Summary of Cyber-Bulling Stories:

Text-message bullying becoming more common

A growing number of U.S. kids say they have been picked on via text messaging, while there has been little change in online harassment, researchers reported Monday. Of more than 1,100 middle school and high school students surveyed in 2008, 24 percent said they had ever been "harassed" by texting. That was up from about 14 percent in a survey of the same kids the year before. "Harassment" meant that peers had spread rumors about them, made "rude or mean comments," or threatened them. Outright bullying, which was defined as being repeatedly picked on, was less common. In 2008, about eight percent of kids said they'd ever been bullied via text, versus just over six percent the year before. Researchers say the findings, reported in the journal Pediatrics, suggest that attention needs to be paid to kids' text-messaging world. But they also stress that parents need not be alarmed. "This is not a reason to become distressed or take kids' cellphones away," said lead researcher Michele L. Ybarra, of Internet Solutions for Kids, Inc., in San Clemente, California. "The majority of kids seem to be navigating these new technologies pretty healthfully," she told Reuters Health. The study included 1,588 10- to 15-year-olds who were surveyed online for the first time in 2006. The survey was repeated in 2007 and 2008, with about three-quarters of the original group taking part in all three. When it came to Internet-based harassment, there was little change over time. By 2008, 39 percent of students said they'd ever been harassed online, with most saying it had happened "a few times." Less than 15 percent said they'd ever been cyber-bullied. http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/11/21/us-text-bullying-idUSTRE7AK1QY20111121

One in Five Teachers Witness Cyberbaiting

Twenty percent of teachers have personally experienced or knows another teacher who has experienced cyberbaiting, a new study reveals. Cyberbaiting -- a form of cyberbullying of teachers conducted by students -- occurs when students taunt their teachers, capture their reactions on a mobile recorder and threaten to upload the footage to the Internet. The cyberbaiting stats were among the findings of the Norton Online Family Report, which examined the effects of growing up in the digital age on youth. Probably due to the widespread prevalence of cyberbaiting, 67% of teachers say being friends with students on social networks exposes them to risks. Despite the apparent risks, 34% of teachers continue to friend students. Roughly half of respondents (51%) report that their schools have social media codes of conduct dictating how teachers and students can interact online. Not surprisingly, 80% of teachers think there should be more education about online safety in schools. Seventy percent of parents agree. StrategyOne polled 19,636 people -- including 12,704 adults, 4,553 children and 2,379 teachers -- online between Feb. 6 and Mar. 14 in 24 countries. The overall margin of error is plus or minus 0.87% at a 95% level of confidence.
http://news.yahoo.com/one-five-teachers-witness-cyberbaiting-study-122022551.html

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88 % of teens see online bullying

Teens identified themselves as victims of bullying in 15 per cent of cases, the survey said. Nine out of ten claimed they ignored hurtful remarks on Facebook while eight out of ten said they either defended a victim or told the bully to stop. More than one in five, however, said they had

joined in bullying, and eight per cent said it had caused a "physical fight". One in four said that the experience had resulted in a "face to face argument or confrontation with someone", and nearly the same number reported that the internet had cost them a friendship. Approximately 13 per cent said it had either made them nervous about going to school or caused an argument with their parents. The report's author said "Social networking sites have created new spaces for teens to interact and they witness a mixture of altruism and cruelty on those sites". Amanda Lenhart said "For most teens, these are exciting and rewarding spaces. But the majority have also seen a darker side. And for a subset of teens, the world of social media isn't a pretty place because it presents a climate of drama and mean behaviour." The Pew Research Centre also said 95 per cent of American teens ages 12 to 17 are online and 80 per cent of online teens use social media sites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter compared to 55 per cent five years ago. Facebook is the "dominant" social media site, with 93 per cent of teen social media users having a Facebook account; 24 per cent have a MySpace account, and 12 per cent, a Twitter account. The study also found 45 per cent of online 12-year-olds use social networking sites, despite 13 being the official minimum. Over half, however of the total users, said that they had refrained from posting something online because it might reflect poorly on them in the future.
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/8879398/88pc-of-teens-see-online-bullying.html

