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Survey of Stalking at WPI

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

submitted to the Faculty

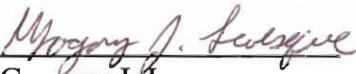
of the

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

by



Gregory J. Levesque

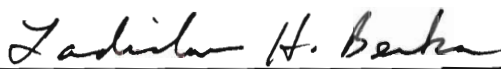
and



Jason J. LeBlanc

Date: March 17, 1999

Approved:



Professor Ladislav H. Berka, Major Advisor



Dean Janet B. Richardson, Co-Advisor

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I – Abstract

A detailed analysis of stalking at WPI was completed via a survey e-mailed to students, faculty, and staff. The returned surveys were then compiled, percentages of responses calculated, and then analyzed to determine if stalking via Internet utilities was a prevalent problem at WPI.

While the results demonstrate that stalking occurrences exist, the crime of stalking is not a prevalent problem at WPI. Final results of the project include a webpage and a pamphlet directed at protecting yourself against stalkers.

II - Introduction

A. Stalking Overview

As defined by the Massachusetts State Law, stalking can be summarized as follows: any act or gesture made over a period of time by one person towards another that annoys or harasses and constitutes a threatening of the safety and well being of that person. In years past, acts of this nature have included, but were and are not limited to, phone calls, intimidating messages or notes, tracking a victim's daily routine, and making appearances at their workplace or even their private homes. In some more severe cases, it has lead to psychological instability in the victim, a victim needing to relocate and re-establish his/her life, and sometimes even murder. Clearly, stalking is a serious crime that demands the attention of the public for the sake of their own safety.

B. College Computing And Advancing Technologies

However, the "Computer Age" is making this defense more of a struggle every day, especially among college students, faculty and staff. With current advancements in technology, coupled with the statistics showing that more colleges and universities worldwide are "getting wired", finding information about practically anyone in the world is becoming easier. Email accounts are being used to send harassing letters, and "tracking" someone via the Internet is not a difficult task. News groups, chat rooms and web pages all provide potential stalkers with enough information to start the process and sometimes all the information they need is literally at their fingertips.

With more colleges providing electronic mailing accounts for students, faculty and staff, communication is expedient to say the least. However, most addresses are public domain, and can be accessed from anywhere in the world via the World Wide Web. Personal web pages created and maintained by the users are also a source. Usually permitted by the college or university, these web pages are used by students to express themselves, their hobbies, or to tell about their families and lifestyles to those who are interested.

Among the things that one might find on these pages are email addresses to contact the creator, photos of family and friends, where they live, or even phone numbers. While all of this might appear to be just an innocent act of openness, stalkers can effortlessly retrieve this personal information. Once this occurs, the actual act of stalking has been initiated -- with the inadvertent aid of the victim.

Stalking is a serious crime that can severely damage the psyche of a victim, or even result in their death. However, not all of the victims are completely helpless in this situation. Precautions can be taken to make oneself less of a target, while still enjoying the advances of the Computer Age. This project hoped to not only demonstrate who is at risk, but also why, and how they can help themselves. We examined the negative interaction of certain segments of society with that of the dynamically powerful Internet.

C. Project Objectives

This project had three main objectives. The first was to determine if persons using the Internet are at a higher risk of being stalked by using data from survey responses. The second was to analyze how these persons are being stalked, and if they

can do anything to prevent such occurrences. The third part lay in tactics and strategies that the victim can employ to lessen their susceptibility of being stalked in the first place. These objectives were carried out through the use of an e-mail survey sent to a random list of students, staff and faculty at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). Also, the tactics and strategies that victims can use can be found in the attached webpages and pamphlet (Appendices B and C, respectively).

III - Literature Review

A. Stalking Definition

According to the Massachusetts State Laws, stalking is defined as follows:

“Chapter 265: Section 43. Stalking; punishment.

(a)Whoever (1) willfully and maliciously engages in a knowing pattern of conduct or series of acts over a period of time directed at a specific person which seriously alarms or annoys that person and would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress, and (2) makes a threat with the intent to place the person in imminent fear of death or bodily injury, shall be guilty of the crime of stalking and shall be punished by imprisonment in the state prison for not more than five years or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars, or imprisonment in the house of correction for not more than two and one-half years or both. Such conduct, acts or threats described in this paragraph shall include, but not be limited to, conduct, acts or threats conducted by mail or by use of a telephonic or telecommunication device including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications and facsimile communications.”¹

(<http://www.state.ma.us/legis/laws/mgl/265-43.htm>)

B. Stalking Versus Harassment

However, it is important to note the difference between “stalking” and “harassment.” Using <http://www.dictionary.com/>, harassment is defined as “tormenting by continued persistent attacks and criticism.”² The difference between the two terms lies in the fact that stalking also involves an actual threat against the victim, placing them in imminent fear of bodily injury or death. According to WPI Director of Public Safety, and former Massachusetts State Trooper JJ Hanlon, harassment cases are “mostly remedied with restraining orders. That usually cures the problem in a swift and easy manner. However, occasionally they fail, and greater measures are taken, including formal charges for stalking, depending on the magnitude of the case.”³

Although there are clearly defined laws for crimes against the people concerning such issues as harassment and stalking, as well as stiff punishments that coincide with them, the number of cases of such crimes grows more from year to year. And with the advancement of technology, stalking has now extended into the realms of the Internet and associated facilities, like email and facsimiles.

C. West Virginia Survey

Stalking is not a new crime that has simply arisen within the last few years. To the contrary, stalking has been a fairly common crime in the United States. A survey done on students at the University of West Virginia in 1995 dealt with campus stalking. Although the West Virginia University (WVU) survey did not incorporate electronic stalking, it demonstrated that 30.7% of the female students at the college considered themselves a stalking victim, as did 16.7% of the males. Contrastly, only 1.0% (all males) of the student body actually considered themselves a stalker. Over 80% of the victims reported knowing their stalker, considering them to be anywhere from “friends” to a “serious date” level, with less than 20% reporting their stalkers as “strangers.”⁴

The results of the West Virginia University survey were published in the Journal of Forensic Science and included a list of what victims did to help protect themselves from personal encounters. The results are provided in the Table 1.1.¹⁰

Table 1.1

Methods used to combat stalking.

