Disconnect

Presentation by Peter Anderson

Disconnect is a 2012 American drama film directed by Henry Alex Rubin and stars an ensemble cast, which includes Jason Bateman, Hope Davis, Frank Grillo, Andrea Riseborough, Paula Patton, Michael Nyqvist, Alexander Skarsgård, Max Thieriot and fashion designer Marc Jacobs in his debut acting role.

Plot

The film explores how people experience the negative sides of modern communication technology by following three interconnecting stories. The first is to do with sex and minors, the second with teenage cyberbullying and the third with adult identity theft.

An ambitious, up-and-coming reporter Nina Dunham has much success with her interview with underage video chat-room stripper Kyle. Kyle, a runaway, works in a whole "house" with other chat-room strippers under his boss, Harvey. However, the FBI wants her to reveal his address in order to shut down the whole website that hosts the web-rooms. Since she has paid him in order to make initial contact, she may have broken the law, making the police and her boss put pressure on her to cooperate. Nina wants to save him from the business, yet fears losing his trust in the process. Kyle reluctantly gives her the address, and somehow, Harvey is tipped off and the entire house flees. When Nina discovers this, she follows them to the motel where they're staying, and asks Kyle to leave with her. At first, Kyle is hopeful for the future and willing, but when Nina is hesitant to guarantee him safe haven in her home, he resists. Harvey watches the argument, then slaps Nina. The entire group of chat-room strippers leave and Nina drives away in tears.

Two boys, Jason and his friend Frye, impersonate a girl, "Jessica Rhony", on Facebook Messenger and convince teenager Ben (the son of Rich, a legal counsel at the TV station where Nina works) to send a nude picture of himself. The boys distribute it to classmates, and the picture circulates to nearly everyone in their grade. Ben is so embarrassed by this cyber bullying that he attempts suicide by hanging himself and ends up in a coma. Rich doggedly searches Ben's social media, looking for answers, and begins chatting with "Jessica". Jason visits Ben in the hospital, where he meets Rich, and falsely calls himself Mike. Jason's father (the real Mike) discovers what Jason has been doing and becomes very angry with him. However, he grudgingly protects his son by erasing the evidence on Frye's iPad. Later, Rich discovers that Jason is actually "Jessica", and goes to Mike's house angrily, resulting in a physical altercation. Jason tries to intervene, and Rich hits him with a hockey stick then Rich gets hit by the father to the ground, stopping the fight.

Cindy and Derek, a married couple who recently lost their child, struggle after their identities are stolen online. They hire private detective Mike (Jason's father), to find the thief, and after revealing that Cindy had been regularly chatting on a support group website, Mike determines their burglar. They go after the suspect, Stephen Schumacher, following him at work, watching his movements, and breaking into his home for evidence. Right before Derek goes to confront him at his front door, Mike calls to tell him that Schumacher is not their guy, that he too was a victim of the burglar. Schumacher, who had been noticing Cindy and Derek stalking him, confronts them in their car with a rifle; however, Derek, a former Marine, disarms him and forces him back into his house. Cindy is able to coax (convincere con le buone, persuadere con paziente insistenza, blandire) the gun away, relating to the online chats about each of their losses.

The film ends with none of the stories being resolved, and yet, with all characters having grown closer to the ones they love in the process, or rather, having stopped "disconnecting".

Critical response

Disconnect received positive reviews from critics and has a score of 69% on Rotten Tomatoes based on 74 reviews with an average rating of 6.6 out of 10. The critical consensus states "It's didactic in spots and melodramatic in others, but Disconnect's strong cast helps make it a timely (opportuno, tempestivo, provvidenziale), effective exploration of modern society's technological overload" (sovraccarico). The film also has a score of 64 out of 100 on Metacritic based on 24 critics indicating "generally favourable reviews".

Richard Roeper of the Chicago Sun-Times gave the film four out of four stars and wrote "Even when the dramatic stakes are raised to the point of pounding music accompanying super-slow motion, potentially tragic violence, 'Disconnect' struck a chord with me in a way few films have in recent years. I believed the lives of these people. I believed they'd do the drastic things they do in the face of crisis. I ached for them when things went terribly wrong and rooted for (to root for *phr verb* US: essere dalla parte di, tifare per) them when there were glimmers of hope. You should see this movie. Please...There wasn't a moment during this movie when I thought about anything other than this movie."

