

# Stop Your Smart TV

## THE 60-SECOND VERSION

- 1 If you just want the switches, here they are by brand.
- 2 The feature is called ACR — it recognizes what's on your screen.
- 3 Samsung: turn off 'Viewing Information Services.' LG: turn off 'Live Plus.' Vizio: turn off 'Viewing Data.' Roku / Roku TV: uncheck 'Use info from TV inputs' and limit ad tracking.
- 4 Fire TV: turn off Device Usage Data and interest-based ads; Google TV: opt out under Privacy, Ads.
- 5 It won't change your shows Turning this off doesn't remove apps, channels, or features — your TV works exactly as before.
- 6 You're only stopping it from profiling what you watch.

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## Stopping Your Smart TV From Tracking What You Watch

From Tracking You Switch off the viewing-data tracking — the setting on every brand

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1137 · NO. W1-11 —————

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**Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech**

(330) 200-8042 · [bill@billshometech.com](mailto:bill@billshometech.com) · Atwater, Ohio

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## SUMMARY

## The 60-Second Version

If you just want the switches, here they are by brand.

- The feature is called ACR — it recognizes what's on your screen.
- Samsung: turn off 'Viewing Information Services.'
- LG: turn off 'Live Plus.'
- Vizio: turn off 'Viewing Data.'
- Roku / Roku TV: uncheck 'Use info from TV inputs' and limit ad tracking.
- Fire TV: turn off Device Usage Data and interest-based ads; Google TV: opt out under Privacy, Ads.
- It won't change your shows Turning this off doesn't remove apps, channels, or features — your TV works exactly as before. You're only stopping it from profiling what you watch.

## WELCOME

## 1.! Read this first — this is a privacy tidy-up, not an emergency

Your smart TV quietly keeps track of what's on your screen and uses it to target ads and share data. It's not spying on you in any dangerous way, and turning it off won't break anything or lose your shows — it just stops the TV building a profile of your viewing. Think of this as closing a few blinds you didn't know were open. A calm, one-time tidy-up, not a crisis. Your TV is watching what you watch Most modern smart TVs have a feature that recognizes everything on the screen — shows, ads, even what plays from your cable box or a disc — and uses it to target advertising and sell viewing data. You can turn it off. I'm Bill, from Bill's Home Tech in Portage County, Ohio. Folks are often surprised to learn their TV does this, and relieved to hear it's simple to switch off. This guide explains what's going on in plain English and walks you through the opt-out on every major brand. We'll keep it calm and practical: what this tracking is, why TV makers do it, and exactly which settings to turn off on your Samsung, LG, Vizio, Roku, Fire, or Google TV. The names differ by brand, which is the only tricky part. Want me to just turn it off for you? Every brand buries these settings differently. I'm glad to find them on your particular TV and switch the tracking off while I'm there. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042.

**WHAT ACR IS**

## 2. What this tracking actually is

*The TV takes constant 'fingerprints' of your screen.*

The feature is called Automatic Content Recognition, or ACR. Many times a second, the TV samples what's on the screen and matches it against a huge database to figure out exactly what you're watching — a show, a commercial, even something from your cable box, a game console, or a DVD. It builds a detailed picture of your viewing habits. That profile is used to target ads at you (on the TV and sometimes on your other devices) and is often shared or sold to advertisers and data companies. It's not recording you through a camera or microphone — it's watching the content on the screen — but it is a lot of data about your household, gathered quietly in the background. It watches the content, not you. ACR looks at what's playing on the screen, not at you through a camera. There's nothing creepy in your living room — it's a data-gathering feature, and one you can switch off.

**WHY THEY DO IT**

## 3. Why TV makers do this

*TVs are sold cheap partly because your data is the product.*

Smart TVs have gotten remarkably inexpensive, and part of the reason is that the maker expects to earn money afterward from advertising and viewing data. ACR is central to that: knowing what you watch lets them sell precise ad targeting. So the tracking isn't an accident or a bug — it's a built-in part of the business, usually switched on at setup. Often you technically 'agreed' to it by tapping Accept on a wall of terms when you first set up the TV. That's why most people have it on without realizing. The good news is the makers also provide an off switch — they just don't make it easy to find. On by default, off by choice. You're not paranoid for wanting it off, and you're not stuck with it. It's simply on by default; this guide is how you make it off by choice.