Females	Rating
1. Ignored/hung up phone calls from stalker	2.44
2. Confronted the stalker	1.75
3. Changed schedule in order to avoid stalker	1.6
4. Carried a repellent spray (mace, pepper spray)	1.59
5. Arranged to have a personal escort at times when you felt in danger	1.46
6. Had someone warn the stalker	1.24
7. Reconciled or "made-up" with the stalker	1.08
8. Called the Police	.95
9. Had a restraint/warrant issued against the stalker	.87
10. Carried a whistle or other type of an alarm	.73
<u>Males</u>	Rating
1. Confronted the stalker	2.37
2. Ignored/hung up phone calls from stalker	1.93
3. Reconciled or "made-up" with the stalker	1.46
4. Changed schedule in order to avoid stalker	1.42
5. Had someone warn the stalker	1.34
6. Changed your phone number	.39
7. Moved to a different address	.39
8. Had someone beat up the stalker	.37
9. Carried a gun or a knife	.37
10. Called the Police	.1
11. Had a restraint/warrant issued against the stalker	.1

0 = never used, 1 = tried, but wasn't effective, 2 = tried with some (not total success),
3 = tried, but wouldn't recommend, 4 = tried, and would definitely recommend

D. World Wide Web

But the methods for stalking victims is becoming itself more varied as time passes. While the former methods of tracking people in person, harassing telephone calls and aggravating letters are still employed, more cases see technology being utilized for often malicious acts against hapless victims. From a survey of 200 Collegiate Institutions carried out by JB Richardson, Dean of Students at WPI, it was reported that 60% of college administrators had recognized unauthorized use of email accounts, and 66% reporting allegations of harassment. And of the 200 colleges and universities, 33% also reported cases of stalking.⁵

At a web site dedicated to combating and promoting public awareness (<http://francieweb.com/stalked/>), stories are posted, written by actual victims, about their "stalking stories". Some deal with "old fashioned" stalking, and some others tell about how they were stalked via the Internet, and vividly describe how the stalker harassed and threatened them. A few excerpts include the following:

"To date, she has used 11 addresses total from America On Line to harass us with -- two real ones that match the e-mail addresses of her main ISP (Internet Service Provider) and nine alias e-mail addresses. With the two "real" ones, she claimed once more, they didn't have that account. Our ISP has a tracker system which has kept records of each and every visit of hers -- and proves she has stalked us relentlessly and nonstop. She visits our guest book in order to follow each and every link in it."⁶

"I expressed my opinions on newsgroups about some issues of the day, and some people didn't agree... ...At first they only sent harassing emails and attacked

me on the newsgroups. But soon, it spread to other forms of harassment: forging my name in various guest books; getting free email accounts in my name and posting with them to impersonate me; Netcopping (filing phony complaints against me to my ISP to try to get me terminated); doing research to learn my full name and address...”⁷

There are also web sites dedicated to helping people cope with the traumatic stalking experience. Some describe the patterns that Internet stalkers use to harass/threaten their victims, and also provide ideas and strategies that can aid the victim in combating the problem. At <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/6647/>, stalkers are described as “individuals who become obsessed with another individual and they follow their victim from board to board, seeking and compiling various information that their victim may have posted...” This same site also depicts WHAT the stalker does in order to track their victim, with the intent that these “patterns” will help the victim recognize the situation before the matter escalates to the point where the victim’s life is in jeopardy.⁸ Other sites, such as <http://hamp.hampshire.edu/html/harassment.html>, advise on how to deal with harassers and potential stalkers through emails and ISP servers.⁹

E. Conclusions

Clearly, the dilemma of stalking people in the United States is becoming more complex due to the growth of technology over the span of the past few years. Obtaining details about people is much easier when possible victims unknowingly place personal information at the fingertips of their stalkers. Email accounts, chat rooms, ISP servers and web pages are all sources that are being utilized to commit the act of stalking. Although an investigation like ours has not quite been attempted in the past, the goal of this project was to build upon past studies of stalking by extending investigations into the computer realm, hoping to not only hinder stalker's malicious attempts, but to also help victims defend themselves.

IV - Procedure

A. E-mail Survey

This project was carried out in part by developing a survey that directly examined the correlation between the Internet (including email and chat rooms) and stalking victims. From the survey, percentages of students stalked through the Internet were determined, as well as those stalked by other means. Conclusions were then developed based on the final results. A copy of the survey itself is included in Appendix A of this report.

This survey was then distributed to a randomly generated population of WPI students, faculty and staff. The male-to-female ratio surveyed was approximately 1:1. The percentages of students to faculty/staff surveyed was directly proportional to that of the college itself. Consequently, approximately 600 undergraduates and approximately 140 faculty and staff were surveyed.

B. Data Analysis

Upon completion and retrieval of the surveys, analytical facts and figures were derived. These included, but were not limited to how the person was being stalked/was stalking someone else; what percentages of the people were "electronically" stalked; what percentages of those surveyed were vulnerable to be stalked as a result of their email account and their use of it, as well as their home pages, should they have maintained one. A comprehensive list of methods and safety measures was then drawn up. These are actions or precautions that people have or can

take to help ensure their safety while still using the Internet and its associated facilities.

C. Project Products

After compiling this data, a web page was created focusing on electronic stalking (see Appendix B). It is hoped that this page will become part of the WPI Campus Police homepage. It has detailed information concerning stalking prevention, as well as legal definitions on the subject matter. A pamphlet was also created to complement the web page (see Appendix C). It contains some of the facts and figures obtained from this survey, along with safety measures for victims. In this report we not only analyze our findings, but also sum up the project as a whole.

V - Survey Results

A. Student Results

Please take a couple minutes to read through the following survey. As part of our IQP project, we are trying to determine if the electronic resources available on the World Wide Web are used to stalk students, staff, and faculty at WPI. To fill out this survey simply choose the reply command on your e-mail utility. Having chosen to reply, you can edit this file by using the keyboard. Scroll with the arrow keys and read each question. On the line provided below each question respond with an appropriate answer. All information provided in your response is entirely anonymous. We have created a utility that will remove your name and address from your response when we receive it. However, feel free to omit any questions that you are not comfortable answering. Thank you in advance for your time.

