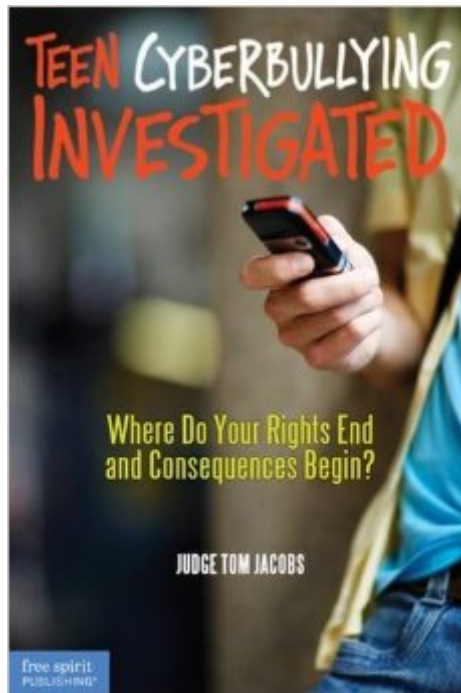


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# Teen Cyberbullying Investigated: Where Do Your Rights End And Consequences Begin?



## Synopsis

How do teens know when they might be a mere click away from the clinic? In *Teen Cyberbullying Investigated*, Judge Tom Jacobs presents a powerful collection of landmark court cases involving teens and charges of cyberbullying, which includes: sending insulting or threatening emails, text, or instant messages directly to someone; spreading hateful comments about someone through emails, blogs, or chat rooms; stealing passwords and sending out threatening messages using a false identity; and building a Web site to target specific people. Each chapter features the seminal case and resulting decision, asks readers whether they agree with the decision, and urges them to think about how the decision affects their lives. Chapters also include related cases, important facts and statistics, and suggestions for further reading. With an ever-increasing number of serious cases of cyberbullying and school violence, this book is needed more urgently than ever.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 6 and up

## Customer Reviews

A more accurate title would be *Cybercrime Investigated*, since many of the cases are not related to online bullying. Regardless, this book, clearly aimed at early teens was fascinating. It is filled with stories of teens who created websites to humiliate or insult teachers and friends and how the judicial system responded to (e.g. school suspensions). Essentially, unless the school or target can demonstrate disruption to classes, obscene or lewd comments or injury to a person, then such speech made online is usually protected by the constitution. While many cases discussed were

pranks by teens who eventually hired lawyers to 'reframe' their immature and often hateful antics as "free speech", there are many examples of what happens when threats to kill are made online. The book shows how our judicial system protects a frightening array of online attacks on our nations teachers and how many pranks have crossed the line and landed the perpetrator in jail. It is suitable for a mature school audience but you should know that the book contains the F word several times. It also contains many relevant references to online resources. It is also of interest to anyone trying to keep up with teenage antisocial behavior in the digital age.

I work at a school so I thought that this book would be helpful for teens to read. Unfortunately though a lot of the cases in here were examples of when parents took schools to court over discipline issues regarding inappropriate use of the Internet, including threats and bullying, and won. However, most of the court cases weren't even over until the student had either graduated or long since transferred schools. So it was not quite the moral tale I had hoped to use to caution students how they use the Internet and to use good judgement about what they post.

I have some interest in this cyberbullying because I write about education-related issues, but also because I have been trying to gain a better understanding of social networking. Judge Jacob's book explains the ramifications of teen cyberbullying in a very readable format. While Judge Jacobs apparently served on the bench for a long time, he has written a book that is not overly drowned in legalese. With respect to cyberspace, issues of free speech may extend off-campus to social networking tools and Web sites. This book mentions several examples including cases of derogatory and misleading information about teachers and students to threats to pull "another Columbine" to tamer incidents such as comments that would appear on student evaluations of teachers at the college level. The major contention from reading the case examples and the rulings is the level of damage or disruption caused by the activity. In some cases, as you will read, the school district won, and expelled offenders. However, in others, the student won, and school districts were forced to pay the student's legal fees. School districts are aptly warned about improper punishments, too. After reading this book, I read about a cyberbullying case on the editorial page of the Rutgers Daily Targum, the main campus daily newspaper, where a high school suspended a student who had posted disparaging comments about a teacher--they were on the line of "she's the worst teacher I ever had." The school also reacted by removing the student from honors and advanced placement classes, which seems excessive. In this case the student had her day in court and won. I recommend this book to school officials as well as parents who are

concerned about their son's or daughter's use of the Internet. It will also provide sufficient warning to potential cyberbullies.

This book was an amazing resource for my School Law class. It was an easy read, and I was able to finish relatively quickly. It would be a great read for teachers in middle and high schools so that they can gain a deeper understanding of the affects of cyberbullying. It is written for a younger audience but is a great discussion book for any age- middle school to adults.

Judge Jacobs "gets it"! He explains complex legal cases on a level that teens, parents, and educators can all understand without a law degree! Not only that, the reader comes away with a good feel for why it is important to know what these cases are about, and how they might relate to you personally. He frequently asks the reader, "How does this decision affect you?" and "How would you decide this case?" He explains "The bottom line," and suggests additional "Things to think about." Educators or parents could easily use those sections to turn any chapter into a classroom activity or to start a conversation with their teenagers around the dinner table. That is why Judge Jacobs "gets it": This book is a great tool to provoke dialogue between teens and adults and help bridge the huge "digital divide" between us. As a professional in the cyberbullying field, a big "thank you" to the Judge for this much-needed-tool.

Judge Jacobs explores the most contemporary issues of our everyday lives; Texting, Sexting, the Internet and Social Networking sites. Compelling yet easy to read, the Judge breaks it down for parents, teens and educators to provide a format for communications. "Think Before You Click". Judge Jacobs examines actual court cases thanks to the brave kids and families who allowed their stories to be told. This is an important subject. Read the book and save a life.

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