7 iPhone privacy settings you should enable now
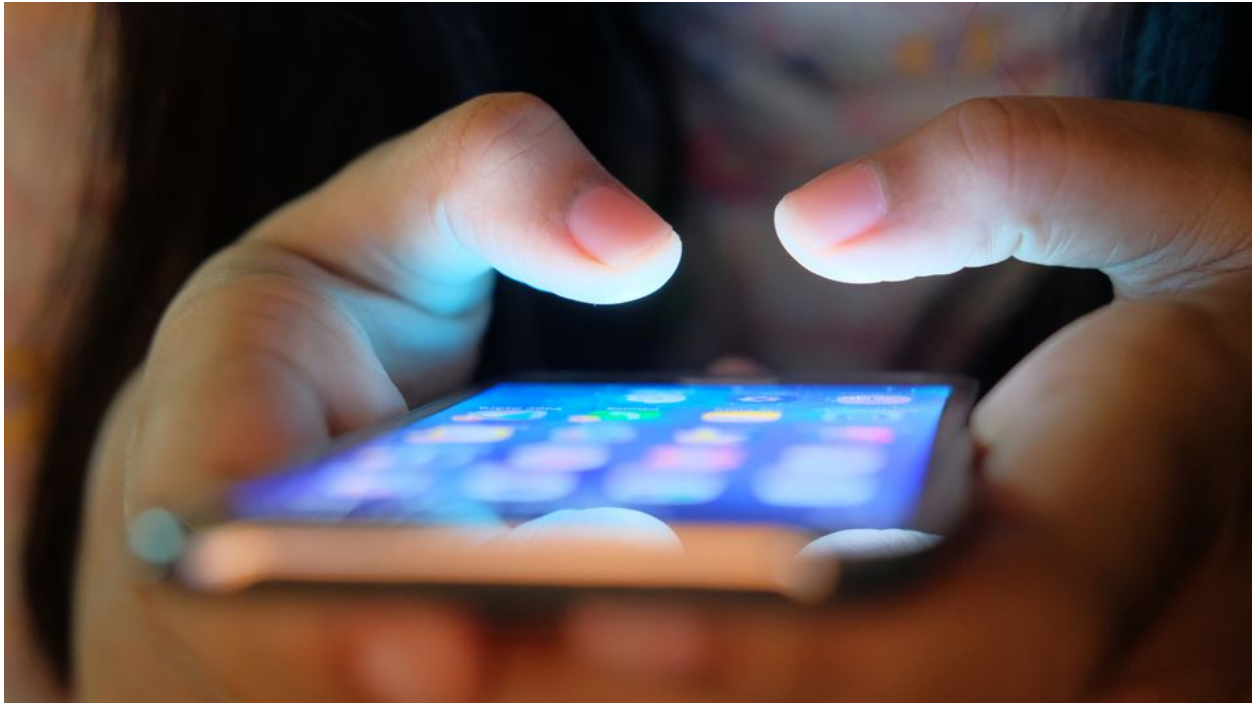

BY JACK MORSE - Mashable
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Sorry eyes. Times have changed. These days, your iPhone (and all its accumulated data) is the window to your soul.

