

Internet Browser Privacy Tips: In-Browser Settings

A Note on Language

In this toolkit, we will sometimes use the word woman/women and feminine pronouns for simplicity and to recognize the significant impact technology-facilitated violence has on women and girls. We recognize that TFGBV also impacts trans, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people. We hope that all people impacted by TFGBV will find these documents useful.

Internet browsers are the first step to accessing the Internet. They are also the first step to both increasing your online privacy and controlling your personal information. Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Safari all provide in-browser privacy settings for users. These options include private browsing, controlling activity logs, deleting cookies, and others.

For survivors of abuse and stalking, using these privacy options may increase their privacy and safety, particularly if they are concerned that an abusive person is physically monitoring their device activity. They can also help survivors have more control over how their personal information is collected and stored when they are online. However, browser privacy options are not going to protect from remote spying or monitoring if the perpetrator is using stalkerware. Learn more about stalkerware on [phones](#) and [computers](#).

This document discusses various options that can enhance a user's privacy in Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Safari. This info sheet is up to date as of October 2022. It is best to search for "how to" on these sites directly for the most up-to-date information.

Here we discuss the following options:

- **Private browsing** allows users to surf the Internet without the browser collecting history. This is helpful if you are concerned that someone may be monitoring your internet activity by going through your browser history. However, private browsing **will not prevent someone from knowing what you're doing online** if they are looking over your shoulder or are monitoring your device with stalkerware.

- **Do not track** is a setting that allows users to opt out of third-party tracking, such as advertisers on a website that you're visiting. This feature is only for third-party tracking, which often tracks users for behavioural advertising purposes; it doesn't prevent the website that you're visiting from collecting information about you.

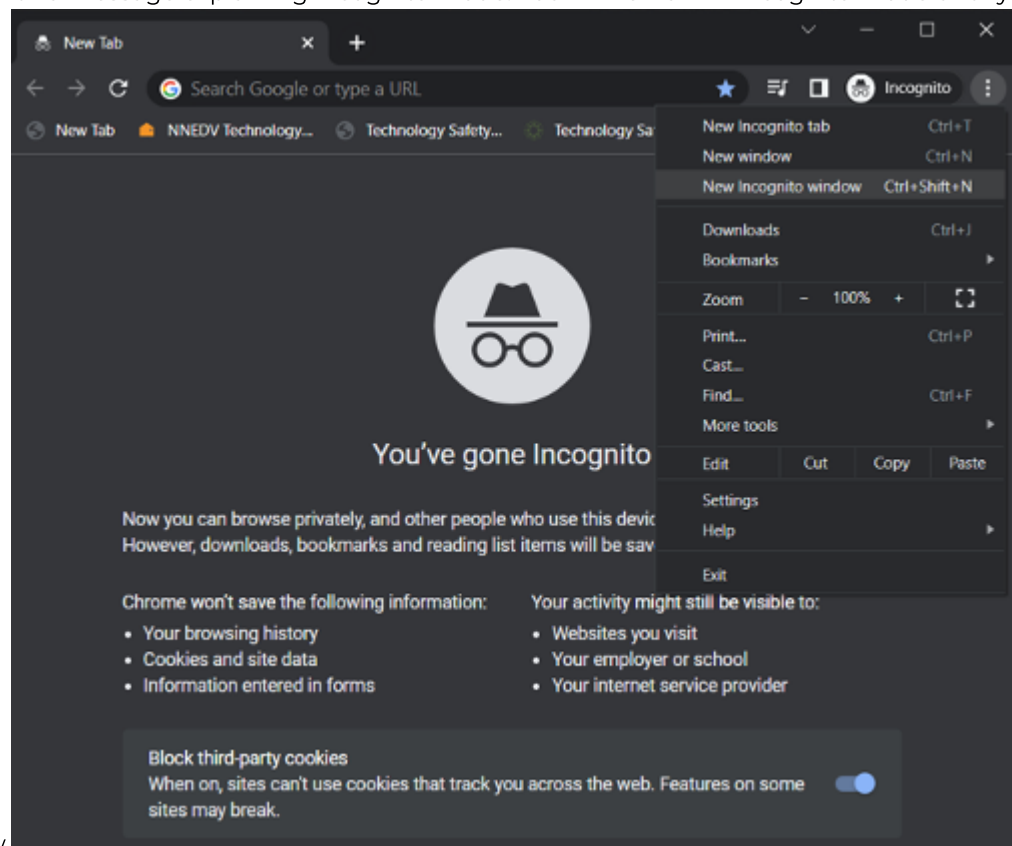
All the browsers discussed here allow users to delete their browser history. Keep in mind that if someone is monitoring your computer use, deleting your browser history may appear suspicious.

However, regularly deleting your browsing history can increase privacy.

