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Glossary

Learn more about technology

There are many different words used when talking about technology, and it can feel a little confusing or overwhelming. You have the right to understand the technology in your life!

We've created this list to give some basic information about common technology terms.

> Search glossary terms

A   B   C   D   E   F   G   H   I   L   M   N   O   P   R   S   T   U   V   W

Access Log

A list of devices such as a phone, tablet, or laptop that has recently logged into an account. This information can include the date and time, location, type of device, operating system, type of browser, and an IP address. Sometimes also saved in "activity" history. Read our guides to learn how to view your access log for your **cloud accounts < https://refugetechsafety.org/guide-online-accounts/>** or **social media accounts. < https://refugetechsafety.org/guide-social-media-basics/>**

Account

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Software that protects against viruses, malware, spyware, and other unwanted, harmful software. You can install it on your phone, tablet, or laptop. Sometimes also called "anti-malware."

App

Short for "application," this is software on a phone, tablet, or computer that can give quick access to information or connect to a service online. Apps usually collect information about you, your location, and your activities – even when the app is not open. Examples are web browsers, social media, photo tools, messaging, and services like banking, weather, fitness, and more. **See our guide to learn about location sharing in apps. < https://refugetechsafety.org/location-guide/>**

Authentication App

An app for added security on your account, used for **Two-Factor Authentication**.

Biometric

A way to identify you that is unique and based on something about you physically, for example your face, fingerprint, voice, or eye. They are used to access to your information, device, or account. While these are intended to provide stronger security, they may not be secure or safe options if you're living with an abuser. Biometrics are also used in facial recognition, where a digital map is made of your face and matched to photos or video.

Block

A way to stop someone from accessing your information. For example, blocking someone on social media could mean that they can't see your posts.

Blog

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An app or computer software that helps you to view websites and other information on the internet.

Bugs

Bugs are mistakes or unwanted pieces of software code that keep a website or app from working properly.

Cache

Stored parts of a website such as images that allow a website to load faster when you return in the future. Privacy experts suggest clearing all or part of your cache.

Cloud

The cloud really just means somebody else's computer, usually a huge computer in a giant warehouse of computers. Data is not stored locally on your own phone or computer, but instead sent through the internet to a data warehouse. Gmail, iCloud, Facebook, and most apps use cloud computing.

Content

Content includes articles, posts, comments, photos, videos, and other information shared on social media, a website, or a blog. Content moderation is reviewing content to make sure it fits community rules. Content curation is gathering and presenting content that is relevant to a specific topic or a user's interests.

Cookies

Little bits of data that are put on your phone or other device so that companies can track you use on other sites or apps. You are not obligated to accept cookies, and they are often not necessary.

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Using technology to track your activities or location, or to make you feel constantly watched and afraid. Many different kinds of technology can be used to stalk someone, including phones, social media, email, cameras, smart home devices, and more. Any kind of stalking is serious, and you can reach out for help or report to police.

Data

Data is another word for information. Big data is a term for really large amounts of data pulled from mobile phones, emails, internet searches, apps, and public records. Companies use big data to identify patterns about us all in order to predict and optimize their business.

Database

Software that holds data and allows a company, charity, or the government to search for information about a specific person or find trends across many people.

De-platform

When a company, usually a social media company, removes a user from their "platform" or online space. This is usually because of a violation of the community rules.

Device

A phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer, smart speaker, or other smart home products. On this site, when we say "device" we usually mean your phone, tablet, or computer.

Doxing

Sharing someone's personal information like a phone number or home address in order to t

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Email is short for "electronic mail" and can include text, images, and attachments of other files. Read our guides to more how to secure **Gmail < https://refugetechsafety.org/guides-google-account/>** or **Hotmail/Outlook < https://refugetechsafety.org/guides-hotmail/>** .

Embedding

Adding content from somewhere else to a web page. When you see a YouTube video on a blog you're reading, or a tweet posted on a business' website you're checking out, that's an example of embedding. Embedding is done through HTML code, and most social media sites have an "Embed" option that gives you the exact code you'll need.

Encryption

A way of scrambling information so that it can only be read by the person who created it or those they choose to share it with. End-to-end encryption protects data between the sender and the receiver, for example between you and a person you send a message to.

Factory Reset

Wiping all the information and settings from a phone or other device, returning it to the way it was when it was made. This is one way to remove harmful software and settings from your phone, in combination with other steps like changing account settings or creating new accounts.

Family Share

Sharing information between accounts such as location or photos.

Find My Phone

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Either software or a piece of equipment that protects a computer network from external security risks. Firewalls monitor inbound and outbound network traffic and determine whether or not to allow the traffic through based on a set of security standards.

Friend, Unfriend

Someone you are connected to through social media, or the act of connecting (or disconnecting) with someone on social media.

Gaming Console

A specific piece of equipment for playing video or online games.

Googling

Searching the internet for information, specifically on Google. See also internet search engine.

Griefer

Someone who seeks to upset someone else or harm them online, usually in online gaming.

Hacking

Breaking into an account, device, or database. The act of doing so is *hacking*. A person who does this can be called a *hacker*. When your account has been broken into, it has been *hacked*.

IP Address

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A company that connects your computer or home network to the internet.

