DITCH THE LABEL
YOUR WORLD, PREJUDICE FREE .

IN:GAME
ABUSE

The extent and nature of online bullying within digital gaming environments.

In partnership with

HABBO

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We believe in a world that is fair, equal and free from all types of bullying.
Are *you* with us?

WELCOME TO
DITCH THE LABEL

LEADING THE WAY WHEN IT COMES TO TACKLING THE GLOBAL ISSUE OF BULLYING.

We are one of the largest anti-bullying charities in the world; helping thousands of people aged 12-25 each week to overcome bullying and the impact it has on their health, esteem, studies and social lives.

We work primarily online through our pioneering website and in partnership with online games and social networks. Innovation is at the core of all that we do and we believe that we can, and will beat bullying.

Within the past year, 1.5 million young people in the UK experienced bullying, with half of them never telling anybody through fear, embarrassment or a lack of faith from support systems.

Through our work with schools, colleges and online communities, we conduct world-leading research on an ongoing basis to help us better understand the dynamics of bullying so that we can tackle it with interventions that work.

Bullying is a societal issue and we advocate that everybody has a role to play in reducing the effect and prominence of bullying. This is why we work hard through partnerships with celebrities, brands and the media to shift societal attitudes and to generate awareness of the issues affecting young people. Our focus is not only on those who experience bullying, but also on those who are doing the bullying. Bullying is a learnt behaviour and we won't stop until it's over.

For support, resources and ways to get involved, visit www.DitchtheLabel.org.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

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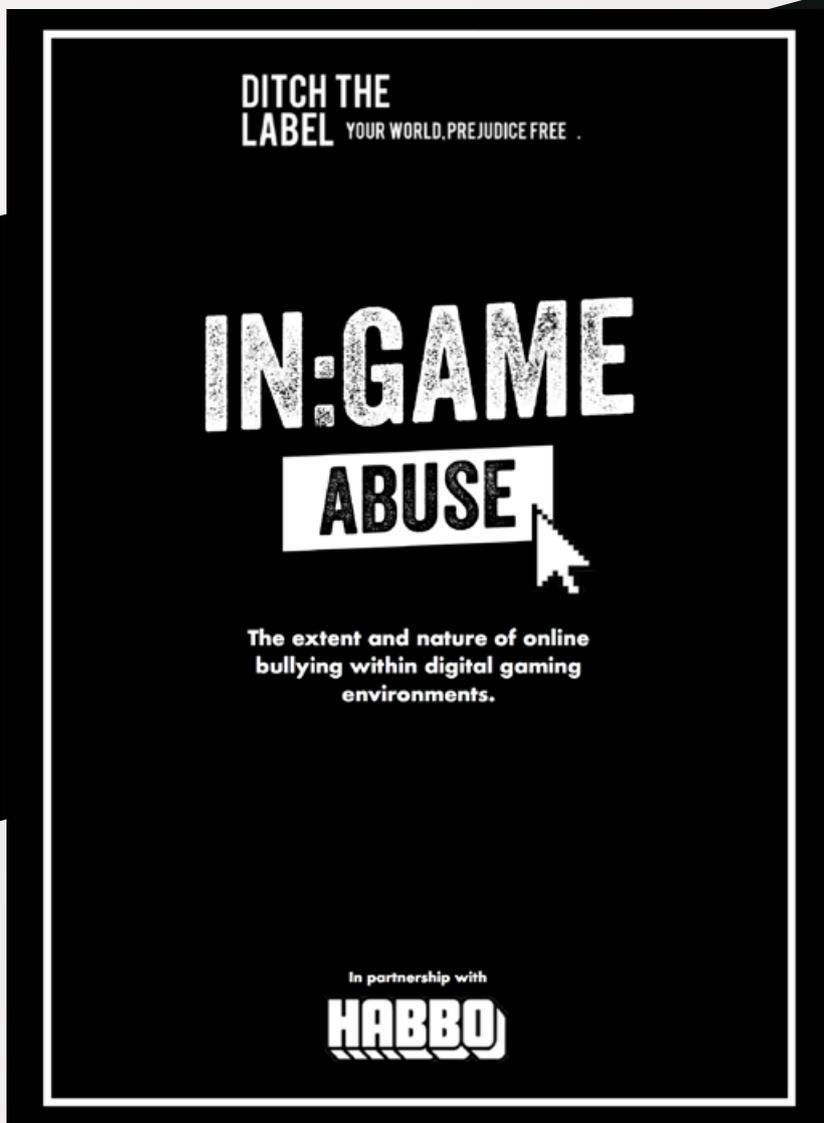
WE'RE TAKING A UNITED APPROACH AGAINST BULLYING BOTH ONLINE AND OFFLINE.

