

LIVE HACKS

IT SEEMS LIKE THE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND THE IMAGE WE PUT OUT THERE. BUT WE CAN LEARN FROM OUR FAVOURITE CELEBS THAT THIS ISN'T, AND SHOULDN'T BE, EVERYTHING

The rise of social media has given everyone a platform to share their whole lives with millions of others around the world. People are now, more than ever before, able to live vicariously through the lives of others. Before this, our closest contact with our favourite celebrities went as far as a poster of them on our bedroom walls and celeb gossip magazines such as *Heat*. But now we can stay updated on everything that's going on in their lives in that moment, from what Kim Kardashian is having for breakfast to Ariana Grande's #ootd – all thanks to apps like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat.

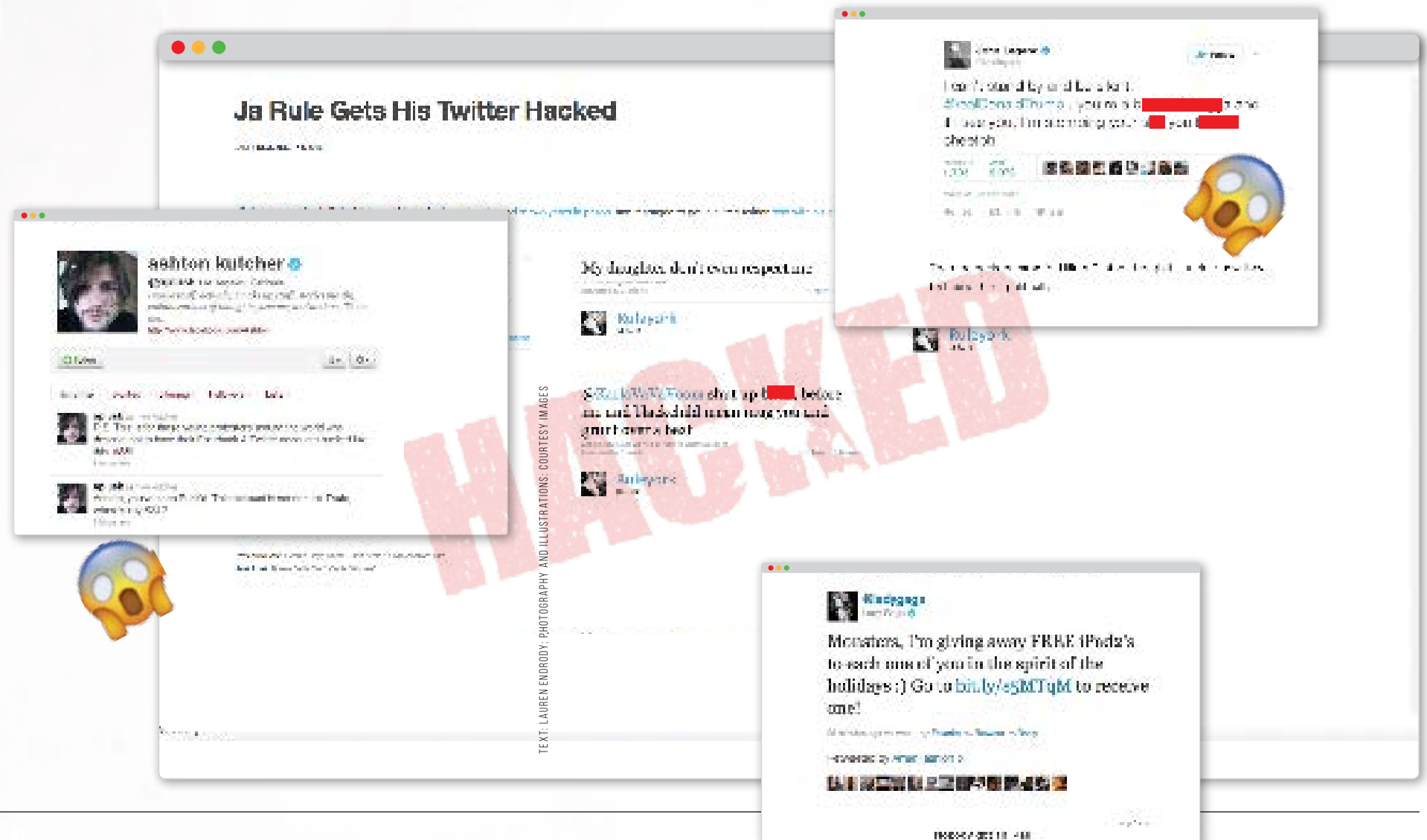
However, these same social media sites have created a gateway for cyber criminals to target prominent people and exploit their massive followings. This is called account takeover (ATO): when hackers use phishing and scams to get the passwords of their victims and take control of their online and social media accounts for any number of reasons – such as to steal money, to cause chaos or even just to vent.

Back in 2010, for example, one hacker gained control of Ja Rule's Twitter account to go on a rant about the rapper's failing career, actually making witty comments like, 'How a Will Smith 9-year-old doing more sales than me. I'm Ja Rule n***a' and 'I changed my email. I changed my password. Too bad I can't change my career status.' In 2011, Lady Gaga offered to give all her fans on Twitter an iPad. There was a link for them to click on and collect these cool gifts, but obviously nobody received one. Most recently, in 2017, John Legend's Twitter account was taken over by a hacker with some unsubtle political opinions. Other than a vulgar comment about Hillary Clinton, he called Donald Trump a Cheeto. Shortly afterwards, the real

John Legend posted this comeback: 'I wouldn't call him a Cheeto because I enjoy Cheetos.' Sometimes, the hackers even seem to have less harmful and more helpful agendas, like the time Ashton Kutcher's hacker Tweeted 'Ashton, you've been Punk'd. This account is not secure' and 'This is for those young protesters around the world who deserve not to have their Facebook and Twitter accounts hacked like this. #SSL.'

Fame gives celebs a certain level of influence, and social media offers a way of immediately and directly exercising or imposing that influence on their millions of followers. Not only are hackers aware of this, but so are celebs. Today it's all about sharing as much of yourself as possible with the world without revealing too much, and it's difficult to find that balance between authenticity and

discretion. This is why some of the most prominent stars have PR teams and assistants who help them manage their social media accounts. Because they know what a big responsibility it is, deciding what to put out there for the world to see and what not to. According to former BuzzFeed CMO Frank Cooper III, 'No matter how organic it looks and feels, it's no longer simply a person who happens to be famous generating content on a daily basis that they feel is interesting. That may make up one part of it, but underneath it all, there's definitely the notion that this is a way to market their products. This is a way to build their "brand", a way to shore up their fan base.' As actress Emily Ratajkowski says, 'There is a separation between your private life and social media. And that's true for everyone. You don't post your whole life. You're editing, and you're curating the image you're putting out there.'



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