

# **Cybersecurity 101:** **Adjust Privacy Settings**

---

Curriculum Guide

## Consumer Reports and Cybersecurity

For more than 80 years, Consumer Reports has been dedicated to working side by side with consumers for truth, transparency, and fairness among products and retailers. Some of the most intimate aspects of our lives unfold through devices and online services. However, there are big questions about whether the devices and services we use respect our privacy, and whether they adequately safeguard our information. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the challenge of staying safe online.

That's why Consumer Reports launched Security Planner. [Security Planner](#) is a free, easy-to-use guide to staying safer online. It provides personalized recommendations and expert advice on topics such as keeping social media accounts from being hacked, locking down devices ranging from smartphones to home security cameras, and reducing intrusive tracking by websites.

Our team of experts has worked on adapting content from Security Planner to create easy-to-use curriculum for any learning spaces. We're dedicated to bringing the power back to consumers and having them feel in control of their digital lives. Though we can't do it alone. We can't say this enough: Thank you for helping us create a more informed and safer world.

## Introduction to the Curriculum Guide

We know that running a workshop can be hard. We also know that teaching cybersecurity can be confusing. We don't expect you to be an expert in either! That's why we've created this guide to help you feel prepared, regardless of your previous experience. Read the guide carefully to capture the tips, tricks, and trusted methods we've listed that are sure to make your event an effective and fun convening for all those involved.

In this guide there are multiple activities that teach the basics of cybersecurity in easy-to-understand and hands-on ways. Activities have suggested times and step-by-step instructions to help you facilitate the workshop. The instructions are meant to act as frameworks and can be adjusted to make the event feel more natural. Make the content your own. So *don't* use it like a script but *do* make it personable and discussion-based.

If at any point you need additional support organizing your event or teaching activities, contact the CR team at [community@cr.consumer.org](mailto:community@cr.consumer.org). We are here to help you every step of the way.

## Welcome and Introduction

<b>SUMMARY:</b>	Facilitators will introduce the workshop and topic
<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Introduce facilitator(s) and participants.</li> <li>→ Set ground rules.</li> </ul>
<b>ESTIMATED TIME:</b>	10 minutes
<b>ACTIVITY TYPE:</b>	Group discussion

### STEP 1: Introductions

 5 minutes

- Welcome participants to the workshop and introduce yourself. Participants should also introduce themselves at this time.
- Discuss why you have organized this event and what cybersecurity means to you (*Note: This should be and feel personal; make sure participants know why **you** care about this topic. If you need help, use the info on cybersecurity that we've gathered below.*)
- Review the agenda and share why the topic you chose is important—what are the threats and concerns we face because of it?

#### Why Cybersecurity and Privacy Settings?

- We are increasingly surrounded by new technologies, and though they are fun and convenient to use, the personal details we are sharing are often at risk.
- Many products, apps, and services allow you to control some aspects of how your personal information is collected, used, shared, or displayed. It's important to adjust your privacy settings to control your location data, audio and video recording, and other personal information.
- In the wrong hands, our personal data can be used against us to coerce us into making decisions, or paying increased prices based on our preferences, and exploit us into giving away sensitive information or money, among other things.

## **STEP 2: Ground rules**

 5 minutes

- Discuss the importance of ground rules at events.
- Share a list of ground rules that will allow for an open, safe, and fun environment.
- Ask participants whether they have questions or they wish to add to the ground rules.

### **Importance of Ground Rules**

- It is important to set ground rules at events because it helps us shape how we will collaborate with each other and create a shared space where everyone feels open to contributing.
- Topics, such as privacy or security, can be very personal and attendees can have a range of experiences, including some negative or conflicting ones.

### **Sample Ground Rules**

- Listen actively—respect others when they are talking.
- We are all here to learn. Everyone’s opinion is valid and important. There are no bad ideas.
- The conversation is not meant to discredit any person, organization, group, demographic, or gender.
- Topics like privacy can be difficult for many reasons. Talk from your own experience and be open and empathic to others’ opinions.
- Your privacy means protecting your personal information. Share stories and information you are comfortable with, while not disclosing sensitive information about your accounts.
- The intent is to participate to our full capabilities and to work together.

