

The Ethical Case for Doxing

By Col

Hello, I would like to start by stating my thanks for being in the first Kiwi Farms magazine. In these trying times it is necessary to make branching publications like this in order to keep the fight going and the spirit high. I hope there are more issues and I can write for them. If you would like to hear more from me then my Poa.st is @colcoal and if you search that up you can find it in various places like youtube and such.

The most contentious issue to common people about the Farms is the allowance of posting dox. Let's be clear, there are different levels of doxing. In addition it is pretty much always an impolite thing to do. But if you say a person's real name when they use a screen name it is considered doxing. If you post someone's address, phone number, and the like this is also doxing. Where the line is drawn by the site is posting information tied to your identity such as credit card numbers, bank numbers, or things like that. So that is where we will draw the line. When is it ethical to post someone's address or phone number or the like?

Some will allege that it is a categorical evil to dox. This means that it is always wrong, always evil. I do not think this is so. There is a very obvious case where not only is it not wrong, but is a moral good and necessity. Consider the case of Tommy Robinson's arrest in England. (<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jul/11/tommy-robinson-given-nine-month-jail-term-for-contempt-of-court>) Why he was arrested and his final conviction is irrelevant. What was important was the initial conditions of the arrest. When he was seized and detained there was no record or public statement. Effectively for 48 hours his supporters, friends, and family did not know what had happened to him. Was he safe? Had he been killed? Should they report him as

missing to the police? They did not know. He was eventually released and it was made known what had happened to him. However we have a policy in America (we are supposed to anyway) so that when someone is arrested their dox is publically available if not printed in the local paper. This ensures(it is supposed to) that the government cannot simply grab civilians and they are never heard from again. In the cases of the government seizing you, doxing them is not only not wrong, but is a good and necessary thing to do.

With the case of doxing I believe a good classical philosophical comparison is an example from Kant's Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: on a supposed right to lie for philanthropic concerns. In this case he lays out that an axe murderer is at your front door and asking about a person inside. You have two choices, either tell the truth and say that they are here or lie and say they are somewhere else. Kant argues that you ought to tell the truth. If you lie and the murderer walks around the house to leave, it very well might be the case that the target inside has run out of the house to escape assuming that you would tell the truth and the murderer would be trying to come in. Thus being killed by the murderer. So whether or not you lie it is still a possibility of the end result being the same, thus it should be set aside. However if it is the case that you always tell the truth, the person in the house would know you would tell the truth and thus make the right decision to leave the house. He has much more justification for it and I highly recommend this book. It is 80 pages and was highly influential for me and my philosophy. (<https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/kant1785.pdf>)

In summary I would compare doxing someone to making an arrest. There are just and unjust arrests. Any call to just outlaw making arrests are not to be seriously considered. I will

finish up by a very relevant quote from the Gospel of John following the verse that everyone quotes and knows by heart. “ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” John 3:19-21 ESV