Internet Privacy

Recently *Google* has been in the news about their new policy to share your web browsing history across all of their products (web search, Gmail, YouTube, Music, Photos, etc.). Sounds like it might be a scary thing, but guess what, basically every product and service in the technology industry tracks our usage. This is how all these wonderful services get paid for. Advertisers pay to place ads across the top or down the right side of websites, web mail, Facebook, etc. and are the ones paying so we can use these services for free. I'm not saying that we should not be concerned (Google's privacy policy: This stuff matters). I'm just saying that all these technology companies do it so don't be so surprised when the latest story goes viral.

Google is not alone in this. They are just the latest to hit the news. *Apple* was recently caught tracking *iPhone* and *iPad* users location information and storing it for one year (CNN Report: iPhones secretly track their users' locations). Now why in the world would they need to know where you have been for the past year? And what about *Microsoft*? From the article: Microsoft Tracks Everywhere You Go, What You Do, "*Microsoft* track users' activity on *Windows* desktops (over the network or locally, for forensics). *Microsoft* also has a data-sharing partnership with *Facebook*, so it knows everything that people do on that site."

So lets use some common sense:

- Don't visit any website you would not want your mother to know about :-).
- Clear your *Google* Web History if you want. Instructions here.

- Ignore all advertisements at the top and down the right side of websites. Clicking on them only gives the advertiser more information about you.

I'm not overly concerned but if you want to do more you may want to read Google's Privacy Policy and listen to this Science Friday episode on NPR.

Maintenance Program Update

I like to use free programs whenever I can. I use a website www.download.com to look up new programs all the time to see if I should introduce them to my clients. Sometimes a free program will have an upgrade version for a fee. Most of the time I am satisfied with the free version so I don't bother paying for the upgrade. For the past few years I have been installing on most *Windows* computers a free program called *Advanced System Care* which is an excellent *Windows* Maintenance program. Now until March 31 they are selling the Pro version for $12.97 and that is good for 3 Windows PC computers for one year. (*Mac* users look at Onyx for an excellent free program and MacKeeper for a good paid maintenance program.)

The Pro version of *Advanced System Care* unlocks some extra features like automatic maintenance so you will not even need to go to the Maintenance folder on your Desktop and run the *Quick Care* program once per week. For this small fee I think every *Windows* user should jump at the "Spring Sale". Click on this link and follow the onscreen instructions to purchase an upgrade activation code. During the purchase uncheck the box to "Automatically renew each year" (at the bottom of the page where you enter all your information). Who knows, next year there might be an even better product for maintenance. When done with the purchase you will receive an email with your License Code. Then open *Advance System Care* (*Quick Care* in your Maintenance folder) and click the gold Upgrade button bottom left to enter the code and unlock the Pro features. Remember, just one purchase per home is good for 3 Windows PCs.

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