Fact Sheet May 2025

Using Apps: the ABCs of privacy protection

Who is this information for?

For NSW citizens to provide an overview of mobile applications (Apps) and how to protect your privacy.

Why is this information important?

The ABCs of privacy protection provides a few simple steps to follow to help you protect your privacy when you download and use apps on smartphones and tablets.

Apps range from gaming apps, business or productivity apps, educational apps, lifestyle apps, entertainment apps, and travel apps.

Keeping your personal details private should always be a top priority when using apps on your smartphone or tablet. However, there are steps that you can take to help protect your privacy. It is important to remember the ABCs any time you download an app to ensure your personal information is protected.

Know your ABCs

A. **ALWAYS** check what information or data the mobile app is collecting, and what it will do with it (e.g. detecting patterns of usage). If it seems excessive, and the collection of information has nothing to do with the app's features or functions, reconsider whether you really need the app.

B. **BE AWARE** of apps that share information online including sharing information with companies that use that information for targeted advertising. For example, some apps might post your exact location or publish photos you have taken online without you knowing about it.

C. **CHECK** reviews before you download or install a mobile app. If there are no reviews or only positive reviews that sound the same or similar you should be cautious about providing any personal information.

NSW privacy law requires public sector agencies, including councils and universities, health service providers and certain businesses to be upfront about what they are doing with any personal information they collect from you, including any personal information collected through a mobile app. This information will usually be made available in a privacy statement.

We encourage you to read the app's privacy policy or statement whenever you are asked to provide personal information. If there is no option to refuse particular types of information sharing, you should consider carefully whether you wish to proceed to download and use the app. We recommend that you regularly review the settings of each mobile app on your smartphone or tablet. We suggest you consider regularly deleting any apps you do not use.

If you're thinking of developing a mobile app, or you are interested in finding out more about the obligations of organisations in relation to the protection of users' personal information, please view the IPC's additional Fact Sheet - Developing mobile apps: know the risks.

For more information

Contact the Information and Privacy Commission NSW (IPC):

Freecall: 1800 472 679
Email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.ipc.nsw.gov.au

NOTE: The information in this fact sheet is to be used as a guide only. Legal advice should be sought in relation to individual circumstances.