

THOUGHT-STARTER: HAS CYBERBULLYING BECOME A GEN Z EPIDEMIC?

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Foresight writer Holly Friend explores the brands empowering young people to use their online presence to reclaim so-called flaws and rise above online trolls.

Today's teenagers, **almost constantly online**, are more vulnerable than ever before. A **study** from Pew Research Center recently found that 59% of US teens have been bullied or harassed online. Unsurprisingly, given its emphasis on appearance, much of this hate speech is localised to Instagram – 42% say they were targeted on the platform.

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Research into how artificial intelligence (AI) can be harnessed to weed out cyberbullies is already under way at Ghent University. There, researchers are working on an algorithm to spot negative comments on social media and remove them before damage is inflicted. However, they are struggling to enable the AI to identify linguistic nuances such as sarcasm.

In a bid to further tackle cyberbullying, recent ad campaigns have outlined the actions people can take in order to rise above the comments, whether using social media or the clothing they wear. Anti-bullying campaigner Monica Lewinsky created #DefyTheName, a public service announcement that features a host of successful celebrities who are referred to by the hateful names they were called in their childhood.

Read how brands are tackling bullies in the full microtrend, [Bullying Backlash](#), [here](#).