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CPJ Emergencies

Digital Security Risk Assessment Template

This two-part digital risk assessment form is designed to help journalists think about how to mitigate digital risk in both their everyday life and when covering a particular story. The following templates are designed to accompany CPJ's [Digital Safety Kit](#), which has practical steps that journalists can follow in order to help them complete the risk assessment process.

Before completing any risk assessment form, all journalists, including freelancers, should have a conversation with relevant team members/editors or even family members/friends, who should have copies of the completed form.

When completing this form, it is important to document in as much detail as possible the dangers journalists may be exposed to; to assess how to mitigate those risks; and to include a contingency plan. For additional details on questions that should be considered and information that should be included in this form, please see CPJ's [Safety Note on Basic Preparedness](#).

ASSESSING PERSONAL DIGITAL RISK

Everyone has a different digital safety risk profile based on who they are, where they live, and how they interact with technology. The following questions are designed to get you thinking about your personal digital risk and how to mitigate it.

Have you reviewed what data is available about you online? What steps have you taken to restrict or remove it?	
Have you spoken with others about your privacy and about what you are and are not comfortable sharing online?	
Using separate accounts for your work and personal life is one way to be more secure online. What steps have you taken to create separation between your work accounts and your personal ones?	
Have you turned on two-factor authentication for your accounts, including saving the backup codes, and are you using a long, different password for each account? If not, what accounts do you need to review and secure?	
Are you informed about phishing attacks and how they can be used to steal your personal data or infect your devices? What steps are you currently taking to protect against this?	
Updating your operating systems, browsers, and apps is one way to better protect your devices from malware. Have you updated your devices, browsers, and apps to the latest version?	
Are you taking steps to secure your devices? Have you activated encryption? Do you have a process for backing up and deleting content from your devices? Have you secured your devices with a pin lock?	

ASSESSING DIGITAL RISK LINKED TO A PARTICULAR STORY

Each story has different digital risks depending on the topic, who you are speaking with, and any threats you may have faced from previous work.

What digital threats could you face by investigating and publishing this story? Please detail.

Have you researched the technical capacity of the person, people, or groups you are investigating? Do they have the ability to target you digitally, for example to access your online data? If so, please detail the possible threats and the steps you have taken to mitigate the risks.

Are you likely to receive any online abuse as a result of the story? If so, please detail the steps you will take to secure your online data and accounts.

What steps have you taken to secure your accounts and the data within them? Please detail.

Are you likely to face any legal threats because of your story? Could there be a legal request to obtain your online data? If so, please detail the steps you will take to secure your information.

Are you contacting sensitive sources, people who could be under surveillance, or people who could cause you physical or digital harm? How will you better protect yourself and your communications with them?

Do you know how to carry out secure research online? Please detail what steps you will take to increase your safety.

<p>Are you going to receive sensitive information, such as documents or photos, from sources? If so, how will you ensure the information is secure and where will you store it?</p>	
<p>Does your story require you to cross borders with devices? What best practice will you follow to ensure your devices and information are as secure as possible?</p>	
<p>Are you at risk of arrest as a result of the story? Please detail how you will best protect your devices and digital content in case of detention.</p>	