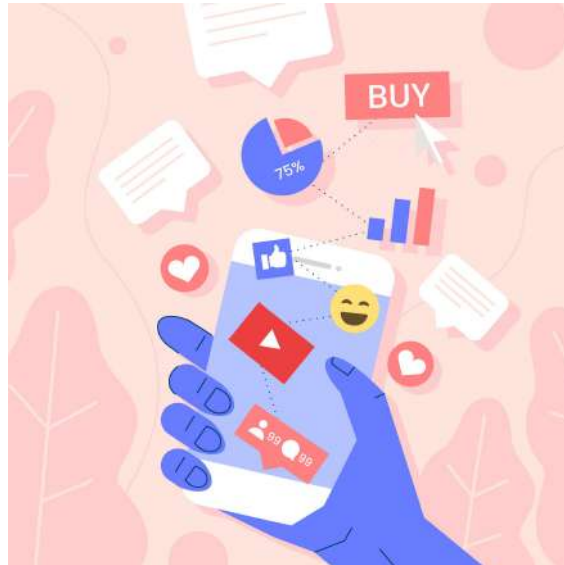




Guide 6

Cleaning your social networks



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Introduction

To begin with, it is important to note that on social networks, the impact of each action is still difficult to measure. The advice given in this guide concerns the use of "digital hygiene" for a better use of social networks as well as the search for a decrease of our environmental impact in using these platforms.

1. Understanding

Understanding the impact of data on social networks

Social networks represent more than 2 hours and 24 minutes a day spent on internet by 60,9% of internet users of the worldwide population.

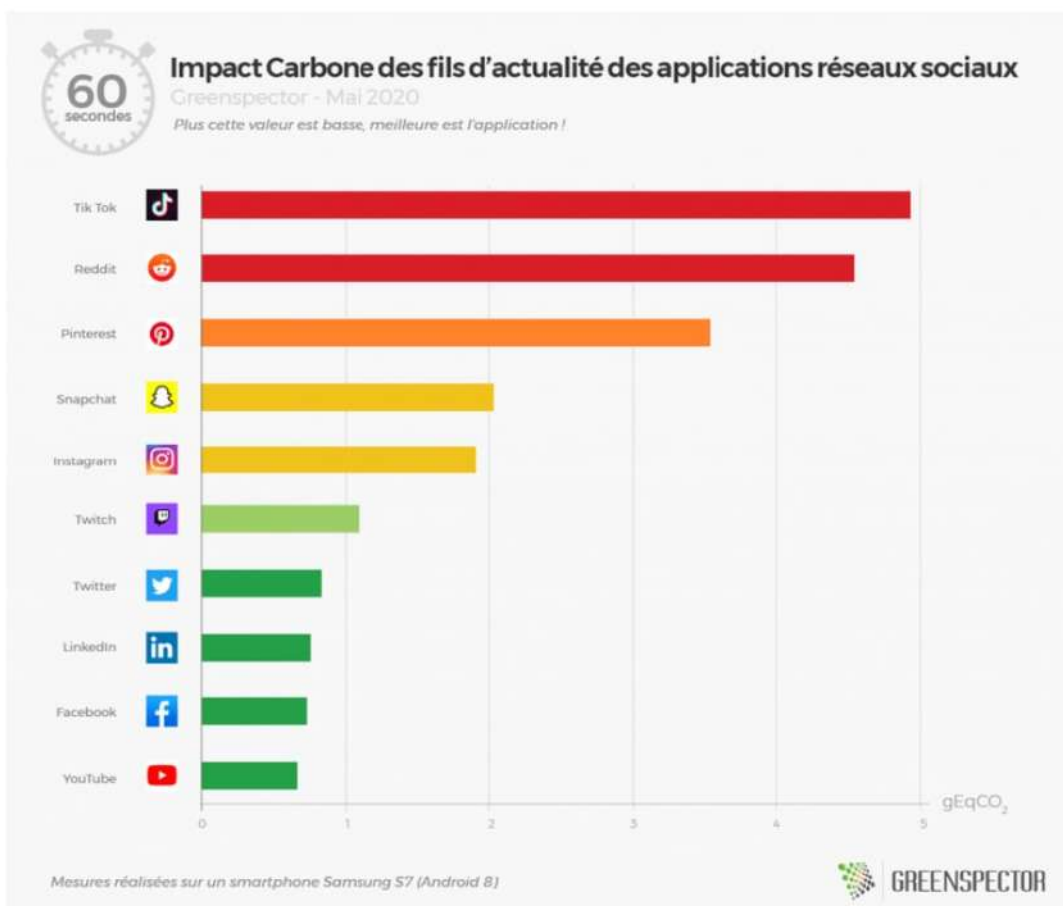
The data generated are linked to everything we share: a selfie, a like, a GIF... and what weights the most are pictures and videos. Every day, there are:

- on Facebook: 8 billions of videos watched and 350 millions of pictures shared.
- on Instagram: 95 millions of pictures and videos posted
- on Snapchat: 3 billions of snaps

According to you, what percentage of the internet data traffic is used for video streaming?

60% [Source](#)

It is also important to understand the concept of pre-loading of an application: as soon as you open one, data are loading and as a result consume energy. Some apps consume more than others from the opening, as shown in the following graphic.



Unsurprisingly, Tiktok is in first place. Videos start playing without any action from the user, as opposed to Youtube where the user has to click on a video for it to start.

Data centers required to video streaming are often fuelled by fossil energies (gas, coal). It is the case for Amazon, Netflix, Pinterest, Twitter. And even though some digital giants such as Alphabet (YouTube, Google), Meta (Facebook, Instagram, Messenger), and Apple invest in renewable energies, the impact of usages demultiplication remains high.

[Source](#)

When using social networks, **metadata** (geolocalisation, time and duration of connections, etc.) are generated and stored.

*Facebook counts about 2,4 billion active users in the world.
In your opinion, how many kg of CO₂ are emitted per year?*

More than 645 millions kg of CO₂, which equivalent to 645 000 Paris - New York flights
[Source](#)

Cleaing data on you social networks will enable you to **free up storage space** and to **better manage your online presence**.

