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Young People Combating Hate Speech On-line

Making on-line public space safer by mobilizing young people for human rights, launching a media youth campaign against hate speech in cyberspace and elaborating policy guidelines

**Mapping study
on projects against hate
speech online**

Mapping study on projects against hate speech online

Prepared by the British Institute of Human Rights

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“If we want to build a truly fair and vibrant community of political debate and social exchange, online and offline, it's not enough to ignore harassment of women, LGBT people or people of colour who dare to have opinions. Free speech means being free to use technology and participate in public life without fear of abuse – and if the only people who can do so are white, straight men, the internet is not as free as we'd like to believe.”

Laurie Penny, A woman's opinion is the mini-skirt of the internet

“Any restrictions on the operation of websites, blogs or any other internet-based, electronic or other such information dissemination system, including systems to support such communication, such as internet service providers or search engines, are only permissible to the extent that they are compatible with paragraph 3 [of Article 19]. Permissible restrictions generally should be content-specific; generic bans on the operation of certain sites and systems are not compatible with paragraph 3.”

General Comment No 34 by the Human Rights Committee on Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Table of Contents

1. Executive summary	5
1.1 Methodology.....	6
2. Definitions	8
2.1 Hate speech	8
2.2 Hate speech online (cyberhate)	9
2.3 Cyber bullying.....	10
2.4 Hate sites	11
2.5 Hate crime	11
3. Cyberhate and freedom of expression.....	12
4. The extent of the problem	15
4.2 Target groups.....	17
5. Forms and methods	20
5.1 Hate sites	20
5.2 Blogs and online forums	21
5.3 Emails and personal messages	21
5.4 Gaming.....	22
5.5 Social networking sites (SNS).....	23
5.6 Videos and music	24
5.7 Automated content, astroturfing and fictitious identities.....	26
6. Confronting cyberhate: key strategies	28
6.1 Monitoring and research	29
6.2 Hotlines and complaint forms.....	31
6.3 Working with ISPs and the law.....	32
6.4 Education, training and awareness raising.....	34
6.5 Victim support and community building.....	45
6.6 Public campaigns.....	47
6.7 International and regional initiatives.....	48
7. Recommendations	51
7.1 The four challenges.....	52

1. Executive summary

This paper is designed to inform the Council of Europe's project '**Young People Combating Hate Speech in Cyberspace**'. It looks at a number of existing initiatives to address the problem of cyberhate and, drawing from these, offers suggestions for the project.

In Section 2, we provide a brief account of definitions used in the paper. Many of the concepts associated with cyberhate are given different interpretations, depending on national legislation or the priorities of a particular organisation, and often the limits of these terms are not made clear. In looking for projects designed to combat cyberhate we have been guided by the organisations' understanding of these terms. It is noteworthy that most organisations do not attempt to distinguish between attempts to address the worst and most dangerous forms of hate speech from those which may be merely unpleasant, disturbing or displaying racist or intolerant attitudes.

In Section 3, we briefly address the tension between the rights of individuals and groups to receive protection from harmful and abusive speech, and freedom of expression – both as a right in itself and as the chief 'enabler' of democratic discourse. Many of the initiatives we have identified concentrate on removing offensive content, or lobbying governments and ISPs for stricter regulation and better oversight. While this may be appropriate for the worst forms of hate speech, there is a need both to adopt a graded strategy, depending on the extent of 'hate' involved, and to keep in mind the delicate balance to be struck if protection from abusive content is not to result in over-policing of healthy debate and alternative opinions.

Section 4 addresses the issue of how widespread cyberhate has become. This is not easy to establish – partly because of a failure on the part of many organisations which engage in monitoring the problem to define the limits of the concept. However, there have been various attempts to track the development of cyberhate and most indicate that the problem is growing. This is probably unsurprising given the fact that racism as a whole appears to be on the increase, and the fact that online communication is becoming both more widespread and more sophisticated. Cyberhate is one form of hate speech generally and there is bound to be a close connection between the its online and offline forms¹.

Section 5 outlines the electronic forms and methods used to disseminate hate speech and provides brief examples. It is only to be expected that those engaging in hate speech make use of all available means of electronic communication - including music, videos, online forums and bulletin boards, emails, blogs etc.

Section 6 consists of an outline of various initiatives undertaken by NGOs in Europe and elsewhere. These can be broadly divided into initiatives designed to monitor hate speech, often in order to remove abusive sites or comments; educational initiatives which aim to address the underlying causes or bring the problem to wider attention; meetings, networks and conferences which allow for exchange of experience and good practice on combating hate speech; work with victims or communities to counter the effects of hate speech; and work with ISPs or governments to influence policy.

¹ It should of course be noted that cyberhate – at least in its most serious form – is a tiny part of the totality of views which fill the internet. *Prejudice* may be a different matter.

The final section contains general recommendations for the project, taking into account comments on existing initiatives, the nature of the problem, and the particular age group of those who will be undertaking the project.

1.1 Methodology

The research time available was brief, and the report does not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the issues nor of initiatives to address them. We have concentrated on looking for individual projects or organisations which claim to be addressing the specific issue of hate speech online, rather than on identifying more general attempts to address racism, discrimination or intolerance. It is interesting that relatively few organisations working specifically on cyberhate – of those we have identified - do have a programme to address the underlying causes.

Research has been carried out using internet searches in English and Russian mainly using combinations of the following terms (word order has also been altered):

General terms <i>Words added to 'hate speech' or 'hate sites'</i>	The extent of the problem <i>Words added to terms in Column 1</i>	Initiatives to combat cyberhate <i>Words added to terms in Column 1 or 2 or both</i>
[none], Council of Europe, EU, Europe, OSCE	Monitoring, measuring, survey, statistics, research, extent, regulations	Project, fight, combat, banning, programme, stop, prevent, campaign, education, anti-racism, initiative, ISP
Online, Internet, web sites, email		
Freedom of expression, censorship, free speech, pluralism, tolerance		
Racism, discrimination, sexism, homophobia, disabled, young people, children, youth		

The list is not comprehensive – for example, we also performed some searches with specific countries as the search term. Searches were also carried out using the Russian translation of terms in the table above – but we were able to identify very few initiatives, other than those designed by international organisations. Some links have also been followed to sites in French and Ukrainian as the initiatives were different from anything previously found and were therefore worth recording.

In selecting which results to record we used the following general criteria:

- Originality or uniqueness of approach, methods or results.
- Whether the organisation worked in other ways to combat cyberhate (organisations that worked in more than one direction on cyberhate were given priority)
- Whether other initiatives or results had already been noted for the particular country

- Whether a particular approach had already been noted under a different organisation / country (we aimed not to duplicate very similar approaches)
- Whether the approach was intended to address cyberhate specifically, or 'internet safety' (the first was given priority)
- Relevance to young people

2. Definitions

A number of the concepts closely related to cyberhate are given different interpretations by organisations working in the field – often depending on the region or country where the work is based. Often the terms are not defined at all, and anything *perceived by users* to be an expression of hate is recorded as an instance of hate speech. In identifying projects (Section 5) we have tended to follow the organisations' use, encompassing the widest range of instances – except when referring to terms or examples which are specifically dependent on a legal interpretation.

The advantage of taking the broader interpretation of concepts such as hate speech or cyberhate is that we do not exclude certain initiatives, reports or organisations which refer to the issue in the wider sense. The disadvantage is that different strategies may be more or less appropriate, depending on whether we are speaking of the worst and most dangerous expressions of hate, or of those which are simply extremely unpleasant and shocking. Related to this, but not necessarily defining the boundaries of any campaign, is the question of where freedom of expression can – or should – legitimately be restricted.

The project group will need to address these questions: they will need to arrive at a common enough understanding of where these boundaries should lie and will need to decide whether their work will be targeted on one side or other of the boundaries, or both. They may also need to be alerted to the importance of becoming vigilant while not becoming vigilantes.

2.1 Hate speech

'The term "hate speech" shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin.'

*Appendix to RECOMMENDATION No. R (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers on "Hate Speech"*²

This broad definition is taken as a starting point.

2.1.1. Points to note:

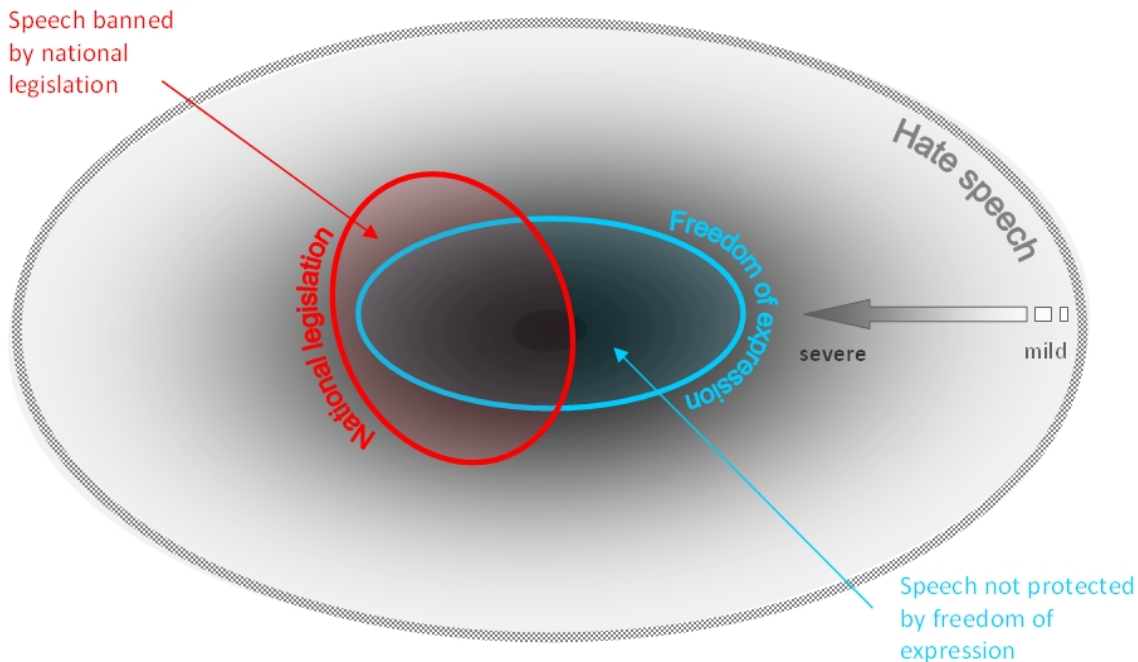
1. Although the definition lists a number of groups which are frequently seen to be the targets of hate speech, it does not limit the possible targets to these groups alone. This is an 'open-ended' definition, in accordance with the open-ended understanding of discrimination adopted by the European Court of Human Rights. In this paper we also look at examples of

² Adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 30 October 1997 at the 607th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies

homophobic and sexist hate speech and instances of intolerance towards people with disabilities or people with different political views.

2. The boundaries of what is regarded as hate speech under this definition are likely to fall outside the boundaries of speech which is criminalised under national legislation. They are also likely to fall outside the boundaries of speech which should not be restricted under freedom of expression (see diagram below). These are important points because the most common strategy of organisations working in this area appears to be to campaign for greater restrictions on content, or to campaign for content to be taken offline.

2.1.2. The boundaries of hate speech



2.2 Hate speech online (cyberhate)

Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime³

Article 2.1 For the purposes of this Protocol:

"racist and xenophobic material" means any written material, any image or any other representation of ideas or theories, which advocates, promotes or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group of individuals, based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, as well as religion if used as a pretext for any of these factors.

³ Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems (Strasbourg, 28.I.2003).

The Council of Europe's **Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime** is concerned only with hate speech which is racist or xenophobic and there are numerous instances of hate directed towards other groups, so we have included instances which 'promote or incite hatred, discrimination, or violence' against such groups as well. We have also considered examples where an individual is targeted because of her identification with a particular group, mainly because the root of this problem is similar and therefore similar strategies are likely to be effective. Perhaps more controversially, we have also included instances where an individual is targeted and there is no apparent link with an underlying intolerance towards a particular group (cyber-bullying). Part of the reason for including – briefly – some of the projects designed to address this problem is that many groups concerned with hatred or abuse online do not bother to distinguish the different cases or causes. A further reason is that the forms of abuse and the methods adopted, are generally very similar, so strategies to address one may overlap with strategies to address the other.

The definition of cyberhate used by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) elaborates on the forms and mechanisms used by those who spread or promote hate online:

"ADL defines Cyber hate as any use of electronic communications technology to spread anti-Semitic, racist, bigoted, extremist or terrorist messages or information. These electronic communications technologies include the Internet (i.e., Web-sites, social networking sites, "Web 2.0" user-generated content, dating sites, blogs, on-line games, instant messages, and E-mail) as well as other computer- and cell phone-based information technologies (such as text messages and mobile phones)."

