

About Technology



How comfortable are you with your information online?

By Rogelio Frederick

In this day and age, your information is likely online in some form. We have digital accounts for almost everything: stores, banks, media distribution, work, school and more. Accounts have to be made, emails get linked and verified, and then our identities exist in a database forever. We're linked to the company for as long as it stands. Even after we delete our accounts, many businesses keep records of every past and present account. For the most part, we don't have a choice in this.

When a website prompts us to sign in or sign up, it's important to make sure the platform is a safe one. When using a site that can handle sensitive info, check for a valid SSL certificate. On any web browser, there should be a green lock on the left side of the search bar. Your information is guaranteed safe *if and only if the icon is green*. If the symbol is red or shows a lowercase "i," that means the website



cannot guarantee your information is secure.

Another important part of signing up is the automation. One form saves your username and password in a browser. Another links your accounts to your social media. And let's not forget the convenience of saving payment and shipping information on the site itself. Automation is good. If you're a frequent internet user, you probably perform an array of tasks on

your computer every day. Auto-fill makes life much easier. However, handy features such as auto-fill can lead to carelessness, in the long run. It's on this end where, the worst case scenario is out of your hands. What makes these situations scary is that hackers don't necessarily target us directly. They target the websites we log on to. We account holders are just caught in the crossfire.

This is when we need to take the

initiative to protect ourselves. Convenience isn't worth the risk of losing everything we have. Here are some habits that will help safeguard your personal information:

1. **Do not auto-fill your credit card information, address, or any other sensitive information.** This way, none of your sensitive data can be leaked in case of a breach or hack.
2. **Have multiple email accounts.** Having a work email and a personal email is common. However, adding a third or fourth email account for subscription-based services will cut any unnecessary ties back to your information.
3. **Only link accounts to your social media if you trust them.** In case of a data breach, social media links to your bank or store account information can put your family and friends at risk as well.

If you're careful with your info at an ATM or the register at the store, then you should be careful at the keyboard. Handle your info responsibly—so you don't have to worry whether companies will.

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