

Cyber-bullying

1. Nina Lakhani's article "One in five children is victim of cyber-bullying" and Aleks Krotoski's article "Hate and the internet" both focus on the issue "cyber-bullying" but with two different starting points. Text one deals with children as victims of cyber-bullying and what consequences this kind of bullying can result in. These include children who miss classes, stop socialising and even children who commit suicide; of which the text mentions three examples of. Two main problems are mentioned in connection to cyber-bullying: It is harder to spot for both parents and care givers, as well as it is more difficult to avoid than traditional bullying, because it is much harder to avoid someone on the internet and phone than it is in real-life. The second text has a more general focus on the internet and raises the question in its headline: "Does the internet encourage insidious and bullying behaviour?" The text lays the foundation for an answer with a "yes" - both through the description of the author's first experience with a chat room, and through the opinions of Dr Karen Douglas, who states that the ability to be anonymous is crucial for the online hatred. In addition to this, the text also deals with how we socialise on the internet. We socialise with people who have the same opinions as ourselves and create large communities about what we love, or hate. This creates demands on the average internet user's ability to come up with counter-arguments in online debates and basically be critical of what he sees on the internet, which according to the text, is the positive side of the hatred messages online. To sum up, the two articles both deal with how people behave in connection to modern communication technology.
2. First of all, the author of text two, Aleks Krotoski, uses a rhetorical question in the headline to catch the reader's attention. "Does the internet encourage insidious and bullying behaviour?" is definitely a headline that functions as an attention grabber but that is actually not the only thing that is meant to catch the reader's attention.

By starting out by telling about a personal experience using a personal account, he tries to give the reader a starting point for understanding his way of looking at the issue. The first-person narrator also makes it easier for the reader to relate to the content of the text; perhaps the reader has browsed on AOL too, and maybe even experienced something similar to what is mentioned in Krotoski's article. If that is the case, he is a big step closer to having caught the reader's attention for the rest of the text as well. Child behaviour and internet usage also plays a role in the text where the author compares these two things. He mentions "childishness" in line twelve, but the longest comparison is found a bit later: "It's like playing a trick on Halloween; it's childish, it seems insignificant, and it's kinda fun." (Ll. 19-20). The author builds a connection between the behaviour of both children and internet users which could give offense to the reader, but the offense is also a way of holding the reader's attention, because the reader then wants to find out why that degrading comparison is used. Moreover, that can be done by continuing reading the text.

Another way of holding the reader's attention is irony. Krotoski does not use it directly, but there is one place in the text, where he mentions the word "ironic" and uses it to make a point: "It's ironic that, rather than opening us up to an ever-greater number of opinions and attitudes, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter may actually be narrowing our worldview ..." (Ll. 24-26). The irony of this situation creates a contrast between the intended use of social networks and the actual use of them. This contrast is a way of making the reader wonder why that is the case, and therefore making the reader continue reading.

3. As text three clearly shows, cyber-bullying is an issue many schools are facing, often with important dilemmas about whether they should be responsible for disciplining the guilty pupil, or perhaps even the guilty pupils. Hence, it is a dilemma indeed, mostly because of the sometimes complicated circumstances. It

should, however, not be the school's responsibility to discipline students who have committed cyber-bullying of any kind in their spare time. The duty of the schools is instead to try to prevent, not only cyber-bullying, but also regular face-to-face bullying. If the schools can prevent it from happening during school time, there is a fair chance of less bullying outside school as well. The big issue is how to avoid criminalisation of the pupil, since that should definitely be avoided. Instead, they should be informed about what bullying is, which consequences it can have and that it will have a consequence if they start bullying another person. But to start seeing them as criminals is unfair; they probably do not know the difference between bullying and teasing, and if they know the "do's" and the "don'ts" right from the beginning of school, why would they start bullying each other if they know it is going to have consequences for themselves? It is not really a question about who is guilty or not, it is rather a question about getting the children to know about bullying and then making it clear that bullying is not under any circumstance acceptable, not regular bullying nor cyber-bullying either. Respect is the keyword, and if children learn to respect each other and say no to bullying, we are already a big step closer to an end to the cyber-bullying problem.