Original Scientific Paper

STALKING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE INTERNET

UDC 343.54:004.738.5

Vida Vilić

Faculty of Law, University of Niš, Serbia

Abstract. *Given all the possibilities offered by the Internet and global social networks, there has been an increase of cyberspace abuse. Some of the most common forms of abuse are cyber stalking and sexual harassment on the Internet.*
Illicit behaviors such as stalking and sexual harassment have always been exclusively related to close physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim. However, the issue of close physical contact has been made completely immaterial by the emergence of cyberstalking and sexual harassment on the Internet, which are still largely unregulated in the Serbian legislation. In this paper, the author's aim is to highlight the characteristics of stalking and sexual harassment in cyberspace, point to the similarities and differences between such conduct in the online and offline environment, and examine the possibilities for preventing this type of abuse and violation of privacy.
The risk of abuse may only be reduced by providing for a further development of compatible standards and legislation. The existing legal standards and the emerging legislation must be very flexible in order to keep up with the daily developments in computer technology and innovations.

Key words: *social networks, abuse, stalking, harassment, cyberspace.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The invention and development of computer technology is a result of a fascinating development of human thought and ingenuity. Given the increased use of computers, computer networks, the Internet and the overall number of Internet users, the possibilities of their misuse and abuse are also on the rise. Nowadays, the Internet is widely used in most countries and there is a growing number of Internet users worldwide. In the period between 2000 and 2005, the use of the Internet increased by 160% and it has been esti-

mated that approximately 938 million people have access to the Internet network[1] in one way or another. This number is permanently on the rise; the latest research shows that in Russia alone this number has increased from 3.5 to 8 million active Internet users in the past year.[2]

In 2001, The Council of Europe adopted the Convention on Cybercrime and the Additional Protocol to the Convention. The Republic of Serbia signed both documents in Helsinki on 16th April 2005, and the documents were ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in March 2009. These documents have been used as the grounds for developing the national legislation and standards in this area, particularly in terms of establishing special state institutions specializing in combating cybercrime. Yet, are there some issues which still remain unregulated and unsanctioned?

2. CYBERCRIME AND VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

Cybercrime is often associated with global social networks and virtual violence. It may be defined as any communication activity involving the use of computer technology to threaten, harass, embarrass, intimidate or target another person by means of other forms of threat and harm.[3]

Global social networks have contributed to a further development of cybercrime considering the fact that computer networks are used both as targets of attack (on network services, features and contents), as means or tools of attack (cyber sex market; human organ market; women and children as victims of prostitution; production and distribution of prohibited harmful contents such as child pornography; pedophilia; religious sects; racist, Nazi and other similar ideas), or as the immediate environment where attacks take place (by using the network to conceal criminal activity); (Konstantinović-Vilić, Nikolić-Ristanović, Kostić, 2009, p.184).

Stalking and sexual harassment via the Internet are still largely unregulated in the Serbian legislation, which makes the issue of close physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim which completely irrelevant. The consequences of these acts of virtual violence can sometimes be more serious and harmful than the consequences of "real" violence because the victim can read the perpetrator's note multiple times, see the photos posted by the perpetrator and read all written comments of other Internet users. The victim is exposed to public humiliation while the perpetrator remains anonymous, which is one of the reasons why the perpetrators of these crimes feel powerful.

3. DEFINING STALKING AND CYBERSTALKING

In real life, the victim is pursued from "up close"; the stalker wants the victim to see him/her and be aware of his/her presence (Gilbert, 1996, p.125-149). However, on the

---

[1] For more information see: World Internet Usage and Population Statistics, http://www.internetworldstats.com /stats.htm, 19.03. 2013.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] For more information see: *http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/cyberbullying.html*, 19.03.2013.

Internet, the concept of closeness gets a new meaning because in the cyber world all users have an illusion of being close to each other although they are physically far away.

During the 1980s, the term "stalking" was used to define "a permanent form of abuse towards another person by imposing unwanted communication or contact upon that person" (Mullen et. al., 2001, p. 9, according to Yar, 2006, p. 123). According to this definition, stalking includes a number of repeated actions which interfere with the victim's privacy for a period of time; these actions include: making frequent phone calls to the victim, sending letters or various types of presents, monitoring and spying on the victim, trespassing the victim's property, contacting the victim's family members, friends and associates (McGuire, Wraith, 2000, p.317). Stalking may be described as a course of conduct where one individual imposes repeated and unwanted communication or contact on another person, ultimately resulting in the victim's feeling of fears for his/her own safety (Purcell, Pathe, Mullen, 2004, p. 157 according to Clough, 2010, p.365).

