The Switch List

Yusuf, VXSec. Updated November 2026.

Your apps share more about you than their setup screens let on. These are the settings that change it, app by app. Most take under a minute.

None of this makes you invisible, so each one tells you what still happens after you flip it. Menus move with updates. If one isn't where I said, search its name in that app's settings. Some are different or missing outside Canada and the US.

> **Short on time? Do these five.**
>
> 1. Instagram: Activity from other businesses
> 2. iPhone: Allow Apps to Request to Track. On Android, delete your advertising ID.
> 3. Google: Personalized ads
> 4. TikTok: Targeted ads
> 5. ChatGPT: Improve the model for everyone

Instagram and Facebook

Both use the same settings area. Start at your profile, tap the three lines, then Accounts Center.

Activity from other businesses

Your information and permissions > Activity from other businesses > Don't allow

Changes: Instagram stops using what other businesses send about you to pick your ads.

Still happens: Businesses can still send it. You'll still see ads based on what you do on Instagram and Facebook, and if a business's customer list matches you.

Also worth going through

Under Ad preferences > Customize ads > Manage info

- Categories used to reach you
- Audience-based advertising
- Ads in other apps
- Ads about Meta
- Social interactions

Also worth going through

Under Your information and permissions

- Search history
- App connections
- External accounts
- Manage contacts

TikTok

Start at Profile, tap the three lines, then Settings and privacy.

Targeted ads

Ads > turn off Targeted ads

Changes: TikTok stops using your activity outside TikTok to choose your ads.

Still happens: You'll still get ads based on what you watch and do inside TikTok.

Google

These follow your Google account on every device you're signed in on.

Personalized ads

Go to myadcenter.google.com > Personalized ads > Off

Changes: Google stops using your activity to pick ads, on Google and on partner sites and apps.

Still happens: Same number of ads. They're picked by things like the site you're on and your general location.

Web and App Activity

myactivity.google.com > Web & App Activity > Turn off and delete activity

Changes: Google stops saving your searches and activity to your account.

Still happens: Plain Turn off keeps what's already saved, so pick the delete option. Timeline and some newer search history settings are separate.

YouTube history

YouTube > profile photo > Settings > Manage all history > Controls > turn off

Changes: New videos stop going into your watch history and recommendations.

Still happens: Your home feed may go empty. Old history stays until you clear it.

Gemini activity

gemini.google.com > Activity > Turn off and delete activity

Changes: Your chats stop being saved to your account for review.

Still happens: Chats are still kept up to 72 hours. Any a human already reviewed can stay up to 3 years.

Timeline

Google Maps > profile picture > Your Timeline > three dots > Location & privacy settings > Turn off and delete activity

Changes: Google stops saving your exact movements to Timeline.

Still happens: It's off unless you turned it on, so check it. Other Google settings can still save location.

iPhone

Everything here starts in Settings > Privacy & Security unless it says otherwise.

Tracking

Tracking > turn off Allow Apps to Request to Track

Changes: Apps can't ask to track you across other apps and websites anymore, and new ones are told not to.

Still happens: Apps you already allowed stay allowed. Turn those off on the same screen. Apps still see what you do inside them.

Significant Locations

Location Services > System Services > Significant Locations & Routes > off

Changes: Your iPhone stops learning the places you go most.

Still happens: Apps with location permission can still get it. Check each one in Location Services.

Apple ads

Apple Advertising > Personalized Ads > off

Changes: Apple stops targeting its own ads at you in the App Store, News and Stocks.

Still happens: Apple says you may see just as many ads. Other companies' ads aren't touched.

Mail tracking

Settings > Apps > Mail > Privacy Protection > Protect Mail Activity on

Changes: Senders can't see when you opened an email, or your IP address.

Still happens: Links and attachments aren't covered. To hide your IP, Limit IP Address Tracking must also be on: Settings > Wi-Fi > the (i) next to your network.

Safari

Settings > Apps > Safari > Hide IP Address and Prevent Cross-Site Tracking

Changes: Known trackers can't see your IP address.

