

Combat against Doxxing and Cyberbullying



14 May 2021

Office of the Privacy Commissioner for
Personal Data, Hong Kong

What is Doxxing?

Doxxing refers to:

- the **gathering of the personal data** of **target** person(s) or related person(s) (such as family members, relatives or friends)
- through **online** search engines, social platforms and discussion forums, public registers, anonymous reports, etc.
- **disclosure of the personal data** on the Internet, social media or other **open platforms** (such as public places), and
- such disclosure would cause **psychological harm** to the target person(s) or related person(s)

What is Cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying generally refers to **bullying** that involves the **use of email, images or text messages** sent to web pages, blogs, chat rooms, discussion forums, online gaming network, mobile phones, or other information and communication technology platforms
 - Example: **disclosure** of another one's **private matters** after a relationship break-up
- i.e. the data user and the data subject **knew each other personally**

Weaponisation of Personal Data



名: [REDACTED]
 隊編號: [REDACTED]
 老豆搵仔編號: [REDACTED]
 電話號碼: [REDACTED]
 地址: [REDACTED]
 身分證: [REDACTED]
 email: [REDACTED]
 生日日期: [REDACTED]
 伴侶: [REDACTED]
 老婆身份證: [REDACTED]
 仔女: [REDACTED]

Instagram: [REDACTED]

TG:

威水史: 佢老婆做 [REDACTED] 得本人證實, 佢將 [REDACTED] 小姐story cap圖然後send去公司。佢隨後立即block左 [REDACTED]

Weaponisation of Personal Data



麻包袋接放學準備

30.2K · edited 5:34 PM

【編號】：

【中文姓名： 】

【英文姓名：_____】

【身份證號碼： ██████████】

【出生日期： 年 月 日】

【年齡： 歲】

【電話】：

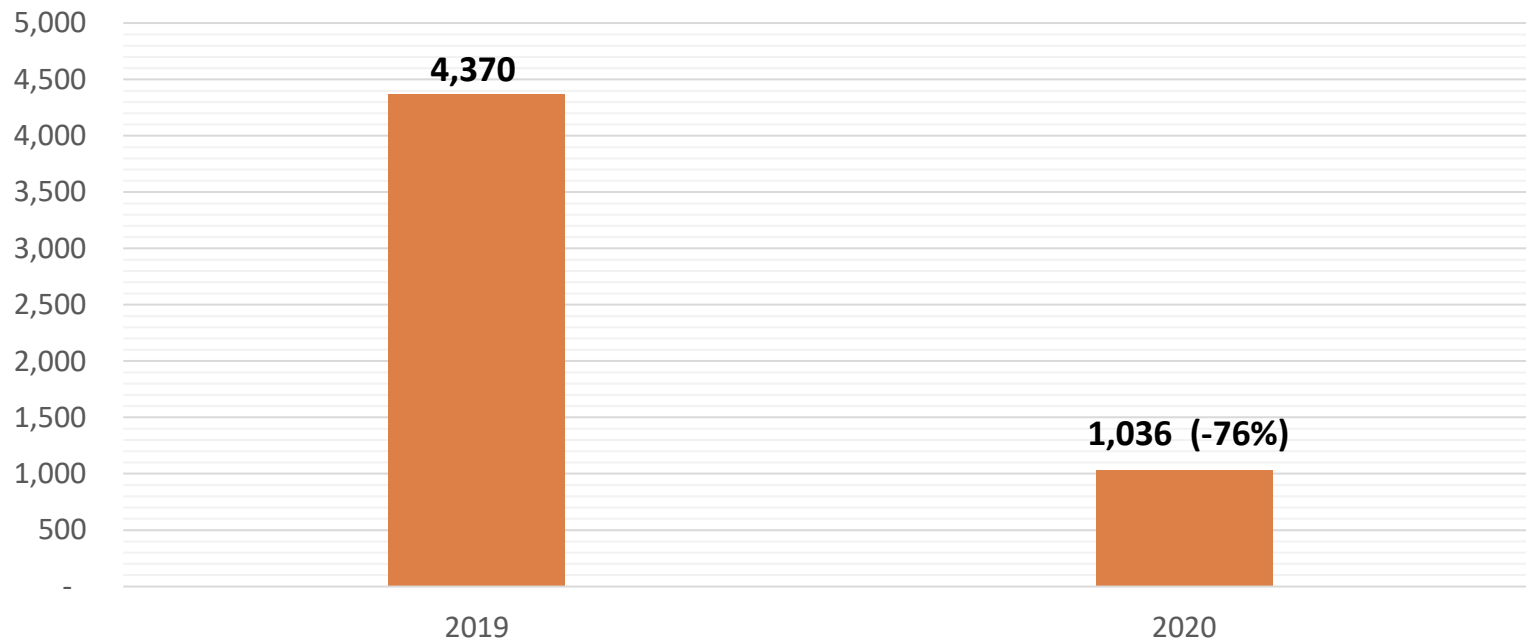
【住址：_____】

【職業： 藥店老闆()，地址： ()
電話： ()】

【卷號：[REDACTED]，[REDACTED]歲，電話：[REDACTED]，住址：[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]】

