Glossary
Social Media, Cyberbullying, & Online Safety Terms To Know

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.

In our Glossary below, we define the terms you need to know in the realm of social media, cyberbullying, and online safety, so that you are increasingly informed about technological jargon as you work with the youth under your care.

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP): A policy that schools and other organizations create to define the responsibilities and appropriate behaviors of computer and network users.

Algorithm: A promotion strategy that is determined through your interactions with other posts in order to decide the posts to place at the beginning of your news feed.

Among Us: A murder mystery online game where you work with other players (Crewmates) to fix a spaceship while trying to determine who the killers (Impostors) are.

Android: Operating system created by Google. Android powers smartphones and tablets.

Anonymizer: An intermediary website that hides or disguises the IP address associated with the Internet user. Generally, these sites allow a person to engage in various Internet activities without leaving an easily traceable digital footprint.

App: Abbreviation for "application," it is a piece of software, primarily referring to those used on smartphones, tablets, and other touch-based devices.

Archive: This is a feature primarily on Instagram where users can access previous stories after 24 hours when they disappear from their followers' home page. Snapchat has a feature similar to an archive where users can save their stories before or after posting to their friends. The media will then save to their Snapchat "memories" which are always available for a user to look back on.

Ask.fm (app): An app (and website) where users can ask and answer others' questions with the option of doing so anonymously.

Avatar: A virtual image that users create to look like them. Avatars are available on Facebook which allows users to customize their avatar's wardrobe, facial features, and background. Users can then send and post their Avatar as a sticker to friends. Snapchat has a similar feature like this called Bitmoji.

Bash Board: An online bulletin board on which individuals can post anything they want. Often, posts are malicious and hateful statements directed against another person.

Bio: A short description of a person on their social media platform. Often, a "Bio" will include relevant information about a person's interests or preferences. It also sometimes includes personal information such as school name, where they are from, the initials or social media handle of their boyfriend/girlfriend, their pronouns, etc. In addi-

tion, a relevant link may be present too in order to provide additional details to interested parties.

Blocking: The denial of access to particular parts of the Internet. Usually, a message will be shown on screen to say that access has been denied. For example, Facebook users can block other users from sending them messages or seeing their posts.

Blog: Interactive Web journal or diary, the contents of which are posted online where they are viewable by some or all individuals. The act of updating a blog is called "blogging." A person who keeps a blog is referred to as a "blogger." The term was created by combining "web" and "log."

Bullicide: Suicide that results directly or indirectly from bullying victimization. The relationship between bullying and suicide is complex and for that and other reasons, many researchers have concerns with the utilization of this term.

Bullying: Repeated and deliberate harassment directed by one in a position of power toward one or more. Can involve physical threats or behaviors, including assault, or indirect and subtle forms of aggression, including gossip and rumor spreading. The term bullying is usually reserved for young people and most often refers to these behaviors as they occur at or near school.

Canceled: When individuals are collectively and very publicly shamed online for disappointing others with their opinions or actions. This often leads to major damage to the canceled person's reputation when considering the power of vocal groups on social media committed to a cause.

Caption: A short blurb or sentence that describes the user's photo or video usually to receive higher engagement on posts.

Catfishing: In the online world, catfishing refers to the practice of setting up a fictitious online profile, most often for the purpose of luring another into a fraudulent romantic relationship.

CD9: Used when youth want to convey to others that they can't talk openly because parents, teachers, or other adults are nearby. Short for "Code 9."

Challenge: Primarily introduced from TikTok, this term largely refers to a TikTok user recording themselves doing a particular challenge that has gone viral due to popularity. These can include dancing, posing a particular way, using an object/product, using a filter, etc. A famous TikTok challenge includes *The Cereal Challenge* where a user would

lie down on their back while a friend/family member pours cereal and milk in their mouth as the user attempts to swallow the contents, although most challengers spitted up the contents altogether. Another big TikTok challenge was the *Pee Your Pants Challenge* which, as the name implies, is when a user literally pees on camera. Another big TikTok challenge was the *DIY Vampire Fangs Challenge* where users who dressed up like vampires for Halloween superglued fake fangs to their teeth.

Chat: An online real-time conversation, typically carried out by people who use nicknames instead of their real names. A person can continually read messages from others in the "chat room" and then type and send a message reply.

Chat Room: A virtual online room where groups of people send and receive messages on one screen. Popular chat rooms can have hundreds of people all communicating at the same time. Typed messages appear instantly as real-time conversation. All of the people in the room are listed on the side of the screen with their screen names.

