



## Introduction

The Internet is seen as a place where racism shouldn't be able to reach. With users having the supposed-ability to hide their identities as a way to relieve bias of character, many Internet users do not consider this concept to be a double-edged sword. As one can hide their identity, they can get away with the writing of hateful comments without being condemned or shunned. This is where the ugly and blatant thoughts of anonymous users can be, and often are revealed in shocking displays of aggression.

## Research

In July of 2019, *Social Problems* published a research paper on the covert forms of racism that plagued the internet. They studied one private midwestern university (Mid-U) in the United States, that created a student forum in 2013. This forum was created with the intent to let students express their thoughts on uncomfortable political topics. Instead, the forum became known for its EXTENSIVE amount of offensively racist messages. The researchers then spoke to several groups of radicalized students from Mid-U about the student forum, many of whom considered the university to be very diverse and accepting in nature. The students were shown the comments, which ranged from micro-aggressive racial jokes, to flagrant racist statements about multiple different races on the Mid-U campus. Afterwards, students expressed their thoughts on the issue.

*Many were frustrated with their inability to protest against these racist comments as they could not identify a target to fight against.*

**Here are some ways that you as a user can prevent the spread of online racial discrimination...**

# Online Racial Discrimination

## *The Issue of Masked Racism*

### Ways to Combat Online Racism

#### **1. Stopping the normalization of hate through seemingly lighthearted humor.**

Many users create or share jokes that involve racial stereotypes and at times it can be seen as humorous and harmless. However, these jokes can degrade and dehumanize racial groups, which is exactly how extremist groups connect with new members, namely by immersing them in this online culture that uses memetic media to make fun of racial groups. As one website shares with readers, "*Humor and satire should not be hiding places for ignorance and bigotry.*"

#### **2. DON'T publicly call out racism on social media.**

It is understandable when users reply angrily to racist comments online or call out individuals responsible for racist remarks, but many social media critics claim that this can just amplify the desired attention those individuals are looking for. So, instead of confronting the user head on, report the activity or aggressive user to the social media platform the comment was made on. Thus, reporting them to the right authorities and giving them less attention on the media platform.

#### **3. Stop amplifying harm by being online lurkers.**

We all can tend to be online lurkers at times, but it can have very bad consequences. Media outlets that report hate crimes to the public can bring attention to the perpetrator as well as curiosity from the audience. During the Christchurch shooting, people started to look at the manifesto the individual wrote, the hate group they were from, and even the live shooting video that was streamed. Understandably, people merely wanted to look and understand the issue at hand. But it can cause negative effects, as the more popular those sort of searches become, they can redirect the internet algorithm to recommend pro-racism content to users unintentionally.

## Conclusion

Racism is an issue that has continued for many decades, but just because racist individuals have gone from overt to covert in their way of expressing hatred, does not mean that racism is "gone". The Internet is the perfect environment for such people to express their extreme ideas and opinions, both of which can cause harm to others. Many hate crimes have been influenced one way or another by media platforms and extremist websites. Identifying the best way on how to fight racism can be complicated, but with these three points you can help in stopping the spread of hatred.

## Bibliography

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