10 ways to protect your privacy online | Provided by Surfshark

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We live in a society with an overwhelming reliance on technology just to communicate. The chances are, you're reading this on a mobile browser that you use for just about every form of communication – email, social media, banking, as well as calling and texting.

However, when data lands into the wrong hands through lack of precautions, or due to a hacker, it could lead to disruption to online accounts, stolen money or even identity theft.

Here are some easy but effective ways to batten down those digital hatches and surf more securely and confidently.

1. **Change your social media habits**

   Do you love to check-in to every shop, restaurant, or public place you visit? Are you quite relaxed about everyone knowing where you are and what you're up to?

   Avoid giving away details unnecessarily to avoid making the tasks of a criminal that much easier.

2. **Use end-to-end encryption**

   Choose messaging services, like What's App, that use end-to-

end encryption. This means that messages are encrypted on the senders' device and deciphered by the receiver – nobody in the middle can intercept.

3. **Use stronger passwords**

   Create passwords with at least 12 characters, include a few special characters and numbers, and you'll be instantly more hacker-proof.

   Use a password manager to help, and also try to avoid using the same password for every online service.

4. **Revoke mobile app permissions**

   Apps love to frequently access your camera, microphone, contact list, or obtain geolocation data – all of which you may have consented to already. So, perhaps it's time to put a spoke in the wheel?

   Simply revoke access to any parts of your device you no longer want certain apps to view.

5. **Turn off GPS tracking**

   Turning off your location when it's not needed can give you added security.

   Not only do companies use your location to target you with more personalized advertisements, but criminals can gain a unique picture about your life, which can only have negative consequences.

6. **Use a VPN**

   A VPN can hide your true IP address, providing you with a brand-new one, so your real location remains anonymous.

Internet traffic is also encrypted when tunneled through to a remote server, therefore it's no longer being stored by your ISP.

So if, for example, you live in the U.S., and want to protect your data form your ISP, but still keep optimal speeds, then simply choose a [USA IP address](#).

7. **Stay safe on Wi-Fi networks.**

Most public Wi-Fi networks fail to encrypt internet traffic, meaning that other malicious users could snoop on your activities in order to steal login credentials, banking details and other sensitive information.

Once again, using a VPN can help as all internet traffic is encrypted, making it impossible for a snooper to gather data.

8. **Secure your browser**

Keeping your browser up-to-date, clearing cookies regularly, and reviewing your browser settings should already be on your safety checklist.

However, care must be taken not to overload your browser with too many add-ons and extensions, as they can open pathways to spy on your activities. Be sure to only download from reputable sources, and enable automatic updates.

9. **Only use HTTPS**

Traditionally, data that is sent from a website to your web browser uses the HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP). However, a more secure version exists: HTTPS.

With HTTPS, data is both encrypted and verified which helps prevent interception and eavesdropping.

When using sites that require payment or login details, look for a green padlock in the address bar which will confirm that a site is using HTTPS.

10. **Be on the alert for bogus emails**

Email phishing scams are still a popular choice for hackers. Their emails can be highly personalized and mimic real businesses, appearing legit even to the most digitally astute web users.

Ask yourself, is this an unsolicited email? If the person tells you that your computer has a virus that they can resolve by clicking a link, you can be certain that this is a fear or pressure tactic being used snatch personal details from you.

Technology may have improved our lives, and made day-to-day tasks more convenient, but if we're not diligent enough, it could come back to bite us.

Maintaining maximum privacy online isn't as daunting as it looks. It simply involves readjusting your online habits, and staying alert as technology continues to evolve.

[Surfshark](#) is an award-winning, secure VPN that encrypts your online data to help you stay private and protected every day, hassle free. Visit our site to learn more about how a VPN can help keep your digital life more secure.