

Documenting Online Abuse

1,800,000

people in the UK suffered threatening behaviour online in the past year.



Our [Ripple Effect Report](#) showed that this is worse for women and significantly worse for women of colour, and that this has sadly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. We've created this resource to make it easier to document and report online abuse, to support you in [using this form](#). Action doesn't have to be taken alone - you can send this to a friend to help you document abuse too. According to [Take Back the Tech!](#), many people do nothing because they think they are overreacting.

We want to be absolutely clear: you are not overreacting.

If you choose not to report it, we highly recommend you still document the abuse, as you may change your mind.

Documenting online abuse provides a record of what happened, helps to consolidate information about perpetrators and provides you with evidence for the impacts of online abuse. It will help you to see patterns and help you to understand if the abuse is escalating.

Data from YouGov survey in Spring 2021 of 4,000 people.

Our Key Terms

Digital Citizenship

Individuals engaging positively, critically and competently in all digital spaces.

All individuals have a right to safely and freely engage in online spaces without discrimination.

Digital citizenship is respecting and championing the human rights of all individuals online, and encompasses three key elements: individual, social and institutional responsibilities.



Online Abuse

An umbrella term that encompasses the various forms and tactics of abuse, intimidation and violence in online spaces.

It can include - but is not limited to - offensive or discriminatory comments and insults, threats of physical or sexual violence, stalking, harassment, bullying, impersonation, defamation, denial of service attacks, online impersonation, deadnaming, or violations of privacy such as “doxing” (posting private details online such as a person’s address or phone number with the aim to cause alarm or distress) or sharing intimate and private images of a person online without their consent.

1. Give it an ID



To keep track of the evidence and create a labelled folder, use an ID containing

- the platform
- the user
- the date
- a number.

For example: 'TWT-03/08/18-TwitterUser-1'.

This will be really useful to keep a timely track and evidence-based report for the future.

2. How Does It Make You Feel?

An important question, which you might find yourself answering a lot during the process of reporting, is: 'how did that make you feel?'. Tracking your emotions, feelings and discomforts in this space can help you tackle two things at the same time:

- Keeping track in order to facilitate the process when reporting;
- Understanding your own emotions and reactions in order to practice self-care.

We understand that at that moment you might find yourself struggling to express your feelings. For this reason, we suggest you assign a number or scale to them instead - for example, 1 feeling extremely upset and 10 not being particularly bothered by the comments.



3. Date and Time of the Abuse



The more details you can give for the report, the 'easier' you will make the process for yourself. For this reason, dates and times are extremely important to be noted. We suggest they are as precise as possible. Also, remember to include in the screenshot this same date and hour when possible, to create better coherence and correlation in your report.

4. Social Media Handles

Social media handles are important for a number of reasons:

1. It helps you identify repetitive harassers, trolls, etc
2. It can help track the users based on their IP
3. You can, in the future, silence or block these users and practice self-care.



5. Do You Know Who It Is?



Some people on social media change their names or provide nicknames instead. There are lots of reasons why people do this. If you do know who someone is, please do keep track of this.

6. Screenshot Link

We suggest you have a particular folder on your computer or device for this material. You can for instance, add a folder under the name of your Party/Organisation/etc.+ the particular issue (harassment, doxxing, etc.)+ the nature of the material(evidence)+ the characteristics of the material (visual, audio, screenshots, etc.).

For example you might find it useful to name it 'WomenPowerParty/Harassment/Evidence/Audio).

In your table you can insert the link of the folder so you know exactly where it is and it is easily accessible for you at any time.



7. Social Media Platform

Although you will have the ID, the screenshot, etc. already, having this as an extra column might be helpful to condense all the information for each piece of evidence.

8. When did you report it?

Make a note of when it was reported to see if and when action was taken by the platform.



9. Link to the abusive post

Having the link is also a key element for this. We know that some people delete their comments online, but they can be retrieved in the future if needed. For this reason, the more details you can provide, the better.



Our Final Top Tips

Do not delete emails. If possible, take a screenshot of their IP address - here's how:

Gmail Full Email Header: Open your Gmail account, then open the email you want to trace. Select the drop-down menu in the top-right corner, then Show original from the menu.

Outlook Full Email Header: Double-click the email you want to trace, then head to File > Properties. The information appears in the internet headers.

Apple Mail Full Email Header: Open the email you wish to trace, then head to View > Message > Raw Source.

Take screenshots of all incidents of abuse before reporting, as the social media company might remove the abuse if it breaks their community guidelines.

Found this helpful?

Great! We would love it if you'd consider donating to Glitch. Your support can help us equip more people with the tools and skills they need to survive and flourish in online spaces.

Feedback

Did you find our resource helpful? Is there anything we can do to make it even better for you? We'd love some feedback via email



Thank you!
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