當中有名經營生菓舖的[]，不但公然於社交網站發出[]言論，揚言[]，滿口歪理，[]
[]，可借此等無知幼稚的思想、只會加深社會矛盾，造成對立和分化。要知道香港在新冠肺炎影響下，經濟已經持續不振，[]
[]，將香港的經濟推進深淵，受苦的是全體香港市民。】

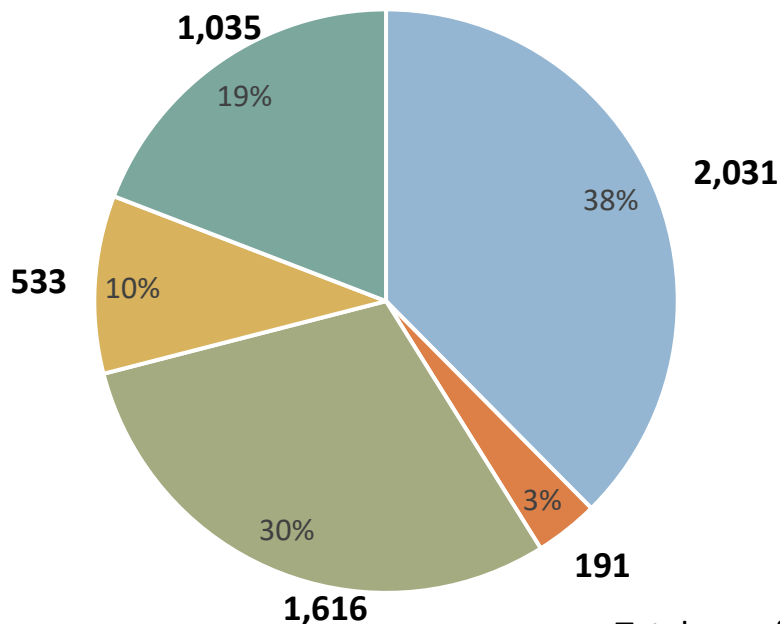
Doxxing Cases



Total no. of cases from June 2019 to December 2020 :

$$4,370 + 1,036 = 5,406$$

Victims of Doxxing



Total no. of cases:
5,406

- Police officers and their family members
- Government officials, councillors and their family members
- Citizens expressing views in support of the government or the Police
- Citizens making comments against the government or the Police
- Citizens doxxed because of illegal events

Note: From June 2019 to December 2020

Injunction Orders relating to Doxxing

- Restraining persons from disclosing personal data of police officers and their family members (HCA 1957/2019)
- Restraining persons from wilfully disseminating or publishing material or information for the purpose of promoting, encouraging or inciting the use or threat of violence (HCA 2007/2019)
- Restraining persons from disclosing personal data of judicial officers and their family members (HCA 1847/2020)



Handling of Doxxing Cases

Combat doxxing



253 times

wrote to 18 online platforms



1,461 cases

referred to the Police



57 cases

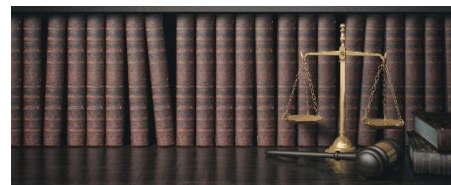
referred to the Department of Justice

Note: From June 2019 to December 2020

Section 64 (2) of PDPO

A person commits an offence if the person:

- a) **discloses** any **personal data** of a data subject;
- b) obtained from a data user **without the data user's consent**; and
- c) the disclosure causes **psychological harm** to the data subject
 - Nowadays, doxxers obtain personal data from sources which may not be known (i.e. **difficult to locate the data user**)
 - **Difficult to prove** “without the data user's consent”
 - The Privacy Commissioner is **not conferred with criminal investigation and prosecution powers** under the PDPO

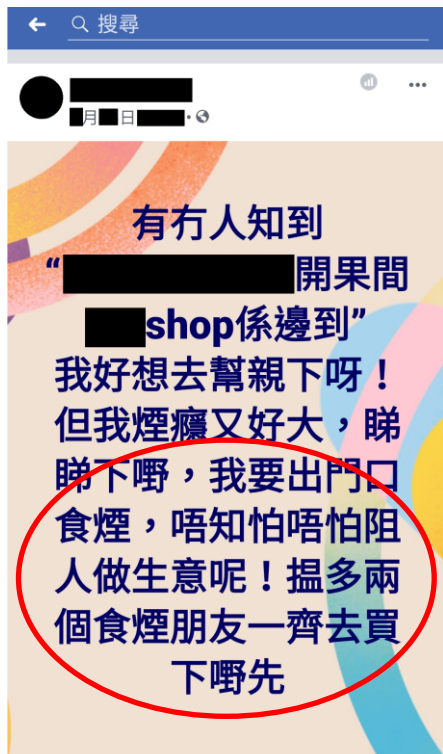


Sentencing of Doxxing Cases

- Two convictions under section 64(2) of the PDPO. In November 2020, a defendant was **sentenced to 18 months** for the offence
- Defendants in four cases which involved violations of injunction orders were convicted of civil contempt of court. One of the defendants was sentenced to **immediate imprisonment for 21 days**



What should you do if you are being doxxed or bullied?



