

# Developing and Validating the “This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things Scale”: Optimising Political Online Communities for Internet Trolling

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Internet trolling describe the posting of any content on the Internet which is provocative or offensive, which is different from the original meaning online in the 1990s, referring to the posting of messages for humourous effect. Those systems operators (sysops) who run online communities are being targeted because of abuse posted on their platforms. Political discussion groups are some of the most prone to trolling, whether consensual or unwanted. Many such websites ara open for anyone to join, meaning when some members post messages they know are offensive but legal, others might find grossly offensive, meaning these messages could be illegal. This paper develops a questionnaire called the This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things Scale (TIWWCHNT-20), which aims to help sysops better plan the development of online communities to take account of different users’ capacity to be offended, and for users to self-assess whether they will be suited to an online community. The scale is discussed in relation to different Internet posting techniques where different users will act differently.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Internet trolling as a term has changed in meaning through use since the 1990s. Around that time trolling meant posting messages on the Internet in order to provoke a reaction. It has come to mean the posting of provocative or offensive messages more generally (Bishop, 2013a; Bishop, 2014b; Walter, Hourizi, Moncur, & Pitsillides, 2011), but in legal terms it should refer to the posting of messages which are grossly offensive as opposed to simply offensive (Starmer, 2013). The difference between what is

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offensive and what is not appears to in some cases be driven by the media, meaning people posting offensive messages are falling foul of the criminal justice system as pressure is put on law enforcement authorities to deal with such content

It is now firmly established that cyberspace is not a frontier in its own right but is subject to the jurisdiction of nation states (Bishop, 2011a). Case law has established that what is grossly offensive to one person may not necessarily be grossly offensive to another. The case of DPP v Connolly in the UK for instance found that a person who might send an image of an aborted foetus to pharmacists with a political message would not be breaking the law, whereas if they sent the same to an abortion surgeon it would be free speech as the abortion surgeon is unlikely to get grossly offended, but pharmacists unexposed to such images are likely to. In terms of the USA and Canada the cases of Jake Baker and Arthur Gonda respectively has the same outcome which was that by sending abusive messages between one another could not be considered unlawful because they were not intended for a wider audience (Wallace, 1999). In the case of Jake Baker specifically he was found to not have broken US trolling law in the form of the Telecommunications Act 1996 by posting a plot for a rape story to a newlist as it was free speech. This was replicated in the UK with the case of Chambers v DPP, where it was found that a message has to cause apprehension in those receiving it in order for it to be illegal.

Such clear yet complex case law provides a challenge for the systems operators (sysops) who run online communities where the posting of political content is the norm. The chance of someone getting grossly offended when most others in a community are not even offended can create challenges for sysops. Websites like 4chan have tried to deal with this by separating general boards like ‘/b/’ from ones containing hardcore content like ‘/hc/’ so that users know what to expect. However it is difficult for these sysops to plan the design of an online community without knowing which content would be tolerable to which people. This is something this paper hopes to solve.

## **Politicisation in the Network Society**

The term network society is now widely used. The network society is made up of virtual communities and organic communities (Van Dijk, 1999; Van Dijk, 2005). It is almost impossible in today’s world to exclude any form of governance over one’s life. This has led to online discussion groups and online communities in general to be cesspits for political partisanship where people express opinions on the basis of whether it corresponds with the policies of the political party they support and not their genuine convictions. Equally there are those online discussion groups which are solely dedicated to attacking politicians regardless of their party politics. One might therefore see the world not as a network society per se, but as a collection of network societies in which the social construction each person has received through their senses about the world, is to them the true reality. It is therefore important to understand the political points of views of those who participate in online discussion groups because depending on their point of view and attitudes their participation in an online community may be destined to be successful, or indeed unsuccessful.

## **The 12 Types of Troller**

It is established that there are 12 types of Internet troller that describe many of the types of behaviours online, through clearly defined character theory (Bishop, 2012b; Bishop, 2013b). In addition to this there are four groups of Internet troller in which these can be classified using definitions available in

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(Edmonds & Gray, 2002). All of these can be seen in Table 1. Haters include E-Vengers, Iconoclasts and Snerts, who all like to inflame situations for no real benefit to others. Lolcows consist of Big Men, Rippers and Chatroom Bobs, who post messages to to provoke others so that the attention is on them. Bzzzters, namely MHBFY Jennies, Wizards and Flirts like to chat and engage in conversation even if the information or advice they give is inaccurate. Finally Eyeballs are made up of Lurkers, Elders and Trolls, all of which like to watch what others are doing, waiting for their opportune moment to post.

Consider the Flirts and Snerts. These trolls take part in a type of posting called ‘snacking’ (i.e. intensive posting on specific topics). Both of these types of troller are known to post off-topic, but to what extent something could be considered to be off-topic is often a matter of debate (Wallace, 1999, p.238). One might consider that if an off-topic post results in a flame-war, as Snerts try to achieve if a person of interest to them is the original poster, then as this erodes the discussion it might be considered by sysops and their moderators to be unnecessary and disproportionate (Wallace, 1999).

*Table 1. The 12 types of troller and their 4 sub-types*

<b>Group type</b>	<b>Troller Character Type (orientation)</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Haters</b> (Like to inflame situations for no real benefit to tohers)	E-Venger (Not Criticised)	Driven by ‘Vengeance’ forces. An E-Venger does trolling in order to trip someone up so that their ‘true colours’ are revealed.
	Iconoclast (Important)	Driven by ‘Destructive’ forces. An Iconoclast takes part in trolling to help others discover ‘the truth’, often by telling them things completely factual, but which may drive them into a state of consternation. They may post links to content that contradicts the worldview of their target.
	Snert (Appreciated)	Driven by ‘Anti-social’ forces. A Snert takes part in trolling to harm others for their own sick entertainment.
<b>Lolcows</b> Like to provoke others so the attention is on them)	Big Man (Important)	Driven by ‘Order’ forces. A Big Man does trolling by posting something pleasing to others in order to support their world view.
	Ripper (Not Criticised)	Driven by ‘Thanatotic’ forces. A Ripper takes part in self-deprecating trolling in order to build a false sense of empathy from others.
	Chatroom Bob (Appreciated)	Driven by ‘Existential’ forces. A chatroom bob takes part in trolling to gain the trust of other members in order to exploit them.
<b>Bzzzters</b> (Like to chat regardless of accuracy or usefulness of contributions)	MHBFY Jenny (Appreciated)	Driven by ‘Forgiveness forces’. A MHBFY Jenny takes part in trolling to help people see the lighter side of life and to help others come to terms with their concerns.
	Wizard (Important)	Driven by ‘Creative’ forces. A Wizard does trolling through making up and sharing content that they think helps others.
	Flirt (Not Criticised)	Driven by ‘Social’ forces. A Flirt takes part in trolling to help others be sociable, including through light ‘teasing’
<b>Eyeballs</b> (Like to watch what others do for the ‘opportune’ moment to post a provocative message)	Lurker (Not Criticised)	Driven by ‘Surveillance’ forces. Lurkers make silent calls by accident, etc., clicking on adverts or ‘like’ buttons, using ‘referrer spoofers’, reporting posts, modifying opinion polls or user kudos scores.
	Troll (Appreciated)	Driven by ‘Chaos’ forces. A Troll takes part in trolling to entertain others, bringing some fun and mischief to an online community.
	Elder (Important)	Driven by ‘Escape’ forces. An Elder is an outbound member of the community, often engaging in “trolling for newbies”, where they wind up the newer members often without questioning from other members.