Measuring your impact

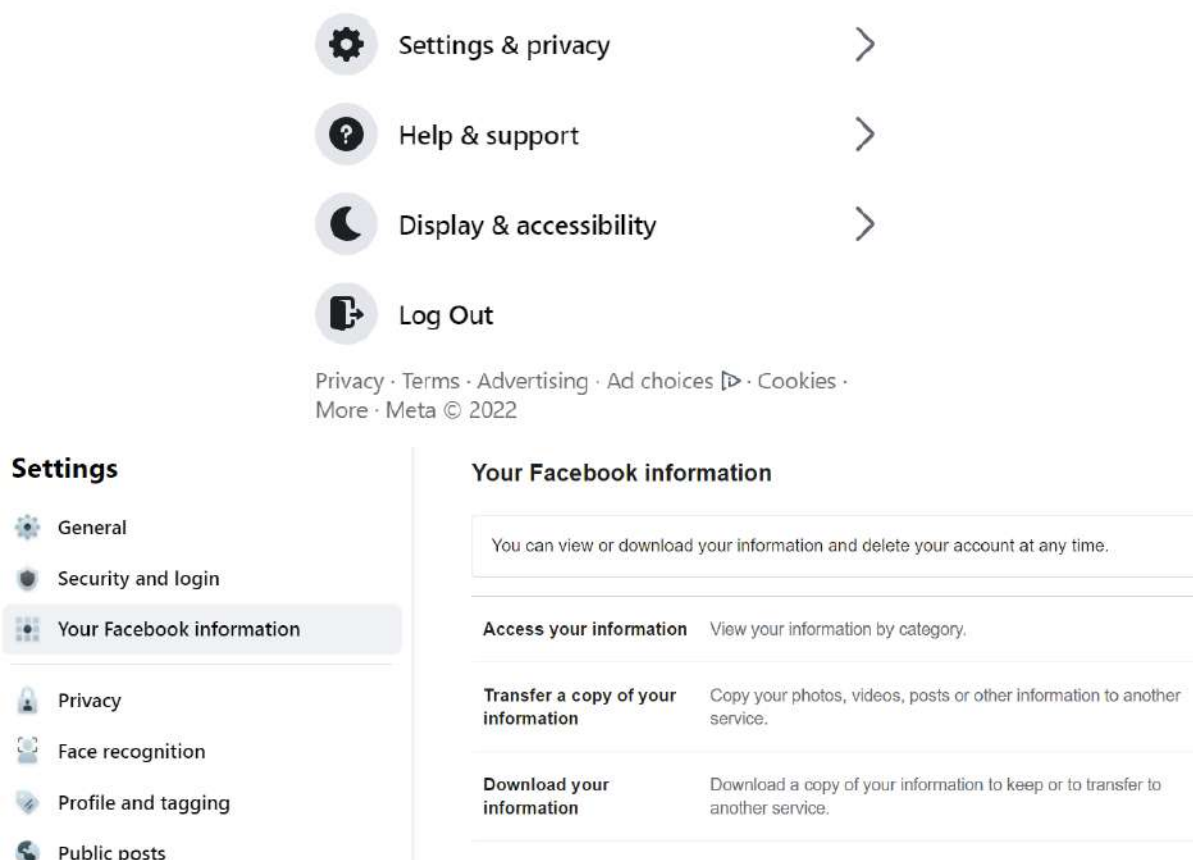
On social networks, it is difficult to measure data before and after the cleaning. Indeed, the volume of storage on your mobile for given social network, represents only the volume used for operating and the data stored on cache, not necessarily the weight of your profile in itself.

The only way would be to ask, for each social network, to disclose the size of your data stored on their servers, before and after the cleaning, in order to get a precise counting.

How can this be done?

Let's take the example of facebook

1. Connect to your Facebook account
2. Go to "Settings and Privacy" on the top right of your page then "Settings"
3. Go to "Your Facebook information" and click on "Download your information"
 - a. You will be able to select the period for which you wish to retrieve the data and the type of information to download.
(cf. screenshot below)



This action, although interesting **become aware of** the amount of data retained on social networks, takes time (several days) and the environmental cost caused by the flow

of the data produced may be higher than the gain obtained by deleting of a fraction of them data during the operation.

Therefore, only an estimate of the amount of data deleted will be requested. The more important thing remains to proceed to the sorting itself!

So, let's do it!

2. Taking action

Becoming aware: screen time

First of all, it is interesting to appreciate the time spent on social media on your smartphone. This information is very easy to find on all phones. It is also possible to put in place screen time limitations:

On Apple

Go to "Settings" > "Screen time" > "See the whole activity"

You will see the most used apps, the screen time for each of them and data/graphics linked to your usage use per week or per day.

How to limit your screen time?

Go to "Settings" > "Screen time"

- Break time: it is possible to set a time without screens. Only the few selected apps and calls will be authorized.
- Apps limitations: you can limit the screen time for some apps. For example: 30 min for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter"

On Android

Go to "Settings" > "Digital well being and parental control"

You will have an overview of the time spent on your smartphone today, the most used apps, as well as the number of notifications received and number of unlockings. You just have to click on the graphic which appears in order to get more details on the time spent on each app.

How to limit your screen time?

