

What is Cyberstalking?

Cyberstalking is the use of the internet to threaten, pursue, humiliate, or intimidate someone against their will. The impact of cyberstalking on a victim can be as devastating as physical stalking, and a stalker may use both tactics to harass and intimidate their target. Social media, email, and instant messenger are a few of the many available mediums that an aggressor may utilize. Cyberstalking should be taken seriously, as it can escalate to (or coincide with) physical stalking and acts of violence.



Cyberstalking can happen to anyone, quickly and without warning. However, there are a few precautions you can take to help protect yourself and maintain your privacy.

General Internet Safety

- Create a separate email account for the use of online forums or chat rooms. Create a username that does not resemble your real name or nickname, and is preferably gender and age neutral.
- Do not post any personal information in chat rooms, forums, or other public spaces online. If asked for it by a user, don't give it out.
- Exercise extreme caution if you decide to meet someone from the internet. If you decide to meet, do so in a public space, and bring a friend.
- If someone you are communicating with online is hostile, inappropriate, or makes you uncomfortable, log off or block them. If possible, report them to the site on which you encountered them and to your Internet Service Provider (ISP).

The Division of Law Enforcement & Safety provides reasonable, fair, and compassionate assistance to victims and witnesses of crime.

The Division is committed to the development, implementation, and maintenance of programs and activities that provide appropriate assistance to victims/witnesses.

Law Enforcement Victim Advocate Services Include:

- Assistance with Restraining Orders and Orders of Protection (Civil)
- Housing Assistance
- Class Assistance
- Parking Assistance
- No Contact (USC Student Conduct)
- Court Preparation/Apearances (To include the Bond Hearing)
- SOVA Assistance
- Safety Plans
- Referrals

Rave Guardian Safety App

Download our free mobile app that turns your cell phone into a personalized protection network, connecting with University Police during an emergency and giving us important information we need instantly.

les.sc.edu/RaveSafetyApp



Victim Services
Division of Law Enforcement and Safety
1415 Henderson Street
(1600 Hampton Street Annex)
Columbia, SC 29208

24 hour phone number: **803-777-4215**

Emergency: **911**

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University of South Carolina
Division of Law Enforcement and Safety

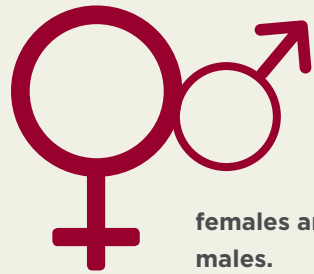
Cyberstalking and Internet Safety:
Keep yourself safe.



Know the facts

1 in 5

Students enrolled at a four year college report one or more instances of cyberstalking.



females are at higher risk than males.

18-30

Young adults between the ages of 18-30 are at the highest risk of being victimized by a cyberstalker

Often, cyberstalkers are known to their victims, but they are able to hide through the anonymity of the internet, causing additional stress to their victims through fear of the unknown.



Social Media Precautions

- When maintaining an active social media account, be mindful of the privacy settings, which may change frequently. A quick internet search can help you stay aware of changes that may affect your account. Some sites allow you to filter who sees information by grouping your friends and followers into specific categories, allowing for an additional layer of privacy. You may still want to exercise caution regarding what you post, as a cyberstalker may find a way to work around filters.
- Do not post your phone number or address on social media profiles.
- Think hard before utilizing location-based apps and check-in features. If someone tags you in a geographic location on social media, consider untagging yourself and requesting that the individual cease doing this in the future.
- Always be mindful of what you are posting. Even if you have blocked someone, it may still be possible for them to view your profile through a mutual acquaintance.

Is This Happening To You?

Cyberstalking is unique in that the perpetrator is often able to shield themselves completely through the veil of technology. A victim has no way of knowing if the aggressor is nearby, or thousands of miles away. Regardless of the distance, the damage can be as harmful as physical stalking.

A cyberstalker may:

- Attempt to contact you excessively by phone, email, social media, or instant messenger
- Deliver unwanted gifts to your home or work
- Contact, harass, or threaten your friends and family
- Use your email address to sign you up for excessive unwanted newsletters, listservs, and porn sites
- Broadcast your personal information to wide audiences online such as on internet forums
- Post humiliating or untrue information about you online that could be damaging to your reputation
- Create one or multiple false social media account(s) in your name with your pictures and name. They may post personal information about you or may fabricate information.

If it happens to you

If you are experiencing cyberstalking, there are steps you can take.

Write it down. Keep copies of emails, screen shot messages and chats, and document all unwanted contacts or attempts to contact you by the cyberstalker. Don't rely on storing emails on your computer or in an email account; a tech savvy cyberstalker can hack either and wipe them clean, erasing evidence. Print off as much as you can and keep it somewhere safe.

Reach out. Let your friends and family know that someone is stalking you through the internet and on social media. Tell them the cyberstalker's online aliases and give them descriptions of their profiles so that they can be on the lookout; it is not uncommon for cyberstalkers to target those close to their victims.

Get help. Call local police if you live off campus or call 803.777.4215 if you live on campus.

Speak Up!



If you or someone you know is being cyberstalked, acknowledge that the trauma of being harassed online can be as severe as being stalked in person, and the two may coincide with each other. Call the 24-hour number at 803.777.4215, or email victimhelp@mailbox.sc.edu.

Individual and group counseling services are available to all USC students. Crisis intervention and walk-in appointments are available, too. Call 803.777.5223 or visit the Close/Hipp Building, fifth floor, located at 1705 College Street. If you ever feel that you are in danger or at risk of harming yourself or someone else, call 911 immediately.