BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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A Yearly Privacy Cleanup — 30 Minutes to Stay Safer

Thirty minutes once a year to tidy your digital life and stay safer

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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THE 60-SECOND VERSION

1 The 60-Second Version

The whole thing in a breath.

Over a year, your digital life quietly collects clutter that chips away at your privacy: forgotten apps, unused services, permissions you granted without thinking, old accounts, passwords that could be stronger. A once-a-year privacy cleanup — about thirty minutes — tidies it all up and keeps you safer, like an annual decluttering for your digital life.

Here's the checklist. First, review app and service access: look at what apps and services can access your information or are connected to your main accounts (like the list of apps that can sign in with your Google, Apple, or Facebook account) and remove any you don't recognize or no longer use. Second, check your phone's app permissions: see which apps have access to your location, camera, microphone, contacts, and photos, and turn off any that don't need it — a flashlight app doesn't need your location.

Third, close accounts you no longer use: old accounts sitting out there are a privacy risk (they hold your data and can be breached), so shut down services you've stopped using. Fourth, check your key passwords and two-factor: make sure your most important accounts (email, bank) have strong, unique passwords and two-factor authentication turned on (which adds a big layer of security).

Fifth, review your privacy settings: glance through the privacy settings on your main accounts and devices, adjusting anything that shares more than you'd like. You don't have to do every item perfectly or all at once — even partway helps. The real trick is making it a habit: pick a date you'll remember (New Year, a birthday) and run the list once a year.

It's one of the easiest, highest-value things you can do to stay safe online.

- Over a year, your digital life collects privacy clutter: forgotten apps, unused services, thoughtless permissions, old accounts, weak passwords. A once-a-year,

~30-minute cleanup tidies it and keeps you safer — like annual decluttering for your digital life. The checklist:

- (1) Review app & service access — what apps/services can access your info or are connected to your main accounts (e.g. apps that sign in with your Google/Apple/Facebook); remove any you don't recognize or use.
- (2) Check phone permissions — which apps have your location, camera, microphone, contacts, photos; turn off any that don't need it (a flashlight app doesn't need your location).
- (3) Close old accounts — unused accounts hold your data and can be breached; shut down services you've stopped using.
- (4) Key passwords & 2FA — make sure important accounts (email, bank) have strong, unique passwords and two-factor turned on. (5) Review privacy settings on your main accounts/devices. You needn't do it all perfectly — even partway helps. The real trick: make it a habit — pick a memorable date (New Year, a birthday) and run the list yearly. One of the easiest, highest-value things for staying safe online.

THE IDEA

2 Why a Yearly Cleanup

Clutter accumulates; tidying helps.

Before the checklist, it's worth understanding why a yearly privacy cleanup is such a valuable habit — because the logic of it is what makes the small effort worthwhile and easy to stick to.

- Digital clutter accumulates quietly: over a year, you install apps and forget them, sign up for services and stop using them, grant permissions without thinking, and leave old accounts sitting out there. It builds up gradually and invisibly.
- Each loose end is a small risk: every forgotten app with access to your data, every unused account holding your information, every unnecessary permission is a small chink in your privacy and security — and a potential way for your data to leak or be misused.
- It never feels urgent — so it piles up: none of this feels pressing on any given day, which is exactly why people never get around to it and the clutter accumulates year after year. A set yearly habit solves that.

- Thirty minutes once a year is enough: you don't need to obsess over privacy daily. A focused half-hour once a year to run through a checklist tidies up the accumulated clutter and resets things — a small, painless investment for real benefit.
- Think of it as annual decluttering: it's like the annual tidy-up many people do of their home or paperwork, but for your digital life — a satisfying, worthwhile reset that leaves you safer and with more peace of mind.
- Partway still helps: and you don't have to do it perfectly. Even getting through part of the checklist improves your privacy, so there's no reason not to do what you can in the time you have.

Before getting to the checklist itself, it's worth understanding why a yearly privacy cleanup is such a valuable habit, because the logic behind it is what makes the small effort genuinely worthwhile and easy to stick to. The heart of it is that digital clutter accumulates quietly: over the course of a year you install apps and then forget about them, sign up for services and stop using them, grant permissions without really thinking, and leave old accounts sitting out there unattended, and all of this builds up gradually and more or less invisibly.

The problem is that each of these loose ends is a small risk — every forgotten app that still has access to your data, every unused account quietly holding your personal information, every unnecessary permission you've granted is a small chink in your privacy and security and a potential way for your data to leak or be misused.