## Adjust Privacy Settings

<b>SUMMARY:</b>	In this module, facilitators will discuss how to edit and update settings on apps and social media platforms.
<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Discuss importance of updating settings</li> <li>→ Edit privacy settings on mobile apps</li> <li>→ Review privacy settings on social media platforms</li> <li>→ Delete old accounts and applications</li> </ul>
<b>APPROX. TIME:</b>	35 minutes
<b>MATERIAL:</b>	Post-it Notes Pens Internet-connected devices (computers and smartphones)

### Activity 1: Why update settings? (20 mins)

#### STEP 1: Settings

 5 minutes

→ As a group, discuss the prompts below.

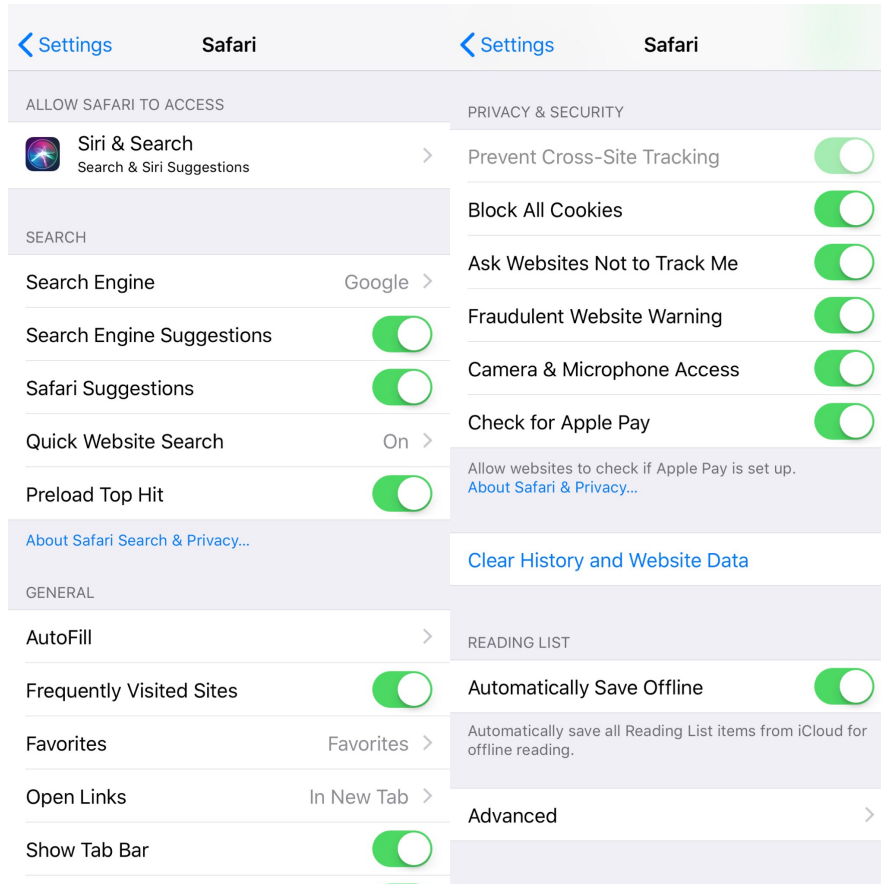
#### Updating Settings

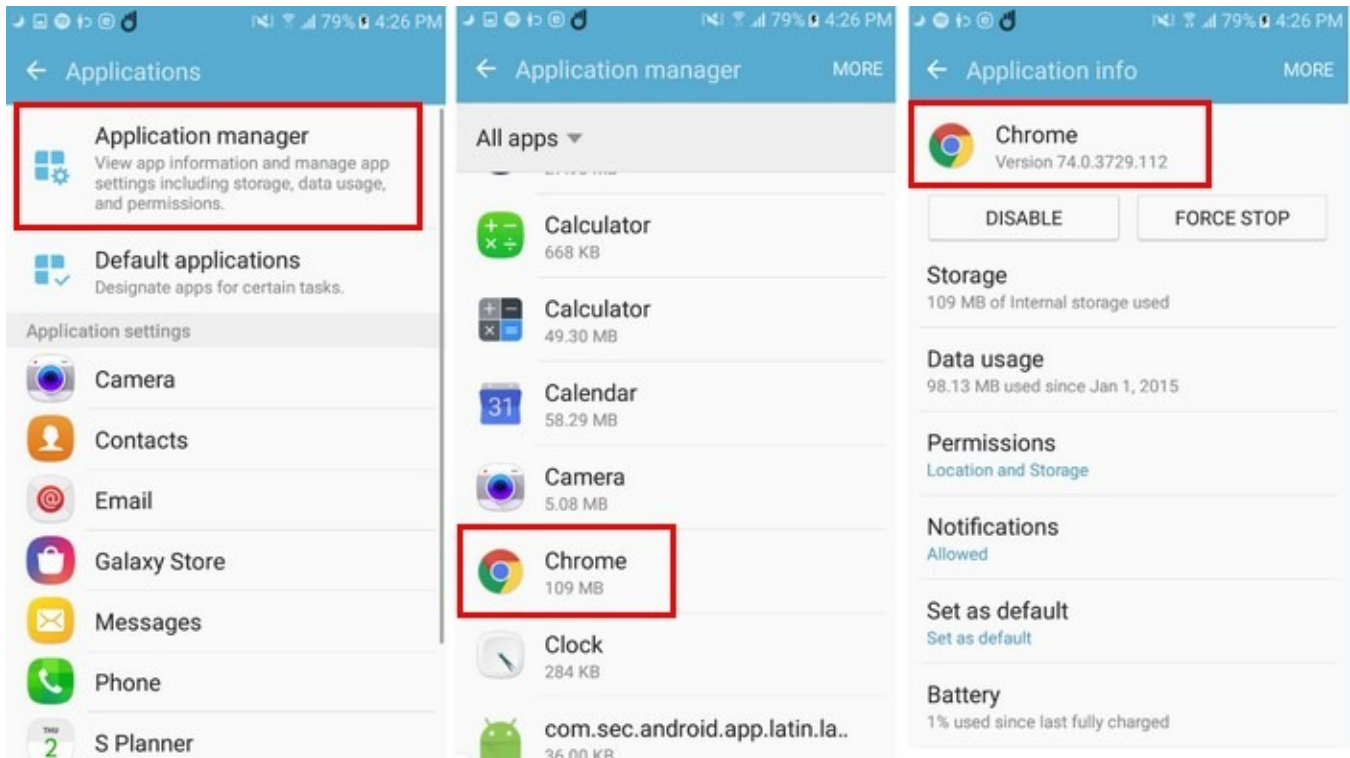
- What are your favorite apps on your phone? Why are they your favorite?
- How often do you update your settings on social media accounts?
- What type of settings do you update?
- What information do you want to keep private?
- Why do apps want information like location, microphone access, and tracking?
- If you don't use a feature, why does it matter to turn it off?

## STEP 2: What settings to change

 10 minutes

→ Have individuals review the images of a web browser application’s settings below. Ask the group what settings they would change for each app. Discuss why you would turn off or leave on each setting. We’ve used Safari and Chrome as examples but individuals might use other browsers and can follow similar steps on an Apple or Android device.





## Images Described

### Apple settings for Safari App

- Settings to review:
  - **Block Pop-ups.** This prevents suspicious sites and advertisements from being loaded. Turn this setting on.
  - **Prevent Cross-Site Tracking.** This allows other sites to track your data. Turn this setting on.
  - **Ask Websites Not to Track Me.** This tells websites you don't want them gathering your behavior on other sites (though it's not always respected!). Turn this setting on.
  - **Fraudulent Website Warning.** This warns you if a site is suspicious. Turn this setting on.
  - **Camera, Microphone, and Location Access.** This allows the app to obtain images and voice recording when open. Unless you are using your phones internal camera, camera apps like Instagram, or applications like Siri, this does not need to be collected. Turn this setting off.
  - **Privacy preserving ad measurement:** You actually want this turned off, to not allow advertisers to measure the effectiveness of their ad campaigns on the web and collect more data from you.
  - **Check for Apple Pay.** This setting is helpful if you use Apple Pay. If you use Apple Pay, turn this setting on. If you don't use Apple Pay, this setting can drain

battery and continuously prompt you to enter your information. If you don't use Apple Pay, turn this setting off.

