How to Stop Facebook From Using Your Browsing History
By Ashley Feinberg, Gizmodo, 6/12/14

(Editor: Are web ads targeting you providing a better experience, infringing on your privacy, or simply limiting your choices? The following article reminds you how to limit this practice. Opting out does mean that the company or companies from which you opted out will stop delivering ads tailored to your web preferences and use patterns. You'll still receive other types of online advertising, and Web sites you visit may continue to collect information for other purposes. Periodically recheck opt out sites as other companies are added and opt outs expire. Add a recurring note to your calendar to recheck monthly, semi-annually or whatever makes sense to you.)

Facebook announced that it was going to start using all of that ever-so-illuminating app and website data it collects to serve us with more targeted ads. In other words, Facebook is getting ready to use your browsing history to benefit advertisers. Here's how to stop them.

Of course, just because you're getting some new (and highly necessary) controls over how Facebook shares your data doesn't mean it's going to stop collecting the data in the first place. So while we can at least somewhat limit how all of our salacious internet habits are being used, it doesn't mean the cache of data itself is going away.

What's more, the new feature is opt-out, so in order to keep your browsing history away from prying third-party eyes. You'll need to actively head over to Digital Advertising Alliance (http://www.aboutads.info/choices/) and let them know you're not willing to share. (If you're using AdBlocker Plus or anything else that disables cookies, you're going to need to turn that off before you'll be able to opt out.)

(Editor: If you need help, go online and search for "disable cookies," and then type in the browser(s) you use, such as Safari, Firefox, Chrome, etc. Another method is to type in Mac, iPad, iPhone, etc. Once you are at Digital Advertising Alliance, you'll see a screen that says All participating Companies, Companies Customizing for Your Browser, and Existing Opt-Outs. Select "Companies Customizing Ads for Your Browser" and scroll down until you see Facebook. Or simply select "All Participating Companies" and check the box: SELECT ALL SHOWN to get them all.)

Click the little check box next to Facebook, and as long as you're here, feel free to scroll through and check off any other sites you'd like to stop forking over your most private internet deeds. Once you've clicked to your heart's content, hit "Submit."

Now, considering how many of us also use the Facebook app, you're probably going to want to do the same for your mobile device(s). For iOS users, open settings and go to **General>Restrictions>Advertising** (under the "Privacy" section). Flip the switch for Limit Ad Tracking, and you're all set.

June 25 SBAMUG:
Password Security-
One Password, Last Pass, Keychain

In the wake of the Heartbleed virus and password nightmares that many of use have imposed on ourselves, it's time to really take charge! Throw out the little black book! Rip down the post-it notes! But can you trust the password keepers? Learn more from LJ on June 25th - if he trusts it, you might want to too!

If you're using Android, go to **Google Settings>Ads>Opt Out of Interest-Based Ads**, and that's it—you're free to browse in peace.

Facebook advertisers won't be able to cater to you quite so creepily, and your privacy is left just that much more intact. Of course, that's not to say that Facebook's advertisers would do anything malicious with the data, but considering all that we do out on the internet's wild frontiers, better safe than sorry.

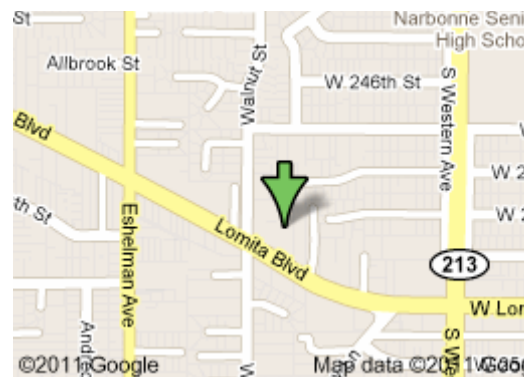http://gizmodo.com/how-to-stop-facebook-from-sharing-your-browsing-history-1589918083

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Meetings: Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita
Mail: PO Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA
90277-0432
Phone: (310) 644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com
Website: http://www.sbamug.com

Members, friends and colleagues are invited to attend our monthly meetings. The $35 annual membership dues entitle you to receive this monthly newsletter by mail or online, plus many more benefits (page 8). To become a member or get more info please check our website.

Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita

SBAMUG Monthly Calendar

June 25: Password Security- One Password, Last Pass, Keychain
July 30: iOS
*** *Read this newsletter online (active hyperlinks!) at http://www.sbamug.com/newsletter.html* ***

SBAMUG Meeting Format:

6:30—7:30 p.m. Questions & Answers and Sharing: *Everyone* is welcome, beginners encouraged

7:30—7:45 p.m. 'iSocial' – shoot the Mac breeze with others over a cookie

7:50—9:00 p.m. Announcements and Program

**Refreshments provided; donations appreciated!

Submit suggestions for topics or speakers, or articles, ideas & original artwork for this newsletter by the last Wednesday of each month. Articles may be edited to fit space. Submit to: ptownsend@sbamug.com

Other Meetings:

- 1st Sat. each month – SBAMUG Core Group, 10 a.m. Join Google+ SBAMUG community, or email: info@sbamug.com.

- Special interest groups (SIGs): Ask at the meetings or email: info@sbamug.com

- Last Sat. each month - Northrop Grumman-Ham Radio & Computer Swap Meet, 7--11:30 a.m. Meet at SE corner of Marine/Aviation Blvd, Redondo Beach

- Los Angeles Portable Users Group: Mac OS X, iPhone, iPod, MacBook, etc., http://www.lapug.org/

Officers & Volunteers:

President: Arnold Silver   VP: Vacant
Secretary: Wayne Inman   Treasurer: CW Mitchell
Directors at Large: Dave Nathanson, Margaret Wehbi, Pam Townsend, LJ Palmer
PD Disk Editor: Jim Pernal
Membership: CW Mitchell
Member Development: Pete Myers
Programming: Vacant   Greeter: Vacant
Server Director: Dave Nathanson
Newsletter: Pam Townsend, Pete Myers, Bill Berks
USPS Liaison: CW Mitchell
Refreshments: Member contributions

Membership Report – 121 members!

Please wear membership card as your name tag

Thank You Member Renewals: Raul Rey, Dick Rath, Dan Rey, Arnold Silver**.**

If your name is not spelled right or your expiration date is wrong, contact cwmitchell@sbamug.com for a correction. Or contact CW for everthing membership, dues and benefits.

Nine items this month. As usual many updated programs and some are new.

Adium_1.5.10.dmg This instant message client update is mostly bug and security fixes. Works with Google Talk, ICQ, Yahoo, MSN and others. OSX 10.6.8 or higher. Intel Free

CAPSWarn5.7.zip This utility program provides on screen indications of a Caps Lock key being on. Intel OSX 10.5 or higher. Shareware $6.00

gc9_build1620.dmg Graphic Editor with powerful features. Been around forever. Bug fixes and new JPEG metadata and auto color features added. Intel 10.7 or higher. Shareware $39.95

Geekbench-3.1.6-Mac.zip Benchmark your processor, and memory performance of your computer. Intel 64 Bit OSX 10.6.6 Shareware $9.99

MacGourmetDeluxe-2.dmg Create, Build, and share your recipe collection. Bug fixes in this update. Intel OSX 10.7+ required. $49.95 to register

Mactracker_7.3.2.zip Database about just about all Apple products. This update adds the latest Macbook Air and IOS releases. Intel 10.6.8+ Free

MenuMeters.dmg This program adds meters to your menu to monitor CPU, Memory, Disc, and Network usage/performance. Intel 10.4 or higher. Free

Pacifist_3.2.11.zip Opens up the .pkg package installers that programs use to extract and install individual items. Great for grabbing an older version of an Apple supplied program from a previous version of the OS. Intel OSX 10.6.8. Shareware $20.00

seamonkey-for-ppc-2.26-RELEASE.app.zip Do it all web browser. Has email, IRC chat, HTML editing, and a newsgroup client in addition to being a web browser. This version written for Power PC based Macs. OSX 10.5 required. Free

CD for this month will be at the June 2014 meeting, labeled as the May-June CD. See you at the June meeting.

Surfing for Fun, Fact or Financial Gain

If you have a few minutes of down time web surfing during the commercials, try these websites for fun, facts or financial gain! Selected from *What are the most productive ways to spend time on the internet?* by Manas Joshi, who proclaims to be programmer, writer, dreamer & gamer, at Quora.

Duolingo.com A free version of Rosetta-Stone that delivers the same results: teaching you another language.

Justin Guitar.com Guitar is one of the few instruments out there that's actually pretty easy to learn if you're a little older. The website provides hundreds of free guitar lessons that range in different styles, depending on how you want to play.