And because none of it ever feels urgent or pressing on any particular day, that's precisely why people never get around to dealing with it, and the clutter simply accumulates year after year — which is exactly the gap that a set yearly habit fills. The reassuring part is that thirty minutes once a year is genuinely enough: you don't need to obsess over your privacy every day, and a single focused half-hour spent running through a checklist is enough to tidy up the accumulated clutter and reset things, making it a small and painless investment for a real benefit.

The best way to think of it is as the digital equivalent of the annual tidy-up many people already do of their home or their paperwork — a satisfying, worthwhile yearly reset that leaves you safer and with more peace of mind. And crucially, you don't have to do it perfectly: even getting through part of the checklist improves your

privacy, so there's really no reason not to simply do what you can in the time you have, rather than putting it off because you can't do all of it.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Why a yearly privacy cleanup: over a year, digital clutter accumulates quietly — forgotten apps, unused services, thoughtless permissions, old accounts, weak passwords. Each loose end is a small privacy/security risk and a way for your data to leak. It never feels urgent, so it piles up year after year — which a set yearly habit fixes. Thirty focused minutes once a year is enough to tidy it and reset things: a small, painless investment, like annual decluttering for your digital life. And you needn't do it perfectly — even partway helps.

ACCESS & PERMISSIONS

3 Reviewing Access and Phone Permissions

Who can reach your information?

The first two checklist tasks are about trimming back who and what can reach your information: reviewing the apps and services connected to your accounts, and checking the permissions apps have on your phone. Both are quick and satisfying.

Review app and service access

- What to look at: over time, you connect apps and services to your main accounts — think of all the apps and websites you've let sign in using your Google, Apple, Microsoft, or Facebook account, or that you've granted access to your email, calendar, or files.
- Where to find it: your main accounts have a security or 'connected apps' / 'apps with access to your account' section (in the account settings for Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, etc.) listing everything you've connected.
- Remove what you don't recognize or use: go through the list and remove (revoke access for) any app or service you don't recognize, no longer use, or don't remember granting. Each one you remove is one less thing with access to your information.

- Don't worry about breaking things: revoking access to an app you don't use won't harm anything; if you ever do need it again, you just grant access again. So be happy to trim freely.

Check your phone's app permissions

- Apps ask for lots of access: phone apps request permission to use things like your location, camera, microphone, contacts, and photos — and over time you've granted many of these, sometimes more than an app really needs.
- Where to check: in your phone's Settings, there's a Privacy (or app permissions) area where you can see, by permission, which apps can use your location, camera, microphone, contacts, photos, and so on.
- Turn off what doesn't make sense: review these and turn off access that an app doesn't need — a flashlight app doesn't need your location, a game doesn't need your contacts. Trust your common sense about what each app actually needs.
- Location especially: review which apps can see your location, and consider setting location access to 'only while using the app' (rather than always) for apps that don't need constant location — a meaningful privacy win.
- The microphone and camera: check which apps can use your microphone and camera, and turn off any that have no good reason to — these are the most sensitive permissions.

The first two tasks on the checklist are both about trimming back who and what can reach your information, and they're quick and quite satisfying to do: reviewing the apps and services connected to your main accounts, and checking the permissions that apps have on your phone. On reviewing app and service access: over time you end up connecting all sorts of apps and services to your main accounts — think of all the apps and websites you've allowed to sign in using your Google, Apple, Microsoft, or Facebook account, or that you've granted access to your email, your calendar, or your files.

You can find these in your main accounts' security or 'connected apps' section, often labeled something like 'apps with access to your account,' within the account settings for Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and the like, which lists everything you've connected over the years. The task is simply to go through that list and remove, or revoke access for, any app or service you don't recognize, no longer use, or don't even remember granting, since each one you remove is one less thing with access to

your information; and you needn't worry about breaking anything, because revoking access to an app you don't use won't cause any harm, and if you ever do need it again you simply grant access once more, so you can trim freely and happily.

On checking your phone's app permissions: phone apps request permission to use things like your location, camera, microphone, contacts, and photos, and over time you've granted many of these permissions, sometimes to apps that don't really need them. In your phone's Settings there's a Privacy area, or app-permissions area, where you can see, organized by permission, which apps can use your location, camera, microphone, contacts, photos, and so on.

You go through these and turn off access that an app has no good reason to need — a flashlight app doesn't need your location, and a game doesn't need your contacts — trusting your common sense about what each app actually requires. Location deserves particular attention: review which apps can see your location, and consider setting location access to 'only while using the app' rather than 'always' for any app that doesn't genuinely need to know where you are all the time, which is a meaningful privacy win.

And the microphone and camera are the most sensitive permissions of all, so it's worth checking which apps can use them and turning off any that have no good reason to.

