

Victim Zero
The Internet Bullying
Of
Monica Lewinsky

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Definitions

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

The 2013-2014 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) indicates that 7% of students in grades 6–12 experienced cyberbullying.

The 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey finds that 15% of high school students (grades 9-12) were electronically bullied in the past year.

Electronic aggression is defined as any type of harassment or bullying (teasing, telling lies, making fun of someone, making rude or mean comments, spreading rumors, making threatening or aggressive comments, sexually oriented comments, unwanted sexual overtures, nonconsensual use of personal information, photos, or video or voice recordings) that occurs through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, a website (including blogs), text messaging, social media and videos or pictures posted on websites or sent through cell phones.

Monica Lewinsky in 2016

In 2014 Monica Lewinsky began utilizing her experience with a 16 year old wave of abuse and shaming for one greater campaign she is now crusading for, Cyberbullying. Since she was the first person to have their reputation destroyed over the internet, she declared that she would now use her experience to help others deal with cyberbullying and online violations of privacy.

As she has spoken for the victims of cyberbullying she mentioned the passing of Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old Rutgers freshman who jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge after his roommate secretly videotaped and live streamed Tyler kissing another man.

Monica Lewinsky promotes NoBullying.com which features many pages dedicated to parents, teens, teachers, health professionals as well as posts related to cyber safety and the latest news about law making concerning curbing Bullying worldwide as well as inspirational Bullying Poems and famous Bullying Quotes. The website regularly updates its bullying statistics and cyberbullying statistics as it is essential to understand how widespread the bullying epidemic has become. It also regularly runs cyberbullying surveys and questionnaires to get recent updated statistics on everything related to cyberbullying. NoBullying.com has a very good article about Monica Lewinsky on the website.⁽⁴⁾

“How Do We Move Beyond The Darkest Moments In Our Lives?” Is the title of the Ted Talk that Monica Lewinsky did in 2016. Earlier, on in 2015 at TED2015 Truth and Dare, in Vancouver, Canada she made a presentation entitled “The Price of Shame.”

The TED conference is an annual five-day live event that host 1,300 delegates and 70+ talks and performances. TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to “Ideas Worth Spreading,” usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or fewer) delivered by contemporary leading thinkers and doers. Many of these talks are given at TED's annual conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, and made available, free, on TED.com. TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Elizabeth Gilbert, Sir Richard Branson, Nandan Nilekani, Philippe Starck, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Sal Khan and Daniel Kahneman.⁽⁶⁾ (ted.com)

Monica Lewinsky has also received a Masters in Social Psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 2014, she released an essay for Vanity Fair named *Shame and Survival*, which was nominated for a National Magazine Award. She is currently involved with anti-bullying projects in the United States and the United Kingdom.⁽⁵⁾

Monica Lewinsky was a speaker at Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity in June 2015. Tham Khai Meng, Worldwide Chief Creative Officer at Ogilvy & Mather, said: "Monica Lewinsky is an eloquent, courageous and highly intelligent woman as evidenced by her recent TED Talk "The Price of Shame," which has had over 5 million views to date. As the living embodiment of what can happen when a human being is dehumanized online by virtual stone throwers, she moves the important topic of cyberbullying center stage. We are proud to support

Monica in her mission to stamp out online harassment. We believe businesses like ours can play an important role in getting her inspiring messages out to create a more compassionate, empathetic society."

Monica Lewinsky commented about speaking at the event: "I am honored and grateful for the opportunity that Ogilvy & Mather has given me to speak out on this issue to an extraordinary audience of those who can effect change. We need a cultural revolution on this matter. Public shaming as a blood sport has to stop, and it's time for an intervention on the Internet and in our culture."⁽⁷⁾

Monica Lewinsky is still being exploited and abused on the Internet. A search of major e-commerce website shows over 100 books for sale with a reference to Monica Lewinsky as well as 400 other items of various types many of them sexist or sarcastic. A search of a major auction website shows 340 items for sale many in the same vein of the miscellaneous items for sale on the e-commerce website.

Monica Lewinsky joined Twitter on October 20, 2014 to release three tweets, following no one and gaining almost 73,000 followers in the blink of an eye, following her speech on the same day, her account was bombarded by waves of trolls and bullies slut shaming her with crude references to her past scandal in 1998.

