

Online Abuse and Crime Experiences of Youth and Young Adults



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Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

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RIT Research Findings

1. Youth high tech crime paradigm shift
2. Alarming aspects of contemporary digital youth culture undermine civility and trust
3. Several forms of cyber offending and victimization by and among youth

1. New Paradigm: Today's Youth...

- Have never known a world without the Net
- Use many devices to access the Internet from public and private places
- Do not differentiate being online or offline
- They are “always connected” in their minds or in fact via electronic devices
- Continually change along with Internet technologies and content
- Substantially influence overall “Internet culture”

Digital Youth Culture

- Social computing via website forums, chat rooms, blogs, electronic gaming, “IM-ing” and “texting” are integral aspects of life
- Social computing provides for creativity and stimulating online interactions
- Social computing = mobile computing
- Always being online, available to chat or help out, and rapid-fire messaging is highly valued

2. Alarming Aspects of Contemporary Digital Youth Culture

- Online incivility, promiscuity, abuse and crime by and among youth is common
- Sending mean messages and/or posting nasty content is done routinely by many though not all youth
- This is learned, “normal”, expected and encouraged online by millions of youth

Alarming Aspects (cont.)

- “Leetspeak” (i.e., cryptic abbreviations) accelerates and disguises message content . . .
A form of encryption
- Kids create multiple personal profiles consisting of true-to-false information
- Lying about age, appearance, etc. is common for deceitful and self-protection reasons
- Rampant naivety (or apathy) about trustworthy online friendships and the process of “friending”
- Content and behaviors multiply “virally” as youth create, teach and promote their online culture