WATCH OUT

Task 1 — review app & service access: in your main accounts' security / 'connected apps' settings (Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, etc.), look at what apps and services can access your account, and remove any you don't recognize or use (revoking is harmless — just re-grant if ever needed). Task 2 — check phone permissions: in your phone's Settings > Privacy, see which apps can use your location, camera, microphone, contacts, and photos, and turn off any that don't need it (a flashlight app doesn't need your location). Set location to 'only while using the app' where sensible; mind the mic and camera especially.

ACCOUNTS, PASSWORDS & SETTINGS

4 Old Accounts, Passwords, and Settings

Close, shore up, and review.

The last three checklist tasks: closing accounts you no longer use, shoring up your most important passwords and two-factor security, and reviewing your privacy settings. Then the real secret — making it a yearly habit.

Close accounts you no longer use

- Old accounts are a quiet risk: accounts for services you've stopped using still sit out there holding your personal information, and they can be caught up in a data breach — so an unused account is a small, ongoing privacy risk for no benefit.
- Close what you've stopped using: think of services you no longer use — an old shopping site, a social network you've left, a service you tried once — and close those accounts (look for 'delete account' or 'close account' in their settings). Fewer accounts means less of your data scattered around.
- It reduces your 'attack surface': every account you close is one less place your data lives and one less thing that can be breached or misused — a genuine privacy improvement.

Check key passwords and two-factor

- Focus on the important accounts: you don't have to review every password, but do check your most important accounts — email (especially, since it can reset others), bank and financial, and main accounts — have strong, unique passwords.
- Strong and unique matters most: make sure these key accounts aren't using a weak password or one reused elsewhere. A password manager makes strong, unique passwords easy if you'd like one.
- Turn on two-factor authentication: for your important accounts, turn on two-factor authentication (2FA) if you haven't — it requires a second step (like a code) to log in, adding a big layer of security that stops someone getting in with just your password. This is one of the highest-value things on the whole list.
- A good yearly moment to improve: the cleanup is a natural time to upgrade a weak password or add 2FA to one more important account.

Review your privacy settings

- Glance through the settings: on your main accounts and devices (social media, Google/Apple account, phone), take a look through the privacy settings and adjust anything that shares more than you'd like.
- Common things to check: who can see your social-media posts and profile, whether your activity or location is being shared or saved, ad-personalization settings, and what's public versus private. Dial these to your comfort.
- Settings change over time: services update and sometimes reset or add settings, so a yearly check catches changes that might have quietly widened what you share.

The real secret: make it a yearly habit

- Pick a memorable date: the trick that makes this work is attaching it to a date you'll remember and repeat — New Year's, a birthday, tax time, the start of a season. Then it actually happens year after year.
- Set a reminder: put a recurring yearly reminder in your calendar so you don't forget — the whole value is in the regularity.
- Don't aim for perfect: run through what you can in your half-hour; even partway helps, and you'll get further each year as it gets familiar.
- Enjoy the peace of mind: finishing leaves your digital life tidier and you genuinely safer — a satisfying, worthwhile little ritual for a small slice of time once a year.

The last three tasks on the checklist are closing accounts you no longer use, shoring up your most important passwords and two-factor security, and reviewing your privacy settings — followed by the real secret, which is making the whole thing a yearly habit. On old accounts: accounts for services you've stopped using still sit out there holding your personal information and can be caught up in a data breach, so an unused account is a small but ongoing privacy risk that gives you no benefit in return, which means it's worth thinking of the services you no longer use — an old shopping site, a social network you've left, a service you tried once — and closing those accounts by looking for a 'delete account' or 'close account' option in their settings, since fewer accounts means less of your data scattered around and, with every account closed, one less place your data lives and one less thing that can be breached or misused.

On passwords and two-factor: you don't have to review every password you own, but you should check that your most important accounts — your email especially,

since it can be used to reset the others, along with your bank and financial accounts and your other main ones — have strong, unique passwords rather than weak or reused ones, and a password manager makes keeping strong, unique passwords easy if you'd like to use one.

Even more valuable, turn on two-factor authentication for your important accounts if you haven't already, because it requires a second step such as a code to log in and adds a big layer of security that stops someone getting in with just your password — this is genuinely one of the highest-value things on the whole list, and the yearly cleanup is a natural moment to upgrade a weak password or add two-factor to one more account.

On privacy settings: take a look through the privacy settings on your main accounts and devices — social media, your Google or Apple account, your phone — and adjust anything that shares more than you'd like, commonly checking who can see your social-media posts and profile, whether your activity or location is being shared or saved, your ad-personalization settings, and what's public versus private, dialing all of it to your comfort; and because services update and sometimes reset or add settings, a yearly check usefully catches any changes that might have quietly widened what you share.