General Student	Number of surveys e-mailed	600		
General Student	Replies received	172	28.67	600
Stalker Data	Total number of self-admitted stalkers	6	3.49	172
Stalking Victim Data	Total number stalked victims	24	13.95	172
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Replies received	144	83.72	172

1. Please identify your gender (M of F)

General Student Data	Males	71	41.28	172
Stalker Data	Males	5	33.33	6
Stalking Victim Data	Males	3	12.50	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Males	64	44.44	144
General Student Data	Females	101	58.72	172
Stalker Data	Females	1	16.67	6
Stalking Victim Data	Females	21	87.50	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Females	80	55.56	144

Part I. If you have an e-mail address/account, please answer the following four questions.

2. Do you check your e-mail at school? (Y or N)

General Student Data	171	99.42	172
Stalker Data	6	100.00	6
Stalking Victim Data	24	100.00	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	143	99.31	144

Home?

General Student Data	146	84.88	172
Stalker Data	6	100.00	6
Stalking Victim Data	21	87.50	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	121	84.03	144

Office?

General Student Data	54	31.40	172
Stalker Data	1	16.67	6
Stalking Victim Data	9	37.50	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	44	30.56	144

3. Are you a member of any mailing lists or read/post to news groups? (Y or N)

General Student Data	115	66.86	172
Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
Stalking Victim Data	12	50.00	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	100	69.44	144

4. Do you respond to people you don't know? (Y or N)

General Student Data	92	53.49	172
Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
Stalking Victim Data	11	45.83	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	80	55.56	144

5. Does your e-mail service provide any public and/or personal information that is readily available to other users? (Y or N)

General Student Data	120	69.77	172
Stalker Data	5	83.33	6
Stalking Victim Data	18	75.00	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	98	68.06	144

Part II. If you maintain a home page on the Internet, please answer the following seven questions.

General Student Data	maintain web page	70	40.70	172
Stalker Data	maintain web page	3	50.00	6
Stalking Victim Data	maintain web page	5	20.83	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	maintain web page	63	43.75	144

6. What personal information about yourself is available? Please list and be specific (i.e., addresses, phone numbers, personal photos, etc.).

General Student Data	personal info available	59	84.29	70
Stalker Data	personal info available	3	100.00	3
Stalking Victim Data	personal info available	5	100.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	personal info available	31	49.21	63

7. Does your page(s) link to those of your friends'? (Y or N)

General Student Data	34	48.57	70
Stalker Data	1	33.33	3
Stalking Victim Data	2	40.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	31	49.21	63

8. Are you linked from theirs? (Y/N/(D)on't Know)

General Student Data	Yes	35	50.00	70
Stalker Data	Yes	2	66.67	3
Stalking Victim Data	Yes	0	0.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Yes	33	52.38	63
General Student Data	don't know	13	18.57	70
Stalker Data	don't know	0	0.00	3
Stalking Victim Data	don't know	0	0.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	don't know	13	20.63	63

9. Do(es) your home page(s) contain information that the general public might inquire about (i.e., celebrity biographies, hobbies, studies/research)? (Y or N)

General Student Data	31	44.29	70
Stalker Data	1	33.33	3
Stalking Victim Data	1	20.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	29	46.03	63

10. Do you provide resources on your home page that browsers could use to contact you (i.e., e-mail address, phone number, etc)? (Y or N)

General Student Data	49	70.00	70
Stalker Data	2	66.67	3
Stalking Victim Data	2	40.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	45	71.43	63

11. Have you been contacted as a result of your web page(s)? (Y or N)

General Student Data	22	31.43	70
Stalker Data	2	66.67	3
Stalking Victim Data	2	40.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	19	30.16	63

12. Have you ever contacted other people via their web page(s)? (Y or N)

General Student Data	47	67.14	70
Stalker Data	2	66.67	3
Stalking Victim Data	4	80.00	5
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	42	66.67	63

Part III. Please answer the following five questions if you have in the past, or presently enter any internet chat rooms.

General Student Data	88	51.16	172
Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
Stalking Victim Data	14	58.33	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	73	50.69	144

13. When entering Internet chat rooms do you participate in the conversations? (Y or N)

General Student Data	72	81.82	88
Stalker Data	2	66.67	3
Stalking Victim Data	2	14.29	14
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	20	27.40	73

14. Do you enter chat rooms with the intention of meeting people? (Y or N)

General Student Data	22	25.00	88
Stalker Data	1	33.33	3
Stalking Victim Data	14	100.00	14
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	57	78.08	73

15. Have you ever offered or received personal information in these rooms (i.e., phone numbers, e-mail address, photos, etc.)?(Please list)

General Student Data	47	53.41	88
Stalker Data	3	100.00	3
Stalking Victim Data	9	64.29	14
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	37	50.68	73

16. Have you been contacted privately by people you've met in chat rooms outside the context of the chat room? (Y or N)

General Student Data	36	40.91	88
Stalker Data	1	33.33	3
Stalking Victim Data	5	35.71	14
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	30	41.10	73

17. Have you ever privately contacted someone you've met in a chat rooms outside the context of the chat room? (Y or N)

General Student Data	28	31.82	88
Stalker Data	1	33.33	3
Stalking Victim Data	4	28.57	14
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	23	31.51	73

Part IV. Please carefully read through the following five questions and answer them as truthfully as possible. Remember, all responses are entirely anonymous.

18. Do you tend to follow a set schedule week to week? (Y or N)

General Student Data	122	70.93	172
Stalker Data	5	83.33	6
Stalking Victim Data	15	62.50	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	103	71.53	144

19. Do you tend to use the same routes to get from place to place? (Y or N)

General Student Data	135	78.49	172
Stalker Data	5	83.33	6
Stalking Victim Data	17	70.83	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	115	79.86	144

20. Do you normally travel with others? (Y or N)

General Student Data	111	64.53	172
Stalker Data	5	83.33	6
Stalking Victim Data	11	45.83	24
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	96	66.67	144

21. Under Massachusetts law stalking is defined as a pattern of conduct directed at a specific person which is threatening, causes emotional distress, and places the victim in fear of harm. With this definition, have you ever been stalked? (Y or N)

General Student Data	24	13.95	172
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If you answered yes, what methods did the stalker employ? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

a. Repeated e-mail

Stalking Victim Data	14	58.33	24
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b. Web comments/replies (home pages)

Stalking Victim Data	0	0.00	24
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c. Telephone calls

Stalking Victim Data	17	70.83	24
----------------------	----	-------	----

d. Mail

Stalking Victim Data	6	25.00	24
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e. Physical contact (Talked or threatened you directly)

Stalking Victim Data	16	66.67	24
----------------------	----	-------	----

f. Followed you

Stalking Victim Data	18	75.00	24
----------------------	----	-------	----

g. Inquired of you through your friends

Stalking Victim Data	18	75.00	24
----------------------	----	-------	----

h. Left notes for you at your home, on your car, etc.