Internet of Things (IoT)

Devices or everyday objects that are connected to the internet or your home network. Sometimes called "smart" or "connected" devices, examples include smart speakers (such as Google Home or Amazon Alexa), televisions, video doorbells, electrical sockets, and even cars, medical devices, and whole buildings. **Use our Home Tech Tool to find out how to protect yourself. < https://refugetechsafety.org/hometech/>**

Log in (or Login)

The information you use to access an account; usually your username or email address and a password. Logging in is the act of going into an account.

Malware

Malicious software [link to software in glossary] that is designed to allow someone else to break into your account, network, or device. Malware includes viruses and ransomware.

Mentions

Mentions are ways of referring to a person or account on social media platforms (@yourTwitterhandle on Twitter or +YourName on Google+). Mentions are a way someone can get your attention or as a form of abuse.

Metadata

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Data about other data. Examples include date and time, location, or other information abo

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Equipment used together with a router to connect a device or a network to the internet.

Notification

A message sent by SMS text message, email, or a "push" notification displayed on your phone or computer.

Operating System

The software that runs a device like a phone or computer. It should be updated regularly.

Password

A password or passcode secures your account or device. It is important to use strong passwords, or better yet 'pass phrases.' They should be at least 12 or more characters long (letters, numbers, symbols). Do not use any information which others could easily guess like the name of a pet or a birthdate. Use a different password for every account, and a password manager to keep track of them. Experts say you shouldn't share your passwords with anyone, but some abusive people may force or coerce you into sharing them – and that's not your fault.

Password Manager

A service or app that stores all of your passwords and allows you to use them when you need them. Password managers help you to use strong passwords that are unique to each site or account. Privacy experts recommend against storing your passwords in your browser.

Permissions

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Options that you choose once, or that are already set when you get your phone that allow a ...

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Specific information about you stored in your account, for example social media or online shopping. Depending on the app or website, you can choose how much information is in your profile, and who can see that information. Read our guides to learn how to update and protect your profile information in your cloud accounts and **social media accounts. < https://refugetechsafety.org/guide-social-media-basics/>**

Report (Content)

To let a company know about inappropriate or harmful posts, images, comments, or other content, usually on social media or another online account. Read our guides to learn more about how to report abusive content or behaviour in **social media accounts. < https://refugetechsafety.org/guide-social-media-basics/>**

Reverse Image Search

To use a picture or image file to find matching information like other accounts, a name, or a location.

Routers

Devices used to connect personal computers to the internet via an internet service provider (ISP) like cable or DSL. The device that your computer is connected to with a cable or through your Wi-Fi network.

Screen Lock

A security feature that "locks" your device until you enter a passcode, PIN, biometric, or other verification. Privacy experts recommend using a screen lock and not sharing your device with anyone, but some abusive people may force or coerce you into sharing them – and that's not your fault. Read our guides to learn how to set up a screen lock for your phone.

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Search Engine

A website or app that helps you find information on the internet.

Secret Questions

An older way of adding security to your account by asking for questions that only you know, such as the name of your first pet or the street you grew up on. When the abuser knows you well, this is not a good security measure. Also, big data makes some of this information available online. One option is to make up answers that aren't true, or to use two-step verification instead.

Security Fob

An added security features that is small object similar to a key that is plugged into a device or contacts a security pad (like a credit card or transit pass). Used for two-step verification.

Server

Special, very large computers used to store information for websites, apps, or other data that can be accessed through the internet. When you visit a website with the browser on your computer or smartphone, you are requesting it from a server.

Settings

Options for your app, account, or device. You can adjust your settings for greater privacy, security, accessibility, and more.

Smart Devices

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Apps and websites that share updates, photos, and more with other people. Read our guides to learn how to secure your social media.

Software, Hardware

Software is a set of instructions or a program made up of computer code that tells a computer, phone, or tablet what to do. This includes individual apps like a web browser, anti-virus, or social media, as well as system software like operating systems (Android or Windows) and drivers that communicate with hardware. Hardware is a piece of equipment like a computer, webcam, or printer.

Spam

Junk email, calls, or messages.

Spyware, Stalkerware

An app or software designed to secretly monitor everything that you do on your phone or computer, including calls, images from the camera, internet searches, messages, location, and more. It is very difficult to find and remove, and the person doing the monitoring will usually see attempts to do so.

Tablet

A device that is smaller than a laptop and larger than a phone, usually with a very large screen.

Troll

Someone who deliberately tries to upset or harm someone else online.

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An important security step, updating your operating system, apps, anti-virus, and other software that protects your devices and accounts from hacking.

User, Username

Someone who uses an account, social media platform, computer, database, or other system. A username is a unique name you use to access an account when you log in.

VPN (Virtual Private Network)

Like a secure tunnel for your information, a VPN allows you to connect over public WiFi and other unsecure networks more safely. When you use a public Wi-Fi network, for instance, your device and data could be visible by someone else on the network. VPN's can be set up through some web browsers or can be accessed through paid monthly services.

Verification Code

An added security step, usually a number sent by SMS text message to your phone or to your email, that you use to access your account in addition to a password or if you ask to reset your password.

Webcam

A camera built into or connected to your computer, tablet, or phone. Privacy experts recommend putting a reusable sticker or other cover over your webcam when you're not using it.

WiFi

Wireless connection between devices or to the internet. Privacy experts recommend avoid WiFi, or use a virtual private network (VPN). **Use our Home Tech Tool to find out how t**

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