

JANUARY 28

Data Privacy Day

Data Privacy Day is an international effort to empower individuals and encourage businesses to respect privacy, safeguard data and enable trust.

January 28, 2021 is Data Privacy Day and **Secured IT Solutions** is proud, as a Data Privacy Day Champion, to play a part in this international effort by growing awareness and providing tips and guidance to help people and organizations to protect their data. We will share a series of articles designed to explain some of the nuances around what privacy means as well as resources focused on a variety of internet users so that you can take appropriate measures to safeguard your privacy.

This first article is focused on individuals, with subsequent articles, focused on small business and large enterprises, can be shared with you. Millions of people, worldwide, are using the Internet to share data including our banking credentials, personal photograph's, and our geolocations. Although cyberspace is an exciting environment with a myriad of benefits, opportunities, and conveniences, it is also an increasingly risky one, with numerous threats to our privacy.

Why do you care?

Data about individuals can be and is used in a variety of ways. Unfortunately, all too often, the manner in which the data is used is not known, expected, or even approved by you, the individual. For example, when connecting to social media as well as mobile and smart devices (e.g.

mobile phones, wearables, speakers, headsets, cameras, TVs, cars, toys and appliances), you are continuously generating information about your use, yourself, and others. This becomes an abundance of data that is very valuable to commercial entities and advisories. Bad actors target those data sets to steal and use for larger campaigns or missions. That's why it is important to understand the value of your personal information and how to manage it. **Your personal information is like money! Value it. Protect it.**



Please see this [infographic from the National Cyber Security Alliance \(NCSA\)](#) to help you gain a quick perspective.

What is Privacy really?

It is important to note privacy and cyber security overlap - but is not one and the same. There is a difference between privacy and security. Cyber Security is necessary to protect data, but security alone is not sufficient to ensure privacy. Privacy includes other aspects such as:

- telling users what data is collected and how it will be used,

- giving users a choice when their data will be used for purposes other than originally disclosed,
- ensuring data is protected and can only be used for the purposes disclosed, and
- ensuring data practices comply with federal, state, and international laws.

Sounds simple. Don't the companies and organizations need to take care of that?

As individuals, we need to share personal details and identifiable information (PII) in order to gain a service or conduct transactions. However, we don't want the information to be abused, lost, or used for purposes other than the reasons we shared the data. This appears to be an easy ask but its not easy to achieve and meet because of conflicted local laws that requires public access.

For example, court records must be made publicly available for public scrutiny and review to ensure citizen's confidence in court ruling. This need must be balanced with the need to ensure privacy of the litigants. However, it becomes very difficult to balance the two objectives because most court cases, both civil and criminal, documentation until recent years includes personal information and some sensitives like individuals' Social Security numbers and other sensitive data.

What do I need to do?

Here are some basic steps to help safeguard your privacy:

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH:** Before connecting your smart device to the Internet, do some research. Ideally, you would conduct this research before purchasing any new internet-connected device by checking out user reviews on the product, exploring whether there have been any security/privacy concerns, and understanding what security features or limitations that the device has.
- **CONTROL YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE:** configure your privacy and security settings the moment you turn on a new smart device and are asked to sign-in, sign up for a new online account, or integrate an existing account from other platforms like Google, Facebook, etc. Most devices and accounts default to the least secure settings, so take the time and moment to change those settings to be more secure. For example, disable any features you don't need, such as location tracking, (your Livingroom TV doesn't need to track location); and update your software on those devices.
- **LIMIT THE DATA ABOUT YOU:** It is best to limit what information you put online. For example, when completing or integrating a profile for an account, you don't have to fill in everything. If you do need to answer every field, consider answering those fields with illegitimate answers about yourself. It's not against the law to do so; however, you may need to pick a date of birth that shows that you are over 18 years of age. Just remember those responses in case you need recover your account. If you find that a company does require truthful information about you, question whether you feel comfortable about providing it as well as understand what they do with that information. Then reconsider creating a profile with that company.

Take action:

Update the privacy settings on at least one of your online accounts this Data Privacy Day (January 28). Here's how: staysafeonline.org/stay-safe-online/managing-your-privacy/manage-privacy-settings/