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Consider also MHBFY Jennies (who are empathetic and forgiving) and E-Vengers (who are vengeful). These types of troller often take part in a type of posting called ‘mobiling.’ Mobiling can be used constructively by trolls to share stories and offer advice (Young & Levine, 2000, p. 13), but it can also be used to provide advice in a non-constructive and deceptive way.

Another set of trolls, Trolls and Big Men, take part in trolling, or ‘classical trolling’ (Bishop, 2014b) whereby the point of the former’s posts is to provide provocative content that is entertaining (Wallace, 1999, p.102; Young & Levine, 2000, p. 275) and the point of the latter’s posts is to post messages that assert their point of views which then provokes those posters who either disagree with their point of view, or don’t like them per se.

Another type of posting called ‘flooding’ is often done by users called Chatroom Bobs and Rippers. Flooding can have as its aim to target users through fast, rapid or multiple postings in order to seduce someone to their perspective in the case of the former (Wallace, 1999, p.245), or in the case of the latter to draw attention to how they have been treated unfavourably by others to drown out or bring attention to that point of view (Wallace, 1999, p.238; Young & Levine, 2000).

A further kind of posting is ‘spamming.’ Whilst this conjures up images of unsolicited emails to either a person or newlist (Wallace, 1999, p.132), the concept extends to the posting of any content in a self-promotional or self-serving way. This can include self-promoting oneself on Wikipedia using a sock puppet account masked with a pseudonym, or using search engine optimisation (SEO) methods to post links to ones content from various providers of free personal homepage creation. Spamming is usually done by Wizards and Iconoclasts.

A final type of participation is ‘lurking,’ which is traditionally associated with people who do not participate in online communities, except on the periphery, known as Lurkers (Bishop, 2007b; Preece, Nonnecke, & Andrews, 2004). However, it has been extended to those out-bound from the community, known as Elders, who wait for the opportunity to post unconstructively lurking by Elders includes ‘trolling for newbies,’ where they post messages that go against the grain of the beliefs the new members expect to find in the discussion group. Both these trolls will try to influence the kudos points others may have so that those they disagree with, or who post an idea before they thought of it, are given bad ‘karma’ (Powazek, 2002, p.132).

## **THE ROLE OF THE ‘THIS IS WHY WE CAN’T HAVE NICE THINGS’ SCALE**

This section sets out the need for the ‘This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things’ Scale (TIWWCHNT-20) in order to help optimise political online communities so that their users fit the intended discourses for that website or app. The premise is that if one is offering a website that is anti-politician, trolling is reduced if the members are anti-politician and not pro-politician. Equally, if a website or app is intended for serious debate and discussion of policy then having members who are anti-politician is a recipe for disaster. The ‘This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things’ Scale (TIWWCHNT-20) is to help identify which category a particular user is in.

### **Limitations in the Law and the Need for TIWWCHNT-20**

Case law in the UK says that a message is only grossly offensive if the recipient is likely to be offended (DPP v Connolly). Other case law has said if the group to which a message refers is likely to be grossly

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offended then the message is illegal (DPP v Collins). This poses a challenge for those communities which might want to use the TIWWCHNT-20 scale to attract users who post transgressive or subversive messages that target particular groups, such as on the grounds of race. Whilst the community members might want to ensure that the only members who join are unlikely to be offended within the meaning of DPP v Connolly, they risk posting unlawful messages under DPP v Collins in relation to those who are not in the community whom might be offended.

If one were to look at the legal situation in Great Britain around Internet trolling, it might be possible to see how the TIWWCHNT-20 questionnaire could be used to justify the existences of websites that would offend those for whom they were not intended. A number of precedents have been set on Internet trolling that raises questions about when a website’s content should be considered free speech and when it should be considered “*grossly offensive*.”

The case of *DPP v Connolly*, for instance, found that a message is only grossly offensive if the recipients to whom it was targeted would find it to be grossly offensive. A community where users high on Relevant are likely to occupy are likely to offend people who score high on Expression. For instance, on the Urban75.net website, its sysop Mike Slocombe called the London Mayor the T-word because of how the crowd at the London Olympics found him endearing. One might therefore ask whether it would be possible for the police to take action against websites like this if it could be made clear to visitors of the website that there is likely to be a high amount of flame trolling, which some people might find offensive. It might seem a bit much to the reasonable person for websites to be closed simply because others find the content offensive, if that website is dedicated to being offensive, such as the website ‘Sickipedia’. Equally, a general website that is open to all persons, might be found to be breaching decency if it is not possible for users to be pre-warned.

## **Network Politics and TISWCHNT-20**

The role of TIWWCHNT-20 in preventing conflict in online discussion groups that discuss politics could be an increasing one for ensuring the effective implementation of ‘network politics.’ The emerging field of network politics has come about for a number of reasons according to (Solo & Bishop, 2011). Information technology and communication networks have caused many changes in the realm of politics. The newest communication network to have a great impact on politics is the Internet. Recent revolutions in many countries in the Middle East and North Africa have started in large part due to social networking Web sites like Facebook and Twitter. Politicians and candidates use their own Web sites and social networking profiles to get their message out. Equally, the mainstream media no longer have a monopoly on political commentary as anybody can set up a blog or post an article or video online. It is also possible for political activists to network together online.

It can therefore be seen that information and communications technologies, especially the Internet has been a vehicle for social change at all levels. With each technology that enables free speech, humans have a strange way of making it work for the worse aspects of humankind. Whether it is the threatening letter, the abusive phone call, text or tweet, humans are always ready to abuse others. It is therefore imperative that ways are found so that everyone is able to exercise free speech to express their grievances, without harming others in the process.