Cooking for Engineers.com Founded by Michael Chu, the site goes further than just providing recipes. His analytical take on ingredients and cooking recipes is interesting and will likely change the way you approach cuisine.

Investopedia.com Provide a news blog that makes it easy to digest and really understand the financial markets.

Informationisbeautiful.com Sometimes a visual demo just makes information come alive. Information is Beautiful is a platform that uses gorgeous visuals to impart data.

Spreeder.com According to Spreeder, a lot of us have trouble reading quickly because we can only read as fast as our "inner voice". Spreeder's teaches you to read without an inner voice, boosting reading speed and comprehension immensely. And it's totally free.

Codeacademy.com The Internet has pretty much taken over everything, which means the coding and developing websites is in higher demand than ever. Codeacademy provides free tutorials that teach you the basics of coding with interactive and handy tools for helping you become an expert.

Geography.com Imagine if Google Earth and Wikipedia decided to make it official and have a child. That's GeographyIQ. Using the world map, select any country and access virtually every facet of useful information there is.

Mindtools.com Blog that teaches you what they call "practical career skills" that you can apply at your job. This is a great daily read for entry-level workers who want to make a great impression, and the variety of topics and advice make this is a fantastic bookmark for anyone wanting to excel.

OneLook.com Finding a great dictionary is not a difficult task, but it can be tricky to define more complicated words and phrases that most dictionaries (besides UrbanDictionary) don't attempt to define. OneLook provides multiple definitions from numerous dictionaries, even for something obscure.

The World Factbook (cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook) Did you know the CIA has information on pretty much everything in the world? And they make a ton of it open to the public. World Factbook provides facts and details on a seemingly endless amount of info from reputable sources.

MIT Open Courseware (ocw.mit.edu/index.htm) Need we say more?

http://www.quora.com/The-Internet-2/What-are-the-most-productive-ways-to-spend-time-on-the-Internet

The Care and Feeding of External Hard Drives

By Josh Centers, Tidbits, 4/28/14
(Edited for space- http://tidbits.com/article/14708, Editor)

With the introduction of the new Mac Pro, Apple sent a clear message that it's abandoning internal storage expansion in the Macintosh product line. If you need more storage for your Mac, you're going to need some kind of external storage device, whether it connects via USB, FireWire, or Thunderbolt.

And with the prevalence of fast but low capacity solid-state storage, you are going to need more room for data, and that means one or more external hard drives. Historically, external drives have been used more for backup than anything else, but when you're relying on external storage as the primary location of important data, it's essential that you take steps to protect that data.

Test Them First! -- I recently wasted an entire weekend trying to copy data to a new external drive, only to run into troubles later. The encrypted partition wouldn't accept my password, or if it did, the Finder would prompt me to initialize the disk. In the worst cases, it would cause the Finder to freak out, forcing me to unplug the drive and reboot.

At first, I thought that it was because I was trying to do something fancy: share an encrypted volume over the network for my wife's Time Machine backups. But after running the drive test included in WD Drive Utilities for Mac [4], I learned that no, the drive was just bad out of the box, and I'm having it replaced.

Back Them Up! -- Many people don't back up their external drives, but, assuming you're storing important data there, you simply must back it up. External drives fail more often than internal ones. Unfortunately, that means buying even more external storage, which isn't cheap, but do you want to risk losing your precious photos, videos, documents, and music?

Hide Them! -- You probably don't want every disk mounted at all times. The duplicate of your boot drive, for instance, doesn't need to be mounted until you need it (and Carbon Copy Cloner and SuperDuper can mount and unmount drives automatically).

Speed Them Up! -- Are your external volumes slow, do they keep making noise even when not in use, or do they stubbornly refuse to unmount? One common cause is Spotlight indexing. You'll probably want to let Spotlight index a storage drive that contains useful documents, but there's no reason to index backup drives.

Encrypt Them! -- One of the best features of Mac OS X is full disk encryption, called FileVault 2, and I keep all of my disks encrypted. If thieves steal my drives, I don't want them to be able to access my photos and financial information. Apple introduced FileVault 2 with OS X 10.7 Lion, and with 10.8 Mountain Lion, moved the encryption commands into the Finder's contextual menu. The only downsides to FileVault 2, apart from the requirement that you remember the login password that's used to decrypt the data, are a very slight performance degradation and more difficult drive recovery (but you have a backup, right?).

