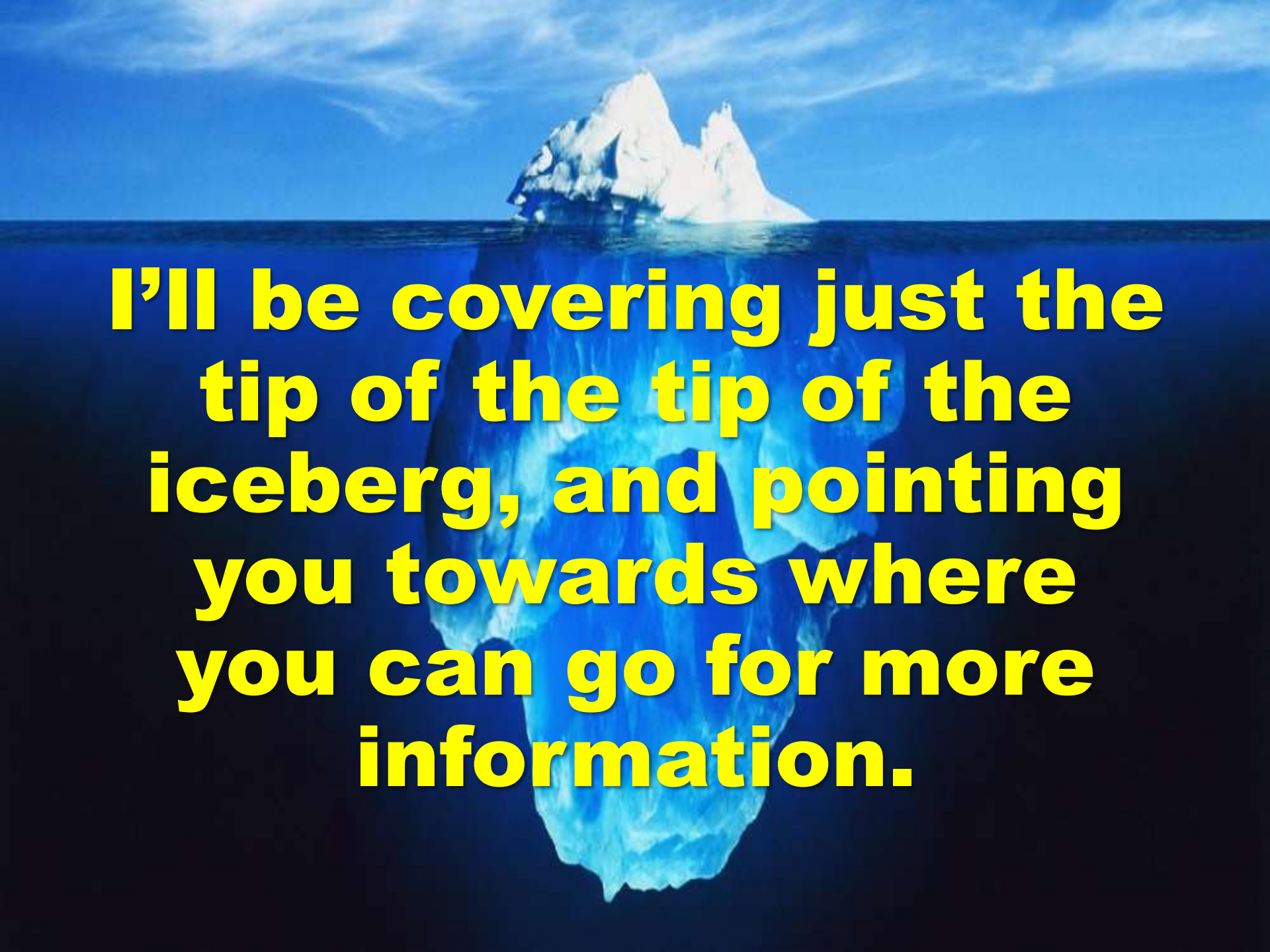# Privacy On the Internet

Agenda of our Privacy On the Internet Series:

- ✓ Before Part One: VPN's (Virtual Private Networks)
- ✓ Part One: Privacy on the Internet – Why We Need It
- ✓ Part Two: Browsers and basic browser privacy settings
- ✓ Part Three: Search engines
- ✓ Part Four: Some of the ways you can be tracked
- ✓ Part Five: Anti-Tracking and Ad-Blocker software
- ✓ Part Six: The privacy policies of the internet giants and what they do with your information
- Part Seven: Can you remove all your personal info from the internet?
- Updates on VPN's, CAPTCHA's, and more

Then we'll see where we go from there

I'll be covering just the tip of the tip of the iceberg, and pointing you towards where you can go for more information.

What info is out there?

There's all sorts of sensitive information about you floating around the web. This may include but is not limited to:

- Full name, telephone number, education history, and physical address
- Bank account number and login details
- Health records
- Social Insurance Number
- Health insurance data
- Other personal identification details

What else might you want to remove?

- **Any involvement in political, human rights or protest activities.**

- **Old forum posts or old blogs that might be embarrassing now or don't reflect who you are now.**

- **Old drunken party photos.**

- **Anything that you don't want your current or prospective employer to see.**

Can you remove ALL your personal info from the internet?

The short answer to the question is probably NO!!!

You can never completely remove yourself from the internet, but there are ways to minimize your digital footprint, which would lower the chances of your personal data being out there.

HOWEVER, removing your information from the internet could adversely affect your ability to communicate with potential employers and others.

Can you remove ALL your personal info from the internet?

Some of the information in this presentation comes from:

https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/remove-all-your-personal-info-from-internet-6-steps-disappear-for-good/

Some other great info is at:

https://privacybee.com/blog/how-to-delete-yourself-from-the-internet/

Here are some ways to at least partially disappear your digital self.

1. Delete or deactivate your shopping, social media and web service accounts

Think about which networks you have social media profiles on. Aside from the big ones (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn), do you still have old accounts on sites like Tumblr, MySpace and Reddit?

Which shopping sites have you registered on? Common ones might include Amazon, Costco, Canadian Tire and Loblaws.

1. Delete or deactivate your shopping, social media and web service accounts

To get rid of these accounts, go to your account settings and look for an option to either deactivate, remove or close your account. Depending on the account, you may find it under Privacy or Security, or something similar.

If you're having trouble with a particular online account, try searching online for "*How to delete*" followed by the name of the account you wish to delete. You should be able to find some instructions on how to delete that particular account.

1. Delete or deactivate your shopping, social media and web service accounts

Here's [how to permanently delete your Facebook account without losing your photos](#).

https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/deactivating-your-facebook-account-isnt-enough-you-need-to-delete-it-permanently/

1. Delete or deactivate your shopping, social media and web service accounts

If for some reason there are any undeletable accounts, change the info in the account to something other than your actual info.

Something fake or completely random.

2. Remove yourself from data collection sites

There are companies out there that collect your information. They're called data brokers, and they have names like Spokeo, Whitepages.com and PeopleFinder, as well as plenty of others.

They collect data from everything you do online and then sell that data to interested parties, mostly in order to more specifically advertise to you and sell stuff.

2. Remove yourself from data collection sites

Now you could search for yourself on these sites and then deal with each site individually to get your name removed. Problem is, the procedure for opting out from each site is different, and sometimes involves sending faxes and filling out actual physical paperwork.

Actual. Physical. Paperwork. What year is this, again?

These companies want to make it as difficult as possible for you to remove yourself.

2. Remove yourself from data collection sites

- An easier way to do it is to use a service like **DeleteMe** (US$129 per year). The service will jump through all those monotonous hoops for you.

- It'll even check back every few months to make sure your name hasn't been re-added to these sites.

- Be warned: If you remove yourself from these data broker sites, you'll also mostly remove yourself from Google search results, therefore making it much harder for people to find you.