Cheesing: In gaming, this means that a player is reducing an opponent's health by forcing them to respond to moves that are difficult or impossible to block. On social media, this involves the juvenile challenge of sticking cheese on cars as an act of vandalism. In photos, it means the subject is grinning widely and without any embarrassment or reservation.

Cheugy: A term used on social media to describe users who appear to be out-of-date with current trends such as fashion, captions (including hashtags), technology, foods, etc.

Clubhouse: an audio-based social app where individuals can gather and connect in channels to discuss certain topics on a regular or ad-hoc basis. While each person is represented by an icon-based avatar but shares only their voice with others.

Connections: Used on LinkedIn to refer to the number of people following a user.

Cookie: A file on a computer or other electronic device that records user information when visiting a website. Cookies are often used to identify the websites that the device has visited, save login information and customization preferences, and enable the presentation of more personalized information or content.

Cuffed: Tied down in a committed relationship. Related to "cuffing szn" which is the season of the year when individuals are looking for new romantic relationships.

Cyberbullicide: Suicide resulting directly or indirectly from cyberbullying victimization. The relationship between cyberbullying and suicide is complex and for that and other reasons, many researchers have concerns with the utilization of this term.

Cyberbullying: Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.

Cyberspace: The electronic "universe" created by computer networks in which individuals interact.

Cyberstalking: Repeated harassment using electronic devices and networked technology that includes threats of harm, or that is highly intimidating and intrusive upon one's personal privacy.

Cyberthreats: Electronic material that either generally or specifically raises concerns that the creator may intend to inflict harm or violence to others, or to himself or herself.

Dashboarding: When online users (usually on gaming consoles) rapidly switch from online in-game play to the home screen for their console or other devices. Gamers do this when they are losing badly, and don't want the game to register their demise, or lack of kills, or another metric that demonstrates poor performance.

Decoy Apps: Apps used to store private information, such as photos, videos, voice recordings, or texts. They look like everyday apps such as a calculator so offer a secure way to hide certain information. They also are called vault, secret, or ghost apps. A teen may use this on their phone to secretly store sexual pictures and videos that they don't want their parents to see.

Diabolical (Devious) Lick: A social media trend where students post videos of themselves perceivably or actually stealing or destroying property from their schools.

Digital evidence: Tangible signs, proof, information, or data that demonstrate some behavior. This could be a screenshot, a record of Internet activity, a saved piece of content, etc.

Digital Footprint: Evidence of a person's use of the Internet, typically focusing on dates and times of specific websites visited. This includes anything that can be linked to a user's existence, presence, or identity. See also, "cookie."

Digital Immigrant: A person who has not grown up with digital technology, such as smartphones, social media, and the Internet, but has adopted it later. Many adults are referred to as digital immigrants, because they have known a time when these technologies didn't exist.

Digital Native: A person who has grown up with digital technology, such as smart phones, social media, and the Internet. Many adolescents or young adults would be classified as digital natives, because they have not known a time without these technologies.

Direct Message (DM): A way to communicate privately on social media websites that include an inbox of chat messages from followers and requests from strangers who want to send you a private message. Some applications where you can DM others include Instagram, Twitter, Facebook Messenger, and LinkedIn.

Discord (app): Discord is an app and website that allows individuals who share an interest (e.g., a specific video game, hobby, or topic) to communicate via video, voice, text chat, and screen sharing. You can even integrate it with your gaming console and join others' servers, set up your own, and create channels/categories. While mostly used for gaming, it has communities for tons of other uses such as Netflix shows, anime, schoolwork, dance, books, and more.

Discover: An exclusive section of Snapchat that allows users to browse through news publishers, influencers, and other brands that are created in story format. Users are able to subscribe to content they enjoy most and that content will appear at the top of their Discover section. Some examples of popular Discover content include NBC Stay Tuned, Daily Mail, Seen Stories, and Transformed.

Double Tap: Used to describe a user liking another user's content only on TikTok, Instagram, and more recently, Twitter.

Duet: When a TikTok user posts a video that includes their video and another user's video content side by side. Often, the TikTok user who decides to do the duet will be narrating what's going on in the other video or will be simultaneously doing the same actions.

E-mail: Electronic mail. Allows Internet users to send and receive electronic messages to and from other Internet users.

Engagement: Any activity that a social media user does towards your content that generates a notification to you. This can include liking or reacting to a post, commenting, saving, or posting on a timeline.

Fabotage: Slang for 'Facebook Sabotage' and used to describe hijacking, and meddling with, someone's Facebook account while it is unattended.

Facebook (app): The most popular social media app with over 3 billion members. Users can create personal "profiles" to represent themselves, listing interests and posting photos and communicating with others through private or public posts and messages. They can also join groups about common interests, play games with friends, buy and sell goods and services, run a business, plan events, and more.