Keep Them Cool! -- A lot of external drives don't come with fans, which makes them quiet, but which also means that they run hot. Most drives are rated for up to 50 or even 60 degrees Celsius, but it's worth putting a little effort into making sure there's good airflow around the drive cases to aid in cooling.

Is Your Word Document Leaking Secrets?

By Dianne Parker 4/23/14, Avitus Group Blog

To check if a document contains previously made edits like tracked changes, comments, hidden text, and other information, you will want to use the Document Inspector. To access this feature, go to File > Info > Check for Issues > Inspect Document. This will bring up the Document Inspector menu which will display six categories that you can inspect. They are:

- Comments, Revisions, Versions, Annotations
- Document Properties and Personal Information
- Custom XML Data
- Headers, Footers, and Watermarks
- Invisible Content
- Hidden Text

Make sure that what you want inspected has the box corresponding to it checked, and then click Inspect. You will now be given the inspection results, and if Document Inspector finds content in the categories that you selected it will give you the option to remove the content by selecting Remove All.

Why Would You want to Remove a Document's Hidden Content? If you plan on sharing your document, then you should use the Document Inspector to remove the hidden content before sharing it, especially if you've previously entered and deleted sensitive information. Without taking this security measure, you could share a document with a Word-savvy person that would be able to view what you deleted.

The easiest way to prevent a shared document from leaking secrets is to use a clean template when making a new document. This will give you a master version to be used for editing and referencing that you wouldn't share with your clients.

http://info.avitusgroup.com/blog/bid/342151/Is-Your-Word-Document-Leaking-Secrets

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Keep Them Powered! -- Do you ever sit down in the morning and see the nasty "Disk Not Ejected Properly" error? Assuming gremlins didn't unplug your external drive in the middle of the night, for some reason, the drive lost power or its connection, either of which could lead to disk corruption. There are two ways to address this: one in software and one in hardware.

Return Them! -- Drives die, and with the industry succumbing to the market's desire for bigger, cheaper drives, they die all too often. But what many people don't realize is that drives often come with full replacement warranties.

The Wisdom of External Storage -- After I moved back to the Mac from the DIY PC world, I was frustrated by the limited amount of storage available. But when my MacBook Pro recently developed an audio problem that requires a logic board replacement, it dawned on me how useful it is to have my data stored outside my computer.

Read the full article: http://tidbits.com/article/14708

Pump Up Your Email With Apple Stationery

By Tom Nelson & Mary O'Connor, About.com: Macs

Why send boring monochrome email messages when you can use colorful stationery instead? Apple Mail makes it easy to add a stationery template to your email.

Select a Stationery Template

You can write your message first, or select a stationery template and then write your message. In some cases, particularly for Announcements, select the template first. Then, enter your information in the appropriate places, and retain the text formatting of the template.

1. To **access** the stationery templates, open a new message window and click the Show Stationery icon in the top right corner of the window.

2. There are **five categories** to choose from (Birthday, Announcements, Photos, Stationery, Sentiments), plus a Favorites category, where you can store templates you use often. Select a category, and then click on the stationery template that catches your eye to see what it looks like in an email message. To try another, just click on the template and it will appear in the message.

3. Some templates offer **different background colors**. Click the thumbnail for a template, such as the Bamboo template in the Photos category, more than once, to check out the background color options.

4. You can **replace placeholder photos** in templates with your own photos. To do this, click the photo of your choice on the desktop or in a Finder window and drag it over the existing photo.

5. You can also **add photos** using Mail's Photo Browser. Click the Photo Browser icon in the upper right corner of the message window. Select the photo you want to use and drag it over the existing photo in the template.

6. If your **photo is larger** than the template photo, Mail will center it. Click and drag your photo around the photo window to focus on a specific area of the photo, or leave it as is. If your photo is much larger than the template photo, use an image editor to crop it or reduce its size.

7. After you enter some or all of your text and photos, if the template supports them, you can click between stationery templates to **see how it all looks** in a different template.

Remove a Stationery Template

1. If you decide you **don't want to use a template**, remove it by clicking the Stationery category, and then click the Original template, which is blank.

2. If you **change your mind again**, and decide a template isn't such a bad idea after all, just click to select a template and you'll be right back where you started.

Create Custom Stationery

1. You're not limited to the stationery that comes with Mail; you can also **create your own**, although it won't be as fancy as the pre-supplied templates. Create a new message, enter and format your text, and add images. When you're happy with the result, select Save as Stationery from the File menu. Enter a name for your new stationery template, and click Save.