Cyberstalking is an "extension" of the common type of stalking. It can be defined as a persistent and targeted harassment of an individual by using electronic means of communication (Yar, 2006, p.122), or as the use of new communication technologies in order to pursue another person (Clough, 2010, p.366). This kind of conduct takes place in the "virtual" world and is largely confined to Internet communication but it can be easily transferred from the "virtual" into the "real" world, thus generating very dangerous forms of victimization. Stalking via the Internet can be defined as "the repeated use of the Internet, electronic mail or related electronic communication devices to intimidate, threaten or abuse a specific individual" (D'Ovidio, Doyle, 2003, p.10).

One of the first and most comprehensive definitions of stalking via the Internet was given by Paul Bocij, who defines cyberstalking as a set of behaviours by means of which an individual, a group of individuals or an organization uses information and communication technologies to harass another individual, group of individuals or organization (Bocij, 2004, p.10). *Inter alia,* such behaviour may include: threats and false claims, identity and data theft, damage to data or equipment, unauthorized use of video monitoring and control, any form of aggression, use of specific information, and other types of behaviour aimed at inflicting emotional distress or causing insecurity in another person.

The term cyberstalking is mainly related to the use of the Internet, e-mail, and any other form of electronic communication which may generate an illicit intimidation, harassment and feelings of fear in one or a number of victims (Bocij, 2004, p.14). This kind of behavior may include various activities ranging from forwarding harmless but annoying messages to arranging potentially dangerous and fatal stalker-victim encounters.

One of the obvious differences between stalking and cyberstalking is a geographical distance between the stalker and the victim. The victim may be harassed by a cyberstalker either from a neighbouring house or from a faraway country (Reno, 1999, according to Pittaro, 2007, p.184). Cyberstalking rarely includes any type of physical contact, which is one of the reasons why the police do not give much attention to this type of criminal behaviour, nor do they respond to the victims' reports on this crime (Reno, 1999, according to Pittaro, 2007, p.185).

Cyberstalking does not have to be necessarily motivated by some sort of sexual obsession with the victim. It may also be motivated by some kind of hostility between the stalker and the victim, or by some kind of aggression resulting from imbalance of powers and social standing, both of which are much more frequent than material gain or sexual

obsession. Just like physical stalking, cyberstalking is guided by the feelings of anger, power and control, which have been provoked by the victims' acts or omissions to act.

Stalking assumes that the abuser and the victim have had at least two contacts. The mechanisms of cyberstalking can be classified into two categories (Sheridan, Grant, 2007, pp. 627-640): (1) **solely on the internet**– stalking happens only by using the Internet and social networks; there are no personal contacts aside from the ones in the virtual world; it can include sending electronic messages, communication in chat rooms and blogs, social networks and Internet pages; (2) **mixed type of stalking** – stalking begins on the Internet and lasts for several weeks, after which stalking is transferred into the "real" world (as the perpetrator tries to make a personal contact with the victim); the contact can be maintained not only electronically, via the Internet, but also in other ways (for example, the perpetrator may start stalking the victim from the "real" world and transfer it into the virtual reality).

Cyberstalking may be manifested as the following types of behaviour: collecting data about a victim over the Internet for the purpose of abusing, harassing, intimidating or blackmailing; sending or publishing false claims about the victim; assuming another's identity in the virtual environment by identity theft and/or misrepresentation by using the victim's name; publishing highly personal/confidential information about a victim; sending computer viruses and malicious software programmes to the victim for the purpose of attacking the victim's electronic data and computer equipment; frequent threats to the victim, the victim's family members, colleagues and friends using the electronic means of communication; exerting influence on other people to harass the victim; ordering and buying products by assuming the victim's identity (Bocij, 2004, p.13).