Bullying within online gaming environments is a real issue. Previous Ditch the Label research found that young people who experience bullying offline are the most likely to play online games as a way of seeking escapism from the stress and trauma caused by the bullying. This is why Ditch the Label has pioneered digital anti-bullying support online, in partnership with games, such as Habbo, since 2012.

We wanted to join forces with Habbo to better understand the extent and nature of bullying within online games. We believe that everybody should have freedom of expression wherever they socialise and spend their time - regardless as to whether or not it is online or offline.

Bullying seriously undermines the fun and enjoyment that gamers seek when playing online and we want to understand how we can work together with partners to combat game-based bullying once and for all.

The survey was conducted within the Habbo game. Over a period of 4 days, we were able to survey 2,515 young people aged 12 - 25 about their experiences of being subjected to, witnessing and perpetrating bullying in online gaming environments.

This report is produced as part of our 'Gamers Unite for a Better Internet' campaign, which is a global movement of gamers united by a shared vision of an internet that is fun and free from all types of bullying and malicious trolling.

About Habbo

Habbo is a virtual hotel where millions of people from around the world go to chat, play games and make friends. It's a massively multiplayer experience in which users design rooms, game, play roles in various organisations, and even open their own shops and cafes. Currently, there are over 120 million user-generated rooms spread across nine different communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
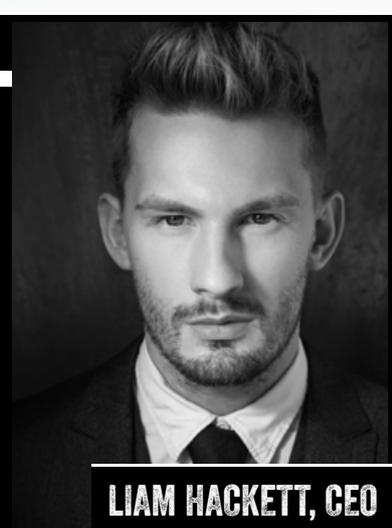
LIAM HACKETT, CEO

Bullying is one of the biggest challenges facing the health and wellbeing of children and young people today.

This research highlights that 1-in-2 of all online gamers, have at some point been subjected to bullying within a game. At Ditch the Label, we believe that games should be fun and creative environments for everybody to enjoy, regardless of charactersistics such as race, religion, sexuality, gender or a disability.

Previous Ditch the Label research discovered that young people who are subjected to bullying offline are some of the biggest consumers of the internet and technology and subsequently more likely than average to use online games for escapism and to be free of ridicule and abuse. It is this relationship that makes our findings all too pressing and real.

Online abuse is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly if a young person is experiencing bullying both online and offline, the impact on things such as health, esteem and academic performance is only amplified. Safety is an essential need for all of us. If a young person never feels safe, their stress levels are constantly high, which can also undermine their physical health.

The internet provides a unique opportunity for users to receive abuse anonymously - either from people they know offline or from complete strangers. Anonymous abuse has been found to increase rates of paranoia and social anxiety and can be incredibly destressing to those who are subjected to it.

Whilst the internet comes with a new set of social challenges, it is also a powerful tool for connecting like minded people and communities together. Ditch the Label is an organisation that has grown purely from the internet. Each month, we help thousands of young people to overcome the issue of bullying, through our pioneering digital support programmes.

We are proud to be working proactively with partners, such as Habbo to address some of the issues discovered in this report as we continue to work together towards a shared vision of an internet that is fun, safe and open to all.

We believe that everybody should have freedom of expression, regardless of where they socialise and spend their time - irrespective as to whether it is online or offline.

It is my hope that this research will generate further dialogue around the issues and will be of benefit to stakeholders and our partners working within the gaming industry.

Liam Hackett, Founder and Global CEO

HABBO
PREFACE

"**Working with our long-term partners Ditch the Label, we carried out this survey in order to generate better awareness of the kinds of behaviour online platforms such as our own deal with.**" - Raquel Alvarez

RAQUEL ALVAREZ

Raquel Alvarez
User Care & Safety, Director, Habbo.

