



GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders

# Digital Safety Guide

At GLAD Law we know that staying safe online is important, especially for queer and trans folks. Below you will find information on online safety, harassment and doxing as well as resources for yourself and your organization.

## What steps can I take to protect myself online?

The first thing you should consider is assessing your online presence and making sure you are taking steps to protect your personal and identifying information wherever you can. Everyone is at a different level of risk based on their situation, activities, and background.

Some steps you can take to minimize risk include:

- Protect your accounts
- Use strong passwords
- Utilize a password manager
- Create a separate email account specifically for password recovery
- Utilizing two-factor identification for all online accounts
- Understand the privacy and harassment policies of the sites you use. See [Right to Be's Guide to Privacy and reporting on social media platforms](#).
- Limit what you share:
- Turn off location services ([Google and Android](#), [iOS](#), [apps](#))
- Turn off all the things that allow people to drop files on your devices, like airdrop (apple) and bluetooth.
- Remove personal identifying information, such as your address, from digital spaces (social media, LinkedIn, etc.)

**You can search for what is available about you online (self-doxing) and take steps to remove what you can.**

**Here are a few examples of sites that you can use:**

- [Spokeo](http://www.spokeo.com/opt_out/new) (to remove listing: [http://www.spokeo.com/opt\\_out/new](http://www.spokeo.com/opt_out/new) )
- [Anywho.com](http://www.anywho.com/help/privacy) (to remove listing: <http://www.anywho.com/help/privacy> )
- [Intelius](https://www.intelius.com/optout.php) (to remove listing: <https://www.intelius.com/optout.php> )
- [Whitepages](https://support.whitepages.com/hc/en-us/articles/203263794-Remove-my-listing-from-Whitepages-) (to remove listing: <https://support.whitepages.com/hc/en-us/articles/203263794-Remove-my-listing-from-Whitepages-> )

# Doxing (also spelled doxxing):

## What is Doxing?

Doxing is the act of revealing someone's personal information online. The term is derived from "dropping dox" or documents about an adversary. Doxing is a form of online harassment that means publicly exposing someone's real name, address, job, or other identifying data. Doxing happens without a victim's consent, with the aim of humiliating or bullying a victim.

### Read more here:

[Avast](#)

[US News](#)

[Cyberbullying Research Center](#)

If you have been doxed and begin to receive direct threats of violence or experience violence, you are able to request a [Harassment Prevention Order](#) (also called Civil Protection Orders or Temporary Restraining Orders).

## Is Doxing Illegal?

There are no specific anti-doxing laws in most jurisdictions. Instead, the legality of doxing is determined on a case-by-case basis. While compiling or publishing publicly available information is rarely illegal, there are other crimes that doxers can be charged for. Those crimes include stalking, harassment, identity theft, or incitement to violence.

In the US, the Interstate Communications Statute and the Interstate Stalking Statute may be applied to doxing, depending on the details of a particular case. Doxing could also violate the terms of service for certain websites. For instance, Twitter prohibits posting the private information of another person without their permission.

Read more here: [Avast](#)

### More information on how to do so in:

[Connecticut](#)

[Maine](#)

[Massachusetts](#)

[New Hampshire](#)

[Rhode Island](#)

[Vermont](#)

It may also be appropriate to file a complaint to the Attorney General's Civil Rights Division in your state.

[Connecticut](#)

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## I am being doxed. What can I do?

There are several free, DIY methods to help eliminate or lessen the effects of doxing as well as the amount of personal information that is online.

You can find more information using the resources below.

[What to do if you've been doxxed](#) from Crash Override

[Securing your accounts](#) from Crash Override

Visit Harvard's [Cyberlaw Clinic](#) website to see if you qualify for their pro bono support.

[Antidoxing guide](#) from EqualityLab.

Contact the [Cyber Civil Rights Initiative](#) for support.

Right to Be's guide [How to Use Social Media Safely](#) includes information on how to report online harassment on all major social media platforms.

Make a report to the US Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division [here](#) or [here](#).

Another option is paying to have your personal information scrubbed from the internet by a service. Below are two such paid services that can help you scrub personal information online. These are not intended as endorsements, and there are other services available as well. We encourage you to research to find the service that best meets your need and your budget

[Deleteme](#)  
[Brightlines](#)

## How can I protect my organization from online harassment?

Right to Be has a digital how to guide you can find [here](#):  
And another [here](#).

## How can I help stop doxing all together?

Support the [Anti-Defamation League](#)'s efforts to disrupt online hate.  
Volunteer with the [Cyber Civil Rights Initiative](#).

## Dealing with doxing is taking a toll on my mental health. What can I do?

The Trevor Project has a [24/7 national hotline](#) for LGTBQ+ people in crisis.  
For folks living in New England, Fenway Health has a [free mental health program](#) for LGTBQ+ people who have or are experiencing violence and harassment.  
Tips for [dealing with the effects of doxing](#) from GoodTherapy can be found here.

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Acknowledgements: All of the information in this guide came from the linked sources above. The majority of this information came from Right to Be and can be accessed on their Digital Safety How-To Guide.