When you are on "Digital well being and parental control"

- Usage time: click on the graphic with your time of use > on the right of each app, a small timer is shown> by clicking on it, you can set a screen time for the app.
- Silent mode: click on "No distraction"> determine the apps to put onto silent mode and mask the notifications.
- Deactivate the notifications: click on "handle the notifications"> deactivate the notifications of some apps not to be disturbed

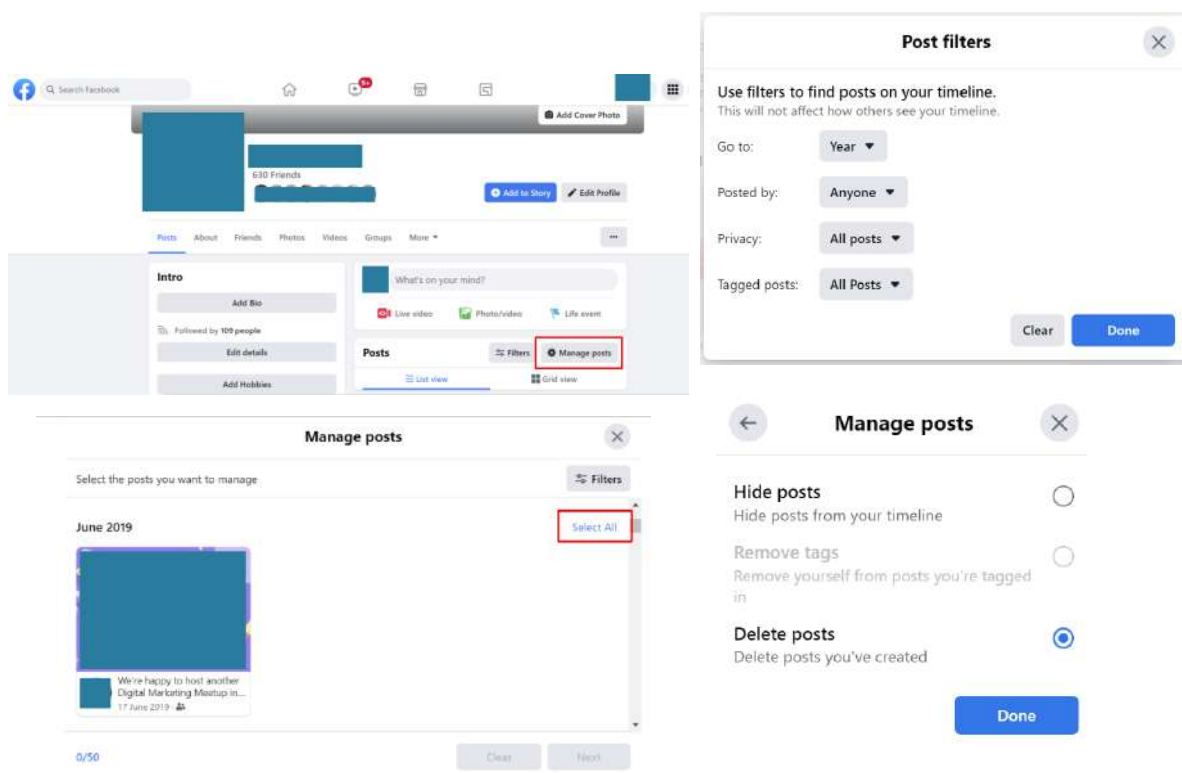


Cleaning your data: focus per social media

#1 Facebook

The operations below can be realized on the mobile application but we advise you to realize them on the web version, which offers more options and comfort..

