Cyberstalking is one of the most overlooked crimes. This is exactly why it is among the fastest growing crimes in the world. Learn all there is about cyberstalking here.

The internet brought with it plenty of benefits, but accompanying these benefits came some evils that were previously not known of. These evils include hacking, identity theft, online surveillance, and cyberstalking.

The Dangers of Cyberstalking

Most of us are already aware of what cyber stalking is or have encountered real-world stalking at some point in our lives. Women tend to have had more experiences than men. Stalking in its traditional sense refers to a situation where someone is keeping an eye on you without your will or interest. While this is enough to make someone uncomfortable, stalkers do so to know more about their victim so that they can use the learnt information to blackmail their victims or take advantage from them.

Because of the internet and all of its connectivity, stalkers do not need to follow you around the neighborhood. If you're not too careful, they can learn everything there is to know about you, without even leaving their dimly lit basements.

They do this by following you on the internet. Because of social media, it's not too difficult to follow you around. You probably post most of your daily activities on your social media profile. You check into places, post pictures while you're there, tell people about the movie you recently watched, and share your current mood and feelings.

Why people get targeted so easily?

All the personal information which is nowadays easily available on the internet can become the source of pleasure for any random cyber stalker. He can learn all there is to know about anyone **in just a few clicks**.

Most cyber stalkers are skilled hackers as well. They can **hack into your social profiles** and **read your chats**, and even **post stuff from your profiles** which can damage your reputation. Once an account gets compromised finding pictures from chats such as those that may have been shared with an intimate friend is **cake walk**.

Similarly, these hackers can hack your devices too. This means that any private data saved on your phone can be seen and taken over by the hacker. They can even **hack into your webcam** and watch you live, without you knowing about it.

Today, modern technology has made it much easier for hackers and other **cybercriminals to hide their tracks**. With a specialized cyber security tool such as a **VPN**, anyone can become completely anonymous and invisible online, making it impossible for anyone **to detect your presence or activities**.

While cyberstalking is an issue for all genders, women are the most affected. When cyber stalkers get their desired info, they use it to blackmail the victim and force them to do special favors. Some demand money, others demand more **heinous**

things. And there's no end to all this blackmailing. Those who are affected even turn towards suicide just to bring an end to all this **creepiness** and **blackmailing**.

According to some recent estimations, 94% of women who use the internet have faced cyberstalking at some point in their life. Moreover, 62% of all cyberstalking victims are young women between the age of 18 and 24. *Psychologytoday.com* says that, cyberstalking is the fastest growing crime and at least 1 million women are cyber-stalked in the US alone.

The Lack of Awareness…

What's worse about cyberstalking is that there is virtually no awareness on it. Those who are affected by this issue do not know how to deal with it. This is because most victims prefer to stay quiet to save their name and their reputation. Others can't even find the right platforms to raise their voice and find the right kind of help.

CYBER-STALKING PREVENTION

In the virtual world, cyber-stalkers and predators are **lurking at every corner**. Others may never know when they're being targeted until it's too late. As listed above, there are several ways a cyber-criminal can target you. However, luckily for us, there are many ways to protect ourselves from this menace. Here are some simple ways to protect yourself online:

- Don't send or receive private emails or messages when connected to a public Wi-Fi as they are notoriously unsafe. With today's technology, there's always a chance that **someone could be snooping on your internet traffic**.
- Use a VPN because it helps to protect your personal information and keeps you anonymous online.
- **Install a top-notch antivirus software** on your computer and laptops and other devices.
- Be careful of what you **upload on social media**. Don't provide too much personal information that would make it easier for a cyber-stalker to do his thing.
- Use strong, unique passwords and **multi-factor authentication** for **thwarting easy access** to your personal information.
- Don't upload photos on social media that show your location or places where you often hang out because it can be used against you by a cyber-stalker.
- **Phishing emails** are still a major threat online, so it's extremely important that you avoid them.
- **Review privacy settings** on all your social media accounts as carefully as possible to ensure your information remains protected.

In this day and age, it's imperative to educate our kids and even adults about cyber-stalking and its **far-reaching consequences**. **Raising awareness** and implementing the strategies suggested above can go a long way in protecting yourself and your loved ones from these types of threats.