However, the most frequent forms of internet stalking (Clough, 2010, p. 375) are:

(1) **communication with the victim** – sending unwanted messages via e-mail, chat rooms, forums and even mobile phones, which is the basic and the most common type of cyberstalking; (2) **publishing the victim's personal information/making it publically available;** (3) **attack on the victim's computer** – when a stalker who is technically educated gets access to the victim's computer by using a malicious programme for the purpose of destroying data, intimidating or spying on the victim's activities and movements; (4) **permanent monitoring of the victim's activities/putting the victim under surveillance** – surveillance can be carried out with the aim of collecting data about the victim, the people the victim contacts, the victim's daily whereabouts, as well as with the aim of a literal surveillance of the victim's whereabouts.

4. SEXUAL HARRASMENT IN THE "REAL" WORLD AND IN CYBERSPACE

Cyberspace is a virtual place for social contacts where one may encounter diverse activities and relations which may be both mentally healthy and pathological. This fact supports the claim that new technologies entail both constructive, positive aspects for human development as well as destructive, negative aspects that degrade and obstruct social progress.

Sexual harassment is a widespread social phenomenon which appears at work, at school, in our daily communication with people, as well as in virtual communication. The most common victims of this type of harassment are women (Gruber, 1997; Paludi & Paludi, 2003, according to Barak, 2005, p.77) and subsequently men, homosexuals and

children. Similarly, most victims of sexual harassment on the Internet are women even though the other population groups have been targeted as well (Barnes, 2001, according to Barak, 2005, p.77).

Sexual harassment is almost impossible to define because it can take many forms. In the broadest sense, sexual harassment is an act of violence against another person which implies different types of behaviour ranging from sexist discrimination to sexual aggression.[4] Till (Till, 1980, according to Barak, 2005, p.78) tried to describe the different forms of sexual harassment and understand their causes, correlations, impact on victims and personal ways of coping with the consequences of sexual harassment. He initially classified all types of behaviour which may be regarded as sexual harassment into five categories and subsequently reduced them to three categories: gender-based harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion.

- *Gender-based harassment* involves unwanted verbal and visual comments and remarks which are aimed at insulting an individual on the grounds of his/her gender or inciting negative public emotions (for example, by posting pornographic pictures in public or in places where they are regarded as deliberate insults, telling chauvinistic jokes, making degrading sexist remarks, etc.).
- *Unwanted sexual attention* refers to uninvited forms of behaviors that explicitly communicate sexual desires or intensions toward another individual (such as: overt behavior and comments, staring at different body parts, making verbal statements that explicitly or implicitly propose or insinuate sexual activities, etc).
- *Sexual coercion* involves exerting physical or psychological pressure on a person to solicit sexual cooperation (for example, an undesired physical contact, offering a bribe or promising a reward for sexual favors, making threats, etc).

All three types of sexual harassment are present both in the real world and in cyberspace. However, given the virtual nature of cyberspace, the most common types of online sexual harassment are gender-based harassment and unwanted sexual attention. Sexual coercion is a less prominent form of harassment in cyberspace, primarily because there is no actual physical contact in cyberspace.

Gender harassment in cyberspace is very common and can be manifested either in different active or passive verbal forms of behavior or in different active or passive graphic formats of online delivery.

(1) *Active verbal sexual harassment* mainly appears in the form of offensive sexual messages initiated by a harasser toward a specific victim (e.g. gender-degrading comments, sexual remarks, telling dirty jokes, etc). These kinds of harassment are considered to be humiliating and offensive for the victim, particularly when they are neither invited nor consented to by the recipient. This type of sexual harassment is usually practiced in chat rooms and forums, as well as in private electronic communication.

(2) *Passive verbal sexual harassment* might be less intrusive because the harasser does not directly target a specific person or persons but potential (passive) receivers by using their nicknames or user names as well as personal details and terms attached to

---

[4] For more information see: *Žene za život bez nasilja:priručnik za volonterke SOS telefona (Women for life without violence: Handbook for SOS volunteers),* 1999, edited by Lada Protić and Lepa Mlađenović, Beograd: Bufala Bil, 2nd edition, p. 230

one's online identification. This category also includes explicit sex messages attached to one's personal details in communication software or on a personal web page.

(3) *Active graphic sexual gender harassment* refers to intentional sending of erotic and pornographic contents or digital videos through individual online communication channels (such as e-mail), or posting them in cyberspace. These contents may be more or less offensive, depending on the victim's individual sensibility and the actual degree of their explicitness.

