

Data privacy and young people



What is data privacy?

“Every time that we use a computer or a phone or a social networking platform there is a data trail, a deep data trail.”

- **Tama Leaver, Professor of Internet Studies, Curtin University**

Data privacy is about each person’s right to know about and control the kinds of information collected from them and how that information will be used.

Despite this seemingly straightforward definition, data privacy is not an easy concept to understand. This is because whenever we use the internet, especially social media, information is collected. This information can include details about us including our age, location, and tastes, as well as the things that we search for and interact with online. The challenge is knowing exactly what is collected, how long it is kept, and how it used.

What issues do young people have to concern themselves with when it comes to data privacy?

“Often the data trail being generated is not one you imagine following you through the rest of your life, and yet that’s the very reality we live in.”

- **Tama Leaver, Professor of Internet Studies, Curtin University**

It can be hard to imagine how something that we post today might affect us in the future, and this is why data privacy is a problem for young people. While we might forget about the photos, videos, and comments that we post, platforms often don’t.

To best protect ourselves, we need to be aware of the data that platforms retain and who might be able to see it in the future. It isn’t often clear if platforms delete data even after accounts are deleted. So we should always ask ourselves what might happen if our post was seen by someone who we hadn’t intended it for. What might our parents, teachers, or future employers think if they saw what we posted? Because one day they might.



There are lots of ways to take charge of your data privacy

“Spend some time thinking about your privacy when you join a website or when you download an app for the first time”

- **Tama Leaver, Professor of Internet Studies, Curtin University**

Every social media platform has a privacy policy that lays out in detail the data it collects and how it may be used. But there are easier ways to know what is collected and who has access to your posts.

Private versus public content. Know whether your account is public or private when you create it. When creating a new account, some social media platforms will default to public, some to private, and some will depend on age. This setting will determine how easy it is for people to find your account and to see what you are doing. It does not generally change the information that the platform collects.

Review your privacy settings in the devices, apps and sites you use. You can review privacy and security from your profile settings and adjust who has access to your information and how visible your posts are, as well as allowing you to restrict access.

Set your location settings as off by default. When you first set up your phone turn location services off by default. You can then grant or deny apps to have access to your location once or just when you are using the app. Setting these permissions will help to limit when your location information is shared. Be aware that platforms have other ways of collecting your location information.

Use safety tools. Platforms give you the option to block other users or restrict their access to your content and your access to theirs in different ways. Familiarise yourself with these options and don't be afraid to use them to protect yourself and your data.

Download your data. You can request a download of your data from platforms that will show you what the platform collects and stores. You might want to keep your data if you delete an account, which is the safest way to stop using a platform. It's also a great way to review what is collected and then further adjust your privacy settings.

“You can protect your privacy by being aware of, and actively using, the privacy settings of these platforms and your devices, as well as understanding your legal rights”.

- **Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

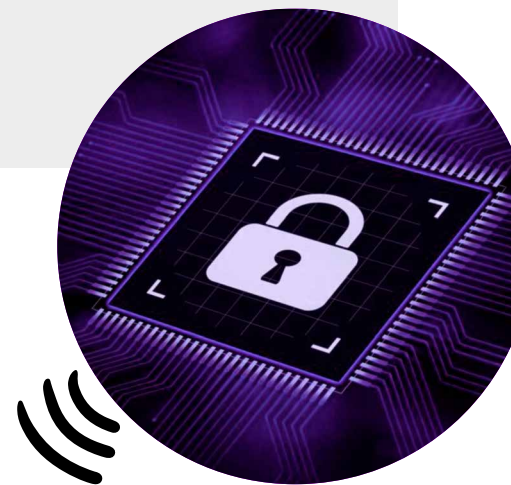


GUIDES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- [Instagram safety centre](#)
- [How to stay safe on Snapchat](#)
- [TikTok safety guides](#)
- [YouTube privacy controls](#)

GUIDES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

- [Instagram parental guide for teens](#)
- [Snapchat parent guide](#)
- [TikTok guardian's guide](#)
- [YouTube parental control tools](#)
- [YouTube protection policies](#)



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