DOXXING SELF-DEFENSE

dox(x)ing = publishing someone's personal information online, such as phone number, address or photos. This information is made public without consent.

Which steps can you take?
→ page 2-3

How to remove your data?
→ page 4-5

How to file a complaint?
→ page 6-7

How to defend yourself?
→ page 8-9

STEP BY STEP

COLLECT EVIDENCE

Save as much evidence as you can: take screenshots and save text messages, voicemails, emails. You can create a folder where you collect all this evidence. Even if you do not want to involve the police, it is important to have traces.

- When you take screenshots, make sure that the date, time and phone numbers are visible.
- Emails could possibly lead to the identity of the sender because they reveal an IP address, so don't throw them away.
- You can record a telephone conversation, but only in some cases can it serve as evidence.

REMOVE YOUR DATA

There are several ways to remove the photos or other data that was published online without your consent. It is important to respond quickly because the internet moves fast. The longer you wait, the harder it is to counter the spread. Read more on → page 4-5.

FILING A COMPLAINT

If you're ready for this, you can file a complaint with the police. On → page 6-7 you'll read more about what to expect and how to prepare yourself for this.

PREVENTION

By protecting your data and googling yourself regularly, you can partly prevent future harm. Hiding your personal details on the web is the most effective strategy against doxxing. Read more on → page 8-9.

TALK WITH SOMEONE

Talk about it with friends, family or a counsellor. You don't have to bear this alone. Others can offer you support or help you find a solution.

- UTSOPI is the union of sex workers in Belgium, you can contact our team / www.utsopi.be
- Violett offers information, advice and support specifically for sex workers in Flanders / www.violett.be
- Espace P offers information, advice and support specifically for sex workers in Brussels and Wallonia / www.espacep.be
- Alias offers information, advice and support specifically for MSM and trans* sex workers in Brussels / www.alias.brussels
- Boysproject offers information, advice and support specifically for MSM and trans* sex workers in Antwerp / www.boysproject.be

REMOVING DATA

! Before removing your data online, try to gather as much evidence as possible !

Here we'll give tips on how you can remove your data, but you don't have to do this alone: the organisations mentioned on page 3 and IEWM can assist you.

IEWM is a trusted flagger for Google, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. This means that their requests are treated with priority. If you want this, they can also contact the Federal Police to remove images.

IEWM (Institute for the Equality of Women and Men)
supports victims of digital sexual violence by informing them about their rights and options for action, giving (legal) advice and offering support in removing images.

tel: 0800/12 800
mail: gelijkheid.manvrouw@igvm.belgie.be
www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be

StopNCII.org has created a tool which turns your images/videos into a unique code that can be shared with various social media platforms. When someone tries to distribute your images/videos, they are recognised through the code and stopped. You can find more info: www.stopncii.org

GOOGLE

To be removed from Google searches you can use Google's "Personal data removal request form".

Request the removal of content on various Google services with "Report Content On Google".

FACEBOOK

Request removal of photo or video because it violates your rights with Facebook's "Report a Violation of your Privacy on Facebook".

INSTAGRAM

You can adjust your public visibility in the privacy settings.

In the How to Report Things section, you'll find information about what to do "If someone shares an intimate photo of you on Instagram".

X (TWITTER)

Report to the Help Centre: "Staying safe on X and Sensitive Content".

SNAPCHAT

In the Help Center, click on "Report a Safety Concern".

CARD STOP

Has your financial information been stolen? Don't forget to call Card Stop: 078 170 170

FILING A COMPLAINT

Here we'll go over the steps of filing a complaint. This process can be scary, but remember that you are not to blame and you deserve support. Do not hesitate to contact the organisations mentioned on page 3 or IEWM (www.igvm-iefh.belgium.be) if you could use some help.

During your meeting with the police, you may always be assisted by a lawyer or a person you trust. You also have the right to an interpreter if needed.

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE?

The most important thing is to gather evidence and to bring this to your meeting. If relevant, you can focus on these points:

- An offender acting for profit risks harsher penalties. If you suspect this applies to your offender, mention this to the police.
- An offender who chose to commit the acts because of your gender may also face harsher punishment. This may be evident from comments posted by the offender, if they have done this before or by their general attitude. Try to provide evidence for this.
- If the offender shared information of someone in a vulnerable situation due to their age, pregnancy, illness or a physical or mental disability, or if the offender is a partner, relative, or is in a relationship of authority with you, harsher penalties apply.

We recommend making an appointment at your local police station and to briefly explain what your case is about on the phone. This way you're sure they'll make time and you might be able to speak with a police officer who has experience in this topic. Bring all the evidence you have!

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You can file a complaint against the initial creator/distributor of the images, as well as against those who further shared the images. Even if you don't know who posted the photos online or don't have their full identity, this is possible. It is also possible to take legal action against a platform that does not cooperate in removing images.

↓

The police will transfer your complaint to the Public Prosecutor's Office that will decide whether to prosecute the offender or not.

↓

As a victim, you have the right to stay informed about the next steps in the procedure, to be heard as a witness and/or to ask for compensation. This doesn't happen automatically, the organisations mentioned on page 3 can support you with this. You cannot decide whether or not the offender should appear in court or what penalty will be asked for.

↓

When the Prosecutor opens an investigation, the offender will be informed of this. The offender can possibly be informed of your identity. If this is an obstacle for you, do contact IEWM to look into the options together.

Resource: Het Instituut, handleiding wraakporno: Klacht neerleggen bij de politie
https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/159_-_handleiding_wraakporno.pdf

SELF-DEFENSE

SEPARATE MAIL + PHONE

By using a separate mail address and phone for your work, you can prevent spillage of private information. Avoid logging into accounts for private use on your work device and vice versa. Otherwise, the two can become linked by platforms.

DELETING METADATA

Photo metadata is the embedded information within a digital image file that provides details about the photo (camera, date, time, location). Before sharing photos online, you can remove the metadata so that it becomes more difficult to trace the image back to you. You could use for example: www.metadata.systemli.org

Cypher Sex empowers LGBTQ* people, women, and sex workers in their use of online services and digital tools through workshops, guides, and consultancy.

Website: www.inventati.org/cyphersex/
Guide: www.projet-evasions.org

The Digital Resilience Advisor is a sex worker based in the Netherlands who gives advice to sex workers and sex work organisations on digital issues.

Website: www.swdigitaal.nl

VPN

A VPN protects its users by encrypting their data and masking their IP addresses. It hides your browsing activity, identity, and location, allowing for greater privacy and autonomy. You can find a list of options here: www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-vpn-service/

PICTURES

Never re-use photos from your private life for work! Many search engines offer reverse image search functions that can identify all the places where a picture was published. A cropped picture could lead to finding the full picture. You can try out the reversed image tool here: www.tineye.com

UPDATING DEVICES

Updates of apps or devices often include adjustments in terms of security issues. So don't forget to keep your devices up to date.

PASSWORDS

A strong password consists of at least 8 characters and contains a combination of letters, numbers and symbols. Don't recycle passwords, but try to have different ones for your various profiles. You can keep your passwords in an offline password manager (like KeePassXC) so you don't have to remember them.

NOTES

A tiny guide by UTSOPI
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this guide was made possible by a grant from the flemish government.
originally written in dutch, it was translated into different languages to reach our multilingual beneficiaries

font: terminal grotesque by raphaël bastide & jérémy landes
editing & research by monica