3. Remove your info directly from websites

First, check with your phone company and/or cell provider to make sure you aren't listed online and have them remove your name if you are.

Note that there may be a charge for this.

3. Remove your info directly from websites

If you want to remove an old forum post or an old embarrassing blog you wrote back in the day and can't delete it yourself, you may have to contact the webmaster of those sites individually.

You can either look at the 'About Us' or the 'Contacts' section of the site to find the right person to contact or go to whois.com and search for the domain name you wish to contact. There you should find information on who exactly to contact.

3. Remove your info directly from websites

Unfortunately, private website operators are under no obligation to remove your posts. So, when contacting these sites be polite and clearly state why you want the post removed. Hopefully they'll actually follow through and remove it.

4. Remove personal info from websites

If someone's posted sensitive information of yours such as a Social Insurance number or a bank account number and the webmaster of the site where it was posted won't remove it, you can send a [legal removal request](#) to Google to have it removed.

Removing Content From Google:

https://support.google.com/legal/troubleshooter/1114905

5. Remove outdated search results

Let's say there's a webpage with information about you on it you'd like to get rid of -- like your former employer's staff page, months after you've changed jobs. You reach out to get them to update the page.

They do, but when you Google your name, the page still shows up in your search results -- even though your name isn't anywhere to be found when you click the link.

This means the old version of the page is cached on Google's servers.

5. Remove outdated search results

Here's where the 'Removing Content From Google' tool comes in. Submit the URL to Google in hopes it'll update its servers, deleting the cached search result so you're no longer associated with the page.

There's no guarantee Google will remove the cached info, for reasons, but it's worth a try to exorcise as much of your online presence as possible from the internet.

Denials for page removal or SafeSearch label requests

https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/63756

6. The last step you'll want to take is to remove your email accounts

An email address is necessary to complete the previous steps, so make sure this one is your last.

Depending on the type of email account you have, the number of steps this will take will vary.

You'll have to sign into your account and find the option to delete or close the account. Some accounts will stay open for a certain amount of time in case you want to reactivate them.

The Reality

You'll need to be patient when going through this process, and don't expect to complete it in one day.

You probably have to accept that there are some things you won't be able to permanently delete from the internet.

Some information on the internet is like zombies, you just can't kill it.

Data Removal Services

Besides the previously mentioned **DeleteMe**, there are other services such as **Guaranteed Removals**, **Reputation Management** and **Net Reputation**. You can search on '*Data Removal Services*' or '*Reputation Management*' for more names and info.

The services can do a one time cleanup, provide ongoing monitoring and other services.

Remember

The moment you go back online to email, shop, search, surf, etc, the whole cycle begins again, and any old info still on the internet that you thought was buried may come back to the surface. You'll be back on the privacy and security hamster wheel.

Erasing Porn

Many people, especially impressionable teenage girls, have had pornographic images and videos of themselves posted online without their permission.

Getting rid of these is virtually impossible since porn sites large and small steal content from each other and endlessly repost it.

As one young woman profiled on CTV's W5 stated *"I'll always be somebodies porn"*.

For More Information

You can search on '*how to delete personal information from the internet*' for lots more info

How to delete yourself from the internet in 10 steps

https://privacybee.com/blog/how-to-delete-yourself-from-the-internet/

How to erase your personal information from the internet (it's not impossible!)

https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/9/11/20859597/internet-privacy-erase-history-google-facebook

How to Remove Personal Information From Internet Sources

(must turn off your VPN and Anti-Tracking apps)

https://www.getapp.com/resources/remove-personal-information-internet/

How to Remove Your Personal Information From the Internet

https://www.lifewire.com/remove-personal-information-from-internet-3482691

How To Delete Personal Information From Google

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=340dlNuJeyY

How To Remove Your Personal Data From The Internet

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qx60rSWtgio

Privacy On the Internet

So this session we've looked at how you remove some of your personal info from the internet

Next session:

Updates on info from previous sessions, including VPN's, CAPTCHA's, and more