

# 'Shouldn't we be above public shaming?'

## The cyclist could have got into trouble with the law, said lawyers.

Mr Steven Lam was one of three lawyers who said that by pedalling across the road without warning, the cyclist could have breached road traffic rules for reckless driving.

But he conceded that such cases are rare because it is "difficult to locate bicycles without licence plates".

Dr Michael Netzley, a media researcher and the academic director of executive development at Singapore Management University, said that both Madam Tan and the cyclist had over-reacted.

"It was complete over-reaction to upload the video online, but I have to say that the cyclist's actions were silly and excessive," he said.

Other motorists The New Paper spoke to agreed that both parties need to calm down.

"The cyclist was definitely in the wrong. But if everyone were to post videos of inconsiderate cyclists, there would be so many of them online," cabbie Tony Teo, 49, said.

Housewife Lilian Tan, 44, who has been driving for a decade, agreed that such behaviour are "a dime and dozen" and that "Singaporeans need to be more forgiving".

In situations where offences or criminal acts are involved, it is best to let the authorities handle them, Dr Netzley said.

International communications and social media expert Lars Voedisch



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agreed.

He said: "That's what they are there for. I would always advise people to take the high road."

Often, netizens post these videos online to vent their "anger and frustration", he said.

He added: "I'm sure we all have our mistakes and bad-behaviour days, but do we want to end up online in an unfavourable light?"

"The idea of public shaming is like in mediaeval times. Shouldn't we stand way above that?"

## 'REVENGE'

Dr Netzley warned that such behaviour could "start to have more in common with revenge than they do with justice".

A possible consequence, he maintained, could be the presence of laws to "limit our ability to speak out about such issues".

"Anytime we push the boundaries of civil behaviour, such as what we are seeing in this case, we may unintentionally be inviting further restrictions," he said.

Both experts felt that Madam Tan and her friends should have practised better self-regulation.

Said Mr Voedisch: "Before posting anything, better step back from the keyboard and ideally sleep over it."

"Too many times, people post things out of emotional distress and wouldn't use the same tone or words if they just take a deep breath."



LEAVING THE SCENE: The cyclist moving away after the incident.