Finally, the real secret that makes all of this actually happen is to turn it into a yearly habit: attach it to a memorable date you'll remember and repeat — New Year's, a birthday, tax time, the start of a season — put a recurring yearly reminder in your calendar so you don't forget, and don't aim for perfection but simply run through what you can in your half-hour, since even getting partway helps and you'll get further each year as it becomes familiar.

Finishing leaves your digital life noticeably tidier and you genuinely safer, which makes it a satisfying and worthwhile little ritual for a small slice of time once a year.

TIP

Task 3 — close old accounts: services you've stopped using still hold your data and can be breached, so close accounts you no longer use ('delete/close account' in their settings). Task 4 — key passwords & 2FA: make sure your important accounts (email especially, bank, main ones) have strong, unique passwords, and turn on two-factor authentication — one of the highest-value things here. Task 5 — review privacy settings on your main accounts/devices (who sees your posts, location/activity sharing, ads). The secret: make it a yearly habit — pick a memorable date (New Year, a birthday), set a recurring reminder, and do what you can; even partway helps.

QUESTIONS

5 Plain Questions and Answers

The things people ask most.

"Why bother with a yearly privacy cleanup?"

Because over a year your digital life quietly collects clutter that chips away at your privacy — forgotten apps, unused services, thoughtless permissions, old accounts, weak passwords — and each loose end is a small risk and a way for your data to leak. It never feels urgent on any given day, so it piles up for years. A focused thirty minutes once a year tidies it all up and resets things — a small, painless investment, like annual decluttering for your digital life, that leaves you safer.

"What should I actually check?"

Run a short checklist: review what apps and services can access your main accounts (and remove ones you don't use); check your phone's app permissions (turn off location, camera, mic access apps don't need); close accounts for services you no longer use; make sure your important accounts (email, bank) have strong, unique passwords and two-factor turned on; and glance through your privacy settings. You don't have to do every item perfectly — even getting partway through helps.

"What's the single most valuable thing on the list?"

Turning on two-factor authentication (2FA) for your important accounts, especially email. It requires a second step — like a code — to log in, which adds a big layer of security and stops someone getting into your account with just your password. Paired with making sure those key accounts have strong, unique passwords (not weak or reused ones), it's the highest-value security improvement you can make, and the yearly cleanup is a natural time to add it to one more account.

"How do I make sure I actually do it each year?"

Attach it to a date you'll remember and repeat — New Year's, a birthday, tax time — and set a recurring yearly reminder in your calendar. The whole value is in the regularity, so the reminder is what makes it a real habit rather than a one-off. And don't aim for perfection: just run through what you can in your half-hour. Even partway helps, and you'll get further and faster each year as it becomes familiar.

WRAP UP

6 Half an Hour, Once a Year, Much Safer

A simple habit worth keeping.

Your digital life quietly accumulates clutter and loose ends over a year — forgotten apps, unused services, permissions granted without thinking, old accounts, passwords that could be stronger — and because none of it feels urgent on any given day, it piles up. A once-a-year privacy cleanup, taking only about thirty minutes, is the simple habit that fixes that, like an annual decluttering for your digital life.

Run through a short checklist: review what apps and services can access your main accounts and remove those you don't use; check your phone's app permissions and turn off location, camera, and microphone access that apps don't need; close accounts for services you no longer use, since each is a quiet risk; make sure your important accounts have strong, unique passwords and — the highest-value step — two-factor authentication turned on; and glance through your privacy settings, adjusting anything that shares more than you'd like.

You don't have to do every item perfectly or all at once; even getting partway through makes you safer. The real secret is making it a habit: pick a date you'll remember, like New Year's or a birthday, set a recurring reminder, and run the list once a year. For a small, painless slice of time, you'll keep your digital life tidy, meaningfully reduce your risks, and gain real peace of mind — which makes this one of the easiest, highest-value habits there is for staying safe online.

Pick your date, and make it a yearly ritual.