From Responding to Cyberhate, Toolkit for Action (ADL)⁴

2.3 Cyber bullying

"Cyberbullying is related to, but is different from, Cyberhate. In a school context, cyberbullying means any electronic communication including, but not limited to, one shown to be motivated by a student's actual or perceived race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry or ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability, gender, gender identity and expression, or other distinguishing personal characteristic, or based on association with any person identified above, when the written, verbal or physical act or electronic communication is intended to:

- (i) Physically harm a student or damage the student's property; or
- (ii) Substantially interfere with a student's educational opportunities; or
- (iii) Be so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment; or
- (iv) Substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the school.

Responding to Cyberhate, Toolkit for Action (ADL)

⁴ http://www.adl.org/internet/Binder_final.pdf

As noted above, cyberbullying may only be of relevance to the project when it is primarily directed at individuals because of their association with a particular group.

2.4 Hate sites

"An Internet hate site is a web site (or web page) maintained by an organized hate group on which hatred is expressed, through any form of textual, visual, or audio-based rhetoric, for a person or persons, or which provides information about how individuals can support the group's ideological objectives."

Untangling the Web of Hate, Brett Barnett (2007)

The technologies of Web 2.0, which allow for extensive user interaction have resulted in hate spreading outwards from what are more narrowly known as 'hate sites'. This report addresses hate speech both on sites dedicated to particular hate groups, and elsewhere – such as in emails or other personal messages, through gaming, comments on blogs and forums, music, videos – and so on.

2.5 Hate crime

Hate crimes are criminal acts committed with a bias motive⁵. Every hate crime has two elements. The first element is that an act is committed that constitutes a criminal offence under ordinary criminal law. The second element is that the offender intentionally chose a target with a protected characteristic. A protected characteristic is a characteristic shared by a group, such as "race", language, religion, ethnicity, nationality or any other similar common factor⁶

Crime Laws: A Practical Guide, (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2009), p. 16⁷

Online hate crime is clearly narrower than hate crime generally – and cyberhate narrower still, since many examples of cyberhate are likely not to constitute criminal activity in the specific country where they take place. In general, we avoid speaking of hate crime in this report, mainly because the legislation differs too much from one country to another. There may, however, be a question for organisations in specific countries as to whether domestic legislation is adequate (or over-adequate) to deal with the problem of cyberhate – particularly where it is likely to lead to criminal activity in the real world; and whether the legal route may be relevant in efforts to combat hate speech online.

⁵ This definition appears in the OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 9/09, "Combating Hate Crimes", Athens, 1-2 December 2009, <http://www.osce.org/cio/40695>

⁶ *Hate Crime Laws: A Practical Guide*, (Warsaw: ODIHR, 2009), p. 16, <http://www.osce.org/odihhr/36426>

⁷ <http://www.osce.org/odihhr/36426>

3. Cyberhate and freedom of expression

JOINT DECLARATION ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE INTERNET⁸

a. Freedom of expression applies to the Internet, as it does to all means of communication. Restrictions on freedom of expression on the Internet are only acceptable if they comply with established international standards, including that they are provided for by law, and that they are necessary to protect an interest which is recognised under international law ...

b. When assessing the proportionality of a restriction on freedom of expression on the Internet, the impact of that restriction on the ability of the Internet to deliver positive freedom of expression outcomes must be weighed against its benefits in terms of protecting other interests.

UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information

Even within the Council of Europe member states there is little common ground concerning the need, or otherwise, for legislation to prohibit hate speech. Article 10 of the ECHR allows member states some margin of appreciation on this matter and there are fairly significant differences in national legislation across Council of Europe countries. These may partly be led by cultural differences, partly by historical fact, but also by the need – or perceived need – for greater or lesser protection for commonly targeted groups in countries which do not face identical challenges.

This report is not the place for a detailed examination either of differences in national legislation or of the complex relationship between freedom of expression and the suppression of hate speech. But given the fact that the tendency among those working on the issue of hate speech online appears to lean towards greater legislation - or at least, greater supervision of sites or groups which engage in hate speech - it is worth noting the key principles which have guided the European Court of Human Rights in determining where the balance should be struck.

Firstly, it is recognised within the European Convention of Human Rights that some expression may fall outside the protection of Article 10 (Freedom of Expression) where the requirements of Article 17 are met, that is, where persons or groups are engaged in activities aimed at the destruction, or limitation, of the Convention rights themselves.

⁸ Joint Declaration by The United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Organization of American States (OAS) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, <http://www.osce.org/fom/78309>

Secondly, even if the test for Article 17 is not met, Article 10 itself is a qualified right and governments may – and in some circumstances should – limit expression where it is necessary in a democratic society to pursue one of the aims referred to in Article 10 (2), but only in so far as they are provided for by law and in a manner which is proportionate. The test against which such limitations are evaluated is a strict one.

The Human Rights Committee on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, in General Comment 34, has also provided guidance on the question:

Any restrictions on the operation of websites, blogs or any other internet-based, electronic or other such information dissemination system, including systems to support such communication, such as internet service providers or search engines, are only permissible to the extent that they are compatible with paragraph 3⁹ [of Article 19]. Permissible restrictions generally should be content-specific; generic bans on the operation of certain sites and systems are not compatible with paragraph 3. It is also inconsistent with paragraph 3 to prohibit a site or an information dissemination system from publishing material solely on the basis that it may be critical of the government or the political social system espoused by the government

*General Comment No 34*¹⁰, Human Rights Committee on Freedom of Opinion and Expression

Despite the Committee’s recommendation that restrictions should be ‘content-specific’, the point is not that the content of an expression is itself the deciding factor. Rather, it is the *impact* of the expression - whether in a particular instance it is likely to incite violence or hatred, or affect the rights of others – and also its intent or purpose which should help us to determine whether the line has been crossed. Any discussion of hate speech must also be informed by careful consideration of how, where, and by whom the impact and intent should be assessed.

What these considerations underline is that any attempt to address the issue of hate speech online through bans or restricting content must of course be informed by the potential danger or damage to particular individuals or groups; but it must also recognise the need ‘to avoid the risk of undermining democracy on the grounds of defending it¹¹’. Speech - in all its forms - is fundamental to democracy, and so is a

⁹ Paragraph 3 states that: “The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

1. (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
2. (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.”

¹⁰ <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/GC34.pdf>

¹¹ RECOMMENDATION No. R (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on “Hate Speech” (1997) http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/doc/cm/rec%281997%29020&expmem_EN.asp

degree of 'tolerance' towards ideas or ideologies which we may find distasteful - but not dangerous.

Given the broad interpretation of hate speech which many organisations use in their work, it is important that attempts to combat the problem keep in mind this balance, and pay attention to the need for different approaches, depending on the context of the utterances, the intended aim or motivation, the profile of the individuals or groups which have been targeted, and the likely consequences. A recent article by Sergei Smirnov of the Russian Human Right Network¹² illustrates the dangers in assuming that legislation designed to protect the most vulnerable may not come to be used by the most powerful to protect either financial interests or political reputation. He lists a number of cases where politicians or companies have successfully used legislation to remove sites or comments which they regarded as detrimental to their interests.

Nevertheless, and despite the dangers, it is clear that the worst expressions of hate are not only very hurtful, but also potentially dangerous, and therefore almost certainly require some supervision and control. Speech is a powerful weapon which can be used to marginalise, intimidate and demean still further those who have already been rendered vulnerable by society. The ease and global reach of the internet, and the dangers in allowing free reign to all forms of expression - not just for individuals and groups but for society as a whole – at times necessitate restriction of free speech. Control of the more extreme forms of hate speech are not carried out despite human rights, but in the name of human rights.

¹² Сергей Смирнов, Борьба за чистый Интернет http://www.library.cjes.ru/online/?a=con&b_id=795

4. The extent of the problem

"I get at least five sexually threatening emails a day." One of the least obscene recent messages read: "You're gonna scream when you get yours. Fucking slag. Butter wouldn't fucking melt, and you'll cry rape when you get what you've asked for. Bitch."

*Caroline Farrow, journalist and blogger, Nov. 2011*¹³

It is difficult to obtain accurate estimates of the extent of hate speech online. Although many NGOs carry out their own monitoring, this is rarely comprehensive, and definitions of what constitutes hate speech – or the focus of monitoring - differ from country to country. There are further difficulties associated with methods of monitoring, particularly in an internet world which is increasingly user-generated, interconnected, and consisting of multiple forms of content. Personal messages and emails are clearly particularly difficult to track.

However, in general, there seems to be consensus that the problem of cyberhate is increasing both in magnitude, and in the variety of strategies used. The 2011 edition of the Simon Wiesenthal annual Digital Terror & Hate Report¹⁴ notes a 12% increase to 14,000 'problematic social networks websites, forums, blogs, twitter, etc. (up from 11,500 last year), comprised on the subculture of hate'.

A further measure is provided by the Internet Security system, Websense, which claims to be tracking about 15,000 'hate and militancy' sites, and which reported that racism, hate, and militancy sites tripled in number over 2009¹⁵. In particular, they report a substantial increase on social networking sites and other Web 2.0 sites such as YouTube, Yahoo! Groups, and Google Groups. However, the filtering system used by the company is a crude one: a number of sites have complained that they have been classified incorrectly as hate sites – and have later been re-classified by Websense as acceptable.

One reason behind the difficulty for NGOs in obtaining accurate statistics is the fact that hate speech is rarely confined to easily identifiable 'hate sites'. Furthermore, even where the sites are logged by monitoring organisations and then removed as a result of a complaint, they will frequently be set up anew using a different service provider (often in a different country). This, together with the particular features of Web 2.0 technology, which allows users to post comments, set up individual blogs, upload music, images or video content with extreme ease, makes comprehensive tracking both time-consuming and complicated, as well as being a task requiring constant vigilance.

¹³ Quoted in 'Women bloggers call for a stop to 'hateful' trolling by misogynist men'
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/05/women-bloggers-hateful-trolling>

¹⁴ Digital Terrorism and Hate Report launched at Museum of Tolerance, February 2011
<http://www.wiesenthal.com/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=IsKWLbPJLnF&b=4441467&ct=9141065>

¹⁵ Racism, hate, militancy sites proliferating via social networking, Networkworld, May 2009
<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2009/052909-hate-sites.html>

The spread of methods used and the over-spilling of hate speech onto ‘normal’ sites is perhaps the issue which presents most difficulties in attempts to combat the problem. Hate sites whose purpose is to recruit individuals or engage in planning of hate crimes can in theory be removed with more ease, and individuals can be prosecuted. But the ‘lesser’ problem of hate speech generally is both more widespread and, partly for that reason, more difficult to erase (even temporarily). The key challenge is almost certainly to ‘erase’ the attitudes which give rise to such a multitude of abusive comments, rather than to attempt to police them whenever they arise.

In Section 5 (below) we outline various initiatives by NGOs to monitor sites which target individuals or groups.

4.1.1. Young people and cyberhate

We have found relatively few attempts to track young people’s involvement specifically in cyberhate – as opposed to surveys which look at internet safety in general, with an emphasis on avoiding sexually explicit sites. One organisation that has produced a survey which looked at young people, and isolated hate (together with bullying), is the Canadian Media Awareness Network. However, in common with many other studies – and for understandable reasons – the survey deals with perceptions and does not attempt to measure these perceptions against a freedom of expression standard. It is therefore difficult to assess what proportion of the comments which were perceived as hate might be considered to cross the line of acceptability.

Online Bullying and Exposure to Hate¹⁶

- One quarter of young Internet users (25%) say that someone has e-mailed them material that said hateful things about others. Of those, 35% did nothing about it. Twenty-nine per cent of those respondents replied to the e-mails themselves.
- More than half of all young Internet users (56%) use instant messaging. Of these, 14% indicate that they've been threatened while using instant messaging.
- Sixteen per cent of young Internet users say they have posted comments on the Internet that were hateful toward a person or group of people. Of those, 60% were male.
- Among youth in secondary school, only 21% say they have household rules about saying insulting things in their instant messaging or e-mail.

Media Awareness Network, Canada

¹⁶ From ‘Young Canadians in a Wired World’, a national school-based survey of 5,272 children and youth in Grades 4 to 11, and qualitative research findings from focus groups with parents and young people aged 11 to 17. 2003 – 2005.

4.1.2. The extent of cyberbullying

There is more research on the issue of cyberbullying. One detailed study was carried out between 2009-11 by 'EU KidsOnline' to investigate children in Europe's use, risk and safety online. Interviews were conducted with 25,000 European children and their parents in 25 countries¹⁷. Some of the key findings are given below:

EU KidsOnline Survey

- Across Europe, 6 per cent of 9 to 16-year-old internet users reported having been bullied online, and 3 per cent confessed to having bullied others.
- Far more had been bullied offline, with 19 per cent saying they had been bullied at all – and 12 per cent having bullied someone else
- 56 per cent of online bullies said they had also bullied people face-to-face, and 55 per cent of online victims said they had also been bullied face-to-face.

The report notes the close connection between people who bully online and offline, and also between victims and perpetrators of bullying. The authors suggest that 'Online and offline bullying should be seen as connected, part of a vicious cycle in which perpetrators reach their victims through diverse means and victims find it hard to escape'.

There are numerous stories¹⁸ of children or young people who have been damaged, and have even committed suicide as a result of cyberbullying, often reinforcing bullying which takes place offline.

