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Digital spring clean for more security

Computer, tablets and smartphones offer ever increasing memory space. You usually have so much memory available that you can never completely use it all up. And users are therefore never forced to clean out their data and apps either. Unused apps in particular can pose a great risk to security.

A common term used for regularly checking digital devices such as computers, tablets and smartphones for unused apps, data, documents etc. and then deleting any unused ones is data hygiene. Similar to personal hygiene, which aims to improve your own health and wellbeing, data hygiene is intended to improve quality and security of digital devices and data.

Any apps installed which are never used present the risk of no updates being installed any longer, so that security gaps are never closed. Attackers can specifically exploit such security gaps to access your device and cause damage.

Documents and data you delete from your device are still in your recycle bin. If not emptied on a regular basis, documents and data can still be found quite easily on your device. Your download folder, the folder for storing screenshots or the one for scanned documents are frequently cleared only very rarely too, leaving data easily accessible.

For your digital spring clean, we recommend at least taking the following steps:

- **Delete unused software and apps:** This not only leaves you with more memory space, but also reduces the risk of security gaps caused by software and apps which are no longer updated.
- **Regularly empty your recycle bin:** Only once they are deleted from your recycle bin, documents are no longer accessible directly.
- **Regularly clean the folder where screenshots and scans are stored:** Scans in particular can contain sensitive data such as insurance policies and signatures.
- **Archive or delete documents you no longer need:** You can either archive your documents offline on a hard drive or delete them if you no longer need them at all.
- **Structure your documents and folders:** A clear folder structure doesn't just create order, but also helps you find everything more quickly.