Research Question
How is the social problem of cyberbullying constructed by different claims-makers?

What is Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying is “the voluntary and repetitious abuse that is inflicted through computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices” (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Research Methods
By collecting credible sources such as newspaper articles, scholarly research articles, papers, and anti-bullying websites, our group was able to analyze different claims made by these sources. “A claim is any verbal, visual, or behavioral statement that seeks to persuade audience members to define a condition as a social problem.” (Loseke, 2003, p. 26)

Statistics (NCPC, 2010)
- 43 percent of teens have been victims of cyberbullying in the last year (p. 1).
- Almost 80 percent of teens said that they either did not have parental rules about Internet use or found ways around the rules (p. 1).
- Only 11 percent of teens talked to parents about incidents of cyberbullying (p. 2).

Access to Anonymity
- Diagnostic Claim: “Another damaging component of cyberbullying is the cyberbully’s ability to remain anonymous” (Sourander et al., 2010).
- Prognostic Claim: “Over 70 percent of teens said that being able to block cyberbullies was the most effective method of prevention” (National Crime Prevention Council, 2010).
- Motivational Claim: Your child could be the one being bullied and think about ways to hurt others or themselves.
- Motivational Claim: Your child could be hounded every day by an attacker with no face.

Lack of Parental Control
- Diagnostic Claim: “If parents are going to provide such access to their children, they must be held accountable for their online activities, including cyber-bullying” (Huffington Post, 2013).
- Prognostic Claim: Parents should monitor what their kids are doing online to prevent bullying.
- Motivational Claim: Your child, or sibling, could be someone else online and bully others without your knowing.

Conclusion
The ability to be anonymous online allows users to potentially harm others without the risk of getting caught. In order to prevent this social problem from continuing to happen in the future, we must address the lack of parental control on social media and other digital communication platforms, as well as monitor or eradicate the ability to say things to others anonymously.

Analysis
From the National Crime Prevention Council to Sourander, data around the causes and solutions of cyber-bullying support our claims that (1) parental obliviousness and (2) access to anonymity online are major causes of cyberbullying as a social problem.

References