Alexa Berman, 14, of Brookfield, Conn., hangs herself in her bedroom three days before starting high school. Adopted from Russia as a 3-year-old, she had made a smooth transition until adolescence, when former friends tormented her in person and over instant messages.

Teens who have committed suicide after being bullied online, Aug. 23, 2008

4.2 Target groups

Hate crime statistics can provide some indication of trends in attitudes towards particular groups, and they can also – when disaggregated sufficiently – provide an indication of the key target groups in a particular society. The OSCE has been collecting

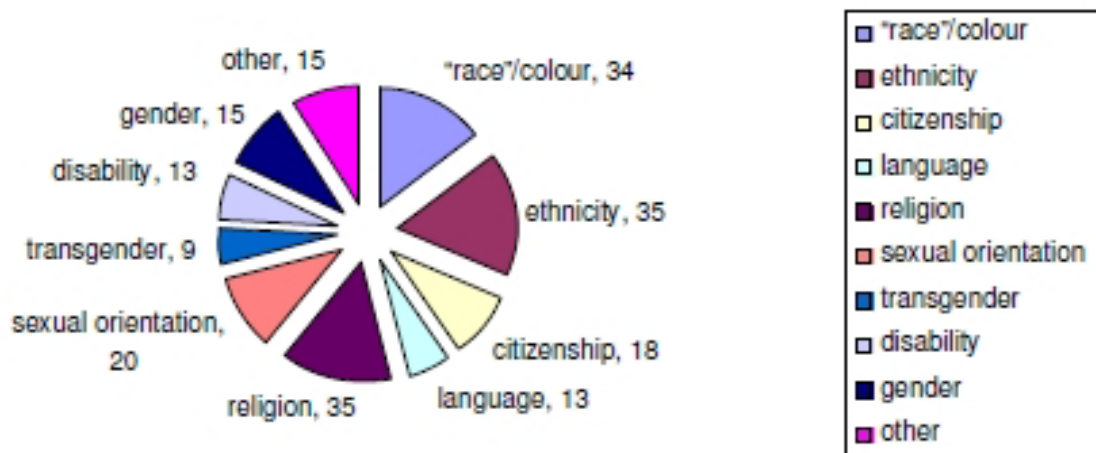
¹⁷ [http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20II%20\(2009-11\)/EUKidsOnlineIIReports/Final%20report.pdf](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20II%20(2009-11)/EUKidsOnlineIIReports/Final%20report.pdf)

¹⁸ See, for example 'Teens who have committed suicide after being bullied online', <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130248877>

figures from member countries¹⁹ and has broken the figures down according to groups which are most frequently targeted (or perhaps more relevantly, for which governments supply information). Diagram 2 on the next page illustrates the overall picture. However, perhaps the most striking feature of the tables published by the OSCE are the huge gaps in information submitted, and the very low figures for certain countries compared to others. These low figures appear to be not so much an indicator that hate crime is absent in these particular countries – other information does not back up such a conclusion – but that there are very few prosecutions for such crimes.

The OSCE report also notes that for those countries that do submit figures, and where the numbers are higher, there is not consistency in the groups which are disaggregated, and the figures for many important groups are frequently not recorded. Diagram 1 provides a snapshot of figures from some countries to illustrate these points.

Diagram 1: Bias motivations recorded in hate crime figures



A report from ENAR²⁰ lists a number of groups which have not been documented and for which countries do not appear to collect (or submit) evidence. One interesting feature is the recognition that target groups differ across Europe – which is of course to be expected. This, together with the differences in legislation across European countries, may be an important consideration in designing an all-Europe campaign to address hate speech.

¹⁹ Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region (2009) <http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/73636.pdf>

²⁰ ENAR Factsheet No2, Racist Violence and Support to Victims. December 2009 <http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/FS42%20-%20racist%20violence%20and%20support%20to%20victims%20EN.pdf>

Diagram 2: Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: Police Reports, Prosecutions and Convictions in 2007, 2008 and 2009

Participating State	Type of data	Cases recorded by police 2009	Cases recorded by police 2008	Cases recorded by police 2007	Cases prosecuted 2009	Cases prosecuted 2008	Cases prosecuted 2007	Cases sentenced 2009	Cases sentenced 2008	Cases sentenced 2007
Albania										
Andorra		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armenia			0	0		0	0		0	0
Austria	Data represent the total number of offences with xenophobic/ racist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic motives.	61	91	65						
Slovenia			22	24						
Spain		23	38	224		246	0			
Sweden	Data include crimes of incitement to hatred and discrimination crimes.	5797	5895	3536	450	290	290			
Switzerland	Data include discrimination crimes.				36	27		28	9	
Tajikistan										
Turkey	Data include crimes of incitement to hatred and discrimination crimes.				250	258	203	242	97	39
Turkmenistan										
Ukraine	Data include crimes of incitement to hatred and discrimination crimes.		8	2		1	0		1	0
United Kingdom		52,102 (crimes in England and Wales) 6,590 (crimes in Scotland)	46,300 (crimes in England and Wales)		13,030 (crimes in England and Wales)	14,186 (crimes in England and Wales)		10,690 (crimes in England and Wales)		

5. Forms and methods

The following section outlines briefly the main methods used to spread hate on the internet, with examples. The examples are far from being the worst. They are probably the ‘best’ of the worst, the ones that may just be printable in a document such as this.

5.1 Hate sites

12 per cent of European 11-16 year olds claimed to have seen hate sites in 2009, rising to one in five 15-16 year olds.²¹

A hate site is a site dedicated to promoting or inciting hate against a particular group or groups. The most ‘effective’ hate sites may be seen as those which employ all of the available methods of electronic communication. They form hubs of hate for the purposes of building communities, spreading a particular ideology, recruiting newcomers, and sometimes – though not inevitably – encouraging or promoting hate crime.

New technologies have put new tools into the hands of those who wish to spread such messages and hate sites today make full use of blogs, social networking sites, videos and open forums. Many of the forms or specific sites mentioned below will link through various routes to each other, and sometimes to a general site where supporters and newcomers may aggregate.



“Stormfront, arguably the largest white power online forum, sees racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic and xenophobic YouTube videos reposted there by the hundreds. A single thread, titled ‘YouTube,’ has 1,170 posts – most of which contain reposted YouTube videos of white power bands, hate group leader’s speeches, and various white nationalist call-to-action videos. Other threads on Stormfront encourage members to post videos to YouTube, as a way to spread white nationalist ideals.”

Stop Racism Collective (Canada)

The worst examples of hate sites can often be taken offline - either because they infringe legislation in the country where they are based, or by lobbying the service provider. Sites based in the US are, however, particularly 'well-protected' and the process of removing them may be lengthy if not impossible. Of equal if not greater concern is the fact that hate groups have become more conscious of the need to propagate their ideology in terms which do not obviously come across as racist. The language is often more subtle, the messages are hidden

²¹ Result from the survey ‘EUKidsOnline’

[http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20II%20\(2009-11\)/EUKidsOnlineIIReports/Final%20report.pdf](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/EU%20Kids%20II%20(2009-11)/EUKidsOnlineIIReports/Final%20report.pdf)

beneath multiple examples or narrow statistics which confirm negative stereotypes about particular groups - but only because of the absence of other information. The sites of nationalist political parties are one example. It is perhaps a consideration that the suppression of openly hateful sites could lead to authors of such sites adopting more sophisticated, more insidious forms of hate. These may be just as damaging, but harder to identify - and much more difficult to control or neutralise.

5.2 Blogs and online forums

In Hong Kong after a 31-year old woman jumped 24 stories to her death in December of 2007, a mob of bloggers, called the “human flesh search engine,” accused her husband, of being responsible for her death. Internet users used his admitted affair as bait to saturate him with harassing messages and death threats.

*Cyber hate on the rise, UN Radio*²²

Hate Blogs provide one form in which individuals are able to display racist or intolerant views for general view, but ‘haters’ also target the blogs of potential victims through comments on *their* sites. For some groups, or in some countries, this may be the preferred form: comments can be anonymous, new identities can be set up with ease, the impact on the individual concerned can be immediate - and a few negative comments on a blog or in a forum are likely to encourage others to join in. If comments are un-moderated - or if the 'moderation' is done by individuals who support the attacks, the result can be that the site quickly chases away members prepared to offer counter-examples or arguments. There is a closing down of debate and those left behind become a mutually supporting community sharing only negative comments or stereotypes.

Hate mails and offensive and threatening messages on public discussion forums, in particular on Usenet (newsgroups) are much more common [than hate sites].

Another “trend” are SMS messages sent to mobile phones owned by persons with a non-Danish background⁸, including pictures of a black man strung up in a robe, subtitled “White power”²³.

David Hopmann, Danish Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC)

5.3 Emails and personal messages

Interview with David Goldman, creator of HateWatch

²² <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2009/06/cyber-hate-on-the-rise/>

²³ From ‘Hate on the Net’ (INACH) <http://www.inach.net/content/inach-hateonthenet.pdf>

IR: What about other aspects of the Net, like chat rooms, E-mail lists and discussion groups? Are they more useful to extremists?

GOLDMAN: Number one is E-mail, E-mail, E-mail. E-mail lists are a fantastic way to pull people together because you can talk to one another directly.

And one-to-one E-mail is a powerful tool, particularly when somebody of the stature of a Don Black sends you a personalized E-mail message. So I think what we're seeing now is a return back to older technologies based on text rather than images or graphics.

There are other examples of this. In chat rooms, which are populated mainly by young people, you can swear and use racial epithets with a certain amount of ease, and that helps to support your own stereotypes and racial bigotry. Unlike hate sites, these chat rooms create a sense of immediacy and community.

*Cyberhate Revisited*²⁴

Private emails or personal messages are perhaps the hardest medium to control or influence. As the extract above indicates, emails may be used to draw in supporters and spread ideology in private spaces which are almost impossible to monitor. Personal messages are also used to target and intimidate individuals, often resulting in self-censorship or the individuals removing themselves from the public gaze.

“After one particular round of rape threats, including the suggestion that, for criticising neoliberal economic policymaking, I should be made to fellate a row of bankers at knifepoint, I was informed that people were searching for my home address...

I'd like to say that none of this bothered me – to be one of those women who are strong enough to brush off the abuse, which is always the advice given by people who don't believe bullies and bigots can be fought. Sometimes I feel that speaking about the strength it takes just to turn on the computer, or how I've been afraid to leave my house, is an admission of weakness. Fear that it's somehow your fault for not being strong enough is, of course, what allows abusers to continue to abuse.”

*Laurie Penny, journalist and blogger, Nov. 2011*²⁵.

5.4 Gaming

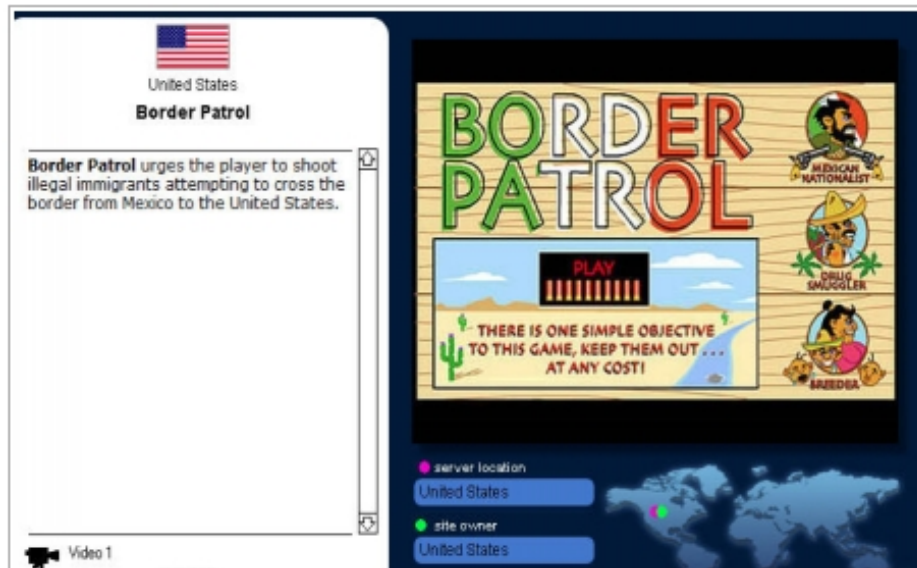
Hate groups are creating their own anti-Semitic and racist online games to incite violence and genocide. The objective of the computer game Ethnic Cleansing, for example, is to kill “subhumans”, also known as Blacks and Latinos, along with their Jewish “evil

²⁴ <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2001/spring/the-year-in-hate/cyberhate-revisited>

²⁵ ‘A woman's opinion is the mini-skirt of the internet’, Laurie Penny, 2011.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/laurie-penny-a-womans-opinion-is-the-miniskirt-of-the-internet-6256946.html>

masters". Hate groups are also reaching young people by developing hate versions of popular computer games.