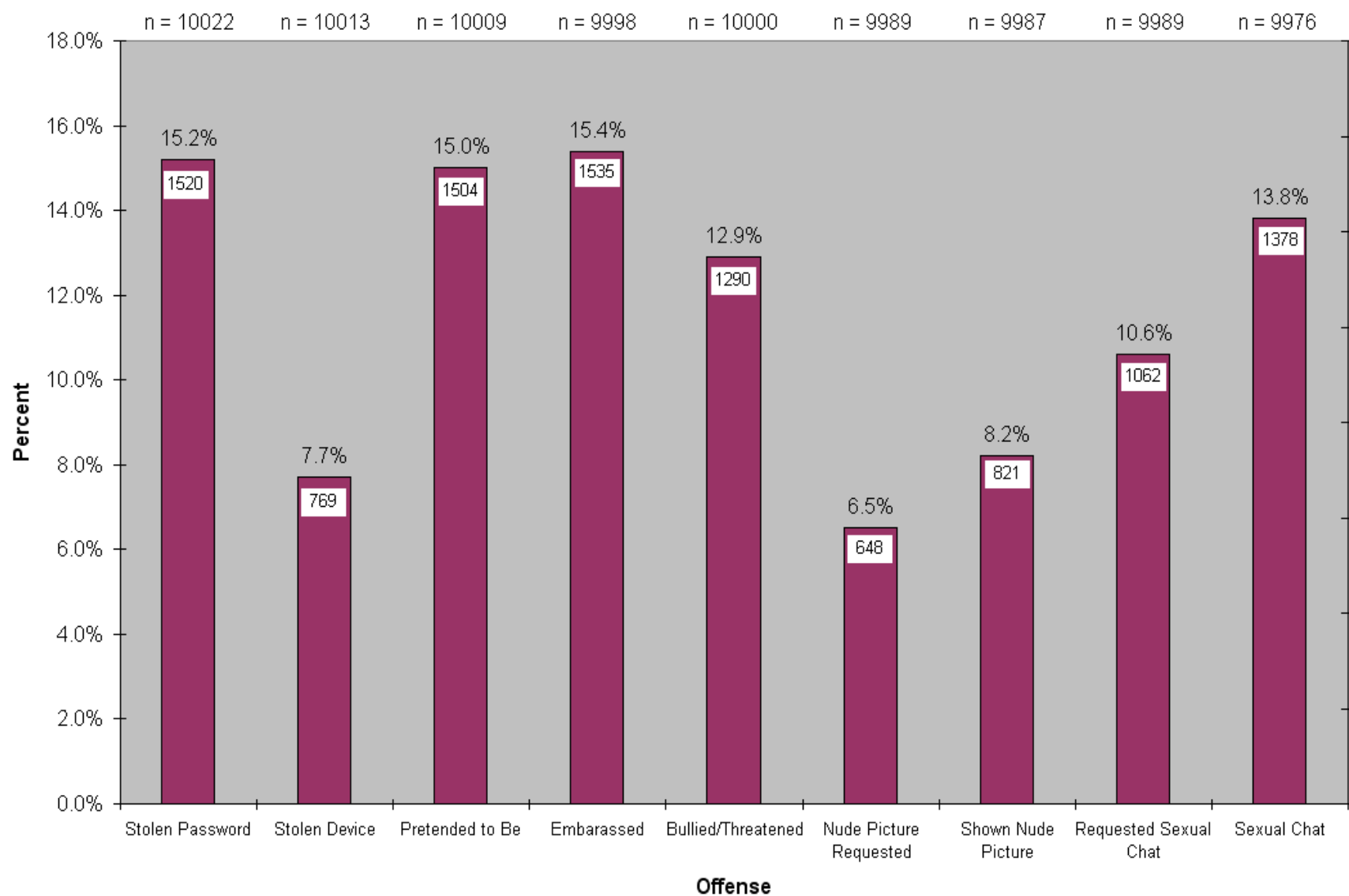
3. Youth Cyber Abuse and Crime

- Academic dishonesty
- Plagiarism
- Piracy of music, movies and software
- Online threats and harassment (cyber bullying)
- Credit card fraud and identity theft
- Creating and posting child pornography
- Sending unwanted solicitations for sex
- Illicit purchasing of prescription and illegal drugs
- Writing and distributing malicious computer code
- Password cracking and computer hacking

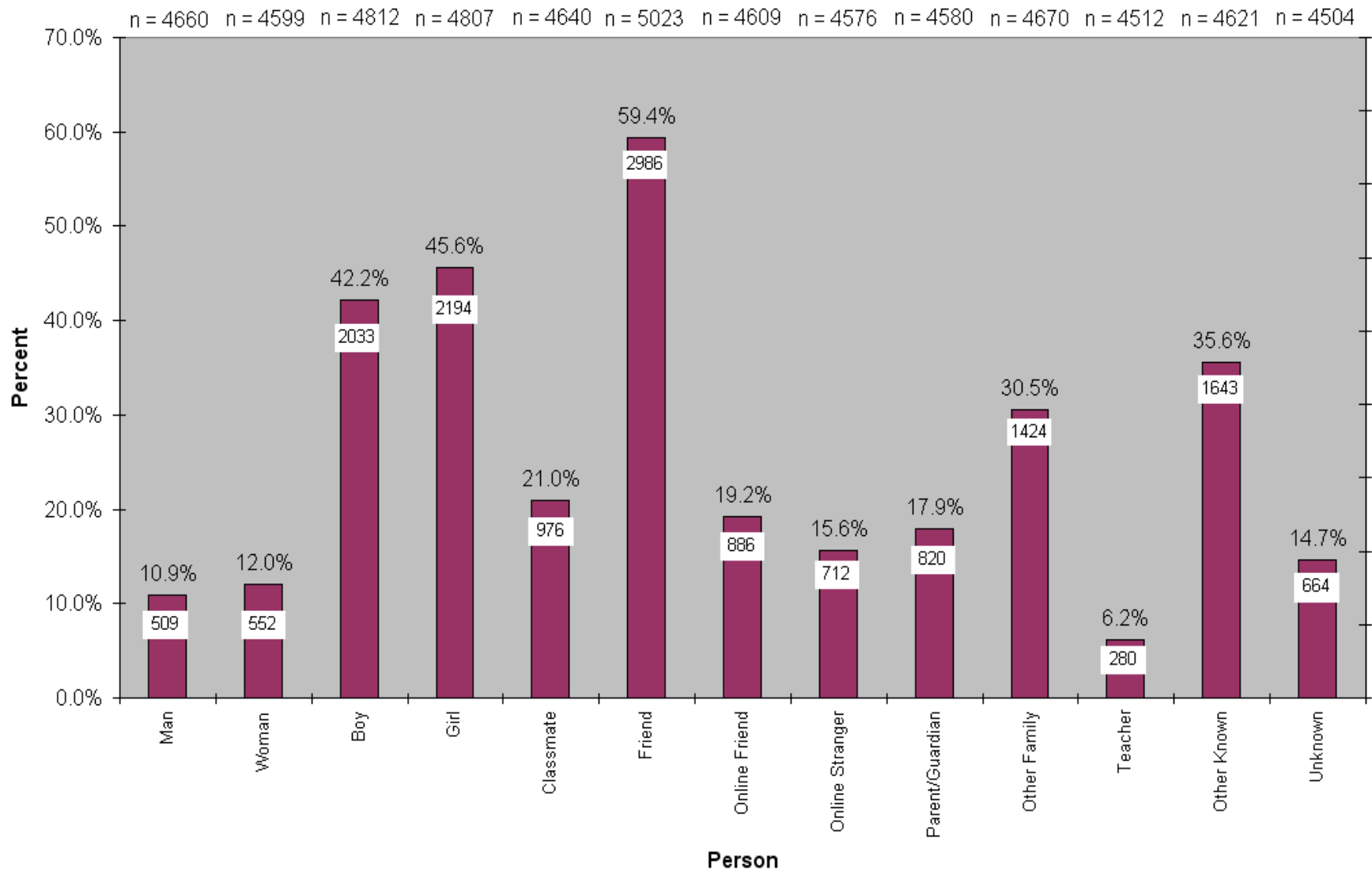
Cyber Victimization and Abuse By and Among Youth

- Perpetrators are often known in advance and most are classmates or “friends”
- Online bullying begins in 2nd grade
- Sending and receiving of sexual content is experienced by primary school students
- Pirating begins in the 4th grade, when overall cyber offenders exceed the number of online victims
- Middle school students experience all known forms of cyber offending and victimization

[7th-9th] Q16: During this past school year, has someone...

