

A Quantitative Content Analysis of Topics, Victims and Coping Strategies in Online Cybercrime News

L. De Kimpe; 1; M. Walrave; 1; K. Ponnet; 2;

1. UAntwerpen, Antwerp, Belgium.

2. Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium.

Abstract Body: Several scholars claim that cybercrime news mainly focuses on celebrity and corporate victims. According to the availability heuristic, this might give ordinary internet users the impression that they are less at risk. However, these claims about cybercrime news are not based on empirical findings. Moreover, little is known about which protective coping strategies are discussed in cybercrime news. Therefore, this study analyzed 733 cybercrime news articles using a quantitative content analysis. The analyses confirm that individual victims are rarely discussed compared to celebrities and corporate victims. In addition, more than three out of four articles do not contain any coping strategies that might help the reader. News media should thus be encouraged to share more testimonies by ordinary victims and to provide more information about coping with cybercrime threats/victimization. This way, users will be able to make a better assessment of their own vulnerability and the coping mechanisms available.