It is therefore necessary to introduce a concept of ‘TISWCHNT Potential.’ The acronym TISWCHNT means, as stated earlier, ‘This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things’. A Website’s TISWCHNT Potential therefore is the extent to which the design and nature of the website is conducive to abusive

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*Table 2. Overview of how to read results from the This Is Why We Can’t Be Nice Scale*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Outcome of High Score</b>	<b>Benefits of more users</b>
Opportunity	Increased TISWCHNT Potential. Flame trolling, unbalanced lurking	Increased content production
Understanding	Reduced TISWCHNT Potential. Reduced flame trolling, increased lurking	Increased content consumption
Relevance	Increased TISWCHNT Potential. Increased flame trolling, increased lurking	Increased posting of flames
Aspiration	Reduced TISWCHNT Potential. Reduced flame trolling, reduced lurking	Increased participation and membership base due to viral marketing
Choice	Reduced TISWCHNT Potential. Reduced flame trolling, reduced lurking	Increased posting of kudos, even if critical
Expression	Moderate TISWCHNT Potential. Unbalanced flame trolling, reduced lurking	Mixed posting of kudos and flames due to increased confidence

forms of posting, such as flame trolling. The outcome of a person’s scores on the This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things Scale (TIWWCHNT-20) could be used to determine which type of online community they would most effectively troll in and which they should use to avoid trolling. The higher their score on a particular factor of the scale, the more suited they are to an online community. Table 2 Overview of how to read results from the This Is Why We Can’t Be Nice Scale shows how a high score on a particular part of the scale can help users determine which communities they can avoid the temptation to troll in, and thus have a reduced TWIWWCHNT Potential, as well as those they can most effectively troll in, where their TWIWWCHNT is at its greatest.

**The Role of the TIWWCHNT-20 Scale for Choosing a Web-Based Community Platform**

Depending on the outcome of a batch of founding users of an online community, the appropriate genre could be chosen to maximise the type of posting that the systems operator (sysop) of that online community wants to achieve. If one considered the 12 types of troller (Bishop, 2008; Bishop, 2012b; Bishop, 2013c) it is possible to see how these different types of user may be reflective of the various types of attitude reflected in the TIWWCHNT-20 scale. Even though it is proven that have then they were members of an online community can be more effective than have been many, the actors not necessarily correspond with the view that an online community should not seek to involve others besides its own members. Social networking services like Facebook are allowing organisations to create pages were they can promote the work they do. Such pages could do far more to increase the membership of an online community in a productive way and also act as a means of recruitment (Bishop, 2010). When people are on Facebook they are unlikely to leave it, but having a page on Facebook allows a dedicated online community to build trust in their brand through cooperating with Facebook, even if it is informally. Cooperative advantage, which refers to avoiding competing with organisations in a market and instead working together for mutual benefit (Bishop, 2012a), can allow a community to grow on a different website one might want to compete with, but instead make use of it to promote one’s offerings.

Table 3 presents an amalgamation of established research from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Wallace, 1999) and the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Preece, 2000). The findings are still relevant in the second decade

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*Table 3. Examples of posting types, their descriptions and associations with online discussion group genres*

<b>Pulse type (Post type) Character theory</b>	<b>Description of posting type</b>	<b>Genre to encourage posting type</b>	<b>Genre to discourage posting type</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Social (Snacking) Mostly done by Flirts and Snerts.	Participants who perform snacking offer short bursts of content and consume a lot too. It allows for the posting of ‘anecdotal evidence’ or other content which is tolerable or acceptable, but also the posting of messages targeting others which cause harm to them in some way that is not necessary or proportionate.	Snacking is more achievable in communities where discussion can flow and where people are looking for sympathetic points of view. Message boards and chat groups are examples.	Snacking is least achievable in communities where people are abused or blocked for going off-topic or digressing from the original post which is asking for an answer and not empathy.	Flirt: “Brighton is a good place to learn to ski. That’s where I learned, and I think they offer a special deal for beginners.” (Wallace, 1999) Snert: “You are a jerk,” “You are stupid” (Hardaker, 2013).
Emotional (Mobilizing) Mostly done by MHBFY Jennies and E-Vengers.	Mobilizing is where participants use emotions to either become closer to others or make a distance from them. It allows for the posting of passionate opinions and/or resentment of target groups like politicians. The risk is that those affiliated with the target might be offended and start a flame war.	Mobilizing is more achievable in communities where communication is fast so that grammatical or others mistakes can be made and picked upon. Examples include Chat Groups, especially where length of posts are limited.	Mobilizing is most difficult to achieve in platforms where users can easily correct their mistakes or delete embarrassing posts. Examples include weblogs controlled by the user or message boards with an edit feature.	MHBFY Jenny: “Most newbies will not have the ability to recognize a troll post amid all the good advice posted, or the bad advice that is suggested and then refuted. Leaving bad (troll) advise unrefuted *will* mislead newbies who are diligently trying to educate themselves.” (Hardaker, 2013). E-Venger: “Somehow you expect people to be diplomatic to you when you have been trolling us. [...] We only reply to your BS to keep others from thinking that you might be giving them useful advice. [...] you can rest assured that someone is going to call you on it.” (Hardaker, 2013).
Cognitive (Trolling) Mostly done by Trolls and Big Men.	Trolling as a more generic pursuit seeks to provoke others into posting a response to a topic, which might be iconoclastic, unpopular or unfashionable. Can involve the posting of satirical or other banter and humour which may be acceptable depending on the website in question.	Trolling is most achievable in communities where it is possible to identify particular interest groups and post alienating or opposing comments. The most effective platforms are those where content is more permanent such as message boards and blogs.	Trolling is least achievable in communities open to a range of materials and where it is easy for sysops to remove confrontational content.	Troll: I love trolling on the horse news groups. It is just plain FUNNY. They have gotten used to my trolls. Any ideas on a good troll for the horse people?” (Hardaker, 2013). Big Man: “bubi: depends what sort of qualifications, experience, intentions, area” (Wallace, 1999)
Physical (Flooding) Mostly done by Chatroom Bobs and Rippers.	Flooding is where participants get heavily involved in posting on a particular topic (often to multiple websites) to further discussion on a topic that might be the subject of censorship because those to which it refers find the ‘truth’ distasteful or even painful.	Flooding is most achievable in communities where membership is easily achievable and content goes unchecked. Examples include platforms offering blogging and personal homepage hosting.	Flooding its least achievable in communities with strong systems for detecting that users are only posting to SEO existing content or to mass post specific points of view.	Ripper: “Jeny doesn’t love me anymore: (“ (Preece, 2000). Ripper: “I’ve had some tough times in my life” (Wallace, 1999) Chatroom Bob: “Are you lonely, solo?” (Wallace, 1999)