Stalking Victim Data	10	41.67	24
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i. Other(s) not mentioned here

Stalking Victim Data	6	25.00	24
----------------------	---	-------	----

If you were stalked, do you know where/how the stalker obtained information about you? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

a. Via Web utilities

Stalking Victim Data	3	12.50	24
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b. Phone book (campus directory)

Stalking Victim Data	5	20.83	24
----------------------	---	-------	----

c. Friends/Acquaintances

Stalking Victim Data	14	58.33	24
----------------------	----	-------	----

d. Other(s) not mentioned here (Please be specific)

Stalking Victim Data	10	41.67	24
----------------------	----	-------	----

e. Don't know

Stalking Victim Data	8	33.33	24
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22. Following the same definition provided in question 21, have you ever stalked someone?

Remember answers are anonymous. (Y or N)

General Student Data	6	3.49	172
----------------------	---	------	-----

Please indicate with a 'Y' those methods that you employed

a. Repeated e-mail

Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
--------------	---	-------	---

b. Web comments/replies (home pages)

Stalker Data	0	0.00	6
--------------	---	------	---

c. Telephone calls

Stalker Data	2	33.33	6
--------------	---	-------	---

d. Mail

Stalker Data	2	33.33	6
--------------	---	-------	---

e. Physical contact (Talked/threatened them directly)

Stalker Data	2	33.33	6
--------------	---	-------	---

f. Followed them

Stalker Data	1	16.67	6
--------------	---	-------	---

g. Inquired of them through their/your friends

Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
--------------	---	-------	---

h. Left notes at their home, on their car, etc.

Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
--------------	---	-------	---

i. Other(s) not mentioned here

Stalker Data	1	16.67	6
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If you stalked someone, where/how did you obtained information about the person? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

a. Via Web utilities

Stalker Data	1	16.67	6
--------------	---	-------	---

b. Phone book (campus directory)

Stalker Data	2	33.33	6
--------------	---	-------	---

c. Friends or Acquaintances

Stalker Data	4	66.67	6
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d. Other(s) not mentioned here

Stalker Data	3	50.00	6
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Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Greg Levesque gregjl@wpi.edu
 Jay LeBlanc mouth@wpi.edu

B. Faculty/Staff Results

Please take a couple minutes to read through the following survey. As part of our IQP project, we are trying to determine if the electronic resources available on the World Wide Web are used to stalk students, staff, and faculty at WPI. To fill out this survey simply choose the reply command on your e-mail utility. Having chosen to reply, you can edit this file by using the keyboard. Scroll with the arrow keys and read each question. On the line provided below each question respond with an appropriate answer. All information provided in your response is entirely anonymous. We have created a utility that will remove your name and address from your response when we receive it. However, feel free to omit any questions that you are not comfortable answering. Thank you in advance for your time.

General Faculty/Staff	Number of surveys e-mailed	142		
General Faculty/Staff	Replies received	13	9.15	142
Stalker Data	Total number of self-admitted stalkers	0	0	13
Stalking Victim Data	Total number stalked victims	2	15.38	13
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Replies received	11	84.62	13

1. Please identify your gender (M of F)

General Faculty/Staff Data	Males	7	53.85	13
Stalker Data	Males	0	0.0	0
Stalking Victim Data	Males	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Males	6	54.55	11
General Faculty/Staff Data	Females	6	46.15	13
Stalker Data	Females	0	0.0	0
Stalking Victim Data	Females	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Females	5	45.45	11

Part I. If you have an e-mail address/account, please answer the following four questions.

2. Do you check your e-mail at school? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	8	61.54	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	2	100.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	6	54.55	11

Home?

General Faculty/Staff Data	8	61.53	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	8	72.73	11

Office?

General Faculty/Staff Data	11	84.62	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	2	100.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	9	81.82	11

3. Are you a member of any mailing lists or read/post to news groups? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	8	61.54	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	7	63.64	11

4. Do you respond to people you don't know? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	7	53.85	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	6	54.55	11

5. Does your e-mail service provide any public and/or personal information that is readily available to other users? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	2	15.38	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	9.09	11

Part II. If you maintain a home page on the Internet, please answer the following seven questions.

General Faculty/Staff Data	Maintain web page	5	38.46	13
Stalker Data	Maintain web page	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	Maintain web page	2	100.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Maintain web page	3	27.27	11

6. What personal information about yourself is available? Please list and be specific (i.e., addresses, phone numbers, personal photos, etc.).

General Faculty/Staff Data	Personal info available	1	20.00	5
Stalker Data	Personal info available	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	Personal info available	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Personal info available	0	0	3

7. Does your page(s) link to those of your friends'? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	0	0	5
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	0	0	3

8. Are you linked from theirs? (Y/N/(D)on't Know)

General Faculty/Staff Data	Yes	0	0	5
Stalker Data	Yes	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	Yes	0	0	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Yes	0	0	3
General Faculty/Staff Data	Don't know	2	40.00	5
Stalker Data	Don't know	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	Don't know	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	Don't know	1	33.33	3

9. Do(es) your home page(s) contain information that the general public might inquire about (i.e., celebrity biographies, hobbies, studies/research)? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	1	20.00	5
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	0	0	3

10. Do you provide resources on your home page that browsers could use to contact you (i.e., e-mail address, phone number, etc)? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	2	40.00	5
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	33.33	3

11. Have you been contacted as a result of your web page(s)? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	4	80.00	5
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	2	100.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	2	66.67	3

12. Have you ever contacted other people via their web page(s)? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	2	40.00	5
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	33.33	3

Part III. Please answer the following five questions if you have in the past, or presently enter any internet chat rooms.