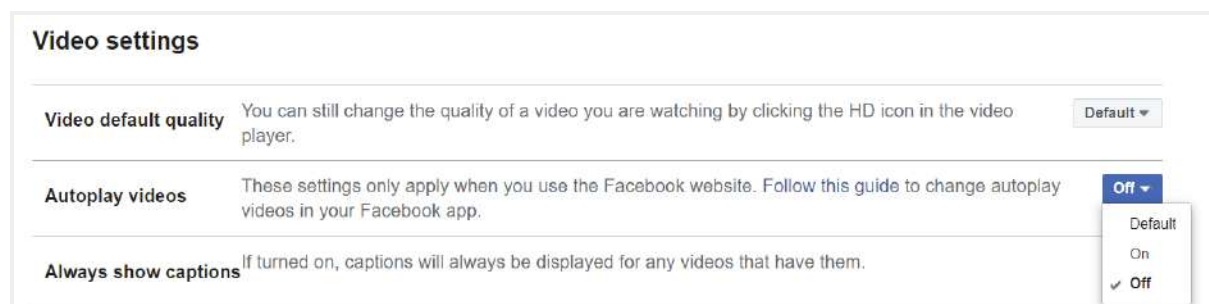
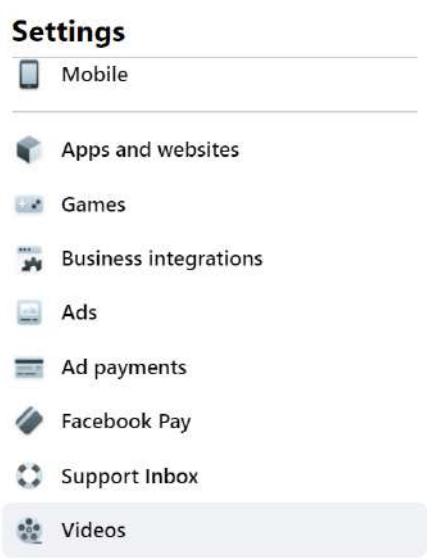
- Clear the old posts: go to your profile and click on "Manage posts". No need to scroll until your posts from 10 year ago to clean them up. You can use the filters! Once the filter is defined, you can "Select all" then "Next" to get the "Delete posts" option. You can do it on each publication of course or a selection (cf. screenshots below))



- Sort out and clear pictures and videos: go to your profile page and click on "Photos". Clear those you don't want to keep.
- Sort out your groups: go to "More"> "Groups", then select a group you want to leave and click on "Joined" then "Leave group"
- Sort out your likes: go to "More"> "Likes". All the pages you like will be displayed. With your laptop, you just have to run your mouse over it and click on "Liked" to clear the mention. On a smartphone, select the page on which you want to cancel your subscription and click on "Unsubscribe".

Take advantage of your cleaning to **update your "About" section** and check your confidentiality settings.

A good practice to limit the consumption of data during navigation: **deactivate videos automatic reading** To do it, go to "Settings & privacy"> "Settings"> "Videos"> "Autoplay videos", then select "No"



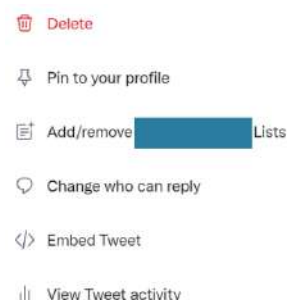
#2 Twitter

Twitter won't allow you to remove several tweets at the same time. Starting a big cleaning requires patience, as you have to use the manual option:

- To **remove a chosen tweet** :

Go to your profile page, find the tweet you want to remove, click on the "..." icon and click on "Delete"

(cf. screenshot below)