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*Table 3. Continued*

<b>Pulse type (Post type) Character theory</b>	<b>Description of posting type</b>	<b>Genre to encourage posting type</b>	<b>Genre to discourage posting type</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Visual (Spamming) Mostly done by Wizards and Iconoclasts.	Spamming, often associated with unsolicited mail, is in general the practices of making available information one has a conflict of interest in so that it is more accessible to others.	Spamming is most achievable in communities which give advice or offer the chance to post their point of view as fact. The partial advice given could actually be to the person’s detriment, and is most achievable on Wikis or message boards where pseudonyms are used.	Spamming is least achievable in communities where people have to use their own identities or otherwise strong moderation facilities exist.	Iconoclast: “B, explain to me exactly how I am being a Troll. I am participating in a ng about horses. Thats all. We are discussing a method of horse training that I like and you don’t. I have stated from my original post that I was just playing with this method because I was bored. [...] I have not bashed their chosen method of training.” (Hardaker, 2013). Wizard: “On many gaming muds, you see server code trying to handle the task of intervening before actual harm is done, and prevent the antisocial activity from occurring (eg, the @player killing siwtch@)” (Wallace, 1999)
Relaxational (Lurking) Mostly done by Lurkers and Elders	Lurking is enacted by those on the periphery of a community. Their judgements for not taking part often relate to a lack of purpose or control. It is essential to build on the skills and knowledge that already exist in the community, for example, by encouraging networks of people who can support each other. Designing the community around allowing people to both see what others are up to, as well as allowing them to have a break from one another can build strong relationships. A ‘do not bite the newbies’ policy should be enforced.	Lurking is most achievable in communities that have kudos points of other means of secretly influencing the dynamics of online discussions.	Lurking is least achievable in discussion groups where one’s actions are transparent and visible to all and where content cannot be accessed by those who do not post.	Lurker: “Since everyone thinks I am a troll, I wont post here anymore. I didn’t mean to come across the way I did, and this group doesn’t mean anything to me anyway” (Hardaker, 2013). Elder: “What we try to do on uo [Ultima Online] is give tools to the players to help them identify the behavior THEY don’t like, and then to give them tools to easily identify and track repeat offenders.” (Wallace, 1999)

of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and have been confirmed by recent studies, including research by an acupuncture expert (Hardaker, 2013). Many of these types of posting have been defined since the mid 1990s (Jansen & James, 1995), and Table 3 provides a simple way to understand and differentiate the different kinds in a concise and clear way that older and more contemporary research has failed to do.

The differences between the Snerts and the Flirts, who conduct ‘snacking’, which would rely on the ‘Expression’ component of the scale. In the case of the former they will be obnoxious (as they are in real life) and the Flirts will give anecdotes to keep the conversation going. Snacking, which includes ‘infosnacking’ and ‘data-snacking’ is the posting and consumption of content in online communities (Jansen, 2002; Jansen & James, 1995). Snerts are more suited to communities where there is a negative

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attitude to politics and politics, whereas Flirts will fit into most communities – except those where getting to the point and staying on topic are important.

The practice of ‘mobiling’ is often carried out by MHBFY Jennies and E-Venger, as can be seen from Table 3. In the case of the former these more emotional posts are based on trying to provide empathy and in the case of the latter to ‘right wrongs.’ In those political online communities where things can become heated it might be common for some posters to have their accounts deleted. This can result in that person becoming an E-Venger and signing up under a new alias to cause havoc (Bishop, 2013b). The longer a person has been in the community often reflects the intensity of their need for vengeance – especially if they earned a lot of kudospoints or had a high post count (Powazek, 2002). In terms of the MHBFY Jenny, as can be seen from Table 3, they will provide help and support to members, including newbies, but this can sometimes be unhelpful or inaccurate. Posters who spread misinformation can be called Bzztters, and MHBFY Jennies are not the only posters who do this, as Flirts and Wizards can do this as well. Even so, the posts by MHBFY Jennies are often intended to be in good faith and empathetic. Both these types of users will likely fall into the ‘Understanding’ component of the TIWWCHNT-20 scale, as MHBFY Jennies want to understand other users, whereas E-Vengers want others to understand them. Someone with a high score on this part of the scale is likely to not engage in flame trolling, but if their comments are not welcomed, they are likely to go back to lurking for a while. Someone with a low score is likely to target those who may lack an understanding of their point of view, which they feel is under-represented or which has been ignored.

The next type of posting – trolling – is more complex than those who rely on grey media such as newspapers might think. Trolling when done by Trolls (as opposed to ‘trolls’) is for mischief making and provocation to make others ‘laugh out loud’ (i.e. ‘trolling for the lolz’). Another type of trolling is done by a type of poster called a ‘Big Man.’ This troller type takes part in trolling to puff themselves up by speaking in an authoritative way to assume the role as expert on a particular topic (Campbell, Fletcher, & Greenhill, 2009). They are often targets of other members of the group, especially Snerts, who often feel the Big Men think they are superior to them, even if they don’t.

Flooding is another type of posting online, which is often provoked when an online community deletes content or gives opportunities for content to be created, is the extensive posting of content to a person or website (Jansen, 2002; Jansen & James, 1995). In terms of ‘chatroom bobs,’ if someone denies a person a right to free speech they will ensure that free speech is widely available (by flooding the Internet). Chatroom bobs can also do a different type of flooding – where they flood a particular user with compliments and other favourable gestures in order to seduce them and take advantage of them (Bishop, 2012c). When flooding is done by another type of troller called a Ripper, it is flooding one or more online communities with ‘sob stories’ in order to try to get sympathy for whatever they are using to seek attention. Chatroom bobs and Rippers be best recognised through the Opportunity component of the TIWWCHNT-20 scale. The former are more likely to be at the low end of this part of the scale as their posts are only relevant to achieving their own aims regardless of others’ interests. The latter are more likely to fit into a high score part of this component as they are likely to flame troll themselves before deciding not to participate.