(4) *Passive graphic sexual gender harassment* mainly includes publishing offensive photos and videos on different web portals or sites where the victims/web users do not even expect to find such explicit contents (e.g. massive use of forced pop-up windows with redirected links to porno sites).

There are two major factors which can be used to determine the actual degree of harassment in each of these four types of gender sexual harassment: a) the nature of the verbal or graphic stimulus perceived in terms of its explicitness and recurrence; and b) the victim's personal attitudes, sensitivity, and communication preferences of the recipient. The combination of these two factors determines the intensity of the subjective experience of sexual harassment sustained by the victim.

Unwanted sexual attention in cyberspace usually involves direct personal verbal communication between a harasser and a victim involving the exchange of explicit messages directly related to sex and sexuality (e.g. messages referring to the victim's sex organs, sex life, intimacy) as well as insinuations, provocations, proposals of sex-related activities, and sex-related sounds or images. Unlike gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention is specifically intended to solicit sexual cooperation of some sort, either in virtual or in face-to-face contact, which is uninvited and forced upon the victim. In cyberspace, this kind of offences most frequently take place in public forums or chat rooms, as well as in private electronic messages between the harasser and the victim. The harasser's primary motive is to establish some kind of sexual contact with the victim but the motive may also be to inflict emotional harm and abuse the victims.

Sexual coercion on the Internet involves the use of various means available on the Internet or online in order to solicit sexual cooperation by exerting some kind of pressure on the victim; this kind of conduct is uninvited and forced upon the victim. Although the use of physical force is impossible in cyberspace, the victim may perceive these explicit threats as identical to physical force used in face-to-face situations. These threats may be a source of great anxiety for the victim, who may panic even at the thought of being subject to virtual tracking (e.g. in chat rooms and forums visits). Many authors believe that this form of sexual harassment is most similar to cyberstalking, and that it frequently develops into this type of abuse (Adam, 2001; Deirmenjian, 1999; Griffith, Rogers, & Sparrow, 1998; Spitzberg & Hoobler, 2002 according to Barak, 2005, p.80).

5. TYPOLOGY OF CYBER PERPETRATORS

Similar to perpetrators in real life, cyberstalkers and sexual harassers try to monitor the activities of their victims in order to find more information about them, to contact the persons close to the victims, unlawfully read their victims' e-mails and monitor the victims' online activity. The victim gets insecure, frightened, intimidated and does not know how to put an end to harassment and cyberstalking.

A relative stalker's anonymity on the Internet may generate a lack of social inhibitions and moral constraints, which triggers individual perpetrators to find new victims easily. The impossibility of watching and listening to the interlocutor may lead to complete alienation and restriction of social communication. The perpetrator may pretend to be a completely different person, which releases him from the fear of being caught, charged and convicted.

By reducing the demotivation factors (such as shame and fear of rejection), the Internet may encourage individuals to take part in dialogues and perform some activities they would never do in "real" face-to-face communication. In the online environment, the perpetrator who would otherwise refrain from entering into direct communication with a potential victim does not hesitate or think twice before forwarding threatening or disturbing messages to the victim. The lack of inhibition can make the perpetrator assume a false identity in virtual communication; the perpetrator commonly assumes the identity of a victim's friend or relative in order to collect more information about the victim, or may even assume the victim's identity and use it for spreading false information (Ellison, 2001, p.141).

The lack of personal contact with the victim may generate diverse projections in the perpetrator's mind, as a result of which the victim may be subjected to denunciation, humiliation or rage (McGrath, Casey, 2002, p. 86). In literature, many authors note that a large number of cyberbullies has already been involved in some criminal activity, had a history of violent behaviour or a behavioral disorder that either directly or indirectly increases the probability of the perpetrator's sociopathic behaviour (Hutton, Haantz, 2003; Reno, 1999, according to Pittaro, 2007, p.184). The collected studies on cyberbullying show that the perpetrators have a personality disorder which may range from a high level of paranoia to obsessive thoughts and behaviour (Mullen et.al, 1999, according to Pittaro, 2007, p.184).

