

Non Sexual Offences in Cyberspace

Online action and content can have legal implications

Most users neither know nor understand the impact or the possible consequences of their online activities. Fostering among them empathy and ethical and moral behaviour can address some problems they may face online, such as bullying, harassment, etc. An awareness of the legal implications of some of their online actions may also help to curb any desire to show extra bravado under the illusion that their actions online are anonymous and that "nobody will ever know".

Stalking

According to Section 354D of the Indian Penal Code, continuously following a woman or contacting her, either online or in person, where she has clearly shown that she does not want the attention, is a criminal offence. It is punishable for three years for first conviction, and for five years for repeat offences. The only exception is when a person is legally bound to follow a woman.

Identity Theft

According to Section 66C of the IT Act, whoever, fraudulently or dishonestly make use of the electronic signature, password or any other unique identification feature of any other person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term that extends up to three years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to Rs one lakh.

Impersonation

According to Section 66D of the IT Act, whoever, by means of any communication device or computer resource, cheats by personation (assumes the identity of someone else with the intention of fooling or deceiving the person) shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to Rs 1 lakh.

Stealing of computer and other digital devices

According to Section 66B of the IT Act, whoever dishonestly receives or retains any stolen computer resource or communication device knowing or having reason to believe that the same to be a stolen computer resource or communication device, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to Rs 1 lakh or with both.

Video and audio piracy

In the wake of messages that several internet service providers posted on their websites, the Bombay High Court ruled that "the offence is not in viewing, but in making a prejudicial distribution, a public exhibition or letting for sale or hire without appropriate permission copyright-protected material." The messages by internet service providers (ISPs), displayed when users try to open blocked websites, said, "Viewing, downloading, exhibiting or duplicating an illicit copy of the contents is punishable as an offence under different sections of the Copyright Act, 1957."

Downloading movies, music and copyright content from the internet is against the Indian copyright law, as are uploading copyright content to the web. This also includes saving images off the web, uploading them elsewhere, making memes out of them, using them in your projects, etc. As the copyright for the image belongs to someone else, so can't use it let alone earn profits from it without their permission.