General Faculty/Staff Data	2	15.38	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	2	18.18	11

13. When entering Internet chat rooms do you participate in the conversations? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	1	50.00	2
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	0
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	50.00	2

14. Do you enter chat rooms with the intention of meeting people? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	0	0	2
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	0
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	0	0	2

15. Have you ever offered or received personal information in these rooms (i.e., phone numbers, e-mail address, photos, etc.)?(Please list)

General Faculty/Staff Data	1	50.00	2
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	0
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	50.00	2

16. Have you been contacted privately by people you've met in chat rooms outside the context of the chat room? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	1	50.00	2
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	0
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	50.00	2

17. Have you ever privately contacted someone you've met in a chat rooms outside the context of the chat room? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	1	50.00	2
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	0
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	1	50.00	2

Part IV. Please carefully read through the following five questions and answer them as truthfully as possible. Remember, all responses are entirely anonymous.

18 Do you tend to follow a set schedule week to week?(Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	5	38.46	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	4	36.36	11

19. Do you tend to use the same routes to get from place to place? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	7	53.85	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	6	54.55	11

20. Do you normally travel with others? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	4	30.77	13
Stalker Data	0	0	0
Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
Non-Victim/Stalker Data	4	36.36	11

21 Under Massachusetts law stalking is defined as a pattern of conduct directed at a specific person which is threatening, causes emotional distress, and places the victim in fear of harm. With this definition, have you ever been stalked? (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	2	15.38	13
----------------------------	---	-------	----

If you answered yes, what methods did the stalker employ? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

a. Repeated e-mail

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

b. Web comments/replies (home pages)

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

c. Telephone calls

Stalking Victim Data	2	100.00	2
----------------------	---	--------	---

d. Mail

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

e. Physical contact (Talked or threatened you directly)

Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
----------------------	---	-------	---

f. Followed you

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

g. Inquired of you through your friends

Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
----------------------	---	-------	---

h. Left notes for you at your home, on your car, etc.

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

i. Other(s) not mentioned here

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

If you were stalked, do you know where/how the stalker obtained information about you? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

a. Via Web utilities

Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
----------------------	---	-------	---

b. Phone book (campus directory)

Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
----------------------	---	-------	---

c. Friends/Acquaintances

Stalking Victim Data	0	0	2
----------------------	---	---	---

d. Other(s) not mentioned here (Please be specific)

Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
----------------------	---	-------	---

e. Don't know

Stalking Victim Data	1	50.00	2
----------------------	---	-------	---

22 Following the same definition provided in question 21, have you ever stalked someone? Remember answers are anonymous. (Y or N)

General Faculty/Staff Data	0	0	0
----------------------------	---	---	---

Please indicate with a 'Y' those methods that you employed

a. Repeated e-mail

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

b. Web comments/replies (home pages)

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

c. Telephone calls

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

d. Mail

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

e. Physical contact (Talked/threatened them directly)

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

f. Followed them

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

g. Inquired of them through their/your friends

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

h. Left notes at their home, on their car, etc.

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

i. Other(s) not mentioned here

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

If you stalked someone, where/how did you obtained information about the person? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

a. Via Web utilities

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

b. Phone book (campus directory)

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

c. Friends or Acquaintances

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

d. Other(s) not mentioned here

Stalker Data	0	0	0
--------------	---	---	---

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Greg Levesque gregjl@wpi.edu
Jay LeBlanc mouth@wpi.edu

VI - Data Analysis

A. Percent Returns

The number of student surveys emailed was 600. After two weeks, a second “reminder” email was sent. One week after this reminder, the survey was closed. The final total of returned surveys was 172 (28.67%). Of these, 101 (58.72%) were from females and 71 (41.28%) were from males. In addition, 140 faculty and staff surveys were sent, with 70 females recipients and 70 male recipients. However, because of the low percent return (13 replies, 9.29%), the data from these surveys are not sufficient enough to provide an accurate representation of WPI faculty and staff. Henceforth, all numbers and statistics described refer to the student population only.

B. Victim/Stalker Percentages

From these data, it was reported that 24 (13.95%) respondents classified themselves as having been stalked, while 6 (3.49%) called themselves a “stalker.” It was also noted that two people who were stalking victims also were stalkers themselves. It was observed that females were more apt to be stalked than males (87.50% of the 24 victims were female). According to a NEWS 7 television broadcast, 1 in every 12 women is stalked.¹¹ This survey revealed that at WPI, almost 1 in every 5 were stalked (21 out of 101).

C. Source of Information

Among the first observations made dealt with the source of information that was readily provided by the victims/potential victims to stalkers. 75% of stalking

victims reported that they utilized email services, a possible source of personal information to other users of the same service. 58.33% of all stalking victims reported having their stalker send repeated emails. Similarly, half of the self-admitted stalkers used email utilities to stalk their victims.

Webpages also seem to be a source of information. Every victim who reported maintaining webpages also noted that they had personal information about themselves on their pages. In addition, 40% of victims provide a means of contacting them on their pages (i.e., a “mailto” link, or perhaps a telephone number), and all of those victims had actually been contacted as a result. Though a possible area of concern, it was later determined to be insignificant as no victims were stalked from their pages, and no stalkers used webpages to actively stalk their victims. However, when asked where stalkers might have received information about them, 33% of the victims reported that they didn’t know where the information was obtained.

55.83% of stalking victims reported that they entered chatrooms with the specific intention of meeting people, while 33.33% of stalkers also entered chatrooms with the same motives. Of these victims, however, only 27.40% stated that they actively participate in the conversations, while two-thirds of the stalkers participate. As a result, 35.71% of victims participating in conversation have been contacted privately by people they’ve met in these chatrooms, and 33.33% of the stalkers reported that they contact other people. At the same time, 28.57% of victims have actually contacted “virtual strangers” after meeting them in chatrooms. And, 64.29% of victims report having given or taken personal information about people in the rooms, while only 50.68% of the non-victims have done the same. 100% of the

stalkers in this survey also reported having exchanged information. This activity obviously increases one's chances of being stalked as you are, in essence, donating the information to a potential stalker.

