



Online Privacy and Safety Tips

We've all heard it before – nothing that happens online is ever truly private or anonymous. And while that is true, it's also true that there are ways people can increase their privacy and feel safer online. This tip sheet is for women who are looking for ways to stay connected but want to feel safer and keep their information more private.

SIGNING UP FOR ACCOUNTS

- Create email addresses and usernames that don't contain identifying information such as your full name or birth date / year.
- Use different usernames and profile pictures for each site, and have more than one email account for different purposes like work, school, and social groups. You can also consider using a picture that isn't of you for your profile photo.
- Be thoughtful about sharing personal information beyond what's necessary to create an account or set up a profile. Sometimes sites don't make it super obvious that the information is optional, so look out for the fine print!
- Click "no" when sites or apps offer to check your contact list to help connect you with your friends already on their site.
- Opt out of having your profile be searchable on the site itself, and from showing up in general search results like Google.

PASSWORDS

- The best passwords are at least 12 – 15 characters long, and can contain letters, numbers and symbols.
- Use different passwords for accounts that contain sensitive or personally identifying information.
- Log out when you're done and opt out when asked if you want the device, browser, site or app to remember your password.
- Read more in our Password Safety tip sheet.

PRIVACY SETTINGS & POLICIES

- Read the privacy settings guides that many social media sites now offer and adjust your privacy settings to meet your needs. Here are links to a few of the major sites privacy guides:



- [Facebook Privacy Basics](#)
 - [Twitter: Protecting Your Personal Information](#)
 - [Snapchat Privacy Center](#)
 - [Instagram Privacy Settings & Information](#)
- Read the privacy policies of apps and sites to find out who else has access to your information and how they can get it. Many sites and apps will share information if they receive a subpoena or court order, which is important for women who have or may have court related interactions with the person who abused or stalked them.
 - Learn more about [Privacy Considerations When Posting Content Online](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Social media is built to be social. Some information is by default always public, while you can choose who sees other information and posts. Regularly review who is in your friends lists, and be aware that your friends' friends may be able to see your posts.
- See our guides to [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Learn more about safety and privacy with [Online Dating](#), and [Online Gaming](#).

FRIENDS & FAMILY

- Talk to your friends and family about what they can and can't post online about you.
- Don't forget that your employers, churches, sport teams, groups, and volunteer organizations may share your personal information online.

SAFE WEB BROWSING

- Use anti-virus software, keep it updated, and regularly scan your devices.
- Periodically delete history, cookies, temporary internet files, and saved forms and passwords from your web browser.
- Learn more about [Internet Browser Privacy Tips](#).