**SAMSUNG TVS**

## 4. Turning it off on a Samsung

*Samsung's switch is 'Viewing Information Services.'*

On a Samsung, open Settings, go to All Settings, then General and Privacy (on some models it's under Support or Terms and Privacy), and find Privacy Choices or the terms and privacy area. Turn off Viewing Information Services — that's the ACR switch. While you're there, also turn off Interest-Based Advertising (or Interest-Based Ads Service). The exact wording and menu location drift a little by model and year, but 'Viewing Information Services' is the term to hunt for. Switching it off stops the content-recognition tracking; the ads setting reduces targeted advertising on top of that. Two switches on Samsung Get both: 'Viewing Information Services' stops the content tracking, and turning off Interest-Based Advertising cuts the targeted ads that use it.

**LG TVS**

## 5. Turning it off on an LG

*LG calls its tracking 'Live Plus.'*

On an LG, open Settings, go to All Settings, then General, then System, and look under Additional Settings for Live Plus. Turn it off — that's LG's ACR. Then, in the agreements or advertisement area, opt out of viewing information and interest-based ads, and turn on 'Limit Ad Tracking' if it's offered. On some LG models Live Plus sits directly under General or Options rather than in Additional Settings — the label is the thing to find. Switching Live Plus off is the main event; the advertising opt-outs are the helpful extras. 'Live Plus' is the one to find. If you remember one LG term, it's Live Plus. Turn it off and the content-recognition tracking stops; the ad opt-outs tidy up the rest.

**VIZIO TVS**

## 6. Turning it off on a Vizio

*Vizio calls its tracking 'Viewing Data.'*

On a Vizio (SmartCast), open the Menu, go to System, then Reset and Admin, and turn off Viewing Data — that's Vizio's ACR switch. (Vizio was actually fined years ago for collecting this without clear consent, so they now put the toggle in that Reset and Admin area.) You can reach the same control from the SmartCast phone app under its Admin and Privacy section. Turning Viewing Data off stops the content-recognition tracking. If you like, you can also clear previously collected data from that same menu. Look under 'Reset and Admin' Vizio tucks the Viewing Data switch in the System, Reset and Admin area — not the obvious place. That's where to turn it off.

**ROKU TVS AND PLAYERS**

## 7. Turning it down on Roku

*Two switches: TV-input tracking and ad tracking.*

On a Roku (a Roku-brand player or a Roku TV like many TCL and Hisense sets), open Settings, go to Privacy, then Smart TV experience, and uncheck 'Use info from TV inputs.' That limits the content recognition on what comes through your antenna, cable box, or HDMI devices. Then, still under Settings and Privacy, go to Advertising and turn on Limit Ad Tracking (you can also reset the advertising identifier). Together these cut the tracking and the targeted ads. Note that Roku, like the others, still gathers some data on its own streaming side — these switches limit it, they don't erase every bit. Uncheck 'Use info from TV inputs' That one checkbox under Privacy, Smart TV experience is Roku's main content-tracking switch. Uncheck it, then limit ad tracking in the Advertising menu.

**FIRE TV AND GOOGLE TV**

## 8. Fire TV and Google TV

*Each has its own privacy and ads settings.*

On a Fire TV (an Amazon stick or a Fire-branded TV from Insignia or Toshiba), open Settings, go to Preferences, then Privacy Settings. Turn off Device Usage Data and Collect App Usage Data, and turn on the interest-based ads opt-out. That reins in Amazon's tracking and targeted ads. On a Google TV or Android TV (many Sony, Hisense, and TCL sets), open Settings, go to Privacy, then Ads, and choose to opt out of ads personalization (and reset or delete the advertising ID). Google notes you can't remove ads entirely, only make them non-personalized. Also watch for Samba TV during a TV's first setup — it's a separate tracking service you can decline. Decline Samba TV at setup Many Sony, TCL, and Hisense TVs offer 'Samba TV' during setup — a separate tracking layer. Decline it then, or disable it in settings later, alongside the platform's own opt-outs.

**A QUICK OPT-OUT OR A THOROUGH CLEAN-UP**

## 9. Two ways people come to this — and both are fine

Some folks just want to flip the main tracking switch off; others want to tidy up every privacy and ad setting while they're in there. Both are easy from the same menus. If you just want the tracking off You want the main content-recognition switch flipped and nothing more.

- Find your brand's ACR switch (Viewing Information Services, Live Plus, Viewing Data, etc.) and turn it off.
- That alone stops the TV profiling what you watch.
- You're done in a couple of minutes. If you want a thorough tidy-up You'd like to limit ads and other data collection too.
- Also turn on 'Limit Ad Tracking' and opt out of interest-based ads.
- Decline or disable Samba TV if your TV has it.
- Clear previously collected data where the menu offers it. I'll do a full privacy pass If you'd like your TV's tracking and targeted ads tidied up properly in one go, that's a quick, satisfying visit. Call (330) 200-8042.