*Barbara Zimmerman, Q and A: Hate on the Internet*²⁶



The compelling world of online games, where users appear to inhabit a parallel world and actions can be presented as having no impact on real individuals is particularly effective in reinforcing stereotypes and presenting 'solutions' which target particular groups – often through violence. Games are increasingly used to propagate myths, build prejudice and create communities. There is a high possibility that immersion in such games, many of which are highly sophisticated and use real groups as the 'enemy', helps to blur the distinction between fantasy and reality. 'Facts' presented in the game world are very likely to be carried over to the real world.

Promotion for the game 'Ethnic Cleansing'

The race war has begun. Your skin is your uniform in this battle for the survival of your kind. The White Race depends on you to secure its existence. Your people's enemies surround you in a sea of decay and filth that they have brought to your once clean and white nation. Not one of their numbers shall be spared.

Quoted in Handbook of Children, Culture and Violence: Dowd, Singer, Wilson

5.5 Social networking sites (SNS)

Most of the SNS have terms of use which prohibit racism, calls to violence, or other forms of abusive and discriminatory content. However, the ease with which these pages can be set up and the strong networking possibilities they offer mean that the terms of use, unless carefully

²⁶ <http://kiwiccommons.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Hate-on-the-Internet.pdf>

monitored, are relatively ineffective. Facebook and other SNS are cluttered with users' pages which target particular groups directly – such as the first one below – and even with groups which call explicitly for violence – such as the Ku-Klux-Klan screenshot shown below that. Although in theory such sites can be removed, they are often difficult to find, because they may only be accessible to the site's 'friends'. And once removed, it is not too difficult for the groups to restore the pages using a different username.



Captured at:

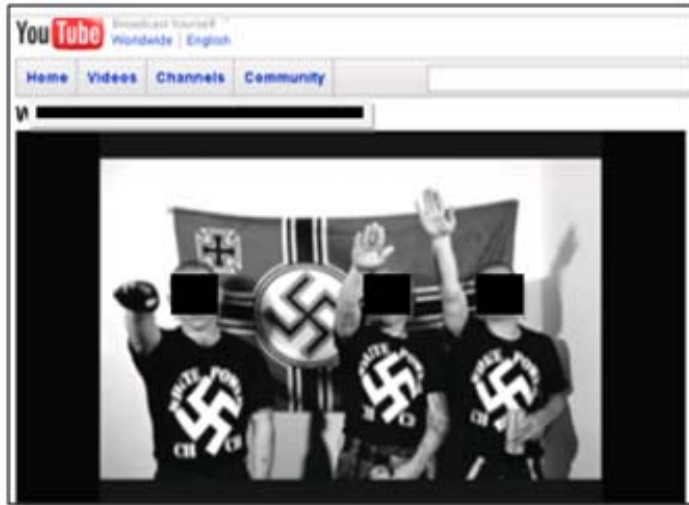
<http://securitylab.websense.com/content/Blogs/3404.aspx>



5.6 Videos and music

Hate music and videos are also used to attract supporters – and often to raise revenue for racist groups. Record companies set up by such groups will typically also contain links to games, videos, forums or other sites with connected ideologies. Hate sites, in turn, link to the download page for music clips or the record company itself.

Although YouTube has terms which forbid the posting of racist or violent videos, the volume of traffic, the anonymity of posters, and perhaps the lack of a strong desire to enforce their own terms means that hate groups or individuals can put up videos containing apparently forbidden content with ease. The same is true of most other video posting sites.



The lyrics of 'hate songs' – another popular recruiting tool - range from the mildly racist to extreme forms of incitement. For example, the Grinded Nig (Texas) song "Splatterday, Nigger Day" contains the lyrics:

*"Drive around in my van
We want to kill a nigger
They are in the city
Follow one into the alley
We all attack the nigger
He has seen his last day."*

Interview with David Goldman, creator of HateWatch

GOLDMAN: The far more important way kids get into this movement is through the music.

IR: You're talking about [racist white power music](#).

GOLDMAN: Yes. That's why [neo-Nazi [National Alliance](#) leader] [William Pierce](#) bought [Resistance Records](#) [America's leading distributor of racist music]. Once you start listening, buying CDs, maybe it's time to take that next step and go to one of the concerts. That's where the next step, actual recruitment, takes place. It's real life, not just logging on to a web site. Now the kid has taken a step in real life.

*Cyberhate Revisited*²⁷

²⁷ <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-report/browse-all-issues/2001/spring/the-year-in-hate/cyberhate-revisited>

5.7 Automated content, astroturfing and fictitious identities

As far as hate speech is concerned, this section is more a possible view of the not-too-distant future than a form of dissemination for which we have found concrete evidence. The key factor linking the methods identified in the title of this section is the element of deceit, the pretence that a particular piece of content has been generated by a single individual. In some cases, the content may in fact have been generated by a computer programme; in others, it has been generated by a company or movement with a particular agenda to push.

Astroturfing is a form of [advocacy](#) in support of a [political](#), organizational, or corporate agenda, designed to give the appearance of a "[grassroots](#)" movement. The goal of such campaigns is to disguise the efforts of a political or [commercial entity](#) as an independent public reaction to another political entity—a politician, political group, product, service or event. The term is a derivation of [AstroTurf](#), a brand of synthetic carpeting designed to look like natural grass.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astroturfing#Examples>

‘Astroturfing’ has been a feature of the internet for some time and has been widely used by – among others - governments²⁸, tobacco companies²⁹, climate change ‘deniers’³⁰ and health providers or insurance firms³¹. It does not seem implausible that such methods may come to be used – if they are not already – by groups attempting to disseminate a racist message. This task will be made easier by the use of computer programmes which can be used to simulate a human being, but which have the advantage of not requiring vast numbers of *real* human beings to carry out the task.

A number of recent reports have also highlighted the increasing volume of ‘bots’ and other electronically generated traffic on the internet³². While the majority of bots have traditionally slunk about the internet, disrupting the human experience or collecting information, more forward-thinking human designers of automated programmes have begun to explore the potential not only to collect, but also to disseminate important messages. For these as yet still new creations, a visible presence becomes essential – but the visibility is in the message and not, of course, in the originator of the message.

A series of recent email exchanges between the US Military and a private contractor suggest that machine-generated content for the purposes of propaganda has already become a reality. ‘Persona management software ’ uses artificial identities, manufactured to appear as real human beings, to send out messages on SNS and other internet forums:

²⁸ <http://arstechnica.com/science/news/2011/07/astroturfing-a-major-challenge-to-climate-change.ars>

²⁹ http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=National_Smokers_Alliance

³⁰ <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/1806738/greenpeace-uncovers-astroturf-campaign-challenge-us-climate>

³¹ Bennett, James T. and DiLorenzo, Thomas D. (1998), *CancerScam: a diversion of federal cancer funds to politics*, Transaction Publishers, ISBN 1-56000-334-0

³² Recent [research by Incapsula](#) showed that approximately half of all Web traffic stems from automated sources

...we will create a set of personas on twitter, blogs, forums, buzz, and myspace under created names that fit the profile (satellitejockey, hack3rman, etc). These accounts are maintained and updated automatically through RSS feeds, retweets, and linking together social media commenting between platforms. With a pool of these accounts to choose from, once you have a real name persona you create a Facebook and LinkedIn account using the given name, lock those accounts down and link these accounts to a selected '#' of previously created social media accounts, automatically pre-aging the real accounts...

Using the assigned social media accounts we can automate the posting of content that is relevant to the persona. In this case there are specific social media strategy website RSS feeds we can subscribe to and then repost content on twitter with the appropriate hashtags. In fact using hashtags and gaming some location based check-in services we can make it appear as if a persona was actually at a conference and introduce himself/herself to key individuals as part of the exercise, as one example. There are a variety of social media tricks we can use to add a level of realness to all fictitious personas

From a leaked email, reported at <http://boingboing.net/2011/02/18/hbqarys-high-volume.html>

It is not yet clear that such methods have reached widespread use – but the use of such methods for dissemination of information or messages is clearly extremely powerful. It seems highly likely that as the technology becomes more widely known, it will be picked up by other groups and begin to increase in volume³³. We have described an initiative in Section 6.4.4 which uses computer generated content to address racism on the internet.

³³ See also Revealed: US spy operation that manipulates social media:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/mar/17/us-spy-operation-social-networks>

6. Confronting cyberhate: key strategies

There are a number of national organisations and international networks which work exclusively on one or more of cyberhate, cybercrime, cyberbullying - particularly where these involve young people - or internet safety. Of these, by far the largest number appear to be concerned with cyberbullying and crime: specifically, with protecting young people from pornographic sites and sexual exploitation. Where this is the focus of an organisation, rather than the broader issue of extremist views online, there may still be a strand of work or a single project devoted to the problem of cyberhate. The approach taken will often sit on the back of the general advice or assistance given to internet users about keeping safe online.

For those organisations whose main orientation is cyberhate and the problem of racist or extremist views online, there are generally a broad range of initiatives undertaken – often including educational activities, receiving complaints or notification from the public, general monitoring of the problem, and guidance on safe use of the internet. Organisations will often follow up on complaints themselves and either engage in campaigns for better laws or a more rigorous approach by internet service providers (ISPs) towards removing such sites. A few such organisations pursue complaints in the courts.

A third group of organisations work on issues such as racism and xenophobia, children's rights or human rights generally - and cyberhate will often be included as one aspect of this work. In general, such organisations tend to focus on activities which raise awareness or promote a better understanding of the issues in question but they may also receive complaints through a hotline or contact form.

The next section outlines in more details some of the specific initiatives undertaken by different organisations – and sometimes by individuals. These have been divided into separate areas of activity, but many – if not most – initiatives will overlap or involve one or more simultaneously:

- 1. Monitoring and research.**
- 2. Receiving and investigating complaints.**
- 3. Working with ISPs and the law**
- 4. Education , training and awareness raising**
- 5. Public campaigns**
- 6. Victim support and community building**
- 7. International cooperation**

6.1 Monitoring and research

Monitoring the extent of the problem is clearly key both to understanding the extent and range of sites covered, forms taken and groups targeted – but it is also important in selecting ways of dealing with the problem. Many European countries appear to have at least one organisation which attempts to track the scale of the problem, but ‘monitoring’ frequently involves no more than collecting complaints from users – which, although better than nothing, does not give an accurate picture of the extent of the problem.

Some of the difficulties in conducting successful monitoring have been outlined in Section 4 above. Surveys or statistics from a hotline may illustrate increasing user vigilance and responsibility for content they find upsetting or shocking, which is undoubtedly a success of sorts. But such statistics can rarely be a useful measure either of the amount of hate speech on the web, or of whether that amount is increasing or decreasing – not least because a single category is often used to cover both pornographic sites and hate sites – ‘sites with harmful content’, or ‘offensive material’. More importantly, however, in contrast to pornographic material, which is normally fairly easily identified, one of the dangers of online hate is that young people – in particular – may be sucked into a community who share negative perceptions of particular groups; and who build on this shared perception by spreading misinformation. Newcomers are likely to be taken in by the misinformation – particularly if they already have a negative view of the target groups – and this is likely to lead to reinforcement of those views. Complaints are only likely to be submitted by those who recognise that the new ‘community’ has passed a line of acceptability.

Two interesting initiatives have approached the question of monitoring the problem of cyberhate in very different, but perhaps equally useful ways. The first, MRAP, has attempted to map out in a fairly comprehensive way the number and forms of hate sites. The second organisation, IHRPEX, has taken a narrower approach and has focussed on the most popular national news sites, looking both at which groups are more frequently targeted for abuse, and at how frequently this happens.

1. The French organisation MRAP (Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples³⁴) conducted a thoroughgoing piece of research between 2008 - 2009 into sites containing instances of hate speech against various groups. The research documented over 2000 URLs, including not just obvious hate sites, but links to and from these sites leading to forums, blogs, social networking sites and individual videos or other forms of multi-media. A picture of a series of highly interconnected ‘hate networks’ emerged, which served to illustrate the sophistication of many hate groups in spreading their ideology and recruiting new members. The viewing of one video, for example, was likely to lead users to

³⁴ <http://www.mrap.fr>

further videos, hate-music, communities which shared the same views, and various resources – many of which could be purchased online.

2. The Ukrainian organisation IHRPEX (The Institute of Human Rights and the Prevention of Xenophobia³⁵) carried out a detailed analysis of 20 of the main Ukrainian social and political websites – including both electronic versions of popular Ukrainian media and a number of independent sites. The organisation also polled 623 users of these sites in order to assess their attitudes towards examples of abuse on these websites. They looked for content which displayed ‘verbal offences, threats and displays of aggression to a certain social group or a certain person’ and limited research to key articles included on the sites and to comments beneath these articles.

Some of the results are included below:

- 71% of discussion threads relating to articles contained comments thought to be abusive
- Approximately one in three comments were perceived as abusive
- About 9% of articles were judged to contain examples of hate speech: a third of the views expressed belonged to the author of the article, and about 70% were views of other people quoted by the author
- 9 of 10 respondents claimed to have seen abusive content – mostly on discussion threads. 80% encountered the displays of hatred in comments, 77% - on forums, blogs and in chats.