Your Mac and Sleep Mode (MacRumors: Guides)

Macs are equipped with a little extra feature that really can be a real time saver, whether you're on the road or at home and you need to leave for a couple of minutes: The sleep mode.

Whenever you close the lid on your portable Mac or press the on/off button on your desktop Mac, it will go to sleep. The advantages of this feature is that it takes less than 10 seconds to send the Mac to sleep and wake it again, while shutting it down and booting up takes about 1 minute.

Why don't all Macs use sleep all the time? Many new switchers from Windows are not used to using sleep (although it is somewhat equivalent to Windows' standby function) and may be in doubt about how sleep mode works.

Sleep and maintenance: An advantage to sleep mode is that the Mac will run its maintenance scripts, which it wouldn't if it was shut down. Mac OS X has three types of scripts: daily, weekly, monthly. If your Mac sleeps and is awakened but missed the weekly script it will execute it immediately. This will not happen if it was shutdown.

Sleep and battery life: When your portable Mac is sleeping, it will consume a little battery life so sleep mode. However, it's very little because only RAM is powered.

Sleep and moving the portable Mac: Since only the RAM is powered and Optical Drive and Hard Drive (the only mechanical hardware with moving bits) is not, you can safely transport your Mac as you see fit.

Sleep and wear and tear: Will sleep mode will wear down your Mac quicker or not? It basically comes down to two issues. Sleep mode will have some effect on your portable Mac since some electric circuits will be powered and thus used. But booting the Mac up cold will create more wear and tear overall, since electronic circuits are strained the most when going from an unpowered to a powered state. The amount of read/write access to the Hard Drive when booting contributes wear as well. There is no definitive answer yet and it will most likely not make a difference.

One final consideration: Sleep mode saves ALL data in RAM, whether good or bad. Often when an application is quit, it will leave things behind in memory. This extra "RAM waste" will persist and continue to accumulate from other applications and such until the system is fully rebooted. Thus a normal user may wish to fully shut down or reboot at least once every couple weeks to ensure optimal reliability and operating speed. http://guides.macrumors.com/Your_Mac_and_Sleep_Mode

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Heads Up: iOS at July 30th SBAMUG

Apple's latest update to its mobile operating system, iOS 8, includes features like QuickType predictive text, an interactive notification menu, and more native photo editing tools. Learn more about iOS 8 and iOS generally at the July 25th SBAMUG meeting. However, these devices won't be able to run it: iPhone 4 or older, original iPad, and iPod Touch 4th Generation and older.

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2. Your new template will be listed in a new Custom category, at the bottom of the stationery template list.

http://macs.about.com/od/AppleMail/qt/Pump-Up-Your-Email-With-Apple-Mail-Stationery.htm

Create a reminder on your Mac in an instant
By Christopher Breen, MacWorld, 4/3/14

Reader Robin Lee wants a bit more convenience from the Finder. She writes:

> *I'm accustomed to creating quick reminders on my iPhone by using Siri. Obviously Siri isn't on my Mac but is there an easy way to quickly create a reminder without having to launch the Reminders app?*

My colleague Kirk McElhearn covered something like this in Create Reminders When You Aren't in Reminders, where the key to success was Automator. I too have an Automator solution, but one that requires a single action.

Launch Automator and in the workflow template that appears, choose Service. At the top of the workflow configure the popup menus to read Service receives no input in any application. Select the Calendar library in the left-most pane and from the Actions pane to the right drag the New Reminders Item into the workflow area. Click on Options in the action and enable Show this action when the workflow runs. Save and name your workflow—Quick Reminder has a nice ring to it.

Launch System Preferences, select Keyboard, click on the Shortcuts tab, and choose Services in the pane on the left side of the window. Locate your Quick Reminder entry near the bottom of the list of services, click to the right of its name, and enter a keyboard shortcut—I've used Command-Control-R.

