

To: Professor Klena

From: Jady Richardson, Cyber law 406, 01221459

Subject: Freedom of Expression and Privacy in the Digital World

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**1: Freedom of Expression.** Discord is the platform that I predominantly use to communicate online. I don't trust that any platform I use operates with the consumer as its number one priority. I do trust that platforms will provide the services I expect it to with some exceptions. I expect Steam to provide me with video games, YouTube to give me videos to watch, and Discord to provide a platform to communicate with communities or personal friends. The exceptions to that trust come from my trust for platforms to have their wallets as their first and foremost priority, which would lead to them cutting corners to reduce costs and excessive monetization to generate revenue. But my trust to provide me with a service does not truly extend to the topic of this paper: privacy and freedom of expression. I don't think that any average person will be able to see private discord messages that I have sent, but I do think that to call any messages I send 'private' is hopeless. Although the general public can't see them, I am willing to bet that discord moderation could choose to see all of the messages that I have ever sent. I also think that discord would not protect my privacy from the government. If the government wanted to acquire my messages or listen into my conversations, I completely believe that they would be able to. The power and technology of the government is too strong for them to not be able to get whatever they want from discord. However, I do think that discord would let me express whatever I want in private messages. At the time of writing this paper, I don't really know what Discord's moderation practices are, but I assume they are very lax. Discord leaves the moderation of a community up to that communities' chosen moderators. These moderators are only connected to

Discord in that they use Discord's services. I say that Discord's moderation is lax because a Youtuber called "No Text To Speech" makes videos that expose illegal or immoral practices of certain Discord communities. A lot of these communities in these videos sexually exploit minors, and I have heard that Discord does not do anything about it even after they are reported.

Apparently freedom of expression exists in discord, even for illegal activities, but only because Discord's moderation team does not care to moderate their platform. Discord's terms of service are simple, and they reserve the right to terminate your account if you violate the terms of service or their community guidelines. A summary of the terms of service is that all communities must follow the community guidelines, and when I put content on Discord, I give Discord a license to that content. This license gives Discord the right to publish, publicly perform, or publicly display my content if I choose to make my content visible to others, and discord can modify, monitor, translate, and reformat my content. The community guidelines are the baseline rules for any content that is published. The content cannot do as follows: harass, threaten harm, threaten the sharing of personally identifiable information, promote hate speech, support violent extremism, depict or distribute or normalize child sexual abuse material in any way, and the content cannot engage in sexual content with anyone under 18. Although these are Discord's community guidelines and terms of service, their enforcement/moderation of these policies is very lacking. The prevalence of harmful communities that violate all of their community guidelines is large. Even when these communities are reported by people, these reports are not acted upon by Discord's moderation.

**2. Personal information shared online:** I share my personal information online with many organizations including ODU, Wells Fargo, my student loan services, my job, and the Federal government. With Wells Fargo, I have shared many bits of personal information. I share my

financial status, where I live, my social security number, and my drivers license. How Wells Fargo protects my personal information is very vague. Their privacy policy page says that they protect my information by using “computer safeguards, secured files, and buildings” and then for more information it links back to the page that I found the privacy policy on. On that page they mention protecting social security numbers in accordance with their information security policy, which I do not believe they make public. It makes sense to not make the information security policy public because malicious actors could exploit that knowledge. Although their policy is vague, I do trust that their security methods will adequately protect my personal information, or at least that Wells Fargo will make their best attempt to protect its customers' information. This is because a mass data leak or exposing of a customer's information would be devastating to Wells Fargo. If customers start to have their information exposed, the loss of trust will cause them to potentially start using a competitor’s services instead of Wells Fargo, and also open Wells Fargo up to potential lawsuits. Banks understand the risks of data leaks, so it is in their best interest to protect their customers' data to avoid the massive financial and reputational damage that data leaks cause.

**3. Concerns about my online presence:** I am most concerned about a data breach having my passwords compromised. I use two factor authentication for my most important services, but still having something like my bank account password compromised scares me. My money is able to be moved and manipulated online, and it is the most valuable thing that I have that is directly connected to the internet. I don’t think that my password alone is enough to compromise my account because of things like two factor authentication and the protections a bank has in place against scams and recovery options, but someone being able to get that close to ruining my life is enough to make me nervous. The article [“26 Million Devices Hit By Infostealers—Bank Cards](#)

[Leaked To Dark Web](#)” written by Davey Winder, showcases my concerns. Even though banks make their best effort to protect information, I believe that data breaches are inevitable and will eventually happen to all major organizations, but the scale and severity of these breaches will vary. This article in particular is concerning because of the large number of people that had their information stolen, and how easy it could be to be a part of that number.