From a summary of the report ‘The phenomenon of cyber-hatred on the Ukrainian Internet’³⁶, May 2011

We have not been able to access the full report, so it is not clear to what extent statements that were ‘perceived to be’ examples of hate speech would actually constitute hate speech. However, the results are revealing because of what they indicate about the extent to which the most popular media sites allow – and engage in – commentary which appears to display hatred towards particular groups or individuals. Interesting, also, was the breakdown of this content which enabled IHRPEX to identify some of the main targets of abuse. The main targets of abuse (35% of negative commentary) turned out to be directed at representatives of the political elite – in particular, the Ukrainian President and (now former) Prime Minister. Given the political status of these individuals, it is hardly likely that all negative comments would qualify as hate speech – or at least, that such negative remarks may well be protected under international freedom of expression commitments.

³⁵ <http://www.ihrpex.org>

³⁶ http://www.ihrpex.org/en/article/2086/the_summary_of_the_report_phenomenon_of_the_cyber-hatred_in_the_ukrainian_internet_space

Among other groups, results were as follows:

- Among commentary towards people with different political views, about 50% of negative commentary was directed at nationalists, 17% at supporters of the Party of Regions, 15% at supporters of communism
- 21% of the negative commentary directed towards nationalists and 30% of that directed at communists contained calls to violence.
- Of the comments directed towards people of different nationality, Russians received most abuse (43%), Ukrainians received 42% of negative comments and Jews 13%
- One in ten comments directed towards representative of other nationalities contained calls for elimination.
- Among comments directed towards people in different regions, about 65% concerned those living in the West of Ukraine.
- Calls for elimination of residents in the West of Ukraine were contained in 20% of the comments directed against people in other regions.

It would be interesting to see a breakdown of comments for other potential target groups – for example, religious belief, LGBT and non-Ukrainian / non-Russian nationalities. But the results of such a survey are clearly very valuable in pointing towards a number of initiatives which may be effective in addressing the problem. In particular, the survey illustrates the need to work with journalists themselves, and a further initiative by IHRPEX - described under Section 6 below – does just this.

6.2 Hotlines and complaint forms

INHOPE

INHOPE is the International Association of Internet Hotlines. INHOPE coordinates a network of Internet Hotlines all over the world, supporting them in responding to reports of illegal content to make the Internet safer.

INHOPE was founded in 1999 and has grown to a network of 40 Hotlines across the globe.

<http://www.inhope.org>

Although INHOPE's primary concern is illegal content – and in particular, online child pornography - many of the member organizations are also engaged with fighting cyberhate, and their hotlines accept complaints about racist material or other abusive content. INHOPE provides support and expertise to members in the setting up and functioning of hotlines, encourages and facilitates the exchange of information and also has educational programmes on internet safety and awareness.

Many organisations working on cyberhate – whether or not they are members of INHOPE - allow users to submit complaints about particular websites, either through a

telephone hotline or, more normally, through an online form. Other organisations provide links to official or unofficial organisations – for example, other NGOs or the police - which will assist or follow up on complaints.

The simple blog ‘Stand up to Hate’ (<http://standuptohate.blogspot.com>) provides a useful and detailed list of the type of information that the police will require, and suggests ways of taking screen shots or downloading content in case these are removed before the complaint can be investigated³⁷. It provides links to online forms in numerous other countries as well as to other organisations dealing with racism or intolerance and has its own online form for reporting.

The Canadian site ‘Stop Racism and Hate Collective’ (<http://www.stopracism.ca>) has a series of excellent initiatives to combat online hate – including various online campaigns (mentioned under Section 6.6 below), information and resources on racism (mentioned under Section 6.4 below), an online form for submitting complaints, and detailed information on how users can complain directly to different sites hosting racist content³⁸. They encourage the submission of complaints directly to websites or hosting companies since this increases the likelihood of those responsible taking notice - and many SN sites or blog hosting sites have terms and conditions which forbid racist or abusive content. The organisation also lists numerous sites or blogs that they have identified³⁹ as inciting or spreading hate, and encourages users to send a personal or template email to complain about these. They have successfully managed to take a number of sites offline.

6.3 Working with ISPs and the law

The purpose of conducting some form of monitoring is usually in order to identify examples of hate sites and then take action to have them taken offline. Sometimes this will involve making use of the web hosting company’s terms and conditions, notifying them about sites that contravene the stated policy. However, except for the most extreme examples of cyberhate – those which constitute crimes - blocking websites or taking them offline has met with criticism by some, either because it is ineffective in countering the opinions expressed – and the priority should be to direct attention towards this – or from the point of view of freedom of expression.

The [Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and the Internet](#) mentioned above makes the following point:

Mandatory blocking of entire websites, IP addresses, ports, network protocols or types of uses (such as social networking) is an extreme measure – analogous to banning a newspaper or broadcaster – which can only be justified in accordance

³⁷ See <http://standuptohate.blogspot.com/p/reporting-online-abuse-and-extra.html>

³⁸ <http://www.stopracism.ca/content/report-hate-social-networking-sites>

³⁹ <http://www.stopracism.ca/content/block-these-blogs>

with international standards, for example where necessary to protect children against sexual abuse.

However, and despite the dispute over the extent of freedom which should be permitted in cases of online hate - there are clearly instances where the balance falls squarely on the side of restricting expression, and where criminal prosecution may be necessary. Some organizations are engaged in pursuing criminal prosecution where this is possible, in the hope not only of removing the abusive content, but of prosecuting the individuals concerned.

6.3.1. Using the law

“All Jews are crying babies. They would shut up if Hitler brought them back to the gas chambers. The world needs Hitler again to do the cleansing job,”

“Expel dirty Roma people out of Lithuania. If the Lithuanian government does not drive them away, Lithuanian citizens will do it!”

“All sleazy fags have to be slain like filthy rats. If I saw a homo talking to my son, I would strangle him with my own hands. Homos needs to get out of Lithuania and go to Brussels or Amsterdam,”

Online comments quoted in ‘Why is hate speech flourishing on the Lithuanian Internet?’, May 2011

The Lithuanian non-governmental organisation [Tolerant Youth Association \(TJA\)](#) has been working for a number of years to promote tolerance in society, and has recently begun working on the problem of online hate speech. In addition to continuing to run educational programmes, in 2010 – 2011, the Association initiated 58 pre-trial investigations into cases involving hate and enmity. This represented a rise of nearly double compared to the previous year.

The Chairman of the TJA, Arturas Rudomanskis explained the change in strategy:

“Until last year, we would pinpoint online hatemongers to prosecutors. This year however, we changed our tactics by creating an autonomous system allowing people to file complaints against online bashers directly to the Prosecutor’s Office. This has undoubtedly worked out well, as conscious people extensively report hate cases to prosecutors,”

Quoted in ‘Why is hate speech flourishing on the Lithuanian Internet?’⁴⁰, May 2011

⁴⁰ <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2011/05/in-lithuania-an-overdue-crackdown-on-online-hate-speech139.html>

As a result of the efforts of the TJA, a number of individuals posting particularly abusive content – such as the examples quoted at the beginning of this section - have been traced, prosecuted, and punished.

Removing a site – or simply any abusive content – may not prevent the same content from reappearing at a different point on the web, possibly hosted in another country. It may also not always be the best use of scarce NGO resources, because a great deal of time can be involved in continually tracking such sites, submitting complaints, and perhaps being uncertain of the outcome - again, depending on where the site is hosted.

However, the strategy adopted by the TJA appears to have advantages beyond simply removing the sites in question. The OSCE Report on Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region⁴¹, mentioned above, indicates that in 2009 only 3 cases of hate crime were recorded by the Lithuanian police, and the year before, the figure was 2. Prosecution of such crimes undoubtedly has the potential to send a message to other individuals that they cannot expect impunity on such issues, and it may also be used to publicise more widely the unacceptability of certain forms of behaviour. The TJA’s outreach work was clearly successful in communicating the message to users that certain material is unacceptable, and that they can take action themselves to have it removed. This can be an empowering message and it can also encourage users to interact more critically with material they come across which appears to breach the bounds of acceptability.

A further consequence of TJA’s strategy was to be seen in the role that it played in ‘educating’ law enforcement officials. The District Prosecutor involved in one of the cases brought by the TJA admitted that the case was the first of ‘its kind’ in his career and commented further:

“I launched the investigation following a complaint by the Tolerant Youth Association. To be honest, had it not been for the complaint, I would have not sought prosecution, as it is simply impossible to keep track of the post flow on the internet,”

6.4 Education, training and awareness raising

6.4.1. Young people

“Programs that have been deemed as utilizing effective strategies in the battle against hate crime are programs that focus on cooperation, communication, affirmation, conflict resolution, problem solving, mediation, and bias awareness (Prutzman,1994). Essentially, these programs are similar, if not the same programs deemed effective against bullying related to any violent behaviour”.⁴²

⁴¹ <http://www.report-it.org.uk/files/73636.pdf>

⁴² Orwick and Settles, op cit.

Educating those who perpetrate cyberhate – or who are likely to do so – in the consequences of their actions and the injustice of their opinions must be *the* key long-term objective of anyone concerned with the problems of racism, bias, hate speech or other forms of intolerance. Reducing the number of people who engage in such behaviour – whether online or offline, altering attitudes in society so that such views are seen as unacceptable and unfounded, removing the psychological reasons which tempt people to join such communities – or at least, establishing other communities not based on bigotry or bias - must be the only sure way to address the issue at its roots. But education is also one of the least certain, and perhaps least rewarding in the short term of all possible approaches. Educational programmes which attempt to change attitudes or promote alternative points of view are difficult to evaluate and are generally only really effective when practised over the long-term – partly because attitudes are deep-rooted and very resistant to change, and partly because so many other societal or cultural influences can play in the opposite direction.

We do not attempt to evaluate or even to list the numerous educational programmes which exist, but a few of the different approaches are outlined below. As the quote at the beginning of this section points out, any educational programme which aims to address the attitudes or issues which lead to hate crime offline will also be effective against cyberhate. The small selection presented below have been chosen either because they dovetail with other efforts being carried out by organisations working on cyber-hate or because they are specifically directed at hate speech online, and not at racism or intolerance generally. However, it is likely to be the case that other initiatives which take a sustained approach to the problem, looking at different aspects of hate, intolerance, human rights and intercultural relations over a period of time may be more effective in developing the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to effect substantial change.

6.4.1.1. Resources for School children

The Media Awareness Network (MNet)⁴³

MNet is a Canadian non-profit organization that has been pioneering the development of media literacy and digital literacy programs since its incorporation in 1996. Members of our team have backgrounds in education, journalism, mass communications and cultural policy. Working out of Ottawa, we promote media literacy and digital literacy by producing education and awareness programs and resources, working in partnership with Canadian and international organizations, and speaking to audiences across Canada and around the world.

⁴³ <http://www.media-awareness.ca>

The idea behind our work

MNet focuses its efforts on equipping adults with information and tools to help young people understand how the media work, how the media may affect their lifestyle choices and the extent to which they, as consumers and citizens, are being well informed.

The organisation has a number of educational resources and links to useful books and articles addressing hate speech and hate speech online – as well as numerous other resources on related issues, such as media stereotyping. In particular, they have made available various free lesson plans and online games for young children, some of which are specifically aimed at addressing the question of cyberhate – either by means of exploring bias and prejudice, or by building critical thinking skills and an awareness of the need to check information and look for alternative viewpoints. Two online games – provided with teachers’ notes - are outlined below.

CyberSense and Nonsense



Sense and Nonsense: Second Adventure of The Three CyberPigs⁴⁴

...three CyberPigs learn some important lessons about authenticating online information and observing rules of netiquette. They also learn how to distinguish between fact and opinion and how to recognize bias and harmful stereotyping in

⁴⁴ http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/games/cybersense_nonsense/index.cfm

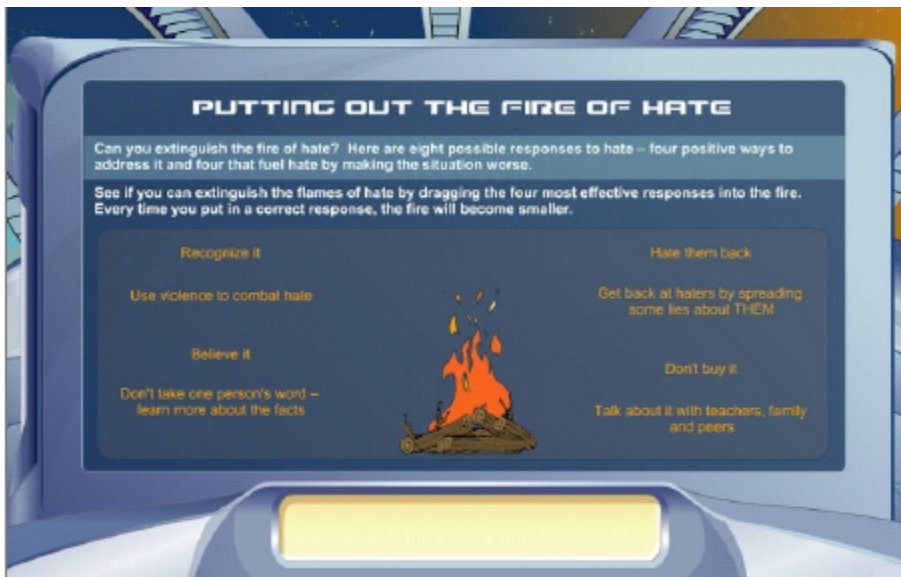
online content. As Les, Mo and Lil discover, "just because it's on the Internet, doesn't mean it's true."

