

A Digital Security Checklist



The Basics

- Use a password manager / create better passwords / use 2-Factor Authentication
- Carefully use an encrypted chat app and teach someone else how to use it. **TURN OFF CLOUD BACK-UPS** for your encrypted chat apps.
- Understand **metadata** and how it leaks
- Take advantage of disk encryption on your phones and laptops (File Vault and Bit Locker)
- Check your app permissions for Twitter, Google, Facebook, Dropbox and check the privacy/sharing settings
- Do not click on links or open documents from people you don't know
- Watch for insecure or weirdly-worded website URL (also HTTP without S)
- Back up your data to your **DEVICE** using a strong password, not just to the cloud.



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The Approach

- What is my sensitive stuff? Who are my sensitive sources?
- Who might want my stuff? Who might want to expose my sources?
- How does my stuff flow through the Internet and where does it land?
- What tools do I have to protect my stuff?
- Which tools should I use for this assignment?
- How can I encourage my sources to use better practices?
- How can I minimize the risk that they (and I) must take?
- How can people connect the source to me?
- How much time do I want to spend securing all of my work?



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More Advanced Practices

Websites To Check

- Hide your searches from USC? Download the 1.1.1.1 DNS SEC “VPN” for your mobile phone.
- Do not use your phone for SMS 2-Factor Authentication codes. Use an authenticator app or a Yubikey.
- Search using <https://www.duckduckgo.com> when you don't want Google logging your search history.
- Check <https://www.haveibeenpwned.com> for your e-mail to see if your data has been breached.
- <https://freedom.press/> - Lots of tips
- <https://thewirecutter.com/reviews/best-vpn-service/> (Which VPN is best for you?)

Resources Available To You

If you aren't sure about something, or you're starting work on a story that is sensitive or might require you to model the threat, ask for help.

Practice what you've learned by teaching these concepts to the students you supervise.



- You'll soon get a FREE Yubikey from Yubico for 2-Factor Authentication. (Trainings in November in the Annenberg Digital Lounge).
- ambinder@usc.edu. (Marc Ambinder)
- Martin@freedom.press. (Martin Shelton)

