



# PRIVACY PRACTICES

jeff@jeffbohr.com | 239.595.0482



BY JEFF BOHR  
Naples Mac Help

In the past 50 years, privacy has become more precious as the internet and social media have eroded the walls of privacy that we have constructed. If you are not sure about this theory, type your name into Google and see what the results are! I am going to give an explanation of some tips you can easily implement to start rebuilding your privacy wall back to a more fortified state.

One of the best things to do is start using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to protect your online activity. A VPN adds a layer of anonymity between your device and the internet provider. An example would be if you were to log into Wi-Fi in a coffee shop. This is an open or public Wi-Fi network that does not require a password. The danger of these networks is that there is no privacy, and anything you type or enter could be intercepted by someone that has the software to do this. This happens anywhere where you can join a network without a password, and no data transferred on these networks should be considered private. This happens in hotels, shopping centers, airports, restaurants, doctors' offices, and almost anywhere that is not a home. Again, if you are logging into your bank to pay bills on an open network, your password and email are at risk of being exposed and another person could then log into your account. Using a VPN prevents this from happening. It makes you anonymous when browsing the web at home or away from home. You can also set up a VPN to show that you are in another country if you want to watch local TV from London while you are in Naples! The best VPN I can recommend is ExpressVPN. It allows you to install the app on all devices—



desktop, laptop, phone, and tablet—and works seamlessly on all of them. For just \$8.32 per month, you can browse the web with no worries, to me this is priceless!

If you use Apple devices, Apple has a new feature called iCloud Private Relay. It is included with a subscription to iCloud+ which bundles Apple services into one payment. When Private Relay is enabled, all of your browsing activity in Safari will be routed through two internet relays. Your data is encrypted and then sent to Apple, so your ISP can't see any of your web browsing requests. It is not really a VPN but does hide your IP address from the sites that you visit.

Another way to protect your privacy is to have a second phone line for shopping and registration for different services and websites. The easiest way to do this is to add a second SIM card to your newer iPhone or Android phone. Most phones since 2020 contain dual-sim capability, so check with the manufacturer to verify. This allows you to accept and make calls from the second line, but since I don't use mine for calls, I know that any number calling on the second line is a marketing call or spam call from a vendor I gave the number. Makes it a lot easier to reject unknown callers!

Google and Apple both have ways to mask your email address when sending mail.

If you have a Gmail account, here's how to do it: your email is joseph@gmail.com. You want to buy something from Amazon, and they ask for your email. Type the + sign and a word afterward, such as joseph+amazon@gmail.com. This mail will automatically come to your inbox, and you can reply from that address. Remember the + sign is the key to creating an alias in Gmail.

Apple has a service called Hide My Email, where they will create a unique email address for many sites and services that you like, and these are forwarded to your primary AppleID email address. Like the Private Relay, this is a feature of iCloud+.

In Safari, Chrome, Firefox, and other browsers, you may see a "Private Browsing" or "Incognito Mode." These only prevent web pages that you visit from appearing in history, they do not protect you from outside eavesdropping as a VPN does. So private browsing is only private on the computer or device you are using, but your internet service provider (ISP) is aware of every page that you visit and may see that data for marketing services, another reason that using a VPN is a great way to maintain privacy!