Media Awareness Network

Allies and Aliens⁴⁵

Allies and Aliens aims to teach students the basics about bias, stereotyping, misinformation and propaganda techniques, on the Internet and in other media. It also helps students to understand the difference between fact and opinion, and the importance of authenticating online information. The challenges of this module will ultimately sharpen students' research skills as well as their critical thinking skills. The experience will teach them to recognize viewpoint, bias, and manipulation – online and off.

The teachers' notes are detailed and provide useful links to relevant information or organisations as well as some background. The website also contains an excellent and well-organised briefing on Online Hate, including details of the relation with free speech, the law, information about recruitment of young people by hate groups, and some suggestions on how to protect young people⁴⁶.



6.4.1.2. Critical thinking

MNet's recognition of the need to develop critical thinking skills and educate young people on how to navigate the sea of opinions, information and misinformation which can be found online is shared by academics, thinkers, journalists and educationalists. There are, of course, various separate projects designed to develop critical thinking

⁴⁵ http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/games/allies_allies/teachers.cfm

⁴⁶ http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/online_hate/index.cfm

skills, and many if not most resources which are directed more generally at the core issues underlying cyberhate⁴⁷ will employ interactive methods and will be designed to question stereotypes or encourage broader thinking skills. However, relatively few organisations working on cyberhate appeared to include it explicitly in lesson plans or resources for young people⁴⁸.

The need for young people to approach material on the internet in a critical manner, to explore the various resources dealing with particular issues, and to arrive at judgements based on an assessment of both sides is backed up by the results of the survey carried out among children in the UK (mentioned under Section 4.1.1):

UK Children Go Online⁴⁹: Surveying the experience of young people and their parents

- Four in ten pupils aged 9-19 trust most of the information on the internet, half trust some of it, and only 1 in 10 are sceptical about much information online. Only 33% of 9-19 year olds who go online at least once a week say that they have been told how to judge the reliability of online information...
- Only 33% of 9-19 year-olds who go online at least once a week say that they have been told how to judge the reliability of online information

Livingstone, S and Bober, M 2004. London: LSE Research Online

6.4.1.3. Internet safety

There are a vast number of resources to assist children in staying safe online. Most concentrate on not giving out personal details, being cautious about trusting strangers online, not arranging meetings with contacts made on the internet – and so on. Organisations working on the problem tend to have interactive resources for different age groups, resources for teachers and for parents.

The Slovenian ‘Safer Internet Plus Programme’

From the site SAFE-SI:

This was an extensive 2-year project (2008 – 2010) which aimed ‘to promote safer use of the Internet and new online technologies, particularly for children, and to fight against illegal content and content unwanted by the end-user...’ The programme consisted of a large number of strands, mostly based around a website (<http://www.safe.si>) with information for children of different ages, games, videos, and

⁴⁷ For example, the Council of Europe’s resources on Human Rights, Anti-Racism, Intercultural Dialogue, and many of the resources developed nationally or internationally to cover such themes

⁴⁸ ADL has developed a resource at http://www.adl.org/education/hate_internet.asp,

⁴⁹ Livingstone, Sonia and Bober, Magdalena (2004) *UK children go online: surveying the experiences of young people and their parents*. 2. London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/395/>

educational resources. But the organization also ran an imaginative public awareness campaign to promote the website, using various different methods – including advertisements in national magazines, a SAFE-SI banner available in the 2009 wall calendar of National Geographic Junior, distribution of materials through shopping centres, cinemas, schools and libraries; a toilets poster campaign, participation at various events – including a national conference – and various workshops and competitions.

Given such an interesting and wide-ranging awareness raising campaign, it is perhaps surprising that the total number of phone calls and questions submitted through the website was so low: just 91 people in the second year of the project – and a third of the callers were adults. It is difficult to assess the reasons for this without knowledge of the language but the website does appear to be fairly content heavy, and many of the resources are either pages of text or are more likely to appeal (in design terms) to much younger users. For older children, much of the attraction of the internet lies in more youth-oriented design and content which is not obviously meant to be ‘teaching’ them.

Top 10 tips
News

10 things that I must know about Internet safety

1. I never give out personal information about me, my family and friends when I go online.
2. I always ask my parents before I download Internet files, buy in online shop or join the competition on the Internet.
3. When I use the Internet I respect his rules everywhere: at home, school and my friends house.
4. I always show Internet content that makes me uncomfortable to my parents or other adults.
5. I don't mention and show violence and sex websites to my friends.
6. I never arrange a face-to-face meeting with my Internet friend, without telling my parents.
7. My password is a secret for everyone, also for my friends! Occasionally I change it.
8. Occasionally I explain my parents, what I do online.
9. I behave friendly and honestly to other people on the Internet.
10. Time that I spend online costs money, therefore I use Internet economically.

Spletno mesto Safe.si poganja SispletCMS, oblikovna zasnova Parsek Interactive
Projekt SAFE-SI, info@safe.si

The project participants are solely responsible for the content of this website. It does not represent the opinion of the European Commission and the European Commission is not responsible for any use might be made of data appearing on the website.

6.4.1.4. Other initiatives:

Videos

The Canadian Stop Racism and Hate Collective has an excellent collection of videos – of interest to adults and children alike – including an interview with a former member of the Final Solution Skins, Charlie Chaplin’s ‘The Great Dictator’, ‘Hitler is informed his application to join the BNP has been rejected’, a documentary on how young women are recruited into hate groups, featuring one who found the courage to leave – and others. The site itself is not designed to appeal directly to young people – it is more a resource centre where educators and others might identify useful material. However, this appears to be fairly typical among organisations dealing with these issues.

Flashboy memory cards game

The Bulgarian organisation 'The Applied Research and Communications Fund' (ARC Fund⁵⁰) has produced a series of flash cards for young people to remind them of basic safety rules:

Target audience: Children 7-16 years

Resource type and Intended use: Game for playing at home with or without parent supervision

Format: 36 cards in a small cardboard box 5.5 X 5.5 X 5.5 cm

Resource description: The game aims to promote the safer Internet Helpline. On each card an online safety rule is written. The cards display the following characters: small girl, small boy, Flashboy – defender of children online and symbol of the Safer Internet Centre, Spammies – bad characters doing wrong things online.



6.4.2. Journalists

Racism and bigotry seeps through the media of every country – often without journalists realising it. Fairly universally throughout Europe, and even in countries with a long tradition of democracy and a 'free' press, there are regular – and fairly open - attacks on asylum seekers, Muslims, the Roma population - people of 'different' ethnic minorities – the LGBT community, and groups sharing different religious or political beliefs.

When the main media outlets – and political leaders, through these outlets - reinforce existing stereotypes and send the message that certain ways of thinking and speaking are 'the norm' this is bound to be picked up by society – and then, of course, by online communities. Journalists can play a crucial role in dispelling such stereotypes rather than spreading them further, and some organisations – particularly in the former communist countries – have realised the importance of this.

The work conducted by the Ukrainian organisation IHRPEX in investigating hate speech among the main sources of electronic news was partly valuable for highlighting the importance of engaging journalists in the struggle against hate speech and crime. To address the issue of intolerance towards other religions, they are working further with journalists to raise awareness of different religions. There is currently little information about the specifics of the project, but there is no doubt that this is an issue where media stereotypes are rife – and part of the problem certainly lies in a lack of understanding or awareness of different world religions.

⁵⁰ [ARC Fund](#)

Ukraine

«The World of Faith» Project (IHRPEX)

The aim of this project of the Institute is to acquaint Ukrainian journalists and wide public with traditions, main religious holidays, and religious specifics of representatives of the largest religious communities of the world.

Our Institute is open for cooperation to representatives of all religions, confessions, and to mass media - without exceptions. Our purpose is to do so that people throughout the mass media sources would be able to learn about world religions and about how do believers live in different parts of the world.

A number of organisations in Georgia have also embraced the problem of hate speech among media organisations. Again, very little information seems to be available about the details of the project.

Georgia

A training was conducted for journalists on the theme of Hate Speech at Regional Television Network 9. The project partners are the Centre for Human Rights, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Internews Georgia and Association Atinati.

Aim of the project:

There is a need to define the problem of hate speech to a wide spectrum of society, and above all, to representatives of the media.

The project will include various meetings and round tables in different regions and will last 2 months⁵¹.

6.4.3. Working with the perpetrators of cyberhate

“Internet Streetworking” (Switzerland)

Switzerland has a project “Internet Streetworking” by Aktion Kinder des Holocaust (Action by Children of the Holocaust) which contacts the authors of pro-nazi or anti-Semitic statements.⁵²

Projects which attempt to address perpetrators of hate speech directly are both bold and innovative – but clearly contain their own risks, particularly if young people were to become involved. However, there is evidence that many perpetrators of hate speech thrive on the lack of confrontation and the feeling of security within an online community which shares their views. The advantages of confronting such individuals or

⁵¹

http://www.akhtskha.net/news/v_regionalnoj_telekompanii_9_kanal_proshel_trening_dlja_zhurnalistov_pod_nazvaniem_jazyk_nenavisti/2011-09-26-1209

⁵² Weber, op cit

their communities directly lie partly in the potential to put the opposite view to others who may not have been aware of it; and partly in the fact that ‘exposing’ ignorance or bias can help to remove the feeling of security, assurance and control which is often a key motivator for those who engage in undermining or abusing others. When effective, such a strategy has the potential to address some of the underlying factors behind hate speech – in a way that, for example, simply blocking a user or site can never do.

Young people and cyber-hate in Belgium

The Centre considers three possible courses of action, depending on the severity of the material.

- In the case of lighter forms of discriminatory expressions it confronts young perpetrators with their behaviour and informs of the possible consequences of hateful actions of this kind. The aim is to remove the disputed expression. If necessary this is done with the intervention of the Internet service provider.
- In more serious or repeated cases the Centre tries attempts to redress the situation through mediation and deliberation. By doing so, the Centre hopes to make young people more aware of what racism or discrimination really means to people who are confronted with it.
- Young people's talents can also be used to achieve positive results. In one case the rehabilitation consisted of young people having to help develop a website for a local anti-racism contact point.

<http://www.diversiteit.be>

A further example of confronting perpetrators – a Facebook page designed to ‘Wipeout Homophobia’ can be found in the section on Victim Support and Community Building.

6.4.4. Mass messaging

Two small-scale examples of combating racism through the use of twitter deserve mention – partly for the unusual approach adopted by each. Both raise a number of questions relating to the ethical standards which may apply even to anti-racist projects.

The first initiative identified is a computer programme designed to hunt out racist tweets and retweet them, with a ‘racist!’ flag. This is of interest partly in light of increasing technological possibilities and the increasing use of such methods by large corporate or political actors. But it also raises associated questions about the ethics – or the wisdom – of using computer-generated content which masquerades as a *human* reaction. This may be something it is necessary for the project to explore.

"Hello there, Racist!

What is a bot? A robot; A piece of software designed to complete a minor but repetitive task automatically and on command.

The task of the Racist Bot is to find tweets including the term “Nigger” and “Nigga” and call the author out for whom they are, a racist. These two terms are not owned by any group of people or persons.

More words will be added as the Racist Bot advances its project. If you want to contribute to ending racism, contact @rOuter on twitter for more information.

Sincerely,

Racist Bot", <http://racistbot.tumblr.com>

Racist! RT @coneybridget No he's
a nigger <http://bit.ly/2D0hLj>

5 minutes ago from twitterfeed

Racist! RT @ifoxmedia The Best Kept Secret In The World |
The Daily Nigger – <http://tinyurl.com/y9atmj6> <http://bit.ly/KziQO>

5 minutes ago from twitterfeed

Racist! RT @Catasha_InRLif @classicanderson
<http://twitpic.com/j37tm> –nigger <http://bit.ly/s0atP>

5 minutes ago from twitterfeed

Racist! RT @DJLEEE Ik zou niet twitteren vandaag.. Maar
DEZE nigger belt 112 voor een heli die ze pokoes..
<http://bit.ly/2aHrYf>

5 minutes ago from twitterfeed

Racist! RT @carterkraft @thadiggitystank damn hill billys
need to stay off youtube. dont be messing with..
<http://bit.ly/1b5Q76>

5 minutes ago from twitterfeed

The second initiative is part of a series of projects undertaken by the American artist, Nate Hill, to bring out the absurdity of racism. The ‘White Smell Bot Vaccine’ is a twitter account which retweets *black* racist comments about whites – focussing on the particular stereotype that ‘whites smell’. The other initiatives by Hill are equally unexpected – and sometimes difficult to fathom. Hill’s interest is in racism against blacks, but he uses black racial prejudice on an issue which seems, to many at least, small, faintly absurd, and clearly not the main negative stereotype, in order to focus minds on the issue of racism generally. The question of whether, or to what extent; minority groups or groups which are themselves the victims of racism, may hold racist views – and whether these could be an issue for the project – might usefully be explored. Of perhaps more importance, is the question of whether *these* views may have originated partly as a defensive mechanism against their own victimisation.

