



Technology 101:
Tips and tricks
for using digital
devices with ease

WARNING

The following pages make reference to family violence. This may be triggering for some readers. See page 10 for support services.

Everything provided here is intended as a guide only. Only take steps you are comfortable with. For your safety, you may wish to hide or dispose of this booklet after use.

Note: safe devices are freely available at any local library.

Tech: Personal Risk and Your Safety

If you're unsafe with your current or former partner, tech and devices can heighten this risk and further threaten your safety.

Here are five key areas of personal tech safety and ways to protect yourself:

1. Your Privacy Matters

In unsafe relationships, shared digital access can threaten your privacy and safety. You may want to consider:

Changing any passwords known to others or use face ID/fingerprint recognition.

Setting up two-factor authentication on your accounts for added security. See the 'Online Safety Checklist' at the end of this document for more instructions.

Using a password manager if worried about remembering passwords. Ensure the manager password is secret.

Installing anti-virus software to block spyware and malware. Refer to the Online Safety Checklist for more guidance – see the ‘important links’ section on page 10.

Identifying devices and accounts your partner may access to tailor your digital habits.

If intimate content is shared without consent, **report it to the police** or confide in someone you trust. Helpline details are on the last page. **Do not pay or give in to blackmail** with intimate images or videos; report it to the police and stop contact, if possible.

2. Smart Devices in the Home

Smart devices help manage home utilities but can be weaponised to undermine your safety. Tips for you to consider:

Smart devices: Any tech device accessing the internet, like energy trackers or smart lights poses a risk. Familiarise yourself with all smart devices at home, and know their passwords/access codes.

Gaslighting: Partners may use smart devices to confuse you, e.g., changing heating settings remotely, making you doubt yourself.

Hidden tracking devices: Cameras/microphones

may be used without your consent. Report suspected devices to the police.

If you find a tracking device: prioritise your safety. Seek advice from someone you trust or the police before removing it.

3. Your Safety + Shared devices

Shared devices like family computers or tablets can risk your privacy and safety. Advice for your consideration:

If you use personal online accounts (such as Facebook or email) on a shared device, someone else could access them even if they don’t know your passwords.

Recommended: use ‘private’ or ‘incognito’ mode to browse the internet on a shared device. This means no search history on the device, and all login info is protected.

To open a ‘private’ or ‘incognito’ browsing tab on an apple device, open your browsing app and press + Shift + n on your keyboard. On a Windows, Linux, or Chrome OS device, open your browsing app and press Ctrl + Shift + n on your keyboard.

If you are **not** using a ‘private’ or ‘incognito’ tab, when you log in to an online account and the shared device asks if you want to save your password, always select ‘no’.

When you’re finished using a shared device, **make sure you log off all your accounts**. If you just close the window without logging off, another person using the device could still access your accounts. If you are worried about using a shared device in your home, consider visiting a local library.

4. Financial Security and You

Shared banking can be helpful in a family settings. However, financial control can be used to undermine your independence and make you unsafe. You may wish to:

Have your own personal bank account, even if it has little or no money in it. Not an option? Know as much as possible about your shared bank account.

Don’t know the details of your shared bank account? If you feel safe to do so, ask your partner to share these details (including logins).

Download an app for your bank. All modern banks offer apps for apple or android smartphones. These

apps help you to keep track of your accounts and transactions.

Regularly check your bank account online, so you know exactly where your money is going.

Keep your bank password and security information private. For extra security, consider setting up two factor authentication.

Keep a physical record of any important financial records. You can print documents at your local library. Keeping these docs in a safe place that only you know about.

5. Protect your location information

Most tech devices that can connect to the internet transmit location information. Unfortunately, this feature can be used by current or ex-partners to keep tabs on your movements. Some info for you to think about:

Any smart device that travels with you could be used to track your location, such as a smartwatch or Fitbit, an iPad or tablet, or a sat nav in your car.

Think you’re being tracked? Consider the smart devices travel around with you. Identifying these is

the first step to location privacy.

On your devices, change the default mode on any location, map, navigation or GPS feature to 'switched off'. Look in the 'location' section in your device settings. Update the location settings on your children's devices too.

Your car sat nav uses location services to guide you. If your current or ex-partner has access to the same car as you, clear journey history after each use.

Still think you're being tracked? It's possible someone has planted a tracking device to follow your movements. The most common spots for tracking devices are in your car, or, if you have a child, inside one of their possessions, such as a toy.

Planting a tracking device without consent is breaking the law. If you feel safe to do so, tell the police. They will be equipped to check your phone, car and home for spyware or devices for trackers.

Don't want to go to the police? You could conduct your own search. For a step-by-step guide, see the 'important links' section on page 10.

Checking for hidden tracking devices in your children's toys or possessions: If your child often

carries a favourite toy around with them, you can give it a search by using your hands to feel for any hard devices that may be hidden inside it. If you feel safe to do so, consider removing the item from the child.

Found a tracking device? Your safety is important. It might not be safest to remove it. Instead, report it to the police or seek advice from a trusted friend.

Summary

Some of what you have read may or may not apply to your relationship. The important thing to remember is that you are the best judge of your own safety.

You do not have to be in a relationship you consider 'unsafe' to start thinking about your personal tech safety – everyone can benefit from understanding where and how tech can be used in relationships and the home.

Remember: Technology-facilitated abuse is never okay, and it is never your fault. If you believe you are being subjected to technology-facilitated abuse, such as the sharing of intimate photos or the installation of surveillance devices without consent, you can consider reporting it to the police.

Remember to always consider your safety as your number one priority.

Where to find help

If you are in Australia and are feeling unsafe, call:

- Police (000)
- or call 1800 737 732 (1800RESPECT)

If you have any questions or wish to speak to a trusted adviser, call Safe Steps for confidential support, information and assistance:

- Crisis line (24/7): 1800 015 188
- Web chat (9am–midnight on weekdays) search: ‘Safe Steps Live Web Chat Support’
- Email (24/7): safesteps@safesteps.org.au

Important links to explore

The eSafety Commissioner website offers great resources on healthy tech habits. Google: ‘eSafety Commissioner’ to explore the website.

For a detailed Online Safety checklist, search: www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/domestic-family-violence/online-safety-checklist.

For help identifying unhealthy behaviour within a relationship, please search: www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/domestic-family-violence/coercive-control.

If you are worried about an image of you being shared without your consent, please go to: www.esafety.gov.au/key-topics/image-based-abuse.

For information on searching for tracking and listening devices in your car or home, visit: www.lifewire.com/find-hidden-gps-trackers-on-cars-4147187

OR visit: www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-to-find-surveillance-bugs-your-house-tracking-system-direct/.



www.ruralwomenonline.org.au