Book Review

Bullying beyond the schoolyard: Preventing and responding to cyberbullying

Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin
Corwin Press, *Thousand Oaks*, *CA, 2009, 254pp.*, *$39.95, ISBN*: *978-1412966894*

With the growth of technology and its emerging role in crime and victimization, the field of criminology has already begun to experience numerous changes since the beginning of the twenty-first century. The birth of cybercrime victimization as both a social problem and an interest of academic researchers has led to a plethora of journal articles, books and research reports. In their book *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*, Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin focus on one of the more quickly emerging topics in cybercrime victimization – cyberbullying. As defined by the authors, cyberbullying is 'willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices' (p. 5). As the result of several extreme cases that have occurred since 2005, cyberbullying has become a popular issue that is frequently discussed by the mainstream media. To that end, Hinduja and Patchin's work is one that is both timely and important.

Hinduja and Patchin's book is divided into seven chapters, with a series of reader resources located after Chapter 7. With the first chapter, the authors provide a very basic overview of cyberbullying. The chapter begins with a fictional example of a cyberbullying incident between two teenage girls. They then provide a definition of cyberbullying and explain how they arrived at that definition. They go on to discuss the growing role of technology in the lives of teenagers and its impact on the day-to-day activities. Chapter 1 concludes with a discussion of the prevalence and consequences of traditional bullying. Chapter 2 includes a more in-depth analysis of cyberbullying, beginning with a description of issues that are specific to cyberbullying. The authors conclude the chapter with a detailed discussion of some of the common methods and types of cyberbullying.

With Chapter 3, the authors describe the prevalence and consequences of cyberbullying. For this discussion, Hinduja and Patchin rely heavily on their own cyberbullying research. In addition to discussing the prevalence of cyberbullying, the authors also go into detail on the characteristics of both cyberbullying offenders and victims, including gender, race, victim–offender relationship and so on. Chapter 4 focuses specifically on online social networking websites. The authors provide in-depth information about the type of information individuals post on social networking sites and how the sites have been used by cyberbullies. The authors conclude the chapter by providing suggestions for how individuals can more safely use social networking sites. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the legal aspects of cyberbullying. The authors focus specifically on the ability of schools and administrators to legally intervene in cases of cyberbullying and harassment. As noted by the authors,

legislation regarding cybercrime victimization is one area that will require much more attention in the future.

As one of the key chapters in the book, Chapter 6 focuses on preventing cyberbullying. Throughout the chapter, Hinduja and Patchin provide suggestions for ways in which schools and teachers can work to prevent cyberbullying, including establishing rules of Internet use at school and providing students with peer mentors. The chapter also includes a discussion of preventative measures that can be taken by parents, including methods they can use to determine if their children are or have been cyberbullying victims. The final chapter discusses possible responses to cyberbullying. The authors spend some time describing ways in which school officials and/or parents can identify cyberbullying offenders and victims. They then discuss methods of responding to cyberbullying, including formal and informal discipline. The chapter concludes with a summary of the possible legal responses to cyberbullying.

The book concludes with a section containing resources for school administrators, teachers and parents. These resources include additional material on cyberbullying, such as websites that can be used to gather more information. There are also several items that can be used in the classroom to educate students about the dangers of cyberbullying. Finally, there are a series of materials that can be used by school administrators or other officials to record and track incidents of cyberbullying.

Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: *Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying* provides a wide range of information on cyberbullying, in a manner that is both useful and easy to comprehend. However, the main contribution of the book is the final two chapters and the resources provided at the end. Each of these sections provides detailed information about how to identify, respond to and/or prevent cyberbullying. This information could be very useful for school administrators, teachers and even parents who are attempting to protect teenagers and children from the harms of cyberbullying. Further, the information could be used to guide administrators and teachers in how they handle cases of cyberbullying, or as classroom materials to help teach students about the dangers of cyberbullying. And, it is in such a setting that this book would be most beneficial for crime prevention.

Although *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard*: *Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying* does have many positive characteristics, it is not without faults. First and foremost, this book suffers from the same problem that many other books and journal articles examining cybercrime victimization must deal with, which is that the material quickly becomes outdated. Given the speed with which technology advances, by the time material is published, there is already something new. For example, the authors spend much time describing the social networking site *MySpace*, which they state is the most popular of the social networking sites. However, though it has only been 2 years since the book was published, *MySpace* is now all but forgotten, as other sites have come to dominate the market. Further, much of the subject matter and intended audience of the book is teenagers and those who directly interact with teenagers. To that end, although useful as an aid for junior high or high school administrators and teachers, the simplistic nature of the information provided by the book is not that useful for academic researchers.

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