Beware Cybercrime, ICT expert warns

That vile message you post on a social media platform in the heat of the moment could lead to someone's death, and land you in jail.

We live in a world where the technology has greatly advanced over the years and we currently even have machine to machine (M2M) communication, a technology through which one machine communicates with another and almost everyone has access to the devices.

There are several forms of cybercrimes, including hacking, identity theft, scamming, spamming, stalking, software piracy and cyber bullying, according to Dr. Makau Mutua, a senior information and communication technology lecturer at Meru University of Science and Technology.

Dr. Mutua, who was delivering a public lecture at SEKU, identified cyberbullying as the most rampant of crimes committed in the virtual world. It is a form of bullying or harassment carried out in the internet.

Cyberbullying has serious effects on the victims, some as extreme as suicide.

We've had people committing suicide after being bullied and trolled on several of the social media pages. Others have suffered from depression and anxiety, fear and psychological and emotional distress," said Dr. Mutua.

Dr. Mutua further advises IT users to be careful with what they send to the web space, "as the information that we put out there may not be safe. A malicious person is likely to trace it back to us and use it for malicious intentions. As much as the technology is of help to us, it also has its disadvantages and we should be very cautious.

According to the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, 2018, a person convicted of cybercrime, which includes cyber bullying , is liable to a jail term of 10 years or a fine of KSh 20 million.

Dr. Mutua concluded with a word of advice to IT users: We should also care about others and ensure what we post would not affect them negatively. We should also report any appropriate posts made on social media so that they are pulled down immediately.