

Winchester, Elizabeth. "High-Tech Bullies." *Time for Kids*. Time for Kids Online Magazine. Web. 3 Mar. 2011. <www.timeforkids.com>.

High-Tech Bullies by Elizabeth Winchester

1 There was a time when bullies used spoken words and fists to hurt others on playgrounds and around school. Today, the bully battles have moved to a new frontier--cyberspace. Using e-mail, instant messages, websites and cell phones, cyberbullies deliberately harm or threaten others. With their identities hidden behind computer screens, cyberbullies can be harder to catch, and sometimes even bolder, than their playground predecessors.

2 As more and more kids use e-mail and text messages to communicate, experts agree that incidents of cyberbullying, also called e-bullying, are on the rise. Two years ago, criminal-justice professors Justin Patchin and Sameer Hinduja surveyed 1,500 kids ages 10 to 17. They report that about one-third of the kids claimed to have been cyberbullied. The most common form is instant messaging. Mean messages in chat rooms and e-mail and on websites were close behind. Girls were twice as likely as boys to be the victims of attacks.

3 No matter how it's done, bullying is damaging. It can cause victims and bullies to feel badly about themselves among other problems. Experts say that as many as one in 10 children is bullied at school. Each day, about 160,000 U.S. students miss school because they are afraid of being harassed. Preventing bullying is an important issue for kids, parents and teachers. Last week, almost 800 people from 42 states and eight countries attended an International Bullying Prevention Association meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana. They discussed the latest research and ways to prevent aggressive behavior in schools.

4 In the U.S., at least 39 states have laws that address bullying in schools and a variety of prevention programs are available. Some of these laws require school districts to ban cyberbullying and punish students who do it. But cracking down on cyberbullying is challenging. "The majority is happening outside of schools," says Nancy Willard, the director of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use. Some officials question whether schools can legally punish students for those actions.

5 Finding out the identity of the bully and getting kids to report a problem pose additional problems. "It is difficult for someone who is being cyberbullied to know who is doing it, because identities can often be hidden or false," Limber says.

6 Homes, schools, and government must work together to deal with this new threat to students. But for a program to work best, "youth must be a part of the solution," says Stephanie Bryn, head of the Stop Bullying Now! Campaign.

7 Kids are tackling the issue together at Rosa Parks Middle School in Olney, Maryland. Through a program called You Have the Power!, high school students are working with 20 Rosa Parks students to spread anti-bullying messages. "When I see someone being bullied, I sometimes don't know what to do," admits middle schooler Haley Nachlas. "I feel this program will give me answers."