Analysis was then done on the non-technological aspects of stalking. When asked if they tend to follow a set schedule week-to-week, 62.50% of victims and 71.53% of non-victims said yes. When asked if they tend to use the same routes to get from place to place, 70.83% of stalking victims and 79.86% non-victims reported "yes." These results were not out the ordinary, though slightly lower for victims than was expected. However, when asked if they normally travel with others, only 45.83% of victims said yes, while a much higher 66.67% of non-victims said they travel with company. While this type of action (walking alone) may not make someone more susceptible to stalking, it might open them up to a confrontation with their stalker, and the victim may have not been aware that they were being stalked in the first place.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show methods that stalkers used to track their victims. The following information was taken from the survey, and pertains only to victims and stalkers. These data are what victims (Table 2.1) and stalkers (Table 2.2) supplied for information. The next two tables show how the information was obtained. Table 3.1 represents data on how the victims thought stalkers obtained their information. Table 3.2 represents data on how the stalkers got their information.

D. Data Tables

Table 2.1

How victims stated they were stalked.

Were followed	75.00%
Stalker inquired through friends	75.00%
Repeated telephone calls	70.83%
Made physical contact	66.67%
Repeated e-mails	58.33%
Left notes for victim	41.67%
Used postal mail	25.00%
Through webpages	00.00%
Other	25.00%

Table 2.2

How stalkers stated they stalked their victims.

Repeated e-mail	50.00%
Inquired of them through their friends	50.00%
Left notes for victim	50.00%
Repeated telephone calls	33.33%
Through postal mail	33.33%
Made physical contact	33.33%
Followed victim	16.67%
Used webpages	00.00%
Other	16.67%

Table 3.1

How victims thought information about them was obtained.

Via friends and acquaintances	58.33%
Phone book	20.83%
Via Web utilities (e-mail, homepages)	12.50%
Other	41.67%
Don't know	33.33%

Table 3.2

How stalkers stated they obtained their victim's information.

Via friends and acquaintances	66.67%
Phone book	33.33%
Via Web utilities (e-mail, homepages)	16.67%
Other	50.00%

VII - Discussion

A. Final Comments on Stalking at WPI

The data that were recovered from the surveys were slightly underwhelming. After careful analysis, it was determined that the issue of stalking at WPI does not have strong ties to the Internet-based world that we live in. Webpages and chatrooms proved to have little bearing on the direct effects of stalking, and electronic mail only had a slight impact. E-mail showed that it was used to harass/locate people (which is a form of stalking), but not to obtain personal information about them.

It appears that the more “traditional” methods of stalking are still employed. Harassing phone calls, following victims, leaving notes for them, and even making physical contact are more often used by stalkers than electronic-based methods. Perhaps this is due to “computer illiteracy” on the stalker’s part, or maybe because it is easier to be caught via computer by authorities due to tracking mechanisms that are in use at WPI today.

B. West Virginia Survey

The original guidelines of this project were to be modeled after a survey that was distributed to students at West Virginia University (WVU) by the Department of Psychology in 1995.¹² The students that participated in the survey were recruited by the faculty who were conducting the survey. They were students currently enrolled in psychology classes at WVU. The total number of students was 294.

This method varies greatly from our survey. In contrast we were given a list of 600 random students with an equal male to female ratio (1:1) and relied solely on

their cooperation to return the e-mail survey to us. We also surveyed faculty and staff at WPI. The WVU survey focused only on students.

The biggest disadvantage that we faced using a random, anonymous method was that we could not interact with participants who might have had a specific question about our survey. Conversely, the WVU students had the option to ask the distributing faculty, who were on-hand, for clarification on any question in the survey.

After two weeks of having sent out the first survey, we then re-emailed the survey as a “reminder” to the selected students and faculty/staff. This re-mailing included the original survey directed at both the victims and the stalker. At WVU, the overall study was done in two parts. Study I (given to 294 students) had two sections. The first section focused on the participant as a stalker, wanting to know if they, “Kept watch on the other person,” or if the participant, “Verbally threatened the other person.” The second section focused on the subject as a stalking victim, wanting to know if, “The person kept watch on you,” or, “The person verbally threatened you.” Study II (involving an additional 299 students) was a revised questionnaire that focused only on being a victim of stalking, and dealt with means of coping with the experience.

Our survey demonstrated that 3.49% of the students considered themselves to be a stalker and 13.95% of the students self identified as victims of stalking. In contrast, slightly more than 1% of the WVU students identified themselves as stalkers, while a larger 24.2% of the students were stalking victims. While this demonstrates markedly varying results, it should be noted that the WPI community

consists of only ~2600 undergraduates, while WVU undergraduate programs are comprised of more than 22,200 students. It is also relevant to note that WPI focuses on engineering sciences, while WVU programs contain various disciplines, such as humanities and non-science majors.¹³ This fact leads to a alteration in the diversity of the student populations at each school.

VIII - Conclusions

A. Project Overview

The original idea of this project was to uncover any cases of stalking at WPI, and determine which cases involved victims at a higher risk of being stalked. This was done by analyzing which victims made themselves more vulnerable to stalking by making information about themselves more readily available to the public. This type of behavior might involve leaving personal information (like home addresses and telephone numbers) on webpages, or user information utilities associated with electronic mail accounts.

The overall project idea had strong foundations and looked like it might reveal important details about WPI's system and the students involved within it. However, it appears (for the better perhaps) that stalking is not a prevalent problem. Most cases (with rare exception) can be handled through the Student Life Office, and do not involve the police. It is our hope that this project might be continued in future years and compared to our own, hoping to identify any trends that may/may not occur as technology becomes an even bigger factor in the daily lives of society.

B. Changes We Might Make to the Project

If we were to re-do this project, or to make suggestions to future project groups on this idea, the first would be to make sure that the meanings of the questions are absolutely clear. It seemed as though some recipients were unsure of specific questions, and thus their answers may not have been as accurate as possible. One way to remedy this would be to hand distribute the survey and be on-site to answer questions. However, the percent of returns via our emailing method was fairly high (28.67%) in comparison to most WPI surveys.

Another change/suggestion would be to focus the questions directly on one subject, and make sure that all aspects are covered. We often found ourselves analyzing the survey and saying to ourselves, “They answered ‘no’, but what if this happened, and that’s why they said ‘no’?” Unfortunately, it was too late, as we could not re-distribute a new survey with corrections and expect the recipients to reply again. There are a number of changes that we would make to the questions. The first would be to omit some seemingly redundant or ambiguous questions, such as questions #4 and #5. Question number four asks if they reply to email from people that they don’t know. This question ironically puts them into a situation where they are replying to unknown people (ourselves). Question number five inquired as to whether personal information was made available to other ISP users as a basic feature of the account. This is also somewhat useless since all WPI accounts provide “finger” information, as well as a “whitepages” command that gives personal information about the student, such as local address, home address, and WPI mailbox numbers. Some students may not realize that this information exists, or that it can be suppressed by the College Computer Center (CCC) on request.

