

An Garda Síochána



Removal tools and links for offensive online social media postings and material

The Internet has increasingly become a vehicle for people to post abusive and defamatory comments and material about others with little thought for the personal affect such material has on their intended victim. The anonymity provided by online social networking and file sharing forums removes social restrictions around saying or publishing without fear of consequence.

There is little restriction in Irish law around posting comments to social media unless the comments or their contents amount to harassment. In most cases comments that are offensive or hurtful are defamatory and not criminal in nature. In such cases the complainant should consult with a solicitor about any civil action that may be available to them.

Most social media services offer their users a method of lodging complaints about content Posted to their forums. This can be by using an abuse or a complaint email. Others have a reporting mechanism where the posting can be individually reported.

For postings to Facebook consult their help forum which contains a full list on how to report messages, threats or offensive material. The page can be found at

https://www.facebook.com/help/181495968648557?helpref=faq_content

Google and YouTube have a similar facility which is explained and available at www.google.com/support/go/legal - all removal of material requests from all Google platforms

All other requests for the removal of material and fake profiles from social media networks should be submitted to the network using their online reporting or complaints processes. This is not a definitive guide and is merely intended as assistance where complaints concerning abusive or false material on social networking platforms are received.

