

# Trolling Attacks on Scholars – CSU Faculty Action

Nationally, unfair attacks on scholars have increased, often in social media, on message boards, and through other online forums. These “trolling attacks” can be professionally disruptive and personally difficult. The University has resources to assist if you are the target of one of these campaigns.

**What Is “Trolling”?** When someone knowingly posts inflammatory messages or digressions in an online forum to discredit or distract from the original post. Often trolls just want attention. But sometimes their motives are malicious.

**Don’t face the trolls alone.** We have the experience and expertise to shut down their attacks. Why Am I Being Trolled? CSU experts who publish articles, provide commentary, or are active on social media can become targets. These attacks are uncommon but are becoming more frequent. While attacks may be intense, they are not usually sustained.

Cleveland State University is committed to protecting the academic freedom of scholars and the personal safety of everyone in our university community.

## If You Are the Target of a Trolling Attack

- **IMPORTANT: Call 9-1-1 immediately if you or your family are in imminent physical danger.**
- **Contact your Department Chair or School Director** to guide you through additional steps.
- **Contact the Cleveland State University Police Department** (216) 687-2020).
- These attacks are intense, but are not usually sustained.
- Your email, social media accounts, and contact information likely will be publicized. You can request that your contact information and profile be temporarily removed or hidden from department/unit web pages.
- Responding to harassing messages tends to prolong and inflame incidents. Consider suspending social media activity for a few days.
- Try to preserve as evidence all messages, emails, postings, or voicemails you receive. Consider allowing [CSU police](#), IS & T or a trusted individual to sort them if you don’t want to see them.
- Media outlets may contact you; You do not need to respond. Consult with University Marketing (216-687-2290) about how — or if — a response is required.
- Attacks may affect your students or classes. If you believe the incident will disrupt class experiences, speak with your Department Chair or School Director about alternative instruction arrangements.
- A trolling attack may involve someone who attends your class and records you. You have the right to prohibit audio/video recording in your classroom.