- **Automatically Save Offline.** This setting is helpful if you want to read items offline. If you want to read offline, turn this setting on. This setting will also store items on your phone using memory space and potentially draining data. If you want to save your data and memory space, turn this setting off.

#### Android settings for Chrome App

- Settings to review:
  - **Storage.** When you visit sites, the browser stores information to help speed up your future interactions with the site. If the site updates, it will still use the default saved settings. It's important to occasionally clear your cache to remove your saved information and access new features.
  - **Privacy.** The safe browsing setting protects you from suspicious sites. Turn this setting on. Do Not Track tells websites you don't want them gathering your behavior on other sites. Turn this setting on. Usage and crash reports allow Google to collect all the information about what you do. Turn off 'Usage and Crash Reports'.
  - **Autofill and Payments.** This setting pre-populates most of your private info, such as credit card and addresses on sites which can be dangerous if you ever lose your phone or accidentally make a purchase. Turn this setting off.
  - **Site Settings.** This setting asks to obtain sensitive information like your location or cookies and access information like microphone or camera. It can be helpful to have this information but only if you grant permission. Change these settings to 'Ask First'. Allow cookies to be gathered, but blocked by third parties.
  - **Sync.** While it can be helpful for Chrome to sync with other Google applications, sharing all your information across Google can increase the information they retain on your digital activities. Turn on or off sync everything.

### STEP 3: Change your settings

 5 minutes

- Ask participants to view the settings on their mobile devices and make adjustments based on their preferences. Instructions are below and in the workbook. Settings can be reviewed for every app, even ones that come built into your phone.
- Note, adjusting these settings might alter how you can use the app. For example, if you change location settings an app might not be able to auto populate your location or show nearby examples.



## How to Access your Settings

### On an iPhone

- Open the devices Settings app
- Scroll down to view each app
- Click each app to view settings

### On an Android

- Open the devices Settings app
- Click App & Notifications
- Click each app to view settings

## What Settings to Change

- **Turn off location tracking.** Unless used for popular apps like maps, your location is not needed by apps.
- **Turn off camera and microphone.** Apps don't need to use your camera or microphone unless they are picture-based, recording, or voice equipped.
- **Background app refresh.** While convenient, this can drain your phone battery and should be turned off.
- **Cellular data.** Some apps will drain your data and can be adjusted to only be used on wifi. Change this setting for different apps.
- **Photos.** Not all apps need to view or obtain your photos.
- **Contacts.** You don't have to share your private contacts with all apps, be picky with which ones you give access too.
- **Privacy.** Adjust the privacy settings for each app and what it can collect from you.

## Activity 2: Updating Social Media Settings (15 mins)

### STEP 1: Social Media Settings

 5 minutes

- Have participants complete the chart of what they would or would not want to share with social media sites in their workbooks.
- As a group, discuss the answers and prompts below.

**? Sample ideas**

Would Share	Would Not Share
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal email</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location details</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facial recognition data</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birthday</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth year</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your name</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favorite books or movies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends lists or friends contact info</li> </ul>

**Sample Prompts**

- How much information are you giving to social media platforms? Is it too much, just enough, too little?
- How often do you review privacy settings on your social media sites?
- How often do social media sites update their settings?
- Why do social media sites auto-opt you into settings? Or why do they want to gather more information than they actually need, such as contacts from your phone?
- Even if you don’t use some of the settings, why would it be important to turn them off?

