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How to get started in Privacy Engineering

1 Pursue a cross-disciplinary education.

- If you are still in college or exploring higher-ed options, seek a degree in privacy engineering, computer science, software/computer engineering, networking, information systems, data science or analytics, cybersecurity, or other technical field, and take courses that focus on privacy.
- Look for opportunities to take data protection-related courses across schools or pursue continuing education online, in areas such as cybersecurity, user testing, risk management, law, and UX or UI design.
- Practice privacy skills through an internship or externship with a local company, government privacy office, think tank or civil rights advocacy organization. Learn how to work with technical, legal and business professionals.

2 Search for career opportunities beyond Big Tech.

- Don't limit yourself as to where you might work or what your title might be. Nearly all companies and industries today require technology and data skills. Consider positionswhere privacy engineering is a component of the role that could grow, whether in more traditional companies that are expanding their digital presence, newer startups or as part of larger teams within more recognizable tech companies.
- Consider post-graduate fellowships in organizations with a privacy focus, such as the IAPP, Future of Privacy Forum and academic research centers, such as Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.
- Explore privacy careers listed on the IAPP's Career Central page.

3 Write about privacy issues.

- Pick a niche that interests you, get smart about it, and start writing — blogs, papers, op-eds and even tweetstorms will all help you stand out in the field.
- Self-publish: Platforms like LinkedIn and Medium make it easy.
- Submit your work for consideration to the IAPP's publications, which are increasing coverage of more-technical privacy developments.

4 Network, network, network: Engage with privacy professionals.

- Become a member of the IAPP and join the Privacy Engineering Section.
- Attend virtual and, when possible, in-person privacy conferences, IAPP privacy engineering forums, PEPR, PETS, SOUPS and others, KnowledgeNet Chapter meetings, and after hours events. Some conferences provide scholarships for students. Or pitch a session for a speaker pass.
- Reach out to privacy professionals in your community, and arrange to meet for coffee.
- Seek out opensource initiatives that focus on solving data and privacy problems to learn tech practices.
- Subscribe to a privacy email list.

5 Become an expert in your own privacy.

- Learn to follow your data. Understand where it goes and who controls it.
- Manage your own privacy with mobile device settings, encryption, location tracking, etcetera.

6 Earn privacy credentials.

- Become a Certified Information Privacy Technologist.
- Earn privacy-related continuing education credits through conferences, trainings, etcetera.

7 Stay informed about privacy issues.

- Subscribe to mailing lists: IAPP Daily Dashboard, Morning Consult Tech, New York Times Bits, ReCode, TechCrunch, opensource.com.
- Follow interesting people and those they follow on Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media.

8 Find a niche.

- Dive deeper into a particular technology, standard, privacy framework or privacy-enhancing technique. Make it your specialty. You have to start somewhere, and having a home base makes it easier to wrap your head around the intersection of privacy, data and tech. A particular interest also demonstrates to employers that you are dedicated to the field.

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