Everything — that's your contacts, your location, your photos, your emails, your texts, and even your bank account — can often be found on that smartphone in your pocket. It's an unparalleled collection of things that, taken in the aggregate, make you *you*. And, if you've been paying attention, you know that a seemingly never-ending combination of unscrupulous companies and data breaches mean that said you is perpetually on the edge of being put on permanent display.
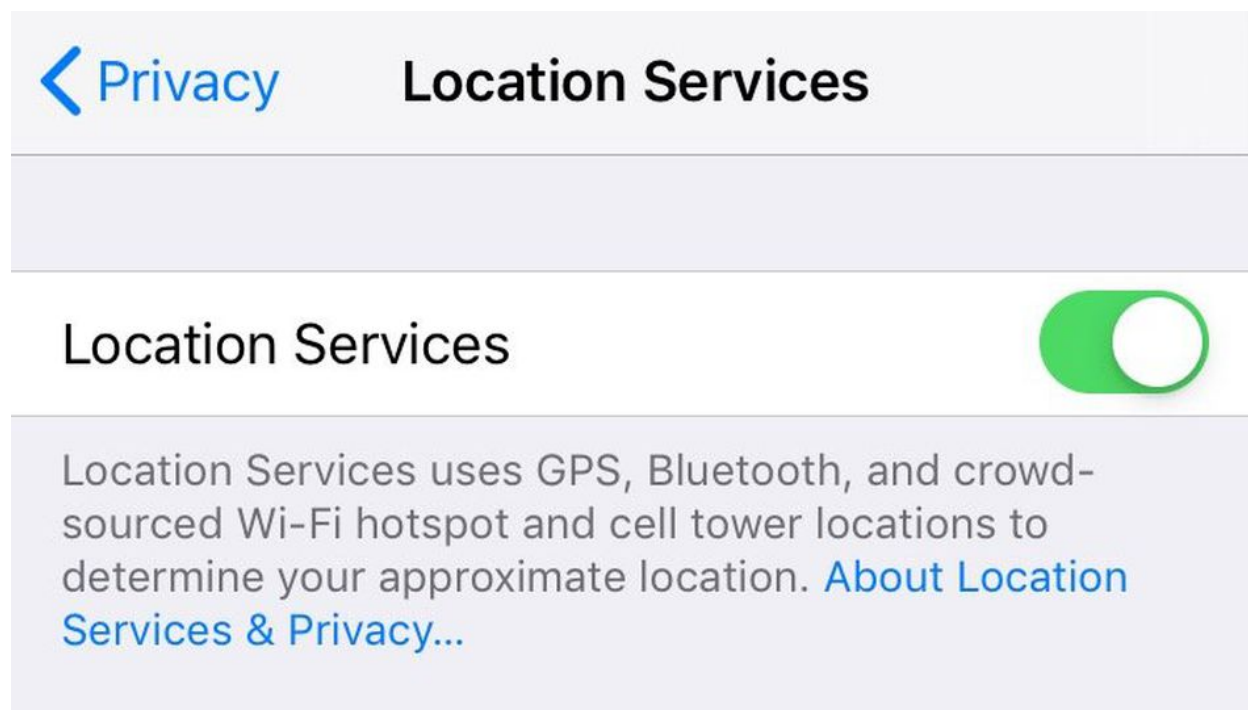
But hey, no one is suggesting you throw your phone into the ocean and wash your hands of the entire thing. There are some small, privacy-focused steps you can take to mitigate your risk without having to go live in the woods.
So let's take them.

1. Location, location, location

As the *New York Times* demonstrated in December, many mobile apps are constantly collecting users' locations throughout the day and then sharing that information with numerous third-party companies. The invasiveness is staggering — "accurate to within a few yards and in some cases updated more than 14,000 times a day."

Apps requesting unfettered access to your location data, say, to tell you your location-specific weather, are some of the most obvious culprits. Go ahead and disable this access.

On your iPhone, go to Settings > Privacy > Location Services. More than likely, you will see that the feature is turned on.

< Privacy   **Location Services**

Location Services   ◉

Location Services uses GPS, Bluetooth, and crowd-sourced Wi-Fi hotspot and cell tower locations to determine your approximate location. About Location Services & Privacy...

On this screen, you'll find a list of apps that either have requested or have access to your location data. Unless it's for a service that actually needs to know where you are, like a maps app, you should individually switch every individual app setting to "Never."

In the case of something like Google Maps or Lyft, change it to "While Using the App." This means that the app in question won't know exactly where you are even when you're not using it. Whatever you do, don't leave any app set to "Always" — especially if it's a weather app.

Oh, and did you know your camera is embedding your location into photos? It is. Turn that off, too.

There are plenty of other ways for bad actors to determine your location, but there's no reason to make it easy for them.

2. Your camera

Numerous apps on your iPhone have likely requested — and been granted — access to your camera. For some of these, the reasoning is a no-brainer. You want to be able to use Snapchat filters? Fine, the app needs access to your camera. That makes sense.

Other apps' reasoning for having access to your camera might be less clear. Once again, head to Settings > Privacy > Camera and review what apps you've granted camera access. See anything in there that doesn't make sense? Go ahead and disable it.

3. The microphone

You might be surprised, and not pleasantly so, at which apps on your phone have requested microphone access. For example, do you want Drivetime to have access to your mic? No? Because if you've downloaded it, then it might.

