

Privacy Best Practices: Scoring and Lessons Learned

*In this module, we reviewed a series of suggested privacy best practices. I rated each on two scales: **strength of privacy (1–5)** and **likelihood I would follow (A–F)**. I also asked three friends to do the same, then added my own recommendations.*

My Scores

1. Use strong, unique passwords with a password manager

- *Privacy strength: 5*
- *Likelihood: A — I already use a password manager, so this is realistic.*

2. Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) on accounts

- *Privacy strength: 5*
- *Likelihood: A — I enable 2FA whenever possible.*

3. Limit app permissions (location, microphone, camera, contacts)

- *Privacy strength: 4*
- *Likelihood: B — I do it sometimes but convenience wins out.*

4. Regularly update your phone's software

- *Privacy strength: 4*
- *Likelihood: A — Updates install automatically for me.*

5. Use a VPN on public Wi-Fi

- *Privacy strength: 3*
- *Likelihood: C I rarely use VPNs since mobile data is more convenient.*

6. ***Be cautious about what you share on social media***

- *Privacy strength: 4*
- *Likelihood: **B** — I try to limit personal details, but it's easy to slip.*

Friends' Responses

- ***Friend 1:** Saw VPN use as critical (strength 4, likelihood A), but admitted they never update apps (strength 4, likelihood D).*
- ***Friend 2:** Prioritized limiting app permissions (strength 5, likelihood A) but was lukewarm on 2FA (strength 5, likelihood C).*
- ***Friend 3:** Rated password managers low (strength 3, likelihood D) because they didn't trust them, but valued software updates highly.*

***Overall pattern:** Everyone agreed 2FA and software updates are strong defenses, but convenience, lack of trust, and habits shape whether they follow through.*

Additional Best Practices I Recommend

1. ***Regularly audit connected accounts and devices** — Remove old logins and apps that still have access.*
2. ***Use encrypted messaging apps by default** — Signal, iMessage, or WhatsApp rather than SMS.*
3. ***Check privacy dashboards on your phone monthly** — Both iOS and Android now show what sensors and permissions are used most.*

What I Learned:

*Scoring privacy practices shows a gap between **awareness of strength** and **likelihood of action**. Even strong measures like 2FA or VPNs fall off when they are inconvenient. Friends varied widely in trust toward tools like password managers. The lesson is that **good privacy advice must also be practical**; otherwise, it will be ignored. My own added practices focus on regular habits and defaults (audits, encrypted messaging, dashboards) because these balance strong protection with realistic effort.*

Conclusion: *Privacy isn't just about knowing best practices it's about aligning them with daily routines. The best strategy is combining strong measures (like 2FA) with regular, low-effort habits that keep personal data secure.*