

SUBMISSION No. 146

Hello,

I placed the rest of this email in the extra comments section of your survey, but I realise that that survey is primarily just to get stats and not much time will be spent going through long polemics written in boxes designed for short two sentence comments. I thought my comments might be better suited to this email, which was provided at the survey's conclusion.

Cyberbullying is not the problem, bullying is the problem. Cyberbullying is an extremely small part of a far greater whole, if someone is being cyberbullied I can guarantee you that they're being bullied in the traditional sense of the word. Everyone over the age of twenty five seems to forget that bullying still exists in the real world, and now assume it all takes place online. This could not be more wrong.

I have not been a victim of bullying since I moved to my current school in year nine (three and-a-bit years ago), but in years seven and eight I got bullied a lot. A group of kids would come up to me and hurl abuse at me, sometimes they got violent. All this time talk of "cyberbullying" was on the rise, and the problems of us regular victims got left behind. I was cyberbullied to an extent, sure, but this was not what concerned me. I did not dread coming home to an email from someone who hated me, I dreaded the prospect of going to school with someone who hated me and having those written words be spat at me before getting my jumper ripped off me and being put into some new and innovative choke hold.

In an email there's always a delete button, in an instant message there's always a block button, in a five on one fight behind the school building there's no such thing. Please, put the focus back on preventing bullying as a whole, not looking through a microscope at the issue and running around condemning all online interaction which is what it feels like is often being done.

Please, I realise this program is designed specifically to help the youth achieve a safe online experience, but I haven't seen a single initiative (government or otherwise) to stop schoolyard bullying since mid primary school (9 years ago). In early high school there were no such things, and that's where my problems started. What's the use of a safe online experience if offline experiences are riddled with torment?

Again, sorry, I realise that this not what the current initiative was created for.

Sincerely,
Vincent