## WHAT IT DOESN'T CHANGE

## 10. What turning it off does — and doesn't — do

*Reassurance, so you can switch it off with confidence.*

Turning off ACR and the ad settings does not remove your apps, channels, recordings, or any feature you use. Netflix still works, the antenna channels still tune, the remote still does everything. You're simply telling the TV to stop building and sharing a profile of your viewing. What it doesn't do is make the TV completely private — these makers still collect some data on their own streaming apps, and you'll still see ads on the TV's home screen (just not ones targeted from your viewing profile). It's a meaningful reduction, not a magic cloak. For most folks, that reduction is exactly what they wanted. A big reduction, honestly described. You'll stop the content-recognition profiling and cut targeted ads — a real improvement. It won't make the TV totally data-free, and that's the honest truth worth knowing.

## COMMON MISTAKES

## 11. Common mistakes

*Avoid these for a clean opt-out.*

- Hunting for the word 'tracking' — brands use their own names (Viewing Information Services, Live Plus, Viewing Data).
- Flipping only the ad setting and missing the main ACR switch (they're separate).
- Accepting everything at setup on a new TV without reading — that's how it gets turned on.
- Forgetting Samba TV on Sony/TCL/Hisense sets — a separate layer to decline.
- Expecting it to remove all ads — it stops targeted ones, not every ad.

**WATCH OUT**

Read the terms on a new TV The easiest time to avoid all this is at setup: when a new TV asks you to 'Accept' viewing-data and ad terms, you can usually decline the optional ones. Slow down on that screen.

**CHECKLIST**

## 12. Your stop-the-tracking checklist

*By brand, in one list.*

- Samsung: Viewing Information Services OFF; Interest-Based Ads off.
- LG: Live Plus OFF; limit ad tracking.
- Vizio: Viewing Data OFF (System, Reset and Admin).
- Roku: uncheck 'Use info from TV inputs'; Limit Ad Tracking on.
- Fire TV: Device/App Usage Data off; interest-based ads opt-out.
- Google TV: Privacy, Ads, opt out of personalization.
- Decline or disable Samba TV if present.
- One pass per TV Do this once on each TV in the house and it stays off. New TV someday? Run the same short checklist, and watch the terms screen at setup.

**A SENSIBLE PERSPECTIVE**

## 13. A sensible way to think about it

*Worth doing, not worth losing sleep over.*

This is a reasonable, sensible privacy step — the digital equivalent of not leaving your curtains wide open. It's worth the few minutes. At the same time, it's not a scandal to have had it on: millions of people do, the data is mostly used for ad targeting, and no one is watching you in your living room. So switch it off with a clear head, enjoy a bit more privacy, and don't fret about the shows you watched before you did. Good digital hygiene is about steady, sensible habits — turning off tracking you don't want is simply one of them. Calm and sensible wins Treat it like locking a door you'd left unlocked — good to do, no reason to panic. Flip the switches and get back to your shows.

## HELPING A RELATIVE

## 14. Doing it on a parent's TV

*A quiet favor that respects their privacy.*

Older relatives often have no idea their TV tracks their viewing, and appreciate having it turned off. It's a small, concrete way to look after their privacy — find their brand's ACR switch, turn it off, flip the ad opt-outs, and decline Samba TV if it's there. Nothing about their TV-watching changes afterward. Explain it simply — 'I turned off a setting that was keeping track of what you watch to sell ads' — so they understand what you did and why. If you can't be there, this guide's brand pages make it a quick phone-guided job, or a fast local visit. I'll handle their whole house I'm glad to go through a parent's TVs and switch off the tracking on each one, explaining it plainly as I go. Call (330) 200-8042.

## COMMON QUESTIONS

## 15. Common Questions

*The smart-TV-privacy questions I hear most.*

Q: Is my TV recording me through a camera or microphone? No. This tracking (called ACR) watches the content on your screen, not you. Most TVs have no camera; a voice remote only listens when you press its microphone button. Q: What's the setting called on my TV? It varies: Samsung Viewing Information Services, LG Live Plus, Vizio Viewing Data, Roku 'Use info from TV inputs,' and privacy/ads settings on Fire TV and Google TV. Q: Will turning it off break anything? No — your apps, channels, and features all keep working. You're only stopping the TV from profiling and sharing what you watch. Q: Does this remove all the ads? No — it stops targeted ads based on your viewing and halts the content tracking. You may still see generic ads on the TV's home screen. Q: What is Samba TV? A separate tracking service offered during setup on some Sony, TCL, and Hisense TVs. Decline it at setup, or disable it in settings later, along with your brand's own opt-outs. Not sure where the switch is? Tell me your TV brand, or let me pop over and turn it off. Call or text (330) 200-8042.

