
Internet Trolling

What to do when confronted
by an internet troll.



“One negative voice aimed at me has the incredible power to drown out a thousand positive ones. One of the greatest things I can achieve is to never let it.”

– Dan Pearce, Single Dad Laughing

The key with online Trolls, just like any bully, is to report their behaviour and avoid responding to their comments. You can control who can contact you online and it's important to make use of the muting, reporting and blocking features available on these platforms.

However, it can be immensely frustrating and hurtful to know that people are spreading falsities and lies about you or your loved ones online. This may leave you feeling overwhelmed, stressed and unsure of how to make it stop.

We've compiled some guidance on the steps you can take in response to this behaviour on Twitter and Facebook.



What is an internet 'Troll'

UrbanDictionary.com defines Trolling as:

“The deliberate act, (by a Troll – noun or adjective), of making random unsolicited and/or controversial comments on various internet forums with the intent to provoke an emotional knee jerk reaction from unsuspecting readers to engage in a fight or argument.”

The anonymous nature of the internet allows for the bullies to operate without accountability or fear of punishment. Indeed, the self-creation of profiles allows user to pose as anyone (or no-one) and the nature of public platforms allows one post, or one user, to reach millions.

Undoubtedly, these platforms can be used as a force for good, yet at the same time, can cause significant harm.

It's important to recognise that people are entitled to hold opinions, and expressing these opinions online is a key element of free speech. We must have compassion, respect and the ability to listen to the opinions of others.

Fundamentally, Trolls can become frustrating, upsetting and dangerous when they share opinions online to provoke an argument or to deliberately cause controversy. Just like there are different types of bullies, there are different types of Trolls.

Some will make a habit out of regularly Trolling. They will repeatedly insert incendiary comments into a discussion to create a reaction and are generally found on forums or in comments. Others will purposely target a particular topic, theory or person. These Trolls are particularly dangerous due to the often relentless and obsessive nature of their attacks, and are generally found as profiles on popular social platforms. This behaviour in particular lies somewhere in between online bullying and cyber stalking.



Identifying & spotting a troll

- Frequent and repetitive posts on their target, quite often in a short time frame.
- They will be engaging in the community surrounding their target with sensationalist, controversial or incendiary statements.
- Their account may be quite new or be inactive for long periods of time.
- They are likely to have a low 'following' and 'followed by' count.

How to take action against Trolls

The Hydra from Greek mythology was a many-headed serpent-like monster. It was said that if you cut off one of the hydra's heads, two would grow back in its place. The same can be said for Trolls – blocking a profile doesn't necessarily stop them but it can be a useful tool on some platforms.

The reason blocking shouldn't be your first go-to action is because the Trolls can simply make a new account, particularly on Twitter. Instead, your immediate action should be to report their accounts, and their posts. Then when possible, mute their account to stop your account from seeing their posts. We have included guidance on how to carry out these actions overleaf.

Because it is more complex to create and build a profile on Facebook, Trolls will have to put in more effort to create a new profile, so blocking them will go further towards stopping the behaviour. However, it is still vital you report their behaviour to Facebook.