Fan: A Facebook user that likes a business page on Facebook.

Feed: Sometimes referred to as a "news feed," a feed is the main tab on social media where users scroll to interact with other media content and like/react to a post. This is also where users will see advertisements displayed while scrolling.

Filtering: The act of restricting access to certain websites or social media platforms. For example, a filter might compare the text on a web page against a list of forbidden words. If a match is found, that web page may be blocked or reported through a monitoring process. Generally speaking, a filter allows or denies access based on previously specified rules.

Finsta: combining the words Fake and Instagram, a finsta is a secondary Instagram account which is usually meant for a smaller, private audience, and allows the user to share pictures and videos in an unfiltered and more natural way without having to make each shot perfect or socially acceptable.

Firewall: Hardware or software that restricts and regulates incoming and outgoing data to or from computer systems. Firewalls allow or disallow access to certain websites or social media platforms.

Flaming: Sending angry, rude, or obscene messages directed at a person or persons privately or an online group. A "flamewar" erupts when "flames" are sent back and forth between individuals repeatedly.

Following: The act of requesting another person to connect with your online social network (on Twitter, Instagram and similar sites).

Friending: The act of requesting another person to connect with your online social network (on Facebook).

FYP: "For You Page" is TikTok's home screen and also refers to the feed you see that displays a curated assortment of videos that the app's algorithms believe you will like. Users typically want their TikToks to be featured on the FYP because it increases the chances it will go viral.

Gallery: This is Instagram's feature of being able to upload up to ten photos/videos in one post.

Gamergate: Controversy involving issues of sexism and progressivism in video game culture, stemming from a harassment campaign conducted primarily through the use of Twitter (and other platforms).

Gaming: Participation in video (often online) games, which involve individuals adopting roles of fictional characters, thereby directing the outcome.

Gaming Console: A device designed for users to run video games on a television. Popular consoles include the Sony PlayStation, Microsoft Xbox, and Nintendo Wii.

Geolocation: The process or technique of identifying the geographical location of a person or device by means of digital information processed via the Internet.

Geotagging: The process of adding geographical information to various pieces of digital content in the form of metadata. The data usually consists of coordinates like latitude and longitude, but may even include bearing, altitude, distance and place names. Geotagging is most commonly used for photos and videos and can help people get a lot of specific information about where the shot was taken, or the exact location of a friend who logged on to make a post.

GG: In video game parlance, it means "good game" to convey appreciation to someone else for playing with you.

Ghosting: The act of ignoring someone who has messaged or otherwise reached out to you; disappearing from any interactions with them. Often refers to the context of romantic relationships and/or dating apps.

Griefing: When a player in an online game deliberately irritates and harasses other players within the game.

Grindr: The world's largest online platform for gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people.

Grooming: Some people use online mediums across the Internet to connect with children so that they can exploit them or even blackmail them for sexual purposes. Befriending a child in this way is called grooming.

GroupMe (app): A group chat app that allows you to create groups (such as family, relatives, friends, team members, whatever you want) and send text, memes, hyperlinks, images, and videos. It works on every smartphone and even on the Web, and it allows you to quickly send messages without having to compile a list of addressees.

Hacking: The act of circumventing security and breaking into an authorized location (a network, computer, file, etc.), usually with malicious intent.

Handle: A username on social media that is accommodated with the @ symbol in order to tag a friend, organization, or other page on social media posts.

Happy Slapping: An extreme form of bullying where physical assaults are recorded on electronic devices like phones, and then sent to others or posted online. This term is more commonly used in the United Kingdom.

Harassment: Unsolicited words or actions intended to annoy, alarm, or abuse another individual. Often based on a protected status (e.g., sex, race, disability, or sexual orientation).

Harm: Physical, psychological, or emotional injury to someone.

Hashtag: A descriptor or label preceded by the pound (#) sign that helps others easily find content related to that word or phrase. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, for example, allow users to look up and click through hashtags to find other users' content that are also listed (tagged) with that hashtag.

Hate raids: A phenomena on Twitch where abusive streamers and bots flood a creator's channel with hateful messages. Targets have typically been Black and LGBTQ+ streamers.

Highlights: This feature is used on Instagram which allows users to keep their 24-hour stories visible to followers on their profile page. Highlights appear under an Instagram user's bio in the shape of circles like a regular story will appear. Users can personalize their highlights with pictures, words, and emojis in order to organize stories the user wants to keep visible.

