How to be a Privacy Snob

You generate a long list of data every time you access the internet. This data is worth a lot of money to many different people, businesses, and organizations, but we often don't value our data as much as they do. We could all be a little snobbier with who we share our data with and what we expect in return.

The global data analytics market was estimated to be worth over

$270 billion

in 2022, and your data makes up a slice of this multibillion bonanza, so here are some tips on how to value your data as much as others do.

KNOW WHAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL

You can't control who has access to every scrap and byte of your data, and many online services require some of your data to function. A maps app cannot suggest directions if it doesn't know where you are located (at least while you are using it), and an image-sharing site needs access to your photos.

There is a tradeoff between convenience and privacy. To use all the features of your devices, apps, and software, you will often have to share more and more data. By understanding this balance, you can make better informed data decisions.

CULTIVATE AN ONLINE PRIVACY HABIT

Apps, websites, devices, and software will often ask for more data than you feel is necessary – like the Solitaire app that wants your location; or the social media app that wants the phone numbers of everyone you know? Here is where you can take charge of your online privacy. Common types of data you might be asked for are: your location, contacts, photos and camera, and your behavior and use of their service.

On mobile devices, you can often choose that apps only have access to this data while using it. But, if an app or software program refuses to function unless you share certain data that you don't feel it needs, (like the Solitaire app demanding your location), find another app and move on.

CHECK YOUR SETTINGS

Even if an app or software program doesn't ask for your data, you should assume it is still collecting it, then check your privacy settings every month or so and ensure they are all within your comfort level.

You can access app and software permissions through your device's general settings. Apps often ask you turn on access permissions, but you usually only need to give them permissions while using the app. Here are some default settings you should keep turned off, unless you need it for the app to function and you trust the app:

Camera – off
Microphone – off
Location – off
Sync contacts – off

DELETE APPS YOU DON'T USE

Finally, perform an "App Audit" - review your devices and think about each app you have downloaded. If you haven't used the app in months, delete it from your device. Be ruthless. You can always download the app again or find a better one!