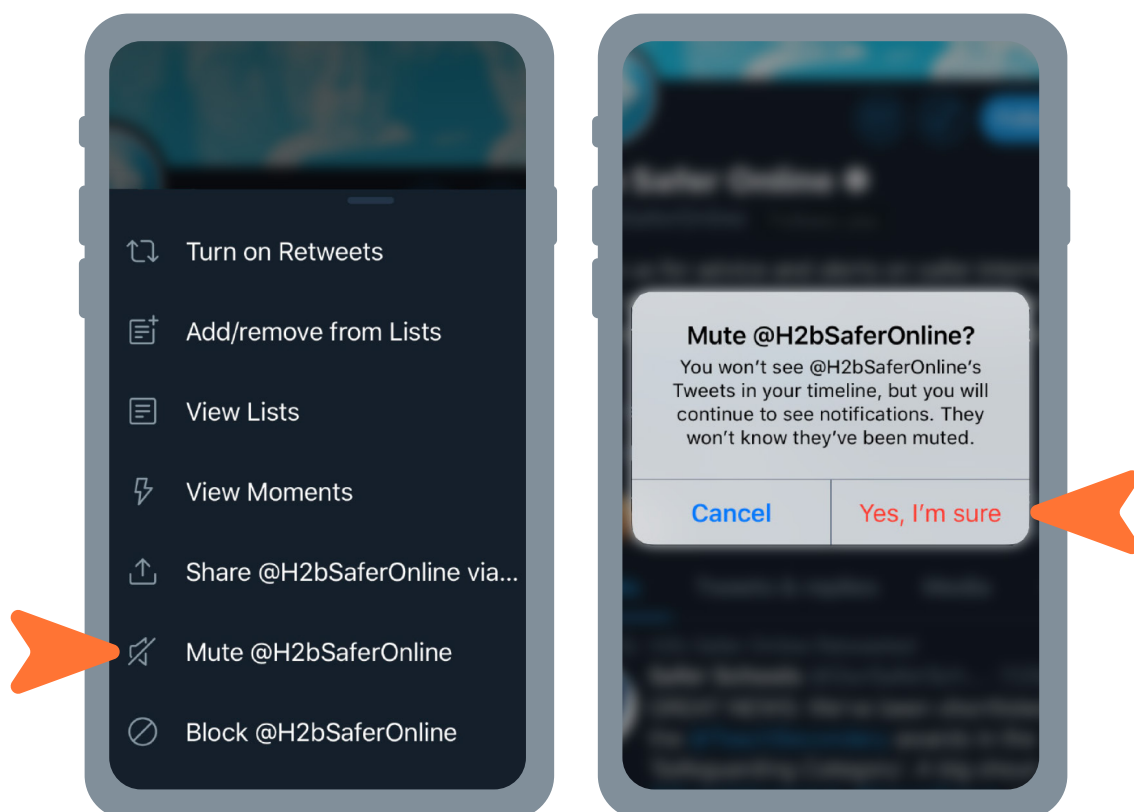
Who are the bullies behind the screens?

Some Trolls can be sadistic in nature and simply want to provoke negative reactions. Others, particularly those who respond to high profile cases in the media, will base opinions on falsities, fake news and ignore facts to support their beliefs. The danger in the latter is that they may believe they are Trolling for the “right reasons”. These so called ‘Keyboard Warriors’ are unable, or unwilling, to consider arguments from other angles which don’t confirm their beliefs. Critically, if their posts gain traction, they may sway public opinion in unhelpful and problematic directions.

The phenomenon of online Trolling is a growing concern and a significant threat to our freedom to connect, create and express ourselves online. As this threat emerges, so must our capacities to understand and address these behaviours.

