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PRIVACY

Ixquick Protects Your Privacy!

The only search engine that does not record your IP address.

Your privacy is under attack!

Every time you use a regular search engine, your search data is recorded. Major search engines capture your IP address and use tracking cookies to make a record of your search terms, the time of your visit, and the links you choose - then they store that information in a giant database.

Those searches reveal a shocking amount of personal information about you, such as your interests, family circumstances, political leanings, medical conditions, and more. This information is modern-day gold for marketers, government officials, hackers and criminals - all of whom would love to get their hands on your private search data.

Why should you worry?

Major search engines have quietly amassed the largest database of personal information on individuals ever collected. Unfortunately, this data can all too easily fall into the wrong hands. Consider the following story:

In August 2006, the online world was jarred when AOL accidentally released three months' worth of aggregated search data from 650,000 of its users, publishing all the details in an online database.
That database is still searchable. It is an absolute eye-opener to see the potential for privacy nightmares.



—>Enter a query and find who searched for it
—>Then click on a "User ID" to find what else this user searched for

Shocked? You are not alone.
When we search, we share our most private thoughts with our computers.
These private thoughts should be safe.

Ixquick's position:

- You have a right to privacy.
- Your search data should never fall into the wrong hands.

NEWS:

January 28th, 2010 **Ixquick launches proxy service.**

Read more in our press release or on the F Explained page.

January 28th, 2009 **Ixquick no longer records your IP address!**

Read more in our press release or below i Ixquick's privacy Q&A.

Ixquick web search awarded the fi



European Privacy Sea
DE-110022 / Valid till 2013-0

On July 14th, 2008 Ixquick was awarded t first European Privacy Seal.
Ixquick is the first and only EU-approved search engine.
Find the official EuroPriSe press release here.

- The only real solution is quickly deleting your data or not storing them to begin with.
- Since January 2009 we do not record our users' IP addresses anymore.
- Your personal data are not shared with any third party.
- We are the first and only search engine to do so.
- Since then we have added many other features that protect your privacy.
- Our initiative is receiving an overwhelmingly positive response!

Ixquick will wholeheartedly continue on its mission to offer you great search results in the best possible privacy!

Ixquick Warranties:

European Privacy Seal

On July 14th 2008 Ixquick received the first European Privacy Seal from European Data Protection Supervisor Mr. Peter Hustinx. The Seal officially confirms the privacy promises we make to our users. It makes Ixquick the first and only EU-approved search engine. Both EU Commissioner Viviane Reding and Dr.Thilo Weichert, German Privacy Commissioner complemented Ixquick on its privacy achievements.
You can find the press release here.

European Privacy Seal
DE-110022 / Valid till 2013-02

Certified Secure, a leading Certification Authority, has certified Ixquick's Privacy procedures.
The CS Privacy Certificate has been awarded after an extensive audit.
It safeguards your Privacy!

Certified Secure
Privacy Protected

Ixquick has been registered with the **Dutch Data Protection Authority** (CBP) under number M 1346973.
This Authority supervises the fair and lawful use and security of your personal data, to ensure your privacy today and in the future.

Ixquick's Privacy Q&A:

* Why did Ixquick decide to take leap steps in June 2006 and in January 2009?
* Had Ixquick ever data mined its search data for commercial use before 2006?
* What is Ixquick's policy now with regard to IP addresses and the use of ID cookies?
* Why is it so important not to store IP address or User ID cookie?
* It is great Ixquick does not store my IP address, but what about any third parties?
* How does Ixquick make money if it doesn't store or sell my personal data?
* How can I be sure Ixquick fulfills its promises?
* What are "cookies" and does Ixquick use any?
* How can Google install a Google cookie in my browser when I never use Google?
* How does Ixquick make use of the limited logfiles it does keep?
* What is the recently added "Ixquick Proxy" service all about?
* How does it work?
* Will the proxy work with Javascript selected off?

* How has the proxy improved Ixquick's position in the search industry?
* What other measures has Ixquick taken to protect my Privacy?
* Does Ixquick support SSL (HTTPS)?
* Will SSL or HTTPS work in combination with the proxy?
* Where are Ixquick's servers located?
* How can I learn more about the privacy issues with other search engines?
* Why are other search engines not yet following Ixquick's lead?
* Where can I find more background information on these privacy issues?
* What is Ixquick's view for the near future when it comes to search engine privacy?

Q: Why did Ixquick decide to take leap steps in June 2006 and in January 2009? Beyond striving to offer our users the best Web search results possible, we also feel strongly about safeguarding their privacy. With other search engines, millions of law abiding citizens world wide expose themselves to serious invasions of privacy while performing innocuous searches across the internet.
We feel the right to privacy is a very important right, worth defending.
These were the principles that guided Ixquick's decision in June 2006 when we started our privacy initiative. Our determination to offer our users the best possible privacy search engine has only increased ever since. That's why we are pleased we were able to stop recording IP addresses altogether in January 2009.

