

Digital Exodus off the Big5 Platforms

To save democracy and our planet

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Note, this is an evolving document. New versions will be updated and file names replaced with the latest date for version control.

*Please send recommendations, question, ideas, and feedback to
peacefulreturn@imaginethenews.com*

About the Digital Exodus

By April 22, 2025, 5 million people in the United States have:

- **Amazon** - Stopped buying on Amazon; cancelled Amazon Prime, any subscriptions related to it as well as the Washington Post; delete app off of phone.
- **Apple**: Stopped buying new Apple products, Cancelled all Apple Subscriptions or as many as possible.
- **Meta**: Deactivated or deleted all Meta platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Threads)
- **Google** - Migrated off Google products - forward Gmail to a new email (like Proton), moved off Chrome to another browser, stopped using Google and Maps for searches. Minimize Youtube.
- **X** - deleted, never to return
- **Remember – Progress not perfection.** *If you can only do 4 out of 5, or most of Google, but not all its apps, that still matters!*

Preparation Step for the Earth Day Digital Exodus:

In the days leading up to Earth Day, we set up a soft landing for us to connect off the platforms. (Remember, this is not about fear, this is about taking back our power and reducing the power of the monopolies who make money off of every data point they collect on us.)

Social Media (Meta/X)

- Exchange emails and phone numbers before you leave Meta and X platforms
- Create or join a Discord or Matrix server (algorithm-free community space)
- Join BlueSky and/or Mastodon and bring your friends.
- Replace WhatsApp and Messenger with **Signal**.
- Reconnect on LinkedIn (it seems to still be relatively safe with real news)

Facebook Groups: One of the most complicated things for me has been figuring out a way to maintain connection with people in Facebook groups or Messenger. What I recommend, is taking them with you. Move from Messenger to Signal, move from Facebook groups to Discord (more details on how to set up a Discord group to come soon). Here is a post you can share to your group.

Google/ABC

- Switch from Chrome browser to another one such as Firefox or DuckDuckGo.
- Instead of Google, use Yahoo or even ChatGPT search as a stopgap.
- Cancel YouTube Subscriptions, minimize YouTube use as much as possible
- Delete Google Maps off your phone and use another app.
- Minimize Google docs use

Amazon

- **Groceries**: Switch to local stores or Instacart (which has some ethical concerns too, but at least allows choice in vendors). Food co-ops and farmers markets when possible.

- **TV/Streaming:** I'm just using Netflix now - there's also Kanopy (free with library card), or select subscriptions you can pay for directly (rather than via Amazon Prime). YouTube and Spotify for curated movement playlists. (although YouTube is Google, so trying to minimize that too)
- **Office + Home Goods:** Staples / Office Depot for supplies; Target, Costco, or even Walmart (depending on your stance); Etsy or local craft stores for more sustainable or handmade items; [Thriftbooks.com](https://www.thriftbooks.com/) or [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org/) for books; Chewy for pet supplies
- **Groceries** - Thrive Market for health & pantry items (subscription, ethical alternative)
- Delay purchases, trade with friends, and rediscover that we don't need as much as we thought, which is a whole other liberation.
- **Cancel Washington Post** (owned by Bezos) - sign up for The Atlantic or The Guardian.

Apple

- Cancel Apple TV - Cancel
- Apple News - Cancel and sign up for individual subscriptions or just read public news for now.
- Apple Storage - I don't know how to fix this one for those who have iPhones
- For now, just hold off on buying any new products unless absolutely necessary.
- Increase security on phone so they can't monetize your data

Remember: progress not perfection – goal is everyone reduces use by 80%

Apple Security Updates

We are not expecting people to throw out their iPhones. So here are some measures you can take to reduce their data collection. Remember this is not about paranoia. This is about ECONOMIC RESISTANCE – they make money off of every data point they collect and we need to stop that now.