Google Chrome

Private Browsing: Incognito Mode

1. In a new window, click on the Chrome menu ☰ icon.
2. Choose **New Incognito window**.
3. A new window will open with a message explaining incognito mode. You will remain in incognito mode until you




close this browser window.

Do Not Track:


1. On your computer, open Chrome.
2. At the top right, click More ☰ > **Settings**.
3. Click **Privacy and security** > **Cookies and other site data**.

4. Turn **Send a "Do not track" request with your browsing traffic** on or off.

History:

1. On your computer, open Chrome.
2. At the top right, click More  > **History**.
3. On the left, click **Clear browsing data**.
4. From the drop-down menu, select how much history you want to delete.
5. Check the boxes for the info you want Chrome to clear, including **Browsing history**.
6. Click **Clear data**.

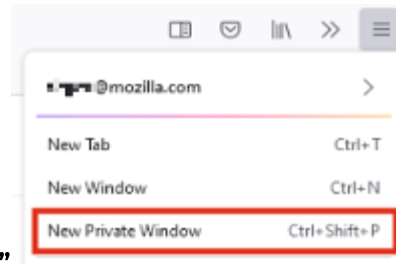
Additional Privacy Options:


1. On your computer, open Chrome.
2. At the top right, click More  > **Settings**.
3. Click **Privacy and security**.
4. Choose what settings to turn off.
 - a. To control how Chrome handles content and permissions for a site, click **Site settings**.
 - b. To delete information from your browsing activity, like your history, cookies, or saved passwords, click **Clear browsing data**.
 - c. To control how Chrome handles cookies and tracking, click **Cookies and other site data**.
 - d. To manage safe browsing and protection, click **Security**.

Google also offers a Privacy Checkup that allows you to review the privacy settings of any Google products you use, such as YouTube. Visit <https://myaccount.google.com/privacycheckup/> for more information.

Mozilla Firefox

Private Browsing




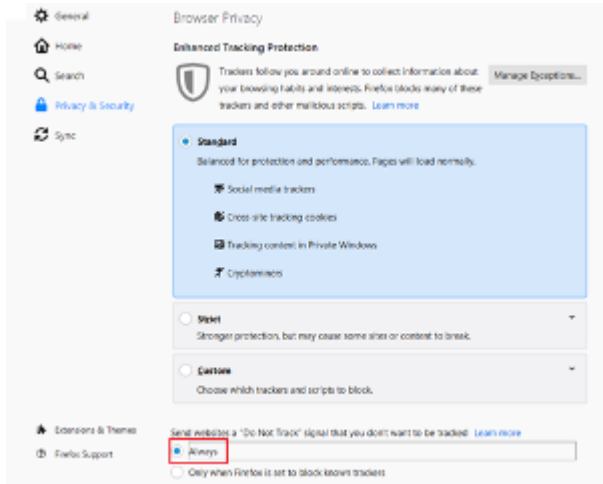
1. Click the menu button  and then click **"New Private Window"**
2. A new window will appear explaining Firefox's Private Browsing option. You will remain in this mode until you close this browser window.

There is also an option to always browse privately. [See here for more info.](#)

Do Not Track:

The **Do Not Track** feature is turned off by default, except in Private Windows, where it is always on by default. To always use Do Not Track:


1. Click the menu button  and select **Settings**.
2. Select the **Privacy & Security** panel.
 - a. This takes you to the Enhanced Tracking Protection section of your Browser Privacy settings.
3. Under **Send websites a "Do Not Track" signal that you don't want to be tracked**, choose **Always**.

