

Noob's Guide To Privacy

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Welcome to Noob's Guide To Privacy. This is my attempt to educate my friends and family about online privacy and digital security, and a guide on how we can protect ourselves in this digital world.

Whether you are an activist, a celebrity, a politician, or just another ordinary person, privacy is for everyone.

Whom are we protecting ourselves from?

Our privacy is in danger, and it is being constantly under attack by government agencies, big tech companies and non-state actors.

- **Government Agencies.**

Governments across the globe indulge in state-sponsored surveillance to combat terrorism, prevent crimes, and to catch criminals. Unfortunately, surveillance is also used by governments for their political gains.

What type of protection is available to us against state-sponsored surveillance?

The only protection I can think of are legal remedies. **Over 150 national constitutions mention the right to privacy.** In India, the Right to Privacy is a fundamental right. In addition to that, the Right to Privacy is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There has been constant attempts to weaken our right to privacy, by attempting to control the use and the distribution of tools like End-to-End Encryption (E2EE).

- **Big Tech Companies.**

In the last few years, we have seen a drastic change in the business model of companies.

Big tech companies of our time like Amazon, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, etc. are solely depended on our data. They monetize our data, and sell it to advertisers. This type of business model allows free services and platforms like YouTube, Instagram or Google Search profitable.

If you're not paying for the product, you are the product.

How true this statement is? We surely are not paying for the online services that we use, then how come we are the product?

We are not paying for free online services like Google Maps, Bing, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with fiat currency, in fact, we are paying for them with our data.

They use our data and our information to show us advertisements which we are most likely to click on. These platforms are designed to be addictive, the more we spend our time on these social media platforms, the more ads they can show us.

Not only we have to ponder upon the data hogging business model of these companies, we also have to think about the ways they implement it. **Social media is addictive by design**. And that design is serving the big tech companies.

What type of protection is available to us against surveillance capitalism?

Surveillance capitalism is an economic system centred around the commodification of personal data with the core purpose of profit-making.

There are several steps we can take to fight surveillance capitalism.

1. Demand stronger data protection laws.
2. Read the terms and conditions before signing up for any service.
3. Be mindful of what social media platforms you use and how they use your data.
4. Limit the amount of data you share online.
5. Avoid using data hungry platforms altogether, and seek ethical alternatives.
6. And finally, claim your digital rights.

Human Rights are interlinked, if one human right is violated, other human rights are also weakened. If one human right is protected, other human rights are also strengthened.

Similarly, if one person claims their digital rights, it helps others to protect and claim their digital rights as well. If one person gives up their digital rights, it weakens others' rights as well.

- **Non-State Actors.**

By non-state actors, I mean individuals who indulge in illegal activities like cyber crimes to target others.

What type of protection is available to us against cyber crimes?

Nowadays, almost every country has its set of law governing a wide range of online activities like e-banking, e-commerce and other aspects of technology.

In India, there is the Information Technology Act, 2000 which is a comprehensive law that deals with technology. This Act also lays down penalties and punishment for committing cyber crimes in India. And the Indian Penal Code which was also amended to include a range of crimes like fraud, forgery, theft, etc. committed over the internet or through any electronic device.

Along with the legal protections, you also have to be aware of the risks and follow secure practices, like using different passwords for different accounts and using two-factor authentication (2FA), to protect yourself from cyber crimes.

Coming Soon!

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