

# Cyberstalking in the Modern Era

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## Abstract

Cyber, cyberspace, and cyber connection implicate each other in the context because of advanced technology in the modern era. Consequence makes something happen as cyberstalking which can make anyone quickly become the offender as well as victims. Women's & Gender Center (2021) mentions that cyberstalking refers to the use of the Internet or other telecommunication technologies to harass or stalk another person. Gordon (2021) and University Module Series: Cyber Crime (2020) mention about cyberstalking examples that can define in positive and negative trend.

Impact of cyberstalking is presented by evidence of mental state and property. Cyberstalking should be taken seriously by the legal authorities and victim assistance professionals. This article shows Figure 1: Cyberstalking Model: The Relationship of Cyber, Cyber Connections, Cybercrimes, Cyberstalking and Cyberstalking Laws. Prevalence of negative impact and cybercrimes bring on the victims' well-being, cyberstalking and relevant laws challenge for enforcement

**Keywords:** Cyberstalking / Modern Era

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## Introduction

The term cyber is commonly used to describe of, relating to, or involving computers or computer networks and connected with electronic communication networks, especially the Internet as cybernetics (Merriam-Webster, 2021; Oxford Dictionary, 2021). Cybernetics is shown by the science of communications and automatic control systems in both machines and living things.

Mbanaso and Dandaura (2015) mention about cyberspace is driven by information systems and the Internet transforming. The environment is in extraordinary ways by which people connect, interact and collaborate with one another. They also point that more and more cybercitizens globally will ultimately rely on the effective functioning of the Internet to survive and prosper with unremitting upsurge. An example of cyberspace is the home of Google, Yahoo and Facebook.

Oluga et. al., (2014) describe that the cyberspace and cyber activities which have some similitude with those of the physical world and which tend to be more convenient and with less constraint as they can be done usually anywhere there are required facilities and cyber connection as cyber commerce, cyber learning, cyber socialization, cyber gaming, cyber entertainment, cyber journalism, cyber broadcasting, cyber advertising, cyber politics, cyber tourism, cyber medicine, cyber governance, cyber evangelism and cyber mobilization. Nevertheless, they strongly focus on various cybercrimes presently constituting threats like cyber fraud, cyber gambling, cyber (child) pornography, cyber prostitution, cyber impersonation, cyber blackmail/extortion, cyber harassment, cyber defamation, cyber malware, cyber illicit business/transaction, cyberjacking, cyber piracy/copyright infringement, cyber denial of service, cyber spoofing, cyber spying and espionage, cyber terrorism, cyber warfare and cyber murder.

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## Cyberstalking

Under the context of cybercrimes, cyberstalking is the first beginning. Women's & Gender Center (2021) mentions that cyberstalking refers to the use of the Internet or other telecommunication technologies to harass or stalk another person. The communications are often filled with inappropriate, and sometimes

disturbing, content which make victim to cease all contacts.

University Module Series: Cyber Crime (2020) describes that cyberstalking involves behaviours and actions over a period of time that are intended to intimidate, alarm, frighten, or harass the victim and/or the victim's family, partner, and friends. The spyware, "Stalkerware," can run on to collect and relay all a victim's actions on computer, smartphone or other Internet-enabled digital device as emails and text messages sent and received, to photographs taken and keystrokes, to use malware on smartphones to remotely switch on cameras and microphones, to track the location of users and app usage, and intercept calls.

Begotti & Maran (2019) share the results of their research, "Characteristics of cyberstalking behavior, consequences, and coping strategies: A cross-sectional study in a sample of Italian university students" that about half of the participants experienced at least one incident of cyberstalking and more than half experienced more than one type of cyberstalking. Victims suffered from depression more than those who had never experienced. Implications for health care professionals, police officers, and government are their suggestion.

Cyberstalking is a growing problem, and it reflects who engage in this behavior use a variety of tactics and techniques to harass, humiliate, intimidate, and control their victims. Sometimes, after all the stalking is done on Facebook, they get all the information and are able to go to the house of the victims they're stalking. Anyhow, there are many examples of things people who cyberstalk might do in different levels.

