

HOME CYBER DEFENSE

ARE YOU SAFE FROM CYBER CRIME?

WEEKLY

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This is a weekly publication dedicated to your personal cyber security. Our newsletter is designed to help the public recognize and avoid cyber threats while they are online. If you are not a subscriber, please go to HomeCyberDefense.net to sign up.

Internet Trolls

TROLL MAKE INTERNET MAD.
TROLL LIKE ANGER.
TROLL WANT PEOPLE AS
MISERABLE AS TROLL.



In Internet slang, a **troll** is a person who sows discord on the Internet by starting arguments or upsetting people, by posting inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community (such as on social media, in a forum, chat room, or replying to a blog) with the deliberate intent of provoking readers into an emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal on-topic discussion, often for their own amusement.

Those who aren't quite familiar with this definition of "troll" or "trolling" might automatically think of the mythical creature from Scandinavian folklore. The mythological troll is known to be an ugly, dirty, angry creature that lives in dark places, like caves or underneath bridges, waiting to snatch up anything that passed by for a quick meal.

In some ways, the mythological troll is similar to the Internet troll. The Internet troll hides behind his computer screen, and actively goes out of his way to cause trouble on the Internet. Like the mythological troll, the Internet troll is angry and disruptive in every possible, often for no real reason at all. What makes trolling so easy is that anyone can do it, and it can be done totally anonymously. Trolls can hide behind their shiny computers, screen names and avatars when they go out trolling for trouble, and after they're all done, they can carry on with their real lives without facing any real consequences. Trolling makes a lot of cowardly people feel stronger.

The most common way for teenagers to fall victim to trolls is through social media, **Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Instagram, Tumblr or practically any social networking site**. Almost anyone can comment on a status update, reply to a tweet, converse in a community thread or send an anonymous question, trolling is absolutely everywhere that people can use to interact. Instagram is especially bad, because it's a very public platform that people use to post photos of themselves, inviting everyone and anyone to judge their appearances in the comment section.

The disgusting truth concerning Internet Trolls:

- Trolls are immune to criticism and logical arguments. True trolls cannot be reasoned with, regardless of how sound your logical argument is.
- Trolls do not feel remorse like you and me. They have sociopathic tendencies, and accordingly, they delight in other people having hurt feelings.
- Trolls consider themselves separate from the social order.
- Trolls do not abide by etiquette or the rules of common courtesy.

- Trolls consider themselves above social responsibility.
- Trolls gain energy by you insulting them.
- Trolls gain energy when you get angry.

Please realize that you CANNOT win with a Troll. Publicly retaliating against them just fuels their childish need for attention. There are only 3 reliable ways to deal with trolls, all of which focus on removing their audience, removing their power, and depriving them of the attention they seek.

1) **For a casual or emergent troll:** Completely ignore the person's postings. While it is difficult for most users to to let a troll have the last word, this tactic successfully takes the wind out of a casual troll's sails.

2) **For social media trolls:** Social media sites have options to hide posts from other user's posts or comments. Use these options and then forget the troll exists. (However, do remember that hardcore trolls may have more than one account, so you may have to block these accounts one at a time, but eventually they will run out of accounts and move on to an easier victim.)

3) **For chat room trolls:** Have the moderators take away the troll's ability to post online. If enough people report the toll, this will often prompt the moderators to take action. This will commonly mean that the troll is kicked from the system, or blocked by IP address. Even better is when the troll is allowed to continue posting, but unbeknownst to him: all of his postings are deleted from everyone else's view. This will lure the troll into wasting his efforts while still feeling proud of his childish antics. This moderator move is sometimes called 'muting' or 'bonzo-ing' the offender.

So bottom line, if you are being harassed by an Internet troll, ignore, block (if possible), or report them; and move on with your online life.

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