



Case Study: Death as a Result of Cyber Bullying

1. STATUS

Known as the first cyber bullying case in America to go to court, the story of Megan Meier is just one of many about children committing suicide due to cyber bullying.

Megan is one of many bullied teenagers on and offline. She committed suicide on Monday, October 16, 2006, minutes after she exchanged last messages with a friend she met on MySpace - Josh.

2. ISSUES

What Megan didn't know was that behind Josh's identity stayed Lori Drew – mother of one of Megan's friends with whom she no longer got along with. The two started chatting with Drew aiming to gather more information about Megan in order to later use it to humiliate her. Drew was collaborating with her daughter Sarah and an 18 year old employee of hers. Megan received the following messages by "Josh":

"I don't know if I want to be friends with you anymore because I've heard that you are not very nice to your friends"

"Everybody in O'Fallon knows who you are. You are a bad person and everybody hates you. Have a shitty rest of your life. The world would be a better place without you."

20 minutes after these messages were sent Megan was found dead by her mother. She had hanged herself with a belt in her closet. The last message Megan sent to Josh was:

"You're the kind of boy a girl would kill herself over."

3. ACTIONS

A few days after Megan committed suicide it was discovered that behind Josh's identity is one of her former friends' mother – Lori Drew. More information came out later that revealed that Drew was not the one who sent the last bullying messages to Megan. It was her 18 year-old part-time employee.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

Cyber bullying is part of Internet planned and committed crimes. Over 80% of these crimes are first planned in chat rooms. It is thus important to be aware of your children's activity online, as well as to educate them about the dangers that the Internet holds.

✓ **Monitor**

It's vital to ensure your children's online safety. Have you ever asked yourself the following: Do I know who my child is talking to? Do I know how my child feels due to the conversations that he or she has online? Has my child been bullied at school?

✓ **Control**

It's important to be aware and in control of your child's online activities. Do you know what websites your child is visiting every day? Do you know what type of content goes through your child's eyes?

✓ **Share**

Constantly talk and share your thoughts on your child's safety with your family and friends. The faster you understand the risks for your child of having uncontrolled access to the Internet, the faster you can prevent an incident from happening.

Don't feel overwhelmed, let BEYOO ONLINE help you in ensuring your child's safety online. We can:

- monitor your child's activity and provide you with regular reports on his or her online behavior;
- use SEO techniques to optimize positive content about your child online in order to ensure his or her successful university or job application;
- ensure there are no potential threats to your child's safety;
- educate your child on how to properly conduct his or herself online so as to minimize potential damage to personal safety as well as future aspirations.

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