(Approx. 411 words)

Security Tips – February 2019

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Attention Facebook and Android users: Apparently, some platforms and applications on those portable devices transmit information about you and your “doings” when the app opens. This information comes from an investigation by a company that has resulted in the EU banning those apps unless they are rewritten to notify users and asking permission to use the data. You are warned that this aggregates under a unique identifier that can reveal information about you. Please see <http://bit.ly/2Y2KRBo>

Did you get an Amazon Alexa during the holidays? If so, are you aware that while it is listening for the wake-up phrase, it is listening AND recording everything it hears? Check out the Amazon Alexa Privacy page: click on Alexa Privacy and review voice history. Furthermore, there are fake setup apps for Alexa. Searching for the setup, you'll find an app near the top called "Setup for Amazon Alexa" by One World Software. That's the fake. This app actually climbed the Apple popularity chart to among the top ten, and it was worse for the Android and Google Play folks. For Alexa, the official version is developed by AMZN Mobile, so look for that before downloading. And it shows up in the Apple App Store's Music section, not Utilities. If you have an Alexa-enabled Fire tablet, the real app is downloaded automatically.

“San Diego School District Hacked, 500,000 Employees and Students Possibly Affected” was the headline in the San Diego Union-Tribune. The takeaway for all of us no longer in school or working in schools is: DO NOT provide personal, unchangeable information about your kids or grandkids to school systems that do not need it, and demand that the schools secure the information they probably need to legitimately run their institution. See <http://bit.ly/2F8bi10>

Is privacy an ongoing concern for you? Check out Pogowasright.org. This website, founded in 2006 by two people who loved Pogo and thought that the iconic cartoon with the caption “We have met the enemy and he is us,” drawn by Walt Kelly was the motivation for their website.

Five biometric security measures to keep you safer in 2019. Fingerprint and facial recognition, gait analysis, and behavioral, palm, and voice biometrics are some of today's cutting-edge biometric technologies that can help identify and authenticate users. See: <http://bit.ly/2CdTZcY>.