

Navigating the Digital World

In today's digital world, technology and the internet play a central role by providing us with opportunities to learn, communicate, and entertain ourselves. Explore the following statistics about internet use in 2022:

- 95% of Canadians used the internet for personal reasons
- 78% of Canadians used the internet for online banking
- 74% of Canadians used the internet for social media
- 47% of Canadians had smart home devices (i.e., Alexa, Google Home)

Being online can also pose challenges and potential risks that we should be aware of. Online safety is about protecting ourselves and others when using technology and the internet. In the following text, you will explore digital privacy and online security measures.

Digital privacy

People have the right to privacy. There are laws in place that can protect your privacy both online and offline. However, it is also important that you protect your own privacy. It is important that you have control over your own personal information and make positive choices about how it is collected, used, and shared with others. Your personal information includes things like your full name, address, phone number, birth date, photos, and videos of you.

Privacy risks

So, what are the risks? A **data breach** is one potential risk to your privacy when you are online. A data breach is when personal information is accessed, stolen, and used without your permission. Someone might do this to sell your information or pretend to be you.

Another possible risk is **online tracking**, when companies or websites track your online activities. They might track the websites you visit, the things you search for, and even the videos you watch. They use this information to build a profile about you and then send you target advertisements for content or products they want you to see or even buy. In 2023, 27% of Canadians indicated that they felt comfortable with apps tracking their real-world activity. Another thing to consider is that information you share online **stays online**. This can impact your future, as what you share online may not match with your feelings, opinions, or thoughts as you grow up.

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Tips for online safety

With all of these risks in mind, there are ways that you can protect yourself from these privacy risks. For starters, **think about what you post** and share online because once it's online, it can be saved, copied, and altered, and you cannot permanently delete it. Watch out for **scams** by avoiding websites and links that you are unfamiliar with.

Check your **privacy settings** on your devices and as you download and explore content; sometimes, the preset settings allow your information to be shared, but you can make them stronger. 49% of Canadians changed their privacy settings on accounts of apps to limit access to personal information. Do you think this percentage is high enough? Along with this, you can turn your **location off**. By altering your privacy settings and turning your location off, you can avoid being tracked online.

Make **strong passwords** that are difficult for others to guess, and don't share them with others. By making your passwords strong, you will help avoid a data breach and keep your personal information more secure. With all of this in mind, you should always check with a trusted adult before sharing your personal information, and ask for help if you need it.

Online security

Did you know that over half of Canadians have experienced a cyber threat at least once? When navigating the digital world, it is important to be aware of cyber threats. A cyber threat is when someone tries to do something harmful to your device in an attempt to gain your password, personal information, or even damage your device with a virus.