Houseparty (app): A video chat app (defunct as of October 2021) that gained popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. You were able to add friends based on the phone numbers stored in your contacts list, or search for their usernames. Once you open the app, you could join "rooms" (chats) with other friends who were currently using the app.

IYKYK: "If you know, you know."

Influencer: An individual who can sway an audience through a digital platform. This term is often used in relation to social media marketing, promotion, and other related efforts.

Instagram (app): An app where users can apply filters to photos and videos before posting them for others to like and comment on. Users can also share their content on other social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Instant Messaging: The act of real-time messages sent and received between two or more people over a network such as the Internet. This can occur through software such as WeChat, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Viber, and Facebook Messenger.

Internet: A worldwide network of computers communicating with each other via phone lines, satellite links, wireless networks, and cable systems.

iOS: Operating system created by Apple Inc. iOS powers iPods, iPhones, iPads, and Apple TVs.

IP Address: "Internet Protocol" address. A unique address assigned to a computing device that allows it to send and receive data with other computing devices that have their own unique addresses.

IRC: "Internet Relay Chat." A network over which real-time conversations take place among two or more people in a "channel" devoted to a specific area of interest. See also "chat" or "chat room."

ISP: "Internet Service Provider." The company that provides an Internet connection to individuals or companies. ISPs can help with identifying an individual who posts or sends harassing or threatening words.

Kik (app): A communications app which facilitates cross platform (iOS and Android) instant messaging across phones or tablets in an attractive interface. Users can send links, pictures, videos, group messages, etc.

Meme: A virally transmitted cultural symbol or social idea. Most modern memes are captioned photos or videos that are intended to be funny, often to publicly ridicule human behavior. Others are popular for depicting traits or experiences that many others can totally relate to.

MMORPG: Acronym that stands for: "Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game." A game in which large numbers of individuals from various locations connect and interact with each other in a virtual world online.

Monitoring: The recording and reporting of online activity, usually through software, which may log a history of all Internet use, or just of inappropriate use.

Mutuals: When two individuals friend or follow each other on social media.

Netiquette: "Network etiquette." The unofficial rules of accepted, proper online social conduct.

Network: Two or more computers connected so that they can communicate with each other.

Newbie: Someone who is new to, and inexperienced with, an Internet activity or technology. Also referred to as a newb, n00b, nob, noob, or nub.

Offender: The one who instigates online social cruelty. Also known as the "aggressor."

OnlyFans: A subscription-based online platform that allows creators to sell their video streams and content. It originally gained notoriety during the COVID-19 pandemic and is/was used by those in the pornography industry, models, escorts, and others to supplement their income.

Periscope: An application (owned by Twitter) that allowed users to broadcast live streaming video. It was shuttered as of October 2020.

Pharming: Pronounced 'farming', this is a method by which scammers try to get personal/private information from users by directing them to false, bogus, – or 'spoof' – websites which look legitimate in their web browser.

Phishing: A technique used to gain personal information, usually by means of fraudulent e-mails.

Photoshopping: The process of altering digital images so that the main subject is placed in compromising or embarrassing situations. For example, a person might photoshop a picture to append an animal's face to a human's body (or vice versa), or something much worse.

Pinned Post: This is a way for users to keep their most important pieces of media at the top of their profile page so that it's the first thing followers see when tapping on their username.

Pinterest (app): Is an online pinboard and visual discovery engine for finding ideas like recipes, home and style inspiration, and more. Users create, share, and link to boards and "pins" of visual content (largely pictures, memes, and related creations) from across the Web.

Profile: When considered in the context of online social networking, this is a user-customized page that represents that person. Here, a person's background, interests, and friends are listed to reflect who that person is or how that person would like to be seen. Pictures, biographical and contact information, and other interesting facts about the user are often included as well.

Proxy: Software or a website that allows one's Internet connection to be routed or tunneled through a different connection or site. If a user's computer is blocked from accessing certain websites or programs, the user could employ a proxy to redirect the connection to that site or program. For example, if a software filter prohibits a user from directly visiting TikTok, a proxy website could be used to circumvent the filter and provide access.

Raiding: On Twitch, creators at the conclusion of their own stream send their audience of streamers to a friend's or colleague's channel to boost their viewership.

Rage quitting: A condition in which gamers, through steady provoking, simply cannot take being killed (cheaply or otherwise) anymore and leave an online game mid-match.

Reactions: Introduced by Facebook, reactions allow users to react to a piece of media in order to closely identify how they feel about the post as opposed to just "liking" the media. Reactions include like, love, funny, care, angry, sad, and surprise.