6. THE VICTIMS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF CYBERSTALKING

Virtually anyone can become a victim of a cyberbullying. Although statistics show that a vast majority of victims are of female gender and that the majority of cyberbullies are male (Pittaro, 2007, p.188), there are records of cases where both the victim and the perpetrator are of the same gender (*Ibid.*). Unlike male cyberbullies, rather than stalking and harassing strangers, female perpetrators usually stalk and harass their ex-partners or their ex-partner's partners (Purcell, Pathe, Mullen, 2001 according to Pittaro, 2007, p.184).

Just like real-life stalker, cyberstalkers try to monitor the victim's activities, collect as much information about the victim as possible, contact the victim's close friends or relatives, read the victim's e-mails illegally and track the victim's internet activities. The victim becomes insecure, intimidated, frightened and cannot find a way to end stalking and harassment.

Statistics show that approximately 80% of cyberstalkers are male; this figure coincides with the percentage of "real" stalkers (Yar, 2006, p.128). A total of 52% of victims are female, whereas this percentage is much higher (75-80%) in "real" stalking (*Ibid.*). The victims and the perpetrators are commonly between the age of 18 and 24.[5]

---

[5] For more information see *http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=9*, 6.11.2012.

In spite of the fact that these types of illicit Internet behaviour do not include physical violence, the victims may sustain very serious consequences. The most common and inevitable reactions are fear and anxiety but there may be some other effects, such as: sleep disorder, depression and suicidal thoughts. Some research studies have shown that one-third of the total number of victims is likely to seek psychological help, one-fifth of the victims fail to go to work regularly, whereas 7% of the victims are not capable of coming back to work at all (Tjaden, 1997, p.2). The victim is also "forced" to adapt her/his life to the new situation; in an attempt to avoid the perpetrator, the victim may take a number of precautionary measures: change the telephone number, provide additional security in his/her living space, carry self-defence gadgets, attend a self-defence course, change the car, move to another location, change jobs, change his/her identity (name/surname), and even moves to live in another country (McGuire, Wraith, 2000, p.323).

7. CONCLUSION

Cyberstalking and sexual harassment on the Internet have been drawing more and more attention in the past years as our global society has increasingly focused on considering and creating mechanisms for solving problems related to different types of harassment and victimization in general. In literature, there are some opinions that cyberstalking and sexual harassment on the Internet should be differentiated from their "real" world counterparts; however, in practice, in the countries where the perpetrators of these criminal acts are prosecuted, cyberstalking and sexual harassment on the Internet are most most frequently qualified and sanctioned as a form of stalking and harassment (Clough, 2010, p.369).

The information about the victim is the essence of the perpetrator's power. The viability of intimidating and controlling the victim depends on the amount of collected information (McGrath, Casey, 2002, p. 89).

Global social networks have contributed to generating new, sophisticated, inconspicuous and technically perfect types of online crime which are difficult to fight because they are largely "invisible" and "intangible". Given the huge number of Internet users, availability/accessibility of data, openness in communication and insufficient legal regulations both at the national and the international level, cyberspace is an excellent safe haven for the perpetrators of these criminal acts, which is another factor that makes the victims' protection even more difficult.

The effects that stalking and harassment are likely to exert on the victim are extremely complex as they cause changes in the victim's behaviour, mental state and social life. In particular, there is a high risk of losing self-confidence, a feeling of insecurity, a fear of losing friends or employment, insomnia, change of the victim's social habits, etc.

In spite of the general consensus that the Internet victimization has become a serious and constantly evolving threat in the modern society, this social problem is still not regarded as a crime and a criminal act but as a specific type of "social construction" (Yar, 2006, p.133). These cybercriminals abuse new technologies to make new contacts and social relationships, in the course of which they violate all cultural and moral norms of behavior and decent communication.

The problem of cyberstalking and sexual harassment on the Internet may be resolved by applying many different approaches, including preventive measures and strategies, legislative solutions and regulations, as well as technological solutions to overcome technical drawbacks of social networks. Although the enforcement of legal procedures is practically impossible on the Internet, it is essential to take relevant measures to reduce the prevalence of this kind of cybercrime. Cybercrime is no different from "real" crime because it can also result in a series of offensive, unlawful and socially dangerous behaviours. The growing number of Internet and social network users will necessarily yield an increasing number of criminal acts committed in cyberspace. As the Internet has become an inseparable part of daily existence for a large number of people, the problem cannot be solved by simply turning off the computers. As practice has proven that virtually anybody using the Internet can become a victim of cybercrime, the Internet users have to learn how to protect themselves from all forms of potentially dangerous behaviour on the Internet.

