

Doxing

Community Guidelines

This session involves an overview of a serious and often upsetting and controversial topic. Our goal today is for everyone to...

- *Be respectful of others*
- *Be inclusive*
- *Seek to understand other perspectives*
- *Listen*
- *Be mindful of your own reactions and take a pause as needed*

In This Module

- What is doxing?
- How does doxing happen and what are the risks posed by a doxing attack?
- What can you do if you have been doxed?
- What actions can you take to better avoid being doxed?

Doxing

Doxing is a digital attack and a serious form of online harassment where someone publicizes another person's personal and private information online in order to scare, intimidate, and harass them

Discussion

Have you ever heard about a doxing attack? What happened and who was affected?

What Is Doxing?

A doxing attack obtains and publicizes information from different private documents (hence the name doxing). This information can include:

- Phone numbers
- Addresses
- Social security numbers
- User names
- Financial information
- Private photographs

What Are the Effects?

Doxing can have serious effects and repercussions for victims. It can:

- Lead to an increase in harassment, cyberbullying, trolling, and cyber stalking
- Be a way to embarrass, intimidate, or silence someone
- Lead to threats of violence
- Cause serious mental health repercussions for victims

What Are the Effects?

Doxing can have serious effects and repercussions for victims. It can lead to real-world consequences:

- Identity theft
- Problems with an employer
- Public shaming
- Having the police called to someone's home, which is known as swatting

How and Why Does Doxing Happen?

Doxing is an act of aggression and is frequently done to seek revenge. This can be due to a personal dispute or because someone gets angry at something another person posted online.

Social media disputes are often triggers for doxing attacks.

How and Why Does Doxing Happen?

Doxing is usually done by anonymous attackers and it can be difficult to track down who did it.

If this happens to you, remember, doxing is never your fault!

Who Is at Risk of Being Doxed?

Doxing increasingly affects anyone and everyone. You don't have to be a celebrity or a famous person to end up being the victim of a doxing attack.

Women, LGBTQIA individuals, and people of color online are also often doxed for misogynistic, homophobic, or racist motivations.

Doxing is often used as a weapon to intimidate and silence someone.

Discussion

Have you or someone you know ever experienced cyberbullying or harassment before? What happened and how did you feel?

What to Do if You've Been Doxed

Immediate steps to take:

- Report the incident to sites where your information has been made public and/or where you are experiencing bullying and harassment
- Take screenshots and document what has happened
- Reach out to a trusted friend or contact for support during this scary situation

What to Do if You've Been Doxed

Consider going offline for a while.

While this can feel like admitting defeat to your harassers, it can also be positive for your mental health, can encourage harassers to lose interest in you, and can give you time to strengthen your digital security.

Whether you decide to remain online, go public with what happened, or go offline, your decision is valid.

What to Do if You've Been Doxed

Manage your digital security:

- Change passwords
- Set-up multi-factor authentication
- Check your social media account settings for options to secure your account
- Clear out cookies and delete browser history to disrupt trackers
- Consider using a VPN for an added security layer

What to Do if You've Been Doxed

Watch for scams and hacks:

- Monitor your accounts for signs of identity theft including odd activity on bank statements, newly created accounts, et cetera
- Monitor your accounts for signs of hacks, including odd changes to your social media account, posts you didn't make, et cetera
- Be alert of phishing schemes and scams

How to Avoid Being Doxed

Practice data minimization:

- Limit the amount of personal information you make available online
- Make sure your social media accounts are secure
- Use of different account security settings for things like targeted ads, who can see your posts, and profile information

How to Avoid Being Doxed

- Audit your social media post history
- Remove posts that reveal too much personal information
- Be cautious about what you upload
- Search for yourself and see what information is out there

How to Avoid Being Doxed

- Avoid linking accounts
- Consider pseudonyms or an alternative email for social sites
- Consider having different usernames across platforms
- Avoid logging into sites with your Facebook or Google account
- Create separate accounts to avoid linking all your accounts together

How to Avoid Being Doxed

- Practice password hygiene by:
 - Using password managers
 - Opting in to multi-factor authentication
 - Having strong passwords that are long and unique
- Consider using a VPN to conceal your IP address

Discussion

What other digital security best practices could help you avoid being doxed?

Doxing and Online Participation

Doxing is often aimed at silencing certain communities and voices online.

Weigh the risks. Don't let threats like this silence you, but be smart with your online behavior and with what information you chose to share and make available.

Takeaways

- Doxing is a serious and harmful form of online harassment and can be used to attack, frighten, intimidate, and silence people online
- Remember, falling prey to a doxing attack is not your fault. Doxing increasingly happens and it can affect anyone and everyone online, though certain groups are more at-risk for being doxed

Takeaways

- There are proactive steps you can take to avoid being doxed and to protect your privacy online, including data minimization, password hygiene, and using social media account settings to stay secure
- If you are doxed, there are steps you can take to deal with the attack. Do not hesitate to reach out for help and support if this happens to you!

Resources

“Doxxing: Tips To Protect Yourself Online & How to Minimize Harm” from Electronic Frontier Foundation ([link](#))

“What to Do if You’re Being Doxed” from *Wired* ([link](#))

Questions?

NYC Digital Safety

Privacy & Security