

I've been thinking a lot about privacy

With the US taking a turn toward fascism and amping up the surveillance state, I've been thinking a lot about privacy.

For years we were warned that by using free apps and services like Gmail, Google Maps, and Facebook (to name a few) Big Tech would use our data as a means for them to profit.

I always responded to those warnings with "I have nothing to hide". You've probably said something similar. What I'm discovering now is that it was never about what we had to hide but more about what they would do with our information.

You've probably also heard someone say "there is no such thing as a free lunch"? Welp, that's definitely true in this situation. The reality is that we do not pay upfront for these tools because that's not what Big Tech is selling. It's us. ***We* are their product**.

I'm not an idiot. I knew that Google and friends were selling my data. What I didn't fully understand, until the current US regime came to power, was just *how much* of it they were collecting or *how* they were using it.

You may not realize it but every app on your phone and every website you visit is collecting data about you. That customer loyalty card from your favorite store? Another way to gather data about you. Even your smart TV is spying on you. All of that information is used to construct a profile about you and your likely habits.

There are several things about this that I don't like. It's not just the personalized ads trying to separate me from my money or using my personal information to figure out how to keep me doom scrolling on Instagram. It is that these companies are using my data to train their AI models and that they will turn over my data to the government - or anyone else - constitutionality be damned.

So not only are they collecting tons of data about me, they are not being especially careful with it. Data breaches are becoming far too common and do not always make the news. I was definitely shocked by how many times my information has been stolen. You can check for yourself to see if your email or password have ever been at compromised in a data breach. Keep in mind that this is just the tip of the iceberg - anyone remember DOGE?

With this new understanding about my digital privacy (or lack there of) I decided to break up with Big Tech and de-google my life (as much as possible). I've been working at this since February and let me tell you it has not been quick, simple or easy. Despite the effort involved, I think it is worth it.

I'm curious, is this something that's been on your radar? Have I gotten your wheels turning? If so, here are some pretty simple steps you can take to decrease how much of your data these companies can access and start taking control of your digital data.

+ stop accepting cookies on websites
+ delete apps from your phone that you've not used
+ review the permissions for the remaining apps (does that map app really need to access your contacts?)
+ turn off your phone's Bluetooth and Wi-Fi when not using them

During tonight's YouTube livestream I'll share my progress and the lessons I've learned so far in this journey.

What I've been working on

As many of you know, I am a sewist (a person who sews). Usually, I sew clothing but currently I'm making on a pair of Birkenstocks. I won a kit, which included the footbeds and sole material, a few years ago when I attended Chicago Frocktails. The rose gold leather was picked up when I visited Toronto to see Beyonce perform. Not sure why it took me so long to start this project but hopefully I'll be done this week.



Picky Girl Travels, LLC

This message is sent to you because your email address is on our newsletter subscribers' list. If you are not interested in receiving more emails like this one, just hit click the link below.

Click here to unsubscribe