**Tips for Hiding your Tracks Online**

Taking the actions listed on this page may not prevent someone from discovering your internet activity and are meant to reduce the chances that your Internet activities will be traced. Web browsers store the searches you make and the pages you visit on the Internet. Here are some tips of actions you can take to reduce the chances of someone viewing your Internet searches.

**Utilize private browsing options if available…**

* Many browsers will allow you to perform private searches without storing any information of that search. To turn on private browsing:
  + For Google Chrome: Click the three dots to the right of your browser search tab and click ‘New Incognito Window’
  + For Firefox: Click the three lines to the right of your browser search tab and click ‘New Private Window’
  + For Internet Explorer: Click the settings cog to the right of your browser search tab, click ‘Safety’ then ‘InPrivate Browsing’
* Please note that you will need to choose this option each time you start a new browsing session.
* If your browser does not have this option, follow the steps below.

**How to clear your Internet Search History…**

In general, to hide what you’ve been searching on the internet you will need to erase two things:

* Your cache: where your computer stores copies of files you’ve recently looked at with your web browser
* Your history list: a single file containing the webpages you’ve recently visited

**Clear your Internet History with Google Chrome…**

* In the top-right corner of the browser window, click the Chrome menu.
* Select ​‘history’.
* Click the button ​‘clear browsing data’. A dialog box will appear.
* From the drop-down menu, select how much history you want to delete. To clear your entire browsing history, select the beginning of time.
* Check the boxes for the data you want Chrome to clear, including ​‘browsing history.’
* Click the button ​‘clear browsing data.’

**Clear your Internet History with Internet Explorer…**

* Open the ​‘tools’ menu and select ​‘inter­net options’.
* Select the ​‘gen­er­al’ tab at the top.
* In the sec­tion called ​‘tem­po­rary inter­net files,’ click on ​‘delete files.’
* Your cache will now be cleared.
* On the same screen, in the sec­tion called ​‘his­to­ry,’ click on ​‘clear history.’
* Your his­to­ry list will now be cleared.
* If there is a lot of sites on your list, this might take a few moments.
* Note that clear­ing the cache and his­to­ry in Inter­net Explor­er also auto­mat­i­cal­ly clears your address bar.

**Clear your Internet History with Firefox…**

* Open the ​‘tools’ menu, select ​‘options.’
* Select the ​‘pri­va­cy’ tab locat­ed on the left side of the menu bar.
* Select the ​‘his­to­ry’ tab and click on ​‘clear.’
* Your his­to­ry will now be cleared.
* Select the ​‘cache’ tab and click on ​‘clear’
* Your cache will now be cleared.
* Note that clear­ing the cache and his­to­ry in Fire­fox auto­mat­i­cal­ly clears your address bar as well.

**Important note:** If someone checks your cache and history list and sees it is empty, they may guess that you are trying to hide something. One possible way to avoid suspicion is to clear your history after you’ve searched for sites you don’t want people to know you’ve accessed and spend a few minutes looking at websites that wouldn’t raise any eyebrows.

**Other actions you can take to increase online safety…**

* Have your computer and cell phone password protected and change your password often
* Have another tab (such as the news) or another app open that you can quickly shift to if you are interrupted during a private search
* If you are worried about the safety of your home computer or personal phone, try using a computer in a public place (i.e. a public library)
* If you need to save the contact information of a counsellor or support services (i.e. a Crisis Line), save it under an alternative name