Now when you want to create a new reminder without opening the app of nearly-the-same name, just press this keyboard shortcut. A New Reminders Item window will appear that contains Title, Add to, Priority, and Due date entries. Fill out the reminder in a way that makes sense to you (you can add an alarm if you've enabled the Due date option) and click the Continue button. The reminder will be added to the Reminders app.

http://www.macworld.com/article/2139101/create-a-reminder-on-your-mac-in-an-instant.html

Slim down your SSD with symbolic links
By Christopher Breen, MacWorld, 4/28/14

Reader Josh Gillam loves the speed of his SSD but not its capacity. He writes:

> *Late last year you wrote about speeding up an old Mac with an SSD. I followed your advice by replacing the media drive in my MacBook Pro with an SSD, leaving the original hard drive for other things. The problem I face now is that my SSD fills up quickly. Is there a way I can better manage its storage so files are stored by default on the old hard drive rather than the SSD?*

Absolutely. There are a couple of ways you can go about this. If you find that a lot of the storage is being used by iPhoto and iTunes, you can simply shift their files over to the old hard drive and then point the apps to look there for their resources.

For iPhoto, copy the iPhoto Library archive from youruserfolder/Pictures to the old hard drive (where you copy it isn't important). Then launch iPhoto while holding down the Option key. An iPhoto window will appear that lists any iPhoto Library archives you have as well as the path to the currently selected archive.

Select the archive you moved and click Choose. (If you don't see it in the list, click Other Library, then click Open.) You can now delete the original iPhoto Library archive. Whenever you work with iPhoto it will load and save images using this iPhoto Library archive.

Working with iTunes is less straightforward as you have to additionally adjust some settings within its preferences. I'll let Apple show you the way.

The other thing you might consider is moving some folders within your user folder to the old hard drive and creating symbolic links to them. The idea is that any app that wants access to folders such as Documents, Movies, Pictures, and Downloads will be directed to copies you've created on the old hard drive. This can't happen until you create links that tell the operating system "Look over there for the folders you want." Doing so requires some folder copying and the tiniest bit of Terminal work. Like so:

First, consider which folders you want to place on the old hard drive. The advantage of an SSD is that it accesses files very quickly and so you want to keep those files most often accessed on the faster drive. For this reason I'd suggest moving folders that contain large files that aren't used all that often—in my case the Pictures, Music, and Downloads folders. I would very definitely keep the hidden Library folder on the SSD as it contains lots of little files that the OS touches constantly.

Copy the folders you want to move to the old hard drive. You needn't put them in any particular place. I've created a folder at the root level of my old hard drive, named it My Home Folders, and then moved the folders into it. Now, to Terminal.

Within Terminal enter cd and enter the location of your home folder on the SSD drive. The easy way to do this is to type cd, followed by a space, and then drag your home folder into the Terminal window. Press Return and Terminal will list the name of your home folder followed by a prompt—chris$, in my case).

Now type sudo rm -rf, a space, and then the name of the folder you want to delete. So, to delete the Downloads folder you'd enter rm -rf Downloads and then press Return. Enter your password when prompted, press Return again, and the folder will be deleted. Repeat this for each folder you wish to delete (again, after making sure that you've made copies on the old hard drive).

I'd use this command to delete my original Downloads folder (after first making a copy). I'd use this command to delete my original Downloads folder (after first making a copy).

You must now create links to the folders you moved to your hard drive. You can do this by typing ln -s, entering a space, and then dragging in the folder on your old hard drive that you want to create the link to. In our example I would type ln -s and then drag into the Terminal window the Downloads folder from the My Home Folders folder I created on my old hard drive. When I press Return the link to the folder is created within the home folder on the SSD.

When you delete those folders from the SSD's home folder they'll also disappear from Finder windows' sidebars. You can put them back (minus the custom icon, which you also lose) by navigating to the original folders on the old hard drive and dragging those copies into the sidebar.

http://www.macworld.com/article/2148490/slim-down-your-ssd-with-symbolic-links.html

[Macworld Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of "Secrets of the iPod and iTunes (6th edition)," and "The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide (4th edition)" both from Peachpit Press and "Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard Essential Training (video)" from lynda.com Find Chris' books at www.amazon.com and www.peachpit.com.)

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Why Should I Buy a Hotspot When I Can Just Tether to My Phone?
By Alan Henry, LifeHacker, 5/15/14

Dear Lifehacker,

I've seen people using mobile hotspots for internet access on the go, and read your top five, but I don't get it. Why would I ever buy a hotspot when I can just tether to my phone and use it instead? Is there a benefit to having another gadget that I'm missing?

Sincerely, Dubious Traveler

Dear Dubious Traveler,

Whether a mobile hotspot is right for you depends heavily on the type of traveling you do, your mobile carrier, and the data plan you have. They're not for everyone, but using a hotspot does have some advantages over tethering to your smartphone. Let's take a look.