A search of Yahoo showed 1,560,000 results on October 18, 2016. On the same day on her Twitter account Monica Lewinsky had 129,000 followers and 5,880 likes, and has made just

over 3,000 Tweets. On Facebook there were 45,000+ talking about Monica Lewinsky and her verified page had just over 50,000 likes.

On Instagram.com Monica Lewinsky is being mocked several times. An Instagram page entitled “monicalewinsky2016” states that “Even Bill prefers Monica over Hillary. This account dedicated to electing Monica Lewinsky for U.S. president. Why choose the lesser of 2 evils?” There are three posts and 12 followers. The photo from her Twitter account was hijacked and used on the Instagram page.

The ExopaTerra Research

The webzine ExopaTerra started as an experiment conducted by a few friends. It quickly became more. Once the news of the relationship between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky broke ExopaTerra started collecting and preserving data on related Internet activity. It quickly became apparent that nothing like this had occurred in the Internet age and it deserved some attention and analysis. It was also clear that Monica Lewinsky was being abused and exploited on the Internet by pornographers, mainstream media, and hateful individuals.

One of the big tasks was to determine how fast and how many search engine entries would appear when searching on Monica Lewinsky's name and the nature of those entries. The search engine entry count was conducted daily for several months and in the second half of 1998 just after major events. The details about web traffic, downloads, web technologies used and other odds and ends presented later in this paper came from press releases put out by the various companies or media outlets mentioned.

The press releases were readily available and found through web searches or subscriptions to press release websites. All the organizations involved in the Internet frenzy took as much advantage as they could of the scandal and were achieving a lot of bragging rights about their accomplishments and achievements. In fact, one press release distributor started rejecting releases with Monica Lewinsky content because they felt that the topic was not news worthy.

There were dozens and dozens of web polls about the scandal and those results are not included in this presentation. As popular as the polls were, some getting thousands of responses, there was little if any validity to the results. The results of the web polls that seemed the most legitimate are included towards the end of the paper. Web poll legitimacy was also an issue during the 2016 Presidential campaign in the United States. What the web polls do is provide website visitors the ability to participate and record their opinions or feelings. Such polls will likely remain popular well into the future and remain a fixture in publicly available social media.

There was also a considerable amount of data regarding television viewers for the various networks but that was not particularly relevant to this research except that the networks constantly pushed people to their websites during the broadcasts. Television viewership was noted after significant events during the year. Television viewership undoubtedly had some impact on web traffic.

The other thing that the ExopaTerra project did not engage in was any judgment about the scandal or the commentaries published on various websites. That was not the focus in any way; it was the dynamics and the statistics that ExopaTerra focused on observing, collecting, and preserving. There were a huge amount of disgusting things published especially by the pornographers.

Friends of the webzine ExopaTerra would also forward tidbits they found or press releases they came across regarding the topic. The monikers Tonya Jackson and Brandon L. Harris provided the front end voices for the webzine.

It became clear over time that website visitors around the world were easily driven to participate in web polls and leave notes in comment sections. Although that activity was not as interactive as present day social media applications it was definitely a sign of things to come and served as a precursor to the emergence of social media applications and sharing functions. Web communities were in their infancy and websites similar to Geocities were starting to become popular and provided an early opportunity for consumer-generated content.

News websites affiliated with broadcast or print publications were becoming incredibly popular. The websites often served as a repository for documents, articles, photos, and commentaries and provided viewers or readers an easy opportunity to get more information on the scandal without having to navigate search engines. These news websites also used exaggerated spectacular article titles and headlines to help draw visitors many of which were not very tasteful. Records on web traffic by the news websites were being broken one after another and those websites were enjoying more and more popularity as well as becoming a revenue source by serving up advertising.

The web reaction to the scandal was unique in many ways. Entrepreneurs worked to exploit the opportunity in as many ways possible especially the pornographers. The broadcast news shows and print publications did so as well. In fact it was a battle everyday for viewers and website traffic and the winners were making great gains in their popularity as well as advertising revenue. As time went on it was clear that this was one of the very first web wars.