As Habbo's User Care Director, Raquel works to define the policy framework for end-user safety and to develop age-appropriate customer experiences. Her team works 24/7 to listen and defend the voices of users, to educate teenagers about online safety and to fight online abuse including cyber bullying, child sexual abuse and scams. Prior to her current job, Raquel worked with children and teenagers in NGOs, such as the Red Cross, Unicef and Save the Children.

Bullying and online harassment are both extremely important issues to us at Habbo. With the ever increasing popularity of social media networks among young people, it becomes even more important. Working with our long-term partners Ditch the Label, we carried out this survey inside our English-speaking community in order to generate better awareness of the kinds of behaviour online platforms such as our own deal with.

Our user care team works extraordinarily hard to protect our users and to promote safe online behaviour, and as increasing numbers of people go online to share aspects of their lives and communicate with other people, we feel the data gathered provides valuable insights for others wishing to do the same.

In our opinion, working on important issues like online bullying is crucial as the Internet evolves and presents new challenges. At Habbo, we're proud to share values with an organisation like Ditch the Label, and we hope you benefit from reading the results of this survey.

You can find out more about Habbo at www.Habbo.com.

SAMPLE

The survey was available between 18/05 - 22/05 2017 in-game on Habbo.com. The benefits of conducting the survey in this way was to ensure that 100% of our sample actively play online games.

Once cleansed, a total of 2,515 people participated in the survey.

WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

* 48% Female
* 46% Male
* 3% Transgender
* 3% Other.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

We welcomed participation from all young people, with our core focus being on those aged 12-25 who we know to be some of the biggest consumers of online games.

Age	Percentage
12 and below	2%
13	3%
14	4%
15	6%
16	8%
17	9%
18	13%
19	10%
20	10%
21	8%
22	6%
23	7%
24	4%
25	3%
25 and above	7%

57% HAVE BEEN BULLIED IN AN ONLINE GAME
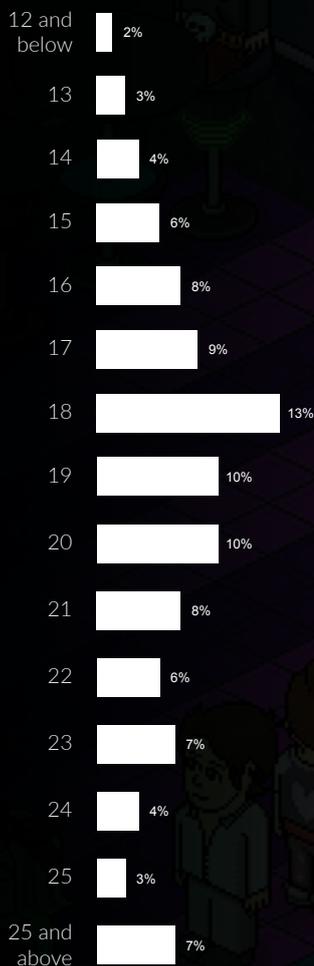
I get bullied constantly for my skill level while playing games. I get told to kill myself and that I'm lesser of a person because I can't play games as well as others.

There have been multiple times where someone has taken a personal dislike to me and **shared my information, pictures and social media with other users** to the point where I was getting ganged up on but mods don't really do anything so I was stuck with 'quit or take it'.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TROLLED IN AN ONLINE GAME?

64% HAVE

Trolling is defined as behaviour used to deliberately annoy other users. It is considered a weaker form of bullying.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SUBJECTED TO HATE SPEECH IN AN ONLINE GAME?

57% HAVE

Examples: racism, homophobia, transphobia and disablist language.

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED THREATS FROM SOMEBODY IN AN ONLINE GAME?

47% HAVE

### HAVE YOU EVER HAD UNWANTED SEXUAL CONTACT IN AN ONLINE GAME?

40% HAVE

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HACKED ON AN ONLINE GAME?

38% HAVE

HAVE YOU EVER HAD YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION SHARED IN AN ONLINE GAME?

34% HAVE

HAVE YOU EVER QUIT AN ONLINE GAME BECAUSE OF BULLYING?