A final example of a misdirected question is found in question number 18. This question asks if the participant (all WPI students and faculty) follow a set schedule from week to week. Considering that WPI course schedules are structured to meet at the same times every day of every week, it seems more likely that we would be receiving “yes” responses to this question. This does not yield any indication that going to classes makes you more susceptible to stalking. A re-worded question for this topic would focus on extra-curricular activities only, like what you might do after classes. A question following this might be, “Do you tend to follow a set schedule outside of classes?”

C. Final Personal Remarks

Overall this was a good project idea, and we are pleased with our efforts despite the fact that our assumptions about the frequency of electronic stalking were false. It is hoped that this project will be carried out again in the future, and the results compared to this project. We feel that as the computer age progresses, a rise in the incidences of stalking via the Internet will occur.

IX - Appendices

Appendix A

Please take a couple minutes to read through the following survey. As part of our IQP project, we are trying to determine if the electronic resources available on the World Wide Web are used to stalk students, staff, and faculty at WPI. To fill out this survey simply choose the reply command on your e-mail utility. Having chosen to reply, you can edit this file by using the keyboard. Scroll with the arrow keys and read each question. On the line provided below each question respond with an appropriate answer. All information provided in your response is entirely anonymous. We have created a utility that will remove your name and address from your response when we receive it. However, feel free to omit any questions that you are not comfortable answering. Thank you in advance for your time.

1. Please identify your gender (M of F)

Part I. If you have an e-mail address/account, please answer the following four questions.

2. Do you check your e-mail at school? (Y or N)

Home?

Office?

3. Are you a member of any mailing lists or read/post to news groups? (Y or N)
4. Do you respond to people you don't know? (Y or N)
5. Does your e-mail service provide any public and/or personal information that is readily available to other users? (Y or N)

Part II. If you maintain a home page on the Internet, please answer the following seven questions.

6. What personal information about yourself is available? Please list and be specific (i.e., addresses, phone numbers, personal photos, etc.).

7. Does your page(s) link to those of your friends'? (Y or N)

8. Are you linked from theirs? (Y/N/(D)on't Know)

9. Do(es) your home page(s) contain information that the general public might inquire about (i.e., celebrity biographies, hobbies, studies/research)? (Y or N)

10. Do you provide resources on your home page that browsers could use to contact you (i.e., e-mail address, phone number, etc)? (Y or N)

11. Have you been contacted as a result of your web page(s)? (Y or N)

12. Have you ever contacted other people via their web page(s)? (Y or N)

Part III. Please answer the following five questions if you have in the past, or presently enter any internet chat rooms.

13. When entering Internet chat rooms do you participate in the conversations? (Y or N)

14. Do you enter chat rooms with the intention of meeting people? (Y or N)

15. Have you ever offered or received personal information in these rooms (i.e., phone numbers, e-mail address, photos, etc.)?(Please list)

16. Have you been contacted privately by people you've met in chat rooms outside the context of the chat room? (Y or N)

17. Have you ever privately contacted someone you've met in a chat rooms outside the context of the chat room? (Y or N)

Part IV. Please carefully read through the following five questions and answer them as truthfully as possible. Remember, all responses are entirely anonymous.

18. Do you tend to follow a set schedule week to week? (Y or N)

- 19 Do you tend to use the same routes to get from place to place? (Y or N)
- 20 Do you normally travel with others? (Y or N)
- 21 Under Massachusetts law stalking is defined as a pattern of conduct directed at a specific person which is threatening, causes emotional distress, and places the victim in fear of harm. With this definition, have you ever been stalked? (Y or N)

If you answered yes, what methods did the stalker employ? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

- a. Repeated e-mail
- b. Web comments/replies (home pages)
- c. Telephone calls
- d. Mail
- e. Physical contact (Talked or threatened you directly)
- f. Followed you
- g. Inquired of you through your friends
- h. Left notes for you at your home, on your car, etc.
- i. Other(s) not mentioned here

If you were stalked, do you know where/how the stalker obtained information about you? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

- a. Via Web utilities
- b. Phone book (campus directory)
- c. Friends/Acquaintances
- d. Other(s) not mentioned here (Please be specific)
- e. Don't know

- 22 Following the same definition provided in question 21, have you ever stalked someone? Remember answers are anonymous. (Y or N)

Please indicate with a 'Y' those methods that you employed

- a. Repeated e-mail
- b. Web comments/replies (home pages)
- c. Telephone calls
- d. Mail
- e. Physical contact (Talked/threatened them directly)
- f. Followed them
- g. Inquired of them through their/your friends
- h. Left notes at their home, on their car, etc.
- i. Other(s) not mentioned here

If you stalked someone, where/how did you obtain information about the person? (Indicate those that apply with a 'Y')

- a. Via Web utilities
- b. Phone book (campus directory)
- c. Friends or Acquaintances
- d. Other(s) not mentioned here

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Greg Levesque gregjl@wpi.edu
Jay LeBlanc mouth@wpi.edu



Stalking On College Campuses

As defined by the Massachusetts State Law, stalking can be summarized into the following terms: any act or gesture repeatedly made by one person towards another that annoys or harasses and constitutes a threatening of the safety and well being of that person. In years past, acts of this nature have included, but were and are not limited to, phone calls, intimidating messages or notes, tracking a victim's daily routine, and making appearances at their workplace or even their private homes. In some more severe cases, it has lead to psychological instability in the victim, a victim needing to relocate and re-establish their life, and sometimes even murder. Clearly, stalking is a serious crime that demands the attention of the public for the sake of their own safety.

However, the "Computer Age" is making this defense more of a struggle every day, especially among college students, faculty and staff. With current advancements in technology, coupled with the statistics showing that more colleges and universities worldwide are "getting wired", finding information about practically anyone in the world is becoming easier. Email accounts are being used to send harassing letters, and "tracking" someone via the Internet is not a difficult task. News groups, chat rooms and web pages all provide potential stalkers with enough information to start the process and sometimes all the information they need is literally at their fingertips.

This page provides various resources that can help victims, and those possibly at risk, deal with the crime of stalking.

