

# Cyberbullying extends to workplace, bedroom

February 18 2013, by Byron Acohido, Usa Today

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Cyberbullying is no longer restricted to children. Adults routinely use content from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social-media services to intimidate and harass subordinates and rivals at work.

When [romantic relationships](#) go sour, aggrieved lovers often turn to social-media services to stalk or embarrass an estranged partner.

"Adults are now finding themselves in uncharted territory when it comes to social media," says Jenny Ungless, a life coach and workplace consultant.

In a recent global survey of 4,000 adults, 82 percent of respondents agreed that posting or messaging defamatory remarks about a colleague amounts to cyberbullying. And 9 percent disclosed incidents in which information gleaned from a social-media service was used to their detriment by a manager.

What's more, results of a survey of 1,000 adults by security firm McAfee show one in 10 Americans have received cyberthreats from an estranged romantic partner. Nearly 60 percent of those threatened have had personal photos or sensitive e-mails and text messages exposed online. The top motivations for such disclosures: alleged lying, cheating or simply breaking up.

"Technology definitely fuels the best of a relationship and the worst of a breakup," says Robert Siciliano, McAfee security analyst. "Airing dirty

laundry often leads to exposing deep secrets and intimate photos never meant for public consumption."

In workplace settings, companies are just beginning to consider policies to effectively govern social-media etiquette among employees, says Tony Anscombe, senior security analyst at AVG.

One in 10 respondents to AVG's survey discovered secret discussions about them online were initiated by colleagues using social media, and 11 percent reported embarrassing photos or videos uploaded onto social-media sites.

Awareness about the potential invasiveness that can stem from use of social media has not kept pace with its pervasive use.

"Until everyone is clear about exactly what is and isn't acceptable online behavior, trying to enforce policies will just fail, leaving the door open to cyberbullying and invasion of privacy," Anscombe says. "If organizations take the time to first educate before establishing and enforcing policies, privacy can be protected in the workplace without having to sacrifice any of the social activity we all enjoy."

In the romantic arena, individuals are on their own. Some 56 percent of respondents to McAfee's poll said they monitored their significant others' [social-media](#) pages and bank accounts, and 49 percent routinely read their partners' e-mails.

One male respondent disclosed that he posted naked images of his ex-girlfriend on Facebook. A female survey taker blurred her face in a photo of her and an ex-beau in the nude, then e-mailed the image to his new girlfriend using a faked e-mail account.

"You can't completely control what people say about you online, but you

can control the ammunition they have against you," Ungless says.

Her advice: Be careful what you post on social networks, and take the time to learn how to use privacy settings to limit access to sensitive information.

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Citation: Cyberbullying extends to workplace, bedroom (2013, February 18) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-02-cyberbullying-workplace-bedroom.html>

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