6%
WERE UNSURE

22%
SAID YES

24%
HAVE CONSIDERED IT

48%
SAID NO
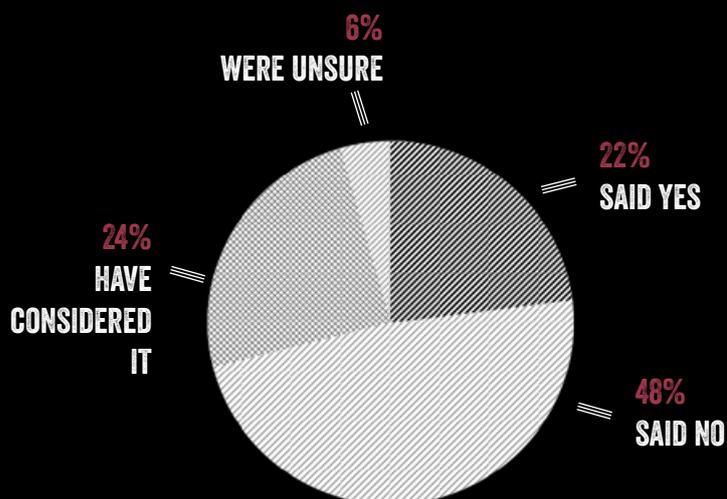
WOULD YOU ENJOY PLAYING GAMES MORE IF BULLYING AND TROLLING DIDN'T EXIST?

62% said yes

29% are unaffected

9% said no
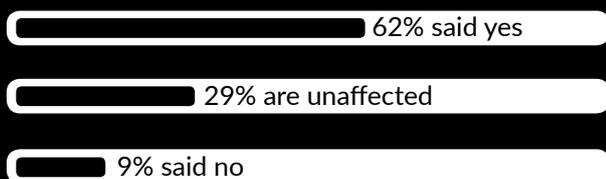
THE BULLYING MADE ME FEEL DEPRESSED

"i had to leave a game since I was bullied by a group of guys (6/7) and it was really terrible. I've been depressed for a long time, and i couldn't really play without being insulted"

THE GAME NO LONGER FELT LIKE A GAME

"The game was not worth playing anymore. The constant harassment was "okay" at the beginning, but it became the "game", to get harassed."

LIAM HACKETT, CEO.

Online games are a huge component of what it means to grow up in a digital world. Not only can gaming be a fun and enjoyable experience, but gameplay often teaches valuable transferrable skills, such as team work, design, navigation and entrepreneurship.

This research shows that the issue of bullying, and the very real impact it has on enjoyability and mental health is significant and impacts the majority of users.

We will be working with our partners, in light of these findings towards a gaming community that is truly accepting and welcoming to all users. Our efforts are largely about redefining gaming culture and modelling the appropriate behaviours that young people should be exhibiting online.

20%
SAID YES

HAVE YOU EVER BULLIED
SOMEBODY IN AN ONLINE GAME?

80%
SAID NO

>;)

OMG

WTF
****

****

MY STORY

"

I used to bully people for fun. Mainly on gaming consoles. I don't know why but it used to be fun However I realised it's wrong and I stopped doing it.

"

MY STORY

"

I was bullied a lot so I started to bully others to make myself feel better, but then I realised it made me feel worse.

"

MY STORY

"

Yes I have bullied. I don't go too far with bullying, but I think the main thing was trying to troll and it morphed into bullying. It was really a struggle for power. I didn't even know him so I started attacking him for no real reason. I guess I had more power because I didn't know him.

"

MY STORY

"

Does making fun of someone's magic attack and physical attack in an mmorpg considered as bullying…?

"

MY STORY

"

Back in the days, I used to bully people in games to make myself feel better from all the hate and negative vibe in real life. To make me feel better about myself, I bully others and make them feel sad and insecure.

As I grew older, I realised that what I did is wrong and I repent and never bully people ever again as the cycle will go on and on. Bullying others doesn't make you stronger. It just makes you as weak as your bully.

"

SHOULD BULLYING WITHIN ONLINE GAMES BE TAKEN MORE SERIOUSLY?

74% said yes

15% don't care

11% said no

72% said yes

28% said no
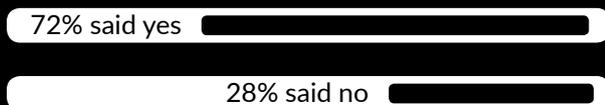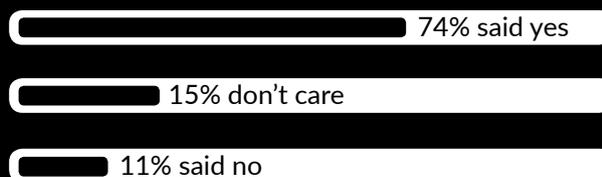
HAVE YOU EVER REPORTED BULLYING IN AN ONLINE GAME?

HOW CAN WE PREVENT BULLYING IN ONLINE GAMES?