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Teen 'Sexting' Common and Linked to Psychological Woes
Some Boston parents might be in for a rude awakening: 13 percent of area high school students say they've received "sext" messages and one in 10 has either forwarded, sent or posted sexually suggestive, explicit or nude photos or videos of people they know by cellphone or online. So found a study of more than 23,000 students, with the results scheduled to be presented Wednesday at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Sexting can include overtones of bullying and coercion, and teens who are involved were more likely to report being psychologically distressed, depressed or even suicidal, according to the 2010 survey of 24 (of 26) high schools in Boston's metro-west region. Twice as many respondents who said they had sexted in the past year reported depressive symptoms, compared to teens who did not. Moreover, 13 percent of teen involved in sexting reported a suicide attempt during that period compared with 3 percent of non-sexting teens, according to the researchers at the Education Development Center in Newton, Mass. That doesn't mean that sexting leads to depression or increases suicide risk. "It's a cross-sectional study -- it shows an association but not a causal relationship," explained lead researcher Shari Kessel Schneider. However, she added, "It's important to know there's a link between sexting and psychological distress. It's something to be considered if you know of a youth who is involved in sexting." Of the high-school students, 10 percent of boys and 11 percent of girls said they had sent one of these images in the past year, while 6 percent of males and 4 percent of females had had such an image sent of themselves. The researchers also found that youths who did not self-identify as heterosexual -- that is, they described themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual other or not sure -- were more likely to be involved in sexting. Justin Patchin, co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center, said his first advice to teens who receive a sext message is this: "You should delete it and not tell anybody. If it's doesn't get disseminated and distributed, it's ended."
http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=658527

College Students Still Vulnerable to Bullying
Bullying and cyberbullying don't end when students go from high school to college, a new study finds. "We got into looking at college students because there are studies on elementary, junior high, high school and the workplace," Christine MacDonald, a professor of educational and school psychology at Indiana State University, said in a university news release. "There's nothing on colleges. It doesn't just stop when they turn 18." She and her colleagues found that 15 percent of college students in their study reported being bullied and nearly 22 percent reported being cyberbullied. In addition, 38 percent of students knew someone who had been cyberbullied and almost 9 percent said they had cyberbullied someone else. Of those who said they'd been cyberbullied, 25 percent said it was through a social networking site, 21 percent through text message, 16 percent through email and 13 percent through instant messages. The study also found that 42 percent of students said they had seen someone being bullied by another student, 8 percent reported bullying another student, nearly 15 percent had seen a professor bully a student and 4 percent said they had been bullied by a professor. "Students who are different in some way seem to be singled out. If it's by ethnicity or sexual orientation, we don't know. We don't have enough data, MacDonald said. The researchers said universities and colleges must provide safe environments for students. "We really believe there's a whole dimension to bullying from minor rude behavior like not saying hello to assault at the other end," MacDonald said. "By intervening at minor behaviors, we can stop more severe negative behaviors."
http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=658120

Students and parents want schools to act on cyber-bullying
Whether it's taunting Facebook posts, hateful tweets or any other form of cyber-bullying, regardless of when or where it happens, students want schools to take action. That's the response of more than two-thirds of students, as revealed in an Ontario Student Trustees' Association report released Friday. More than 7,100 pupils from public, French and Catholic schools were surveyed, along with 2,400 parents. The report was released the day after the funeral for an Ottawa teenager, whose parents say he committed suicide after he was bullied online. His death follows the suicides of other Canadian students this fall who took their lives in part because of bullying and mental-health issues. Such tragedies, and those involving adults as well, have politicians calling for a national suicide-prevention strategy. Ontario school boards are required by law to react to bullying online, and have response plans in place. But it doesn't mean schools, which rely on tips from students or on staff noticing, can catch everything happening online. As well, the survey shows that about one-third of students don't know where to go if they have mental-health problems. The survey asked students throughout Ontario whether a student wanting to establish a gay-straight alliance at their school should be allowed to do so. More than 87 per cent of students said yes, while 78.8 per cent of parents said yes.
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/students-and-parents-want-schools-to-act-on-cyber-bullying/article2208640/

