

The Dark Web is not illegal, but be wary of these 7 things!

The dark web is a mysterious place with a notorious reputation. Finding the dark web isn't difficult. However, learning how to navigate it safely is another story, especially if you don't know what you're doing or what to expect.

The dark web is notorious for hiding and facilitating criminal activities like hacking, drug trafficking, and even terrorism. But it's not as scary as you might think. The dark web is a subset of the main internet that resides on networks called the "darknet" and requires specific software to access.

Like the regular internet, you'll find both good and bad things on the dark web. If you're looking for something illegal, the dark web has you covered. But it's also a surefire way to find new things and escape scrutiny. If you're browsing the dark web, here's what to watch out for.

1. Do not access illegal websites on the dark web

First, you need to know what the dark web actually is. It sounds scary and definitely not something you should actively explore. In fact, it seems illegal. But depending on where you live, the dark web may not be illegal.

However, some activities on the dark web are illegal. There is a big difference between accessing the dark web (which is generally legal) and what you access through it (which can be illegal). Many people who use the dark web have bad intentions, so government agencies and secret services monitor what happens there. Illegal activities that take place on the dark web include drug and weapons trafficking and information obtained through scams and hacking.

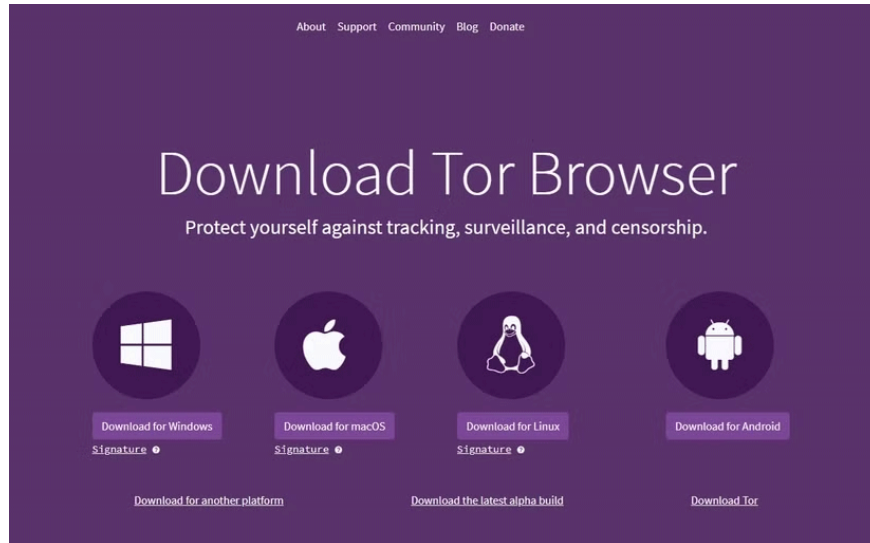
2. You can easily fall into the trap of scammers

The dark web isn't just useful for cybercriminals trading stolen data. It's also a great way for scammers to target you.

Dark web sites don't have the security features you'll find on the regular web, so you're left largely unprotected. Malware is rampant, and browsers won't scan downloads the way they would on a reputable site. A regular antivirus suite isn't enough if you're on the dark web.

Furthermore, it is advisable to use cryptocurrency when buying anything on the dark web, and many sellers do not even accept traditional credit cards. Cybercriminals also like cryptocurrency because it is virtually untraceable, so you will not be able to get your money back.

3. Don't download Tor from unofficial sources!



The most common way to access the dark web is through the Tor browser, which is similar to any other browser like Google Chrome and Firefox, but allows you to see content that other search engines don't index. Tor is a great way to think about the dark web. It stands for The Onion Router. Tor allows you to peel back the top layers to see the third layer that is usually hidden (the second layer is the deep web, which is different from the dark web).

But scammers know how easy it is to download fake copies of real apps. Fake apps put your data in the hands of scammers, and that's especially problematic when it comes to fake browsers. Data transmitted through a fake browser that's masquerading as Tor or a similar option can be completely hijacked, so everything you type and view is in the hands of hackers.

Make sure you only download anything, including Tor, from official sources.

4. Don't browse the Dark Web without a VPN!

Lots of people use Tor for harmless reasons—you might even be reading this on Tor right now!—so there's a large population of people who aren't interested in illegal activity. Cookies and logs aren't kept, so your data stays more private. But dark web browsing doesn't keep everything safe. First of all, your data is encrypted in transit and safe in Tor, but your ISP can see your data at entry and exit nodes. That means your ISP can still see that you're using, say, Tor, and websites can still read your IP address. So can your browser.

The virtual private network (VPN) then hides your data with end-to-end encryption, meaning everything is unreadable without the correct decryption key. If you really want to stay anonymous, using a VPN is the way to go.

5. Be careful with black markets on the Dark Web



Anonymity breeds criminal activity, and the dark web has a somewhat infamous reputation for this. Indeed, the dark web is rife with black markets. It's where people search for data harvested from ransomware attacks and identity theft, buy illegal goods, fund and promote terrorism, and sell hacking services. Another horrifying fact about the dark web is the proliferation of child pornography.

Make no mistake: The dark web may not be completely illegal, but that doesn't mean it's safe.

6. Don't visit countries with Internet surveillance

Is the dark web itself illegal? This depends entirely on the territory. Generally, in countries that monitor online activity, including Russia, China, and Iran, accessing the dark web is illegal.

Why? The Tor browser (and other means of exploring the dark web) use encryption, so any place that bans the use of VPNs, for example, also bans citizens from using other means to anonymize their activities.

For example, the dark web is not illegal in the United States, the United Kingdom, or India. But if you are used to government surveillance and restrictions, the dark web is likely illegal in your territory.

7. Don't browse the dark web aimlessly!

There are many great sites on the dark web that you won't find on Google. For example, the news site ProPublica aims to 'expose abuses of power and betrayals of trust by the public, governments, businesses, and other institutions, using the moral power of investigative journalism.'

However, the dark web still has its dangers. It's not something you can just browse. First, you need to know the exact URL of a website, although there are dark web search engines you can use, like TorLinks and The Hidden Wiki.

You could be found guilty of a crime if you find yourself on the wrong website. And yes, that could land you in jail, especially if you buy something illegal on any of the black markets. You could also accidentally download malware, like ransomware, keyloggers, and botnets.

The dark web can be scary, but you can still use it safely if you know what to look out for. However, if you're unsure, don't go on the dark web. It's really not worth the risk for the average user!

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