REFERENCES

1. Barak, Azy (2005), Sexual Harassment on the Internet, Social Science Computer Review, Vol. 23, No.1, Spring 2005, 77-92, DOI:10.1177/0894439304271540, © 2005 Sage Publications, 77-91.
2. Bocij, Paul (2004), *Cyberstalking: harassment in the Internet age and how to protect your family*, Praeger Publications
3. Clough, Jonathan (2010) *Principles of Cybercrime*, Cambridge University Press
4. D'Ovidio, Robert, Doyle, James (2003), "Cyberstalking: Understanding the Investigative Hurdles", *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 72(3)
5. Ellison, Louisse (2001), *Cyberstalking: Tackling harassment on the Internet"*, Crime and the Internet, London: Routledge
6. Gilbert, Pamela (1996), "On Sex, Cyberspace, and Being Stalked", *Women and Performance 9, No.1*, 125-149
7. *http://www.caepv.org/getinfo/facts_stats.php?factsec=9*, 06.03.2012.
8. *http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/talk/cyberbullying.html*, 19.03.2013.
9. Konstantinović-Vilić, Slobodanka; Nikolić-Ristanović, Vesna; Kostić, Miomira (2009), *Kriminologija (Criminology)*, Pelikan print, Niš
10. McGrath, Michael; Casey, Eoghan (2002), Forensic Psychiatry and the Internet: Practical perspectives on sexual predators and obsessional harassers in cyberspace, *30. Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law 81*, 86, *http://www.jaapl.org/content/30/1/81.full.pdf+html*, 02.03.2013.
11. McGuire, Brian; Wraith, Anita (2000), "Legal and psychological aspects of stalking: A review", *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry, 11(2)*
12. Pittaro, M. (2007) Cyber stalking: An Analysis of Online Harassment and Intimidation. International Journal of Cyber Criminology, 2, 180-197.
13. Sheridan, P. Lorraine; Grant, Tim (2007), Is cyberstalking different? *Psychology, Crime & Law. 13(6)*, 627-640
14. Tjaden, Patricia (1997), The Crime of Stalking: How big is the problem?, *National Institute of Justice - Research preview*, Washington DC, National Institute of Justice
15. World Internet Usage and Population Statistics, *http://www.internetworld stats.com/stats.htm*, 19.03.2013.
16. *Žene za život bez nasilja:priručnik za volonterke SOS telefona (Women for life without violence: Handbook for SOS volunteers)*, 1999, edited by Lada Protić and Lepa Mlađenović, Beograd: Bufala Bil, 2nd edition, pp. 229-238
17. Yar, Majid (2006), *Cybercrime and Society*, Sage Publications Ltd.

PROGANJANJE I SEKSUALNO UZNEMIRAVANJE PUTEM INTERNETA

Vida Vilić

Uz sve mogućnosti koje pružaju internet i društvene mreže, zabeležen je porast zloupotreba vezanih za virutelni prostor. Jedan od najčešćih vidova zloupotrebe je proganjanje i uznemiravanjee korišćenjem internet komunikacija.

Ponašanje poput proganjanja i seksualnog uznemiravanja uvek su se vezivali isključivo za blizak fizički kontakt nasilnika i žrtve. Proganjanje i seksualno uznemiravanje putem interneta predstavljaju veliki, u Srbiji još uvek pravno neregulisan problem, koji u potpunosti relativiziraju pitanje blizine. Cilj rada je da ukaže na karakteristike proganjanja i seksualnog zlostavljanja u virtuelnom prostoru, sa sličnostima i razlikama u odnosu na ista ponašanja u offline environment, kao i na mogućnosti sprečavanja ovog vida zlostavljanja i narušavanja privatnosti.

Samo razvijanjem kompatibilnih standarda i pravnih propisa ovakve inovacije mogu da se razvijaju uz smanjenje rizika od njihove zloupotrebe. Pravni standardi i zakoni koji tek nastaju moraju biti veoma fleksibilni da bi mogli da prate svakodnevni razvoj kompjuterske tehnologije i inovacija.

Ključne reči: *društvene mreže, zloupotreba, proganjanje, seksualno uznemiravanje, virtuelni prostor.*