

Privacy and Security Gifts

Rebecca Herold, Privacy & Security Brainiacs
2023 – 2024

1. Comparatively low-cost USB data blockers, also commonly called juice jack blockers, to use yourself, and to provide to all your family, friends, and employees who work remotely. They are small and easy to carry in your pocket, phone case, etc. They look similar to this. They are also inexpensive. We've found them for as low as two for USD \$7.89. They also typically cost less when buying them in bulk.

NOTE: This is not an endorsement of this particular device over others. It is provided to show what one type of such device looks like.



2. Personal portable charging devices for situations where a power source is needed, but there are none to be found, such as while hiking, or spending the day with a client in an environment with few-to-no usable electrical outlets. We carry two; one a flat credit-card size, and another the size of lipstick, that can each be put into different pockets, or storage belts. The charging devices vary greatly. A couple of types look similar to these.

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3. Charging-only cables to use in public USB ports. This will prevent data from being transmitted through the USB connection similar to how juice-jack blockers work (but, yes, are larger and bulkier to carry). Cables that charge and provide data transfer have four. Charge only cables only have two wires within the cable, usually making them thinner.

4. Electric outlet-to-USB adapters, great for travelers. These are usually inexpensive (usually less than USD \$10) and small. Most of these have two USB ports within them and look similar to this.

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5. USB port blocker. For example, here's a LINDY 40425 USB Type C Port Blocker Key. These devices physically prevent access to USB ports. A pack of 4 costs USD \$35 - \$40.

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6. Fairly inexpensive cellphone temperature protection, padded, waterproof cases/covers to protect your phone and devices from such temperature extremes and other environmental threats. While you're at it, get a case that also protects your phone from nearby wireless access via blue-tooth and RFID transmissions. These typically cost between USD \$8.00 to \$50.00

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7. An RF-shielded travel belt, small storage bag, etc.; often called a "Faraday bag." These can be used to store driver's licenses, passports, credit cards, and other RFID-embedded items. They prevent those nearby from accessing the data stored on the RFID chips; commonly called RFID skimming.

8. Privacy screens/filters: for smartphones, laptops, tablets, large monitors, etc. There are many different kinds. The cost varies based upon size. This one lists for USD \$22.

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9. UPS (uninterruptible power supply) devices with surge protectors built in.

10. Backup drives. USB or hard drives that connect to your computer.

11. Cable locks, to use while traveling, when working in a shared type of business space (e.g., rented work areas), when leaving the hotel room, in home offices where there are others in the house that do not live there, or when you don't want anyone to move your computing device. There are many different kinds. They run the gamut from USD \$7 - \$60. Here's one that is being sold for USD \$20.

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12. Remote locator, data wipe and activity logging/recording tools.

13. A physical alarm, or a software app alarm, that will go off if someone takes the computing devices. There are many types, and they vary greatly in price. Here's one that sells for USD \$15.

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14. Subscription to anti-malware and other types of security and privacy software.
15. Backup service subscription. Make sure the service is one that has strong security and privacy practices. We also recommend using one that either has the option to store your data locally (where you are physically located, on a device you can disconnect from your network), or that they strongly encrypt all backups, and cannot decrypt the data (the subscriber controls the decryption keys).
16. Encrypted USB drives. To store copies of photos, videos, important financial papers and wills, etc.

17. Covers for webcams. These can be the items made specifically for this purpose, similar to the one shown. Or, working just as well, is a sheet from a sticky note cube/pad.



18. Digital tracker detector to check for digital trackers in your vicinity. For example, that may have been planted on your vehicle, in your bags, luggage, pockets, or other locations that you don't normally check that often. If you have a reason to believe you, or a friend or family member, is being tracked, invest in a digital tracker detector. There are many kinds. Ones similar to those shown below are typically available in the USD \$40 - \$50 range, and work well. Professional strength detector devices are available in the USD \$150 - \$250 range.

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19. Green screen with a background generator tool, for those who do a lot of online meetings, schooling, etc. This will keep the work area environment where they are physically located (often in their homes) from being seen.
20. Portable VPNs for work from home (WFH) folks, as well as travelers, students, and others who connect to the internet from remote locations.

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21. Privacy clothing. A bit offbeat, but will definitely be used by some. Particularly travelers. For example, there are stores that make clothing that is “the first design collection that offers knitted garments that shield facial recognition,” such as the item shown from Cap_able. *NOTE: This is not an endorsement of this particular store. It is provided as an example to show what one type of such clothing looks like.*



22. A one- or two-person privacy booth. For home or at work. There are many options and manufacturers of these. They vary greatly. Here is one example of what is a stand-alone booth. *NOTE: This is not an endorsement of this particular device over others. It is provided to show what one type of such device looks like.*



23. Two-factor authentication hardware. There are several to choose from. A currently popular one is the Yubikey which looks like this. *NOTE: This is not an endorsement of this particular device over others. It is provided to show what one type of such device looks like.*



24. Offline (your password can be stored locally) password manager. We were asked to list some we like. None are perfect. However, three we like, for different purposes and in consideration of the ease of use and general understanding of technology by those using them include 1Password, Enpass, and Passwarden. *NOTE: This is not an endorsement of these over others. They are just some choices based on our work and what has worked well for our clients. Others may work better for your specific situation.*

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25. Microphone blocker. This secures the computing device's microphone input. When plugged in, the microphone in the blocker will become the device's primary microphone and prevent others from listening in. Here is a popular one.

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26. For friends and family still using landlines, a call blocker. Here's a popular one.

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