THE LGBTQ+ GUIDE TO ONLINE SAFETY

https://www.vpnmentor.com/blog/lgbtq-guide-online-safety/

This guide was developed by VPN mentor. Whether you are part of the LGBTQ+ community or are an ally, we hope you find this guide helpful.

Worldwide survey conducted showed the challenges LGBTQ+ community faced online.

Here are some of our **key findings**:
- **73%** of all respondents in all categories of gender identity and sexual orientation have been **personally attacked or harassed online**.
- **50%** of all respondents in all categories of gender identity and sexual orientation have suffered **sexual harassment online**.
- When it comes to sexual orientation, **asexual people feel the least safe online**, and gay men the safest.
- When it comes to gender identity, **transgender women feel the least safe online**, and cisgender men the safest.
- **Transgender women are the most likely to be outed against their will** online, while cisgender men are least likely.

[+]*For complete results, see the* *appendix.*

The Dark Side of the Web

However, **the internet can also be an intimidating and dangerous place**. Just read the comments on any viral social media post and you'll see a slew of insults and misdirected aggression.

Considering the fact that a large portion of these **hateful comments include homophobic and sometimes even biphobic slurs**, the internet is especially threatening to the LGBTQ+ community.

Given this ugly reality, we believe **it is essential that all LGBTQ+ people know how to defend and protect themselves online**. Therefore, we created this guide to minimize your personal exposure to online bullying and harassment.
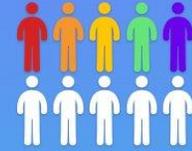
ALMOST ALL LGBTQ+ PEOPLE FACE ONLINE HARASSMENT

73% of LGBTQ+ people experience **ABUSE ONLINE**

MORE THAN **50%** have been **SEXUALLY HARASSED** on the internet

"I tend to not bring up my orientation or gender identity online. It isn't worth painting a target on myself."

Cole (queer/trans)

Combating Harassment & Prejudice at Work

If you experience harassment or discrimination at work, it can be emotionally overwhelming. Especially with everything online nowadays, you might experience online harassment from your coworkers. However, that doesn't mean you can't get recourse. Here's where to start:

- Document every relevant interaction and collect evidence to take to HR or your lawyer.
- Use your phone to record potentially problematic conversations, so you have first-hand proof of what happened.
- If any evidence exists within your work email correspondence, be sure to copy and paste or screenshot the content elsewhere – because your employer can delete or edit messages that exist within the company's internal system. This applies to Slack or other online chat groups as well.
- Find someone you trust to help gather documentation. Having a witness will increase the credibility of your claims.
- If HR doesn't take your accusations seriously, find a third-party you can contact to push the case further.
- Know your rights. Being able to refer to specific legislation and guidelines regarding discrimination will help you go to battle with confidence.

We Hope This Helped

- In a perfect world, LGBTQ+ people wouldn't face a heightened risk online and would be free to express themselves however they wish. Sadly, **social norms aren't changing fast enough**, and we still have a long way to go before that reality is realized. Unfortunately, this means that LGBTQ+ people have to be extra careful, especially online.
- We hope our guide helps you take control of interactions online and makes you feel safer, while at the same time **empowering you to fully enjoy the digital aspects of your personal, intimate, and professional life**.