

## **Google's New Privacy Policy: What You Need To Know**

On March 1st, Google implemented a new, unified privacy policy that affects the browsing history and information Google has on you, both past and present. Prior to this change, your Google history of the searches you made and sites you visited was not shared with Google's other services, particularly advertisers. Naturally, Google is one of the biggest media and marketing companies in the world, and your preferences and search information is pure gold from a marketing standpoint. Marketers armed with that information would know exactly what products and services to display to you as you use the search engine.

However, your search history can reveal a lot about you including details on your location, interests, age, sexual orientation, religion, health concerns and more. If you want to keep Google from combining your web history with the data they have gathered about you in their other products, such as YouTube or Google Plus, you may want to remove all items from your web history and stop your web history from being recorded in the future. To do this, sign into your Google Account and go to the "History" section, then select "Remove All History."

Of course, clearing the web history in your Google account will not prevent Google from gathering and storing your preferences, searches and information and using it for internal purposes. It also does not change the fact that any information gathered and stored by Google could be obtained and used against you by law enforcement.

With web history enabled, Google will keep these records indefinitely; with it disabled, they will be partially anonymized after 18 months, and certain kinds of uses, including sending you customized search results, will be prevented. This brings up a whole other topic of what kind of information should you post about yourself (or store) online. Facebook is another site that gathers tons of personal information about you, including your location, date of birth, friends and family, age, preferences and much, much more. In the future, I believe that cyber security will become an increasingly important issue for all of us.