

Dangers Posed by Lack of Ethical Standards in Information Technology: What we can do as future engineers

I was shocked, flabbergasted and very sad all at the same time, to hear of the news. The news that a third year high school boy killed himself under the psychological agony from the nasty, swear words against him written on the Net. He was only eighteen when he took his own life alone. It is such a heart-breaking incident, but this is not the only case that has been caused by Internet bullying. In reality, it is a very horrible fact that this type of Internet-related incident is happening more and more, victimizing many young students.

We students, whether at elementary, junior high or high school, or college like us, are concerned in these Net problems too. I have heard that some students of my Kosen have written in slanderous words, and gossiped about their friends or teachers in some people's web logs or so-called 'school stealth sites'. Dirty words such as 'Go to the hell.', 'You are sore to the eye.' or even 'You have got to die'. These words are much easier to use as an anonymous writer to a target person. Also messages on e-mail are said to be very abrupt and language in the messages sounds strange and sometimes very wild. Japanese language has been negatively affected along with the spread of IT communication.

It is said that it is too easy to put in such abusive words without feeling guilty because they do not have to identify themselves, and do not actually do any violent actions like hitting, kicking, or being seen to speak ill of the target person. I wonder if they have ever thought of the feeling of the victims; how the target students feel, how they grieve to the extent that they start to think they are worthless and it is better to disappear from this world.

However, I would not like to talk about only the downsides of the Internet. Since I am an Information technology student at Koshiro Kosen, I know the benefits that the Internet offers to our lives and society. We can order many things from around the world, and book tickets and accommodation and enjoy shopping without actually going out, wherever we are and whenever it is. Everything has its good points and bad points. Life without a mobile phone and the Internet is unthinkable now. They are an absolute necessity in our daily life, even a must in the business world. Our lives have become much easier and more comfortable with a lot of time and trouble saved thanks to ever-advancing information technology. Who could have expected that these series of misbehaviors and criminal acts would appear as a by-product of the Internet

and electronic information technology.

I think that the root of these IT problems lies in the absence of IT ethics that all Net users must have. Or even that the problem rests with basic human manners before IT ethics. If we have already learnt these basic social manners, we could naturally think about IT ethics and recognize what we must not do in using the Internet. We should not forget that we may be a next victim of some ill-minded Net user tomorrow.

One piece of e-mail to you, or one phrase written on your web log may encourage you and make you happy, but on the other hand there is a risk of being hurt or even having your self-esteem destroyed by only a single heartless phrase in the e-mail or web log. It is very much lamentable that the Internet is abused for wrong purposes. I strongly think that it is time for us to wake up to the need for the establishment of a set of ethical standards for Information Technology, so that we will not have to see any more wrongful use of the Internet and its accompanying sad incidents and sufferings happening in our society. We, Kosen students should be at the front of setting in force this commonsense attitude and making efforts to stop corrupt IT communications since we are future engineers. I will do this because I never want to see anyone involved in such a sad Internet-related incident, and I will do this by observing basic social manners and trying to set a good example myself for others to realize the importance of keeping ethical IT standards, because I want to see, as an engineer, everyone use Information technology for the betterment of individuals and for the peace of society.