**QUICK RECAP****16. The quick recap**

*The whole guide in one glance.*

- The tracking is called ACR — it recognizes what's on your screen for ads.
- Samsung: Viewing Information Services OFF. LG: Live Plus OFF.
- Vizio: Viewing Data OFF (Reset and Admin). Roku: uncheck 'Use info from TV inputs.'
- Fire TV and Google TV: opt out under their Privacy / Ads settings.
- Decline Samba TV if your TV offers it.
- Nothing about your shows or apps changes — it's a privacy tidy-up.
- A few minutes, a little more privacy One quiet pass through the settings and your TV stops profiling your viewing. Calm, simple, and worth doing.

**ABOUT THE VOICE REMOTE****17. A word about the voice remote**

*Since folks often ask — it's not always listening.*

If your remote has a microphone button for searching by voice, you may wonder whether it's always listening. On almost every TV, the microphone only listens while you hold the button and speak — it's not an always-on ear in the room. That's different from the ACR screen-watching this guide is about. If you'd rather not use voice at all, you can simply never press that button, and some TVs let you disable or revoke the voice feature in settings. But for most people the voice remote is a harmless convenience that only listens on demand. It listens only when you ask The voice button is press-to-talk, not always-on. If it still bothers you, don't press it — or disable voice in the settings. Either way, it's separate from the viewing tracking.

## THE BIGGER PICTURE

## 18. While you're thinking about privacy

*The TV is one of several devices worth a quick look.*

If tidying up your TV's tracking has you thinking about privacy more broadly, the same spirit applies to streaming sticks (which have their own ad-tracking settings, covered above), phones, and smart speakers — each has a privacy or ads section where you can opt out of personalized advertising and limit data sharing. None of it is urgent, and you don't have to do it all at once. But a relaxed, device-by-device pass — TV today, phone another day — quietly shrinks how much of your life is being profiled. My other guides on phones and online safety cover those when you're ready. One device at a time There's no rush. Handle the TV now; get to the phone and the rest whenever you feel like it. Small, steady steps add up to real privacy.

## YOU CAN DO THIS

## 19. A little reassurance

*You can't hurt the TV by changing these settings.*

Poking into the privacy menus is perfectly safe — nothing you toggle there can harm the television or lose your shows, and anything you change can be changed back. The only hard part is that each brand hides the setting under its own name, which is exactly what this guide's brand pages solve. Find your brand, follow the steps, and flip the switch. And if the menus feel like a maze — they are, a little, by design — that's just the sort of small thing I'm happy to come handle so you can watch in peace. Find your brand and flip the switch It really is just a toggle or two, once you know its name. Turn to your brand's page, follow along, and enjoy a quieter, more private TV.

## ON YOUR NEXT TV

## 20. Catching it on your next TV

*The easiest time to opt out is the very first setup.*

When you set up a brand-new TV, it walks you through a series of agreements and asks you to 'Accept.' Buried in there are the viewing-data and advertising permissions. If you slow down and read, you can usually decline the optional ones right then — which means the tracking never gets switched on in the first place. You generally do have to accept the basic terms for the TV to work, but the viewing-data and personalized-ad pieces are usually optional and can be declined at setup. Saying no there saves you the menu-hunting later — and it's the same choice this guide helps you make after the fact. Slow down on the 'Accept' screens. Don't rapid-fire 'Accept' through a new TV's setup. Read for the viewing-data and ad permissions and decline the optional ones — it saves you this whole chore.

## 21. Streaming Sticks and Boxes Have Their Own Switches

*The little gadgets plugged into your TV track too.*

Many folks don't watch through the TV's own apps at all — they use a little streaming stick or box plugged into an HDMI port. Those gadgets do their own advertising tracking, separate from the TV. So if you've turned off the TV's ACR but still watch through a stick, there's a second set of switches worth flipping on the gadget itself. It's the same calm, one-time job, just in a different menu.

- Roku stick or box: Settings, then Privacy, then Advertising — turn on 'Limit Ad Tracking.'
- Amazon Fire Stick: Settings, then Preferences, then Privacy Settings — turn off Device Usage Data and turn on the interest-based ads opt-out.
- Chromecast with Google TV: Settings, then Privacy, then Ads — opt out of ads personalization.
- Apple TV: Settings, then General, then Privacy — a notably more private option, covered on the next page.

### GOOD TO KNOW

The stick and the TV are two separate little computers. Turning off tracking on one doesn't touch the other, so if you use both, give each a quick pass. It's the same calm, one-time job either way.