The small websites had their own competition among themselves just as the major networks and print publications. The battle often involved seeing which website could get the highest ranking in search engines. With the exception of Yahoo which required submitting a URL and waiting for approval, the other search engines were pretty much a free for all and it was easy to submit a URL for inclusion in search results. Part of that competition involved looking at competitor's websites and copying or mimicking descriptions and key terms.

Some of the smaller websites that posted serious commentary or data provided cross links with their competitors and the links would be mutually maintained. There developed a sense of camaraderie between those sites and there was considerable sharing of information and mutual praise for their accomplishments.

One thing is for certain, the World Wide Web was starting to mature and settle into its role in modern society. The web was not going to be viewed as just a novelty any longer and it would never be the same as it was before the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

The ExopaTerra webzine traffic peaked out with about 3,000 visitors per month in the fall of 1998. Data from ExopaTerra was quoted in several master's thesis and doctoral dissertations. The webzine also got recognition by other websites and earned a few web badges as well. The ExopaTerra series on Monica Lewinsky on the World Wide Web was mentioned in several newspaper and magazine articles including:

- "Scandal by the Numbers" USA Today, February 15, 1999 by Evelyn Polivent

- “Where to go When You Need all the Monica You Can Get” Business Week Online
August 21, 1998 by Diane Young
- “Monica back in public eye for all the Web to see” Irish Times, July 30, 1998
- “In Their Sites” Baltimore Sun, July 29, 1998 by Geoffrey C. Upton
- “Web watchers are quick to spin Lewinsky sites” Star-Telegram, January 28, 1998 by
Tommy Cummings Star-Telegram Staff Writer
- “Obscurity to infamy in a flash: Sex scandal floods Internet” Houston Chronicle, January
28, 1998 by Tony Freemantle
- “Clinton scandal: Riding a cyber-rocket to infamy” Edmonton Journal, January 30, 1998.

The Event Timeline and Background

By the time it was all over the Office of the Special Prosecutor spent an estimated \$4.5 million and caused the U.S. Federal government to spend up \$11 million⁽¹⁾ in agency expenses to pursue charges against then President Bill Clinton. It took four years, the time of scores of FBI and IRS agents, hundreds of subpoenas, thousands of documents, outside consultants, law professors, personal counsel, ethics advisers, and a professional public relations expert to discover very little except that then President Bill Clinton had some type of sexual affair with White House Intern Monica Lewinsky. Some of the key events in the time line were:

- July 10, 1995: Monica Lewinsky begins a White House internship.
- November 15, 1995: President Clinton begins an intimate relationship with Lewinsky.
- April 5, 1996: Monica Lewinsky is transferred from the White House to the Pentagon.
- January 20, 1997: President Clinton inaugurated for a second term of office.
- December 5, 1997: Monica Lewinsky's name appears on the Jones v. Clinton witness list.
- December 19, 1997: Monica Lewinsky is served with a subpoena to appear for a Jones v. Clinton deposition and to produce gifts she received from President Clinton.
- December 24, 1997: Monica Lewinsky completes her last day of work at the Pentagon.
- December 28, 1997: Monica Lewinsky meets with President Clinton and receives gifts, later giving a box containing gifts from President Clinton to Betty Currie.
- January 7, 1998: Monica Lewinsky signs an affidavit to be filed in Jones v. Clinton.

- January 12, 1998: The Office of the Independent Counsel receives deceptive information that Monica Lewinsky is attempting to influence the testimony of a witness in Jones v. Clinton.
- January 16, 1998: Attorney General Janet Reno asks the DOJ Special Division to appoint an independent counsel to investigate Monica Lewinsky's activities relating to the Jones v. Clinton litigation; the Special Division, in a sealed order, appoints Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr to investigate what became known as the Monica Lewinsky matter.
- January 17 1998: President Clinton is deposed in Jones v. Clinton.
- January 21, 1998: The Monica Lewinsky matter is widely reported in the national media. President Clinton publicly denies having had sexual relations with Lewinsky; he further denies asking anyone to lie.
- January 27, 1998: Betty Currie testifies before U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Grand Jury.
- January 29, 1998: The Special Division unseals the Lewinsky jurisdictional mandate.
- April 1, 1998: Chief Judge Wright grants summary judgment in favor of President Clinton in Jones v. Clinton.
- July 7, 1998: The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit affirms the district court's order compelling the grand jury testimony of Secret Service agents.
- July 17, 1998: President Clinton is served with a grand jury subpoena.
- July 28, 1998: Monica Lewinsky and the Office of the Independent Counsel reach an Immunity and Cooperation Agreement. She turns over a blue dress to investigators. The blue dress is sent to the FBI Laboratory.