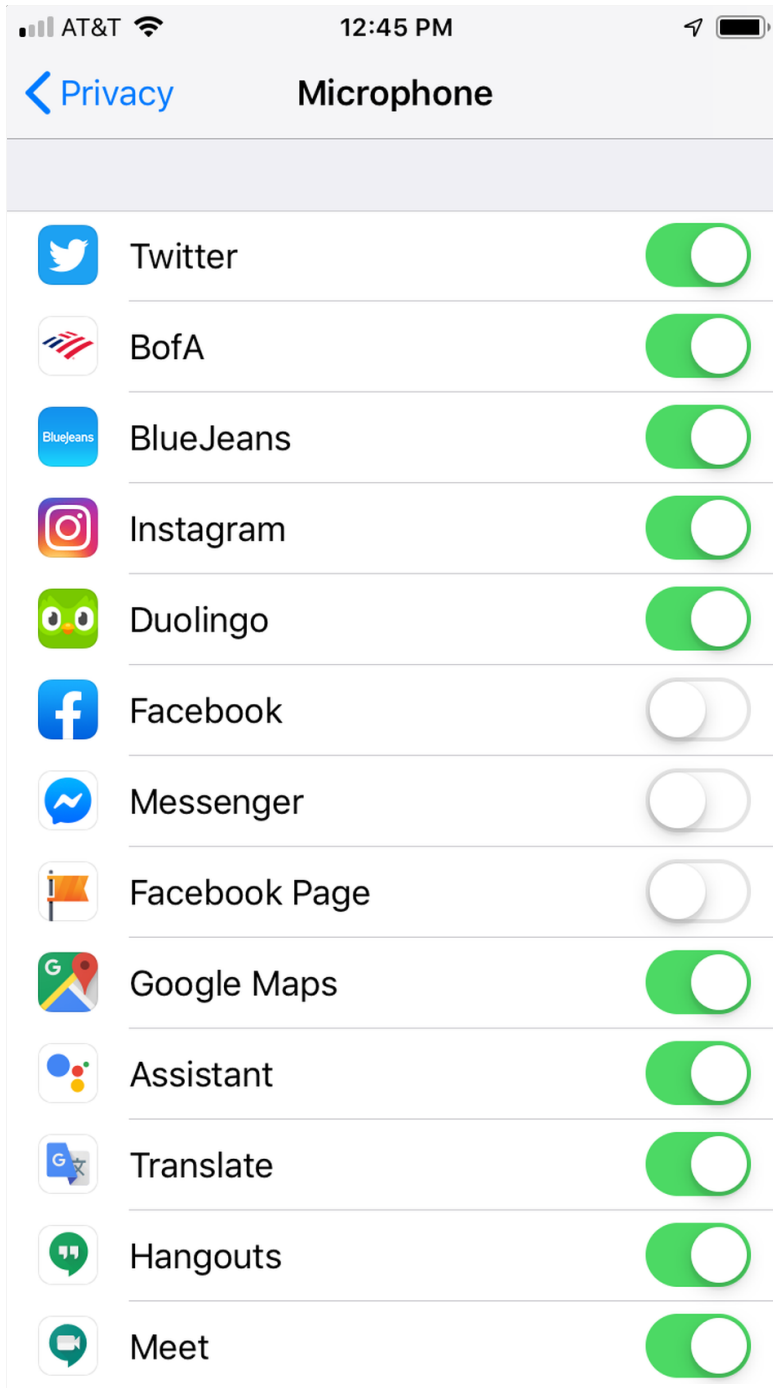If an app doesn't have a clear reason for needing access to your microphone, don't give it that access.

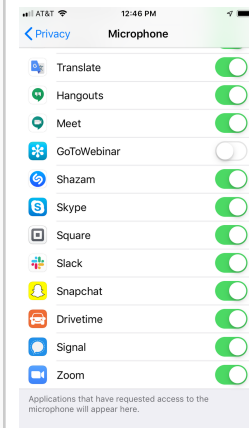*IMAGE: SCREENSHOT / IPHONE*

IMAGE: SCREENSHOT / IPHONE

To disable an individual app's access to your microphone, head to Settings > Privacy > Microphone and start switching things off. Don't worry about overdoing it, either, as you can always go back and turn it on later if you determine that something like Google Maps does in fact need your mic.

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4. Ad tracking

Did you know the iPhone has an option to limit ad tracking? Well, it does, but you have to make sure it's turned on. Head back to Settings > Privacy and then scroll down to Advertising. Select "Limit Ad Tracking" to toggle the feature on.

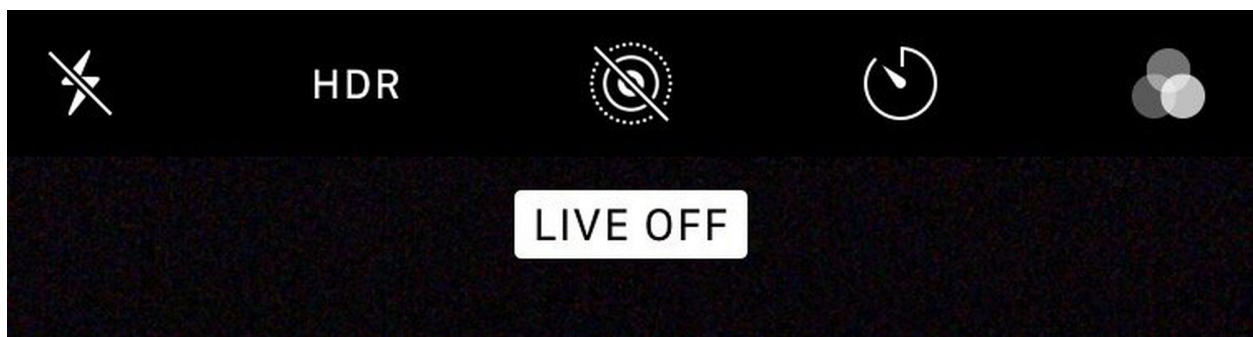While you're there, go ahead and hit "Reset Advertising Identifier."