Still happens: Hiding it from websites too needs paid iCloud+.

Android

Names change by phone maker. If one isn't there, use the search bar in Settings.

Advertising ID

Settings > Google > All services > Ads > Delete advertising ID

Changes: Apps can't use that ID to build an ad profile on you.

Still happens: Apps can still use their own data and other identifiers.

Ad topics

Same Ads screen > turn off Ad topics, App-suggested ads and Ad measurement

Changes: Android stops sharing your interests with apps.

Still happens: You still see ads.

Privacy dashboard

Settings > Security and privacy > Privacy > Privacy dashboard

Changes: Shows which apps used your camera, mic and location, and when. Tap an app to change it.

Still happens: It only shows you. Nothing changes until you remove a permission.

Snapchat

Ad preferences

Profile > gear > My Account > Manage My Account > Ad Preferences > turn off Audience-Based, Activity-Based and Third-Party Ad Networks

Changes: Snap stops using advertiser lists, your activity off Snapchat, and outside ad networks.

Still happens: You still get ads, based on what you do in Snapchat.

Ghost Mode

Snap Map > gear > Ghost Mode on

Changes: Other people can't see you on the Map.

Still happens: Snap still gets your location, and so does My AI. Snaps you submit to the Map can still show there.

My AI data

Profile > gear > Privacy Controls > Clear My AI Data

Changes: Wipes what My AI remembers about you.

Still happens: New chats get saved again.

ChatGPT

Improve the model for everyone

Profile icon > Settings > Data controls > off

Changes: Your new chats stop being used to train OpenAI's models.

Still happens: Your saved chats stay. Voice mode has its own separate control. If you send feedback on a reply (thumbs up or down), that whole conversation can still be used for training.

LinkedIn

Data for Generative AI

Settings > Data privacy > Data for Generative AI > off

Changes: LinkedIn stops using your data and posts to train its AI from now on.

Still happens: What's already been used isn't undone. It's on by default, including in Canada.

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Grok training

Settings > Privacy and safety > Data sharing and personalization > Grok & Third-party Collaborators > untick

Changes: Your posts and Grok chats stop being used for training.

Still happens: If you rate a Grok reply with thumbs up or down, that chat can still be used.

WhatsApp

Start at Settings > Privacy.

Last seen and online

Last seen and online > Nobody or My contacts

Changes: Strangers can't see when you were last on.

Still happens: If you hide yours, you can't see other people's.

Groups

Groups > My contacts

Changes: Random people can't drop you straight into a group.

Still happens: They can still send you an invite link.

Alexa

Voice recordings

Alexa app > More > Alexa Privacy

Changes: Choose to delete recordings and how long they're kept.

Still happens: Not saving recordings turns off Voice ID. Amazon can keep other records.

Where this comes from. Each company's own help pages, in case you want to check me:

- Meta: facebook.com/help/568137493302217
- TikTok: support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/personalized-ads-and-data/targeted-ads
- Google ads: support.google.com/My-Ad-Center-Help/answer/12155656
- Google activity: support.google.com/websearch/answer/54068
- YouTube: support.google.com/youtube/answer/95725
- Gemini: support.google.com/gemini/answer/13278892
- Maps Timeline: support.google.com/maps/answer/6258979
- iPhone tracking: support.apple.com/en-ca/102420
- iPhone location: support.apple.com/en-ca/102515
- Apple ads: support.apple.com/en-us/105131
- Android ads: support.google.com/android/answer/12461628
- Android dashboard: support.google.com/android/answer/13530434
- Snapchat ads: help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/7012345515796
- Ghost Mode: help.snapchat.com/hc/en-us/articles/7012322854932
- ChatGPT: help.openai.com/en/articles/7730893-data-controls-in-chatgpt
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a5538339
- X: help.x.com/en/using-x/about-grok
- WhatsApp: faq.whatsapp.com/3307102709559968
- Alexa: amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=GVP69FUJ48X9DK8V