

⚠ Privacy Alert: Your connected devices like smart speakers can become privacy risks if they're hooked up to outdated internet routers.

We've got five simple steps you can take to protect yourself.

What's going on with your smart home?

Your smart gadgets — from thermostats to fitness watches — may be more exposed than you think. The FBI says hackers are exploiting outdated routers to:

- Gain access to your computers and phones without your knowledge.
- Collect your personal information (hello, identity theft)
- Spread malware across your networked devices
- Turn your gadgets into part of a "botnet" (basically a robot army for launching attacks)

And here's a twist that might surprise you: Some hackers are harvesting this data to train their own AI. Your daily routines, your voice commands, your habits are all valuable fuel for AI systems you never agreed to help build.

Don't worry — here are five easy fixes to help you lock things down.

### **How to protect yourself and your smart devices:**

✅ Replace outdated routers: If your router isn't getting security updates anymore or is from before 2011, it's time for an upgrade. This isn't just about faster Wi-Fi — it's about locking down your digital life. (Routers need retirement plans too, who knew?)

✅ Turn off remote management: Log into your router settings and switch this off. It's often enabled by default — basically an open invite for digital party crashers. Close the door.

✅ Use strong, unique passwords: Skip the "Password123!" and go for something only you could dream up. Aim for long, unpredictable phrases — the kind that would impress even your nerdiest cybersecurity friend.

✅ Create a separate Wi-Fi network for smart devices: Set up a guest network just for your Internet of Things gadgets. Think of it as a VIP lounge — your smart speaker and

doorbell camera can mingle there, while your phone and laptop stay in the secure zone.

✅ Keep everything updated: Turn on automatic updates for your router and smart devices — it's one of the easiest ways to stay secure.

We get it — swapping out a router doesn't come with the excitement of a new phone. But it's a lot less painful than dealing with identity theft or hacked bank accounts.

[Get even smarter about smart devices with our Smart Home Buyer's Guide](#). It breaks down what to look for — and what to avoid — to keep your privacy intact.

Thanks for being part of the movement to make the internet good.

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