1. Turn Off Location Tracking Where You Don't Need It
 - **Settings > Privacy & Security > Location Services**
 - Turn off **Location Services** entirely or review app-by-app.
 - Scroll down to **System Services** and turn off most of those (especially: *iPhone Analytics, Significant Locations, Routing & Traffic*).
2. Disable Apple's Ad Tracking
 - **Settings > Privacy & Security > Apple Advertising**
 - Toggle **off** *Personalized Ads*
3. Stop Sharing Analytics with Apple
 - **Settings > Privacy & Security > Analytics & Improvements**
 - Turn **everything off** here (especially *Share iPhone Analytics, Improve Siri & Dictation*)
4. Limit App Tracking (This Affects Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
 - **Settings > Privacy & Security > Tracking**
 - Toggle **off** *Allow Apps to Request to Track*

- Also turn off tracking for any individual apps listed
5. Turn Off iCloud for Non-Essentials
 - **Settings > [your name] > iCloud**
 - Disable syncing for stuff you don't want backed up to Apple's servers (e.g., Photos, Notes, Safari)
 6. Turn Off Siri & Dictation Data Collection
 - **Settings > Siri & Search > Siri & Dictation History**
 - Tap *Delete Siri & Dictation History*
 - Then go to **Settings > Privacy & Security > Analytics & Improvements** and make sure Siri data sharing is off.
 7. Block Tracking in Safari
 - **Settings > Safari**
 - Turn on *Prevent Cross-Site Tracking*
 - Turn off *Preload Top Hit*
 - Set *Search Engine* to DuckDuckGo (or Ecosia if you want a sustainable option)
 - Toggle off *Safari Suggestions* and *Search Engine Suggestions*
 8. Use Minimal Apple ID Features
 - Avoid using **Sign in with Apple** where possible
 - Consider using **anonymous email aliases** (Apple lets you do this with some logins)
 9. Disable Bluetooth/Background App Refresh Where You Don't Need It
 - **Settings > General > Background App Refresh** → Turn off or set to *Wi-Fi only*
 - **Settings > Bluetooth** → Turn off for apps that shouldn't need it
 10. Consider Turning Off iCloud Backups Entirely (Advanced)
This gives you *maximum control*—but you'll need to back up manually via computer if needed.

Others:

- Replace Uber with Lyft

Special Instructions for Influencers

For influencers that make money off of ads on Meta, X, or Youtube, we understand your concerns. We are not asking you to sacrifice your livelihood, and understand you may take a longer time to exit the social media platforms. Exit the others (Google, Apple, Amazon) now and give yourself a longer time to move off Meta, X and Youtube.

- If you have not already, start migrating your audience to Substack and/or Patreon and invite them to be direct subscribers and supporters. This is a much more authentic business model. (Think HBO quality with its subscriber model vs. quality of regular network shows supported by ads.)

Special Instructions for Investors

For those with big holdings in the stock market, we encourage you to divest from the Big5 and move to more sustainable options. If you want to stay in tech, consider smaller companies, or if you need to have a large cap, choose Microsoft, a lesser offender, as a stop gap.

Additional Resources

Alternative Platforms

Discord (Community & Chat)

- <https://discord.com/register>
- Create an account → Join or create servers for different communities.

Bluesky (Decentralized Twitter/X Alternative)

- <https://bsky.app>
- You'll need an invite code if you don't already have one, but they're much more available now. Let me know if you need help getting one.

Mastodon (Decentralized Twitter/X Alternative)

- <https://joinmastodon.org>
- Pick a server/instance that fits your interests (all connect to the same fediverse).
 - Good general-purpose instance: <https://mastodon.social>
 - For activism/tech/policy: <https://mastodon.green> or <https://kolektiva.social>

On Tech Sovereignty

- **Privacy Suggestions:** Wired article with additional suggestions for [secure platforms and how to increase privacy settings](#).
- **Digital Expat:** Wired article calling for a [digital expat movement](#) being necessary for increased privacy and sovereignty.
- **Signal CEO on Tech Monopolies:** [A new model for independent tech](#)

On Social Unrest

- [Survival of the Richest](#) (book that became a blog)

On Resistance

- [50501 Movement](#): (April 5th Hands Off Resistance Day)
- [Fighting Back: A Citizen's Guide to Resistance](#)
- [Indivisible: Practical Guide to Democracy on the Brink](#)
- [What you can do to fight this coup: choosedemocracy.us/what-can-i-do/](#)

On Climate Change Urgency

- [WWF Living Planet 2024](#) - *"It is no exaggeration to say that what happens in the next 5 years will determine the future of life on earth"*
- [UK Actuarial Report](#): Climate scenario risks

- [April 1 Bloomberg Article](#) on Trump Oil Policy
- [Bloomberg Article - Pivotal Moment](#) “Scientists have concluded that it’s somewhere between “likely” and “[virtually certain](#)” we’re in the midst of a 20-year period where the Earth breaches 1.5C, and the United Nations has warned humanity is on course for [twice](#) that much warming—considered to be [a catastrophic outcome](#) for billions of people.

*Please reach out to me if you have additional resources to share.
peacefulreturn@imaginethenews.com*