Spamming is normally thought in terms of sending someone an unwanted email to entice them into buying a product or service, but in terms of online communities it has a broader meaning (Jansen, 2002; Jansen & James, 1995). When Wizards do Spamming it is usually to share their ideas and generate a lot of content that can be attributed to them. As can be seen from the example in Table 3, a Wizard will also provide help and advice on making use of specific tools in a web-based community so others can enjoy

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the experiences of creativity they did. In terms of Iconoclasts, their type of Spamming is making other aware of their ‘truth’ or to challenge the status quo in terms of others’ beliefs, which can be painful to some who would rather not hear it (Bishop, 2013b; Starmer, 2013). Both Wizards and Iconoclasts may fall within the ‘Relevance’ part of the TIWWCHNT-20 scale. In the case of Wizards (who have a low score) they will try to create content relevant to the community and in the case of Iconoclasts (who have a high score) they will try to remove content they find irrelevant, or which is contrary to their point of view.

Lurking is generally thought of in terms of non-participation and peripheral participation (Bishop, 2007b; Nonnecke & Preece, 2000; Preece et al., 2004). As can be seen from Table 3, it is more complex than that because lurking is not just done by Lurkers who don’t post, but also by Elders who have made a lot of contributions. Both of these types of troller look for the opportune moment to post a message. In terms of a Lurker it takes a long time for them to get the confidence to post. Sometimes if they do post and get a bad reaction Lurkers will return to peripheral participation as there is usually something keeping them there (Bishop, 2007b; Preece et al., 2004). Elders know the rules and norms of an online community and can be helping in encouraging Lurkers to become posters (Bishop, 2007b; Kim, 2000). If they are out-bound from the community, however. They can be problemating by posting content to wind up the newer members as a kind of initiation called ‘trolling for newbies.’ The part of the TIWW-CHNT-20 scale relevant to these trollers is Choice. A low score reflects lurking, where the user thinks by choosing not post they are less likely to be abused or otherwise not have their posts welcomed (Preece et al., 2004). Elders on the other hand are also driven by Choice and a higher score on this part of the scale suggest they will be more likely to flame troll newbies. An overview of these different types of posting, and their connection with the types of discussion group genre are presented in Table 3.

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Tensions in online communities, particularly of a political nature, can have a severe impact on the enjoyment of participating in those online communities (Bishop, 2011c; Bishop, 2013b; Hardaker, 2013). This poses a problem for the systems operators who design and administer online communities can ensure that only the types of poster most suited to their website take part and that they can keep away those who would be offended or otherwise dislike that online community’s ethos. There can be no one kind of political online community – some are abusive to politicians and others focus on policy and not personalities. It is therefore important that a scale to assess the suitability of particular users to online communities be developed. Whilst this may be difficult for sysops of online communities to administer adhoc, it is hoped such a scale could help in the planning of online communities and through self-administration by users themselves.

### **Participants**

This research study examined what implications for forms of democratic citizenship and participation that consumption may have on online and media participation. The research covered the ways that people’s practices as media consumers were connected (or not) to their practices as citizens. The project involved a telephone survey of over 1000 people, conducted by ICM Research across the United Kingdom that aimed to produce conclusions on the detailed issues about consumption and citizenship (Couldry, Markham,

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& Livingstone, 2005). In the end, a total of 1065 observations were made, consisting of people from a variety of backgrounds across the United Kingdom.

In terms of age, 287 of the participants were aged 18-34 (26.9%), 386 aged 35-54 (36.2%), and 344 were aged over 55 (32.3%). In terms of Internet access 295 of the participants (27.7%) had access to the Internet at home, 85 had access to the Internet at work (8%), 47 had access to the Internet somewhere else (4.4%), with 301 not presently having access (28.3%) and 48 of the participants (4.5%) did not respond to this question. In terms of ethnicity, 835 of the participants considered themselves to be British (78.4%) and 13 considered themselves to be Irish (1.2%), with 48 not responding (4.5%) and the remaining 169 (15.9%) being from other ethnic backgrounds.

### **Measurements**

The study administered a set of questions that were derived from analysing the diaries of 37 participants’ media consumption as well as initial and subsequent interviews that were conducted with those respondents, and focus group interviews that were conducted with diarists (Couldry et al., 2005). The telephone survey of 1,017 people, was conducted by ICM Research across the United Kingdom that aimed to produce conclusions on the detailed issues about consumption and citizenship raised in Phase One (Couldry et al., 2005).

## **METHODOLOGY AND METHOD**

Factor analysis was the most appropriate method for this dataset, as it is necessary to reduce the data to specific factors, which would hopefully map onto the ecological cognition framework (Bishop, 2007a; Bishop, 2007b). There are three primary analytical techniques for performing a factor analysis; principal components analysis, common factor analysis and Q-method factor analysis. Principal components analysis (PCA), was selected because it yields one of more composite variables that can capture much of the information originally contained in a larger dataset, with the components being weighted as sums of the original sums. It was decided to use the A Priori Criterion and extract six factors from the data as this represented the six processes from stimulus to response in the ecological cognition framework.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

Multi-collinearity was tested by the author before they conducted a factor analysis by measuring the sampling adequacy, using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test. This test compares the magnitudes of the calculated correlation coefficients to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients. The dataset showed individual MSAs of between 0.587 and 0.868 which in the case of the latter is “great” (Field, 2005, p.630). In the case of the latter, 86.8% of the variance of one variable is accounted for by all the others and 58.7% in the case of the former. Taking into account this and the KMO of 0.778 it seemed that there was no reason for concern and that the factor analysis should continue. As well as the overall measure of sampling adequacy, as estimated by the KMO, it is also important to test the sphericity of the data set. The Bartlett test of sphericity examines whether a variance-covariance matrix is proportional to an identity matrix and a dataset is considered suitable for further analysis if the associated probability is

less than .05 (Bryde & Pelie, 2006). In the data set it showed a Chi square of 2961.74 and significance of <0.001 making the dataset suitable.

## **Factor Extraction, Rotation, Description, and Naming**

Assessing the loadings of variables on to factor is important in assessing the effectiveness of the factor analysis output. Factor loadings are coefficients that indicate the importance of a variable to a factor. The un-rotated component matrix showed variables loading onto more than one of the factors. Whilst it may have been possible to run the analysis again without restricting it to 6 factors. It seemed more suitable to rotate the data to improve the clarity of the pattern using Quartimax rotation. Loadings under 0.25 were disregarded. As a structure to the data existed, the next stage involved naming and describing the factors and their interrelationships through investigating their loadings using the rotated component matrix.

