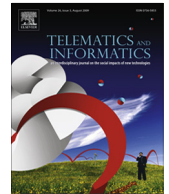




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Misuse of web cameras to manipulate children within the so-called webcam trolling



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ABSTRACT

This article presents an overview of the phenomenon of Internet trolling and, in particular, on the so-called webcam trolling (misuse of web cameras to attack other Internet service users). Alongside the succinct summary of the approaches to individual forms and variants of the so-called online trolling, the contribution describes how the misuse of web cameras works in practise and what attack strategies are used by the attackers within webcam trolling. The authors' intention is an in-depth analysis of the ways of misusing webcam trolling to attack a child with the aim to wheedle intimate material from him/her and blackmail him/her thereafter. The article also contains exemplary cases of web trolling dealt with by the online consulting room 'Centre for the Prevention of Risky Virtual Communication' of the Palacký University in Olomouc between 2013 and 2015.

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1. Introduction to the issue

As information communication technologies develop and Internet services enabling the interconnection of a high number of users and their mutual communication and sharing of information become widely available. Users who want to disrupt

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the communication, provoke, be the centre of attention and harm others began to appear on the Internet. They are referred to as *Internet trolls* and their conduct as *trolling*.

In the past, trolling was perceived by some authors only as sending other users of Internet services provocative messages, while flaming was defined as the distribution of harassing messages (Porter, 1997; Wallace, 2001). However, at present, it is necessary to re-define these concepts since the current trolling includes not only the sending of a message or information that is harassing or provocative or that attacks other users (Bishop, 2014) but also completely new exhibitions associated, among other things, with textual form of communication (for example, the creation of fake profiles on the Internet).

For simplification, the present Internet trolling can be divided into the so-called '*kudos trolling*', the aim of which is, in particular, to amuse the Internet audience, and the so-called '*harm trolling*', the aim of which is to harm Internet users (Bishop, 2015). However, in practise we can usually notice the combination of both.

Trolls may have various forms. They may intervene in Internet discussions, distribute bad and dangerous advice, harm the plausibility of messages and, generally, the feeling of trust in the newsgroup community, or attack the individual discussion user (Donath, 1999). According to Donath, trolls first become legitimate users of discussion groups and then disrupt their activity. According to Donath, trolling is some kind of game about identity deception.

As soon as trolls penetrate into a group and become its accepted members, they start developing their fake identities and disrupting the group's activities and try to evoke anger in other members and prevent the revelation of their identities at the same time (Dahlberg, 2001).

Some authors (Shachaf and Hara, 2010) focused in their research on the conduct of trolls on Wikipedia. Based on the implemented interviews, they identified multiple reasons why trolling is happening: boredom, endeavour to attract attention, revenge, amusement, desire to harm the community, etc. Other researchers (Hardaker, 2010) analysed trolls' contributions within the system of electronic discussion groups 'Usenet'. On the basis of the analysis, they identified the basic characteristics of *trolling*: aggression, deception, disruption, and success. By means of these criteria, trolling needs to be differentiated from the other forms of antisocial behaviour (for example, cyberbullying). Some other authors dealing with the occurrence of trolling within the social media site YouTube (McCosker, 2013) confirmed the presence of provocative and annoying posts commenting on various shared videos (videos depicting natural disasters, traditional cultural events, etc.).

Some authors (Herring et al., 2002) draw attention to the specifics of male trolling within discussion groups predominantly focusing on feminism and consisting of 90% female members.

Other authors (Langos, 2010) perceive trolling as the placement of outrageous material on websites (social networks, etc.) with the aim to attack other users and evoke negative emotional reaction. In some cases, trolls place illegal material (for example, child pornography) on the Internet.

Other trolls carried out sociological probes into people's behaviour in the Internet environment. For example, the well-known troll Jason Fortuny posted a hoax on the Internet, in which he looked for "brutal muscular males" under a female identity. He received answers from more than 100 applicants and, subsequently, posted their names, photos, e-mails and phone numbers on his blog (his activity became known as the so-called Craigslist Experiment) (Schwartz, 2008).

With the massive spread of Facebook and other social networks, trolls have started to establish various types of discussion groups and fake profiles associated with certain socially significant events or personas. Through these profiles, they "amuse" the present virtual audience by harming the good reputation of specific people, for example, actors, politicians or other celebrities. Some forms of trolling have also been associated with cases of deaths, suicides or murders, in which trolls abuse the tragic situations to draw attention to their own activities (Phillips, 2011).

This form of trolling can be documented on the following case from the Czech Republic: Two twenty-year-old Czech girls – Antonie Chrástecká and Hana Humpálová – were kidnapped on 13 March 2013 in the Baluchistan province in south western Pakistan. A few days later, a discussion group titled '*Congratulations Hana and Antonie on their new life in Pakistan*' appeared on Facebook. The website contained relatively revolting comments on the case of the kidnapped girls and its ironic textual comments were accompanied by illustrative material in the form of photos and videos. The photos and videos depicted executions of captives, decapitations, sadistic close-ups of tortured prisoners, etc. The author of the website also accompanied the texts by ironic advice as to how to behave when crossing Pakistan: "*Don't worry. Pakistan is a safe country to travel. Don't believe any official information of the ministries of foreign affairs that it is dangerous to travel through this great country. Travel alone or at most in a pair. Go by bus or take your own car, preferably across the areas that are not fully controlled by the state administration. Under no circumstances should you hire the border guards or any state apparatus to protect yourself during the travel. Remember to wear your traditional clothes and not to try to 'fit in' the local outfit of Pakistani women. During your travel, you should speak your native language. Follow our instructions and enjoy a magnificent and safe travel across Pakistan!*" (Kopecký, 2013a).

The public media came to pay attention to this discussion group and started to publicise the group's posts within their regular nationwide news. Under a wave of criticism, the author removed all the contents a few days later and replaced them with information about the users having been "trolled".

The other documented cases of trolling happening through fake profiles on social networks include, for example, a case of Czech trolling focused on the famous Czech actor, writer, lyricist and script writer Zdeněk Svěrák. At the beginning of November 2013, he became a victim of an unknown Facebook user who created a website about him titled '*I Was Raped by Zdeněk Svěrák*'. At the moment of its publication, the Facebook page '*I Was Raped by Zdeněk Svěrák*' contained several accusations of an alleged rape committed by the actor, which were sent from fictitious and anonymous user accounts. The page stated, for example, that Zdeněk Svěrák abused children during shooting of children's programmes and paid them for

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