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Free services like Facebook, Google, Twitter

and even your wireless carrier — all of which actively harvest your personal data and track your online activities in exchange for offering you "free" access to their services.

In this increasingly hyperconnected world, the problem of privacy loss has reached epic proportions. We now have to worry about the National Security Agency (NSA) illegally spying on us using backdoor access to our mobile phones and computers, or other federal agencies using crafty gateways like the Patriot Act to invade our private lives [in the name of "national security."](#)

Coming to the stark realization that virtually everything we do in our "tech" lives is likely being tracked by someone can be a bit overwhelming. Nevertheless, we're not completely powerless to defend ourselves.

Security expert Felicia King, who's been researching the subject for more than 10 years, offers some helpful tips to protect your privacy and get the government out of your personal business.

Having worked in the IT industry for many years, King knows a thing or two about personal privacy. According to her, there are a lot of simple ways for average tech users to better protect themselves from privacy breaches without breaking the bank.

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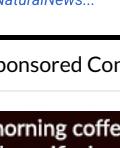
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## VPNs, data encryption and cloud storage — make sure you're protected

The smartphone market is one area where privacy is often sacrificed in favor of convenience and trendiness. Whether you own an Android, Windows Phone or iPhone, you are at risk. All of these devices are relatively easy to hack, which is why King suggests installing add-ons whenever and wherever possible to avoid having your browsing habits tracked.

Unless you own an advanced smartphone device like the [Cryptophone](#) — a \$3,500 piece of equipment often used by law enforcement and other government entities to avoid having mobile data and calls intercepted by cell tower-mimicking "stingray" equipment — your mobile phone activity is highly vulnerable.

King suggests installing virtual private network (VPN) software like [Golden Frog's VyprVPN](#), which adds an extra layer of protection and security by tunneling data through private networks typically hosted overseas (where government spying is prohibited or

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Dear Donald Trump: Blockade the lying mainstream media and recognize the independent media as America's real free press

highly unlikely).

She also suggests avoiding uploading raw data to the "cloud" or to sites like Dropbox, which provide little to no privacy protection for users. Encrypting your data *before* you upload it anywhere, she suggests, will ensure that only you and those you allow will have access to your data.

## Private search engines, social media and cookie blockers for your web browser

It's becoming increasingly apparent that popular search engines, like Google, care little about your personal privacy. Google has been the subject of much controversy in recent years for tracking users' search habits, private emails and other information while hailing a corporate mission of "don't be evil."

Since Google has abandoned its "don't be evil" mantra, it's now up to you to protect yourself by using private search engines such as [Startpage](#) and [DuckDuckGo](#), which are both anonymous. Then there's also the [Good Gopher search engine](#) launched by our own [Health Ranger, Mike Adams](#).

Plug-in tools like [HTTPS Everywhere](#), [PrivacyBadger](#) and [AdBlockPlus](#) can be installed in the Firefox browser for added protection against data intrusion and spying.

Two other tools, [Tails](#) and [Cookie Wall](#), also ensure that every time you boot up your computer, your tracking cookies are removed. This means that there's "no history, nothing," as King puts it, that any third party can extract from your computer in an attempt to invade your privacy.

And as an alternative to the Facebook social media platform – which is one of the biggest data-mining tools out there right now – King recommends our own [Natural News Share](#) network, which provides uncensored information sharing without corporate censorship and privacy invasion.

### Sources:

[WhoWhatWhy.org](#)



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## More news on Internet privacy.

[Google lets you download your entire search history - So yes, they're monitoring and archiving our data](#)

[CISPA attack on Internet freedom of speech is back with a vengeance](#)

[Take that, NSA: Communities worldwide start building cheap, homemade Internet networks due to privacy concerns](#)

[List of words to avoid using if you don't want the NSA to flag your emails, phone calls](#)

[Every picture you take is secretly encoded with your GPS location](#)

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