

Cypurr Collective Cryptoparty ***BKPL Info Commons, 8/13/2017***

Sometimes our privacy needs to be protected because the content of what we're saying to someone (health and finance records, information about our plans or location, political views) could put us at risk if the wrong person or group overheard. Metadata, on the other hand, is information about who we talk to, when we do, and how we're talking to each other.

A lot of data collected by large companies like Facebook or Google is metadata about what users do and who they talk to using their software. They then use that metadata to improve their software. But they are allowed to keep those records for a long time, and if someone can access them (with legal requests or technical skill) metadata can be just as dangerous, even if the records don't include what exactly you said. Internet service companies can also sell your data to other advertising, insurance, or banking groups. Part of working on digital privacy is learning how different cloud services are tracking your activity, what the possible risks are, and the tools or settings that can be changed to improve your privacy. Going into your Facebook (Settings -> Ads) or Google (Settings -> My Account -> Ads Settings) account settings can tell you a lot about what your metadata says about you.

Good Computer Hygiene:

(These points will stay the same, but the software might change / grow outdated)
Update software regularly, to keep up with security patches
Regular virus scans (AVG, Avast, Bitdefender)

Use strong passwords / a password manager (KeePass, LastPass)

Protect your browser with script/ad blockers (uBlock Origin, Privacy Badger)

Connect to websites with a secure connection (HTTPS Everywhere)

Resources:

Security in a Box, <https://securityinabox.org/>: step-by-step security guides for each operating system

Surveillance Self-Defense, <https://ssd.eff.org/> — explanation of different surveillance threats and the tools that defend against them

Prism Break, <https://prism-break.org/en/> — free, open-source software

Cryptoparty, <https://www.cryptoparty.in/> — meet-ups, crypto news