International Travel: Digital Privacy Checklist

Before You Travel:

- Minimize data on your device - Remove sensitive files, emails, or apps you don't need

- Back up everything - Use cloud storage or external drives before you depart

- Use a strong passcode - Avoid facial recognition or fingerprint unlocks

- Turn off biometric access - Switch to manual code entry before arrival

- Log out of social media - Or temporarily delete apps (they can be reinstalled later)

- Use a travel-only device - Consider a 'clean' phone with just essentials

At the Airport or Border:

- Power off your device before customs - This prevents some forensic tools from accessing it

- Stay calm and respectful - Agents have legal authority to ask for access

- Know your rights:

- - U.S. citizens and green card holders can refuse to unlock their device (but it may be seized)

- - Visitors on visas may be denied entry if they don't comply

If Your Device is Searched or Taken:

- Request a receipt for any device taken (Form 6051D)

- Ask how long it will be held and what will be done with the data

- Contact a lawyer if your rights are unclear or you feel pressured