Chapter 3

Detecting Sexual Harassment in Workplace Electronic Communications Networks: The Role of “PROTEGER” for Augmentive Behaviour Monitoring

Jonathan Bishop
Centre for Research Into Online Communities and E-Learning Systems, UK

ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment has been a problem within organisations for some time. Its manifestation in electronic communication networks can be seen to amount to cyber-bullying or cyber-stalking. Through looking at records relating to an instance of sexual harassment at a higher education institution, including from that member of staff’s workplace, and those created by referrals to the police, the court service, and their workplace, this chapter shows how a piece of assistive technology called the ‘Protective Technology for Ensuring Guardianship of Environmental Resources’ (PROTEGER) can automatically detect sexual harassment narratives. In this context, ‘environmental resources’ should refer to both humans and documents. Human resource managers would be better equipped to deal with disputes between staff if PROTEGER was running on their local area network as it might not be a matter of one member of staff’s word against another’s.

INTRODUCTION

The modern workplace is one often underpinned by electronic communications and the production of documents through software and other electronic means. In those organisations that have significant levels of management there are often power struggles and behaviours carried out to increase authority through promotion and other forms of achieving a higher status and greater influence. What is often not discussed, especially in the drive to create sex equality, is the abuse of sex to gain and use power. The psychology of such actions is often only observable in the real world, in terms of the shunning of
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people through body language or other ways of belittling through tone of voice or facial expression. Therefore, this chapter seeks to define a computer system that can understand how the pursuit of power manifests as a form of sexual harassment in those workplaces based around electronic communications and document creation. To achieve this goal, documents produced by a manager engaged in the sexual harassment of a student with a disability who was a vulnerable adult is used to, on the one hand show how they achieved their power with a rhetoric of wanting to achieve equality, and on the other hand used that power to do the opposite.

DEFINING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is not about sex; rather, it is about power (Dougherty, 2006; Tinsley, & Stockdale, 1993). Another key factor is that sexual harassment has at the heart of it sexism (Dziech & Weiner, 1990), which can be in the form of chivalrous attitudes and behaviours (Bishop, 2015c). Those organisations whose ‘psychology’ is based on the pursuit of power, while at the same time carrying a rhetoric of equality of opportunity, are at greatest risk of intersectionality resulting in dominance being sought as a means to enable oppression and discrimination (Seabright, 2012; Van de Velde, Huijts, Bracke, & Bambra, 2013).

Table 1 presents several concepts that have been aggregated from several different sources to explain how an algorithm – like that initiated by this chapter – can be used to distinguish between those documents that show no risk of sexual harassment or abuse of intersectional imaginations of equality and those that do.

The first of these is trolling magnitude (TM) which refers to the seriousness of a set of one or more actions of trolling by one person towards another. A TM of 1 is light banter and not serious, whereas a TM of 4 relates to a sophisticated campaign that requires serious effort by the troller and serious harm to their victim. The second of these, seduction gravity, refers to the risk that if a document were to get into the hands of someone for whom it was not intended, this could prey on their mind or provoke unwanted behaviours. The third, namely trolling intensity, refers to the amount of effort a person is exerting to achieve the desired outcome. These categories are based on a long-established model of trolling (Jansen, 2002; Jansen, & James, 1995) describing how trolling ranges from being light entertainment for all to enjoy (i.e., Playtime) to that which causes harm to one or more individuals for a sustained period (i.e., Domination).

Table 1. The trolling magnitude scale and associated categories of behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TM</th>
<th>Seduction Gravity</th>
<th>Trolling Intensity</th>
<th>Befriending Mode</th>
<th>Kudos Motive</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>Playtime</td>
<td>Cyber-bantering</td>
<td>Cyber-trolling (for the lols)</td>
<td>In the moment and quickly regret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Tactical</td>
<td>Cyber-trickery</td>
<td>Go out of way to cause problems, but without a sustained and planned long-term campaign.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advisory</td>
<td>Strategic</td>
<td>Cyber-bullying</td>
<td>Cyber-stalking (for the lulz)</td>
<td>Go out of way to cause rich media to target one or more specific individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Domination</td>
<td>Cyber-hickery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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