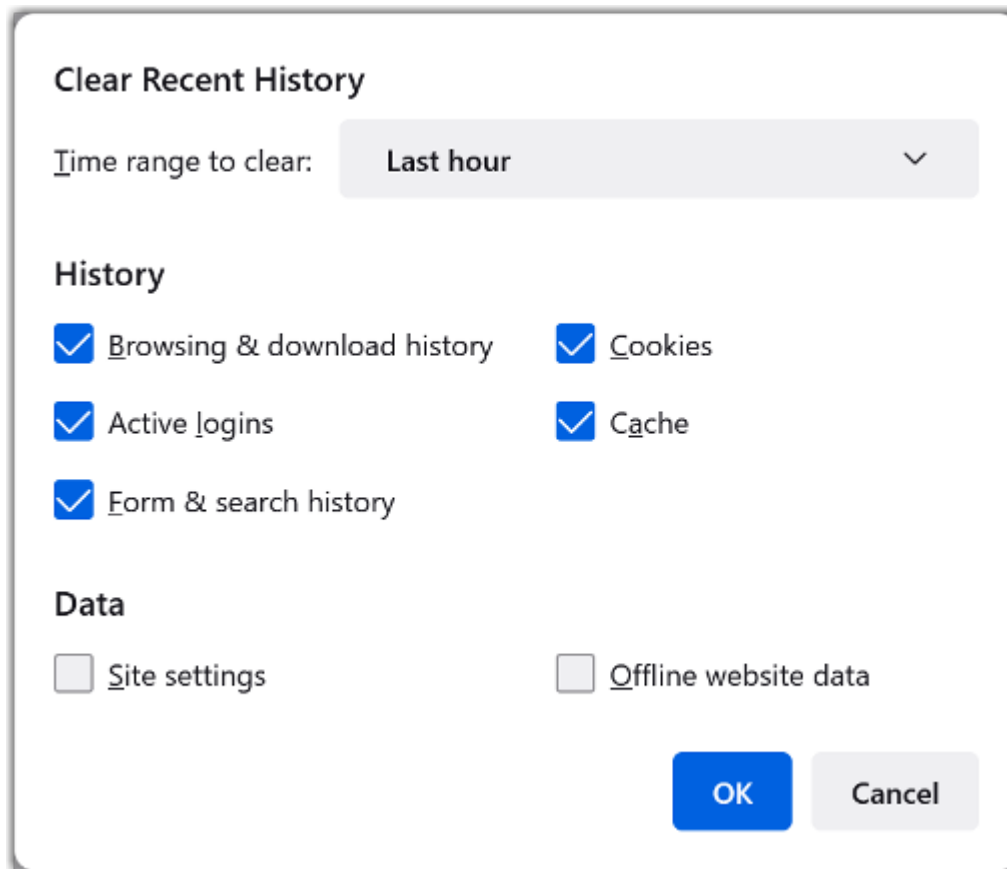


4. Close the **about: preferences** page. Any changes you've made will automatically be saved.

To learn more about how Firefox protects you from trackers in Private Windows, see SmartBlock for Enhanced Tracking Protection.

History:

1. Click on the menu button  to open the menu panel.
2. Click **History** and select **Clear Recent History**.
3. Select how much history you want to clear:
 - a. Click the drop-down menu next to **Time range to clear** to choose how much of your history Firefox will clear (the last hour, the last two hours, the last four hours, the current day or everything).



b. Use the checkboxes to select what information you want to clear from your history. Your choices are described in the [What things are included in my history?](#) section above.

4. Click the **OK** button. The window will close and the items you've selected will be cleared from your history.

Safari

Private Browsing

Browse Privately One Time

1. In the Safari app  on your Mac, choose **File > New Private Window**, or switch to a private window that's already open.
A private window has a dark [Smart Search field](#) with white text.
2. Browse as you normally would.

When you use a private window:




- Browsing initiated in one tab is isolated from browsing initiated in another tab, so websites you visit can't track your browsing across multiple sessions.
- Webpages you visit and your AutoFill information aren't saved.
- Your open webpages aren't stored in [iCloud](#), so they aren't shown when you view all your open tabs from other devices.
- Your recent searches aren't included in the results list when you use the Smart Search field.

- Items you download aren't included in the downloads list. (The items do remain on your computer.)
- If you use Handoff, private windows are not passed to your iPhone, iPad, iPod touch, or other Mac computers.
- Changes to your cookies and website data aren't saved.

Websites can't modify information stored on your device, so services normally available at such sites may work differently until you use a non-private window.

Note: None of the above applies in non-private Safari windows you may have open.

Always Browse Privately

1. In the Safari app  on your Mac, choose **Safari > Preferences**, then click **General**.
2. Click the **Safari opens with** pop-up menu, then choose **A new private window**. If you don't see this option, choose **Apple menu**  **> System Preferences**, click **General**  and make sure **Close windows when quitting an app** is selected.


Do Not Track:

1. In the Safari app  on your Mac, choose **Safari > Preferences**, then click **Privacy**.
2. Select **Prevent cross-site tracking**.

Unless you visit and interact with the third-party content provider's own website, their cookies and website data are deleted.

Social media sites often put Share, Like, or Comment buttons on other websites. These buttons can be used to track your web browsing – even if you don't use them. Safari blocks that tracking. If you still want to use the buttons, you'll be asked for your permission to allow the site to see your activities on the other websites.

History:

1. In the Safari app  on your Mac, choose **History > Clear History**, then click the pop-up menu.
2. Choose how far back you want your browsing history cleared.

Additional Privacy:

Check out Apple's Privacy Preferences [here](#).

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) is part of a continuum of violence that can be both online and in-person. If you or someone you know is experiencing TFGBV, you are not alone. You can use [sheltersafe.ca](#) to find a shelter/transition house near you to discuss options and create a [safety plan](#). You don't need to stay in a shelter to access free, confidential services and support.

Adapted for Canada with permission from NNEDV's Safety Net project, based on their resource [Internet Browsing Tips](#).

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