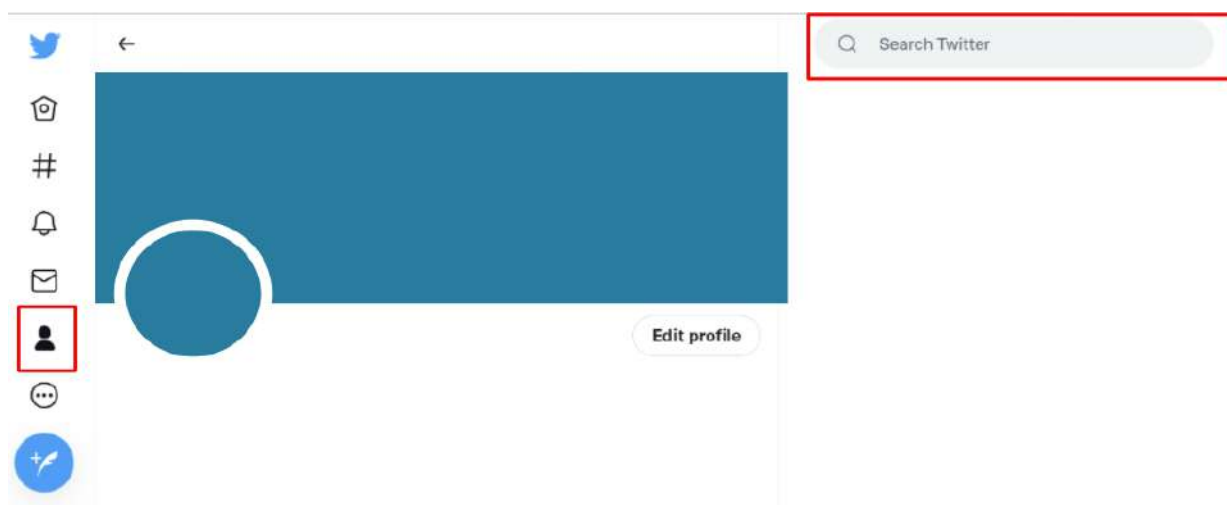


- To **cancel a retweet**, click once again on the **retweet button**.

Tip: you can use the **advanced search** form. It enables you to personalize your research results by specifying **a range of data, a person or other criteria**. It is then much easier to find **precise tweets**.

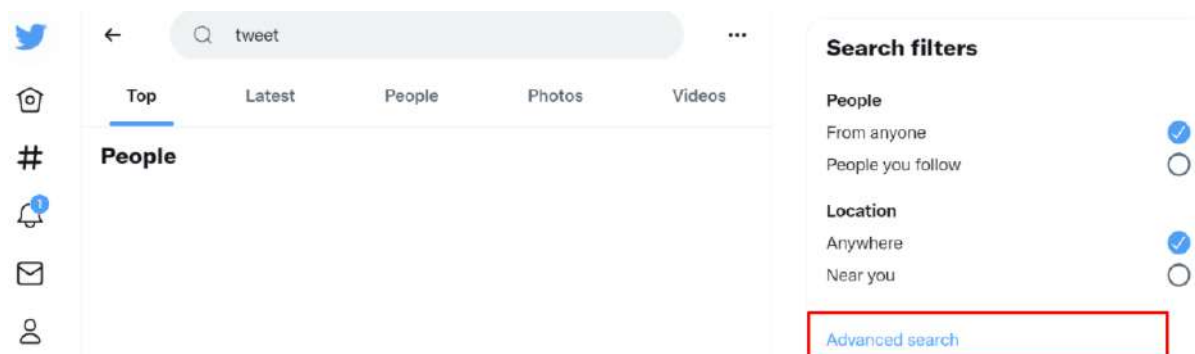
How to use the advanced search?

1. Enter your string of text in the **search bar** on Twitter.

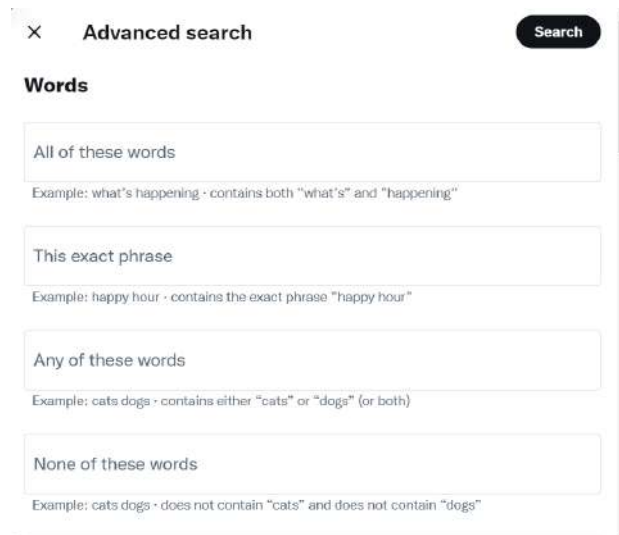


2. Click on "**Advanced search**", under " Search filters", on the top right of your results page.

(cf. screenshot below)



