

Social Media Law Update

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[Cyber-Bullying Does Not Happen In a Vacuum](#)

By [Michelle Sherman](#)

It takes a lot of bullying and all round cruelty to push someone to kill themselves. And, usually, there are opportunities, several, if not more, to intervene, and protect the victim of the attacks. Bullying does not happen in a vacuum. There are witnesses. Bullies get some self-satisfaction from tormenting another person.

We need to interrupt that cycle. Remove whatever gratification they are getting from being cruel to another person. When Dharun Ravi tweeted about his speculation that his roommate was having a date with another man, his tweet was surely read by someone - most likely a number of people. And, when Ravi secretly recorded and broadcast on the Internet that Tyler Clementi, his roommate, was making out with a man, there was undoubtedly an audience. Yet, there are no reports of someone, anyone, objecting to what was clearly a cruel, unkind act by Ravi. No one seems to have alerted school officials. At least two days passed before Tyler Clementi took his life.

If we really want to do something about bullying, we need to each take responsibility for doing something when we see it happening. We can't put blame only on the bully, or the school administration, or the bully's parents.

We need to start acting more like a community of people who protect one another. Bullies need to know they will be called out by the majority. We won't duck and cover and be thankful we are not the one being ridiculed or terrorized. We will alert authorities, school officials, the media. We will be loud and strong in objecting so bullies will get no benefit from the incredible, singular jerks they are.

Bullying is evident everywhere. It is not limited to schools, but can be seen in the military and workplace. It is something we should care about and stop wherever it takes place.

The campaign to stop cyber-bullying is properly getting attention in the media and also with companies and the American Bar Association, who have jointly produced a consumer protection

video on the problem of cyber-bullying in schools. The cyber-bullying video linked [here](#) (Password: Bully) is the first in a series that the ABA, Antitrust Section, through its Public Education Committee, is producing to help high school students learn about vital consumer protection topics. These videos are being funded in part by donations from American companies such as Microsoft Corporation and Time Warner Cable, Inc., and additional fundraising efforts are underway.

For further information, please contact [Michelle Sherman](#) at (213) 617-5405. ([Follow me on Twitter!](#))