If you're not sure whether you watch 'through the TV' or 'through a stick,' look at what you see when you press Home. If the menu is Roku's, Fire TV's, or Google TV's, that's the gadget running the show, and that's where these switches live. Many households actually have both a smart TV and a stick plugged into it — in that case, the simplest answer is to do the short opt-out on each, and then it's handled for good.

## 22. Apple TV: A More Private Box

*If privacy is your worry, this one behaves differently.*

Among the streaming boxes, the Apple TV is the odd one out in a good way. It does not use the content-recognition tracking (ACR) that the TV brands build in, and Apple's business doesn't lean on selling your viewing data the way the cheap TVs do. That makes it a genuinely more private way to watch, which is worth knowing if privacy is what's driving you to this guide in the first place.

There are still a couple of small settings to tidy, so it's honest to mention them:

- Settings, then General, then Privacy — you can review and turn off 'Share Analytics,' which sends usage information.
- Under Privacy you can also limit ad tracking for the apps you install.
- The individual streaming apps (the services you subscribe to) still have their own data practices — this is about the box, not every app on it.

### GOOD TO KNOW

No device is perfectly private, and it would be wrong to promise that. But a box that doesn't fingerprint your screen at all is a real step up from a TV that does — a fair point to weigh if you're choosing what to plug in.

You don't need to rush out and change hardware over this. But if you were already thinking about a new streaming gadget, the privacy difference is a reasonable thing to put on the scale alongside price and ease of use. Some folks land on a simple TV left offline plus a more private box as their tidy, low-tracking setup — and if that appeals to you, it's a perfectly sensible way to go.

## 23. The Simplest Option: Don't Connect It

*A TV that isn't online can't send anything anywhere.*

Here's a plain truth the TV makers won't advertise: a smart TV can only track your viewing and send data if it's connected to the internet. If you already watch through a cable box, an antenna, or a separate streaming stick, you may not need the TV's own smart features at all — and a TV that's never joined your Wi-Fi simply can't phone home. It's the most thorough privacy choice there is, with nothing to maintain afterward.

- If you only use a cable box or antenna, you can skip connecting the TV to Wi-Fi entirely.
- If you use a streaming stick, let the stick go online and leave the TV itself offline.
- An unconnected TV still shows every channel and input perfectly — it just won't run its own apps or send viewing data.

### WATCH OUT

This isn't for everyone. If you rely on the TV's built-in apps to watch your shows, it needs to be online to do that — so you'd use the brand's opt-out switches instead. Choose the path that fits how you actually watch.

For folks who watch through other gear anyway, staying offline is the cleanest privacy choice of all. And if the TV ever nags you to connect — some do, repeatedly — you can simply keep declining; it will go on working as the plain television you want it to be. One honest trade-off: an offline TV won't receive the maker's software updates, which most households won't miss, but is worth knowing if yours relies on its own apps.

## 24. Home-Screen Ads and Recommendations

*The ads on the menu are a separate thing from ACR.*

Many people are bothered less by invisible tracking than by the visible clutter: the ads, banners, and 'recommended for you' rows that now fill a smart TV's home screen. It's worth understanding that these are a bit separate from the ACR tracking — turning off the viewing data limits the targeting behind them, but the ad spaces themselves may remain on the menu.

- Turning off ACR stops ads being aimed from your viewing, but the TV may still show generic ads on its menu.
- Some brands let you reduce or rearrange the home-screen rows in their settings.

- Launching straight into your input or a specific app, rather than lingering on the home screen, keeps you away from most of it.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

This is the honest limit of the whole opt-out: you can stop the TV profiling you and cut the targeted ads, but you can't always clear every ad space off the screen. That's a design choice by the maker, not something you did wrong.

If the home-screen ads really grate on you, a separate streaming box with a cleaner menu — or simply leaving the TV on your cable or antenna input so you rarely see the home screen — sidesteps them. But for the privacy question this guide is about, the key point stands: the tracking is the part you can switch off, and once you have, the ads that remain are at least no longer shaped by a profile of what you watch.

## 25. Reset the Advertising ID and Clear Old Data

*Two small extra steps for a cleaner slate.*

Once you've turned off the main tracking, two optional extras give you a cleaner slate: resetting the advertising identifier, and clearing data the TV already collected. Think of the advertising ID as a little tag that ties ads to your device; resetting it is like getting a fresh one that isn't linked to your past viewing, so advertisers are starting over from nothing.

