

Rising Trends of Cyber Crime: Targeting Women

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Abstract – Information technology has widened itself over the last two decades and has become the axis of today’s global and technical development. With the advancement of internet, the crime using internet has also widened its roots in all directions. Women are the soft targets of this new form of crime. Cyber-crime is emerging as a challenge for national and economic security. Various issues that are discussed in this paper are: Cyber Stalking, Harassment via Email, Cyber Defamation, Morphing, and Email Spoofing against women. The problem would be solved only when the victimized woman then and there report back or even warn the abuser about taking strong actions.

Index Terms – IT, IP, IPC, SMTP.

1. INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous technological advancements over the last decade. Individuals use the internet because they can gather and share information very easily with other individuals no matter where on the globe they are located. In every creation there are both good and bad sides but when a new one is created for the betterment of people, the inventor does not think for its evil sides. The growth of the internet has also resulted in the creation and growth of cyber-crime. For the communication purpose, e-mails have been replaced by e-mails; online web representation is nowadays more important for businesses than printed materials and Internet-based communication and phone services are growing faster than landline communications. These advancements have also brought opportunities for various criminal activities. When internet was invented, inventors did not think for its bad behavior. But the criminal mentality of human psychology started its misuse by using internet as a tool of crime, which gave the birth to “Cyber-crime” and world is facing a huge challenge from these cyber criminals. Crimes are as old as man himself and computer crimes are as old as computers themselves.

Cyber-crime is a major issue facing society today. With the advent of technology, cyber-crime and victimization of women are on the high and it poses as a major threat to the security of a person as a whole. Cyber-crime is criminal activity directly related to the illegal use of computer and a network, for unauthorized access or theft of stored or on-line data that can be used for several criminal activities against a victim.

2. CYBER-CRIMES CAN BE BROADLY DIVIDED INTO THREE MAJOR CATEGORIES

Three categories are cyber-crimes against persons, property and Government. First cyber-crimes committed against persons include various crimes like transmission of obscene

messages, harassment of any one with the use of a computer such as e-mail, cyber-bullying and cyber-stalking. The second category of cyber-crimes is that of cyber-crimes against organization or all forms of property. These crimes include illegal and unauthorized computer trespassing, and transmission of important and critical information outside the organization which can lead to a great loss to the organization. The third category of cyber-crimes relate to cyber-crimes against government which includes cyber terrorism.

3. CRIMES TARGETTING WOMEN

Cyber-crime against women is on at alarming stage and it is a major threat to the security of a person. The World Wide Web allows users to circulate content in the form of text, images, videos and sounds. The circulation of such content is particularly harmful for women. In recent years, there were many women receiving emails which often contain obscene and obnoxious language. Social networking and other websites are created and updated for many useful purposes, but they are nowadays also be used to circulate offensive contents also. Individuals who post personal information about themselves on job and marriage websites or social networking websites are often at the receiving end of ‘cyber-crime’. Women and minors who post their contact details become especially vulnerable.

Crimes that are targeting women are as follows:

1. (I) CYBER STALKING

It is one of the most widespread net crimes in the modern world. The word “stalking” means “pursuing stealthily”. Cyber stalking is the use of the Internet to stalk or harass a person. In Cyber Stalking, stalker access the victim’s personal information like name, family background, telephone numbers and daily routine of the victim and post them on the websites related to dating services with the name of victim. While Cyber Stalking affects both men and women, women are disproportionately targets, especially of age group of 16-35, who are stalked by men. It is believed that Over 75% of the victims are female. More than one million women and 370,000 men are stalked annually in the United States.

Example: Ritu Kohli from New Delhi started receiving many e-mails from unknown source. Initially she ignored the mails. Stalker used obscene and obnoxious language, and posted her telephone number and other personal details on different websites, inviting people to chat with her on the phone. As a result, she started receiving many obscene calls at odd hours

from everywhere, and then she got alarmed. Then She lodged a police complaint. Delhi police immediately traced down the IP address (Internet Protocol address) of the hacker from a cyber cafe. The cyber stalker- Manish Kathuria, got arrested by the Delhi police and was booked under sec 509 of the IPC (Indian Penal Code) for outraging the modesty of a woman and also under the IT Act (Information Technology Act) of 2000.

(II) HARASSMENT VIA EMAIL

E-mails are heavily used electronic tools of the last decade. Many people send and receive in around 100 emails every day. It includes harassment through e-mails includes blackmailing, threatening, bullying, constant sending of love letters in anonymous names or regular sending of embarrassing mails to one's e-mail id. This happened mostly with girls from 16 to 35 age.

(III) CYBER BULLYING

"Cyber bullying" is when a child, preteen or teen is threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.

Today, people all over the world have the capability to communicate with each other with just a click of a button and technology opens up new risks. Cyber bullying is the particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Examples of cyber bullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles. Kids who are cyber bullied are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs
- Skip school
- Experience in-person bullying
- Be unwilling to attend school
- Receive poor grades
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have more health problem

Example: Harini, a 12 year old girl put up her profile picture on a social networking site. She did not know that she would soon face serious physical threat. They were shocked that a person living in the neighborhood had been bullying her and threatening to misuse her personal information and photos if she told anyone. After certain visits to the cyber-crime police station, they somehow managed to get rid of the threat.

(IV) MORPHING

Morphing is editing the original picture by an unauthorized user. Unauthorized person downloads victim's pictures and then uploads or reloads them after editing is known as morphing. They create fake profiles after editing them. This amounts to violation of I.T. Act, 2000.

(V) EMAIL SPOOFING

E-mail spoofing is a popular way of scamming online. In this, the sender's address and other parts of the email header are altered to appear as though the email originated from a known or authorized source. By changing certain properties of the email, such as its header, from, Return-Path and Reply- To fields etc., hostile users can make the email appear to be from someone other than the actual sender. Email spoofing is possible because the main protocol used in sending email i.e. Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP), does not allow an authentication mechanism. The more common method used by men is to email vulgar photographs of themselves to women praising their beauty, and asking them for a date. Besides sending messages by e-mail, SMS and chat, many other also morph photographs-placing the victim's face on another, usually nude body.

(VI) CYBER DEFAMATION

Defamation is used to define the injury that is caused to the reputation of a person in the eyes of a third person. Cyber defamation is publishing of defamatory material against another person with the help of computers or internet. Although this can happen to both genders, but women are more vulnerable. Someone publishes defamatory matter about someone on a website or sends e-mails containing defamatory information to all of that person's friends.

Defamation can cause two main types of injury:

1. Harm to reputation – the loss of a job, loss of customers, causes the victim to become a social outcast.
2. Financial harm – the victim, whether personally or as a business owner, experiences loss of business or money, or incurs expenses in the attempt to repair his reputation.

4. CONCLUSION

The growth of cyber-crime is increasing day by day. Anybody who uses the Internet is at risk for becoming a victim of cyber-crime. Cyber space offers opportunities for cyber criminals to cause harm to innocent people. However there are few provisions to cover some of the crimes against women in cyber space under IT Act. In order to avoid the cyber-crime we should not engage in conversation with people we don't know. People on the other end of the computer may not be who they claim to be. We must keep our passwords protected and do not keep sensitive material on the computer as that can be accessed by the hacker. If anything seems out of place or wrong, contact law enforcement immediately. The problem would be solved only when the victimized woman then and there report back or even warn the abuser about taking strong actions.

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