53%
EXTRA HUMAN MODERATION

49%
ANTI-BULLYING ADVICE & SUPPORT IN-GAME

48%
REWARDS FOR TAKING A STAND AGAINST BULLYING

47%
MORE REPORTING & BLOCKING FEATURES

42%
HARSHER PUNISHMENTS FOR BULLYING

38%
SUPPORT TO HELP THE PEOPLE BULLYING STOP

34%
ANTI-BULLYING CAMPAIGNS IN-GAME

23%
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP TRAINING AT SCHOOL

21%
BETTER AUTOMATIC MODERATION
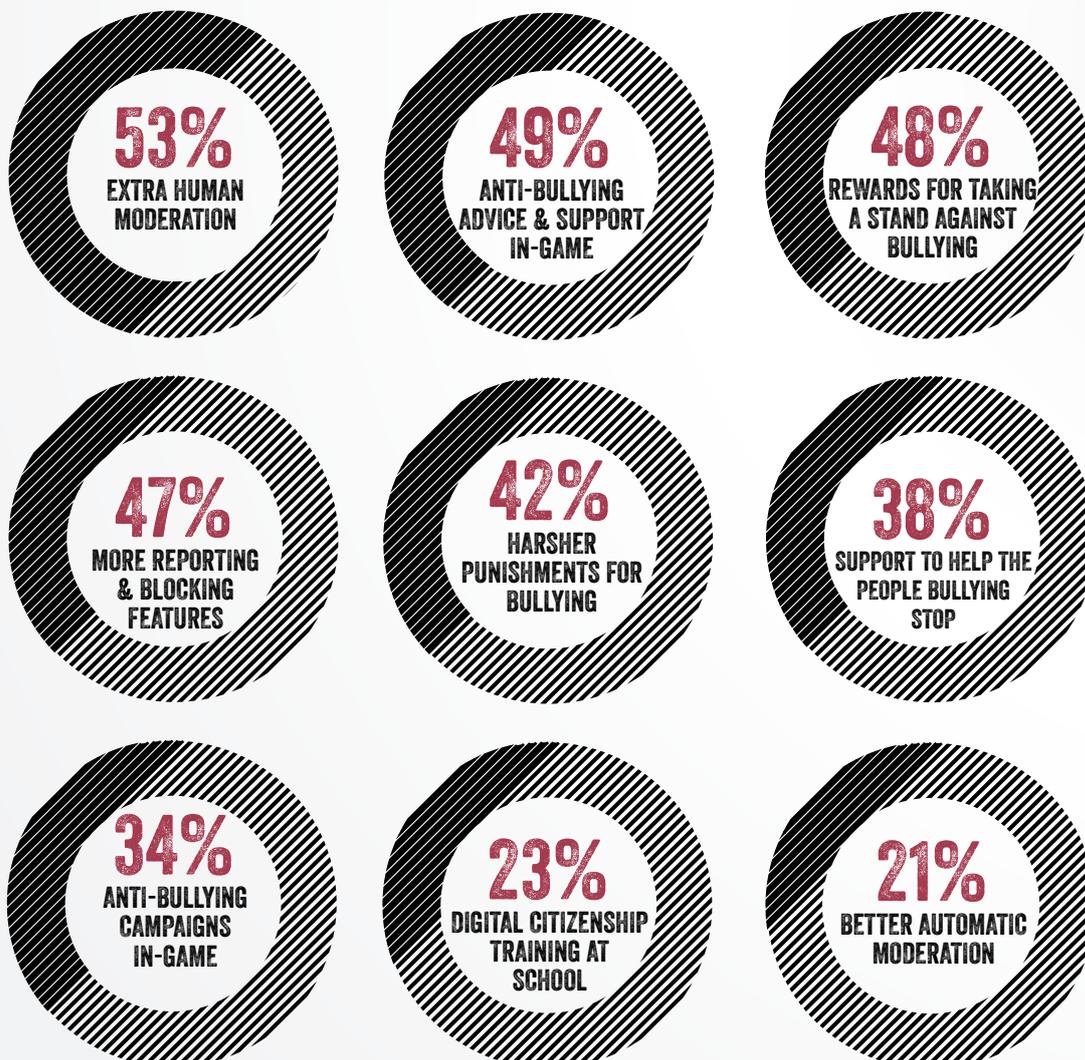
WANNA TALK?

INSTANT HELP AND SUPPORT

You don't have to go through bullying alone. Get instant help and support from the largest online anti-bullying hub in the world.

Browse thousands of guides, tips and interviews, meet likeminded people and speak with our expert mentors.

Visit DitchtheLabel.org

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