### **Examples of Cyberstalking**

Gordon (2021) and University Module Series: Cyber Crime (2020) mention cyberstalker who engage in this behavior use a variety of tactics and techniques to harass, humiliate, intimidate, and control their targets. Even though, in this scenario there is positive trend but not much. The below are some examples.

#### **1. Trend to be Positive**

- 1.1 Follow the target online by joining the same groups and forums
- 1.2 Comment on or like everything the target posts online
- 1.3 Etc.

#### **2. Trend to be Negative**

- 2.1 Call and/or text by leaving voicemails, and sending follower and friend requests

- 2.2 Post on the online sites, pages, and social media accounts;
- 2.3 Post rude, offensive, or suggestive comments online
- 2.4 Flood inbox with emails
- 2.5 Send threatening, controlling, or lewd messages or emails to the target
- 2.6 Use technology to threaten or blackmail the target
- 2.7 Create fake accounts to follow the target on social media
- 2.8 Message the target repeatedly
- 2.9 Hack into or hijack the target's online accounts
- 2.10 Create fake posts designed to shame the victim
- 2.11 Hack into the target's camera on their laptop or smartphone as a way to secretly record them
- 2.12 Continue the harassing behavior even after being asked to stop
- 2.13 Etc.

Cyberstalking is a collection of behaviors where one or more persons use information technology as email, social networking, or websites. With the ubiquity of Internet-enabled devices and social media, cyberstalking is increasingly recognized as a serious and common crime.

#### Impact of Cyberstalking

The Times of India (Sept. 18, 2021) reflects cyberstalking news “Up ‘cyber-crimes capital’ with over 11,000 cases, Maharashtra has most cases of cyberstalking” It can have major psychosocial impacts on individuals such as increased suicidal ideation, fear, anger, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptomology.

Short et.al., (2015) report “The impact of cyberstalking,” the quantitative research, participants who were self-defined cyberstalking victims (N = 353) were asked to complete an online survey. Overall, the findings revealed that victims of harassment may suffer high levels of psychological distress as a consequence of the experience, which are broadly comparable to the symptoms seen in PTSD, leaving the victim experiencing feelings of isolation, irritability and guilt.

Impact of cyberstalking is presented by evidence of mental state and property. Psychological and behavioral dimensions of this category are of offending and victimization within the context of digital forensics investigations. Anyhow, property impact is also important in social context.