Cyberbullying is the use of information technology to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner. According to US Legal Definitions, *Cyber-bullying could be limited to posting rumours or gossips about a person in the internet bringing about hatred in other's minds; or it may go to the extent of personally identifying victims and publishing materials severely defaming and humiliating them.*

With the increase in use of these technologies, cyberbullying has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers. Awareness has also risen, due in part to high-profile cases like the suicide of Tyler Clementi.

Tyler Clementi (December 19, 1991 – September 22, 2010) was an eighteen-year-old student at Rutgers /rʌtgəz/ University in Piscataway, New Jersey, who jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge on September 22, 2010. On September 19, his roommate, Dharun Ravi, and a fellow hallmate, Molly Wei, used a webcam on Ravi's computer and a computer in Wei's dorm room to view, without Clementi's knowledge, Clementi kissing another man. On September 21, the day prior to the suicide, Ravi urged friends and Twitter followers to watch via his webcam a second tryst between Clementi and his friend, though the viewing never occurred. Ravi and Wei were indicted for their roles in the webcam incidents, though they were not charged with a role in the suicide itself. Clementi's death brought national and international attention to the issue of cyberbullying and the struggles facing **LGBT** youth.

LGBT is an initialism (acronimo composto dalle lettere iniziali, sigla) that stands for **l**esbian, **g**ay, **b**isexual, and **t**ransgender. In use since the 1990s, the term is an adaptation of the initialism **LGB**, which itself started replacing the term *gay* when in reference to the LGBT community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s, as many felt the term *gay community* did not accurately represent all those to whom it referred. The initialism has become mainstream as a self-designation and has been adopted by the majority of sexuality and gender identity-based community centres and media in the United States and some other English-speaking countries. It is also used in some other countries in whose languages the initialism is meaningful, such as France and Argentina.

The initialism LGBT is intended to emphasize a diversity of sexuality and gender identity-based cultures and is sometimes used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual or non-cisgender instead of exclusively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. To recognize this inclusion, a popular variant adds the letter Q for those who identify as queer and/or are questioning their sexual identity as LGBTQ, recorded since 1996.

On the one hand, some intersex people who want to be included in LGBT groups suggest an extended initialism *LGBTI* (recorded since 1999). This initialism "LGBTI" is used in all parts of "The Activist's

Guide" of the Yogyakarta Principles in Action. Furthermore, the initialism LGBTIH has seen use in India to encompass the hijra third gender identity and the related subculture. More recently, the catch-all term *gender and sexual diversity* (**GSD**) has been proposed.

Whether or not LGBT people openly identify themselves may depend on whether they live in a discriminatory environment, as well as on the status of LGBT rights where they live.

History of LGBT terms

Before the sexual revolution of the 1960s, there was no common non-derogatory vocabulary for non-heterosexuality; the closest such term, *third gender*, traces back to the 1860s but never gained wide acceptance in the United States.

The first widely used term, *homosexual*, originally carried negative connotations and tended to be replaced by *homophile* in the 1950s and 1960s,[19] and subsequently *gay* in the 1970s.. As lesbians forged more public identities, the phrase "gay and lesbian" became more common. The Daughters of Bilitis folded in 1970 over which direction to focus on: feminism or gay rights issues. As equality was a priority for lesbian feminists, disparity of roles between men and women or butch and femme were viewed as patriarchal. Lesbian feminists eschewed gender role play that had been pervasive in bars, as well as the perceived chauvinism of gay men; many lesbian feminists refused to work with gay men, or take up their causes. Lesbians who held a more essentialist view that they had been born homosexual and used the descriptor "lesbian" to define sexual attraction, often considered the separatist, angry opinions of lesbian-feminists to be detrimental to the cause of gay rights. This was soon followed by bisexual and transgender people also seeking recognition as legitimate categories within the larger community.