## **Opportunity**

When someone decides to visit a particular part of a virtual world or take part in an information exchange, they are doing so by giving up the opportunity to do something else, referred to as ‘the opportunity cost’ (Bishop, 2009). Different generations value certain activities more than others and are more willing to sacrifice certain opportunities over others. This is a core aspect of ecological cognition, where it is stated that users of information systems do not have a hierarchy to their needs that are innate, but have developed cognitions that affect their priorities through exposure to not only their internal environment (i.e. their mind and body), but also their external one (i.e. the world) as suggested by (Bishop, 2007b). Table 2 shows the factor loadings for the ‘Opportunity’ factor.

It has been argued that the question of fairness across generations should be formulated as a comparison of opportunities available to individuals living at different times (Norton, 1999). From this it is clear to find support for the existence of this factor in understanding the similarities between how different generations use information. The statement, ‘You know where to go to find out information that you need’ identified in the data is quite relevant to this category as it is known that organisations can be effective when they act on opportunities to transform information into knowledge in order to integrate the wisdom of different generations into the workplace. The statement, ‘Sometimes you feel strongly about an issue, but don’t know what to do about it’ negatively loaded onto this factor, which is appropriate as different age groups approach opportunities in relation to discussing politics differently and it is recommended that organisations manage the communication between them (Hankin, 2005). This could be because actors within an economy are always seeking out opportunities to meet their goals and will narrow their focus within their competencies to achieve those goals (Mantovani, 1996a). It is a clear

*Table 4. Factor matrix for ‘opportunity’*

	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Expression</b>
1. You know where to go to find out information that you need	.769					
2. Sometimes you feel strongly about an issue, but don’t know what to do about it	-.402	.327	.392			

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principle of economics that human wants are infinite and resources are scarce, which means that users of virtual worlds will seek out a new opportunity if they lack the resources to take part in their preferred one. For instance, in Second Life where some virtual goods are charged for, the user may go without and instead learn to create them for themselves.

### **Understanding**

The crucial part of responding to an economic opportunity in the environment is an understanding of the stimuli it offers. It has been argued that understanding, particularly of science and faith is spread over many generations, with each adding its own contribution, arising from its own perspective (Polkinghorne, 2000). Table 3 shows the factor loadings for the ‘Understanding’ factor.

In terms of the factor analysis, the statements, ‘It’s a regular part of your day to catch up with the news’, ‘You follow the news to understand what’s going on in the world’, ‘You follow the news to know what other people are talking about’ fit well into this factor as it is known that people who follow the news have a greater understanding of their communities and themselves (RW.ERROR - Unable to find reference:514). The statements, ‘It’s your duty to keep up with what’s going on in the world’ and ‘You have a pretty good understanding of the main issues facing our country’ seem relevant to this category as keeping up-to-date with current affairs has been consistent across generations in informing their understanding of the world around them (RW.ERROR - Unable to find reference:515).

### **Relevance**

The relevance of a particular stimulus in the environment to an actor is affected by their ability to consume it (Mantovani, 1996a; Mantovani, 1996b). It can be seen that as a particular user’s confidence in a system increases so their consumption of its resources also increase. For instance, in Second Life, as a user becomes aware of how to interact with the system, such as through ‘flying’ or ‘teleporting’ then the greater their exposure to different aspects of the system will be and it will become more likely that their inventory will increase as they discover artefacts that are relevant to them. Table 4 shows the factor loadings for the ‘Relevance’ factor.

*Table 5. Factor matrix for ‘understanding’*

	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Expression</b>
3. It’s a regular part of your day to catch up with the news		.761				
4. You follow the news to understand what’s going on in the world		.718				
5. You follow the news to know what other people are talking about		.602				
6. It’s your duty to keep up with what’s going on in the world		.511		.462		
7. You have a pretty good understanding of the main issues facing our country	0.3	.443				

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*Table 6. Factor matrix for ‘relevanc.’*

	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Expression</b>
8. You often feel that there’s too much media, so you need to switch off			.652			.280
9. There’s no point in watching the news, because it deals with things you can do nothing about		-.327	.639			
10. It doesn’t really matter which party is in power, in the end things go on pretty much the same			.620			
11. People like us have no say in what the government does			.552			-.325
12. Sometimes politics seems so complicated that you can’t really understand what’s going on	-0.46		.535			

The statements ‘You often feel that there’s too much media, so you need to switch off’ and ‘There’s no point in watching the news, because it deals with things you can do nothing about’ seem fitting to this factor of relevance as people will consume news media if it is relevant to them regardless of whether it is for information or entertainment purposes (Tsfati & Cappella, 2005). The statements, ‘It doesn’t really matter which party is in power, in the end things go on pretty much the same’, and ‘People like us have no say in what the government does’ are also appropriate as the relevance of government and political parties to a particular household is related to the effect they have on that household’s ability to achieve its goals and that all political parties have access to the same instruments for affecting it (Chapman & Palda, 1983). The negatively loaded statement, ‘Sometimes politics seems so complicated that you can’t really understand what’s going on’ is also suitable for this factor as individuals are more likely to accept arguments about their democracies if they are simpler and relevant to their lives (Barber, 2003).

## **Aspiration**

People of all generations and within them have different aspirations (Yu & Miller, 2005), although the thing they generally have in common is that they regularly have them (Grikscheit, Cash, & Young, 1993). Table 5 shows the factor loadings for this ‘Aspiration’ factor.

The two statements in this factor, namely, ‘People at work would expect you to know what’s going on in the world’ and ‘Your friends would expect you to know what’s going on in the world’ seem to fit with the idea that people draw some of their aspirations from those they are in close contact with in the social world. This factor is particularly affected by the principle of ‘marginal utility’, which is the extent to which the exposure to a particular stimulus leads to demand for a re-exposure or reuptake of that stimulus. It is at this stage that actors become unaware of the externalities of their wants and are driven purely by responding to existing relevant opportunities and going on to create new opportunities, even if this is only to be re-exposed to desirable aspects of the environment.

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*Table 7. Factor matrix for ‘aspiration’*

	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Expression</b>
13. People at work would expect you to know what’s going on in the world				.777		
14. Your friends would expect you to know what’s going on in the world		.384		.717		

**Choice**

Different actors will respond differently to the principle of marginal utility and the effect of their judgement on whether to take up another unit of exposure is affected by the universal value of ‘choice’. Choice goes beyond the right to choose, as the basis for exercising choice is according to the perceived needs or values of an individual or group of individuals of different generations (Goldring & Shapira, 1993).

