

# **Steps you can take to further your privacy and security**

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## **1. Furthering your privacy by changing your Web Browser**

If you want to further your privacy, a first step would be to ditch Google Chrome and switch what web browser you use. This is not very difficult as most browsers play nice with each other and allow for password and bookmark importation. The two browsers I would recommend are Brave Browser and Firefox, with Brave being more secure and private out of the box and Firefox being more private if you're willing to change some config settings.

Firefox uses its own rendering engine while Brave is based on the Blink engine, which Google Chrome uses along with many other browsers. If you care about the future of the open internet, I would heavily recommend you use Firefox over Brave as Firefox is one of the few web browsers that doesn't use Blink. However, if you don't really care and want a comfortable experience without much configuration, I would recommend Brave.

If you don't like Brave due to the crypto currency aspects of it and you still want to use something similar to Chrome, you can install either Chromium or ungoogled-chromium. Chromium is essentially just an open source version of Google Chrome while ungoogled-chromium takes the extra step of removing all Google services from the browser.

## **2. Furthering your privacy by switching your Search Engine**

It would not be wrong to say that most people use Google as their default search engine, I would recommend that you avoid it however. Have you ever noticed that you get ads about the things you talk about or search? This is because search engine providers often sell your data to ad providers.

Because of this, I would recommend avoiding Google and using an alternative search engine.

I have two main recommendations; Brave Search and Searx

Brave Search is Brave's own search engine, which has its own Search Index (Doesn't pull from Google or Bing). Searx is a metasearch engine, it acts as a proxy for your searches and it queries many search engines (Including Google) anonymously.

If you value convenience over customizability, I would recommend Brave. Its results are quite good already and I really admire how it doesn't pull from any other search engines.

However, if you want to be super private and want the customizability that Brave lacks, I would heavily recommend Searx. Searx can be set up to run on your own computer, alternatively you can use an open instance of it online. The preference page provides many options for you to pick, such as what search engine you want to use, vim-like movement keys, image proxying and much more.

I do not recommend DuckDuckGo anymore due to them recently being caught in a scandal involving Microsoft and Bing.

### 3. Furthering your privacy by changing your Operating System

If you want to go this far (I did), I would recommend switching from Windows/MacOS to Linux. Linux is Free and Open Source Software, which means that any attempt to add tracking or invasive features would be heavily scrutinized by the community. Linux provides control over your operating system like no other.

#### Reasons for ditching Windows

1. Privacy invasive; Microsoft will collect your data and sell it to advertisers.
2. It's closed source; Closed source software may have security faults that have been unknown for years, all it takes is one person to discover an exploit and keep it a secret, no one will ever know until said person uses the exploit.
3. It may have backdoors; Microsoft is untrusted by adversaries of the West for this very reason, they suspect Microsoft of inserting backdoors for the US government.

There are steps you can take to mitigate the tracking and privacy invasion that are prevalent in Windows, but I would not recommend them due to Microsoft being able to change these settings with Windows Updates.

There is a concept unique to Free and Open Source Software known as **Distributions**. Linux Distributions are always collections of software that the developer community around the distribution thinks is best and most suitable for what they want. The biggest distributions are Ubuntu, Arch Linux, Fedora, and Debian.

As for what distribution I would recommend to a new user, I would recommend Linux Mint or Manjaro. They include drivers and video codecs that are often not provided by other distributions for philosophical and legal reasons.

If you're not sure about Linux but would like to try it, I would recommend installing Oracle VirtualBox and creating a Linux guest virtual machine. The performance won't be close to how it would be on baremetal, but it should give you a taste for how Linux works.

If you liked what you used and want to install Linux, but still need Windows, you can dual boot between the two Operating Systems. GNU GRUB (Linux's bootloader) provides the option to boot multiple operating systems on the same computer. The rule of thumb for dual booting Windows and Linux is to install Windows first and Linux second, Windows does not play nice with GRUB and will often try to overwrite it.

As for what I would do, I would completely switch and be done with Windows. Linux provides many great alternatives to software found exclusively on MacOS or Windows.

## Resources

<https://www.fsf.org/>

<https://archlinux.org/>

<https://spyware.neocities.org/>

<https://www.debian.org/>

<https://stallman.org/>

[https://wiki.installgentoo.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](https://wiki.installgentoo.com/wiki/Main_Page)