

# Fostering Responsible Behavior Online- Relevance of Cyber Ethics Education

Santhosh T [1], Thiyagu K [2],

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[1] santhoshelappully@gmail.com, orcid.org/0000-0002-1850-0105, Central University of Kerala, India.

[2] thiyagucuk@gmail.com, ORCID orcid.org/0000-0003-0533-597X, Central University of Kerala, India.

## ABSTRACT

The role of ethics becomes even more significant given the huge advent and increase of cyber-criminal activities in cyberspace. It has become an urgent necessity to curb the menace of unethical practices in cyberspace and contribute ethical guidelines to a safe and secure digital environment. To minimize the growth of cybercrimes and unethical issues online, users must understand how existing societal norms and ethics can be extended according to the challenges posed by ethical dilemmas in cyberspace. Hence, understanding the importance of cyber ethics in daily life has become essential than ever before. Cyber ethics implies the rules of social engagement and responsibility in cyberspace; it is really about social responsibility in cyberspace and it is aimed at inculcating knowledge of responsible behavior in man when using the online environment. This paper is an attempt to provide an overview of the relevance of cyber ethics education in fostering responsible behavior online. *Metin girmek için burayı tıklayın.*

**Keywords:** *Cyber ethics, cybercrime, plagiarism, unethical issues, digital technologies*

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## INTRODUCTION

At present, technology initiated learning and high-tech schools became the priority concerns of every stakeholder of education. As a result there is a much concentration and heavy dependence on Internet in the education sector by students and teachers. Undoubtedly digital technology acts as a central part of most students' lives today and a fantastic tool for educators. As the benefits of accessing the Internet are increasing, this access must be promoted in a proper and safe manner because digital technology and online actions have not only produced advancement of individuals in different fields of endeavors but also dramatically increased the incidence of criminal activities and unethical practices. As digital devices and programs become more prevalent in everyday life and the education environment, despite the creation of acceptable use policies, responsible teachers and elders must be concerned with educating younger generation about how to be safe using those technologies ethically.

## CYBER REALTED ISSUES THAT NEED ETHICAL CONCERNS

The increasing use and importance of digital technology have resulted in the rapid growth of illegitimate practices as piracy, fraud, information destruction, and telecommunications abuse. (Sivin & Bialo,1992) It has not only produced a dramatic increase in the incidence of criminal activities. Still, it has also resulted in the emergence of what appears to be a new variety of criminal activities. (Odumesi,2014). The

following simple classification of risks posed by digital technology against the learners focuses on the issues that need ethical concerns in the education sector.

- Information Security Risks- These include malware, space, identity theft.
- Physical Risks -Musculoskeletal discomfort, visual problems.
- Personal Social Impact Risks-Withdrawal, Internet Addiction.
- Interaction Threats: Internet Predation, Cyber-bullying. (Kritzinger & Padayachee ,2010)

Igwe and Ibegwam (2014) highlighted some ethical issues in cyberspace that includes,Plagiarism, Copyright, Hacking, Fair use, File sharing, Online etiquette protocols, Posting incorrect/inaccurate information, Cyber-bullying, Stealing or pirating software, music, and videos,Online gambling, gaming, and internet addiction, Loss of privacy and security,Identity theft. Further exposure to pornographic, sexually explicit or offensive items,Harassment through Webpages, email, SMS, chat rooms, social media, discussion group, mobile phones, Activities that are leading to breach of laws like copyright, privacy, defamation, purchase of age restricted materials, use of dark web, privacy, unreliable information also poses serious consideration in the ethical perspective of the users. To curtail the incidence of cybercrimes and unethical issues online, users must understand how existing societal norms and ethics can be extended according to the challenges posed by ethical dilemmas in the cyberspace. Hence, Understanding the importance of cyber ethics in daily life has become essential than ever before. (Knowledge Review, n d).Also it is noted that there is a possibility of dilemma in all the digital infrastructure because overemphasis of security and negilgence of security poses serious challenges. Because overemphasis of security will voilate the fundamental values like equality, fairness, freedom, or privacy and negilgence of security on the other hand , will undermine users' trust and confidence in the cyberspace (Yaghmaei et al., 2020). Hence the role of ethics combined with proper securirty concrens plays a significant role in making appropriate decisions in cyberspace. ( Stuckelberger & Duggal,2018).

## CYBER ETHICS

As more young people are utilizing the internet both for educational and entertainment purpose, raising awareness of cyber ethics is more important than ever. Speaking with teenagers can be particularly challenging since they do not want to be lectured about right and wrong. They appear to believe they have it figured out. More importantly in cyer space there are many questions regarding ethical issues which require ethical analysis. Through this ethical analysis, almost all the moral dilemmas present in the cyberspace must be clarified and a proposition of solutions also should be made.(Wang,2021) For this reason, it's critical to teach proper internet etiquette to children at a young age.(Singh & Tiwari, 2020). Since ethics in cyberspace is concerned with human conduct, more specifically the rules of social engagement and responsibility in cyberspace, it is really about social responsibility in bring changes in the behaviour of individuals (Mahfood,2005).