While the statements in this factor talk about ‘trust’, it is apparent from analysing the ecological cognition framework (Bishop, 2007a; Bishop, 2007b) that this factor is more about ‘choice’ be seen in Table 6. Trust after all is a choice, and the statements represent the different choices individuals take in a democratic society. The statement, ‘You trust the government to do what is right’ suggests that individuals choose to put their trust in elected representatives, as does the statement, ‘You trust politicians to deal with the things that matter’. The statement, ‘You trust politicians to tell the truth’ is reflective of the choice people make to accept information from these representatives as being accurate. This factor appears to include the reconciliation of internal wants with external costs, or externalities.

**Expression**

Like the opportunity factor, the expression factor is affected by opportunity cost. While an actor is using a specific product or communicating with a specific actor they may be missing out on the opportunity to do so with somebody else. It has been argued that the need for expressing oneself is evenly distributed across generations, but the means for expression should be expected to vary, as would means for entertainment, and suggests it would be beneficial to map the differences between generations when

*Table 8. Factor matrix for ‘choice’*

	<b>Opportunity</b>	<b>Understanding</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>Choice</b>	<b>Expression</b>
15. You trust the government to do what is right					.823	
16. You trust politicians to deal with the things that matter					.819	
17. You trust politicians to tell the truth					.773	

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Table 9. Factor matrix for ‘expression’

	Opportunity	Understanding	Relevance	Aspiration	Choice	Expression
18. You can affect things by getting involved in issues you care about						.752
19. You feel that you can influence decisions in your area	.317					.612
20. Politics has little connection with your life	.264		.316	-.265		-0.47

it comes to activities that they carry out (Bolin & Westlund, 2008). The factor loadings for this factor, ‘Expression,’ are in Table 7.

The statement, ‘You can affect things by getting involved in issues you care about’ seems appropriate for this factor as increasingly actors are getting involved in political activism as a form of democratic expression (Andersen, 2002). With the mass adoption of Internet technologies and in particular virtual worlds users are exposed evermore to opportunities to express themselves and often to a wider audience that gives them a greater degree of influence. The statement, ‘You feel that you can influence decisions in your area’ is relevant to this factor as political influence has been linked to the expression of individual identities (Innes & Rendall, 2006). The statement, ‘Politics has little connection with your life’ if inverted is appropriate as political expression is commonplace and shaped by the social context of the individuals within electoral regions (Agnew, 2014).

### VALIDATING THE ‘THIS IS WHY WE CAN’T HAVE NICE THINGS SCALE’

The Development of the This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things Scale (TIWWCHNT-20) needs to be evaluated to ensure its reliability and validity.

#### Reliability Analysis

According to (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tathan, 2006), reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. They indicate that there are three types of diagnostic measures for determining reliability. The first measure is to consider each separate item, including the item total correlation and the interim correlation. The second type of diagnostic measure is the reliability coefficient that assesses the consistency of the scale with Chronbach’s alpha. The third type is to use the reliability measures derived from a confirmatory factor analysis.

To perform the analysis requires selecting one factor at a time and taking into account each of the variables that make up that factor. The Chronbach’s alpha for ‘Understanding’ was 0.689 which is reasonable, and this was not improved by removing variables from the scale. The Chronbach’s alpha for ‘Relevance’ was 0.624 and when items were removed it was significantly reduced, suggesting that the

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scale is adequate. The Chronbach’s alpha for ‘Choice’ was 0.751 and this was not improved by removing items. The Chronbach’s alpha for ‘Aspiration’ was 0.676 and this was significantly worse when variables were removed, suggesting it is adequate. The Chronbach’s alpha for ‘Expression’ was 0.006, but when ‘politics has little connection with your life’ was removed it improved to 0.499, suggesting this item should be deleted from the scale. The Chronbach’s alpha for ‘Opportunity’ was -0.254 and this was not improved by removing any variables, suggesting more variables need to be added to make this scale reliable.

### **Validity Analysis**

The dataset used to devise the This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things Scale (TIWWCHNT-20) was reevaluated to test the reduced variables, making use of those known to be associated with Internet trolling (Bishop, 2014a). Some of these had to be derived from various pre-collected variables. For instance, whether the participant was a young person not in education, employment or training (NEETs) was computed from a persons age and their employment status. Whether someone was “Intelligence” or more importantly whether they were of above average intelligence or not was based on a combination of age and years of education. This is not a perfect measure of intelligence, but it would have been excessive to have re-interviewed all participants with the variables associated with trolling that have only recently been devised (Bishop, 2014b). The variable Trolling in this case was based on whether or not a person posted to online communities. Whilst this would be a better indicator of whether or not the person was a lurker, this was selected as the most appropriate on the basis that no one would post to an online community unless they were able to elicit a response from others and that all trolling – whether for the lolz or the lulz – is provoking. These variables are presented in Table 10.

### **Internet Access**

The first measure investigated to determine the scale’s validity for the digital age was “Internet access.” As can be seen from Table 10, the scale as a whole is significant in terms of its ability to differentiate those who have access to the Internet from those who do not ( $p < 0.001$ ). On each element of the scale, however, the significance scores are poorer. The exception is Choice, which might suggest that those with access to the Internet have better access to information so that they can make better judgements on what to believe and what not to.

### **Trolling**

As can be seen from Table 11, the use of the scale for measuring trolling as a global variable – or in this case the propensity to post messages per se – is not effective. This would suggest that on the one hand measuring trolling in terms of posting content to elicit responses might not be a relevant use of the scale, as it is likely that regardless of where people score on the scale that they will engage in trolling, which may even be consensual among users of an online community.

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*Table 10. T-Test validity analysis results for “Internet access”*

Internet Access		N	Mean	t	Sig.
Complete Scale	Yes	710	35.19	4.626	0.000
	No	307	32.86		
Opportunity	Yes	710	3.76	-2.902	0.227
	No	307	4.08		
Understanding	Yes	710	5.70	1.655	0.933
	No	307	5.31		
Relevance	Yes	710	9.97	8.216	0.606
	No	307	7.73		
Aspiration	Yes	710	3.08	-0.304	0.149
	No	307	3.12		
Choice	Yes	710	7.02	1.302	0.001
	No	307	6.75		
Expression	Yes	710	5.65	-1.426	0.042
	No	307	5.86		

*Table 11. T-Test validity analysis results for “Internet trolling”*

Trolling - Posting		N	Mean	Sig.	t
Complete Scale	Yes	67	34.33	0.726	-0.381
	No	720	34.69		
Opportunity	Yes	67	3.55	0.353	-1.481
	No	720	3.86		
Understanding	Yes	67	4.91	0.206	-0.887
	No	720	5.29		
Relevance	Yes	67	10.61	0.635	1.683
	No	720	9.73		
Aspiration	Yes	67	2.40	0.028	-2.484
	No	720	3.03		
Choice	Yes	67	7.76	0.082	1.898
	No	720	7.01		
Expression	Yes	67	5.10	0.124	-2.474
	No	720	5.77		

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**NEETs**

The role of the scale for measuring whether someone is a NEET – a young person not in education, employment or training – is also not significant. This must be because young people are so diverse that they could fall anywhere on the scale. Simply because someone is not in education, employment or training, it does not mean that will impact of whether they will participate in a political online community in a given way.