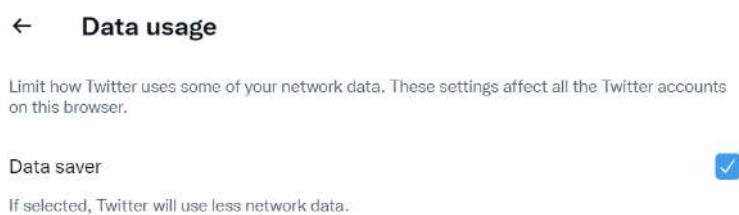
3. **Narrow your search results** by filling the appropriate fields.



4. And then click on **"Search"** to show the results .

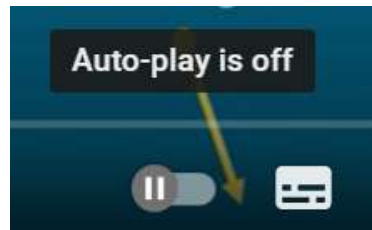
- To **deactivate videos automatic reading** and reduce the quality (hence, the weight) of pictures:

Go to "Settings and privacy", "Accessibility, display and languages", "Data usage", then tick "Data saver"



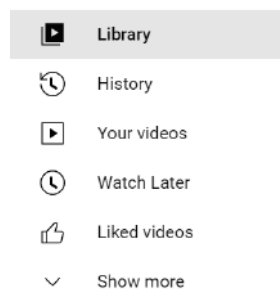
#3 YouTube

To **deactivate videos automatic reading** when you watch a video, an "on/off" button is available on the icons on top of the player.

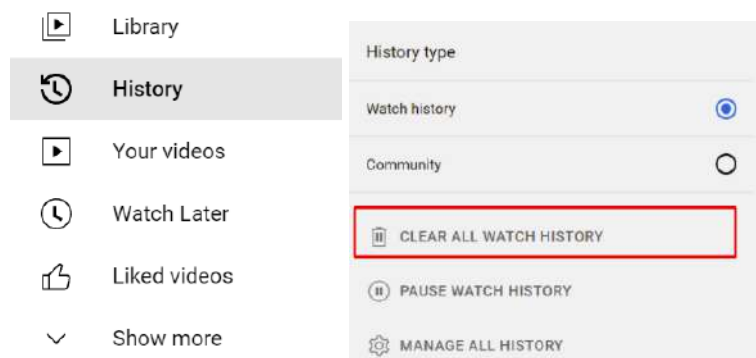


The cleaning can be done at several levels:

In **Library**, do the cleaning on your saved videos and various lists.



You can also go to **"History"** and clear all your watched history.
(cf. screenshot below)



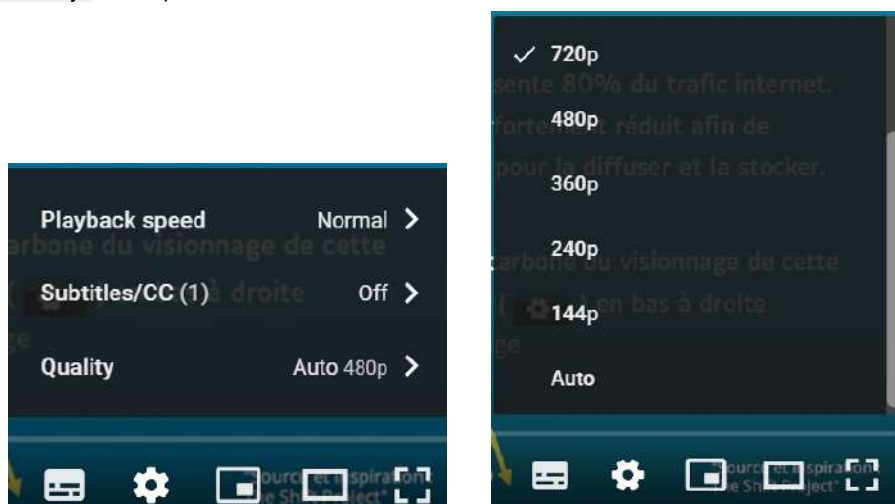
In the option "Manage all history", you can also select a time beyond which it will be automatically erased.