- On Roku, Fire TV, and Google TV, the same Advertising or Ads menu where you limit tracking usually offers 'Reset Advertising ID.'
- Several brands — Vizio especially — let you clear or delete previously collected viewing data from the same privacy menu where you turned ACR off.
- Doing both means you've not only stopped new tracking but also tidied up some of what came before.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

These steps are safe and reversible, and they cost you nothing but a minute. If the option is right there in the menu you're already in, it's worth tapping while you're at it — a clean finish to the job.

Don't fret if your particular TV doesn't offer a 'clear data' button — not all do, and the main opt-out is what matters most. Resetting the ad ID is the more commonly available of the two, and the more useful day to day, since it's what future ads key off. If you can only do one of the two extras, that's the one to reach for, and it takes just a moment.

## 26. If You Watch Antenna or Over-the-Air Channels

*Free broadcast TV and the tracking question.*

Plenty of folks have gone back to a simple antenna for free local channels, and they're often surprised to learn the TV can still track what they watch that way. The content recognition doesn't care where the picture comes from — antenna, cable box, a disc, or a game — it reads whatever is on the screen. So antenna viewers benefit from the same opt-out as everyone else, and nothing about the free channels changes when you turn it off.

- Turning off your brand's ACR switch covers antenna viewing just as it covers streaming.
- On Roku, the 'Use info from TV inputs' checkbox is exactly the one that governs antenna and other inputs — unchecking it is the key step.
- Your channels, picture, and the program guide all keep working the same afterward.

### GOOD TO KNOW

Switching to an antenna is a lovely, thrifty move, and it doesn't lock you into being tracked. The free channels tune in exactly the same whether the viewing-data setting is on or off — so turn it off and enjoy the savings with a little more privacy.

If you only ever watch antenna channels and nothing else, you might also consider simply not connecting the TV to the internet, as we covered earlier — the cleanest option of all for a TV that doesn't need to be online to show your broadcast stations. Antenna plus an offline TV is about as private as home viewing gets, and it's gentle on the wallet too.

## 27. After an Update or Reset, Check Again

*Settings can quietly come back on.*

Here's a quiet frustration worth knowing about ahead of time: a big software update or a factory reset can sometimes switch these privacy settings back on, or march you through the 'Accept' screens again. It isn't usually malice — new features arrive with their own fresh permissions — but it means a setting you turned off last year might be back on today without a word.

- After a major TV software update, take a moment to revisit your brand's ACR switch and confirm it's still off.

- After any factory reset — say, before selling or giving the TV away, or to fix a problem — expect to redo the whole opt-out during setup.
- When a new terms-and-privacy screen appears after an update, read it rather than tapping 'Accept' straight through.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

Pair this with something you already do. When the TV announces it updated, that's your cue to pop into the privacy menu for a ten-second check. A quick habit keeps the tracking off for good instead of creeping back unnoticed.

This is also why the printed checklist in this guide is handy to keep. If you ever have to run through the opt-out again after a reset, you won't have to remember the setting's odd name — it's right there on the page for your brand. And if you're ever passing a TV on to a family member, redoing the opt-out for them during setup is a kind, two-minute favor.

## 28. Game Consoles, Soundbars, and Other Gear

*The other boxes connected to your TV.*

Your TV is often the center of a little cluster of gadgets, and a few of the others have privacy and ad settings of their own. You don't need to chase every one, but it's worth knowing they exist so nothing surprises you later and you can decide which, if any, are worth a look.

- Game consoles (PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo) each have privacy and data settings in their system menus, including advertising and usage-sharing options.
- Soundbars and AV receivers are generally simple audio devices with little or no tracking — no action usually needed.
- A connected Blu-ray or DVD player likewise tends to be a plain device, though the TV's ACR can still 'see' what you play on it.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

The thing that watches what plays from all these devices is the TV's own ACR. So turning that off is what covers the disc player and the console's picture — you don't have to opt out separately on gear that doesn't connect to the internet.

If a grandchild games on a console at your house, its system settings are the place to limit ad personalization and data sharing for that box, and that's a reasonable thing to tidy on a rainy afternoon. For most living rooms, though, switching off the TV's ACR plus the streaming stick's ad tracking handles the great majority of it, and the rest is optional. Don't

let the long list of gadgets make this feel bigger than it is.

## 29. Your Data Rights and the Privacy Policy

*You have more say than the fine print suggests.*

Nobody reads the wall of terms on a new TV, and that's understandable. But it's worth knowing in plain terms what's in there and what rights you have, because you have more say than it feels like in the moment. The viewing-data and personalized-ad permissions are usually optional, and many makers let you ask what they've collected or request that it be deleted.

- The basic terms you must accept for the TV to work are separate from the optional viewing-data and ad permissions — and the optional ones can be declined.
- Depending on where you live, you may have the right to opt out of data 'sale' and to request deletion of collected data.
- The maker's privacy settings menu, or their website's privacy page, is where these requests usually live.

