

Municipality Data Security and Doxing Risk Assessment

For this assessment, we cross-referenced hate crimes data from the FBI Crime Data Explorer¹ with U.S. Census data from 2010, 2000, and 1990². We included any city with a population greater than 100,000 at any of the three census points. These allowed us to calculate rough per capita hate crime figures for each city. In total, our data set included 286 municipalities. We chose to remove any municipalities from states and territories with policies of not reporting hate crimes, as well as any municipality that had reported zero hate crimes during the 1991-2017 review period. This disqualified five cities in Puerto Rico, as well as Savannah, GA, Macon, GA, Honolulu, HI, Gary, IN, Jackson, MS, and Brownsville, TX, leaving us with a set of 276 cities.

Once we compiled our list of cities, we then assessed each municipality in our data set by its level of protection of personally identifiable information (PII). Through a manual research exercise, we examined whether the municipality 1) made incident data available online at all, and 2) if so, whether the data set contained direct or indirect identifiers, compromising privacy of victims, offenders, witnesses, and/or officers, and if so 3) the inconvenience and anonymity associated with obtaining the data. We then graded each municipality's online doxing risk according to the following scorecard:

- A Fully anonymized/aggregated data, no access to online police reports
- A- Fee-based online access to police reports
- B+ Mostly anonymized data - i.e. incident address included, but anonymized to the block
- B No online data/reports only available to verified parties in the case
- B- In-person only access to police reports
- C+ Exact incident addresses shown, but not full report
- C Full reports available for free with sign-in, or other possibly anonymous online request
- C- Direct identifiers for suspects, not for victims/witnesses
- D+ Direct identifier shown for victim/full direct reports available with sensitive cases withheld
- D Recent data (1-2 months) available with direct victim identifiers
- D- Free, full access with direct identifiers with partial information provided
- F Free, full access with direct identifiers

This data is accessible in two ways. First, the entire data set, along with sources, can be found on the Results: All Cities page. Second, users can explore this data visually with the data exploration tool.

Endnotes

1. CDE :: Home. (n.d.). Retrieved April 13, 2019, from <https://crime-data-explorer.fr.cloud.gov/>
2. Bureau, U. C. (n.d.). Decennial Census Datasets. Retrieved April 13, 2019, from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/data/datasets.html>