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AHB 340- Deviance Essay


Deviance is defined as the fact or state of departing from usual or accepted standards, especially in social or sexual behavior. When faced with the topic of deviant behavior, I tend to think of all the negative things that someone could do that is considered "deviant", or deviating from social norms. There are many different things that fall into the category of deviating from what is considered acceptable or normal. The purpose of this research paper is to discuss the virtual self, cyber deviance, and how the internet facilitates deviant behavior. It is also important to define what is the virtual self and how the internet causes people to show who they truly are behind the computer screen.

Virtual deviance theorists believe that someone is more likely to present their true self while sitting at a computer screen than in person. This is because they feel more comfortable saying what they want to say without having the repercussions of actually seeing the person they are speaking to. In addition, it gives the person the ability to shy away from social norms of gender or personality expectations. As an example, a male who feels more feminine could have a virtual self image that is a female, where in reality, he is a male who is uncomfortable with revealing his true self to the world he lives in. This opens up the conversation about how having an alter-ego can affect those in the cyber world.[1]

([https://haenfler.sites.grinnell.edu/subcultural-theory-and-theorists/virtual-deviance/](https://haenfler.sites.grinnell.edu/subcultural-theory-and-theorists/virtual-deviance/))

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[1] (n.d.). Virtual Deviance - Subcultures and Sociology – Grinnell College. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://haenfler.sites.grinnell.edu/subcultural-theory-and-theorists/virtual-deviance/

Through consideration of how the virtual self could impact the cyber world, this brings us to the topic of subculture deviance[2] (Inderbitzen, 2019). The online community is actually considered its own subculture, and for this reason, it needs to be treated as a separate entity. There is much to take into account when thinking about how an alter-ego could impact another person. Perhaps we do not know who we are truly speaking with. Such ideas explain how it is possible for deviant behaviors to occur, such as sex trafficking, rape, or child pornography,

Up until usage of the internet really exploded and access to the world became so readily available, the ideas that defined deviance were tangible. We could put a definition on them, we could see or hear or touch the actions. Deviant behaviors such as bank robbery, murder, or kidnapping, to name a few, were things that we were aware could happen, but they were actions that take place in front of our own eyes. With the access of internet and everything that comes with that, there is a whole new meaning behind these deviant acts. Yes, banks are still being robbed and children are still being kidnapped, but there is more to it now than before. The ability to lure a child away from their family is much easier, through social media or chat sites. Bank robberies or theft now takes place electronically through stolen account numbers or electronic funds transfers. The ability to have access has given us so much, but has also taken away so much more.

The Institute for Homeland Security has conducted some research on the topic of deviant behaviors and the cyber community, and they have determined that, while giving us worldly views to pretty much everything, the access is also a supportive and driving force to deviant behaviors. Many of the deviant behaviors thrive on access to websites that support their cause,

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[2] (n.d.). Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control: Michelle L .... Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://www.amazon.com/Perspectives-Deviance-Control-Michelle-Inderbitzin/dp/1452288852

giving them more drive to promote the negativity. A white supremacist may feel empowered by their beliefs after obtaining access to multiple websites that glorify white supremacy[3] (Duke, 2009).

Access to websites that promote negativity and deviance can cause macro level harm on the global scale. Repercussions of promoting and participating in these deviant behaviors have caused dramatic division among races, cultures, and countries alike. As an example, I recently saw an article by CNN discussing how Italy has made it a requirement for baby car seats to have an alarm attached to remind a parent that their child is in the car with the purpose of helping to prevent deaths from accidentally leaving the child[4] in the car. Would you believe me if I told you that I also saw comments from people on social media criticizing the photo that was used in the article because they were not "safely placed in the car seats"? In a world where children are dying because they get left behind, adults can still find a reason to argue about something irrelevant to the topic at hand instead of being able to band together for the common good. It is situations such as this one that define exactly how divided we are, on the macro level, and we can directly relate this division to the usage of the internet.

It is reported that 40% of the world population has access to the internet today[5] (https://www.internetlivestats.com/). Over 4 billion people are using the internet right now. That is over 4 billion different people that we could interact with at this very moment. When you stop to think about just what exactly that means, it is an overwhelming feeling. There are over 4

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[3] (n.d.). The Impact of the Internet on Deviant Behavior and Deviant .... Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://sites.duke.edu/ihss/files/2011/12/IRW-Literature-Reviews-Deviance-and-the-Internet.pdf
[4] (2019, November 11). National Italy makes alarms for baby car seats mandatory .... Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://www.kshb.com/news/national/italy-makes-alarms-for-baby-car-seats-mandatory
[5] (n.d.). Internet Live Stats. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://www.internetlivestats.com/

billion people who could be practicing deviant behavior. That is over 4 billion people who could be hacking into a banking system, trying to make contact with children, promoting self harm, engaging in cyber-bullying, or stealing someone's identity. We are so very small in comparison.

Having access to the internet helps facilitate deviant behaviors by providing ongoing visibility to everything around us.[6] (Stalans & Finn. 2016) The problem that arises is that the web has so many layers and access points that it makes it nearly impossible for government agencies or law enforcement to maneuver through the systems and catch all who practice deviant behaviors. Add in the virtual avatars and other subcultured levels, it is clear that there is no easy answer on how to stop these behaviors from happening. It is up to us as individuals to practice and teach safe internet usage. Norton US would like to remind us to remember these eleven steps to help prevent becoming a victim of cybercrime[7]

(https://us.norton.com/internetsecurity-how-to-how-to-recognize-and-protect-yourself-from-cybercrime.html 2018).

1) Use full service internet security

2) Strong passwords

3) Make sure all software is up to date.

4) Manage social media settings

5) Strengthen home network

6) Talk to children about internet safety

7) Be aware of security breaches

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[6] (2016, July 29). Understanding How the Internet Facilitates Crime and Deviance. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15564886.2016.1211404

[7] (n.d.). 11 ways to help protect yourself against cybercrime - Norton. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from https://us.norton.com/internetsecurity-how-to-how-to-recognize-and-protect-yourself-from-cybercrime.html

8) Protect against identity theft

9) Know identity theft can happen anywhere

10) Pay attention to your children

11) Know what to do if you become a victim.

It is important to also remember that there are many different types of cybercrime and that awareness is the best prevention. If we do our best to watch out for each other, stop all the division and finger pointing, and try to work together as a worldwide community, I believe we will see a positive difference in the subcultural deviance that takes place in the cyber world.

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