After the initial euphoria of the Stonewall riots wore off, starting in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, there was a change in perception; some gays and lesbians became less accepting of bisexual or transgender people. It was thought that transgender people were acting out stereotypes and bisexuals were simply gay men or lesbian women who were afraid to come out and be honest about their identity. Each community that is collectively included has struggled to develop its own identity including whether, and how, to align with other gender and sexuality-based communities at times excluding other subgroups; these conflicts continue to this day.

The initialism LGBT saw occasional use in the United States from about 1988. Not until the 1990s did it become common to speak of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people with equal respect within the movement. Although the LGBT community has seen much controversy regarding universal acceptance of different member groups (bisexual and transgender individuals, in particular, have sometimes been marginalized by the larger LGBT community), the term *LGBT* has been a positive symbol of inclusion. Despite the fact that *LGBT* does not nominally encompass all individuals in smaller communities (see Variants below), the term is generally accepted to include those not identified in the four-letter initialism. Overall, the use of the term *LGBT* has, over time, largely aided in bringing otherwise marginalized individuals into the general community.

Transgender actress Candis Cayne in 2009 called the LGBT community "the last great minority", noting that "We can still be harassed openly" and be "called out on television."

In response to years of lobbying from users and LGBT groups to eliminate discrimination, the online social networking service Facebook, in February 2014, widened its gender variants. However, this initiative has its critics.

Yogyakarta Principles in Action

Yogyakarta Principles in Action is a movement for activists and human rights defenders to promote human rights, especially those of LGBTI around the Yogyakarta Principles, supported by ARC International, Hivos and Dreilinden Gesellschaft für gemeinnütziges Privatkapitel, Germany.

They published the "Activist's Guide" on the Yogyakarta Principles in August 2010 and also provided translations of the Yogyakarta Principles in languages which are not official languages of the United Nations, including Catalan, Dutch, Euskara (Basque), Filipino, German, Hungarian, Indonesian, Lithuanian, Nepali, Persian, Portuguese, Sinhala, Slovak and Tamil.

On 28 February 2011, International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission held a meeting to celebrate the launch of the Yogyakarta Principles accompanying "Activist's Guide". And on 4 July 2011, Philippine LGBT groups celebrate the Yogyakarta Principles with the "Activist's Guide".

This 146-page guide consists of four sections preceded by a foreword, acknowledgements, and the purpose and structure of the guide. Unlike The Yogyakarta Principles, the term **LGBTI** instead of LGBT is used in all occurrences.

The **Foreword** at p 6 states, "We all have the same human rights. Whatever our sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status, we are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights - interrelated, interdependent, and universal - are shared by each one of us." On p 7, it is stated that "There is an inconsistency between the rights identified in international human rights documents, such as those in the Yogyakarta Principles, and the rights actually enjoyed by individuals. While international standards may grant us rights, discrimination, stigma, violence, and fear pose real threats to people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Activists, human rights defenders, and individual members of our many communities are the driving force behind closing this gap between our rights and our reality."

Hijra /hˌdˌrə/

Hijras is a term used to refer to individuals in India, South Asia who are transsexual or transgender. It is a common misconception among South Asians that hijras are "only men who have feminine gender identity, adopt feminine gender roles and wear women's clothing". In reality, the community is significantly more diverse.

In Pakistan, the *hijras* identify themselves as either female, male, or third gender. The term more commonly advocated by social workers and transgender community members themselves is 'khwaaja sira', and can identify the individual as a transsexual person, transgender person (*khusras*), cross-dresser (*zenanas*) or eunuch (*narnbans*).

Hijras have a recorded history in the Indian subcontinent, from antiquity, as suggested by the Kama Sutra period, onwards. This history features a number of well-known roles within subcontinental cultures, part gender-liminal, part spiritual, and part survival.

In South Asia, many *hijras* live in well-defined and organized all-*hijra* communities, led by a guru. These communities have sustained themselves over generations by "adopting" young boys who are rejected by, or flee their family of origin. Many work as sex workers for survival.

Legal definition of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined in legal glossaries as:

- actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm another or others.