Cyberbullying: The Power and Peril of Anonymity
While the faceless nature of the Internet can bring out the worst in cyberbullies of all shapes and sizes, it also means concerned bystanders can more easily report wrongdoing without the stigma of public identification, said panelists at a town hall meeting on cyberbullying Tuesday in

Chicago and on a live [Web stream worldwide](). "The same anonymity you use as the bully, you can use as the quote-unquote 'snitch,'" said Mike Hawkins, the coordinator and lead mentor of [YOUmedia](), a tech-enhanced learning space for teens housed within the Chicago Public Library's Harold Washington Library Center. "There's a lot of different ways where you can empower, and if you can't do it yourself, you can push the social network, you can push the school."Hawkins and his fellow panelists at the event—co-hosted by children's media watchdogs [Common Sense Media](), and Internet safety efforts [Yahoo Safely]() and [MTV's A Thin Line]()—explored why cyberbullying occurs, why it can be more dangerous than the "traditional" face-to-face variety, and who has what responsibilities in trying to stop it. And while many ed-tech advocates have fought for the right to use the capabilities of popular social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the panelists stressed that if any of those environments should become threatening because of cyberbullying, students should know they have the option to opt out.
[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/DigitalEducation/2011/10/cyberbullying_the_power_and_pe.html]()

Helping Teens Fend Off Attacks by Cyberbullies
Cyberbullies victimize their classmates and acquaintances online because they don't see the immediate consequences of their actions and they mistakenly believe their posts, tweets or emails can't be traced back to them, according to one expert. "If a girl posts a mean remark online, she doesn't have to witness the target's hurt reaction," explained Brandie Oliver, an assistant professor of school counseling at Butler University in Indianapolis who also supervises a high school peer counseling program. "Many students post messages that they would never say in a face-to-face situation."Children should be taught to stand up for themselves -- both in real time and in cyberspace, Oliver said. "Kids need to speak up and tell other kids (especially a bully) what they need and what they don't want," she explained in a university news release. As a rash of U.S. suicides has shined a spotlight on cyberbullying, Oliver outlined some ways to help young people survive digital attacks and also protect themselves from future bullying:
- Only accept online friends who are known and trusted.
- Do not participate in online bullying, gossip or the sharing of embarrassing photos and videos -- either yours or someone else's.
- Understand that any messages, pictures or videos posted online can be seen and commented on by others.

Parents should get involved and help their children understand the online world, Oliver advised. Also, parents must limit Internet access if they believe their teens are not capable of handling the drama that can play out online, she said. Parents should also direct their kids toward activities that build up their self-confidence to help them fend off potential attacks by bullies. "Kids with self-confidence have a built-in shield against bully behavior," she said. Oliver added that young people should be encouraged to stand up for other kids who are the victims of bullies and report any harassment or bullying to an adult.
[http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=657740]()

Cyberbullying, Cell Phones Still Canton School Problem
Cyberbullying, text messaging and cell phones continue to create headaches for school officials. Unauthorized electronics use in the high school increased from 77 incidents in the 2009-2010

school year to 106 cases last year. High School Principal Mark T. Passamonte said cyberbullying that starts outside of school sometimes spills over into the school day when students have face-to-face contact rather than just interacting over their computers. "There's more and more cyberbullying," he said. "It may start over the weekend or during a break. We try to squash it as quick as we can." Cell phone use continues to create disruptions. Unfortunately, he said it's often parents who are texting or calling their teenager. A total of 891 disciplinary issues were recorded at the high school last year, up from 706 the previous year.
http://www.mpcourier.com/article/20111007/DCO01/310079974/-1/dco

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One in Five Teens Report Being Bullied Online
Nearly one of every five kids between age 12 and 17 report being "cyber bullied," according to a recent survey that examined the connection between social networking sites and substance use.Out of 1,037 teens polled by the Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 19 percent of respondents said they had someone post "mean or embarrassing things about them" on a social networking site such as Twitter or Facebook. Girls were far more likely than boys (25 percent versus 14 percent) to report having been bullied. The figure is significantly lower than earlier surveys of youth about online bullying. In a 2004 survey of 1,500 students, in grades four through eight, 42 percent reported having been bullied online and 35 percent reported being threatened online. Compared to teens who are not cyber bullied, "teens who have been cyber bullied are more than twice as likely to use tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana," according to the survey, which mostly asks about the use of drugs and alcohol by teens and their attitude about substance use. "The anything goes, free-for-all world of Internet expression and suggestive television programming that teens are exposed to on a daily basis puts them at increased risk of substance abuse," said CASA Founder Joseph Califano in a statement released with the survey yesterday. To read the report, The National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse, click here.
http://www.youthtoday.org/view_article.cfm?article_id=4982