Q: Had Ixquick ever data mined its search data for commercial use before 2006? In its history before June 2006, Ixquick had never used IP addresses and Unique ID cookies for anything other than tracking its own statistics and improving our site's performance . Unlike most of our competitors, we are an independent company and unable to combine user data with other services we offer. As such, these records had no commercial value to us. Since June 2006, and especially after January 2009 there is nothing to mine.

Q: What is Ixquick's policy now with regard to IP addresses and the use of ID cookies? IP addresses: Ixquick does not record the IP addresses of our legitimate users.
Cookies: Ixquick abolished the use of Unique ID cookies as of June 6th, 2006.
Ixquick only uses one anonymous cookie that is used to remember the search preferences you saved for your next visit.

Q: Why is it so important not to store IP address or User ID cookie? People can either have a static IP address or a dynamic IP address that changes from day to day. If they have a static IP address, one can reconstruct their search history with just that IP address. If they have a dynamic IP address one can reconstruct their search history for today but not for yesterday. The user's ISP, however, can provide the missing link between the various IP addresses. The Unique user ID can also be used to tie the different IP addresses together.
So the IP address is unique to the specific computer or router, but may change from day to day. The User ID is unique for one specific search engine or website.
The combination of the both delivers extensive possibilities to track users' behavior, especially for internet conglomerates with multiple services where the users information can be combined.
Tracking within a site is typically done with the aim of producing usage statistics, while tracking across sites with so-called third party cookies, is typically done by advertising companies to produce anonymous user profiles. These profiles are then used to target advertising (deciding which advertising image to show) based on the user's profile. But advertising companies are just one of many groups that may take an interest in user profiles. Ixquick deletes both the IP address and the User ID cookie. Ixquick does not record IP addresses or use Unique ID cookies.

Q: It is great Ixquick does not store my IP address, but what about any third parties? Ixquick does not share your personal information with any third party including other search engines and the provider of its sponsored results.

Q: How does Ixquick make money if it doesn't store or sell my personal data? Ixquick shows a limited amount of relevant sponsored results on the top and the bottom of the results page.
Each time these sponsored results are clicked upon Ixquick receives a minimal fee from the advertiser.

Q: How can I be sure Ixquick fulfills its promises? Our Privacy Policy is routinely being confirmed by two independent organizations, Europrise and Certified Secure. For more information please click on the respective certifying organization.

Q: What are "cookies" and does Ixquick use any? A cookie is a small piece of data that is sent and saved to your computers' hard drive when visiting a site. Ixquick uses only one cookie called "preferences". This cookie is to remember the search

preferences you saved for your next visit. It expires after not visiting Ixquick for 90 days and is anonymous.

Q: How can Google install a Google cookie in my browser when I never use Google? This has nothing to do with Ixquick. A Google cookie called 'PREF' can be set when you use Firefox or Chrome as your browser, regardless of whether you visit google.com or any other site. There is a technical reason why this happens. More information can be found here. One way to prevent this is to disable or limit the use of cookies. This is something Ixquick recommends from a privacy perspective. For Firefox, go to 'Preferences' -> 'Privacy', for Chrome, go to 'Options' -> 'Under the Hood', and disable the cookies.

Q: How does Ixquick make use of the limited logfiles it does keep? As a privacy search engine we do not log users' IP addresses. Nor do we log the search queries itself. But in order to offer our users the best product possible we do keep data on performance (speed) for maintenance purposes and general statistics like language or category usage.

Q: What is the recently added "Ixquick Proxy" service all about? The "Ixquick Proxy" extends the great privacy protections you get from our search engine to cover your browsing activities too. Our proxy lets you browse third-party websites safely and anonymously, without passing on any private, personally identifiable information. It means you can now surf the web as anonymously as you can search with Ixquick.

Q: How does it work? The proxy allows you to view third-party web pages loaded through Ixquick's servers. Details on how it works can be found on the "Ixquick Proxy Explained" page.

Q: Will the proxy work with Javascript selected off? Yes, the proxy will work fine, although some messages will not appear anymore.

Q: How has the proxy improved Ixquick's position in the search industry? Ixquick leads the search industry on privacy issues, and we are always looking for innovative ways to protect our users. We were the first and only search engine to provide **certified anonymous searching** and **encrypted (SSL) connections**, and now we are the only search engine to offer **anonymous proxy browsing**. Proxy surfing is just one more way we are earning our reputation as "The World's Most Private Search Engine."