- use of communication technologies for the intention of harming another person
- use of internet service and mobile technologies such as web pages and discussion groups as well as instant messaging or SMS text messaging with the intention of harming another person.

Examples of what constitutes cyberbullying include communications that seek to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, or humiliate the recipient. The actions are deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior intended to harm another. Cyberbullying has been defined by The National Crime Prevention Council: "When the Internet, cell phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person."

A cyberbully may be a person whom the target knows or an online stranger. A cyberbully may be anonymous and may solicit involvement of other people online who do not even know the target. This is known as a 'digital pile-on.'

Cyberbullying vs cyberstalking

The practice of cyberbullying is not limited to children and, while the behaviour is identified by the same definition when practiced by adults, the distinction in age groups sometimes refers to the abuse as cyberstalking or cyberharassment when perpetrated by adults toward adults. Common tactics used by cyberstalkers are performed in public forums, social media or online information sites and are intended to threaten a victim's earnings, employment, reputation, or safety. Behaviors may include encouraging others to harass the victim and trying to affect a victim's online participation. Many cyberstalkers try to damage the reputation of their victim and turn other people against them.

Cyberstalking may include false accusations, monitoring, making threats, identity theft, damage to data or equipment, the solicitation of minors for sex, or gathering information in order to harass. A repeated pattern of such actions and harassment against a target by an adult constitutes cyberstalking. Cyberstalking often features linked patterns of online and offline behavior. There are consequences of law in offline stalking and online stalking, and cyber-stalkers can be put in jail. Cyberstalking is a form of cyberbullying.

Comparison to traditional bullying

Certain characteristics inherent in online technologies increase the likelihood that they will be exploited for deviant purposes. Unlike physical bullying, electronic bullies can remain virtually anonymous using temporary email accounts, pseudonyms in chat rooms, instant messaging programs, cell-phone text messaging, and other Internet venues to mask their identity; this perhaps frees them from normative and social constraints on their behaviour.

Additionally, electronic forums often lack supervision. While chat hosts regularly observe the dialog in some chat rooms in an effort to police conversations and evict offensive individuals, personal messages sent between users (such as electronic mail or text messages) are viewable only by the sender and the recipient, thereby outside the regulatory reach of such authorities. In addition, when teenagers know more about computers and cellular phones than their parents or guardians, they are therefore able to operate the technologies without concern that a parent will discover their experience with bullying (whether as a victim or offender).

Another factor is the inseparability of a cellular phone from its owner, making that person a perpetual target for victimization. Users often need to keep their phone turned on for legitimate purposes, which provides the opportunity for those with malicious intentions to engage in persistent unwelcome behavior such as harassing telephone calls or threatening and insulting statements via the cellular phone's text messaging capabilities. Cyberbullying thus penetrates the walls of a home, traditionally a place where victims could seek refuge from other forms of bullying. Compounding this infiltration into the home life of the cyberbully victim is the unique way in which the internet can "create simultaneous sensations of

exposure (the whole world is watching) and alienation (no one understands)." For youth who experience shame or self-hatred, this effect is dangerous because it can lead to extreme self isolation.

One possible advantage for victims of cyberbullying over traditional bullying is that they may sometimes be able to avoid it simply by avoiding the site/chat room in question. Email addresses and phone numbers can be changed; in addition, most e-mail accounts now offer services that will automatically filter out messages from certain senders before they even reach the inbox, and phones offer similar caller ID functions.

However, this does not protect against all forms of cyberbullying; publishing of defamatory material about a person on the internet is extremely difficult to prevent and once it is posted, many people or archiving services can potentially download and copy it, at which point it is almost impossible to remove from the Internet. Some perpetrators may post victims' photos, or victims' edited photos like defaming captions or pasting victims' faces on nude bodies. Examples of famous forums for disclosing personal data or photos to "punish" the "enemies" include the Hong Kong Golden Forum, Live Journal, and more recently JuicyCampus. Despite policies that describe cyberbullying as a violation of the terms of service, many social networking Web sites have been used to that end.

Methods used

Manuals to educate the public, teachers and parents summarize, "Cyberbullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using a cell phone or the internet." Research, legislation and education in the field are ongoing. Basic definitions and guidelines to help recognize and cope with what is regarded as abuse of electronic communications have been identified.