Cyberbullying a Big Worry for Parents: Survey
More than half of the parents of teen-agers say they're worried about cyberbullying, a new survey finds. Cyberbullying, which usually means one teen or group of teens taunting or spreading rumors about a peer online, has risen along with accessibility of the internet and the popularity of online social media such as Facebook. In a survey of more than 1,000 parents of teenagers aged 13 to 17 by the American Osteopathic Association found that 85 percent of those polled reported that their children had social media accounts. About 52 of parents said cyberbullying was a concern. "While bullying through physical intimidation has long been a problem among teenagers, cyberbullying by using computers and smart phones to send rumors or post cruel messages has become more prevalent in recent years," explains Dr. Jennifer Caudle, an osteopathic family physician in Little Rock, Ark. and bullying expert, in a news release. "Even though there might not be physical injuries, cyberbullying leaves deep emotional scars on the victim." The survey also revealed that one in six parents knew their child had been the victim of a cyberbully. Some of the kids teased or harassed online were as young as 9 years old. In most cases, the cyberbullying was not a one time occurrence, but rather happened repeatedly. Cyberbullying can lead to anxiety, depression, loss of interest in socializing, aggression toward

others the victim can bully, poor academic performance, and suicidal thoughts, Caudle said. The vast majority of parents -- 91 percent -- believe they, not teachers, are ultimately responsible for preventing these long term effects. More than 75 percent of parents said they have discussed cyberbullying with their children, while 86 percent said they joined their child's online social network so they can monitor their teens' interactions. Two out of three parents also said they monitor the security settings on their children's social media accounts. The survey also found that one in seven parents have barred their children from using online social media, but keeping teens off these networking sites may prove more difficult. Although just about all teens, or 97 percent, access their accounts from a home computer, many also log on using smart phone or mobile devices. Girls are the worst offenders, the survey showed. About two-thirds of cyberbullying occurred among girls, making it twice as common among girls than boys. This fact may not be lost on parents. More than 75 percent reported they felt this type of aggressive behavior was a greater concern for girls.
http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=654818

Youth Cybercrime Influenced by Peers
Having friends who engage in cybercrimes is one of the greatest determinants in whether juveniles commit cybercrimes, according to a new study by researchers at Michigan State University, Georgia Southern University and Eastern Kentucky University. The study, Low Self-Control, Deviant Peer Associations, and Juvenile Cybercrime, published online in the American Journal of Criminal Justice, is one of the first to analyze the motives behind cybercrimes committed by juveniles in middle and high schools. Authors of the study administered a scientific survey to 435 students in a Kentucky school district. Study results showed that the biggest predictor that juveniles might engage in cybercrime is peer influence – meaning kids with friends who had committed cybercrimes were more likely also to engage in such activities. Results also showed that low self-control was a major factor in juveniles committing cybercrimes. Examples of cybercrimes include digital piracy (including stealing music), online bullying and harassment (including threatening or sexually explicit messages delivered through text messages or e-mails), viewing online pornography (if under age 18), and cyber-trespassing (which most times involves computer hacking). Other reasons that juveniles commit cybercrimes, according to the research, include spending more time online for non-academic reasons, being highly skilled with computers and having a computer in a personal setting. Age also positively correlated with cybercrime, while having higher grades was one of the least correlated factors relating to committing cybercrimes. Females were also very unlikely to commit cybercrimes. Research also showed that low self-control seems to have both a direct and indirect effect, through other peers offending, on youth cybercrime.
http://www.youthtoday.org/view_article.cfm?article_id=4859