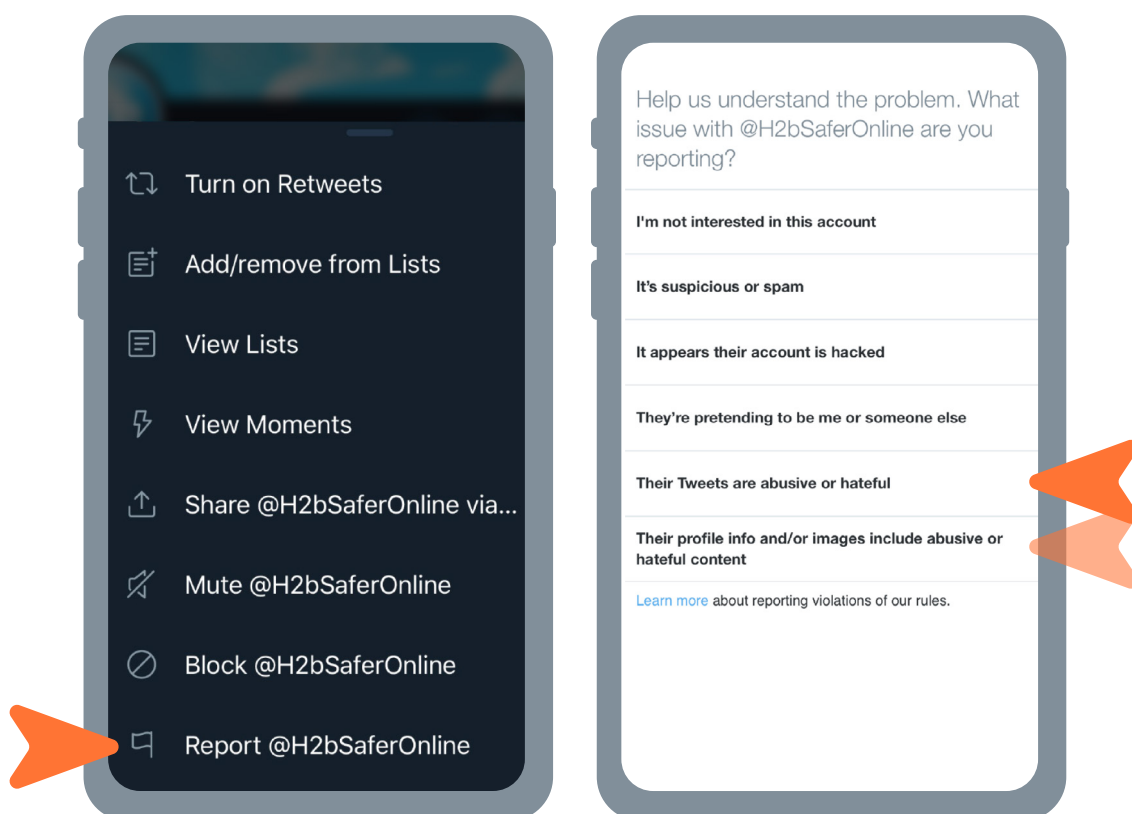
How to mute an account on Twitter

1. On the profile tap on the **three dots**, this appears in the top right corner.
2. Select ‘**Mute @user**’.



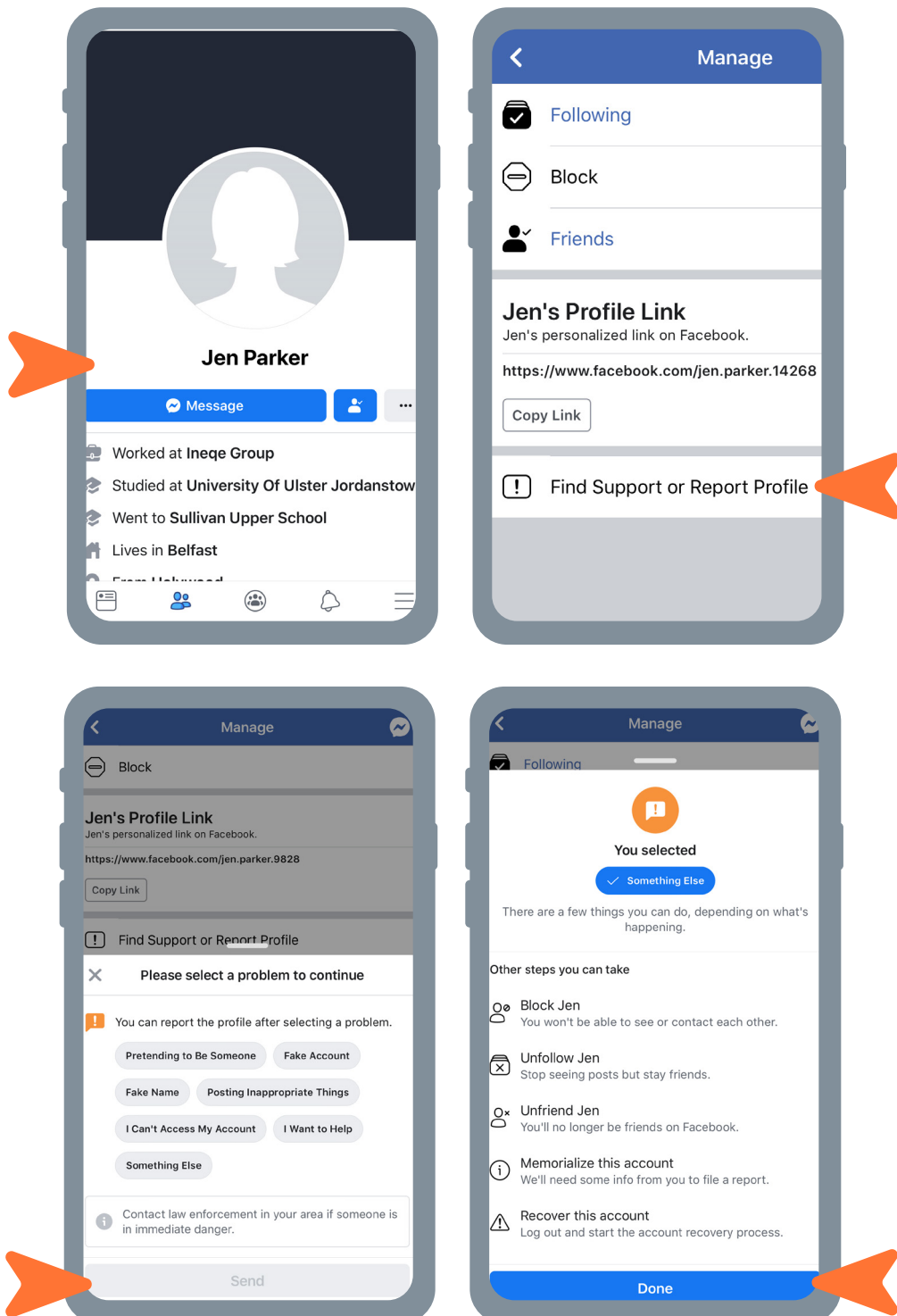
How to report an account on Twitter

1. On the profile tap on the **three dots**, this appears in the top right corner.
2. Select '**Report**'.
3. Select a reason why from the list provided.
4. Click '**Done**'. For ease, you can also mute the account from here.



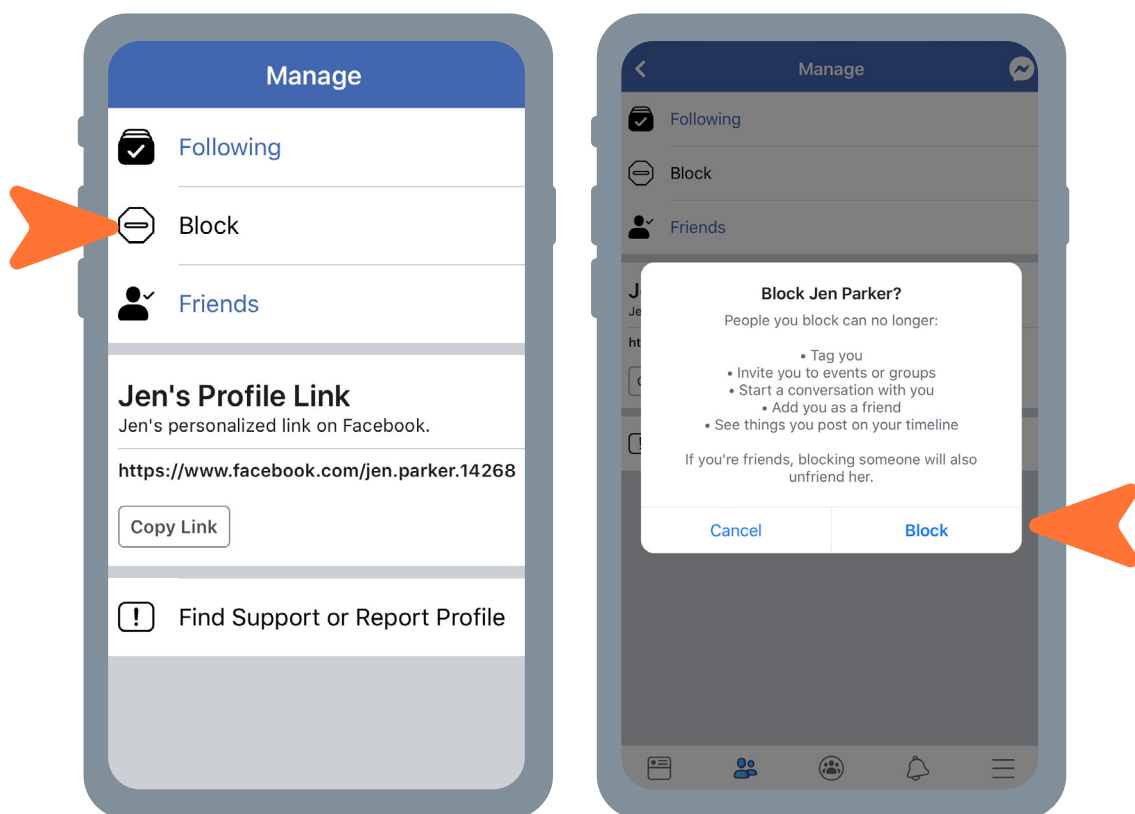
How to report an account on Facebook

1. Tap on the '**profile**' icon under the user's profile picture and beside the 'three dots'.
2. Select '**Find Support or Report Profile**'.
3. Select a reason why from the list provided.
4. Select '**Done**'.
5. From here, you can also block the user.



How to block an account on Facebook

1. Tap on the profile icon under the user's profile picture and beside the **'three dots'**.
2. Select **'Block'** & then **'Block'** again.
3. The person is now blocked.



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