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Who is this guide for?

This guide highlights digital security considerations, mitigation strategies, and resources specific to the Romani, or Roma, ethnic group. This guide is designed to be used by digital security specialists working with journalists from the Roma community or potentially with journalists whose colleagues, sources, or other collaborators belong to this community.

Roma Community Digital Security Challenges

Threats are the direct attacks that can impact your life.

Adversaries are the individuals executing these threats.

Vulnerabilities are the weaknesses in societal systems, technical systems, and individual habits that make it easier for attackers to carry out the threats. Systemic inequities are often the root cause of these weaknesses.

Threats	Adversaries	Vulnerabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online harassment ● Hate speech ● Trolling ● Doxxing ● Phishing ● Malware ● Spyware ● Ransomware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extremist groups ● Law enforcement or similar groups ● Civilian members of society ● Financially motivated attackers ● Nation states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barriers to quality education ● More limited access to digital technologies and literacy ● Lack of relevant digital safety resources and tools (in terms of language, culture, etc.) ● Minimal representation in media and journalism, making Romani journalists easier to identify and target

- Devices can be shared with family members or others within the community
- Lack of secure management of sensitive data (e.g., medical records, private photos, sensitive conversations, passwords, etc.)
- Lack of secure management of social media communications (important for community building)
- [Social media platforms](#) often do a poor job at combatting hate speech and harassment

Threat Modeling for the Roma Community

	Considerations for the Roma Community
Assets	The ability to safely and effectively carry out reporting, names of sources, details of reporting, personal data such as home address and details about family and friends, physical security, money, online identity, mobile devices, applications, group identity, community agency/autonomy, photos, community trust
Adversaries	Mostly non-state, with some state adversaries (such as police) as well
Likelihood	Likelihood can vary based on the topics covered during reporting, stance of the government/law enforcement, value of assets, and history of discrimination.
Consequences	<p>Consequences are often dependent on context but can include the following: attacks on reporting and sources, harm to mental and physical health, risks to employment, self-censorship, community exclusion, violence, segregation, exposure, breakdown of trust, strain or conflict within families, lost assets or lost access to assets.</p> <p>The Roma community is already underrepresented in media leadership, leading to inaccurate and harmful reporting on the community. Digital threats to the Romani journalists might further hinder their involvement in media.</p>
Effort	Potentially quite high (e.g., may need to overcome low digital literacy rates, mitigation could also be high effort, communication barriers may demand high effort to surpass, journalists might be easily identifiable within the Roma community)

Managing Digital Security for Roma

Mitigation strategies are the practices that can be leveraged to address vulnerabilities.

- For example: safe and private social media usage such as delaying posting photos so current location is not accessible, not posting photos from your house, neighborhood, or current location so you cannot be easily geolocated, blur faces of dependents on social media posts, using disappearing messages and end to end encryption for sensitive chats, solid password and 2FA policies

Mitigation tools are the devices, applications, and workflow apparatuses that can be applied to reduce the risk of attacks.

- For example: privacy settings on social media websites, password manager, encrypted sensitive documents, privacy settings (disabling comments, obscuring location)

Mitigation actors are the entities and individuals that can offer protection in a digital security context.

- For example: your newsroom, organizations that work with Roma communities on their rights, other journalists, journalism security trainers, digital rights NGOs, family, friends, community, etc.

How to Talk to and Persuade Others

Allies: Identify allies, both within the Roma community and beyond. Talk to those allies about why digital security is important and don't forget that security best works when many take part in it. The whole community is more secure if behaviors like secure messaging practices or not sharing photos of families/homes become more common.

Transparency: Be transparent about challenges. Normalize that breaches do happen so that others feel comfortable speaking openly and sharing information about vulnerabilities, threats, attacks, etc.

Educate: Explain all pros and cons of certain digital security practices and be more direct about why it might be important to make some changes. Be particularly mindful of the specific threats of both the Roma community more widely and journalists more specifically.

Communicate: Listen and learn from others within the community, especially your sources and collaborators. Try to understand any hesitancy, address concerns, and be open-minded. Contextualize any tools or practices for the needs and profile of the community to make adoption and integration of digital security topics more accessible.

Nudge the Needle: Advocate for incremental changes and be willing to compromise for movement in a direction that promotes healthy digital security (e.g., moving primary form of communication from Facebook to a more secure platform, even if it is not the most secure platform).

Share Resources: Share tools, guidelines, and research from established and credible sources to support

your advocacy around healthier digital security. (These resources should be accessible to the community so make sure to assess language needs, literacy, etc.).

Digital Security Resources for the Roma Community

EDRI | [Romani rights and biometric mass surveillance](#)

Yale | [Addressing the security risks of anti-Roma hate speech on social media platforms](#)

The Romani Tea Room | ["You are being watched"](#)

EDRI | [Roma & Sinti Rights](#)

Panelfit EU | [ICTs, data and vulnerable people: a guide for citizens](#)

International Journal of Discrimination and the Law | [Why are you offline? The issue of digital consent and discrimination of Roma communities during pandemic in Slovakia](#)

ECNL | [Collective power for rights-based and just AI: going beyond the AI buzzword](#)

Biometric Update | [Digital ID schemes marginalizing Roma in Serbia, Rohingyas in Myanmar](#)