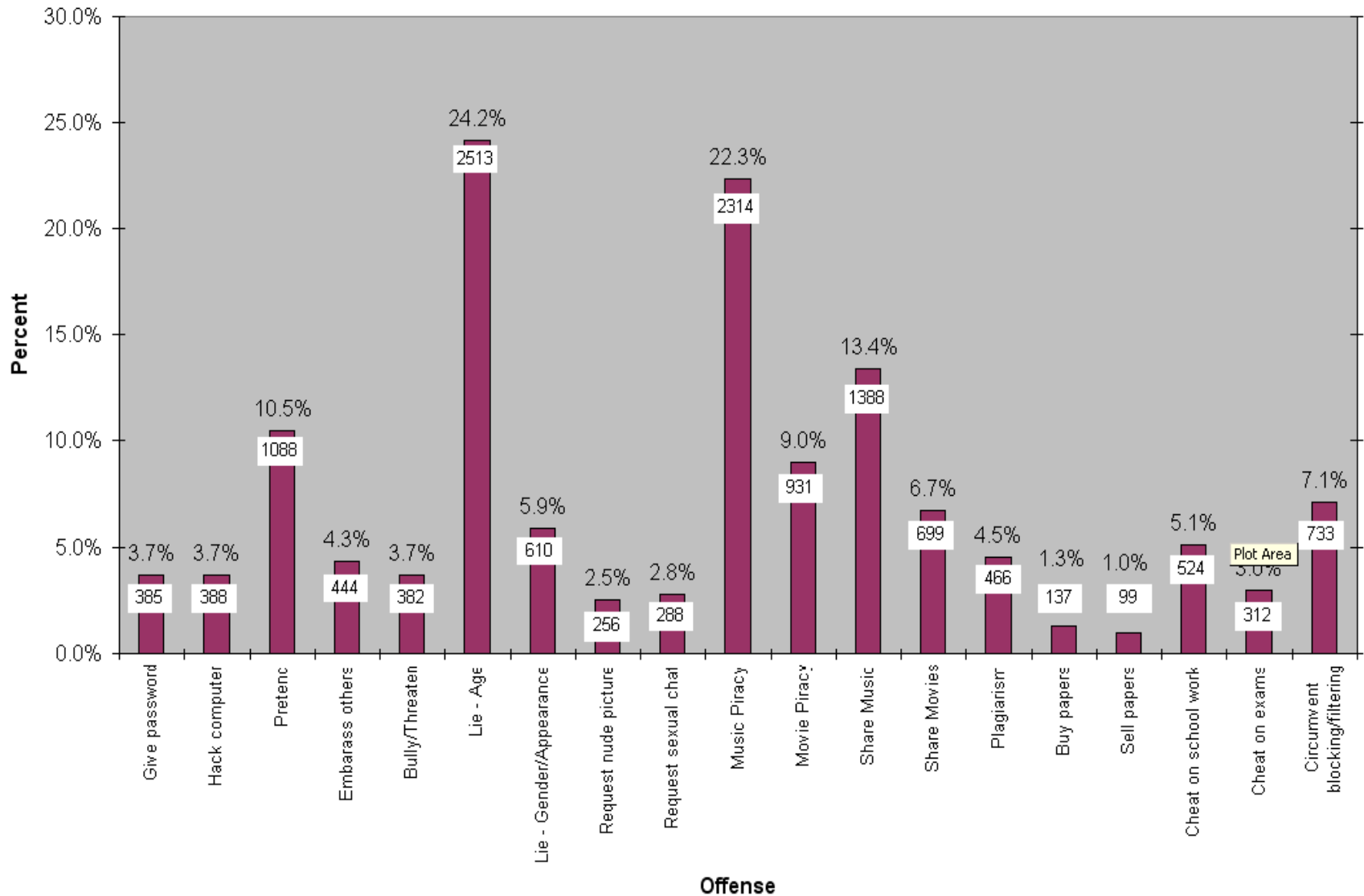


[7th-9th] Q17: If you answered yes to one or more things in Question 16, was the person or people involved a:



[7th-9th] Q22: Which of the following things have you used a computer to do within the last year:

n = 10366



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Cyber Safety and Ethics Initiative (www.bcybersafe.org)

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