Speaking about cyber ethics, it is a branch of applied ethics that examines moral, legal, and social issues at the intersection of computer/information and communication technologies. This field is sometimes referred to by phrases such as Internet ethics, computer ethics, and information ethics. (Tavani,2013) It is concerned about the code of responsible behavior on the Internet (Knowledge Review, n d). Cyber ethics is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation as they pertain to online environments and digital media. (Ramadhan, Dana & Aniasi,2011). Cyberethics is the moral choices individuals make when using Internet-capable technologies and digital media (Pusey and Sadera,2011)

The need for cyber ethics is a result of the adverse effects brought by computers in community not only in the social realm but also in the educatinal arena. This is because although every users has benefited from the consumption of computers, there have been some adverse issues accompanied by their use. It includes issues related to loss of privacy, Inappropriate content online, unfair use of copyright policies, cyberbullying, plagiarism, poor netiquette in interaction online. All these unhealthy practices requires urgent attention because the magnitude of dangers its poses need ethical delaing. (Harrison,2014) Hence communicating the basics of cyber ethics has its own significance because there are ethical, social, and legal limits in engaging

online spaces and that must be regulated through proper norms or conduct. Further, cyber ethics has the influential power to provide appropriate control and intervention in the use of modern technologies. Better recognition of technology users' ethical and responsible qualities helps young people to act virtuously in cyberspace(Whittier, 2007).

## RELEVANCE OF CYBER ETHICS EDUCATION IN FOSTERING RESPONSIBLE ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

To understand the relevance of cyber ethics education, it is important to delve into its historical context. One key figure in the development of cyber ethics education is Dr. Norbert Wiener, a mathematician and philosopher. In the 1940s, he laid the groundwork for cybernetics and explored the ethical implications of technology. His book, "The Human Use of Human Beings," emphasized the need for responsible and ethical use of technology(Bynum,2018). Another important figure is Dr. Luciano Floridi, an Italian philosopher known for his work in the philosophy of information and ethics of information. Floridi argues for the need to develop a digital ethics, suggesting that humans should be accountable for their actions in the digital realm. The relevance of cyber ethics education is significant due to its profound impact on individuals, society, and the digital landscape. It fosters ethical decision-making, mindful behavior, and responsible use of technology. By educating individuals about the ethical dimensions of cyberspace, they become aware of the potential consequences of their actions and develop a sense of digital citizenship. Additionally cyber ethics education promotes online safety and privacy, as individuals learn about the importance of protecting personal information and maintaining a secure online presence.It further helps in combating cyberbullying, malicious online behavior, and cybercrime by instilling a moral compass and empathetic approach towards others.

Taking into account of manifold interaction between technology and human beings a number of psychological,social and ethical practices are relevant in inculcating responsible online behaviour(Kohler,2022).Among this the relevance of cyber ethics education into education programs offers numerous benefits and advantages.

Firstly it promotes the development of ethical awareness enabling students to make informed decisions regarding privacy security and online interactions (Sipior et al. 2011). Secondly it helps students understand the impact of their digital actions on others emphasizing empathy and respect for diverse perspectives. Thirdly cyber ethics education equips students with the skills necessary to recognize and address cyberbullying online harassment and other digital misconduct (McPherson, 2015). More extensively cyber ethics education is aimed at inculcating knowledge of responsible behavior in man when using the online environment(Igwe& Ibegwam ,2014). Further , the recent research findings yield significant insights in the integration of cyber ethics into education and training across sectors. The following reviews strengthens this argument.

UK Cyber Security Council (2023) made a remark that in the world of cyber security, ethical practices are essential for protecting data and maintaining trust. As technology advances, we need to uphold a set of standards when handling sensitive information. Without these guidelines, there can be serious consequences both legally and financially.

Wang (2021) highlighted the relevance cyber ethics in many aspects of individual developments like enhancing safety of data ,following property rights, avoiding misuse of personal information, respecting privacy, enhancing digital wellbeing. Furthermore the study argue that universality of computer technology brings ethical problems. Many data leakage and information abuse contributes to a very serious negative impact on both individuals and society.Once the people have computer ethics and morality, it will be a very effective way in helping current problems.

Petrie et al (2021) paper argues integrating cyber ethics into education and training across sectors to promote digital citizenship, national security, democracy, and social justice. Cyber ethics education can transform professions and society to be more conscious of cyber threats, privacy, and inequities and develop cyber solutions that promote justice, equity, and democratic rights. The paper highlights the data that due to lack of cyber ethics and critical use of cyber technologies made American citizens especially vulnerable to malicious cyber threats.

