worlds have become an important context for psychosocial development
- Use digital peer communication to deal with developmental Tasks
  - the challenges or expectations that a culture has for individuals in different life phases
Understanding the role of media in bullying

Adolescent developmental tasks

- Sexuality
- Identity
- Intimacy
- Autonomy

Studies on online teen chat rooms, blogs, social media suggest

- use these contexts to help with sexuality, identity, intimacy

Subrahmanyam, et al., 2006; Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2011, Subrahmanyam et al., 2009]
Understanding the role of media in bullying

Offline and online worlds
- are connected in terms of both people and issues
- But they are not mirror images of each other

Online behaviors
- New forms
- often exaggerated
- at other times reversed from offline ones!

Connection between offline and online
- Presents both risks and opportunities
- Wider networks but also new ways of victimizing and harassing peers
Offline and online connectedness in victimization

- Majority of victims know bully
- Teens at risk for being bullied
  - victims of repeated school-based offline bullying
  - more time spent online
  - use of instant messaging and webcams
- Offline problems linked to offenders and victims
  - recent school problems, assaultive behaviors, and substance use
Media and bullying

Media present many risks for bullying
But they also provide opportunities for bullying prevention
- Means of support
- Identifying youth who may be at risk
- Delivering interventions
Media and bullying

Social support
- Online & Offline

Social support
- may help to alleviate the effects of victimization
- may also help to prevent bullying

Studies in my lab suggest that online and offline support
- Moderate relation between online victimization and well-being
Short-term longitudinal study (Frisson, Subrahmanyam, & Eggermont, 2015) suggests that well-being may predict victimization.

- Depressed and anxious youth may be more at risk for bullying.
- But only those who report low levels of social support.

Social support targeted to at-risk youth may help with bullying prevention.

Social support typically from friends and family.

But can also be from strangers.

- Bulletin boards, crisis lines (Trevor space, etc).
Media and bullying: Peer support from strangers

- Stranger interactions may help adolescents recover from sting of social rejection
- Experimental study
  - teens experienced social exclusion
  - compared to solitary game play, instant messaging an unknown peer helped to recover from negative affect
- Not all stranger interaction is bad!
Content on new digital media can help to identify youth at risk for bullying.

Displayed references on social media may be useful:

- References to depression symptoms on social media associated with self-reported depression symptoms.
- Model of twitter feeds used to predict depression in twitter feeds one year later.
Teen in VA created a bullying heat map that tracks daily tweets that use the terms "bully" or "bullying" across the country.
Media and bullying

Media disseminate PSA’s – It Gets Better Project

Digital modes of communication can be used to

- Deliver interventions

RCT to deliver key messages from CBT on mobile phones (New Zealand)

- Teens report that messages were helpful to be more positive and to get rid of negative thoughts
- Follow up will test if any change in clinician-rated depression symptoms

Delivering information and interventions
Online worlds present both risks (e.g., cyber victimization) and opportunities (e.g., health resources)

Need new perspectives when assessing implications
  ➢ some youth might be more at risk than others
  ➢ might find opportunities where you don’t expect to find them (e.g., stranger interaction)

Digital media can also provide innovative means of
  ➢ Identifying at-risk youth
  ➢ Delivering bullying prevention programs