

Review of Usage and Privacy Policies
for
Social Media Sites

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Google's lengthy, transparent privacy policy is a couple of layers deep on the company's main privacy page. Although they are not hiding anything, it sounds as if the privacy policy was likely drafted by a team of lawyers, and as such, the majority of the policy is not exactly written in a simple style.

• Information you provide – When you sign up for a Google Account, we ask you for personal information. We may combine the information you submit under your account with information from other Google services or third parties in order to provide you with a better experience and to improve the quality of our services. For certain services, we may give you the opportunity to opt out of combining such information. You can use the Google Dashboard to learn more about the information associated with your Account. If you are using Google services in conjunction with your Google Apps Account, Google provides such services in conjunction with or on behalf of your domain administrator. Your administrator will have access to your account information including your email. Consult your domain administrator's privacy policy for more information.

What this essentially means is that they may sell your information to third-party companies. They may or may not let you know about it. Again, in the world where companies operate hand-in-hand with advertisers, it may not be all that surprising except for the fact that they can opt out to tell you what exactly they are doing with your data is troublesome.

• Cookies – When you visit Google, we send one or more cookies to your computer or other device. We use cookies to improve the quality of our service, including for storing user preferences, improving search results and ad selection, and tracking user trends, such as how people search. Google also uses cookies in its advertising services to help advertisers and publishers serve and manage ads across the web and on Google services.

Cookies are what enable us to sign on to favorite websites without re-entering our name and password; This states that Google uses the cookies to track us. Although makes for ease and can be very convenient, one can change his/her settings to refuse all cookies or to indicate when a cookie is being sent, though that may stop certain features from working. With this change, you can manage to opt out of, what ads you see.

• Log information – When you access Google services via a browser, application or other client our servers automatically record certain information. These server logs may include information such as your web request, your interaction with a service, Internet Protocol address, browser type, browser language, the date and time of your request and one or more cookies that may uniquely identify your browser or your account.

Everything you do, read, and search on Google is automatically saved on servers and tied back to you, thanks once again to those cookies. This has been the new of many individuals when it comes to suspect in proving them guilty, or blackmailing should that information ever get in the hands of the wrong person.

• User communications – When you send email or other communications to Google, we may retain those communications in order to process your inquiries, respond to your requests and improve our services. When you send and receive SMS messages to or from one of our services

that provides SMS functionality, we may collect and maintain information associated with those messages, such as the phone number, the wireless carrier associated with the phone number, the content of the message, and the date and time of the transaction. We may use your email address to communicate with you about our services.

Every single one of your emails and texts may be saved for infinity. To drive this point home, Google clearly states it will save even “the content of the message,” so this now has me thinking twice before I hit send on emails or texts.

- *Affiliated Google Services on other sites – We offer some of our services on or through other web sites. Personal information that you provide to those sites may be sent to Google in order to deliver the service. We process such information under this Privacy Policy.*

Your user information may be shared with outside companies working with Google.

- *Third Party Applications – Google may make available third party applications, such as gadgets or extensions, through its services. The information collected by Google when you enable a third party application is processed under this Privacy Policy. Information collected by the third party application provider is governed by their privacy policies.*

If you use an add-on service from outside of Google to change anything within Google — from using a widget on your Chrome browser to using a download within your gmail account — the third-party company has its own set of privacy policies you might want to know about. Again, this should be common sense, but yet many people may be unaware of such.

- *Location data – Google offers location-enabled services, such as Google Maps and Latitude. If you use those services, Google may receive information about your actual location (such as GPS signals sent by a mobile device) or information that can be used to approximate a location (such as a cell ID).*

If you use a GPS or other mapping tool, Google knows where you are.

- *Unique application number – Certain services, such as Google Toolbar, include a unique application number that is not associated with your account or you. This number and information about your installation (e.g., operating system type, version number) may be sent to Google when you install or uninstall that service or when that service periodically contacts our servers (for example, to request automatic updates to the software).*

The way you search, and the browser you use, is all saved and tracked back with a unique number assigned just to you.