### Cyberstalking Laws

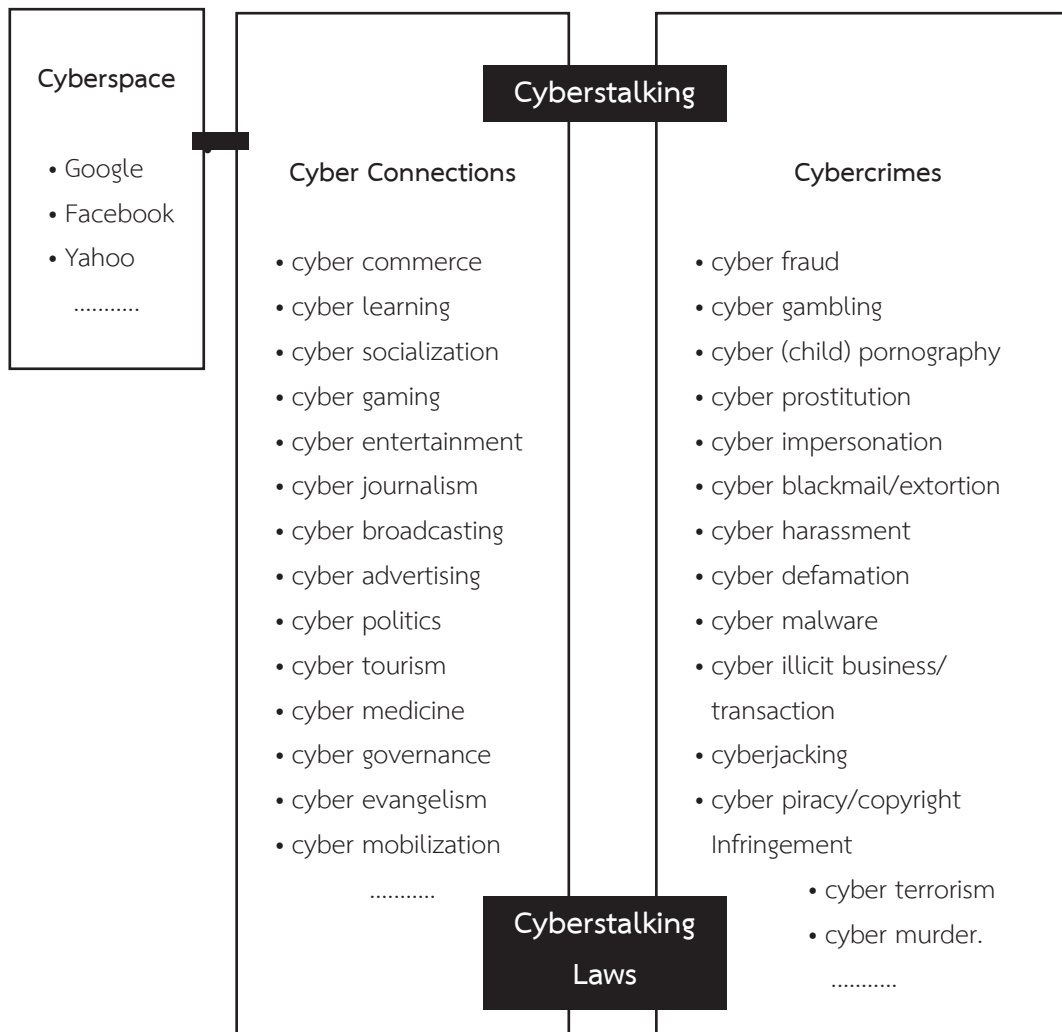
In United States, some states do not have a criminal law specifically against “cyberstalking,” nevertheless the act of repeatedly contacting or harassing a person through the Internet or other technology is still considered a crime under the state’s stalking or harassment laws (WomensLaw.org, 2020).

Chang (2020) mentions about the challenges facing law enforcement by investigating cyberstalking cases: 1) lacking awareness and skills in recognizing and investigating 2) jurisdictional and statutory authority limitation 3) difficulties to obtain internet account information of suspects. He strongly suggests the important points, Execution Aspect as the citizen should have basic acknowledge of identifying cyberstalking crimes and reporting procedures once they do occur; and the authorities should take the problem of cyberstalking seriously and have specific measurements by law enforcement agencies to prevent and combat it. Legislation Aspect As technology Changes, as the authorities should review current laws, ensure the necessary assistance for the victims, and provide appropriate punishment for the offenders; tackle Jurisdictional Issue on Cyberstalkers may attack possible victims across jurisdictional lines; internet service provider’s legal accountability out-dated and missing accounts, subscribers, and user information also bring a challenge for law enforcement in creating an electronic link between the suspect and the victim.

That pattern of behavior can involve physical actions or interactions via social media, emails or other forms of communication which must be unwanted and unwelcome by the recipient. As a result, fear for well-being or safety is protected. Cyberstalking should be taken seriously by the legal authorities and victim assistance professionals.

### Cyberstalking Model

Cyberspace; home of Google, Facebook, Yahoo; is the digital universe. Most of people do their business by selected one or more from Cyber Connections as cyber commerce, cyber entertainment. Cyberstalking happens in any type of cyber connections. Cyberstalker selects victim even though may be starting with comment on or like everything he/she posts online.



**Figure 1: Cyberstalking Model**

Cybercrimes have numerous types and levels. Safety of life and property is what every cyber user needs. Cyberstalking Laws, the challenges are facing law enforcement agencies when they investigate cyberstalking cases.

#### Conclusions

Cyberstalkers often start small in the beginning. They may send a few strange or somewhat unpleasant messages to their intended victim. Then, later, they may brush off these messages as funny, annoying or mildly weird and ignore them without taking any action. Cyberstalkers can be physically far removed from their victim. They do not need to confront the victim physically. Cyberstalking victims are less likely to know the identify of their harassers. Prevalence of negative impact and cybercrimes bring on the victims' well-being, cyberstalking and relevant laws challenge for enforcement.

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