
Cyber Racism – the Growth of Right-wing Extremists and Hate Speech

The growth of right-wing extremists and hate speech. Has the thought and concept of right-wing extremists hate speech now spread to the internet through social media, blogs, and video messages? The internet provides us with a medium of communication which is almost as beneficial as face to face (personal interaction), this communication form based on the theory by (Daft & Lengel, 1986) shows that this form can produce change in people and their understanding (persuade or change a person view), when there is an increased capacity to convey information. This is more evident when immediate feedback is possible through the likes of chat rooms and online instant messaging. There has always been through time radical views and hate speech, which is still evident today, despite there being really only one race, the human race. Unfortunately, colour, age, gender, lifestyle, religion, and politics all appear to feed racism via hate speech. These groups and the opinions expressed now have another outlet that is the internet (the cyber world), throughout this paper the question that will be asked is. What role is the internet playing in the promotion and development of Cyber Racism?

What is cyber-racism? Racism is a term used to describe a belief that some races are inherently superior to others and that some groups of people are different and do not 'fit' into the 'Australian way of life' along with aggressive, abusive or offensive behaviour towards members of other races based on those beliefs Human Rights (2011). When racism happens in the cyber-world it is known as cyber-racism. On the internet, cyber-racism can take the form of a website itself, its written content, its images, blogs, videos, and on-line comments.

Additionally, racist comments, images or language in text messages, on social networking sites or in emails are also examples of cyber racism. There are similarities to other relatively new online phenomena that have corresponding behaviours, such as cyberbullying, cyber-racism is often used as an umbrella term. Human rights and cyber-racism, all people have the right to live life without the fear of being harassed or intimidated and be in circumstances which allow them to reach their fullest potential. They also have a right to be protected from physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, including racism and discrimination. The enjoyment of these and other rights can have a negative impact. When the internet is used 'for purposes contrary to respect for human values, equality, non-discrimination, respect for others and tolerance', it can also affect the enjoyment of a person's rights. [bookmark: bbib29] From a criminological perspective, a review by Hale (2012) targeted research that specifically investigated right-wing extremist groups' online activities, rather than reviewing all forms of cyber-racism. It identified several ways in which the Internet is increasingly exploited by right-wing extremist groups (such

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as information sharing, fundraising, social networking and recruiting, publicity, and risk mitigation). These are broken down into two main types/categories Groups and Individuals who promote this action.

The use of the Internet, social media, and to some extent gaming mediums appear to facilitate the growth and promotion of some form of hate speech/cyber racism. These findings by Hale (2012), have proven to help establish a certain guideline to establish key groups or individuals and how they achieve their desired result of Cyber-Racism or hate speech. Cyber Racism has been able to manifest itself through the actions of groups or individual starting at the youth level and growing into adulthood. With the advent of portable technology, it has allowed the perpetrators to have a certain cloak of anonymity which allows them to communicate in an abusive and threatening manner and in ways that they would not necessarily do in a face to face confrontation and then gaining momentum with other peers in their social circle. Due to the delay in seeking a reaction to their comments or online speech the perpetrators have no empathy for their victims, friends, family or social circles. The main objective for racist taunts from groups and individuals is to either defend their ideologies or global opinions or to promote them to enhance their group base and gain notoriety and more followers or supporters. In comparison, individual racist online attacks are more about hurting a group (outright racism) or to support a (racist) through interactions with other like-minded people. It is plausible that the objectives and the roles and sources of communication shape the manifestation of cyber-racism.

Summary

Where does Australia fit into this global situation, there are several different groups involved in addressing cyber-racism the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA), they will all have their own agendas and priorities on how they move forward. Under Australian law, there are three areas that could be addressed. Internationally Australia could remove the Article 4 reservation which is for International Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Despite this being raised several times in the past it has been met with ongoing opposition from free speech and conservative activists and politicians. There has been new information released from Australias E Safety Commissioner with the exposure of hate speech to children has unified both sides of politics to a common goal. Australia has adopted a similar approach to that of New Zealand and its handling of cyber hate. Australias E Commissioner now has the power after investigation to hold platforms accountable for all online content publication and should that content be found to be seriously offensive then the platform in question has a certain time frame in which to remove the offending material or risk having fines laid against them, to date there have been over 250,000 cases presented to the Australian E Safety Commissioner and not one fine has needed to be issued. The Internet will not change, there are only ways to arm victims of cyber-racism to

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handle and deal with targeted attacks.

There have been suggestions of Cyber tipping lines which would enable the reporting of online race hate speech, by having an option such as this it would allow for further investigation or legal action. The E Safety Commissioner has already run Anti- Racism workshops which have aimed to provide a pushback against Cyber-Racism, by doing this it has also given victims the building blocks where people can come together online. The growth of Cyber-Racism is a battle between a destructive and dark social movement wanting to minimize the cultural differences and the education of society in general. Social movements of inclusion will play a major role to hold attackers and platforms responsible as they confront the industry in their pursuit for answers and responses. Cyber-Racism, unfortunately, has an intimate relationship with power not only via the economy and society but through state and federal levels of everyone's lives. In some senses, it could be viewed as a double edge sword in the fact that the internet which is the vessel for which Cyber-Racism is being carried out can also be the way to curb and control how it is manifesting throughout contemporary Australia.

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