- Cyberbullying involves repeated behavior with intent to harm and repeated nature
- Cyberbullying is perpetrated through Harassment, Cyberstalking, Denigration (sending or posting cruel rumors and falsehoods to damage reputation and friendships), Impersonation, Exclusion (intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group)

Cyberbullying can be as simple as continuing to send e-mails or text messages harassing someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender. It may also include public actions such as repeated threats, sexual remarks, pejorative labels (ie, hate speech) or defamatory false accusations), ganging up on a victim by making the person the subject of ridicule in online forums, hacking into or vandalizing sites about a person, and posting false statements as fact aimed a discrediting or humiliating a targeted person. Cyberbullying could be limited to posting rumors about a person on the internet with the intention of bringing about hatred in others' minds or convincing others to dislike or participate in online denigration of a target. It may go to the extent of personally identifying victims of crime and publishing materials severely defaming or humiliating them.

Cyberbullies may disclose victims' personal data (e.g. real name, home address, or workplace/schools) at websites or forums or may use impersonation, creating fake accounts, comments or sites posing as their target for the purpose of publishing material in their name that defames, discredits or ridicules them. This can leave the cyberbully anonymous which can make it difficult for the offender to be caught or punished for their behavior. Though, not all cyberbullies use anonymity. Text or instant messages and emails between friends can also be cyberbullying if what is said or displayed is hurtful to the participants.

Some cyberbullies may also send threatening and harassing emails, instant messages or texts to the victims. Others post rumours or gossip and instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target.

Cyberbullying by email from a fictional friend@hotmail.com.

The recent use of mobile applications and rise of smartphones have yielded to a more accessible form of cyberbullying. It is expected that cyberbullying via these platforms will be associated with bullying via

mobile phones to a greater extent than exclusively through other more stationary internet platforms. In addition, the combination of cameras and Internet access and the instant availability of these modern smartphone technologies yield themselves to specific types of cyberbullying not found in other platforms. It is likely that those cyberbullied via mobile devices will experience a wider range of cyberbullying types than those exclusively bullied elsewhere.

In social media

Cyberbullying can take place on social media sites such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter. "By 2008, 93% of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 were online. In fact, youth spend more time with media than any single other activity besides sleeping." There are many risks attached to social media cites, and cyberbullying is one of the larger risks. One million children were harassed, threatened or subjected to other forms of cyberbullying on Facebook during the past year, while 90% of social media-using teens who have witnessed online cruelty say they have ignored mean behavior on social media, and 35% have done this frequently. 95% of social media-using teens who have witnessed cruel behavior on social networking sites say they have seen others ignoring the mean behavior, and 55% witness this frequently.[19] "The most recent case of cyber-bullying and illegal activity on Facebook involved a memorial page for the young boys who lost their lives to suicide due to anti-gay bullying. The page quickly turned into a virtual grave desecration and platform condoning gay teen suicide and the murdering of homosexuals. Photos were posted of executed homosexuals, desecrated photos of the boys who died and supposed snuff photos of gays who have been murdered. Along with this were thousands of comments encouraging murder sprees against gays, encouragement of gay teen suicide, death threats etc. In addition, the page continually exhibited pornography to minors."

In gaming

Sexual harassment as a form of Cyberbullying is common in Video game culture. A study by the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology suggests that this harassment is due in part to the portrayal of women in video games. This harassment generally involves slurs (ingiurie, osservazioni offensiva) directed towards women, sex role stereotyping, and overaggressive language.

In one case, in which Capcom sponsored an internet streamed reality show pitting fighting game experts against each other for a prize of $25,000, one female gamer forfeited a match due to intense harassment. The coach of the opposing team, Aris Bakhtanians, stated, "The sexual harassment is part of the culture. If you remove that from the fighting game community, it's not the fighting game community… it doesn't make sense to have that at attitude. These things have been established for years."

A study from National Sun Yat-sen University observed that children who enjoyed violent video games were far more likely to both experience and perpetrate cyberbullying.