### GOOD TO KNOW

You don't have to read every word of a privacy policy to protect yourself. The in-menu opt-out switches this guide covers do the practical work. The policy mainly matters if you want to go further and ask for old data to be deleted.

For most folks, flipping the switches is plenty and the fine print can stay in the drawer. But if you're the sort who likes to close every door, knowing you can request deletion — and that the tracking was optional all along — is a reassuring thing to have in your back pocket. It also reframes the whole business: you were never stuck with it, and you're well within your rights to say no.

## 30. Shopping for Your Next TV With Privacy in Mind

*A little foresight saves the menu-hunting later.*

When the time comes for a new television, you can save yourself this whole chore by keeping privacy in mind as you shop — without paying a premium or giving up a good picture. A few sensible points steer you toward a set that's easy to keep private, and none of them require you to become an expert.

- Remember that nearly every modern smart TV has ACR; the question is how easy the maker makes it to turn off, not whether it's there.
- A separate streaming box (especially a more private one) plus a simpler TV can give you more control than an all-in-one smart set.
- Plan to slow down during setup and decline the optional viewing-data and ad permissions right then.

**WATCH OUT**

The very best moment to opt out is the first setup of a brand-new TV. If you read the agreement screens and decline the optional ones, the tracking never switches on at all — and you skip the menu-hunting entirely.

Don't let any of this talk you out of enjoying a lovely new TV. The picture quality and the privacy switch are unrelated — you can have a gorgeous screen and a quiet one. Just go in knowing the setting is there, and you'll handle it in two calm minutes on day one. If the setup screens move too fast or the wording is confusing, that's a perfect thing to have a patient hand nearby for.

## 31. Built-In Voice Assistants Versus the Remote

*Some TVs listen from across the room — and some don't.*

We've covered the voice remote, which only listens while you hold its button. A few higher-end TVs go a step further with a built-in, always-ready voice assistant — the kind you call out to across the room, like 'Hey' followed by a wake word. That's a different thing worth understanding, because it does involve a microphone in the set itself rather than in a remote you pick up.

- A press-to-talk voice remote listens only while you hold the button — nothing to worry about.
- A built-in far-field assistant (hands-free) has a microphone in the TV that listens for its wake word. Many TVs with this feature include a setting, or even a physical switch, to turn the microphones off.
- If your TV offers hands-free voice, you can disable it in the settings and simply use the remote's button instead.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

Most TVs have no always-listening microphone at all. This only applies to the models that advertise hands-free voice control. If yours doesn't mention it, you almost certainly have the simple press-to-talk kind, and there's nothing to switch off.

If a far-field microphone in the room bothers you, turning it off is easy and costs you nothing but having to press the remote's button to search. For many people that's a fair trade for the quiet certainty that the TV isn't listening unless they ask it to. And if you're unsure which kind your TV has, the setup menu or the manual will say — look for any mention of 'hands-free' or 'always-on' voice.

## 32. Projectors, Monitors, and Older Sets

*Not every screen does this.*

It's reassuring to know that the content-recognition tracking is really a smart-TV feature, and plenty of screens in homes don't do it at all. If you're wondering about a particular display, here's the simple rule of thumb: the tracking needs both internet smarts and built-in apps to work. A screen with neither has nothing to track with.

- A plain computer monitor or a basic projector with no apps and no internet isn't running ACR — it's just showing whatever you feed it.
- An older 'dumb' TV from before the smart-TV era has nothing of the kind.
- A smart projector or an Android-based projector, however, can have the same ad and privacy settings as a smart TV — check its menus the same way.

**GOOD TO KNOW**

If a screen has no apps and never asked to join your Wi-Fi, it has nothing to track with. The tracking lives in the smarts, so a simple display is private by nature — one less thing to worry about.

So you can relax about the old set in the spare room or the basic monitor on the desk. Focus your few minutes on the smart TVs and streaming gadgets that actually connect to the internet — those are the ones where the opt-out switches make a difference. If a display ever surprises you by showing its own ads or a home screen full of apps, that's your sign it has smarts worth checking; otherwise, a plain screen is just a plain screen.

### 33. Will This Change Your Picture, Speed, or Features?

*The honest answer: no.*

Folks sometimes hold off on the opt-out because they worry it might hobble the TV — make the picture worse, slow things down, or switch off a feature they like. Let's put that to rest plainly, because the fear is the only thing standing between many people and a quieter TV, and it's a fear with nothing behind it.