Reel: Created by Instagram, Reels allow a user to post short videos on their profile. If a user creates a Reel, another tab will appear on the user's profile. Reels are similar to TikTok videos and Facebook has a similar feature too called the "Watch" tab that allows users to scroll through videos.

Revenge Porn: Sometimes known as nonconsensual porn – defined as the act of distributing intimate photography through different means without the individual's consent.

Saved: An Instagram and TikTok feature within the app that allows users to go back to posts they were previously looking at/interested in. Instagram and TikTok create a private feed of saved posts that are only available to you.

School Climate: The quality, character, social atmosphere, and 'feel' of the school, mostly exhibited by patterns of behavior and interactions among and between students and school personnel. Improving school climate reduces both offline and online student interactions.

Screenshot: An image that is captured of what is shown on a phone, tablet, or computer screen.

Secret: An app that gives users the ability to share what they are thinking and feeling with friends from their phone's contact list, while remaining anonymous.

Sexting: The sending or receiving of sexually explicit or sexually suggestive images or video via phone or the Internet.

Sextortion: Threats to expose a sexual image in order to make a person do something or for other reasons, such as revenge or humiliation.

Shoulder Surfing: Peering over the shoulder of someone to see the contents on that person's computer, tablet, or phone screen.

Skype (app): A popular application that enables users to set up profiles, make free phone calls, text chat, and video chat through their computer or mobile device from any point around the world.

SMS: Acronym that stands for: "Short Message Service." A communications protocol that allows short (160 characters or less) text messages over cell phones.

Snapchat (app): Very popular with youth and young adults, users of this app share text messages, pictures, and videos with friends from their contact list, which generally can be viewed for a period of between 1 to 10 seconds (unless set to "infinity") before disappearing. S

Snapchat Premium (or Premium Snapchat): This expression simply means that the user of the account is willing to share with you snaps that are sexual in nature in return for payment. These users often share their Cash App or Venmo details so you can directly send them money, and they will "subscribe" you to their informal service of sending you their nudes.

Snapchat Filters: When users of Snapchat are in particular places, specialized "filters" are available to superimpose onto their "Snap," providing fun, artsy backgrounds, pictures, and word art highlighting that location.

Spaces: A new Twitter feature that allows users to create a live audio conversation. Though anyone can join your Space to listen, only the host and up to ten Twitter users the host selects are able to talk during the Space.

Stitch: This refers to a TikTok user using part of a clip from another user in their own, new video – thereby "stitching" them together.

Story: Initially started on Snapchat and later followed by Instagram and Facebook, this piece of content is posted by users and typically disappears within 24 hours.

Swipe Up: When a social media user attaches a link to their Snapchat, Instagram, and/or Facebook stories encouraging followers to visit the attached link. This term can also be used if the social media user posts a question to their story encouraging responses from followers.

Timeline: Often referenced on Facebook and referred to as your profile, a timeline is your personal social media page that displays a list of all written and media-related content that you have shared on social media to your friends/followers.

Trend: when a particular topic, item, media, clothing, hashtag, etc. becomes of particular interest to social media users for a short amount of time

Vine (app): A video app owned by Twitter which allowed users to capture moments in six seconds and share them with others. It was officially discontinued in April 2019.

Viral: When an online piece of media (i.e., worded post, video, picture) becomes rapidly available to social media users across the World in a short amount of time.

VoIP: Acronym that stands for: "Voice over Internet Protocol." The transmission of voice over an Internet connection. Allows users to make phone calls using the Internet instead of a phone line.

Web: Short for "World Wide Web" and representing the sites and pages linked together via the Internet.

Webcast: A live or pre-recorded audio and/or video session that uses the Internet to broadcast.

Webcrastinate: To waste time by browsing around the world wide web instead of getting on with the things one should be doing.

Webdrawls: The act or process of going without the use of the Internet which one has become addicted.

WhatsApp (app): A cross platform messaging application that allows users to send texts, pictures, videos, links, user locations, documents, and more. It allows for connections based on one's phone number. It has over 2 billion monthly active users.

Whisper (app): An app that allows users to share their secrets anonymously with other users using text and images. Individuals input their secret (or another self-disclosing message) into the app, select a relevant picture as a background, and then post it for others to like, comment on, and share with others.

Wireless: Communications in which electromagnetic waves carry a signal through space rather than along a wire. Refers primarily to wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi) available in an increasing number of places.

Wireless Device: Electronic devices that can access the Internet without being physically attached by a data cable.

YouTube (app): is a wildly popular video sharing app and site owned by Google where registered users can upload and share videos with anyone able to access the site. It has over 2.5 billion average monthly users watching over one billion hours of videos every day.

CYBERBULLYING
RESEARCH CENTER