There, doesn't that feel better?

5. Live Photos tell on you

Do you use the Live Photos setting on your iPhone? Do you know what that even is?

"With Live Photos, your iPhone records what happens 1.5 seconds before and after you take a picture," explains Apple. "What you get is more than a great photo; it's a moment captured with movement and sound."

In other words, your "pictures" are actually 3 second videos.

The setting is found at the top of the camera app.
IMAGE: SCREENSHOT / IPHONE

Many people have this feature enabled without realizing it, and, as a result, instead of sharing a cute photo with friends and family risk sharing something ...else.
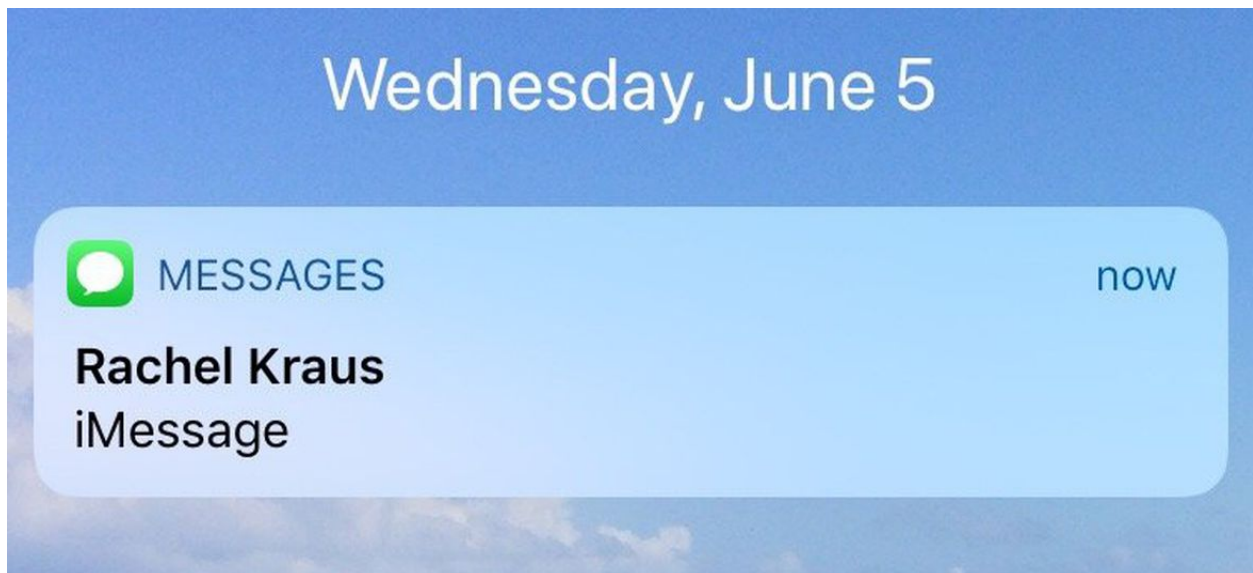
The potential pitfalls of Live Photos are vast. Imagine talking trash with your friends while someone snaps a quick photo. That pic — which is a Live Photo — is then iMessaged around, and now everyone who receives it has an *audio* recording of your trash talk. It's a great way to tell on yourself. Don't risk it.

6. Lock screen message previews

Do you receive a lot of iMessages? Signal Messages, maybe? Like most people, you expect those digital musings to be private exchanges between sender and recipient. But, of course, that's not always the case.

When you receive a message and your iPhone is locked, your phone will typically display a preview of that message on your Lock screen. Not just who the message is from, but part of the message's content as well. With the habit of people putting their smartphones face up on conference room tables or desks regrettably becoming widespread, you're one ill-timed message away from a shoulder-surfing catastrophe.

Imagine that you're applying for a new job and your significant other wants to know how the interview went. Pretty innocuous, right? Well, not if you're in a meeting with your current boss and the following message preview pops up — clearly visible to all — right on your phone's Lock screen: "Did you get the job?!?"

Lock screen.
IMAGE: SCREENSHOT / IPHONE

But you can disable that preview functionality. Tap your way to Settings > Notifications and then scroll down to Messages. Under the Messages settings, there's a "Show Previews" option. Set it to "Never."

That way, you can still see that you have a message — and even who the message is from — but its contents won't be hanging out there for all to see.

Now, rinse and repeat with any other service you don't want leaking onto your lock screen.

7. Your lowly voicemail

Did you forget about your voicemail? Hackers didn't. At the 2018 DEF CON, researchers demonstrated the ability to brute force voicemail accounts and use that access to reset victims' Google and PayPal accounts (among others).

original article:
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