- Picture and sound: unchanged. The tracking has nothing to do with how good the image looks.
- Speed: unchanged, and if anything a touch snappier, since the TV isn't busy matching your screen against a database.
- Your apps, channels, inputs, and recordings: all keep working exactly as before.
- Your internet: the TV uses a hair less of it, not more, when it isn't sending viewing data.

#### GOOD TO KNOW

Everything you actually use the TV for carries on untouched. You're only telling it to stop building and sharing a profile of your viewing — a background activity you never saw or benefited from in the first place.

So there's genuinely no downside to weigh. Turning off the tracking is all upside: the same TV you enjoy, minus the quiet data-gathering. That's why I describe this as a tidy-up rather than a trade-off — you give up nothing and gain a bit of privacy, which is about as easy a decision as home tech offers. If you've been putting it off, let this be the nudge: flip the switch, and the only thing you'll notice is a little more peace of mind.

## BILL'S HERE TO HELP

## 34. You don't have to do this alone

*You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.*

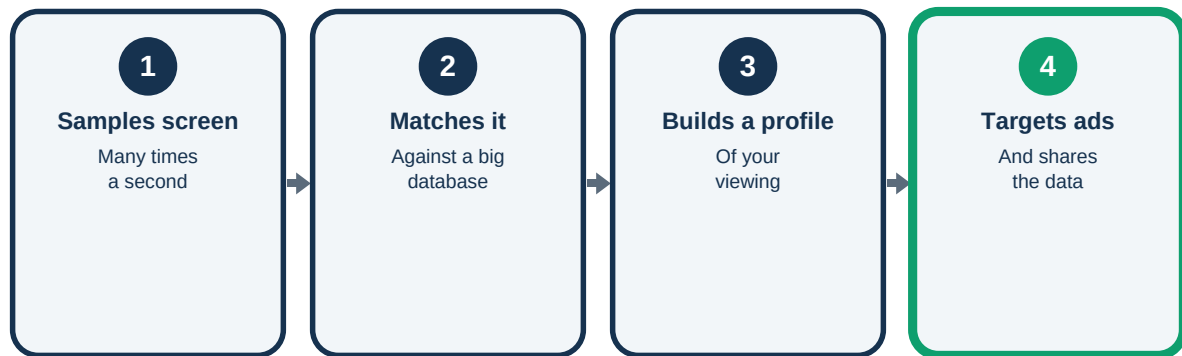
I hope this guide made stopping your smart TV from tracking what you watch feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything. When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I'm a patient tech helper — not a mechanic, an electrician, or the manufacturer — so for repairs, wiring, or warranty work I'll help you understand your options and line up a trustworthy local pro. Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

## AT A GLANCE

## A Picture to Follow Along

## What ACR Does

Your TV fingerprints the screen



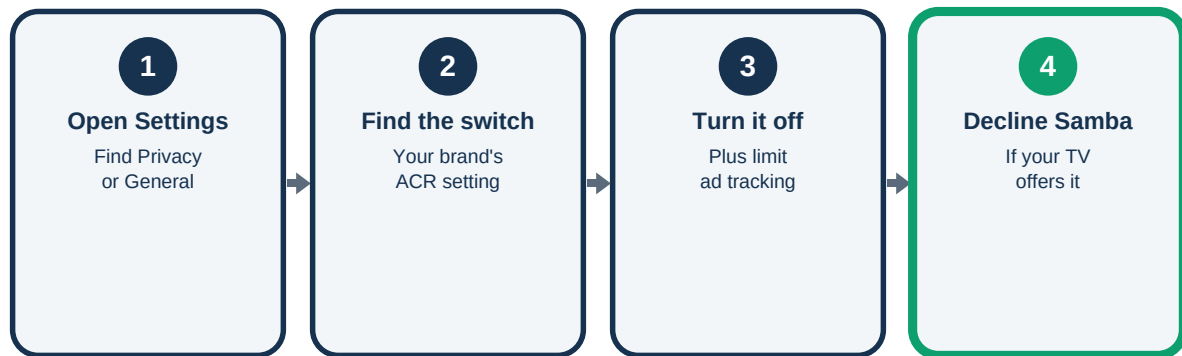
It watches the content on screen -- not you. And you can switch it off.

## AT A GLANCE

## A Second Look

## How to Opt Out

A couple of minutes, one time



Do it once per TV and it stays off.

## BEFORE YOU GO

## A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



## HOW I CAN HELP

### Your Visit — and My Promise

**In-home visit — \$99 flat** for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

**Remote Support — \$49** for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

#### GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: [billshometech.com/book](https://billshometech.com/book) · [bill@billshometech.com](mailto:bill@billshometech.com)

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