

ALERT DESK ZW: 7 DAYS ONLINE WITH A QUEER ZIMBABWEAN

DIARY ENTRIES

6 daily entries

AVERAGE INTERNET RELIANCE (0-5)

4.8

REPORTS FILED (PLATFORM)

2 reports



What is the digital diary?

The Digital Diary is a structured method we use to understand digital safety through lived experience. Over 7 days, a diarist documents what their online life looks like in real time—what platforms they use, how safe those spaces feel, what harms show up, what actions they take to protect themselves, and how those moments spill into offline life (like transport, school, home, rest, and relationships).

It is designed to hold both data and feeling—because digital harm is never only “online,” it lives in bodies and daily routines.

As you read this diary snapshot, hold one key idea gently: a “safe” rating doesn’t always mean the absence of harm. In the diary, safety is often something the diarist creates through boundaries and careful choices. So the visuals don’t just tell us what happened, they show us the everyday labour it takes to stay connected, stay afloat, and stay as safe as possible.

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MOST USED PLATFORMS (MINUTES)

TikTok (1 569)

32.1%

WhatsApp (1 596)

32.7%

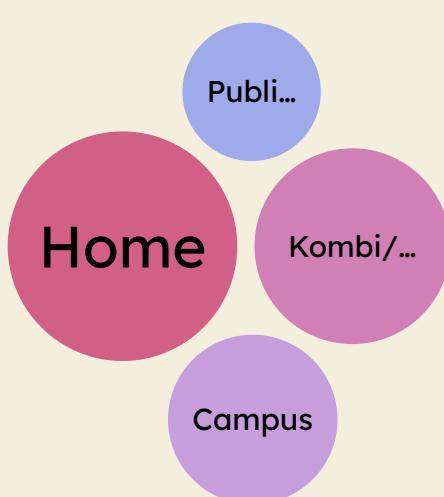
Instagram (1 316)

26.9%

Facebook (405)

8.3%

PEAK RISK CONTEXTS-WHERE RISK FOLLOWED THE BODY



HOW OFTEN RISK SHOWED UP

- Public WiFi spot 2/6 days
- School Campus 4/6 days
- Kombi 5/6 days
- Home 6/6 days

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Most used Platforms (minutes)

Time spent clusters around WhatsApp + TikTok, with Instagram close behind.

Even when platforms were rated “safe,” the diarist still did constant background safety work (curating viewers, turning off read receipts, removing people from stories/status). That’s a key insight: “safety” here often means “managed risk,” not “absence of harm.”

Peak risk contexts: Where risk followed the body

- Mobility is a repeated vulnerability point where harassment escalates and safety planning becomes physical
- “Home” is not automatically private; shared living increases the need to manage visibility and eavesdropping.
- Learning spaces are not neutral — insults and surveillance can travel into classrooms and libraries.
- Connectivity choices are shaped by affordability and infrastructure, not preference.

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Even on days where “economic impact” scored low, emotional strain stayed high and physical risk spiked repeatedly, especially when harm was tied to public spaces and other people’s control over safety (transport, school, shared housing).

Digital safety & wellbeing tracker: A day-by-day view

Day	Emotional strain (0-5)	Physical safety risk (0-5)	Economic impact (0-5)	Social impact (0-5)	Harm logged
Mon	4	5	0	4	Hate speech/slurs; threats of violence
Tues	4	3	0	5	Hate speech/slurs
Wed	5	5	0	3	Hate speech/slurs; threats; suspicious link/hacking
Thurs	5	2	0	3	Hate speech/slurs
Fri	4	3	2	4	Hate speech/slurs
Sat	5	5	1	5	Hate speech/slurs; threats; impersonation/ fake profile

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Harm Patterns during the week: This is where we show the diarist's agency and labour of staying safe.

Harm type logged	Number of days it appeared (6 entries)	Where it showed up
Hate speech/slurs	6/6	Campus/classroom/library, transit, social spaces
Threats of violence	3/6	Transit + social spaces
Suspicious link/hacking attempt	1/6	Instagram-linked attempt via a friend
Impersonation/fake profile	1/6	Dating app context (Grindr)

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Response patterns (what the diarist actually did:

Hate speech/ slurs

Across the week, the diarist most often leaned on: blocking/reporting, tightening visibility (removing viewers; turning off read receipts), and community grounding (speaking to friends).

Hacking attempt & Fake profile

And at least 2 platform reports were made (Instagram + Grindr), with outcomes recorded as accounts blocked

What stands out is how safety is practiced as a daily routine ,not one dramatic “fix.” The diarist’s choices (curating who can see them, limiting read receipts, leaning on trusted friends, choosing when to leave a space/platform) show harm reduction in motion: small decisions that protect dignity, reduce exposure, and keep life moving, even while harm keeps trying to interrupt it.