



# Online Privacy Guide:

## Handling Online Privacy the Right Way

**AS OUR LIVES MOVE FURTHER INTO THE DIGITAL WORLD**, we're often paying for newly-gained comforts with our privacy. Yet, because the effects from these compromises are not often immediately visible, it is easy to dismiss the potential impact of privacy loss on our lives and overlook the steps necessary to minimize it.

In order to help our associates, partners and clients protect their digital footprints, Assurex Global asked our “go-to” resource for digital forensics and cybersecurity, LIFARS, for advice. What follows is a sampling of questions it commonly hears from clients and its advice for handling online privacy the right way.

### **Am I able to use software to help protect my privacy online?**

Most of today's top antivirus programs, such as Norton, Kaspersky, McAfee, and Trend Micro include various features that help you manage your privacy while browsing the Internet. Yet these programs are often just the first line of defense. If you want to further increase your level of online privacy, browser extensions are a good solution.

#### **Examples include:**

##### ■ **uBlock Origin**

Used by millions, this extension is at the top of the list for both Chrome and Firefox browsers. It intelligently helps protect against malicious content on websites—such as malware, password theft, information theft and more.

##### ■ **Privacy Badger**

A very popular privacy extension created by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), Privacy Badger is available for both Chrome and Firefox. It blocks spying ads and invisible trackers on websites you visit. Unlike other tools, it has a not-for-profit business model—ensuring that your privacy comes first.

Other tools such as VPNs or the Tor Network can be used to increase the security and privacy of your Internet connection, but these are a bit more complex to implement and not necessary for everyday use.



## **I am being inundated with sales emails I do not want.**

### **How can I remove my information from these databases?**

Your information is very valuable. That free guide to real estate investment you downloaded last week was not really free—your information paid for it. In a typical scenario, the information you enter is added to a database for marketing purposes and often sold to other companies. This can start an avalanche of spam. While it is nearly impossible to completely remove your information from these lists, it is possible to limit the spread of your information. You can track your online presence, and monitor the Internet to ensure that your personal information does not get leaked. Some of the best tools available are DeleteMe, Catalog Choice, and Safe Shepherd.

### **With all this talk of tracking and snooping, are the popular search engines safe to use?**

Yes, they are safe to use. But search intelligently and clear the cache and cookies in your browser regularly. Most search engines build their entire business around collecting search data and selling it to advertisers. Your searches are never private. A side effect of searching and visiting websites is that ads on that topic will start to follow you. If you don't want embarrassing ads popping up on your screen, eliminate queries on that subject and stick with things you would not mind asking publically. For sensitive searches, such as health queries, it's a good idea to take it offline and ask your doctor instead. Another option is to use a privacy-focused search engine, such as DuckDuckGo.



### **What are some simple ways I can increase my privacy levels on social media?**

Social networks are created for sharing, and privacy is very hard to maintain, but there are a few simple steps you can take to increase privacy while continuing to use your favorite social networks. First and foremost, review the privacy settings of your accounts. In most cases, users mistakenly believe that their information is not publicly shared. Facebook now offers a privacy check-up tool that walks you through your settings. Many networks also offer the option to see your profile as someone else and check what others are seeing when they click on your profile. We recommend that you read the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy of the social media you are using so that you understand how your information is and can be used



LIFARS is a digital forensics and cybersecurity intelligence firm based in New York City. Our incident response and penetration testing teams consist of the top experts in the field. As a testament to our excellence, LIFARS was ranked the #2 cybersecurity company in New York Metro area on the Cybersecurity 500 list of the hottest and most innovative cyber security companies.



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