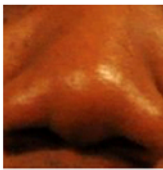
White Smell Bot Vaccine

Ages 6+

Synthesized: September 2011

White Smell Bot is a twitter page. Twice daily, it retweets comments about how white people smell crafting a racist experience for kids as young as age 6. After all, insulting each other is part of being a kid. Kids shout, "Butt breath!" while White Smell Bot tweets, "White ppl breath smell like evaporated milk!" They are quite similar. As an adult, we recommend you read this twitter feed with your child. After being inoculated by this racist experience (with your guidance), your child will receive a safe exposure to the germ of racism, and learn to be repulsed when they encounter "real" racism in the future.

<http://natehillisnuts.com/home/white-smell-bot/>







WhiteSmellBot



@WhiteSmellBot
Retweeting an average of 90 tweets per day. Started September 2011.



[+ Follow](#) Text follow WhiteSmellBot to 40404 in the United States



Tweets Favorites Following Followers Lists



 **_EnvyKeraMOORE** Feb 27 ·  by WhiteSmellBot
some white people smell like rain , & dogs No offense to my white followers .
4 hours ago

 **Jasmiine_xOx** * SuchaFxxkinLady ★  by WhiteSmellBot
all white people smell the same to mee , that sounds weirdd lol , but im always surrounded by them .
5 hours ago

 **Tis_Nigga** Johnny Rocco  by WhiteSmellBot
Why does it smell like pot? This is a white people bus! #smh
5 hours ago

 **onetakeovaent** O.N.E.  by WhiteSmellBot
QT @Bigkerry71854: "@JayOleese: White people smell like hot dog water."can u say racismLOL.....u crazy...kmsl.....racists Lil girl
8 hours ago

 **Bigkerry71854** U WANNA B ME  by WhiteSmellBot
"@JayOleese: White people smell like hot dog water."can u say racismLOL.....u crazy...kmsl
8 hours ago

 **JayOleese** Jaylise  by WhiteSmellBot
White people smell like hot dog water.
8 hours ago

Stay in touch with WhiteSmellBot

Join Twitter right now:

[Sign up](#)

About @WhiteSmellBot

10,266 Tweets	0 Following	91 Followers	0 Listed
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6.4.5. Meetings and conferences

Meetings and conferences can be useful forums for discussing strategy, comparing results, outlining problems and sharing different expertise or approaches. A number of organisations have organised one-off meetings to look at the issue but it is not always obvious (perhaps because it was not obvious from the meeting!) where efforts are taken after this. One difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of such meetings is that detailed reports of their discussions and conclusions are rarely available.

As part of a greater initiative to address the problem, face to face meetings can be invaluable. The annual conferences and other meetings organised by INACH are undoubtedly useful forums for the participants – and since members of the organisation are all focussed on the same issue, have the potential to move forward initiatives in different countries or regions.

A two-day Global Summit on Internet Hate held at the French embassy in Washington, D.C., recently gathered experts from around the world to discuss the challenges and possible solutions to online hate. The event, hosted by INACH and its U.S. constituent, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), touched on legal issues, public-private partnerships, and the global nature of the Internet.

“The purpose of INACH and its annual convention is to have this international cooperation that allows for sharing of knowledge, exchanging best practices, and trying to coordinate measures against hate speech,” says Deborah Lauter, director of civil rights for the ADL. “So just bringing all these people from different countries together who are addressing this topic, in and of itself, is one of the goals of this conference,” she says⁵³.

6.5 Victim support and community building

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there appear to be very few organisations which offer support specifically to individuals who have been victims of hate speech. The matter is often different for hate crime victims, and support lines for people who have suffered abuse will normally address racism or intolerance in addition to other forms. However, the emphasis of most organisations appears to be to collect the information, to act on it (if necessary) themselves, but rarely to assist or empower those who have experienced the abuse.

Two interesting initiatives are the Centre for Cyber Counselling in India, described below, and an apparently unique initiative by an individual who has decided to confront the issue of homophobia on Facebook directly.

⁵³ <http://www.securitymanagement.com/article/internet-hate-tough-problem-combat-005259>

Centre for Cyber Victim Counselling (India)

- We counsel persons who are either a victim in the social networking websites, or a victim of cyber harassment via email or chat rooms or offending websites. We cater the needs of all cyber victims including men, women and children.
- As cyber law experts we will also guide you to understand the present Indian law regarding your case. If you need to go to the police or the court, you may provide our “help” as “evidences” through your lawyer. However, you must ask for our permission for reusing our “solutions” even when you are taking them to the courts.

<http://www.cybervictims.org>

The site ‘Wipeout Homophobia on Facebook’⁵⁴ is best described in the author’s own words:

Wipeout Homophobia On Facebook

WHOF, all started on the 9th May 2010. During a search for a gay group I found two hate pages. They only had a few members , but all I could think was what if one of my family found this page and read the hate speech.

I decided to "report" both pages. Hate speech is illegal in most of the free world and is also against Facebook's own terms of use.

I sent links to the pages to some friends so they too could report them, they replied with links to others. I thought that rather than 30 of us sending each other messages, I would collate the links on one Facebook page. An hour later there were hundreds of members and by the end of the day a thousand had joined.

WHOF has become a huge gathering of LGBT support from all over the world. We educate each other. We have a lot of "straight" supporters who learn a lot about us too. This is community engagement, resource sharing, discussion, encouragement, on a global scale.

The site is both empowering and amusing. ‘Kel’ responds to the numerous examples of hate mail received – and many are to a high degree abusive and obscene – with confidence and humour. There is no obvious evidence to suggest that his correspondents are transformed in the process, but their abuse is deflected and defused, supporters flock to the site, and as he says himself, many who might have previously been uncertain, have ‘learnt a lot’ as a result. The ‘command and control’ is undoubtedly on his side but it encompasses not only him individually, but also the thousands of members of his ‘community’.

⁵⁴ www.WHOF.net

A sample of some of my daily hate mail, which gives me the extra boost i need to get me through the day... (FB Privacy rules mean I can't name and shame)...



Kel fan number 1

If you don't remove WHOF from facebook I will make it my life's crusade to track you down and kill you. I have investigated you and I know who your mother is, she will be first on my list. You have 1 hour.

REPORTED & BLOCKED



Kevin O'Neil

Well done on your investigative work, please remember to bring a shovel with you as my mother has been dead for 23 years.



[Redacted Name]

Fags are shit



Kevin O'Neil 29 July at 11:42

I agree, I gave up smoking them 8 years ago and feel much healthier now PLUS I now have more money to spend on KY and glitter - RESULT.



[Redacted Name]

?

6.6 Public campaigns

Since a separate paper will address this area in detail, it is dealt with only briefly below. The majority of campaigns which we have identified are designed primarily to promote public awareness – more often than not, on internet safety. Other campaigns – and there are many – are designed to address racism or targeting of particular groups.

Two initiatives which address the issue of cyberhate specifically are worth mentioning.

1. The Stop Racism and Hate Collective (<http://www.stopracism.ca>) runs various online campaigns, mainly asking users to contact particular sites requesting that they take action to remove - or disassociate themselves from - sites with harmful content. One campaign asks users to contact Planet.com, which hosts a number of racist websites; another is designed to stop abusive content on YouTube. The organisation calls for users to email YouTube requesting that they implement word filtering on user names, and block IP addresses by offending users.

Stopping abusive content on YouTube

Please help us by demanding that YT implement: (1) word filtering, (2) [IP blocking](#) and, (3) blocking commonly used [proxies](#) and [anonymous internet services](#).

Word Filtering

Word filtering would help stop offensive content and harassment by blocking words like "[nigger](#)", "[faggot](#)", "[jewwatch](#)" and "[1488,88](#)" in the creation of channels and user names on YT.

User Names

A simple word filter would also prevent the use of user names like [niggerstinkOfshit18](#) and [JewwatchFrance](#) and [JEWWATCH7](#) and [HAHAimbackjews1488](#), [14USA88](#), [MrNiggerHunter1488x](#).

Stop Racism and Hate Collective <http://www.stopracism.ca>

Irrespective of the views about the effectiveness of filtering offensive content or blocking particular sites – or the arguments relating to freedom of expression – a campaign of this sort might be more effective if some information was provided about successes or about the number of people who have been engaged. In fairness, these ‘campaigns’ are perhaps not designed to be a key focus of the organisation, which is more directed towards providing information about the problem. A campaign of some sort on these informational sites is however likely to engage more people because it appears to indicate a way in which they can help to address the problem. In doing so, it might even be used to raise awareness of the issue itself.

2. Changing legislation

A working group on the problem of hate speech has been set up by the organisation ‘Multiethnic Georgia’ (Mnogonatsionalnaya Gruzia) and a number of NGOs. The aim of the working group is to lobby for an amendment in the Criminal Code to make state representatives culpable for examples of hate speech. The organisations will also conduct an informational campaign to raise awareness about the initiative.

Anita Mirzoeva, Director of the organisation Multiethnic Georgia explained:

“This process will adopt a dual strategy. We will prepare an amendment to the Criminal Code with the aim of getting it adopted by Parliament. Secondly, we aim to mobilise public opinion to take an active part in this process”

Mirzoeva believes that the main objective of this campaign is to meet obligations under Council of Europe membership, in particular, relating to the unacceptability of hate speech.

http://www.media.ge/ru/content/osveshchenie_ etnicheskih

6.7 International and regional initiatives

These are worth mentioning briefly both for the expertise they have built up and because they consist of member organisations in different countries, all of which are working at a national level to address the problem of abuse online. Only one of the four

organisations addresses cyberhate exclusively but most of the others include this as one issue in a wider remit of promoting online safety.

6.7.1. INACH

The International Network Against Cyber Hate (INACH) works to ‘counter and address all forms of online discrimination’ through a network of 18 organizations from different parts of the globe’. They have done significant and valuable work in collecting information from different countries, facilitating meetings and encouraging sharing of information as well as offering their own expertise on the issue of cyberhate.

INACH: Mission

Unite and empower organizations to promote respect, responsibility and citizenship on the Internet through countering cyber hate and raising awareness about online discrimination. INACH reinforces Human Rights and mutual respect for the rights and reputations of all Internet users.

6.7.2. Insafe⁵⁵

Insafe is a European network of Awareness Centres promoting safe, responsible use of the Internet and mobile devices to young people.

The Insafe network provides a range of information, awareness-raising tools and educational resources on issues relating to online safety for parents and teachers, and children and young people.

Insafe unites national Awareness Centres in 27 countries in the European Union (EU), Norway, Iceland and Russia.

Each centre comprises between one and four organisations who work together to raise internet safety awareness at a national level. Centres typically work with a broad range of partners such as schools, libraries, youth groups and industry to promote good e-safety practices.

Networking at a European level allows centres to share information, showcase successful initiatives and draw on lessons learned.

6.7.3. Enacso⁵⁶

The European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online is a network consisting of 22 children’s rights NGOs from across the EU working for a safer online environment for children.

⁵⁵ <http://www.saferinternet.org>

⁵⁶ <http://www.enacso.eu>

Our Mission is to promote and support actions at national, European and international level to protect children and promote their rights in relation to the Internet and new technologies.

Our work is based on the 1989 [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) and the [Optional Protocol](#) to the UNCRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Activities

eNACSO provides opportunities for and lead on the exchange of information, strategies, and approaches between the network members and partners through meetings, conferences, email and internet.

eNACSO develops and adopt policy positions, recommendations and briefings based on the results of this exchange.

eNACSO supports members to identify ways to influence national governments.

The network members attend national and international meetings, conferences and events to present and promote eNACSO policies and recommendations.

6.7.4. INHOPE

INHOPE is the International Association of Internet Hotlines. INHOPE coordinates a network of Internet Hotlines all over the world, supporting them in responding to reports of illegal content to make the Internet safer.

Mission

To support and enhance the performance of Internet Hotlines around the World; ensuring swift action is taken in responding to reports of illegal content making the internet a safer place.

Key functions of INHOPE

- Exchange expertise
- Support new hotlines
- Exchange reports
- Interface with relevant initiatives
- Educate and inform policy makers at the international level

7. Recommendations

The Council of Europe's project is different in many ways from any of the initiatives against cyberhate which we have been able to identify. Firstly because it is long enough to build in different activities and areas of work, but at the same time short enough to constitute a 'campaign' in a real sense. Secondly, because a key factor of the programme involves working with young people, empowering them to be the main actors and initiators. Thirdly, because the main initiators and actors are not themselves 'experts' in fighting cyberhate so they will be learning the skills and designing tactics as the programme progresses. And finally, because apart from a very few exceptions, most attempts to work on cyberhate tend to have a national rather than a regional focus.

None of these need present an obstacle – in fact, each in its own way may offer an advantage, and we consider these in more detail below. Overall, the combination of factors means that the programme will almost certainly have to find its own model.