**STEP 2: Updating Settings**

 10 minutes

- Social media accounts constantly change their settings. Discuss with the group why it’s important to review your settings regularly.
- Ask participants to choose one social media account and go into the settings to adjust their preferences. The workbook contains instructions for Facebook and Twitter but any

social media account can be used. It is easier to change settings on a computer but it can also be done on a mobile device through an app or mobile web browser.

- What if participants are not on social media accounts? Invite them to ask their neighbor if they can watch (or assist) them through the process of changing their settings. If there are many people without social media accounts, invite them to form their own breakout discussion on why they don't use social media platforms or what has prevented them from using/staying on them.

## Instructions for Changing Settings

### Facebook (on site)

- Click the drop-down arrow in the top right corner of your Facebook page.
- Click settings.
- Scroll through each tab on the left to customize your settings.
- Three things you can change:
  - **Click the Privacy tab.** Under who can see your future posts click edit. Limit posts and photo sharing to 'Friends' or 'Friends of friends' so that it isn't viewable to the public or anyone who searches your profile.
  - **Click the Apps and Websites tab.** Review apps that you use regularly and their permissions of what they can see or do on your profile. Delete old apps that you no longer use so they do not have access to your data.
  - **Click the location tab.** Click to view your location data and delete information Facebook has stored about your location.
- Want to do more? Click the question mark in the top right corner and select privacy checkup from the drop-down. Follow the steps to edit your privacy.

### Facebook (on mobile app)

- Click the three lines in the bottom right corner.
- Scroll down and click Settings & Privacy.
- Click Privacy Shortcuts and review your settings.
- Three things you can change:
  - **Click Control face recognition.** Turn off the setting that says 'do you want Facebook to recognize you in photos and videos?'
  - **Click Manage your location settings.** Adjust what settings Facebook captures from you.
  - **Click See more privacy settings (under Privacy).** Scroll down to 'who can see your future posts?' and change it to 'Friends' or 'Friends of friends'.

- Want to do more? Click ‘review a few important privacy settings’ and follow the steps.

**Twitter**

- On the left sidebar, scroll down and click More.
- Click Settings and Privacy.
- Three things you can change:
  - **Click Account.** Click Apps and Sessions. Click each app listed and revoke access for those you no longer use or want connected.
  - **Click Privacy and safety.** Click Location information. Uncheck the box that says ‘add location information to my tweets’.
  - **Click Personalization and data.** Turn off personalization and data so that Twitter cannot share your data with others or show you advertisements based on your profile information and behaviors.

**Twitter (on mobile)**

- Login to Twitter on your mobile web browser to follow the steps above.

**Conclusion**

<b>SUMMARY:</b>	Close-out your workshop with one final reflection.
<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Discuss what participants are taking away from the workshop.</li> <li>→ Share what participants can expect after the workshop.</li> </ul>
<b>ESTIMATED TIME:</b>	5 minutes
<b>ACTIVITY TYPE:</b>	Group discussion

## STEP 1: Final comments

 5 minutes

- Facilitate a brief and reflective discussion about how often participants should update privacy settings.
- If you are a small group, have everyone go around in a circle and comment on something they learned, found interesting, or will do differently as a result of the workshop.
- If you have a large group, ask individuals to break off into pairs and discuss their reflections with another person. Bring the group back together and ask if anyone wants to share what was discussed.
- Encourage the group to share any outstanding questions or comments.

### ? Suggested Prompts

- What is one thing you will take away from the workshop?
- How does this relate to the technology, platform, and devices you use every day?
- How will you share something you learned with someone else who didn't attend this workshop?

## Resources and links

The resources and links below are to aid your workshop. You can share them before, during, or afterwards with participants.

### Additional Resources

**ARTICLE:** Change your privacy settings

<https://securityplanner.consumerreports.org/tool/change-your-privacy-settings>

**ARTICLE:** Account security checkups

<https://securityplanner.consumerreports.org/tool/account-security-checkups>

**ARTICLE:** Secure your smart speaker

<https://securityplanner.consumerreports.org/tool/secure-your-smart-speaker>