- August 6, 1998: Monica Lewinsky testifies before the grand jury for the first time.
- August 8, 1998: President Clinton gives a blood sample to investigators from the Office of the Independent Counsel.
- August 17, 1998: FBI Laboratory confirms that the DNA sample taken from Monica Lewinsky's dress matches the blood taken from President Clinton. President Clinton testifies before the grand jury, acknowledging an improper relationship with Lewinsky.
- September 11, 1998: Kenneth Starr sends his final report to the U.S. Congress.
- December 19, 1998: The U.S. House of Representatives votes two articles of impeachment of President Clinton.
- February 12, 1999: Following impeachment trial, the U.S. Senate's votes on the House Articles of Impeachment does not get the two thirds of the Members present necessary for conviction of President Clinton.⁽²⁾

A submission by counsel for President Clinton to the Committee on the Judiciary of the U.S. House of Representatives made on September 11, 1998 sought to clarify the position of the Office of the President regarding the accusations made by the Office of Independent Council. Key points from that submission include:

- The Whitewater Investigative Dead-Ended: The Lewinsky investigation had its antecedent in the long-running Whitewater investigation. On August 5, 1994, Kenneth W. Starr was appointed Independent Counsel by the Special Division to conduct an investigation centering on two Arkansas entities, Whitewater Development Company, Inc., and Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan Association. The Office of Independent

Counsel's (OIC) investigation dragged on slowly and inconclusively, without any charges being lodged against either the President or Mrs. Clinton.

- The President has insisted that no legalities be allowed to obscure the simple moral truth that his behavior in this matter was wrong; that he misled his wife, his friends and our Nation about the nature of his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky. He did not want anyone to know about his personal wrongdoing. But he does want everyone -- the Committee, the Congress and the country -- to know that he is profoundly sorry for the wrongs he has committed and for the pain he has caused his family, his friends, and our nation.
- At his testimony before this Committee on November 19, 1998, Mr. Starr conceded that his agents had conducted interrogations and acknowledged that he had not sought expansion of his jurisdiction from the Attorney General or the Special Division of the Court of Appeals. He contended that these inquiries were somehow relevant to his Whitewater investigation. However, the OIC was obviously engaged in an effort to gather embarrassing information concerning the President.
- The Paula Jones Litigation: In January 1998, the OIC finally succeeded in transforming its investigation from one focused on long-ago land deals and loans in Arkansas into one involving a different topic (sex) and more recent events in Washington, D.C. The Lewinsky investigation grew out of the pretrial discovery proceedings in the civil suit Ms. Paula Corbin Jones had filed against the President in May 1994, making certain allegations about events three years earlier when the President was Governor of

Arkansas. Ms. Jones selected a spokesperson, Ms. Susan Carpenter-McMillan, and retained counsel affiliated with the conservative Rutherford Institute, who began a public relations offensive against the President.

- Mr. Starr actively sought jurisdiction in the Lewinsky matter, despite his representations to the contrary: After four years of fruitless investigation of the President and Mrs. Clinton on a variety of topics generically referred to in the news media as "Whitewater," the Starr investigation was at a standstill and in early 1998 the Independent Counsel himself had sought to resign in 1997. However, a telephone call from Ms. Tripp with allegations of obstruction and witness tampering in the Paula Jones case (which turned out to be false) offered Mr. Starr a dramatic way to vindicate his long, meandering, and costly investigation. Mr. Starr seized his chance energetically, promising Ms. Tripp immunity and using her to surreptitiously tape Ms. Lewinsky even before he made his request for jurisdiction to the Department of Justice.
- Mr. Starr gave immunity to anyone he thought could help him go after the President: He granted immunity to one witness who had admitted engaging in illegal activity over a period of several months (Ms. Tripp), and another witness who was, as he stated, "a felon in the middle of committing another felony" (Ms. Lewinsky), Transcript of November 19, 1998 Hearing (testimony of Mr. Starr), all in an effort to gather information damaging to the President.

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