We do not aim in the recommendations below to propose a particular way forward for the programme – except to suggest that as far as possible, the young people who will be running and organising the work should be consulted on their experience of the problem, their preferred 'solution' and approach. One study that really does seem to be missing is a detailed review of young people's perceptions of hate speech online. It would be useful to obtain a clearer picture of the following questions, at least:

- What do young people regard as (unacceptable) forms of hate speech – hate speech that they believe should not be available online at all?
- What is their experience of such forms of hate speech (how often do they encounter it, in which forms, against which targets)?
- Do they have personal acquaintance with perpetrators of hate speech online? If so, how do they understand the motivation of such individuals?
- How do they normally respond when they come across examples of hate speech online?
- How do they view the tension between freedom of expression and the need to protect certain sectors of the population?
- Would they support more censorship, punishment of perpetrators, removal of abuse (and for what level of abuse)?
- How, in practical terms, do they think the problem could best be addressed?
- What do *they* feel able to do – as individuals and as a group?

The following 3 recommendations follow from the need to explore and understand the ramifications of these questions:

Recommendation 1:

We would recommend that any programme directed towards young people and carried out by them would first of all obtain a clearer picture of *young people's* perception of these issues.

Recommendation 2:

Given the differences of opinion on many of the questions relating to hate speech, we would recommend that the group selected to lead the programme needs to familiarise itself early on with the range of content covered by the term and to explore in depth any areas where there are significant differences of opinion. For some aspects of the work, a form of consensus within the group may need to be found – even if this consists in an agreement to respect different cultural attitudes or different geographical / societal needs across the range of countries represented.

Recommendation 3:

Given the importance of balancing freedom of expression with the standards of the European Court, the group who will lead the project should be well acquainted early on with these standards, as well as with particular issues and dilemmas surrounding the idea of freedom of expression.

7.1 The four challenges

In this section, we attempt to draw out some of the possible approaches, given the four issues raised in the first paragraph and points made throughout this paper about existing projects.

7.1.1. Length of the programme

Most initiatives conducted by organisations which do not work exclusively on cyberhate are relatively short term: a single workshop, a few educational resources – to be used as part of a wider programme – a meeting of experts, and so on. The matter is of course different for organisations with an infrastructure, paid staff members, a bank of expertise, and a long-term focus on the problem. This campaign sits between the two.

Medium length projects – such as this one – may achieve measurable results in the given time if the focus of the work is in such specific areas as effecting legislative change, removing a given number of websites from the internet, building a group of supporters of a particular size, or simply raising general awareness of the problem. Although such results may be significant, they are unlikely to affect the underlying causes of cyberhate – and may also be unlikely to affect substantially the ‘amount of hate’ circulating the internet.

We believe that in the time available, there ought to be the possibility to build up a group of engaged young people, skilled in the necessary areas, and committed to some degree to continuing the work after the project end. Such a commitment, backed up by an established group of supporters (online or offline) would be more likely to lead to substantial change in the longer term. If this is also supported by a website presence with the potential to appeal to others ‘outside the circle’, there is great potential to build a bigger movement – which could

both be more effective in raising general public awareness, and could provide a strong support community for those who have been or are likely to be targeted by hate crime.

Two years is also sufficient to begin, and progress some way towards, empowering and enabling a group of young people to carry out educational activities – again, online or offline. This might be in the form of facilitating online discussions – on given themes relevant to the subject area, on controversial articles, or even on views about particular examples of hate speech. We feel that any ‘educational’ work should probably be as ‘real’ as possible and should ideally aim to look as much like a normal internet discussion, rather than a ‘teaching resource’. Although it may be a more risky strategy, specific examples of racism, for example, might be more engaging and provoke more interest from outside the group’s ‘natural’ supporters than, for example, a general discussion on the nature of, or reasons for, racism generally.

One element that may be necessary, given the voluntary nature of the young people’s involvement, is to begin building a second tier of young people, possibly to be engaged more actively in the second year of the project, but who will be able to assist in taking the work forward if the Council of Europe support is not continued at the project end.

The next 3 recommendations are designed to help the work acquire its own momentum so that the project does not die out when the Council of Europe’s involvement ceases:

Recommendation 4:

The initial group should be selected on the basis of a proven commitment to some of the issues central to hate speech (anti-racism, human rights, freedom of expression etc.). Ideally, they should already be able to link up with existing networks working on these issues in their own country.

Recommendation 5:

Sustainability of the project can be helped by building a strong and attractive web presence which is likely to draw others in – possibly through the provision of useful online resources but perhaps more importantly, by providing a space for discussion of real issues of concern to young people

Recommendation 6:

A second group of young people could be brought in for the second year of the project - partly to support those already involved, partly to learn from the first group who might be re-engaged by taking on a mentoring role, and partly to take the place of any members of the first group who have moved on or are likely to do so.

7.1.2. Young people as actors and initiators

If the young people are able, as far as possible, to lead the process – to engage in a project which they have helped to design – this could be both a completely new approach to addressing cyberhate, and potentially very powerful. Young people are now ‘Web 2.0’ generation: those who use the internet are mostly familiar with its different aspects and fully able to make use of them. They are more likely to recognise the type of site which will attract their peers, the type

of issues which concern their peers, and may be able to speak from first hand experience about the type of hate speech or hate sites commonly encountered by people of their generation.

A second area where the age group of the members may be relevant relates to the actual content of hate speech. Some members of the group may not be fully aware of the worst examples – and the worst examples have the capacity to shock and upset. A decision may need to be made about the extent to which young people need to be familiar beforehand with the ‘worst examples’: it is our view that this may be an advantage in order for them to appreciate the urgency of the problem (and some will investigate them anyway). Such an approach would clearly require preparation and support for the group – and the support will need to be ongoing.

A different focus might target not the very worst sites – not the comments, videos and discussions which would call for removal under most interpretations of freedom of expression – but the kind of comments which one encounters daily in the real world and the virtual, and which the internet community perhaps needs to learn to negotiate. The project could take as its key aim bringing further towards tolerance and understanding those who *do* perceive certain groups according to certain negative stereotypes, but who have no real desire to cause deep distress, or to recruit others to the cause. The risk even in such a strategy is that a successful website presence which addresses stereotypes against Muslims, LGBT, asylum seekers, or other groups frequently targeted may anyway attract extreme elements.

Whatever the decision about the key target group, part of the training for the young people will need to assist them to deal with such extreme elements – either by learning to ignore them, or to engage, in ways which does not lead to escalation; and certainly, to be prepared for such an eventuality and to know where to turn for assistance and support.

One of the dilemmas of the project consists in weighing up the advantages of a slightly more sober website presence – which may not be so attractive to young people not already interested in the problem; with, on the other hand, a ‘free’ zone which experiments with genuine freedom of expression, allowing all but those who could cause serious damage to individuals involved.

The next 3 recommendations are more vague, and the details will need to be worked out by the group itself:

Recommendation 7:

An initial mapping of the different skills, networks, personal resources and other relevant factors within the group will help members to see whether there are particular individuals who could more effectively play certain roles – for example, building a website presence, designing or identifying resources, playing a supporting role, and so on. The choice of strategy will also depend on the available skills and resources within the group.

Recommendation 8:

The group should be given the time and space to consider different approaches to the problem – with the associated dangers – and make its own selection, based on what members think is most effective, what they believe is possible in the time available, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and the particular context in which each is working.

Recommendation 9:

A support system should be put in place to assist members of the group who might be troubled by some of the comments and sites they will inevitably come across, and who may experience difficulties in their own country as a result of the work.

7.1.3. 'Non-expert' actors and initiators

Young people are experts in young people. In this respect, and for this project, they have an advantage over 'professional' educators or experts on cyberhate. Nevertheless, there are areas where the young people who are to lead the project will need greater skills or understanding of certain issues. A number have already been mentioned – for example, they will need to understand the concept and the limits of freedom of expression, and they will need to be prepared to deal with upsetting or deeply shocking comments.

Depending on the range of issues to be covered – for example, whether the individuals or the project as a whole decide to concentrate on Islamophobia, disablism, homophobia, or some other specific target group – they will need to have arguments and information about these issues. Researching the issues could form part of the project, and even identifying examples of (mild?) hate speech, and practising among themselves disputing or refuting negative content.

More difficult, but of great importance, is that the young people begin to explore the numerous societal and psychological factors which drive not only hate speech online, but racist attitudes generally. In order to engage effectively with those who genuinely believe in the superiority or greater importance of certain groups, arguments and resources used in the course of the project will need to try to address the underlying reasons and motivations.

It is perhaps controversial to admit it, but it is not uncommon to find groups or individuals working on racism or in the field of human rights who, when tested, may themselves display attitudes which admit the inferiority of certain habits, cultures, religious beliefs, or nationalities. Nationalism can, after all, be dangerously close to racism. It would therefore be useful to explore some of these areas with the young people.

As a grounding for such a discussion, and in order for them to better understand the importance of two issues central to any efforts to combat hate speech – the concepts of equality and freedom of expression – a good understanding of human rights generally is essential. This would put the two concepts into context and would also help the group to measure any underlying prejudices members might have against internationally agreed standards. Human rights will also provide a useful framework both for discussion within the group, and for any resources or discussion which will take place later outside the group.

Finally, we have already seen that those most anxious to promote particular messages, if they have the technology or the financial backing to do so, are increasingly turning to highly sophisticated programming tools to spread their message and manufacture the illusion of significant public backing for their cause. Despite familiarity with *using* the internet, a very small proportion of young people – and of the population as a whole - are fully aware of the technologies behind the techniques they use everyday. A broad understanding of the technical

and technological features of the internet would help the group to understand the ‘battlefield’, enable them to exploit (in the positive sense) its possibilities, and possibly to ‘know their enemy’. If powerful racist groups begin to use such methods to propagate their message – or if they are already doing so – the project team may need to think about how racist robots, driven by racist programmers, can be most effectively addressed.

Recommendation 10:

The group should begin to build up a bank of useful resources – both to inform their own thinking and to use with wider audiences. These could be in the form of educational resources which could be used within the framework of the project, but could also include a set of counter-arguments, useful statistics, ‘mythbusting’ articles or facts which could be deployed when discussing issues with groups or individuals outside the project circle.

Recommendation 11:

The group should be given the opportunity to explore the reasons behind racist beliefs and to test their own beliefs and attitudes. This will also assist them in engaging with those outside the project who display either mild or strongly based racist prejudice.

Recommendation 12:

The group should have a good understanding of the human rights framework, including national, regional and international standards.

Recommendation 13:

The group should be acquainted with the technical and technological possibilities that the internet provides – and should ideally be given an understanding of the methods employed by those at the forefront of the propaganda game. A basic understanding of issues such as ‘data mining’, privacy, search engines and the way that sites such as Facebook, Google, Youtube – and many governments - gather information about their users for their own commercial ends would also be desirable, if only to offer some basic protection for those members of the group who are not aware of this. This may be particularly important for representatives of countries where the internet is monitored by the government itself.

7.1.4. The regional factor

We have already noted that both target groups and legislation concerning hate speech differs substantially from one country to another. So too do perceptions about freedom of expression. It is highly likely that content which has a national focus is more likely to engage outside users, but this may raise problems from a language point of view if the number involved in each country is not substantial enough to be able to support the work. It may be more realistic to select issues or target groups which are throughout Europe targeted by hate groups – for example, asylum seekers, Muslims, LGBT. This would also have the advantage of limiting the range of issues covered, which may mean a more focussed approach.

There should almost certainly be a central website – ideally with 2 or 3 working languages – but if representatives from countries with other languages felt able to resource and service sections

of the site in their own language this would obviously be an advantage. Since this may not always be possible, and it would be a great loss only to engage speakers of non-native languages, the website work should be backed up by work carried out off-line in local communities. Educational work conducted face-to-face is almost inevitably more powerful than the anonymity of the internet and the same underlying causes of hate speech can probably be more effectively addressed by engaging with people on a personal level. Such offline work could feed into discussions on the central website and may also be a way of stimulating interest in the site itself. It may also be a means to draw in new members to support the local work and become more engaged in the project generally.

Recommendation 14:

If it is possible to identify particular groups which are targets of hate speech across all countries represented, we believe this would provide a more focussed campaign. However, individual members of the group may feel this is too limiting or not the key priority in their region – and in such a case the group itself may wish not to limit the target group.

Recommendation 15:

An English language version of the website is probably essential. As far as possible, discussions and resources should be available in other languages.

Recommendation 16:

An online presence backed up by awareness-raising work offline could help to spread the word about the issues, and about the online initiative. Schools or youth groups could be involved in such work and working with Compass – or other materials available in multiple languages - at local level and feeding the results back to the central website might provide some coherence between different initiatives in the members' countries.

Recommendation 17:

The project could lead towards a more formal campaign at European level in the second year. This might be along the lines adopted by most organisations working on cyberhate: to identify target hosts or sites with unacceptable content and aim to remove the worst material (or the site). But a campaign might also be run along the lines of encouraging young people, in all encounters with abusive material, to take some action – whether, again, reporting the site, or responding to the content, or, for example, using humour, photo or video-montage to defuse it.