Have a look on your list of **subscriptions** to channels. If some channels do not interest you anymore, unsubscribe!

If you have your own youtube channel, go to "Your videos" to erase the old videos, those which are not used or referenced anymore.

It is also possible to decrease the impact of video streaming video by reducing the weight of the video. For example: you can decrease the quality of the video to max 720p.

Settings > Quality > 720p (or less)



#4 LinkedIn

The professional networks need to be cleaned as well.

On LinkedIn:

- Delete former publications: go to "Personal profile"> "Manage"> "Posts and activity" to erase all the old posts.
- Delete chats on instant messaging: click on the "..." > "Manage conversations"> select the old messages> click on the bin and confirm by clicking on "Yes, delete"
- Delete old notifications: in the notifications index, click on "..." at the end of the notification to delete.
Go to "Manage your Notifications"> "View Settings" to make sure to receive only the notifications you are interested in.
- Sort out groups: go to "Groups" then click on "..." on the line of the group that you want to leave and select "Leave this group"
- Handle your network: go to "My Network" then select one by one on the left column "Connections", "Contacts", "People I Follow", "Events", "Pages", "Newsletters", "Hashtags" in order to check the selections are still relevant today.

On LinkedIn, in "Settings & Privacy"> "Site preferences", we can also untick the option "Autoplay videos"

In the same "Preferences" menu, we can go to "Data privacy" and "Search history" to clear it.

If you are a business, do not forget to check that all the information on your business page are updated (in the general information as well as in the list of employees identified as belonging to the company)

#5 Instagram, Snapchat & TikTok

It is important to know that the streaming platforms are the most energy consuming. So, applications like TikTok which are entirely based on video streaming have a higher carbon impact.

These applications don't allow you to delete old posts at once. As for the other social media, it will be necessary to select and delete pictures and videos one by one in the app but on your smartphone file too. If you want to keep them, think about saving them on an external disk.

On **Instagram**, if you want to keep your files before deleting them, go to "Settings"> "Privacy & security"> "Data download". The downloading of the massive data is not a digitally responsible action, but thanks to it you can become aware of the quantity of data that we share.

Checklist

- Empty the cache (of the apps on your smartphone)
- Sort out and delete the multimedia files (pictures and videos)
- Sort out and delete chats
- Sort out and delete groups
- Delete history (chats, search, localisation, etc.)
- Stop video automatic reading

Congratulations! You have cleaned your social medias!



3. Going further

Now that you have cleaned your social networks, would you like them to stay this way all year long? Here are some tips to help you to handle your data.

- **Limit your video streaming consumption.** To stop scrolling continuously on social networks, ask yourself if you really want to watch the video which is presented. If yes, choose a lower quality or download it..
- **Reduce the quality of pictures and videos** that you share.
- Set up a **data saver**, which enables you to reduce your data consumption by preventing some apps from sending or receiving background data.
- Prefer **a dark mode**.
- **Choose to disconnect yourself from social networks** after a given time..
- **Delete automatically your tweets** with [TweetDelete](#).
- Listen to **Youtube only on audio, without the video** with Youtube Music, or apps such as [Black Screen of Life](#) (only available on Android).

Sources

- Cover picture : <https://fr.freepik.com>
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