

Sharing Personal Information Online

Have you ever been hacked, stalked, or scammed online? How was the experience? Today, I will explain the dangers of sharing personal information online.

The dangers of exposing personal information online

Social media is a great opportunity for people to stay in touch with their loved ones, exchange ideas, and even market businesses. It is a platform that has made it easier to maneuver fast and reap great benefits at the comfort of our homes or offices. However, there are various circumstances whereby we are required to permit surveillance or share personal information in return for something of perceived value. While sharing personal information gives us access to useful information or services, facilitates social and commercial encounters, and saves money, exposing this information can make us victims of identity theft, stalking, harassment, and hacking.

Cybercriminals use personal information shared on social media for identity theft

The most basic way of achieving this is by stealing photos. Therefore, scammers identify a victim, probably a person who shares photos often. They analyze the context of this person and their relationships to get greater access to their personal information such as location, school, workplace, and spouse. They then use these photos to create a fake social media account that looks legitimate enough to trick family members and friends.

Social Media as a source of Platform for Stalking

Sharing personal information online has made people potential victims of stalking. Social media gives remarkable access to shared information, including people's whereabouts, photos, and dating history. Some people misuse this privilege and start harassing other users. They create fake profiles and use them to contact others through unwanted and repeated phone calls and messages that may or may not be threatening. Others go further to observe, follow, and show up wherever their targets go. Unfortunately, some of these incidences end up badly with victims even being killed.

Sharing personal information online is also a recipe for harassment

Social media is a public platform that attracts people from diverse backgrounds. This includes bullies, negative-minded, and easily offended individuals. While interacting with others online, people may sometimes give their views on interesting topics such as politics, religion, sexual orientation, and gender among others. However, this may offend those who have different opinions, and they may decide to make derisive comments, name-call, or belittle the victims. These harassments may escalate to physical threats, sending unsolicited emails, or impersonation. This can be embarrassing to the victim, especially in public places such as their place of work. In return they may start believing what is being said about them and even fall into depression.

Sharing personal information online makes social media users susceptible to hacking

Private accounts are the most vulnerable to hacking because most people use rather predictable passwords. For instance, hackers may get information of the cities we live, graduation years, as well as the makes and models of the cars we own. These events, places, or objects may show up

in the photos that we share. Moreover, photos often contain details on dates and locations, which can, in turn, be used to answer security questions to retirement funds and bank accounts.

Final Thought

While we may think that we are only sharing personal information online with our families and friends, there are trolls, scammers, and hackers on social media sites. Thus, we should share information cautiously and use security and safety features to protect our data. Moreover, we should always remember that “the Internet never forgets, so be careful what you put on it.”