Duncan Warns Schools on Banning Gay-Straight Clubs
The U.S. Department of Education on Tuesday warned school districts across the country against taking steps to ban students from forming gay-straight alliances and similar support groups in their schools. "Officials need not endorse any particular student organization, but federal law requires that they afford all student groups the same opportunities to form, to convene on school grounds, and to have access to the same resources available to other student groups," the "Dear

Colleague" letter from U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan reads. Citing 1984's Equal Access Act, created to prevent discrimination against religious groups at schools, Mr. Duncan said schools must treat all student-initiated groups equally, pointing out the benefits of groups that address issues related to students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender in particular, and noting the verbal and physical abuse these students sometimes experience. "Nationwide, students are forming these groups in part to combat bullying and harassment of LGBT students and to promote understanding and respect in the school community," he wrote. "By encouraging dialogue and providing supportive resources, these groups can help make schools safe and affirming environments for everyone. But in spite of the positive effect these groups can have in schools, some such groups have been unlawfully excluded from school grounds, prevented from forming, or denied access to school resources." Although these groups have been around for more than 20 years, students attempting to create gay-straight alliances still face many hurdles. In another recent show of support for gay students, the Education Department recently hosted its first Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth Summit along with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed results of a survey that found students who are gay or bisexual are more likely than heterosexual students to smoke, drink alcohol, use drugs, and take other risks. "This report should be a wake-up call for families, schools, and communities that we need to do a much better job of supporting these young people. Any effort to promote adolescent health and safety must take into account the additional stressors these youth experience because of their sexual orientation, such as stigma, discrimination, and victimization," said Howell Wechsler, director of the CDC's division of adolescent and school health, in a statement last week. "We are very concerned that these students face such dramatic disparities for so many different health risks."

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/06/14/36gaystraight.h30.html

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Cyber bullying can start with a miscue, study says
When people spoke face to face or on landlines, there was less misunderstanding—but "online, all you're left with is your interpretation of that text," said researcher Sameer Hinduja. Mixing the teenage mind, text messaging, and social media can be a recipe for dangerous miscues in the communication age, experts say. A study released this month and co-written by a Florida Atlantic University professor casts new light on the dangers of cyber bullying among teenagers—and how a simple text message or Facebook post taken out of context can lead to violence. The study looks at the phenomenon of "electronic dating violence," a growing subset of cyber bullying. As in any generation, teenagers use relationships as status symbols, experts say. But with text messages and social media, relationships are more about keeping tabs and less about giving space, said FAU professor Sameer Hinduja, co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center. A generation ago, when people spoke face to face or on landlines, there was less misunderstanding, he said. "Online, all you're left with is your interpretation of that text," Hinduja said. "Are they flirting? Is he cheating?" A generation ago, there also was a parental buffer, he said. A parent might have picked up the house phone and not liked someone calling a child all the time. But now, a teen sends out an average of 3,000 text messages a month, said Hinduja, who teaches criminology at FAU's Jupiter campus. Hinduja co-wrote the study with Justin Patchin, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. It's available online here. The study revealed that 85 percent of teenage boys and 92 percent of girls engage in

psychological aggression with their dating partner. It also showed that 24 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls physically attack their partner. Some of this violence is spawned by, or goes hand in hand with, the electronic interactions that teens have with each other. "Privacy violations can occur as perpetrators check up on, monitor, and even stalk their partners [online]," the study said. "There have also been incidents where aggressors utilize textual, audio, picture, or video content stored on their cell phones or computers to blackmail, extort, or otherwise manipulate their partner into saying or doing something against their will." "I call it an electronic leash," said Dr. Jill Murray, a psychologist with the U.S. Department of Education. "I've had girls come into my office with cell phone bills showing 9,000 text messages and calls in a month. This is all hours of the day and night. And it's threatening: 'Hi. How are you? Where are you? Who are you with? Who are you talking to?'" The motivations for teenage dating violence include anger and a need to exert power, the paper notes—and both of these "can be vividly demonstrated through the use of communications technologies. An adolescent can quickly send a scathing or harassing eMail or instant message to a girlfriend or boyfriend … without taking the time to calm down and react rationally to a feeling or situation." http://www.eschoolnews.com/2011/06/08/cyber-bullying-can-start-with-a-miscue-study-says