How Susceptible Are You To Stalkers?

- *Do you place personal information about yourself or you family on your web page?*
- *Do you follow a set schedule from week to week?*
- *Do you enter chat rooms with unfamiliar users?*
- *Do you check your e-mail frequently from campus based computers?*
- *Do you travel alone to and from class?*

If you answered yes to any of these trivial questions you may be unknowingly opening your life up to potential stalkers. In the past, prior to the Internet, stalkers were limited to phone books and visual contact for finding information about potential victims. With the advent of the World Wide Web, stalkers have had a virtual door open up to them. With online phone and address directories, as well as personal home pages, stalkers now can track down personal information about people with minimal effort. So what can you do to protect yourself?

LIMIT PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF!

Any information you make available whether it be your Unix plans, home page, and/or mailing lists provide a means for stalkers to learn more about you. In an unofficial survey concerning stalking on the WPI campus, 14% of those surveyed admitted to being stalked. Of those stalked, more than half posted their e-mail address on a mailing list. And those that maintained a personal Web page presented personal information about themselves.

TAKE STEPS TO MAKE YOURSELF LESS AVAILABLE!

Stalkers generally try to keep track of their victims every move. Simple steps such as varying your routes to and from class each day can keep a stalker at bay. Similarly, traveling with friends not only protects you from other forms of harassment, but also prevents stalkers from approaching you one on one.

Another possible step involves reading your e-mail in a different location each day. Though the idea sounds trivial, many of the victims surveyed reported having their stalker following them around campus by determining which computer lab the student was reading their mail from.

GET HELP IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR BEING STALKED!

Unfortunately many stalking cases go unreported until serious injury and/or anguish has been endured. Many victims feel as though the situation is under control provided they maintain a relationship with the stalker. The WPI and Worcester Police Departments can provide solutions for such situations. If you suspect that you are being stalked, or are in an uncomfortable situation where you feel you are threatened by another person immediately contact the WPI Police or the WPI Student Life Office for advice. In most cases you may choose remain anonymous.

Related Statistics concerning Stalking At WPI:

14%	Of WPI Students Reported Being Stalked.
58%	Of The Victims Were Stalked Via E-Mail.
75%	Of The Victims Were Followed By Their Assailants.
3%	Of WPI Students Admitted To Stalking.
50%	Of The Stalkers Used E-Mail To Stalk Their Victims.
17%	Of The Stalkers Followed Their Victims.
84%	Of The WPI Students That Maintain A Personal Web Page Provide Personal Information About Themselves.
71%	Of The WPI Students Tend To Follow A Set Schedule From Week To Week.
78%	Of WPI Students Tend To Use The Same Routes To Travel Across Campus.
35%	Of WPI Students Travel To Class Alone

The Numbers in this table came from an unofficial survey conducted without the advisement of the WPI administration, therefore these numbers can not be used in any official manor.

Links To Related Stalking Resources:

[Stalked](#)

[Crimes on the SuperHighway](#)

[On-Line Harassment](#)

[Safe Surfing Tips](#)

[Strategies For Stalking Victims](#)



WPI

Pages last modified: February 22, 1999
Page maintained by Greg Levesque and Jason LeBlanc.
Please let us know what you think.
gregjl@wpi.edu & mouth@wpi.edu

Stalking Statistics

- 14% Of WPI Students Reported Being Stalked.
- 58% Of The Victims Were Stalked Via E-Mail.
- 75% Of The Victims Were Followed By Their Assailants.
- 3% Of WPI Students Admitted To Stalking.
- 50% Of The Stalkers Used E-Mail To Stalk Their Victims.
- 17% Of The Stalkers Followed Their Victims.
- 84% Of The WPI Students That Maintain A Personal Web Page Provide Personal Information About Themselves.
- 71% Of WPI Students Tend To Follow A Set Schedule From Week To Week.
- 78% Of WPI Students Tend To Use The Same Routes To Travel Across Campus.
- 35% Of WPI Students Travel To Class Alone.

Important Phone Numbers

WPI Campus Police ...	831-5433
(Emergency)	831-5555
Worcester Police Dept.	911
State Police	829-4411
Security Night Patrol (SnaP)	831-4533
Crisis Center Inc.	791-6562
Rape Crisis Program ..	799-5700
Student Life	831-5201



100 Institute Rd.
Worcester, MA 01609-2280

PERSONAL SAFETY FOR THE WPI STUDENT

A Comprehensive Look
At Protecting Yourself
Against The Crime
Of Stalking



The results and suggestions in this pamphlet were drawn from a 1999 IQP concerning stalking on the WPI campus. All information presented here has not been approved by the administration.

As defined by Massachusetts State Law, stalking can be summarized as follows:

Any act or gesture made repeatedly by one person towards another that annoys or harasses and constitutes a threatening of the safety and well being of that person. Such conduct can take the form of, but is not limited to, electronic mail, internet and/or telephone communications, and physical contact.

In years past, stalking has ‘traditionally’ included phone calls, harassing notes or messages, tracking the victim’s location throughout the day, and even personal confrontations.

However, the growth of the “Computer Age” has added another tool to the arsenal for potential stalkers. As a result, defending yourself again these crimes is more difficult than ever. Newsgroups, chatrooms and email servers all provide personal information that can be used by stalkers to terrorize you.

This pamphlet has been designed to provide ideas and methods to help decrease you chances of being stalked.

E-Mail

- Do not freely volunteer your e-mail address to strangers. You can also help limit the public access of your address by not posting to public newsgroups
- Avoid replying to e-mails if you do not know the sender.
- If your server provides information about the users, ask your administrator to suppress your information. If this is not possible, change to another server.

Personal Webpages

- Do not put up pictures of yourself or your family on the webpages. This just provides the stalker with even more information about you.
- Do not put information with which people can contact you personally. This includes phone numbers and mailing addresses.

Chatrooms

- Do not give out your real name. Your username should suffice. If you must, select a random “pseudo-name.”
- NEVER offer to meet outside the chatroom in person.
- Do not give out personal or family information, and never offer photos, etc. to others.
- Report any harassing person(s) to the chatroom administrator(s).

General Safety

- Avoid walking alone, especially at night. Try to travel with friends. If this is not possible, call SNaP or Campus Police for an escort.
- When traveling at night, use well-lit routes.

X - Notes

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