# Minimalism.

Before we even discuss the internet, let's talk about minimalism pertaining to your local files and programs. "Local" means files and programs stored on your *show devices * physical hard drives, phones, and other personal devices. In general, the rule of thumb is the more programs and services you're using, the higher chance of a security exploit and/or personal data collection.

Why is this? Let's find out after this short message...

## Promotional Spot

A basic example: * Hold Smartphone * Almost all of us have smartphones. Let's say you download the Facebook app onto your phone. It can now read all of your contacts, your SMS messages sent outside of the app, and it can view your phone calls. This already is alarming. But let's say you download Snapchat. Now snapchat has access to similar information, but two different companies have access to it. You have doubled the chances of your information leaking in some fashion. Over on your computer, it's not uncommon for programs to also open up your computer to exploits, like Java, Reader, and Flash. The more apps and programs you leave installed on your devices, the greater chance of an exploit, or that a company will harvest your information, making your digital footprint more extensive. The goal is to be as minimal as you possibly can, I want you to brag about how few apps you use on your devices.

So where do we start? First, if you just got a new device, it most likely comes with preinstalled programs called bloatware, which is a loose term for any software that isn't needed and is considered bloat. Windows loves this, Android has this, iPhones have this, almost all devices do. They take up valuable system resources and more often than not are detrimental to your privacy and security. The first thing I'd recommend you do when you get a new device is to reinstall the operating system to remove the bloatware. If the operating system itself includes bloatware (like windows), uninstall as much of it as you can manually.

After that, we need to delete those old games and other apps you don't use anymore--it's doing much more harm than good in the background! In some of my old videos, I clearly didn't follow this. Just looking at the apps I had installed, you could learn so much about my life, and you can bet that some of these apps were collecting data in the background.

The top shows my cellular provider, Cydia shows I was jailbroken, Pearson PowerSchool reveals that I was most likely a minor attending High school or

*middle school. OneDrive shows I was using a cloud service that uses no default encryption; just to name a few! Swiping to page 2, things just get juicier and juicier,* if we, humans, can visually see these patterns, imagine what these devices can do when they're collecting countless amounts of data on your personal life.

As a totally random note, I want to remind you that most software that comes with new accessories is completely unneeded, and you should avoid installing them. *Printers come with their own software, but you don't need it because your operating system already takes care of that. Monitors come with software too which you don't need. Headphone and other device manufacturers also like advertising their own software; in general it's not necessary.*

So that explains apps and programs, but what about files. I'm going to talk about cookies, cache, and history in the next lesson, but right now let's discuss your personal files: *photos, videos, documents, and anything else you own.* Deleting some of your personal files has advantages as well. *First, if someone is able to get into your devices, they're going to have a tougher time figuring out information about you.* As an example, I frequently clear my SMS messages so that if someone gets into my phone, they can't view any old private messages. On a digital level, some programs on your computer have the ability to collect your data, like antiviruses cloud-based programs, and even certain browsers, so the less you give them the better. The last and most obvious benefit is that you will *free up storage on your devices and have a much more organized life.*

First, go through and remove things that are unused and unneeded across all of your devices, *typically this involves cleaning up your desktop, removing files in your Downloads folder, and emptying your trash bin.* Now technically things emptied from your trash or recycle bin can be recovered, but we'll cover shredding files later on in the course. Then you can start moving to your other files, finding things you really have no use for anymore. *Old screenshots, unneeded videos, expired documents, this is all on you to decide.* At this point, I'd recommend transferring any documents which contain sensitive information about your life to a properly secured *\* show both \** external hard drive or flash drive, which can only be accessed if you physically plug it in, that way the information isn't always accessible by your operating system. We will cover how to properly secure these later on with encryption.

As for mobile devices, *Android does have a file manager which you should frequently check on to make sure there are no files you can remove. And for iOS 11, there is a "sorta" file manager for you as well. Don't forget to frequently clear your text and call history to keep things minimal on all mobile devices.*

I do want to mention that *deleting icons from your computer's desktop isn't uninstalling programs, it has to be done in the control panel or the new Windows 10 settings app, I can't tell you how many people aren't aware of this. For Macs you have to drag it into the trash bin.* For the more advanced users, when you uninstall programs from your computer (especially in windows), there are commonly still leftovers of the program which aren't fully removed. Some key places to look are these directories. ***C:/Program Files, C:/Program Files (x86), C:/User/YOURUSERNAME/Appdata *** *You can also hit Windows Key + R, and enter Regedit.exe. Once here, just search for keywords from the program to find leftover registry keys,* or there's a tool in the next lesson which will automate this process. For Mac users, do the same thing by looking through *these directories to clear program remnants.* To avoid leftovers like these in the future, *make sure to remove settings for your programs during the uninstallation process, if prompted, and use a free tool like Geek Uninstaller, which automatically picks up remnants when you uninstall a program. For Macs, AppCleaner is an amazing app that works similar to Geek uninstaller.*

Before wrapping it up, Parents and spouses, try to avoid installing 3rd party spy software on your loved one's devices. First, try to create enough trust between you two to figure out a physical compromise, *like leaving the phone outside the bedroom for kids.* 3rd party spy software is extremely dangerous because it gains access to everything on a phone, and it's all being stored on that company's servers. This is a huge security and privacy issue, *software like mSpy continually suffers leaks,* and *an app even leaked Teens' Apple IDs, which is enough information to break into an account*--as we'll discuss later in the course. If you have to setup parental controls or spy software of some sort, *most devices have built-in parental controls allowing you to do this without handing over data to a third party company. Additionally, lots of routers allow you to setup parental controls as well, so you don't need to setup parental controls on the device itself.* No matter what, avoid spy software from third party companies, that's a big no-no.

## Queue Outro Promos

So that wraps it up for minimalism. Remember: *Less is more.* The less programs, apps, and files you store on your devices, the less data there is to collect about you, and less risk of a security exploit. This was a simple and casual step, but it's very important nonetheless down the road. This is also one of the beautiful things to do, because it actually speeds up your devices and improves your battery life, without really affecting convenience. The next lesson for section 2 will dive a little bit deeper into minimalism. I will see you then.