- Over a year, your digital life accumulates privacy clutter — forgotten apps, unused services, thoughtless permissions, old accounts, weak passwords — and since it never feels urgent, it piles up. A once-a-year, ~30-minute cleanup fixes it, like annual decluttering for your digital life.
- The checklist: review what apps/services can access your main accounts (remove unused ones); check phone permissions (turn off location/camera/mic access apps don't need); close accounts you no longer use; make sure important accounts have strong, unique passwords and — the highest-value step — two-factor turned on; and review your privacy settings.
- You needn't do it all perfectly or at once — even partway makes you safer.
- The real secret is making it a habit: pick a memorable date (New Year, a birthday), set a recurring reminder, and run the list yearly. A small, painless slice of time for a tidy digital life, meaningfully fewer risks, and real peace of mind — one of the easiest, highest-value habits for staying safe online.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you've never done a privacy cleanup, I'd be glad to help you run through one — it takes about thirty minutes once a year and makes a real difference. We'd review which apps and services can reach your accounts and remove the ones you don't use, tidy up your phone's permissions so apps aren't quietly using your location or microphone, close old accounts that are just sitting out there with your data, and — most valuable of all — make sure your important accounts have strong passwords and two-factor turned on. We'd glance through your privacy settings too. You don't have to do it all perfectly; even partway helps. And the real trick is making it a yearly habit — pick a date you'll remember, and we'll make it a quick, satisfying ritual that keeps you safer.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this page handy. It points you straight to what to do for each task.

I want to...	Do this...
The idea	30 minutes once a year to tidy your digital life
App & service access	Review what can access your info; revoke old ones
Phone permissions	Check which apps use your location, camera, mic
Close old accounts	Shut down services you no longer use
Passwords & 2FA	Shore up key passwords; turn on two-factor
Privacy settings	Review settings on your main accounts
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

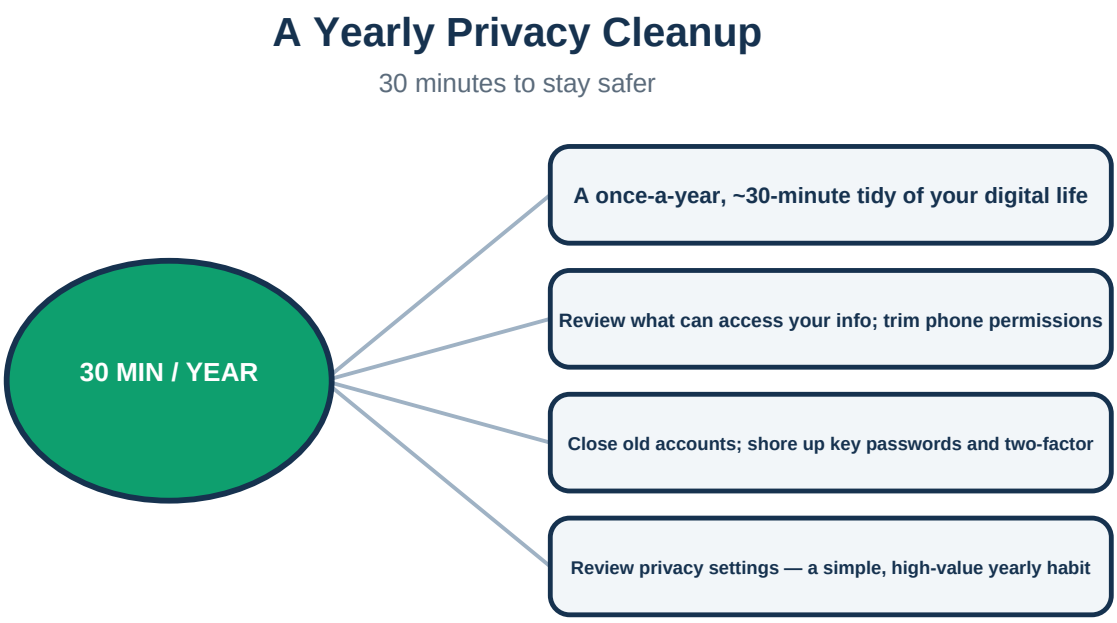


Illustration — a schematic. Set-up screens differ; each takes only a few minutes.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

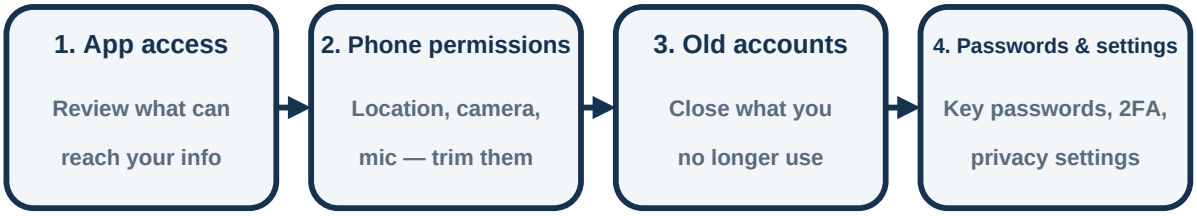


Illustration — a schematic. The order is a suggestion; do one box at a time.

A schematic of the plan — company steps vary; the order does not have to.

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

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

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.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

Call or text (330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com

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