Simplifying your life usually means carrying *fewer* gadgets with you, especially if you have one item that can pull double-duty. However, a mobile hotspot does have some advantages over tethering to your phone. Here's why you might consider one:

- **You don't have unlimited data, or want a data plan that makes sense for tethering.** If you need to do any real, bandwidth-hogging work while tethered, you may catch yourself running out of data with your phone before you know it. Using a hotspot can get you out from under that.

- **You spare your phone's battery.** Using a hotspot means never draining your battery just because you needed to get some work done. This comes with the benefit of better long-term usage, since you're not taxing your phone just to stay connected.[1]

- **You can reliably tether multiple devices.** While you *can* tether multiple devices to your phone, the more you add, the worse the experience usually is. While most hotspots will put a limit on the number of devices you can connect, you can always connect more than one or two without performance problems.

- **You can work for longer periods without drops or throttling.** When The Wirecutter tested mobile hotspots, they explained that tethered phones dropped signal more frequently. Part of it is just a matter of firmware, but part of it is the fact that the phone itself is connected and working while your devices are, too. Similarly, even "unlimited " data plans—depending on carrier—get throttled after a certain point. You won't have to worry about that with a hotspot, especially a pay-as-you-go one. [2]

- **You don't have to choose between data and voice.** This varies by carrier, but with Verizon Wireless and Sprint, tethering (via 3G, not via LTE) means you can't talk on the phone. Sure, it may ring, but if you choose voice, data is disconnected, and vice versa. [3]

- **You can diversify carriers.** If you travel frequently—and let's face it, the people who really need hotspots probably do—you now have the option of whichever carrier offers the better service where you roam. Even if you're at home, you now have the option to pick the carrier with the best performance, or switch off when you need to.

If you're worried about money, a mobile hotspot doesn't have to come with contracts and fees. The best ones are pay-as-you-go, so you only pay for the data you use, and refill when necessary. The carriers with the best coverage and speed (Verizon Wireless, for example) are usually the most expensive, and may demand a contract. The ones with the best prices and value (Karma, FreedomPop, etc) sometimes suffer less-than-stellar coverage and speed. We get into more detail about this in our complete guide to choosing the best mobile hotspot for you.

Mobile hotspots are generally for people who need a reliable, backup internet connection, wherever they are—home or abroad. Personally, I found there's a tipping point between "Comcast is out, I can tether to my phone," or "riding the train from DC to New York, would love to check my email on the way," to "Comcast is out for hours and I have a deadline to meet" and "this hotel's Wi-Fi is horrible and I really need to finish uploading this." That tipping point is different for each of us, and it's up to you to decide where on that line you fall.

Of course, a mobile hotspot isn't ideal for everyone. It's another gadget to carry and keep charged. If your ISP is reliable or your work doesn't require a constant connection, a dedicated device may not make sense. Similarly, if you're lucky enough to still have *truly* unlimited data, then your smartphone is a *better* option than a hotspot. For the longest time, I just tethered to my phone since my needs were sparse and didn't justify the expense.

Ultimately, it comes down to your use case. If someone tells you they know what's "best" without knowing what your needs are, they're full of it. Make your own call based on your own situation.

Good luck, Lifehacker

http://lifehacker.com/why-should-i-buy-a-hotspot-when-i-can-just-tether-to-my-1576789744

Everything You Need to Know From WWDC 2014

Apple rarely introduces new hardware at its annual Worldwide Developers Conference, but it certainly provides plenty of software updates to talk about. The company showed off new operating systems for iPhone, iPad and Mac, along with initiatives that touch the health-tracking and smart home markets, a slew of new features like third-party keyboards, and even a new programming language. If you missed any of it (or are just looking for a good recap), here are the biggest highlights from WWDC 2014:

- iOS 8: New iPhone/iPad features this fall.
- Mac OS X Yosemite: Desktop operating system OS X 10.10
- Health app and HealthKit: keeps all your health-related information in one hub.
- HomeKit: control locks, lights, cameras, doors, thermostats, plugs and switches via one iOS 8 app.
- Family Sharing: up to 6 people share iTunes purchases.
- Synced photo editing: revamped Photos app syncs with iCloud.
- Revamped App Store: Features developers asked for.

Read more at: http://mashable.com/2014/06/02/wwdc-2014-everything-you-need-to-know/

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