14則回應



【編號：】

【中文姓名：】

【英文姓名：】

【身份證號碼：】

【出生日期：年 月 日】

【年齡：歲】

【電話：】

【住址：】

【職業：商人】

【Wechat：】

【生意夥伴：、出生日期：年 月 日、身份證號碼：、住址：、電話：、職業：商人、Wechat：】

What should you do if you are being doxxed or bullied?

Ask social media platforms to
take down posts

Save the messages
(screenshot info and web link)

Report to PCPD and lodge
complaints

If serious (e.g. intimidated),
report to Police

What should you do if you are being doxxed or bullied?

- What goes online **stays online**. Do not post any information online that you would not share publicly offline
- Even with access limited to only “friends”, you have **no control** over what your “friends” share online
- **Think twice** before joining a heated discussion
- Use the social network sites’ **blocking feature** to stop receiving such messages
- **Complain directly to the social network operator** (abusive contents may be a violation of its acceptable use **policy** and subject to removal)

Directions of legislative amendments to combat doxxing



Criminalising doxxing acts



Conferring on the Privacy Commissioner statutory powers to demand the removal of doxxing contents from social media platforms or websites



Empowering the Privacy Commissioner to carry out criminal investigation and institute prosecution



Handling of Doxxing Cases

- Strengthened collaboration with other law enforcement agencies and trade associations
- Hong Kong SAR Licensed Money Lenders Association Ltd. appealed to all its members to tighten up their customer due diligence and verification procedures to prevent identity thefts
- Department of Health posted a warning notice on its website for registration for organ donation
- PCPD plans to produce educational materials for primary school students



Guidance on Protecting Personal Data Privacy in the Use of Social Media and Instant Messaging Apps (issued on 5 April 2021)

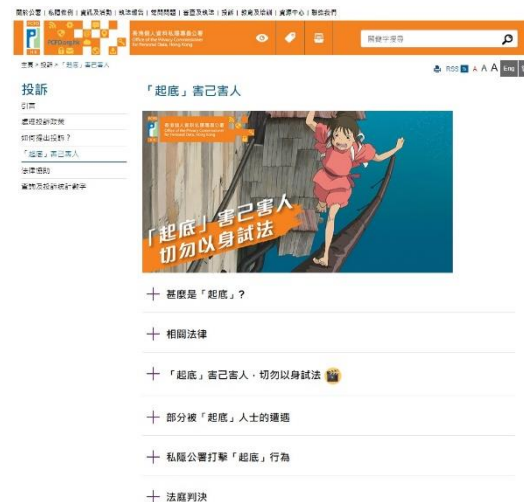
- Take steps to **understand how social media platforms handle the personal data** by examining the privacy policies. Whenever there are any changes in the privacy policies, the users should clearly understand the relevant changes before they accept the changes
- Regularly **review the privacy settings** to retain control over what information will be disclosed to other users and how widely the information is disclosed
- **Limit the permissions** granted to social media platforms on how the personal data, such as facial images and location data, can be used
- **Think twice before sharing or sending** any information on social media
- **Respect other people's privacy** and be cautious about tagging other people in photos or sharing information about other people
- **Be vigilant about online scams**, such as malicious hyperlinks that request the users to “log-in” or provide personal data



Settings	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
To adjust the public visibility of your profile information (such as education, contact details)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to 'Settings and Privacy' 2. Select 'Settings' 3. Select 'Privacy Settings' 4. Select 'Manage your profile' to make changes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to 'Settings' 2. Select 'Privacy' 3. Select 'Private Account' to make changes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to 'Settings and privacy' 2. Select 'Privacy and safety' 3. Select 'Protect your Tweets'
To adjust the permission granted to the app to use facial recognition technology to recognise you in photos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to 'Settings and Privacy' 2. Select 'Settings' 3. Select 'Face Recognition' to make changes 	Not applicable	Not applicable
To adjust the right granted to the app to track your activities across different apps and websites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to 'Settings and Privacy' 2. Select 'Settings' 3. Select 'Off-Facebook Activity' to make changes 	Not applicable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to 'Settings and privacy' 2. Select 'Privacy and safety' 3. Select 'Personalization and data' to make changes

Education and publicity work

- A dedicated webpage “Say ‘No’ to Doxxing”, providing one-stop information
- Hotline (3423 6666) to handle enquiries or complaints
- Media statements, interviews and newspaper articles
- Social media posts





- **Hotline:** (852) 3423 6666 (doxxing)
- **Fax:** (852) 2877 7026
- **Website:** www.pcpd.org.hk
- **E-mail:** complaints@pcpd.org.hk
- **Address:** Room 1303, 13/F, Dah Sing Financial Centre, 248 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong