



## Internet Privacy Seems Like a Badly Told Joke

ANY INFORMATION ON A COMPUTER THAT'S CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET CAN BE COMPROMISED.

START WITH THAT UNDERSTANDING WHEN YOU CONSIDER SECURITY AND PRIVACY.

Recently we learned that Cambridge Analytica improperly obtained data about Facebook subscribers and used that data to affect the 2016 election. In fact, Cambridge Analytica used the same procedures Facebook advertisers use to target you for ads.



To Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and all the other services, you are the product. It's advertisers who are the customers. That's not a new concept. If you listen to commercial radio, watch television, read any free magazines or newspapers, or play any free games on the internet, you are what's being sold.

Nothing is free. If someone is providing a service that you use but don't pay money for, you are paying in another way.

There's been a lot of talk about quitting Facebook, but what viable alternatives exist? Facebook provides more than just entertainment. When my older daughter was ill last year, it was how we kept distant family members updated. My wife has used it to find relatives in Poland and I belong to groups for old-time radio people, editors, photographers, punsters, my hometown, and more.

Jim Wright, an old Navy guy who can be both profound and profane, has large Facebook

following. "[F]or all of its problems, it's still a huge communication system that allows me to reach 150,000+ people every day." Wright says that he's careful about the personal information he posts because he knows that Facebook is more about profits than about protecting users, adding "at the moment, I get more out of Facebook than they get out of me and so I'm going to stick around."

But we could all be a little more proactive about our own private information.

Facebook users should opt out of *platform application program interface sharing*. In trying to scare you away from making that change, Facebook warns that you will lose access to "apps, plugins, games, and websites on Facebook and elsewhere." That's actually good, but if you've used Facebook credentials to access other sites, you'll need to create a user name and password for each of those sites.

Some applications you use on a mobile device may need access to Facebook. If so, you can adjust settings for that application and limit what it can see.

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— Jim Wright

Before posting a message to Facebook, think about who should be able to see it. Public means exactly that, but you can limit posts to just your friends, friends with certain exceptions, a list of specific friends, only yourself (useful for testing), or a custom list. Messages

that contain personal details you might not want to be public, should have limited distribution.

It's also worthwhile to visit Facebook's ad settings section to see what Facebook thinks it knows about you. You'll find a list of categories such as birthday month, political leaning, interests, and hardware used. Facebook says this information helps "advertisers reach people who are most likely to be interested in their products, services, and causes." You can delete these.

### It's Not Just Facebook

NOT EVERYONE USES FACEBOOK, BUT JUST ABOUT EVERYONE USES GOOGLE. AS A RESULT, GOOGLE KNOWS MORE ABOUT YOU THAN THE FBI, CIA, AND NSA COMBINED!

Much of this information comes from searches you conduct using Google. Have you noticed that searching for something (let's call it a "widget") on Google will result in the display of ads about widgets on website pages that have ads when you visit those pages.

That's not necessarily bad. If you're looking for a widget, companies that make or sell widgets would like to introduce themselves and you might welcome the ads. However, the ads continue to appear long after you've bought the widget or decided not to buy one.

The easiest way to avoid this is to use a search engine other than Google. DuckDuckGo is the best known non-tracking search engine. It displays ads, which is how the service is paid for, but it doesn't add your information to a file anywhere and it doesn't track you. I've found DuckDuckGo to be a worthy and reliable replacement for Google.

Another search engine is an excellent choice for certain types of searches. Wolfram Alpha is a specialized search engine that does not catalog commercial sites, so it's not a good choice if you want to buy something.

Search for *LED lights* on most search engines and you'll be shown a list of places where you can buy them. Wolfram Alpha will identify the inventor of the technology and explain how it works. If you need scientific or technical information, Wolfram Alpha should be your first stop. General information is free, but if you use the site a lot and need more detailed responses, you'll want a monthly subscription (\$5 to \$8 per month).

If you want to continue using Google, you can purge your search results. Start on the Google Activity page where you may be astonished by what Google has retained. Google says "Only you can see this data. Google protects your privacy and security." Even so, you might want to eliminate some of it. Google explains the full process on their support site.

I found that Google had a list of my search terms back to August 11, 2013, and decided to delete all history prior to January 1, 2018. Keeping recent terms can be helpful. If you choose to delete the history, you'll need to revisit the activity page occasionally and repeat the process.

Google also allows users to turn off ad personalization, but think twice before doing so. Turning off personalization doesn't turn off ads, but it does make them less useful. Google explains: "You'll no longer be able to block or mute some ads. Ads you see may be based on the subject of the webpage that you're viewing."

## Other Services and Devices

IF YOU USE A PERSONAL ASSISTANT (CORTANA OR JIRI, FOR EXAMPLE) OR A SMART DEVICE THAT YOU TALK TO (LIKE AMAZON ECHO), CONSIDER REVIEWING WHAT THE SYSTEM KNOWS ABOUT YOU AND POSSIBLY PURGING SOME OF THE INFORMATION.

These devices learn about you and are able to respond better once they know your preferences – just like a real personal assistant – so deleting everything isn't a good idea.

Most large companies tell their employees to assume that telephones and computers owned by the company and provided to employees are being monitored. It's not unreasonable to assume the same thing when we're dealing with on-line services. Jim Wright put it this way: "I don't talk about anything in Facebook messenger that would embarrass me in public. And I don't give Facebook any information that I don't expect them to exploit for their own profit." 🏠

## The Most Important Gift

THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN, SHALL WE SAY, "INTERESTING" AS WE LEARNED MORE THAN WE EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT HOW THE LIVER WORKS, HOW IT FAILS, AND ORGAN TRANSPLANTS.

On Monday, May 15, 2017, we learned that older daughter, Elizabeth, was in the emergency room at Fairfield Medical Center. Liver failure was the initial diagnosis. After being in intensive care overnight, she was transferred to Ohio State University Hospital the following morning. Barely conscious on arrival, she soon slipped into a coma.

An outstanding team of medical professionals from many departments confirmed the liver failure diagnosis. Because the failure was acute and immediately life threatening, she was moved to the top of the list for a donor organ. A match was found on May 19 and the transplant surgery began late that afternoon.

The following afternoon, Elizabeth met her surgeon (lower left photo) and has been observed closely in the year since by the head of the surgical team and the hepatology department at University Hospital.

As essential as the medical staff has been, this past year would have been much different without *Donate Life Ohio*.



## The Importance of Organ Donation

DONATE LIFE OHIO IS A COALITION OF THE STATE'S ORGAN, EYE, AND TISSUE RECOVERY AGENCIES DEDICATED TO EDUCATING OHIOANS ABOUT THE NEED FOR DONATIONS AND MOTIVATING THEM TO JOIN THE OHIO DONOR REGISTRY.

Similar organizations associated with Donate Life America exist in all states. If you're not yet a registered organ donor, please consider signing up. The [donatelife.net](http://donatelife.net) website can guide you to your state's organ donor registry, help you determine if you're already registered, and assist with registration if you're not.

On average, 20 people die every day in the United States while waiting for a transplant that doesn't come in time. More than 100,000 people are on various transplant waiting lists.

We are eternally grateful to the organ donor, the organ donor's family, the intensive care doctors and nurses who kept Elizabeth alive during the wait, and the surgical team. These are the heroes who gave Elizabeth a second chance at life. 🏠