***“Intelligent”***

In terms of the test of whether someone is intelligent – crudely measured by whether they have an IQ of 100 or above based on how much their education corresponds to their age – it is also clear that the scale offers no assistance in measuring such differences. Whilst the t-scores for the scale as a whole was high (t=3.008) and for relevance (t=6.542), the significance scores were poor (p=<0.107 and p=<0.355 respective). At most this would suggest that the higher one’s intelligence the more important it will be for the media one is consuming to be relevant to one’s interests. It would also suggest that to take an active part in the media – including attacking politicians or policy – requires a degree of intellect so that the higher one’s intelligence the higher one’s score on the scale will be.

*Table 12. T-Test validity analysis results for “NEETs”*

NEET		N	Mean	t	Sig.
Complete Scale	Yes	94	36.90	3.329	0.993
	No	922	34.24		
Opportunity	Yes	94	4.33	2.947	0.916
	No	922	3.81		
Understanding	Yes	94	7.21	4.838	0.445
	No	922	5.42		
Relevance	Yes	94	9.06	-0.577	0.039
	No	922	9.32		
Aspiration	Yes	94	3.55	2.342	0.057
	No	922	3.04		
Choice	Yes	94	7.10	0.510	0.043
	No	922	6.93		
Expression	Yes	94	5.65	-0.286	0.109
	No	922	5.72		

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*Table 13. T-Test validity analysis results for “Intelligent”*

Intelligent		N	Mean	t	Sig
Complete Scale	Yes	785	34.87	3.008	0.107
	No	231	33.20		
Opportunity	Yes	785	3.81	-1.799	0.212
	No	231	4.03		
Understanding	Yes	785	5.59	0.044	0.196
	No	231	5.58		
Relevance	Yes	785	9.74	6.542	0.354
	No	231	7.77		
Aspiration	Yes	785	3.08	-0.289	0.029
	No	231	3.12		
Choice	Yes	785	6.98	0.723	0.181
	No	231	6.81		
Expression	Yes	785	5.66	-1.362	0.199
	No	231	5.88		

## DISCUSSION

The posting of messages on the Internet that are Satirical, or iconoclastic, or rude comment, the expression of unpopular or unfashionable opinion about serious or trivial matters, banter or humour, even if distasteful to some or painful to those subjected to it should and no doubt will continue at their customary level the UK case of DPP v Connolly found. We must therefore accept that after 200,000 years of existence that if the human race has not changed about their acceptance of those who happen to be different from them, they are unlikely to ever change without forcing the evolution of our brains, or more practicably, by changing our environment to promote constructive behaviours over destructive ones. Changing the law so in the words of victims of Internet abuse things “never happens again” is naïve to say the least, especially as most flame trolling offences are illegal in the UK and other countries through dedicated or generic laws on harassment or public order.

This paper has shown that the type of online discussion group genre (i.e. the platform) can have a significant effect on the types of contribution made to them. The paper proposes a scale for predicting the types of contributions a specific troller is likely to post called the ‘This Is Why We can’t Have Nice Things Scale’ (TIWWCHNT-20). Putting the two together the paper has shown how those who control online communities, whom are called sysops (i.e. systems operators), can attract the types of poster they want – whether they have a negative attitude about politics and politics, or whether they want positive and constructive debate.

The paper discussed the different types of post that can be made to an online community and the types of user that are more likely to post that type of message. This can help sysops manage the types of posts they want to encourage members to post while assisting them in ensuring the types of users who are unwelcome in the community can be identified and blocked from access.

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## **KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Anonymous:** An association of Internet users who take part in ‘hacktivism’ and often forms of Internet trolling.

**Cyberbullying:** Bullying that is conducted via the Internet or other public communications network.

**E-Politics:** Politics enabled via electronic means.

**Internet Trolling:** The posting of messages on the Internet that are either provocative or offensive.

**Troll:** A person that does Internet trolling, usually to create gross offence or to act in a way that is indecent, obscene, menacing or threatening. Traditionally it referred to someone who posted provocative messages for humorous effect.

**Troller:** A person who posts messages to the Internet in order to provoke a response. Anyone who posts a message with the intention of others responding to it is a troller.

## **APPENDIX: SCALE AND SCORING METHOD**

The scale associated with each item is a Likert scale where 1 is “Never Characteristic,” 2 is “Rarely Characteristic,” 3 is “Sometimes Characteristic,” 4 is “Often Characteristic,” and 5 is “Always Characteristic.” To give the TIWYCHNT-20 score, each value is then added up and the total number of items, namely 20, is then deducted from that number to produce the score. In the case of items 1 to 7, 13 to 15 and 20 the 5-point Likert scale is inverted. The mix in actual item values should avoid perceptions that the scale is biased in the eyes of the participant. The items from 1 to 20 are as follows:

1. You know where to go to find out information that you need.
2. Sometimes you feel strongly about an issue, but don’t know what to do about it.
3. It’s a regular part of your day to catch up with the news.
4. You follow the news to understand what’s going on in the world.
5. You follow the news to know what other people are talking about.
6. It’s your duty to keep up with what’s going on in the world.
7. You have a pretty good understanding of the main issues facing our country.
8. You often feel that there’s too much media, so you need to switch off.
9. There’s no point in watching the news, because it deals with things you can do nothing about.
10. It doesn’t really matter which party is in power, in the end things go on pretty much the same.
11. People like us have no say in what the government does.
12. Sometimes politics seems so complicated that you can’t really understand what’s going on.
13. People at work would expect you to know what’s going on in the world.
14. Your friends would expect you to know what’s going on in the world.
15. You trust the government to do what is right.
16. You trust politicians to deal with the things that matter.
17. You trust politicians to tell the truth.
18. You can affect things by getting involved in issues you care about.
19. You feel that you can influence decisions in your area.
20. Politics has little connection with your life.