



## Legal Guide for Bloggers

Whether you're a newly minted blogger or a relative old-timer, you've been seeing more and more stories pop up every day about bloggers getting in trouble for what they post.

Like all journalists and publishers, bloggers sometimes publish information that other people don't want published. You might, for example, publish something that someone considers defamatory, republish an AP news story that's under copyright, or write a lengthy piece detailing the alleged crimes of a candidate for public office.

The difference between you and the reporter at your local newspaper is that in many cases, you may not have the benefit of training or resources to help you determine whether what you're doing is legal. And on top of that, sometimes knowing the law doesn't help - in many cases it was written for traditional journalists, and the courts haven't yet decided how it applies to bloggers.

But here's the important part: None of this should stop you from blogging. Freedom of speech is the foundation of a functioning democracy, and Internet bullies shouldn't use the law to stifle legitimate free expression. That's why EFF created this guide, compiling a number of FAQs designed to help you understand your rights and, if necessary, defend your freedom.

To be clear, this guide isn't a substitute for, nor does it constitute, legal advice. Only an attorney who knows the details of your particular situation can provide the kind of advice you need if you're being threatened with a lawsuit. The goal here is to give you a basic roadmap to the legal issues you may confront as a

blogger, to let you know you have rights, and to encourage you to blog freely with the knowledge that your legitimate speech is protected.

Please note that this guide applies to people living in the US. We don't have the expertise or resources to speak to other countries' legal traditions, but we'd like to work with those who do. If you know of a similar guide for your own jurisdiction or feel inspired to research and write one, please [let us know](#). We can link to it here.

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