Whittier (2013) supports the need for cyber ethics since it helps students to unsnarl the complex issues in cyberspace and focus on the need for students to learn to be responsible about their passwords, to respect the privacy of others, and to be empathetic when they see what can embarrass, humiliate, or bully. Moreover, it helps to know about the consequences of unethical behavior in cyberspace and develop virtues like respecting oneself and others, responsibility, empathy for others of actions online, honesty, trust, or trustworthiness in online spaces. Adhering to cyber ethics can help in preventing cybercrime by promoting responsible and ethical behavior online. As stated by Johnson (2016) cyber ethics encourages individuals to respect intellectual property rights refrain from engaging in illegal activities online and report any suspicious or malicious activities to the appropriate authorities.

To reiterate and reinforce ethical principles concerning ethical behavior in cyberspace, the role of cyber ethics is manifold. It is intended to increase the insight and knowledge for information disclosure and the ability to socialize better. As an outcome most of the studies reveals evolving of new contents and educational designs which infuse responsible behaviour and awareness in the areas of different types of computer crimes, privacy, intellectual property, accuracy and accessibility (Aisyah et al, 2020; Stuckelberger & Duggal, 2018; Igwe & Ibegwam, 2014).

## FEATURES OF A CYBER ETHICS EDUCATION

Cyber ethics education can be described as an instructional program aimed at inculcating individuals' knowledge of ethical standards and issues required while using the cyberspace to avoid acts that constitute cybercrimes. (Igwe & Ibegwam, 2014). The features of a cyberethics program as follows:

**Clear Objective:** Just as a regular education cyber ethics education must have a clear objective. This objective, as defined in advance to achieve the desired outcome.

**Accurate Content:** The content must be ideologically correct with the rules and the codes of conduct of the society. (Bian Hua, 2004) It must help to curb unethical practices in cyberspace. Cyber ethics education must focus on raising awareness in achieving positive online behavior. Dissemination of information meets the requirements of responsible behavior.

**Proper Method:** Cyber ethics education should be taught in a lively atmosphere with a great deal of enthusiasm. Students should play an active role and work together with the teachers. Real-time technology intervention is necessary for updating knowledge and understanding. Real-life examples of unethical issues in cyberspace make education more effective.

**Real-life Case Studies:** One of the essential features of a cyber ethics education should be the inclusion of real-life case studies. These case studies provide students with practical examples of ethical dilemmas they may encounter in their online activities. By analyzing and discussing these cases students can develop critical thinking skills and understand the importance of making ethical decisions in the digital world. For instance a case study could involve a scenario where a student discovers a classmate cheating by using an online source during an exam. Through discussions and analysis students can explore the ethical implications of reporting the incident or confronting the classmate privately.

**Ethical Frameworks:** Another important aspect of cyber ethics education is introducing students to various ethical frameworks. By familiarizing students with different ethical theories such as utilitarianism deontology and virtue ethics they can develop a broader understanding of ethical decision-making processes. For example students could discuss the ethical implications of online privacy from different ethical perspectives. They can explore whether the utilitarian approach which focuses on maximizing overall happiness or the deontological approach which emphasizes individual rights and duties is more applicable in the context of online privacy.

## DISCUSSION

Cyber ethics education is imperative, not only for the younger generation but also for all individuals who use digital technologies. (Ramadhan, Dana & Aniati, 2011). It must be properly articulated and integrated into multiple sectors of society. However, the common nature of human behavior is such that people tend to only adhere to ethical standards once it's stipulated under the law and once there are legal ramifications; hence ethical standards concerning ethical behaviour in cyberspace are not adequately backed by appropriate legal provisions and sanctions, they rarely get complete enforceability. (Stuckelberger & Duggal, 2018).

Further more, to effectively incorporate cyber ethics education into the curriculum it is essential to adopt a multidisciplinary approach. This could involve collaboration between educators school administrators and IT professionals to design a comprehensive curriculum that covers topics such as online privacy password security and safe social media practices. (Kilhoffer et al, 2023) Additionally partnering with organizations specializing in cybersecurity such as the National Cybersecurity Alliance can provide valuable resources and expertise.

Finally, cyber ethics education by way of integration, and it is primarily carried out in the educational institution first, it should also be extended outside the classroom at the right time. It should go beyond the classroom into our society and to life. Other organizational collaboration for the dissemination of knowledge and awareness also is ensured for better implementation by reinforcing cyber legal frameworks.

## CONCLUSION

A comprehensive cyber ethics education requires the features such as real-life case studies exposure to various ethical frameworks and an emphasis on digital citizenship. By incorporating these elements into the curriculum students can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the digital world responsibly and ethically. Simultaneously its is believed that implementing and integrating cyber ethics education, is crucial aspect in nurturing ethical awareness and responsible behavior in the digital realm which inturn contributes positive engagement in online spaces , protects privacy, enhance security and build a an accountable digital society.

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