Q: What other measures has Ixquick taken to protect my Privacy? Contrary to other search engines Ixquick uses the so-called POST method (instead of the GET method) to keep your search terms out of the logs of webmasters of sites that you reach from our results. Search terms tell a lot about what you are thinking, which is why this is a privacy issue. With the POST method Ixquick uses, your search terms are stripped off.

Q: Does Ixquick support SSL (HTTPS)? Yes, the Ixquick servers have been configured to handle HTTP requests over secure and encrypted Secure Socket Layer (SSL) connections. SSL is an encryption protocol that is available in almost all browsers. It establishes a secure connection between your browser and Ixquick's servers. Ixquick uses SSL to hide your search terms from anyone who might be monitoring traffic between your browser and Ixquick's servers. The only drawback of using SSL is a slightly longer processing time. You can activate SSL by using/adding an "s" to "http" in Ixquick's address. (so: https://ixquick.com)

Q: Will SSL or HTTPS work in combination with the proxy? Yes it will. Just make sure you are on the HTTPS version of Ixquick / Startpage / Startingpage before using the proxy feature, and the proxied page (including the URL and the pictures) will also be transmitted to you through a secure connection, hidden from your ISP or other snoopers on the network.

Q: Where are Ixquick's servers located? Ixquick has server clusters in the Netherlands and the United States. Ixquick typically routes European searches to the European servers, American searches to the U.S. servers, and searches from other countries to the closest location. On the rare occasion that there is a problem in one facility, searches are briefly handled by the other facilty. In these cases, when European requests are received by United States-based servers, EU data protection laws are strictly complied with.

Q: How can I learn more about the privacy issues with other search engines? Search engines are frequently silent on their efforts to use and combine data. Their privacy policies may provide some guidance as to their intentions. So the best to do is look for the privacy policies. Ixquick's privacy policy is crystal clear, and can be found here.

Q: Why are other search engines not yet following Ixquick's lead? After the AOL story some search engines quickly commented they will not give up recording the privacy data of its users.
Ixquick's competitors are generally very large and often publicly owned search engines.Such a large share of these company's valuations is based on their ability to mine data from their users, they cannot afford to give the practice up. Commercial pressures to increase effectiveness of advertising and other commercial services, and the profit opportunities that arise by combining data collected across multiple services will ultimately drive these companies to make even greater impositions on your privacy. Even though lately announcements have been made by Yahoo, Google and MSN to lower data retention time, their true

intentions can be questioned. The way in which IP addresses are made “anonymous” and the ability to continue to combine search data through the use of ID cookies and logins make these promises far less positive than they seem. Read more here.

Q: Where can I find more background information on these privacy issues? The web sites of various privacy organisations are a great starting point for locating an abundance of background information on this subject. Ixquick recommends:
http://privacyrights.org/
http://www.eff.org/
http://epic.org
http://worldprivacyforum.org/

Q: What is Ixquick's view for the near future when it comes to search engine privacy? We see an increasing threat to online privacy in general and search engine users' privacy in particular. Ad networks, search engines and government agencies have all stepped up their efforts to exploit private search data. Positive is that consumer awareness is also slowly but surely rising. The resulting political pressure (especially in the EU) may help to force the larger search engines to change their privacy policies for the better. There is only one real solution to this problem: not storing or quickly deleting the data. Only then is data safe from future privacy breaches.

Ixquick will wholeheartedly continue on its mission to offer you great search results in the best possible privacy!

Recent Articles on Ixquick:

Tracking Cookies are Crummy, says Search Engine Startpage.com
Businesswire.com

Ixquick / Startpage launches anonymous Web search service
Reuters

Killer way to slay the Google beast
WorldNetDaily

Ixquick offer anonymous web browsing with new Startpage Proxy
Geek.com

Cool Wesites, Software and Internet Tips
Makeuseof.com

Does Microsoft + Yahoo = A Privacy Arms Race Among Web Giants?
NYTimes.com

Copernic First to Launch Privacy Desktop
PR-USA.NET

Search engine promises completely private surfing
Vnunet.com

Dutch search engine ignores IP addresses
Theregister, UK

Search engine promises completely private surfing
Pcauthority.com.au

Ixquick Ceases User Data Storage
.MarketingVox.com

ixquick offers totally private Internet searches
Geek.com

Audio:

A search engine that remembers little about its users
RealAudio or MP3
National Public Radio

Interview of CEO Ixquick Robert Beens
RealAudio or MP3
The Dr. Katherine Albrecht Radio Show

Other Articles of Interest:

Web tracking has become a privacy time bomb
USA Today.com

A Race to the Bottom: Privacy Ranking of Internet Service Companies
Privacy International

Debunking Google's log anonymization propaganda
CNET News.com

What do they know?
George C. Dimitriou

When companies have the ability to combine data from different resources or services, the privacy consequences become even more staggering:

They know all about you.
The Guardian

Listening to your every move.
Techcrunch

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