

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ONLINE PRIVACY THE CHEAT SHEET

In a Nutshell

It is the nature of the Internet is to collect, store, and disperse information. As such, true online privacy is practically nonexistent, and most of what seems to be privacy is an illusion. Even the simple act of browsing the Web can reveal an astonishing amount of personal data about you.

Most of the time, it's advertisers who want to learn all about you, the better to sell you things via targeted ads. But other people could be watching you too—employers, banks, insurance companies, hackers, and even the government. If you think that's creepy and worrisome, you can take a number of steps to increase the likelihood that your information will remain private.

Your Internet Connection

Start by securing your connection to the Internet itself:

- Always use WPA on any Wi-Fi network that you control.
- Use a VPN on any open or unfamiliar network.
- Turn on your firewall.

Web Browsing

As you use the Web, a number of practices help keep your personal information private:

- Disable third-party cookies in your browsers.
- Make sure sites that require you to log in use HTTPS.
- Use browser extensions such as AdBlock Plus and Ghostery that block ads and tracking.
- Keep passwords, credit card numbers, and other sensitive data in a secure password manager.
- Try DuckDuckGo for anonymous Web searches.
- For anonymous Web browsing (with a severe speed penalty), try using Tor.

Email

Email is hard to keep private because it always involves at least two parties and you never have control over what happens on the other end. Even so, you should do the following:

- Always log in to your email account using SSL.
- Encrypt email messages (or at least attached files) that contain extremely sensitive information.
- Use other communication methods when you need to avoid the inherent risks of email.

Social Media

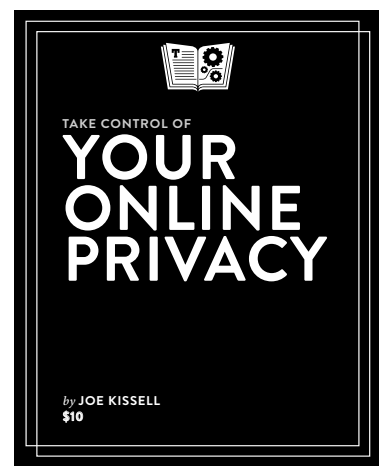
Social media by definition involves sharing information, but you can still:

- Check the privacy settings for each site or service you use (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and make sure you know who can see what.
- Limit friend lists to people you actually know.
- Limit apps when possible; some can read everything you write.
- Don't assume "private" messages really are.
- Use good passwords—and don't share them!

File Sharing

Don't even think about sharing pirated media—it isn't worth it. For greater privacy when sharing other files, however:

- Don't depend on the encryption built into a cloud sync service (like Dropbox); encrypt sensitive files yourself first.
- In lieu of BitTorrent, consider friend-to-friend networks such as Retrosshare or create your own private cloud using a Transporter or similar NAS device.



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